CHAPTER 3
OBSERVING AND ASSESSING YOUNG CHILDREN

Early Childhood Education Today

George S. Morrison
University of North Texas
For Betty Jane—who has made many sacrifices, all in the name of deepest love
This is an exciting time to be in the field of early childhood education. In fact, I can think of only one other time during my career when there was so much excitement and challenge: in 1965, with the implementation of Head Start. The excitement and possibility in the air at that time are similar to conditions today because of the interest in universal readiness, universal preschool, early academics, the transformation of kindergarten and the primary grades, and standards and assessment. The field of early childhood education and the roles of early childhood professionals are being transformed. We discuss these changes throughout this book, which focuses on the early care and education of young children from birth to age eight.

These changes bring with them both possibilities and challenges. The possibilities are endless for you as an early childhood education professional to participate in the restructuring of early childhood education. You and I have the opportunity to participate in the future of early childhood education. We must be creative in teaching young children and in providing the support that they and their families need.

To that end, this revised edition

- Is comprehensive in its coverage.
- Includes a new DVD, *Early Childhood Education Settings and Approaches*, with every copy of the text so that you can see what it is like to work with young children, as you read about them.
- Is more useful and more applied than ever to help you become an effective teacher. New Competency Builder boxes and more strategies, guidelines, and examples have also been added to this edition.

About the Author


Dr. Morrison is a popular author, speaker, and presenter. He writes an ongoing column for the *Public School Montessorian* and contributes his opinions and ideas to a wide range of publications. His speaking engagements and presentations focus on the future of early childhood education, the changing roles of early childhood teachers, the influence of contemporary educational reforms, research, and legislation on teaching and learning.

Dr. Morrison’s professional and research interests include integrating best practices into faith-based programs, developing programs for young children and their families with an emphasis on early literacy, and the influences of families on children’s development. He is also actively involved in providing technical assistance about graduate and undergraduate teacher education programs and early childhood practices to government agencies, university faculty, and private and public agencies in Thailand, Taiwan, and China.
Comprehensive Coverage

Reviewers consistently state that Early Childhood Education Today is comprehensive. Seven core themes are integrated throughout the text and provide a framework for understanding and implementing all that early childhood education encompasses.

• Professionalism in Practice. What does it mean to be a practicing early childhood professional today? This text answers this question and helps you become a high-quality professional. Chapter 1, “You and Early Childhood Education: What Does It Mean to Be a Professional?” discusses in detail the many dimensions of professionalism. In addition, two core attributes of professional practice, collaboration and advocacy, are highlighted throughout the text. The Voice from the Field and Program in Action accounts that appear in nearly every chapter illustrate how early childhood teachers dedicate themselves to helping children learn, grow, and develop to their full potential and to helping parents, families, and communities build strong, educational programs. As you read about how these teachers put professionalism into practice, you will be inspired to proclaim, “I also teach young children.”

• Theory into Practice. This text helps you understand how teachers and programs translate theories of learning and educating young children into practice. The Voice from the Field, Program in Action, Diversity Tie-In, and new Competency Builder features provide real-life insights into how teachers in programs across the United States apply early childhood theories, knowledge, and skills to their everyday practices. You will read firsthand about professional colleagues who make theories come alive in concrete ways that truly help children succeed in school and life.

• Diversity. The United States is a nation of diverse people, and this diversity is reflected in every early childhood classroom and program. You and your colleagues must have the knowledge and sensitivity to teach all students well, and you must understand how culture, language, socioeconomic status, and gender influence teaching and learning. In addition to two full chapters on diversity (chapter 15, Multiculturalism: Education for Living in a Diverse Society, and chapter 16, Children with Special Needs: Appropriate Education for All), every chapter of this edition emphasizes the theme of diversity through narrative accounts and program descriptions. Examples of this can be seen on sample pages 11, 19, 21, 27, and 31, which examine the coverage of diversity in well-known program approaches. The theme of diversity is further emphasized by the inclusion in every chapter of a Diversity Tie-In feature, which focuses on issues of diversity, promotes reflection, and shows you how to provide for the diverse needs of all children.

• Family-Centered, Community-Based Practice. To effectively meet children’s needs, early childhood professionals must collaborate with families and communities. Collaboration is in; solo practice is out! Today, teaching is not an isolated endeavor; successful partnerships at all levels are essential for effective teaching and learning. In addition to an entire chapter on this important topic (chapter 17, “Parent, Family, and Community Involvement: Cooperation and Collaboration”), other chapters provide examples of successful partnerships and their influences on teaching and learning.

• Timeliness. This tenth edition is a book for the twenty-first century. The information it contains is timely and reflective of the latest trends and research. Every chapter has been thoroughly revised to reflect changes in the field. I take great pride in ensuring that you and other professionals are well versed in the current state of early childhood education. Early Childhood Education Today is a contemporary text, written and designed for contemporary teachers in these contemporary times.

• Developmentally Appropriate Practice. The theme of developmentally appropriate practice, which is integrated throughout every chapter of this text, is the solid foundation for all early childhood practice. It is important for you to understand developmentally appropriate practice and become familiar with ways to implement it in your teaching. With all the reforms and changes occurring in the field, your goal is to ensure that all you do is appropriate for all children and their families. Appendix B provides the NAEYC Guidelines for Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs, and every chapter includes examples and illustrations of how to apply developmentally appropriate practice.

• Technology Applied to Teaching and Learning. Technological and information literacy is essential for living and working in contemporary society. This tenth edition provides you and your colleagues with the knowledge and competencies you need to integrate technology effectively into a curriculum and to use new teaching and learning styles enabled by technology. In addition to chapter 13, “Technology and Young Children: Education for the Information Age,” margin notes direct you to related information on the Companion Website for this textbook, located at www.prenhall.com/morrison. And included at the end of each chapter is a Linking to Learning section, which provides an annotated list of websites to support your use of the Internet and new technologies as sources of professional growth and development.
In keeping with this book’s emphasis on current information, best practices, and professionalism, we have included a new DVD with every copy of the text. Early Childhood Education Settings and Approaches contains eight very current, multicultural videos, running seven to nine minutes each and focusing on:

- Infants and Toddlers
- Child Care
- Kindergarten
- Primary Grades
- Head Start
- Montessori
- Reggio Emilia
- High/Scope

Each narrated segment depicts children actively playing and learning and teachers discussing their practices. In addition, segment clips with observation and application suggestions appear in the margins of all of the chapters, as you see here. These video clips and captions point you to specific scenes in the DVD to help you understand how chapter concepts are practiced in real programs. Examples can be seen on sample pages 6, 8, 15, 19, 22, and 26. Seeing in action what you read about in the text and reflecting on what you observe can help you to understand what it is actually like to work with children of different ages and cultures in different types of classrooms.

This edition was carefully revised to include applied, step-by-step how-to’s in Competency Builder features and specific guidelines and strategies in the regular text.

Competency Builders. More than ever before in America’s educational history, teachers are being held accountable for children’s progress. At the same time, early childhood is a unique developmental period, one that should be respected, with every teacher interacting with every child in developmentally and culturally appropriate ways. Because it is challenging for teachers to balance young children’s developmental and learning needs with state and school district standards, which specify what children should know and do, the need for teachers to be competent in all areas of professional practice has perhaps never been greater.

In response to this need, a new feature, Competency Builder, is included in most chapters to show you in detail how to be a competent teacher in the areas that early childhood education professionals say are the most important. Examples are on sample pages 28 and 29 and 34 and 35. A list of all of the Competency Builders in the book is on Special Features page xxiv. In these features you will learn how to observe young children as a basis for planning and assessing learning experiences, how to preserve learning experiences through documentation, how to effectively communicate with children’s family members, how to scaffold children’s learning using Vygotsky’s theory, and much more. These explicit steps will be useful to you in your practicum or student teaching experience and throughout your teaching career. Studying these features and this text will also help you to pass your certification, state licensure exam, or the PRAXIS.

In-Text Strategies and Applications. You will also find more explicit strategies, guidelines, and detailed how-to’s in this edition. One example is on page 7 in these sample pages; others are in the examples shown below. Studying these applications will help you to become a competent professional.

1. Encourage breakfast. If your school or program does not provide breakfasts for children, be an advocate for making it a reality. Providing school breakfasts can be both a nutritional and an educational program.
2. Provide healthy snacks instead of junk food. And advocate for healthy foods in school and programs vending machines.
3. When cooking with children, talk about foods and their nutritional values. They are also a good way to use and talk about new foods.
4. Integrate literacy and nutritional activities. For example, reading is a good way to encourage children to be aware of and the information.
5. Make meals and snack times pleasant and sociable experiences.
6. Provide permits with information about nutrition. For example, aware of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s new initiative (Figure 2.7). You might access the new program online. have the

1. How do they see their role? How do they define their work? What does their work mean to them?
2. How do they see their role? How do they define their work? What does their work mean to them?
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6. How do they see their role? How do they define their work? What does their work mean to them?
• **Program in Action.** One of the hallmarks of this edition of *Early Childhood Education Today* is its practical nature and its ability to translate theory into practice. A Program in Action in nearly every chapter enables you to experience actual programs designed for children in real-life classrooms and early childhood settings throughout the United States. These real examples enable you to explore the best practices of early childhood education. They also spotlight current topics such as early education, family literacy, multilingual and bilingual classrooms, technology applied to learning, inclusion, and early intervention. You will find examples of this feature on sample pages 12, 16, 23, and 32.

• **Voice from the Field.** Teachers’ voices play a major role in illustrating practices in *Early Childhood Education Today*. Voice from the Field features allow practicing teachers to explain to you their philosophies, beliefs, and program practices. These teachers mentor you as they relate how they practice early childhood education. Among the contributors are teachers who have received prestigious awards. You will find an example of this feature on page 28 in these sample pages.

• **Diversity Tie-In.** America’s diversity is reflected in today’s classrooms. You will need to honor, respect, and provide for the needs of all children, regardless of their culture, language, socioeconomic background, gender, or race. You will also need to be thoughtful about integrating multiculturalism and diversity into your teaching. The Diversity Tie-In in every chapter is designed to introduce you to a topic or issue of diversity you might not have thought about and to encourage you to address it in a way you might not have considered. An example of this feature is on sample pages 34 and 35.

• **Portraits of Children.** In a text about children, it is sometimes easy to think about them in the abstract. The Portraits of Children found in chapters 9, 10, 11, 12, and 16 are designed to ensure that we consider children as individuals as we discuss how to teach them. The Portraits of Children are snapshots of children from all cultures and backgrounds, enrolled in real child care, preschool, and primary-grade programs across the United States. Each portrait includes developmental information across four domains: physical, social/emotional, cognitive, and adaptive, or self-help. Accompanying questions challenge you to think and reflect about how you would provide for these children’s educational and social needs if you were their teacher.

• **Lesson Plans.** Planning for teaching and learning constitutes an important dimension of your role as a professional. This is especially true today, with the emphasis on ensuring that children learn what is mandated by state standards. The lesson plans in this text let you look over the shoulder of experienced teachers and observe how they plan for instruction. Award-winning teachers share with you how they plan to ensure that their children will learn important knowledge and skills.

  In addition, Competency Builders in chapters 9, 10, 11, and 12 discuss the specific competencies necessary to effectively plan learning activities or lessons for infants and toddlers, preschoolers, kindergartners, and primary-grade students, respectively.

• **Margin Notes.** Keeping track of important key terms is a problem often associated with reading and studying. Key terms and concepts are defined here as they are presented and are also placed in page margins. In this way, you have immediate access to them for reflection and review, and they maximize your study time by helping you retain essential knowledge.

• **Glossary of Terms.** A glossary of terms at the end of the book incorporates all of the definitions and terms found in the margin notes. The glossary provides a quick and useful reference for study and reflection.

• **Integrated Technology.** Web resources and URLs appear throughout the text, and margin notes cue you to many additional resources, such as projects, self-assessments, and other learning activities found on the Companion Website for this text, located at www.prenhall.com/morrison. These links enrich and extend your learning. In addition, at the end of each chapter is a Linking to Learning section, which provides a list of annotated Web addresses for further research, study, and reflection.

NEW TO THIS EDITION

• **DVD.** A new DVD, *Early Childhood Education Settings and Approaches*, accompanies each copy of the tenth edition so that students can refer to it over and over again. The DVD shows current model programs in multicultural classrooms operated by outstanding teachers and administrators. The DVD takes you inside programs to experience firsthand how teachers interact with young children and to observe the materials, environments, curriculum, and routines of each setting and program. The DVD includes videos of infant- and toddler-child care, kindergartens, and primary-grade settings and the approaches used by Head Start, Montessori, Reggio Emilia, and High/Scope programs.

• **DVD Margin Notes.** DVD margin notes appear many times in every chapter. These notes show a frame from the DVD and include questions and comments that encourage you to observe the scene and relate what you see to chapter content. In this way you can read the text, view the DVD, reflect on what you observe, and be better prepared to apply theory to practice.

• **Expanded Curriculum Content, Lesson Plans, and Teaching Ideas.** Reviewers of the previous edition suggested expanding coverage of curriculum planning and classroom curriculum ideas and activities for the developmental chapters (9 to 12). In response, lesson plans now include helpful tips supporting students who are learning to write lesson plans, several Competency Builders focus on creating lesson plans, and practical and usable lists of curriculum tips and strategies are included in every chapter. These tips give you a professional tool kit to take into classrooms and other early childhood settings so that you can immediately teach with confidence and help children learn.

• **Ethical Dilemmas.** The Ethical Dilemmas found at the end of every chapter cut to the heart of professional practice. The dilemmas are real scenarios relating to real-life professional practice issues that you will encounter throughout your career. These dilemmas challenge you to think, reflect, and make decisions about children, families, and colleagues. As a result, you will grow in your ability to be a fully practicing professional. You can see an example of this feature on sample page 36.
Preface

• Competency Builders. These features are just what their name implies; they are designed to build your competence and confidence in performing essential teaching tasks. In early childhood course work, students are increasingly required to demonstrate competence in key areas. Competency Builders have step-by-step guidelines or strategies and provide explicit details that enable you to do key professional tasks expected of early childhood teachers. The Competency Builders are user friendly and can be applied to your professional practice now. In certain cases, they can help you apply state and local standards to practice.

• New Photos and Artifacts from Contributors’ Classrooms. This edition is enlivened by children’s artifacts and photos from a variety of early childhood settings. You can see some examples of these on sample pages 2.24, 24, 29, 32, and 26. Contributors from around the country have provided classroom or center photographs, such as the A. Sophie Rogers Laboratory School at The Ohio State University, the Boulder Journey School, California family child care owner Martha Magna, and many others who did not have time to spare but graciously helped out anyway!

• Continuing Emphasis on Professional Practice. Chapter 1 is once again entirely devoted to professional practice and sets the tone and context for the entire text. By beginning with professional practice, you can understand the importance of the early childhood educator’s role in shaping the future. You can also recognize that your own professional development is an ongoing responsibility and a necessary part of helping children grow and develop as happily and successfully as possible.

Organization and Coverage of the Text

This edition has been extensively revised to reflect current changes in society, research, and the practice of early childhood education. The text is comprehensive in its approach to the profession and is organized in five sections:

・ Part 1. “Early Childhood Education and Professional Development,” begins with chapter 1 on professional development. This chapter is extensively revised and is designed to place professional practice at the heart of being a good teacher. It helps you engage in professional and ethical practice and sets the tone for what being an early childhood professional is all about. Chapter content encourages you to use professional practice as the compass for all you do.

・ Part 2. “Foundations: History and Theories,” provides a historical overview of the field of early childhood education and descriptions of the theories, ideas, and practices that form the basis of early childhood education. The two chapters in this section also show how the past influences the present and how the major theories of Montessori, Piaget, and Vygotsky influence programs for young children today.

・ Part 3. “Programs and Services for Children and Families,” includes three chapters that illustrate how theories and public policy are transformed into practice in child care, preschools, federal programs, and public schools. Chapter 6 illustrates how Montessori, High Scope, Reggio Emilia, and Waldorf programs function and operate.

・ Part 4. “The New World of Early Childhood Education,” begins with chapter 9, devoted to a discussion of the growth, development, and education of infants and toddlers. Here you will learn how important the early years truly are and how large an impact you have on young children and their families through your personal interactions with them.

・ Part 5. “Meeting the Special Needs of Young Children,” begins with Chapter 13 and a discussion of technology and young children. Technology is an important part of the information age; it is imperative that young children learn to use it and that you and other professionals use it to support your teaching and all children’s learning. Chapter 14 suggests ideas for guiding children and helping them to be responsible for their own behavior. These ideas will enable you to confidently manage classrooms and other early childhood settings. Chapter 15 addresses the ever-important issues of multiculturalism and diversity; Chapter 16 discusses young children’s special needs, early intervention, IEPs, and other issues that you need to be aware of today’s inclusive classrooms. These two chapters help you meet children’s unique needs in developmentally appropriate and authentic ways.

・ Part 6. “Professional Development,” emphasizes the importance of cooperation and collaboration with family and community citizens. This chapter helps you learn how to develop partnerships and confidently interact with parents, families, and communities to provide the best education for all children.

Appendices

Appendix A includes the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct, a position statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, which provides practical guidelines for basing your teaching and professional interactions on ethical practices. Appendix B presents the NAEYC Guidelines for Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs, to ensure that your programs meet the cultural, developmental, gender, and educational needs of all children in ways that are appropriate to them as individuals.

Appendix C provides a time line of early childhood education history, listing important events from Martin Luther’s argument for public support of education for all children in 1524 to Head Start’s celebration of its fortieth anniversary in 2005.
SUPPLEMENTS TO THE TEXT

The supplements package for the tenth edition has also been thoroughly revised and upgraded with some exciting new ancillaries. All online ancillaries are available for download by adopting professors via www.prenhall.com. Contact your Prentice Hall sales representative for additional information.

FOR INSTRUCTORS

• NEW Online Instructor’s Manual. This thoroughly restructured and updated Instructor’s Manual provides professors with a variety of useful resources to support the text, including chapter overviews; teaching strategies (opening motivators, closure); and ideas for classroom activities, discussions, and assessment; transparency masters; and thoughtful ways to integrate the new DVD, the new Ethical Dilemmas, the new Competency Builders, and the robust Companion Website into the course.

• Online Test Bank. The revised and updated comprehensive Test Bank is a collection of multiple choice, matching, and essay (short-answer) questions. The items are designed to assess the student’s understanding of concepts and applications.

• NEW Online PowerPoint Slides. For each chapter, we provide a new collection of PowerPoint slides, which are available for downloading by instructors. These match the transparency masters provided in the online Instructor’s Manual.

• Computerized Test Bank Software. Known as TestGen, the computerized test bank software gives instructors electronic access to the Test Bank items, allowing them to create and customize exams. TestGen is available in both Macintosh and PC/Windows versions.

• NEW OneKey Course Management. OneKey is Prentice Hall’s exclusive new resource for instructors and students. OneKey is an integrated online course management resource, featuring everything students and instructors need for work in or outside the classroom, including a Study Guide (Spanish and English); a Companion Website material; Instructor’s Manual; Test Bank; PowerPoint slides; videos from Early Childhood Education Settings and Approaches; suggestions for using the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct; and more. OneKey is available in WebCT and Blackboard.

For Students

• Companion Website. Located at www.prenhall.com/morrison, the Companion Website for this text includes a wealth of resources for both students and professors. Focus Questions help students review chapter content. Students can test their knowledge by going to the Multiple Choice and Essay modules and taking interactive quizzes, which provide immediate feedback with a percentage score and correct answers. Responses and results can be submitted to instructors via e-mail. The Linking to Learning module contains hot links to all the websites mentioned in the text and assists students in using the Internet to do additional research on chapter topics and key issues. Websites and activities facilitate connections to professional organizations and other groups in the Making Connections module. The Program in Action and Diversity Tie-In modules provide activities with hot links to articles and websites to enhance and extend the feature topics in the textbook. The Glossary module and the Professional Development Checklist are also included on this site.

• NEW Online Test Bank Choice for Student Savings! SafariX Textbooks Online™ is an exciting new choice for students looking to save money. As an alternative to purchasing the print textbook, students can subscribe to the same content online and save up to 50 percent off the suggested list price of the print text. With a SafariX WebBook, students can search the text, make notes online, print out reading assignments that incorporate lecture notes, and bookmark important passages for later review. For more information, or to subscribe to the SafariX WebBook, visit www.safarix.com.

• Student Study Guide. The Student Study Guide provides students with additional opportunities to review chapter content and helps them learn and study more effectively. Each chapter of the guide contains several pages of concept and term identification; open-ended questions requiring short, written answers; and a number of other helpful review resources, including a self-check quiz.

• NEW Spanish Student Study Guide. A Spanish language version of the Student Study Guide is available for the first time with the tenth edition. This translation, which has undergone regional geographic reviews, features the same content as the English-language version, described previously.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In the course of my teaching, service, and consulting, I meet and talk with many professionals who are deeply dedicated to doing their best for young children and their families. I am always touched, heartened, and encouraged by the openness, honesty, and unselfish sharing of ideas that characterize these professional colleagues. I thank all the individuals who contributed to the Voice from the Field, Program in Action, Diversity Tie-In, Competency Builder, and other program features. They are all credited for their contributions, and I am very thankful they have agreed to share with you and me the personal accounts of their professional practice, their children’s lives, and their programs.

I am also very grateful to reviewers Tena Carr, San Joaquin Delta College; Pamela Chibucos, Owens Community College; Ann Disque, East Tennessee State University; Stephanie Shine, Texas Tech University; and Kathleen P. Watkins, Community College of Philadelphia, for their very important and helpful feedback. The reviewers challenged me to rethink content and made suggestions for inclusion of new ideas. Many of the changes in this tenth edition are the result of their suggestions.

My editors at Merrill/Prentice Hall continue to be the best in the industry. It was a pleasure to work once again with my editor, Julie Peters, who overflows with creative ideas. I value her remarkable vision and hard work, which help make Early Childhood Education Today the leader in the field. Development Editor Karen Ballon is organized, persistent, and adept at managing all of the features that put the tenth edition on the cutting edge. Production Editor Linda Bayma and Production Coordinator Nortine Strange (Carlisle Editorial Services) are very attentive to detail and make sure everything is done right. I also appreciated Kathy Termeer’s able assistance and can-do attitude in obtaining needed permissions. My copyeditor, Mary Benis, was collaborative, encouraging, and extremely helpful. She constantly challenged me to write better and to view issues from all sides. Together, my colleagues have made this tenth edition one of high and exceptional quality.
Teacher Preparation Classroom

Your Class. Their Careers. Our Future. Will your students be prepared?

We invite you to explore our new, innovative and engaging website and all that it has to offer you, your course, and tomorrow’s educators! Organized around the major courses pre-service teachers take, the Teacher Preparation site provides media, student/teacher artifacts, strategies, research articles, and other resources to equip your students with the quality tools needed to excel in their courses and prepare them for their first classroom.

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**Appendix A** NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct

**Appendix B** NAEYC Guidelines for Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs

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Parents want their children to attend high-quality programs that will provide them with a good start in life. They want to know that their children are being well cared for and educated. Parents want their children to get along with others, be happy, and learn. How to best meet these legitimate parental expectations is one of the ongoing challenges of early childhood professionals.1

THE GROWING DEMAND FOR QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the nation’s largest organization of early childhood educators, accredits 10,845 early childhood programs serving approximately 915,000 children.2 These programs are only a fraction of the total number of early childhood programs in the United States. Think for a minute about what goes on in these and other programs from day to day. For some children teachers and staff implement well-thought-out and articulated programs that provide for children’s growth and development across all the developmental domains—cognitive, linguistic, emotional, social, and physical. In other programs, children are not so fortunate. Their days are filled with aimless activities that fail to meet their academic and developmental needs.

With the national spotlight on the importance of the early years, the public is demanding more from early childhood professionals and their programs. On the one hand, the public is willing to invest more heavily in early childhood programs, but on the other hand, it is demanding that the early childhood profession and individual programs respond by providing meaningful programs.3 The public demands these things from early childhood professionals:

• Programs that will help ensure children’s early academic and school success. The public believes that too many children are being left out and left behind.4
• The inclusion of early literacy and reading readiness activities in programs and curricula that will enable children to read on grade level in grades one, two, and three. Literacy is the key to much of school and life success, and school success begins in preschool and before.5
• Environments that will help children develop the social and behavioral skills necessary to help them lead civilized and nonviolent lives. In the wake of daily news headlines about shootings and assaults by younger and younger children, the public wants early childhood programs to assume an ever-growing responsibility for helping get children off to a nonviolent start in life.6

Early Childhood Programs

Applying Theories to Practice

If education is always to be conceived along the same antiquated lines of a mere transmission of knowledge, there is little to be hoped from it. . . . For what is the use of transmitting knowledge if the individual’s total development lags behind? And so we discovered that education is not something which the teacher does, but that it is a natural process which develops spontaneously in the human being.

Maria Montessori
As a result of these public demands, there is a growing and critical need for programs that teachers and others can adopt and use. In this chapter we examine and discuss some of the more notable programs for use in early childhood settings. As you read about and reflect on each of these, think about their strengths and weaknesses and the ways each tries to best meet the needs of children and families. Pause for a minute and review Table 6.1, which outlines the model early childhood programs discussed in this chapter.

Let’s now look at four highly regarded and widely adopted model programs: Montessori, High/Scope, Reggio Emilia, and Waldorf. There is a good probability that you will be associated in some way as a teacher, parent, or advisory board member with one of these programs. In any event, you will want to be informed about their main features and operating principles.

PRINCIPLES OF THE MONTESSORI METHOD

Review again the introductory material on Maria Montessori in chapter 4. The Montessori method has been and is very popular around the world with early childhood professionals and parents. The Montessori approach is designed to support the natural development of children in a well-prepared environment.

Five basic principles fairly and accurately represent how Montessori educators implement the Montessori method in many kinds of programs across the United States. Figure 6.1 illustrates these five basic principles of the Montessori method.

Montessori method

A system of early childhood education founded on the ideas and practices of Maria Montessori.

FIGURE 6.1 Basic Montessori Principles

These basic principles are the foundation of the Montessori method. Taken as a whole, they constitute a powerful model for helping all children learn to their fullest.

TABLE 6.1 Comparing Models of Early Childhood Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Main Features</th>
<th>Teacher’s Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Montessori</td>
<td>• Theoretical basis is the philosophy and beliefs of Maria Montessori.</td>
<td>• Follows the child’s interests and needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Prepared environment supports, invites, and enables learning.</td>
<td>• Prepares an environment that is educationally interesting and safe*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Children educate themselves—self-directed learning.</td>
<td>• Directs unobtrusively as children individually or in small groups engage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sensory materials invite and promote learning.</td>
<td>in self-directed activity*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Set curriculum regarding what children should learn—Montessorians try</td>
<td>• Observes, analyzes, and provides materials and activities appropriate for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to stay as close to Montessori’s ideas as possible.</td>
<td>the child’s sensitive periods of learning*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Children are grouped in multage environments.</td>
<td>• Maintains regular communications with the parent*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Children learn by manipulating materials and working with others.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Learning takes place through the senses.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>High/Scope</td>
<td>• Theory is based on Piaget, constructivism, Dewey, and Vygotsky.</td>
<td>• Plans activities based on children’s interests</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Plan-do-review is the teaching-learning cycle.</td>
<td>• Facilitates learning through encouragement*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Emergent curriculum is one not planned in advance.</td>
<td>• Engages in positive adult-child interaction strategies*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reggio Emilia</td>
<td>• Theory is based on Piaget, constructivism, Vygotsky, and Dewey.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Emergent curriculum is one not planned in advance.</td>
<td>• Works collaboratively with other teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Curriculum is based on children’s interests and experiences.</td>
<td>• Organizes environments rich in possibilities and provocations*</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Curriculum is project oriented.</td>
<td>• Acts as recorder for the children, helping them trace and revisit their</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Hundred languages of children—symbolic representation of work and</td>
<td>words and actions*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>learning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Learning is active.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Atelier—a special teacher is trained in the arts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Atelier—a special teacher is trained in the arts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waldorf</td>
<td>• Theoretical basis is the philosophy and beliefs of Rudolf Steiner.</td>
<td>• Acts as a role model exhibiting the values of the Waldorf school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The whole child—head, heart and hands—is educated.</td>
<td>• Provides an intimate classroom atmosphere full of themes about caring for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The arts are integrated into all curriculum areas.</td>
<td>the community and for the natural and living world*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Study of myths, lore, and fairy tales promotes the imagination and</td>
<td>• Encourages children’s natural sense of wonder, belief in goodness, and love</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>multiculturalism.</td>
<td>of beauty*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Main lesson teacher stays with the same class from childhood to</td>
<td>• Creates a love of learning in each child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>adolescence.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Learning is by doing—making and doing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Learning is noncompetitive.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The developmental phases of each child are followed.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

RESPECT FOR THE CHILD
Respect for the child is the cornerstone on which all other Montessori principles rest. As Montessori said:

As a rule, however, we do not respect children. We try to force them to follow us without regard to their special needs. We are overbearing with them, and above all, rude, and then we expect them to be submissive and well-behaved, knowing all the time how strong is their instinct of imitation and how touching their faith in and admiration of us. They will imitate us in any case. Let us treat them, therefore, with all the kindness which we wish to help to develop in them.

Teachers show respect for children when they help them do things and learn for themselves. When children have choices, they are able to develop the skills and abilities necessary for effective learning autonomy, and positive self-esteem. (The theme of respect for children re surfaces in our discussion of guiding behavior in chapter 14.)

THE ABSORBENT MIND
Montessori believed that children educate themselves: “It may be said that we acquire knowledge by using our minds, but the child absorbs knowledge directly into his psychic life. Simply by continuing to live, the child learns to speak his native tongue.” This is the concept of the absorbent mind.

Montessori wanted us to understand that children can’t help learning. Simply by living, children learn from their environment. Children are born to learn, and they are remarkable learning systems. Children learn because they are thinking beings. But what they learn depends greatly on their teachers, experiences, and environments.

Early childhood teachers are reemphasizing the idea that children are born learning and that constant readiness and ability to learn. We will discuss these concepts further in chapter 9.

SENSITIVE PERIODS
Montessori believed there are sensitive periods when children are more susceptible to certain behaviors and can learn specific skills more easily:

A sensitive period refers to a special sensibility which a creature acquires in its infantile state, while it is still in a process of evolution. It is a transient disposition and limited to the acquisition of a particular trait. Once this trait or characteristic has been acquired, the special sensibility disappears...

Although all children experience the same sensitive periods (e.g., a sensitive period for writing), the sequence and timing vary for each child. One role of the teacher is to use observation to detect times of sensitivity and provide the setting for optimum fulfillment. Refer to chapter 3 to review guidelines for observing children.

THE PREPARED ENVIRONMENT
Montessori believed that children learn best in a prepared environment, a place in which children can do things for themselves. The prepared environment makes learning materials and experiences available to children in an orderly format. Classrooms Montessori described are really what educators advocate when they talk about child-centered education and active learning. Freedom is the essential characteristic of the prepared environment. Since children within the environment are free to explore materials of their own choosing, they absorb what they find there.

AUTOEDUCATION
Montessori named the concept that children are capable of educating themselves autoeducation (also known as self-education). Children who are actively involved in a prepared environment and who exercise freedom of choice literally educate themselves. Montessori teachers prepare classrooms so that children educate themselves.

THE TEACHER’S ROLE
Montessori believed that “it is necessary for the teacher to guide the child without letting him feel her presence too much, so that she may be always ready to supply the desired help, but may never be the obstacle between the child and his experience.”

The Montessori teacher demonstrates key behaviors to implement this child-centered approach:

- Make children the center of learning. As Montessori said, “The teacher’s task is not to talk, but to prepare and arrange a series of motives for cultural activity in a special environment made for the child.”
- Encourage children to learn by providing freedom for them in the prepared environment.
- Observe children so as to prepare the best possible environment, recognizing sensitive periods and diverting inappropriate behavior to meaningful tasks.
- Prepare the learning environment by ensuring that learning materials are provided in an orderly format and that the materials provide for appropriate experiences for all the children.
- Respect each child and model ongoing respect for all children and their work.
- Introduce learning materials, demonstrate learning materials, and support children’s learning. The teacher introduces learning materials after observing each child.

THE MONTESSORI METHOD IN ACTION
In a prepared environment, materials and activities provide for three basic areas of child involvement:

1. Practical life or motor education
2. Sensory materials for training the senses
3. Academic materials for teaching writing, reading, and mathematics

All these activities are taught according to a prescribed procedure.

PRACTICAL LIFE
The prepared environment supports basic, practical life activities, such as walking from place to place in an orderly manner, carrying objects such as trays and chairs, greeting a visitor, and learning self-care skills. For example, dressing frames are designed to perfect the motor skills involved in buttoning, zipping, lacing, buckling, and tying. The philosophy for activities such as these is to make children independent and develop concentration.
SENSORY MATERIALS

The sensory materials described in Figure 6.2 are among those found in a typical Montessori classroom. Materials for training and developing the senses have these characteristics:

- Control of error: Materials are designed so that children can see whether they make a mistake; for example, a child who does not build the blocks of the pink tower in their proper order does not achieve a tower effect.
- Isolation of a single quality: Materials are designed so that other variables are held constant except for the isolated quality or qualities. Therefore, all blocks of the pink tower are pink because size, not color, is the isolated quality.
- Active involvement: Materials encourage active involvement rather than the more passive process of looking.
- Attractiveness: Materials are attractive, with colors and proportions that appeal to children.

Sensory materials have several purposes:

- To train children’s senses to focus on an obvious, particular quality. For example, with the red rods, the quality is length, with the pink tower cubes, size, and with the bells, musical pitch.
- To help sharpen children’s powers of observation and visual discrimination as readiness for learning to read.
- To increase children’s ability to think, a process that depends on the ability to distinguish, classify, and organize.
- To prepare children for the occurrence of the sensitive periods for writing and reading. In this sense, all activities are preliminary steps in the writing-reading process.

ACADEMIC MATERIALS

The third area of Montessori materials is more academic. Exercises are presented in a sequence that encourages writing before reading. Reading is therefore an outgrowth of writing. Both processes, however, are introduced so gradually that children are never aware they are learning to write and read until one day they realize they are writing and reading. Describing this phenomenon, Montessori said that children “burst spontaneously” into writing and reading. She anticipated contemporary practices by integrating writing and reading and maintaining that writing lays the foundation for learning to read.

Montessori believed that many children were ready for writing at four years of age. Consequently, children who enter a Montessori system at age three have done most of the

Material | Illustration | Descriptions and Learning Purposes
--- | --- | ---
Pink tower | ![Pink tower Illustration](image) | Ten wooden cubes of the same shape and texture, all pink, the largest of which is ten centimeters. Each succeeding block is one centimeter smaller. Children build a tower beginning with the largest block. (Visual discrimination of dimension)
Brown stairs | ![Brown stairs Illustration](image) | Ten wooden blocks, all brown, differing in height and width. Children arrange the blocks next to each other from thinnest to thickest so the blocks resemble a staircase. (Visual discrimination of width and height)
Red rods | ![Red rods Illustration](image) | Ten rod-shaped pieces of wood, all red, of identical thickness but differing in length from ten centimeters to one meter. The child arranges the rods next to each other from largest to smallest. (Visual discrimination of length)
Cylinder blocks | ![Cylinder blocks Illustration](image) | Four individual wooden blocks that have holes of various sizes and matching cylinders; one block deals with height, one with diameter, and two with the relationship of both variables. Children remove the cylinders in random order, then match each cylinder to the correct hole. (Visual discrimination of size)
Smelling jars | ![Smelling jars Illustration](image) | Two identical sets of white opaque glass jars with removable tops through which the child cannot see but through which odors can pass. The teacher places various substances, such as herbs, in the jars, and the child matches the jars according to the smells. (Olfactory discrimination)
Baric tablets | ![Baric tablets Illustration](image) | Sets of rectangular pieces of wood that vary according to weight. There are three sets—light, medium, and heavy—which children match according to the weight of the tablets. (Discrimination of weight)
Color tablets | ![Color tablets Illustration](image) | Two identical sets of small rectangular pieces of wood used for matching color or shading. (Discrimination of color and education of the chromatic sense)
Cloth swatches | ![Cloth swatches Illustration](image) | Two identical swatches of cloth. Children identify them according to touch, first without a blindfold but later using a blindfold. (Sense of touch)
Tonal bells | ![Tonal bells Illustration](image) | Two sets of eight bells, alike in shape and size but different in color; one set is white, the other brown. The child matches the bells by tone. (Sound and pitch)
Sound boxes | ![Sound boxes Illustration](image) | Two identical sets of cylinders filled with various materials, such as salt and rice. Children match the cylinders according to the sound the fillings make. (Auditory discrimination)
Temperature jugs or thermic bottles | ![Temperature jugs or thermic bottles Illustration](image) | Small metal jugs filled with water of varying temperatures. Children match jugs of the same temperature. (Thermic sense and ability to distinguish between temperatures)

FIGURE 6.2 Montessori Sensory Materials

sensory exercises by the time they are four. It is not uncommon to see four- and five-year-olds in a Montessori classroom writing and reading. Figure 6.3 shows an example of a child’s writing.

Following are examples of Montessori materials that promote writing and reading:

- Ten geometric forms and colored pencils. These introduce children to the coordination necessary for writing. After selecting a geometric inset, children trace it on paper and fill in the outline with a colored pencil of their choosing.

Practical life activities are taught through four different types of exercise:

1. Care of the person—activities such as using dressing frames, polishing shoes, and washing hands.
2. Care of the environment—for example, dusting, polishing a table, and taking leaves.
3. Social relations—lessons in grace and courtesy.
4. Analysis and control of movement—locomotor activities such as walking and balancing.
• Individualized instruction. Montessori individualizes learning through children’s interactions with the materials as they proceed at their own rates of mastery. Montessori materials are age appropriate for a wide age range of children.

• Independence. The Montessori environment emphasizes respect for children and promotes success, both of which encourage children to be independent.

• Appropriate assessment. In a Montessori classroom, observation is the primary means of assessing children’s progress, achievement, and behavior. Well-trained Montessori teachers are skilled observers of children and are adept at translating their observation into appropriate ways of guiding, directing, facilitating, and supporting children’s active learning.

• Developmentally appropriate practice. The concepts and process of developmentally appropriate curricula and practice (see chapters 9 through 12) are foundational in the Montessori method.

You can gain a good understanding of the ebb and flow of life in a Montessori classroom by reading and reflecting on the Program in Action, which describes a day at Children’s House.

Providing for Diversity and Disability

Montessori education is ideally suited to meet the needs of children from diverse backgrounds, those with disabilities, and those with other special needs such as giftedness. Montessori believed that all children are intrinsically motivated to learn and that they absorb knowledge when they are provided appropriate environments at appropriate times of development. Thus, Montessorians believe in providing for individual differences in enriching environments.

The Circle of Inclusion Project at the University of Kansas identifies ten specific aspects of Montessori education that have direct applicability to the education of children with disabilities:

• The use of mixed-age groups. The mixed-age groupings found within a Montessori classroom are conducive to a successful inclusion experience. Mixed-age groups necessitate a wide range of materials within each classroom to meet the individual needs of children, rather than the average need of the group.

• Individualization within the context of a supportive classroom community. The individualized curriculum in Montessori classrooms is compatible with the individualization required for children with disabilities. Work in a Montessori classroom is introduced to children according to individual readiness rather than chronological age.

• An emphasis on functionality within the Montessori environment. Real objects are used rather than toy replications whenever possible (e.g., children cut bread with a real knife, sweep up crumbs on the floor with a broom, and dry wet tables with cloths).

In a Montessori classroom, the primary goal is to prepare children for life; special education also focuses on the development of functional skills.

• The development of independence and the ability to make choices. Montessori classrooms help all children make choices and become independent learners in many ways; for example, children may choose any material for which they have had a lesson given by the teacher. This development of independence is especially appropriate for children with disabilities.

Montessori and Contemporary Practices

The Montessori approach supports many methods used in contemporary early childhood programs:

• Integrated curriculum. Montessori involves children in actively manipulating concrete materials across the curriculum—writing, reading, science, math, geography, and the arts.

• Active learning. In Montessori classrooms, children are actively involved in their own learning. Manipulative materials provide for active and concrete learning.
CHILDREN’S HOUSE DAILY SCHEDULE

This sample schedule is typical of a Montessori program. It is structured to allow for activities in all three basic areas of involvement—life, sensory materials, and academic materials—and includes a rest period for the youngest children.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES | BENEFITS FOR CHILDREN
--- | ---
8:00–10:45 **Work Period** | Children spend this uninterrupted time working on individual or small-group activities at a table or on a rug on the floor. Many activities require a lesson from the teacher. Others, such as puzzles, can be used without a lesson. Children who choose an activity that is too difficult for them are offered something that better matches their abilities. These activities allow children to improve their attention span and concentration skills, small-motor control, eye-hand coordination, attention to detail, perseverance, and the joy of learning. Responsibility for one’s own learning is developed as the children make their own choices.

10:45–11:15 **Circle Time** | This group activity includes calling the roll, a peace ceremony, grace and courtesy lessons, stories, songs, games, or lessons on something new in the classroom. Children help set the tables for lunch, feed the animals, water the plants, and perform other chores. Whole-group lessons are an important time for children to learn how to take turns, participate appropriately in a larger society, share feelings and ideas, enjoy each other’s company in songs and games, and learn respect for others.

11:15–11:45 **Outside Play** | Climbing on the play apparatus, sand play, and gardening are a few of the activities available on the playground. Large-motor control, participation in group games, and learning about the wonders of nature take place as the children play outside.

11:45–12:25 **Lunchtime** | The children wash their hands, wait until all are seated before beginning, concentrate on manners and pleasant conversations at the table, take a taste of everything, pack up leftovers, throw away trash, and remain seated until everyone is finished and excused. After lunch, children help clean the tables and sweep the floor. Respectful behavior at mealtime is learned through modeling and direction from the teacher. Discussions can include manners, healthy nutrition, and family customs. Cooperation and teamwork are fostered as children help each other clean up and transition to the next activity.

12:25–12:50 **Outside Play** | Climbing on the play apparatus, sand play, and gardening are again available on the playground. See earlier outside play.

12:50–3:00 **Age-Appropriate Activities** | Nappers—Children under the age of 4½ sleep or rest in a small-group setting. Pre-kindergarten—Children between 4½ and 5 rest quietly for 30 minutes and then join the kindergarten group. Kindergarten—Children who are 5 years old by September 30 and are ready for the kindergarten experience continue to work on the lessons that were begun in the morning; they also have more extensive lessons in geography, science, art appreciation, writing, and music. Rest rejuvenates these young children for participation in the remainder of the day. Working alongside kindergartners encourages pre-kindergarten children to emulate their classmates in academic as well as social skills. Kindergarten children benefit from being part of a small group and working to their full potential in any area of their choosing. The joy of learning comes to life as they concentrate on works of intrinsic interest to them.

3:00–3:45 **Outside Play** | Climbing on the play apparatus, sand play, and gardening are again available on the playground. See earlier outside play.

3:45–4:00 **Group Snack** | Children share a snack before starting the afternoon activities. A snack provides another opportunity to encourage manners and healthy eating.

4:00–5:30 **After-School Fun** | Activities at this time can include games, art, drama, music, movement, cooking, or an educational video. Cooperation, teamwork, and creative expression are fostered as children build self-esteem.

5:30 **End of Day** | All children should be picked up by this time. Pick-up time offers the children an opportunity to say good-bye to the teacher and each other. It also gives the teacher a chance to speak briefly with parents.


- The development of organized work patterns in children. One objective of the practical life area and the beginning point for every young child is the development of organized work habits. Children with disabilities who need to learn to be organized in their work habits and their use of time benefit from this emphasis.
- The classic Montessori demonstration. Demonstrations themselves have value for learners who experience disabilities. A demonstration uses a minimum of language selected specifically for its relevance to the activity and emphasizes an orderly progression from the beginning to the end of the task. Observe several demonstrations by teachers in the enclosed DVD.
- An emphasis on repetition. Children with special needs typically require lots of practice and may progress in small increments.
- Materials with a built-in control of error. Materials that have a built-in control of error benefit all children. Because errors are obvious, children notice and correct them without the help of a teacher.
- Academic materials that provide a concrete representation of the abstract. Montessori classrooms offer a wide range of concrete materials that children can learn from as a regular part of the curriculum. For children with disabilities, the use of concrete materials is critical to promote real learning.
HIGH/SCOPE: A CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACH

The High/Scope Educational Research Foundation is a nonprofit organization that sponsors the High/Scope educational approach. The program is based on Piaget's intellectual development theory, discussed in chapter 5. High/Scope provides broad, realistic educational experiences geared to children's current stages of development, to promote the constructive processes of learning necessary to broaden emerging intellectual and social skills. Read the accompanying Program in Action, “High/Scope in Practice,” on pages 16–17 to understand how High/Scope works in the classroom.

High/Scope is based on three fundamental principles:

- Active participation of children in choosing, organizing, and evaluating learning activities, which are undertaken with careful teacher observation and guidance in a learning environment replete with a rich variety of materials located in various classroom learning centers
- Regular daily planning by the teaching staff in accord with a developmentally based curriculum model and careful child observations
- Developmentally sequenced goals and materials for children based on the High/Scope “key experiences”

**Basic Principles and Goals of the High/Scope Approach**

The High/Scope program strives to develop in children a broad range of skills, including the problem solving, interpersonal, and communication skills that are essential for successful living in a rapidly changing society. The curriculum encourages student initiative by providing children with materials, equipment, and time to pursue activities they choose. At the same time, it provides teachers with a framework for guiding children’s independent activities toward sequenced learning goals.

The teacher plays a key role in instructional activities by selecting appropriate, developmentally sequenced material and by encouraging children to adopt an active problem-solving approach to learning. This teacher-student interaction—teachers helping students achieve developmentally sequenced goals while also encouraging them to set many of their own goals—uniquely distinguishes the High/Scope Curriculum from direct-instruction and child-centered curricula.

The High/Scope approach influences the arrangement of the classroom, the manner in which teachers interact with children, and the methods employed to assess children. The High/Scope curriculum consists of the five interrelated components shown in Figure 6.4. This figure shows how active learning forms the hub of the “wheel of learning” and is supported by the key elements of the curriculum.

**The Five Elements of the High/Scope Approach**

Teachers create the context for learning in the High/Scope approach by implementing and supporting five essential elements: active learning, classroom arrangement, the daily schedule, assessment, and the curriculum (content).

Active Learning. The idea that children are the source of their own learning forms the center of the High/Scope curriculum. Teachers support children’s active learning by providing a variety of materials, making plans and reviewing activities with children, interacting with and carefully observing individual children, and leading small- and large-group active learning activities.

Classroom Arrangement. The classroom arrangement invites children to engage in personal, meaningful, educational experiences. In addition, the classroom contains three or more interest areas that encourage choice.

### Companion Website
For more information about High/Scope, go to the Companion Website at [www.prenhall.com/morrison](http://www.prenhall.com/morrison), select chapter 6, and then choose the Linking to Learning module.

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### Table: High/Scope Curriculum Wheel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Active Learning</strong></td>
<td>Teachers are aware of the content to be learned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Key experiences are used in math, language, the arts, social studies, P.E., etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Time is spent each day focusing on content areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Classroom Arrangement</strong></td>
<td>3 or more defined interest areas/centers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Range of interesting materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Organized systems for storage/labels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Daily Schedule</strong></td>
<td>Plan-Do-Review is incorporated in the schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Consistent from day to day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Balanced teacher/child-initiated activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Children know about changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment</strong></td>
<td>Attributes of each child are observed and recorded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Portfolios are used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Teachers evaluate and plan on the daily basis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIGURE 6.4 High/Scope Curriculum Wheel**

Source: Reprinted by permission of High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 600 N. River St., Ypsilanti, MI 48198-2899.

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In the High/Scope segment of the DVD, listen to and observe the plan-do-review process that is a central feature of the High/Scope approach.
HIGH/SCOPE in Practice

The High/Scope educational approach and curriculum for three- to five-year-olds is a developmental model based on the principle of active learning. The following beliefs underlie this approach:

• Children construct knowledge through their active involvement with people, materials, events, and ideas, a process that is intrinsically motivated.

• While children develop capacities in a predictable sequence, adult support contributes to their intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development.

• Consistent adult support and respect for children’s choices, thoughts, and actions strengthen the children’s self-respect, feelings of responsibility, self-control, and knowledge.

• Careful observation of children’s interests and intentions is a necessary step in understanding their level of development and planning and carrying out appropriate interactions with them.

In High/Scope programs these principles are implemented throughout the day, both through the structure of the daily routine and in the strategies adults use as they work with the children. The staff of each program plan for the day’s experiences, striving to create a balance between adult- and child-initiated activity.

As they plan activities, staff members consider five factors of intrinsic motivation that research indicates are essential for learning: enjoyment, interest, control, probability of success, and feelings of competence. During greeting-circle and small-group time, staff members actively involve the children in decisions about activities and materials as a way of supporting their intrinsic motivation to learn. This emphasis on child choice continues throughout the day, even during activities initiated by adults.

A Day at a High/Scope Program

Each program may implement the High/Scope approach in a slightly different way. A typical day’s activities at Giving Tree School are described here.

The day begins with greeting circle. After putting their photos on the attendance board, the children gather as the teacher begins a well-known animal finger play, and they join in immediately. Then the teacher suggests that the children look forward to the community cleanup process.

At recall time the children gather with their earlier small groups. Standing in a circle, each group rotates a hula hoop through their hands as they sing a short song (one of many such facilitating techniques). When the song ends, the child nearest the tape on the hoop is first to recall his or her work-time experiences. Charlie tells about the train he made out of blocks. Nicholas describes the special speed sticks he played with, Aja shows her doll bed, and Tasha describes her tickets. After their snack the children get their coats on and discuss what they will do outside. “Let’s collect more pine cones. We can use them for food for the baby alligators.” “Let’s go on the swings. I just learned how to pump.” “Let’s see if we can find more bugs hiding under the rocks. They go there for winter.” The teacher responds, “I’d like to help you look for bugs.”

As small-group activities are completed, planning time begins. The teacher asks the younger children to indicate their plans for “work” time by going to get something they will use in their play. The older children draw or copy the symbols or letters that stand for the area in which they plan to play. Each area is labeled with a sign containing both a simple picture symbol and words for the area. To indicate his plan, Charlie, age three, gets a small hollow block and brings it to the teacher: “I’m going to make a train. That’s all,” he says. Aja, age four, brings a dress and a roll of tape. “I’m going to the playhouse to be the mommy, and then I’m going to the art area to make something with tape,” she explains. Five-year-old Ashley shows the teacher her drawing of the tub table and the scoops she will use with the rice at the table.

During work time the teachers participate in children’s play. Riding on Charlie’s train, one teacher shows Tasha how to make the numerals 3 and 5 from train tickets; then joins two children playing a board game, and finally listens to Aja explain how she made a doll bed out of tape and a box. Another teacher helps Nicholas and Charlie negotiate a conflict over a block, encouraging them by listening and asking questions until they agree on a solution.

As the children are given a five-minute warning that it is almost time to clean up, the teachers tell them that today there will be a parade cleanup. When they hear the music, they can parade in any way they want, and when the music stops, they can choose a place nearby to clean up. These playful cleanup strategies are varied every day, and children look forward to the community cleanup process.

The classroom organization of materials and equipment supports the daily routine—children know where to find materials and what materials they can use. This encourages development of self-direction and independence. The floor plan in Figure 6.5 shows how room arrangement supports and implements the program’s philosophy, goals, and objectives and how a center approach (e.g., books, blocks, computers, dramatic play, art, construction) provides space for large-group activities and individual work. In a classroom where space is at a premium, the teacher makes one area serve many different purposes.

The teacher selects the centers and activities to use in the classroom based on several considerations:

• Interests of the children (e.g., kindergarten children are interested in blocks, housekeeping, and art)

• Opportunities for reinforcing needed skills and concepts and functional use of those skills and concepts

Arranging the environment, then, is essential to implementing a program’s philosophy. This is true for Montessori, High/Scope, and every other program.

Daily Schedule. The schedule considers developmental levels of children, incorporates a sixty- to seventy-minute plan-do-review process, provides for content areas, is as consistent throughout the day as possible, and contains a minimum number of transitions.

Notice the facial expressions of these children as they engage in active, hands-on learning with manipulative materials. Certainly this picture is worth a thousand words in conveying the power of active learning.

Contribution by Betsy Evans, conflict resolution specialist, Kids and Conflict, Gilmanton, Massachusetts, and field consultant, High/Scope Educational Research Foundation.
**FIGURE 6.5**
A High/Scope Kindergarten Classroom Arrangement

Source: Reprinted by permission of High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 600 N. River St., Ypsilanti, MI 48198-2898.

The plan-do-review: A sequence in which children, with the help of the teacher, initiate plans for projects or activities; work in learning centers to implement their plans; and then review what they have done with the teacher and their fellow classmates.

Assessment. Teachers keep notes about significant behaviors, changes, statements, and things that help them better understand a child’s way of thinking and learning. Teachers use two mechanisms to help them collect data: the key experiences note form and a portfolio. The HighScope Child Observation Record (see chapter 3) is also used to assess children’s development.

Curriculum. The HighScope curriculum comes from two sources: children’s interests and the key experiences, which are lists of observable learning behaviors (see Figure 6.6). Basing a curriculum in part on children’s interests is very constructivist and implements the philosophies of Dewey, Piaget, and Vygotsky.

**A DAILY ROUTINE THAT SUPPORTS ACTIVE LEARNING**

The HighScope curriculum’s daily routine is made up of a plan-do-review sequence and several additional elements. The plan-do-review sequence gives children opportunities to express intentions about their activities while keeping the teacher intimately involved in the whole process. The following five processes support the daily routine and contribute to its successful functioning.

**Planning Time.** Planning time gives children a structured, consistent chance to express their ideas to adults and to see themselves as individuals who can act on decisions. They experience the power of independence and are conscious of their intentions. This supports the development of purpose and confidence.

The teacher talks with children about the plans they have made before the children carry them out. This helps children clarify their ideas and think about how to proceed. Talking with children about their plans provides an opportunity for the teacher to encourage and respond to each child’s ideas, to suggest ways to strengthen the plans so they will be successful, and to understand and gauge each child’s level of development and thinking style. Children and teachers benefit from these conversations and reflections. Children feel reinforced and ready to start their work, while teachers have ideas of what opportunities for extension might arise, what difficulties children might have, and where problem solving may be needed.

In such a classroom, children and teachers are playing appropriate and important roles.

**Key Experiences.** Teachers continually encourage and support children’s interests and involvement in activities that occur within an organized environment and a consistent routine. Teachers plan for key experiences that may broaden and strengthen children’s emerging abilities. Children generate many of these experiences on their own; others require teacher guidance. Many key experiences are natural extensions of children’s projects and interests. Figure 6.6 identifies key experiences for children in pre-K programs.

**Work Time.** This part of the plan-do-review sequence is generally the longest time period in the daily routine. The teacher’s role during work time is to observe children to see how they gather information, interact with peers, and solve problems, and when appropriate, enter into the children’s activities to encourage, extend, and set up problem-solving situations.

**Cleanup Time.** During cleanup time, children return materials and equipment to their labeled places and store their incomplete projects, restoring order to the classroom. All children’s materials in the classroom are within reach and on open shelves. Clear labeling enables children to return all work materials to their appropriate places.

**Recall Time.** Recall time, the final phase of the plan-do-review sequence, is the time when children represent their work-time experience in a variety of developmentally appropriate ways. They might recall the names of the children they involved in their plan, draw a picture of the building they made, or describe the problems they encountered. Recall strategies include drawing pictures, making models, physically demonstrating how a plan was carried out, or verbally recalling the events of work time. The teacher supports children’s linking of the actual work to their original plan.

This review permits children to reflect on what they did and how it was done. It brings closure to children’s planning and work-time activities. Putting their ideas and experiences into words also facilitates children’s language development. Most important, it enables children to represent to others their mental schemes.

**PROVIDING FOR DIVERSITY AND DISABILITY**

The HighScope curriculum is a developmentally appropriate approach that is child centered and promotes active learning. The use of learning centers, active learning, and the plan-do-review cycle, as well as allowing children to progress at their own pace, provides for children’s individual and special needs. HighScope teachers emphasize the broad
Figure 6.6 Continued

**NUMBER**
- Comparing the numbers of things in two sets to determine more, fewer, same number
- Arranging two sets of objects in one-to-one correspondence
- Counting objects

**SPACE**
- Filling and emptying
- Filling things together and taking them apart
- Changing the shape and arrangement of objects (wrapping, twisting, stretching, stacking, enclosing)
- Observing people, places, and things from different spatial viewpoints
- Interpreting spatial relations in drawings, pictures, and photographs

**TIME**
- Starting and stopping an action on signal
- Experiencing and describing rates of movement
- Experiencing and comparing time intervals
- Anticipating, remembering, and describing sequences of events


cognitive, social, and physical abilities that are important for all children, instead of focusing on a child's deficits. High/Scope teachers identify where a child is developmentally and then provide a rich range of experiences appropriate for that level. For example, they would encourage a four-year-old who is functioning at a two-year-old level to express his or her plans by pointing, gesturing, and saying single words, and they would immerse the child in a conversational environment that provided many natural opportunities for using and hearing language.16

Many early childhood programs for children with special needs incorporate the High/Scope approach. For example, the Regional Early Childhood Center at Rockburn Elementary School in Elkridge, Maryland, operates a full-day multiple-intense-needs class for children with disabilities and typically developing peers and uses the High/Scope approach. The daily routine includes greeting time, small groups (e.g., art, sensory, preacademics), planning time (i.e., picking a center), work time at the centers, cleanup time, recall (i.e., discussing where they “worked”), snacks, circle time with stories, movement and music, and outside time.17

**FURTHER THOUGHTS**

The High/Scope approach represents one approach to educating young children. Whereas Montessori, Emilia Reggio, and Waldorf are European based in philosophy and context, High/Scope puts into practice the learning-by-doing American philosophy. It builds on Dewey's ideas of active learning and teaching in the context of children's interests. High/Scope is widely used in Head Start and early childhood programs across the United States; High/Scope research has demonstrated that its approach is compatible with Head Start guidelines and performance standards.
There are number of advantages to implementing the High/Scope approach:

- It offers a method for implementing a constructivist-based program that has its roots in Dewey’s philosophy and Piagetian cognitive theory.
- It is widely popular and has been extensively researched and tested.
- There is a vast network of teacher training and support provided by the High/Scope Foundation.
- It is research based and it works.

As a result, the High/Scope approach is viewed by early childhood practitioners as one that implements many of the best practices embraced by the profession.

REGGIO EMILIA

Reggio Emilia, a city in northern Italy, is widely known for its approach to educating young children. Founded by Loris Malaguzzi (1920–1994), Reggio Emilia sponsors programs for children from three months to six years of age. Certain essential beliefs and practices underlie the Reggio Emilia approach. These basic features define the Reggio approach, make it a constructivist program, and enable it to be adapted and implemented in many U.S. early childhood programs. Read the Program in Action about the Reggio Emilia approach to understand its key elements.

BELIEFS ABOUT CHILDREN AND HOW THEY LEARN

Relationships. The Reggio approach focuses on each child and is conducted in relation to the family, other children, the teachers, the environment of the school, the community, and the wider society. Each school is viewed as a system in which all these interconnected relationships are reciprocal, activated, and supported. In other words, as Vygotsky believed, children learn through social interactions. In addition, as Montessori indicated, the environment supports and is important to learning.

When preparing space, teachers offer the possibility for children to be with the teachers and many of the other children, or with just a few of them. Also, children can be alone when they need a little niche to stay by themselves. Teachers are always aware, however, that children learn a great deal in exchanges with their peers, especially when they interact in small groups. Such small groups of two, three, four, or five children provide possibilities for paying attention, listening to each other, developing curiosity and interest, asking questions, and responding. Also, groups provide opportunities for negotiation and ongoing dynamic communication.

Hundred Languages. Malaguzzi wrote a poem about the many languages of children. Here is the way it begins:

The child is made of one hundred.
The child has a hundred languages, a hundred hands, a hundred thoughts.
A hundred ways of thinking, of playing, of speaking.

The hundred languages Malaguzzi was referring to include drawing, building, modeling, sculpturing, discussing, inventing, discovering, and more. Teachers are encouraged to create environments in which children can use all hundred languages to learn.

Time. Reggio Emilia teachers believe that time is not set by a clock and that continuity is not interrupted by the calendar. Children’s own sense of time and their personal rhythms are considered in planning and carrying out activities and projects. The full-day schedule of the documented experience with both colleagues and parents informs the teacher’s choices of similar and different materials that can be introduced to the children.

As educators, we are not passive and objective recorders and analyzers of children’s learning, but rather active participants in this learning. We are partners, along with families, in the children’s research, seeking to make meaning along with them. Our role is to provide a structure that defines the children’s research, supports it as it evolves, and makes it visible to others.

Carlina Rinaldi, executive consultant to Reggio Children, stated that as educators we do not produce learning but rather produce the conditions for learning, rich contexts in which children can realize their potential in dialogue with the environment and with others, children and adults. This statement leads us to wonder:

- How can we encourage the emergence of ideas, small moments during which a child or group of children is engaged in the process of thinking and learning?
- How can we nurture these ideas as they develop into long-term investigations?
- In what ways can the traces of these long-term investigations inform and communicate our understanding of how children learn?

At Boulder Journey School we try to answer these questions, considering the environment an essential element in the learning process. We think that the design of the environment of the school should be thoughtful, based on a strong image of children as active constructors of their own knowledge, responsive to the children and able to evolve in harmony with the children’s learning.

At Boulder Journey School, a private school for young children in Boulder, Colorado, welcomes 250 children ages six weeks to six years of age and their families. As a school community composed of children, educators, and families, we are inspired and encouraged by our study of the municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools in Reggio Emilia, Italy. Since 1995 we have engaged in an ongoing dialogue with educators in Reggio Emilia, as well as with educators around the world who are also inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education. We think that the culture of our school emanates from our values, values that define the philosophy and pedagogy of the school. At Boulder Journey School our values are based on a strong image of children as:

- Curious—From the moment of birth, children are engaged in a search for the meaning of life, seeking to understand the world that surrounds them and the relationships that they form and develop with others in their world.
- Competent—Children pose problems and ask questions, form hypotheses and create theories in an effort to answer their questions and find solutions to their problems.
- Capable—Using a hundred different languages, children are able to construct, deconstruct, re-construct, symbolize, represent, and communicate their understandings of the world.
- Co-constructors of knowledge—Children interact with other children and adults, sharing their unique identities and experiences, learning as individuals while contributing to the learning of the group.

Recognizing and maintaining an image of children who are filled with ideas that can be extended in depth and breadth is critical as we observe, document, and interpret their explorations and investigations. For example, during the experience captured by the photographs of infants and their teacher examining a glass bulb, the teacher observes the children’s use of all their senses: the ways in which they gaze at, touch, and possibly attempt to taste, smell, and listen to the bulb. The teacher documents the experience, combining careful notes with photographs and video. She also notes the ways in which the children interact with one another and with her and how the sharing of ideas contributes to the evolution of the experience. Interpretation of the experiences of the documented evidence with both colleagues and parents informs the teacher’s choices of similar and different materials that can be introduced to the children.
to a school-community project in which families contributed materials to be used in conjunction with various sources of light, both natural and artificial. Families and teachers constructed a school grocery store and café called the Brown Bag, illustrated in the photograph of two boys at the checkout counter. The children visited several local grocery stores and shared their organization and pricing system with managers, leading to subsequent classroom investigations of currency and advertising.

We are also striving to build connections both nationally and internationally with other experiences inspired by the Reggio Emilia philosophy of education. We think of Boulder Journey School as a context in which relationships are created and maintained. It is a context of collegiality and collaboration, a context of creativity and expression, and a context in which the culture of the school, composed of its values, is defined and lived.

The activities and projects, however, do not take place only in the atelier. Smaller spaces called miniateliers are set up in each classroom. In fact, each classroom becomes an active workshop with children involved with a variety of materials and experiences that they have discussed and chosen with teachers and peers. In the view of Reggio educators, the children’s use of many media is not at or a separate part of the curriculum but an inseparable, integral part of the whole cognitive/symbolic expression involved in the process of learning.

**Program Practices**

Cooperation is the powerful mode of working that makes possible the achievement of the goals Reggio educators set for themselves. Teachers work in pairs in each classroom. They see themselves as researchers gathering information about their work with children by means of continual documentation. The strong collegial relationships that are maintained with teachers and staff enable them to engage in collaborative discussion and interpretation of both teachers’ and children’s work.

**Documentation.** Transcriptions of children’s remarks and discussions, photographs of their activity, and representations of their thinking and learning using many media are carefully arranged by the atelierista, along with the other teachers, to document the work and their activity, and representations of their thinking and learning using many media are carefully arranged by the atelierista, along with the other teachers, to document the process of learning. **Documentation** has many functions:

- Making parents aware of children’s experiences and maintaining their involvement
- Allowing teachers to understand children better and to evaluate their own work, thus promoting professional growth
- Facilitating communication and exchange of ideas among educators
- Making children aware that their effort is valued
- Creating an archive that traces the history of the school and the pleasure of learning

**Curriculum and Practices.** The curriculum is not established in advance. Teachers express general goals and make hypotheses about what direction activities and projects might take. On this basis, they make appropriate preparations. Then, after observing children in action, teachers compare, discuss, and interpret together their observations and make choices that they share with the children about what to offer and how to sustain the children in their exploration and learning. In fact, the curriculum emerges in the process of each activity or project and is flexibly adjusted accordingly through this continuous dialogue among teachers and with children.

Projects provide the backbone of the children’s learning experiences. These projects are based on the strong conviction that learning by doing is of great importance and that to discuss in groups and to revisit ideas and experiences is the premier way of gaining better understanding and learning.

Ideas for projects originate in the experiences of children and teachers as they construct knowledge together. Projects can last from a few days to several months. They may start from a chance event, an idea, or a problem posed by one or more children or from an experience initiated directly by teachers. The **Project Approach**, which is so popular in early childhood education today, can trace its roots partially to Reggio Emilia practice. With the Project Approach, an investigation is undertaken by a small group of children within a class, sometimes by a whole class, and occasionally by an individual child. The key feature of a project is that it is a search for answers to questions about a topic worth learning more about, something the children are interested in.

The Voice from the Field “How to Use the Project Approach” on pages 28–29 in a Competency Builder that shows how effectively you can use projects to teach young children traditional academic subjects, such as literacy.

**Providing for Diversity and Disability**

Like the Montessori approach, Reggio places a high value on respect for each child. In a Reggio program everyone has rights—children, teachers, and parents. Children with disabilities have special rights and are routinely included in programs for all children.

The Grant Early Childhood Center in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, is addressing the challenge of inclusion through **Prizing Our National Differences (POND)**, a program based on the Reggio Emilia approach. The POND program includes all children with disabilities as full participants in general education classrooms with their age-appropriate peers. Four core ingredients of the Reggio approach facilitate successful inclusion at Grant Early Childhood Center:

- Encouraging collaborative relationships
- Constructing effective environments
- Developing project-based curriculums
- Documenting learning in multiple ways

**Further Thoughts**

There are a number of things to keep in mind when considering the Reggio Emilia approach. First, its theoretical base rests within constructivism and shares ideas compatible with those of Piaget, Vygotsky and Dewey. Rather, the curriculum emerges or springs from children’s interests and experiences. This approach is, for many, difficult to implement and does not ensure that children will learn basic academic skills valued by contemporary American society. Third, the Reggio Emilia approach is suited to a particular culture and society. How this approach works and flourishes and meets the educational needs of children in an Italian village may not necessarily be appropriate for meeting the needs of contemporary American children.
INTEGRATING LANGUAGE ARTS

Throughout all phases of their project investigation, students have authentic contexts to read, spell, write words, and build their vocabulary. In addition, comparing what they knew with what they have learned from the primary and secondary sources, they develop their analytical thinking and comprehension skills. And they become more fluent readers and writers by using their skills to answer their own questions.

WALDORF EDUCATION: HEAD, HANDS, AND HEART

Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925) was very interested in the spiritual dimension of the education process and developed many ideas for educating children and adults that incorporated it. Emil Molt, director of the Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory in Stuttgart, Germany, was interested in Steiner’s ideas and asked him to give a lecture to the workers regarding the education of their children. Molt was so impressed with Steiner’s ideas that he asked him to establish a school for employees’ children. Steiner accepted the offer, and on September 17, 1919, the Free Waldorf School opened its doors and the Waldorf movement began. Today, Waldorf schools in fifty-five countries. There are over 157 Waldorf schools in North America.

Although Waldorf schools have many distinguishing characteristics, this dedication to teaching the whole child—head, hands, and heart—appeals to many teachers and parents.

Waldorf schools emphasize the teaching of the whole child—head, hands, and heart. This is the way Steiner envisioned such education when he planned his school:

PHASE 1

Exploring previous experiences

• Brainstorm what is already known about a project topic

PHASE 2

Investigating the topic

• Write or dictate stories about memories and experiences
• Label and categorize experiences

PHASE 3

Sharing the project with parents and others

• Make all types of lists (what materials need to be collected, what will be shared with others, who will do which tasks)
• Write questions, predictions, and hypotheses
• Write questions to ask experts
• Write questionnaires and surveys
• Write thank-you letters to experts
• Record findings
• Record data
• Make all types of lists (what materials need to be collected, what will be shared with others, who will do which tasks)
• Write reports or plays that demonstrate new understanding
• Write invitations to a culminating event
• Share stories orally in readers theater

PROVIDING DIRECT INSTRUCTION IN READING AND WRITING

The five reading components articulated in the No Child Left Behind Act—phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension—are taught throughout the students’ day within the context of project investigation and during small-group direct literacy instruction. Direct instruction includes a whole-group meeting during which the teacher reads books aloud (e. g., shared reading) for specific purposes. The teacher may choose to highlight the project topic or specific authors or illustrators or to focus on rhyming words or specific patterns of phonemes.

For more information about Waldorf education, go to the Companion Website at www.prenhall.com/morrison. Select chapter 6, then choose the Linking to Learning module.
PART 3
Programs and Services for Children and Families

Anthroposophy. A philosophy developed by Rudolf Steiner that focuses on the spiritual nature of humanity and the universe.

Eurythmy. Steiner’s art of movement, which makes speech and music visible through action and gesture.

BASIC PRINCIPLES
Waldorf education, like the other programs we have discussed, operates on a number of essential principles (see Table 6.1).

Anthroposophy. Anthroposophy, the name Steiner gave to “the study of the wisdom of man,” is a basic principle of Waldorf education.

Anthroposophy, according to Steiner, is derived from the Greek: anthros “man” and sophia “wisdom.” Anthroposophy, Steiner claimed, offered a step-by-step guide for spiritual research. Anthroposophical thinking, according to Steiner, could permit one to gain a “new” understanding of the human being—body and spirit.24

Anthroposophy is a personal path of inner spiritual work that is embraced by Waldorf teachers; it is not tied to any particular religious tradition. The teacher, through devotion to truth and knowledge, awakens the student’s reverence for beauty and truth. Steiner believed that each person is capable of tapping the spiritual dimension, which then provides opportunities for higher and more meaningful learning.

Respect for Development. Waldorf education is based squarely on respect for children’s processes of development and their developmental stages. Individual children’s development determines how and when Waldorf teachers introduce curriculum topics. Respecting children’s development and the ways they learn is an essential foundation of all early childhood programs.

Eurythmy. Eurythmy is Steiner’s art of movement, which makes speech and music visible through action and gesture and enables children to develop a sense of harmony and balance. Thus, as they learn reading, they are also becoming the letters through physical gestures. According to Steiner, every sound—speech or music—can be interpreted through gesture and body movement, for example, in learning the letter o, children form the letter with their arms while saying the sound for o. In the main-lesson books that are the children’s textbooks, crayoned pictures of mountains and trees metamorphose into letters M and T, and form drawings of circles and polygons that become the precursor to curving writing. Mental imagery for geometrical designs supports the fine-motor skills of young children.25

Rhythm is an important component of all these activities. Rhythm (i.e., order of pattern in time) permeates the entire school day as well as the school year, which unfolds around celebrating festivals drawn from different religions and cultures.26

Nurturing Imagination. Folk and fairy tales, fables, and legends are integrated throughout the Waldorf curriculum. These enable children to explore the traditions of many cultures, thus supporting a multicultural approach to education. They also enrich the imaginative life of the young child and promote free thinking and creativity.

CURRICULUM FEATURES
Common features of the Waldorf curriculum include these:

• The use of eurythmy in learning
• The inclusion of other arts, as well as handwork
• The sequential linkage between subjects, corresponding to the student’s maturity from year to year27

The Waldorf curriculum unfolds in main-lesson blocks of three or four weeks. The students create their own texts, or main-lesson books, for each subject. This enables them to delve deeply into their study.28

The accompanying Program in Action introduces the Austin Waldorf School and enables you to experience Waldorf education in action.

PROVIDING FOR DIVERSITY AND DISABILITY
Providing for and being sensitive to diversity is an important aspect of Waldorf education. From first grade the curriculum for all students includes the study of two foreign languages. In addition, the curriculum integrates the study of religions and cultures. As a result, children learn respect for people of all races and cultures.

Waldorf schools can also experience a certain level of success with children who have been diagnosed with disabilities such as dyslexia. Because Waldorf teachers to all of the senses, there is usually a modality that a child can use to successfully learn curriculum material.

Some Waldorf schools are devoted entirely to the education of children with special needs. For example, Summer School in Collans, California, offers a variety of programs designed to meet the special needs of students aged six to seventeen years who are unable to participate in regular classroom activities. Teachers, physicians, and therapists work closely with parents to create and implement individualized lesson plans.29

FURTHER THOUGHTS
Certainly Waldorf education has much that is appealing, its emphasis on providing education for the whole child, the integration of the arts into the curriculum, the unhurried approach to education and schooling, and the emphasis on learning by doing.

On the other hand, Waldorf education, like the Montessori approach, seems better suited to private, tuition-based education and has not been widely adopted into the public schools.

Several reasons could account for this limited adoption. First, public schools, especially in the context of contemporary schooling, are much more focused on academic achievement and accountability. Second, Waldorf education may not be philosophically aligned with mainstream public education. Waldorf’s emphasis on the spiritual aspect of each child may be a barrier to widespread public school adoption. Identification of a student’s spiritual self has provoked criticism of Waldorf education, as well as humanistic education and other approaches to holistic practices.

In addition, there are a number of other features of Waldorf education that some critics object to. These include delaying reading to read, not using computers and other technology in the classroom until high school, and discouraging television viewing and the playing of video games.

Although some see Waldorf as too elitist, the schools remain a popular choice for parents who want this type of education for their children. The intimate learning atmosphere of small classes, the range of academic subjects, and the variety of activities can be very attractive.
The Austin Waldorf School

Fundamental to Waldorf education is the recognition that each human being is a unique individual who passes through distinct life stages, and it is the responsibility of education to address the physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual needs of each developmental stage.

Basic Values
At Austin Waldorf School in Austin, Texas, our guiding values are these:

- A lifelong love of learning
- Creative thinking and self-confidence
- A sympathetic interest in the world and the lives of others
- An abiding sense of moral purpose

Teachers create a school environment that balances academic, artistic, and practical disciplines, as well as providing daily opportunities for both group and individual learning. We develop these qualities in our students.

The Artistic
Learning in a Waldorf school is an imaginative, enlivening, and creative process. The artistic elements are the common thread in every subject; teachers integrate art, music, drama, storytelling, poetry, and crafts into the curriculum. Thus, students learn with more than their heads; they learn with their heads, hearts, and hands. For example, in first grade the Waldorf student learns to knit. This experience and observation of plants, insects, and animals. Science studies include nature walks, gardening, circle themes, water play, and direct experience and observation of plants, insects, and animals.

Artistic activities and movement abound in the kindergarten. Children participate on a weekly basis in watercolor painting, coloring, beeswax modeling, finger knitting, sewing, and seasonal crafts. Movement activities include eurythmy, rhythmic circle games, jumping rope, swinging, hopping, running, skipping, balancing, climbing, and participating in household tasks. Tasks such as sweeping, hand-washing the cloth napkins used at snack time and then hanging them on a line to dry, caring for the plants and the play area, all instill in the children a sense of reverence and respect for the space in which they spend their time.

The School Day
The day begins with the class teacher greeting every child at the door of the classroom with “Good morning” and a handshake. This allows a human connection to be made between the teacher and the students. The class work begins with the main lesson, a two-hour period devoted to the study of a particular academic discipline. The main lesson is taught in blocks lasting from three to four weeks, allowing the children and the teacher to delve deeply into a subject and then digest the content of the lesson. This approach allows for a concentrated, in-depth study while recognizing students’ need for variety and time to integrate and comprehend subject matter.

The curriculum, which to the young child is play, develops individuals who can think for themselves, be creative in their endeavors, understand the importance of seeing a task to completion, and authentically experience the joy of discovery and learning.

Early Grades
In a Waldorf school, ideally, the teacher who greets a student on the first day of grade one will be the main-lesson class teacher through grade eight. The bond that is created between students and their teachers is extraordinary. A teacher grows with the children and knows the individual strengths and challenges of each child.

Between the ages of seven and fourteen, teachers meet students’ specific developmental needs. These are addressed in a structured, socially cooperative, and noncompetitive environment. The curriculum includes comprehensive language arts, math, science, and social studies, classes in German and Spanish, vocal and instrumental music, speech and drama, eurythmy, painting, drawing, modeling, handwork, and woodworking. The school provides a physical education program, which in the middle school expands into competitive team sports.

The Waldorf curriculum is the same in Texas, California, England, and Israel. The differences lie in the freedom of the teachers to bring the curriculum to life through their individuality, human experiences, and teaching style.

Program in Action

Contributed by Kim Frankel, enrollment director, Austin Waldorf School, Austin, Texas. Photos by Kim Frankel.

EARLY GRADES

Language Arts
Teachers create a rich language environment that draws students forward to mastery of reading and writing. Teachers preserve the vitality of language through the recitation of playful verses and the masterful poetry. Writing down well-loved stories addresses students’ needs to be active in the learning process. Reading follows naturally when the content is already intimately connected to the students. In this way learning is less stressful, and all levels of literacy are addressed. Teachers present literature through the art of oral tradition in lively, engaging, and human presentations.

Movement and Math
Movement and math go hand in hand as students step and clap rhythmically through the times tables. Numbers likewise begin with the children’s immediate experiences and are made concrete by counting shells or stones kept in a special handmade pouch. A tactile relationship to numbers and counting gives the lesson a sensible meaning, which provides children with a foundation for following more complex mathematical processes. Knitting and flute playing develop dexterity in hand and hand. Exposure to the contrasting sounds of German and Spanish develops inner flexibility, setting the stage for later interest in and appreciation of other cultures and peoples.

Central to Waldorf education is the recognition of the individual human being. Every student:

- participates in every subject and every activity
- fully experiences all of his or her potential
- possesses the ability to move through the world with confidence, direction, and purpose
When I asked my class if anyone had seen the hall that was on my desk and my students said, “A bilingual took it,” I knew we had a problem. My third graders were prejudiced against a group of Spanish-speaking children whom they didn’t know and had very little contact with. Here are some tips for teaching respect and tolerance that I used to bring the groups together.

1. Start a conversation
Ask an open-ended question. For instance, I asked my third graders, “What does bilingual mean?” Most kids had no idea. Some thought it meant “from Mexico” or “not too smart.” The first place to start was using our language arts to teaching tolerance, go to the Companion Website at www.prenhall.com/morrison, select chapter 6, then choose the Diversity Tie-In module.

2. Focus on what kids value
Would you like someone just because you were told to? Kids must earn their peers’ respect. So think about what kids value. Kids who can play sports or instruments well gain instant respect. Therefore, take every opportunity to showcase students’ talents. Have schoolwide talent shows, poetry readings, events at recess, or impromptu moments if the kids are willing. For instance, one student said she played “America the Beautiful,” a song that we were discussing in social studies. When the music room was free, we listened to her. Another student who dances in salsa style brought in a tape and showed us some moves.

3. Use history and current events
Will Smith, Michael Jordan, and Jennifer Lopez make people forget race and color. Find historical and current people who are part of an ethnic group to stand as “cool” models. A well-liked student from the targeted group can help bridge a gap between groups. For instance, my students were pleasantly surprised when a popular kid in our class realized and announced, “I’m bilingual!”

4. Put everyone in the same shoes
If differences are languages, teach a class or hand out papers in another language. If the differences are cultural, give a quiz on a cultural event from the minority group’s culture. Discuss with your students how it feels to be confused by language and culture.

5. Focus on the same
Use the curriculum to give kids opportunities to discuss universal kid problems that illustrate how alike we are. For instance, in social studies discuss parental rules or annoying siblings. Use math to talk about allowances and bedtimes.

6. Be a scout
Constantly be on the lookout for special talents and knowledge from your students. Students might not realize that making tamales or tuning pianos is unique. Use the curriculum to ask questions: Has anyone visited Puerto Rico? Does anyone speak two languages or three? Does anyone go to school on Saturdays? You and your students will be amazed at how interesting your class is.

One caution: When students see an individual getting accolades, they might attempt to do or say something to also get attention. To avoid this, discuss with the class that there are two ways to get noticed. One is to do bad things. The class will laugh when you remind them that everyone looks at the toddler who screams at a restaurant. Doing something exceptional or unique is another way. When their funny comments die down, they will agree that the second way is the best.

The best way for any two people to get along is to spend time together and build respect and trust naturally. Therefore, students interacting all day long in little ways will slowly learn to tolerate and appreciate differences. You might even be rewarded by seeing lasting friendships forged.

Contributed by Rebecca Leo, teacher, Enders-Salk Elementary, Schaumburg, Illinois.

**COMPETENCY BUILDER**

**LINKING TO LEARNING**

**American Montessori Society**
http://www.amstic.org
Serves as a national center for Montessori information, both for its members and for the general public—answering inquiries and facilitating research wherever possible.

**Association Montessori International**
http://www.aminet.org
Founded in 1929 by Dr Maria Montessori to maintain the integrity of her work and to ensure that it would be perpetuated after her death.

**ERIC Reggio Emilia Page**
http://ceep.ccr.unc.edu/poptopics/reggio.html
Contains information and resources related to the approach to early childhood education developed in the preschools of Reggio Emilia, Italy.

**International Montessori Society**
http://www.montessori.org
Founded to support the effective application of Montessori principles throughout the world, provides a range of programs and services relating to the fundamental principles of (a) observation, (b) individual liberty, and (c) preparation of the environment.
ACTIVITIES FOR FURTHER ENRICHMENT

ETHICAL DILEMMA: “SHOULD I BECOME A BOARD MEMBER?”

City and Country Day School is a private, not-for-profit preschool in your community. City and Country operates in run-down facilities, serves only low-income children, and has a long waiting list. City and Country has a reputation of not using its resources wisely, and children entering kindergarten from City and Country generally do not do well. When board members suggest changes, the director becomes defensive and says, “If you can get someone else to run this place for what you pay me, hire him!”

Over the last several months several board members have resigned. One of your friends has shared with you that she was invited to serve on the board, but she responded, “Forgot it—I have resigned. One of your friends has shared with you that he was invited to serve on the board, but he responded, “I have resigned.”

What do you do—accept the invitation to be a board member in the hope that you can make a difference and help the children, or do you conclude from what you have heard about City and Country that it is beyond help?

APPLICATIONS

1. Which of the programs in this chapter do you think best meets the needs of young children? Would you implement one of them in your program? Why?
2. Write three or four paragraphs describing how you think the programs discussed in this chapter have influenced early childhood educational practice.
4. Interview a Montessori school director to learn how to go about opening a Montessori school. Determine what basic materials are needed and their cost, then tell how your particular location would determine how you would market the program.

FIELD EXPERIENCES

1. Visit various early childhood programs, including center and home programs, and discuss similarities and differences in class. Which of the programs incorporate practices from programs discussed in this chapter?
2. Compare Montessori materials with those in other kindergartens and preschool programs. Is it possible for teachers to make Montessori materials? What advantages or disadvantages would there be in making and using these materials?

READINGS FOR FURTHER ENRICHMENT


Describes real-life classrooms, including details on the flow of the day, parent participation, teacher collaboration, the importance of the environment, documenting students’ work, and assessment. Features many illustrations of children’s work as well as photos of Reggio-inspired classroom interiors and art materials.


Provides information on planning programs with a play-based, developmental curriculum for children from birth to five years of age. Covers basic principles and current research in early childhood education.


More than a presentation of the Reggio Emilia philosophy, also gives a progress report of the steps American and Canadian teachers have taken in the last six years toward teaching the Reggio Emilia way.


The official manual for High/Scope curriculum, outlines how to set up a High/Scope classroom, from setting up the learning environment to guiding adult interactions.


Focuses on models, approaches, and issues that deal with promising and tested practices in early childhood education. Includes chapters on the family-center model, the Emergent approach, behavioral analysis, Montessori education, and constructivism.


Contains in-depth reviews of products, information on where to buy supplies for integrated lesson planning, recommended computer software, reviews and recommendations of foreign language products.


A good resource that provides an informative description of how Dewey translated his progressive education ideas into the real world of enabling children to engage themselves in the process of learning.

ENDNOTES

6. Ibid.
7. Maria Montessori, Dr. Montessori’s Own Handbook (New York: Schocken, 1963), 133.
9. Ibid., 46.
11. Montessori, Dr. Montessori’s Own Handbook, 131.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., 3.
26. Ibid.