

Early Education Curriculum

A Child's Connection to the World

SECOND EDITION



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Early Education Curriculum

A Child's Connection to the World

SECOND EDITION

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Dallas County Community College District



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Preface

Many changes are taking place as we enter the twenty-first century—new research, rapidly advancing technology, changing family relationships, and violence in our communities. All this affects the families we serve. Nevertheless, the focus of early childhood educators remains the same: *the children*. We should listen to the children and concentrate our efforts on their needs, abilities, interests, and cultural diversity as we plan our curriculum.

In this second edition, interconnecting philosophies are emphasized. The first advocates that curriculum is *child-centered and child-directed*, that it is sensitive to, and supportive of, the development of young children, individually and in a group, emphasizing acceptance of all children. This includes acceptance of diversity, individual differences, and special needs. The second focus is *process*. The text suggests leading adult students through the same process as the children. This encourages experimentation, self-control, and the building of a positive self-image (“I can do it myself!”). The third philosophy recognizes the importance of *cultural context* in the development and learning of young children. Growing up as members of families and communities, children come to us with rich backgrounds of cultural experiences. The fourth belief advocates developing a learning environment that invites *creativity*. This provides opportunities for unevaluated discovery and activity, while promoting acceptance and respect for one another’s creations. The fifth concept involves reciprocal *relationships between teachers and families*. Positive communication between home and school is crucial to providing a consistent and beneficial experience for young children. Each of these philosophies allows children to make choices and is nourished by play.

All chapters of the text are separate and complete, while at the same time connecting to other chapters to form curriculum as a whole for children from infancy to age eight. This allows each instructor to use the chapters in any sequence. This approach is helpful in meeting the individual needs of the teacher, the student, and ultimately the children.

This book is designed for a beginning student as well as an experienced teacher looking for fresh ideas or insights. It can be used by those in early education curriculum courses, in mini/fast-track courses, and in workshop/seminar courses for continuing education of teachers. It is also applicable for students working toward the Child Development Associate credential.

The text is divided into two parts. Part One, *Creating the Environment that Supports Curriculum and Connects Children*, presents the elements of the foundation of early education curriculum. Chapter 1, *Starting the Process*, presents strategies for organizing instruction, with emphasis on developmentally, individually, culturally, and creatively appropriate practices; the importance of play in the lives of children; the planning process; ways to include diverse ages, groupings, and individual differences; and communication with parents. Chapter 2, *Creating Curriculum*, offers examples of curriculum models and programs; explains the process of curriculum development, including multicultural, anti-bias, and special needs considerations, space arrangement of indoor and outdoor environments, determining concepts and skills, themes, specific lesson and activity plans, and a plan of assessment and evaluation based on different ages and individual differences. Both chapters end with an afterview, key terms, exploration activities, references, and additional readings and resources.

Part Two, Discovering and Expanding the Early Education Curriculum, explores each curriculum area in depth, taking into consideration the individual child, group of children, process of setting up appropriate environments, special subject content, and integration of all curricula. Each chapter presents developmentally appropriate activities for each age group and encourages self-esteem and creativity development. The content chapters offer guidance tips for teachers, multicultural/anti-bias activities, an afterview, key terms, exploration assignments, references, and additional readings and resources.

- Chapter 3 Language and Literacy
- Chapter 4 Literature
- Chapter 5 Puppets
- Chapter 6 Dramatic Play and Creative Dramatics
- Chapter 7 Art
- Chapter 8 Sensory Centers
- Chapter 9 Music and Movement
- Chapter 10 Math
- Chapter 11 Science
- Chapter 12 Social Studies

Examples of early education room arrangements and lesson plans are included in Chapter 2. Flannelboard characters, puppet patterns, lesson plan worksheets, and additional resources for teachers are included in the appendices. Key terms have been highlighted in the text and are defined in the glossary.

The *Instructor's Manual and Test Bank* to accompany *Early Education Curriculum: A Child's Connection to the World* includes guidelines for student observation of, and participation with, children, chapter summaries and competencies, topics for class discussions, student activity worksheets for each chapter, and chapter tests.

NEW FEATURES OF THE SECOND EDITION

This edition has been updated and revised to include:

- Current practices, trends, and approaches used by early childhood educators.
- Recommendations and position statements of professional organizations, such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), International Reading Association (IRA), and the Music Educators National Conference (MENC).
- A full color insert reflecting guidance techniques to support a developmentally appropriate classroom community, infancy to age eight.
- Special needs considerations and accommodations in early childhood settings.
- Additional references, readings, resources, and Internet Web sites. *Internet Disclaimer:* The author and Delmar make every effort to ensure that all Internet resources are accurate at the time of printing. However, due to the fluid, time-sensitive nature of the Internet, Delmar cannot guarantee that all URLs and Web site addresses will remain current for the duration of this edition.
- Examples of curriculum models and programs.
- Expanded children's literature selections, including books to nurture inclusion.
- An in-depth interview with *Sesame Street's* "Rosita."

This text is designed to provide additional assistance as you continue to make a difference in the lives of young children, their families, and the early childhood profession.

Dedication

*This book is lovingly dedicated to the men in my life: my husband, PHIL,
and my two sons, STEPHEN and LARRY*

*. . . and to my nephew, JARED, who keeps me connected to
the ever-changing world of children.*

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Special recognition must go to my son, **Laurent Linn**, for his wondrous illustrations that show his love and understanding of children and that give depth and meaning to what I have tried to communicate in words.

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Hilda Jackman has been working with children and families for over forty years. Through her involvement in children's theatre and children's television, as an early childhood teacher and administrator, and as coordinator-professor of Brookhaven College's child development-early childhood program, she has maintained her commitment to the field of early childhood. Since retiring from college teaching, Hilda continues to present workshops and staff development seminars, consult, and stay active in NAEYC, Texas AEYC, and other professional organizations.

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To the Student

Welcome to the world of early education. I am glad you are here. Our profession needs caring, committed individuals to encourage and support children through their early years.

Each of you has a different reason for wanting to be in an early childhood classroom. Some of you are just beginning. Others are experienced teachers. No matter what type of program or what age group you work with, it is important that you understand the development of young children, help them connect with the changing world of their families, and promote developmentally appropriate practices in early education environments and curriculum.

This text is designed to be a practical guide to help you develop a curriculum appropriate for young children. Terminology is often a problem when discussing early education. Throughout this text, the terms are those used by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and most early childhood professionals. Early education, early childhood education, and early childhood *all* refer to the child from birth to age eight and the programs designed especially for these children.

Your experiences with young children are most important to your academic and professional development. I encourage you to use this curriculum text to stimulate your own creativity and knowledge of children. Mix and match, add to, and redesign the ideas and activities presented. Take the time to enjoy the uniqueness of each individual child, as well as the group of children, as they explore and interact with the curriculum.

It is also important to remember that professional ethics and confidentiality are concerns that are inseparable from all observation and participation activities. It is crucial that you deal with each child and/or adult without prejudice or partiality and refrain from imposing your own views or values upon children or adults.

I hope this text will prove helpful to you as you strive to make a difference in the lives of young children and their families. We are all in this profession together, and, like the children, we too are growing and developing.