

# Early Childhood Education

*Building a Philosophy for Teaching*



C. Stephen White  
Mick Coleman

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## *Building a Philosophy for Teaching*

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# Preface

Early childhood teachers in the 21st century face unique educational, family, and societal challenges. Changes in educational policies and practices are leading to new ideas about how to organize and deliver educational programs. We think it is important to help student teachers develop a sense of professional identity and confidence in their ability to respond to the educational needs of young children in contemporary society. It is equally important that teachers recognize the diversity of childhood life experiences represented within their classrooms. It is for these reasons that we take an ecological perspective in this textbook to address the different contexts that influence the care and education of children from birth through age 8:

- **Childhood development.** We examine the physical, cognitive, language, and social-emotional development of children from birth to age 8 in relationship to both theory and research. Likewise, the implications of developmental trends are addressed in regard to family influences and educational practices.
- **Historical precedents.** It is important that students develop a sense of professional continuity with past, current, and emerging educational practices. Subsequently, we review the historical precedents of early childhood education to place current educational issues within a historical perspective.
- **Classroom organization.** We address the design elements associated with organizing child-centered learning centers for both classroom and playground settings. Again, readers are guided through activities in which they apply organizational principles presented in the textbook.
- **Curriculum integration.** Finally, we emphasize how an early childhood curriculum can be integrated across subject-matter content and incorporate families, developmental theories, and issues of diversity. We thus consider the chapter on curriculum integration as a capstone to current trends that challenge teachers to integrate information from various contexts in their planning and facilitation of early childhood educational practices.

## TEXTBOOK FEATURES

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The features of this textbook are designed to assist readers in achieving these goals:

- In each chapter, students are asked to reflect upon key ideas as a means of developing one theme associated with their philosophy of teaching. Students are asked to save their philosophy of teaching. Students are also asked to save their reflective exercises. These are discussed as a whole in the final chapter when students finalize and defend their personal philosophy of teaching.
- Issues of diversity are integrated into discussions of history, childhood development, assessment, classroom organization, behavior management, and curriculum models. The integration of diversity across chapters allows students to better understand and appreciate the diverse abilities and life experiences of young children.
- **Educational policies.** We discuss a range of educational policies and their influence on educational practices. Students are encouraged to consider how these emerging policies might impact their professional lives.
- **Family-school relations.** Chapters on family development and family-school relations provide students with theoretical guides for understanding family lives, communicating with families, and involving families in planning and implementing early childhood educational practices.
- **Assessment.** Readers are encouraged to consider multiple assessment approaches when assessing children's development and educational gains. Subsequently, various assessment strategies are summarized.
- **Behavior management.** The guidance of children's behavior in group settings can be controversial. We therefore examine multiple perspectives of behavior management to provide readers with insight into the various views held on this topic by professionals and families.
- **Curriculum models.** We also review multiple early childhood curriculum models and their relevance to addressing families and issues of diversity. Readers are encouraged to consider how various curriculum models relate to their own philosophy of early childhood education.

### Pedagogical Elements

- Chapter-opening questions help students define essential developmental and educational concepts.
- Case studies allow students to see the personal side of children's family and school lives. The case studies also encourage students to examine their personal reactions to complex situations.

- “Checklists” and “Tips for Teachers” provide quick summaries of factors to consider when assessing or implementing educational practices.
- Figures and tables clarify and extend the key ideas presented in the textbook.
- Boxes provide further examples of how research and theory influence teaching practices in early childhood classrooms.
- End-of-chapter activities encourage students to apply, investigate, or discuss contemporary educational issues.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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**To take advantage of these resources**, please visit the *Early Childhood Education: Building a Philosophy for Teaching* Companion Website at [www.prenhall.com/white](http://www.prenhall.com/white)





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This introductory book considers early childhood issues within the context of society, family, and classroom approaches that influence the care and education of children from birth through age eight to help teachers build their teaching philosophy. Contains detailed cases, teaching checklists, tips for teachers, and philosophy building activities in every chapter. Provides four chapters on child development. Presents chapters on family development and family-school relations. For Education and School Administrators in Early Childhood Education.