

FIFTH EDITION

FOUNDATIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

TEACHING CHILDREN IN A DIVERSE SETTING



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Preface

Early care and education are of concern to everyone who wants to live in an economically sound democracy. Although the early years have traditionally been the domain of early childhood professionals and parents, the rest of the society is beginning now to pay attention to what research has been telling us for a long time—"The first years last forever," as the slogan goes. Two examples show that early childhood is no longer the focus of only early educators, child care professionals, and the families they serve. President Obama before and after his election continually made the point that early childhood education is a vital factor in our society and deserves strong government support. The second example is a 2007 book by David L. Kirp called *The Sandbox Investment*. Kirp is a professor of public policy at the University of California, Berkeley. Early care and education aren't just about preparing individuals for success in life, but also about giving them the kind of experiences that make them productive citizens of a democratic society.

In *quality* early care and education programs, children not only gain the foundations they need for school success and beyond, but they also learn to interact in cooperative ways with others, the basis for gaining a sense of community. Rugged individualism was badly needed in the frontier days of the United States, but today we face huge challenges in creating unity through diversity and keeping the economy healthy. A good beginning in a *high quality* early care and education program can lead to both social and economic benefits and is a great investment for the society to make. It's the kind of investment that will grow from generation to generation. Individuals reap the benefits of this investment and so does society.

This textbook is designed to help increase the quality in early care and education programs through training teachers. It features skill building with a solid theoretical base. Many students taking early childhood classes are already working with young children—in practicum placements, as volunteers or staff in centers or as family child care providers. This book addresses their needs as well as those of beginning students who have no hands-on experience.

A goal is to provide students with an overview of what goes on in early childhood programs through the use of examples, anecdotes, and scenarios. Some students may have opportunities to see master teachers at work, but others won't. To address this reality, the text finds ways to transport readers to early childhood classrooms and family child care homes so they can "watch" how effective educators facilitate the teaching–learning process. These examples are designed to help readers put themselves in the educator's shoes, examine their own reactions, and anticipate how they might handle similar experiences.

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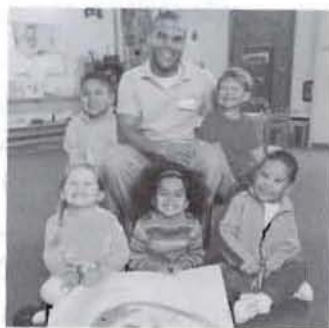
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