



## ANNOTED BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICES FOR EARLY LEARNERS

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### **365 Ways to a Smarter Preschooler**

Marilee Robin Burton and Susan MacDonald  
Publications International

From Goodreads: Developed by experts in early education, 365 Ways to a Smarter Preschooler has hundreds of activities that will ignite the sparks of curiosity and give your child a head start in school.

From the teachers: "Teaches children to create, reflect, think, express, observe, listen, and relate."

The teachers with whom I spoke have been using this for about ten years.

### **Block Play**

Sharon MacDonald  
Gryphon House

From Amazon: Create craft-board trees, railroad tracks and skyscrapers, and watch children experience the joy of learning through blocks! Clear descriptions of what children learn by playing with blocks accompany the activities. Each activity considers the ability and interest level of the children, and encourages developmental skills such as problem-solving, math, science, language, and social skills. Block Play is a must-have for every teacher.

From the teachers: "This book is really informative about the important role that teachers play in using block centers as a way of helping children make connections to new learning, how to set up an effective block center, why blocks are so important for young children, and how blocks are vehicles for assessment."

The teachers with whom I spoke have been using this book for several years.

### **Building a High Scope Program**

Tricia Kruse

High Scope Press

Alverno Early Learning Center is a High Scope program and they use High Scope materials for professional development. There are many important developmentally appropriate practices within High Scope, even for programs that do not follow the model.

From the teachers: "An overview of High Scope classrooms for full-day programs."

### **Conscious Discipline by Dr. Becky Bailey**

**Published by Loving Guidance, Inc.**

[www.ConsciousDiscipline.com](http://www.ConsciousDiscipline.com)

This is a comprehensive social and emotional classroom management program that develops the emotional intelligence of a teacher first and children second. It begins with the 7 basic skills for brain smart classrooms and continues to provide the strategies necessary to build this classroom with a book called Creating the School Family.

I began my journey using Conscious Discipline over 15 years ago and have seen the benefits of it in my personal and professional relationships. Understanding how to respond positively to the world around me has helped shift the focus in a classroom from fear to intrinsic motivation, helpfulness and connection. Once I could self regulate and approach each situation as a learning opportunity the children began to develop the skills they needed to navigate their own emotions.

This learning is brought to life for the youngest of our students through the use of a puppet named Shubert and his friends at Bug Valley School. This is done using a series of books, songs and visuals that are highly engaging and fun yet, building problem solving skills. An added bonus is a parent component available in both English and Spanish. This program is user friendly and designed to show teachers that there is a great way to build a faith community using a classroom family approach.

### **Creating Child-Centered Classrooms: 3-5 Year Olds**

Roxane K. Kaufmann, Kate Burke Walsh

Children's Resources International, Inc.

From Amazon: Creating Child-Centered Programs: 3-5 Year Olds helps teachers create active learning environments for preschool-age children, individualize teaching, and involve families in the program. Teachers learn observation techniques to teach to the strengths, interests, and needs of each child.

From the teachers: “Includes goals and developmental guidelines, characteristics of age groups that are very helpful, focuses on building community, planning an integrated curriculum, and child-centered learning.”

The teachers with whom I spoke have been using this book and this approach for two years.

### **Creative Resources for the Early Childhood Classroom**

Judy Herr and Yvonne Libby

Delmar Publishers

From Amazon: Early childhood educators around the world use this best seller to plan daily curriculum and classroom activities. The book contains 76 different themes ranging from Ants to Zoo Animals, presented in alphabetical order. Content for each theme includes the following sections: Curriculum Flowchart, Theme Goals, Concepts for Children to Learn, Vocabulary, Bulletin Board Ideas, Sample Parent Letter, Arts and Crafts, Cooking, Dramatic Play, Field Trips, Fingerplays/Chants, Group Time, Science, Math, Sensory, Large Motor, Fine Motor, Social Studies, Books, Recordings and Song Titles, and Technology/Multimedia Resources. The updated book sections for each theme include hundreds of new children's literature references with a special emphasis on multicultural selections. In addition, the new Sixth Edition includes a brand new four-color insert on Using the Digital Camera in the Early Childhood Classroom. The text is accompanied by a companion website that contains important assessment tools, lesson plan forms, rainy day activities, developmental checklists, classroom artifacts, and much more. From the teachers: “57 themes that include goals, concepts, vocabulary, addressing all developmental domains”

The teachers with whom I spoke have been using this for about five years.

### **Developmentally Appropriate Practice, Copple & Bredekamp, eds, 3d Edition, NAEYC (ISBN: 978-1-928896-64-7)**

*Developmentally Appropriate Practice* is a landmark book, recognized by countless experts in the field of early childhood education and used in ECE programs throughout the US. It establishes clear standards for what good teaching should be, based on what we now know about young children. The book is based on extensive research and over one hundred years of teaching practice. The user-friendly format of the main section, done in columns, compares specific examples of appropriate to inappropriate practice, is quickly accessible.

In broad terms DAP refers to teaching that is a combination of age appropriate, individually appropriate and culturally appropriate. It rests on the idea that teaching has two key elements. It is intentional—teachers use DAP to deliberately consider everything they do, including interactions, the environment, the schedule, etc. It is reflective—practice is continuously evaluated, including self-evaluating—for whether it meets or does not meet the standards of DAP.

EC teachers need to be aware of what this book says and should be using it as a basis to review their own practice to see how it stacks up. It's not that every teacher has to agree with everything this book says—there's always room for robust discussion—but because the case it makes is so thoroughly argued and cited (in its exposition sections) and so clearly laid out in the column section, it can't be easily dismissed. In this way *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* continues to challenge teachers to engage in best practice.

### **The Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO)**

The Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO) is used to identify the practices and environmental supports that can nurture children's early literacy and language development in early childhood classroom. The assessment looks at five critical areas: classroom structure, curriculum, language environment, books and book reading, and print and early writing. The assessment criterion meets the NAEYC and IRA recommendations for preschool environments. It was designed as an evaluative measure, however, it can be used as an self-assessment. The information gives teachers ways to strengthen their quality of their practice. The ELLCO has a PreK-K assessment and a K-3 assessment. The full assessment takes approximately 1 ½ hours and is available through Brooks Publishing.

### **Focused Observations**

Gaye Gronlund and Marlyn James  
Redleaf Press

From Amazon: Intentional teaching begins with focused observations and systematic documentation of children's learning and development. This book explains why observation is one of the best methods to get to know each child well, track progress, and plan individualized curriculum. It also provides tools and techniques to help you strengthen your observations, create portfolios with rich documentation, and support each child. You will also learn how to share your findings with families and grow as an observer through review and reflection activities.

Learn answers to common questions about observation, including:

Why should I use observation in my classroom?

What does effective observation and documentation look like?

How do I fit observation in so that it doesn't take away from teaching and interacting with children?

How do observation and documentation work with early learning guidelines?

An interactive CD-ROM with nineteen vignettes of children in action provide opportunities to practice observing children and capturing what you see.

From the teachers: "We like this book for three reasons. It describes how to observe for assessment, for curriculum planning, and how to continue to become more skilled at observing children. The forms are helpful, as are the professional resources from NAEYC in the appendix." The teachers with whom I spoke have been using the prior edition for a few years. I included this edition because it comes with the CD.

### **Guiding Young Children: A Child-Centered Approach**

Eleanor Reynolds

Mayfield Publishing Company

From Amazon: Drawing on the author's 25 years in early childhood education, *Guiding Young Children: A Problem-Solving Approach* introduces future childcare providers and preschool teachers to a child-centered philosophy of education and care. The problem-solving approach encourages "kids to do what kids do" as they learn to take responsibility for their words and actions. Through real-life examples, sample dialogues, and numerous photographs and posters, the problem-solving approach is explained, stressing environment first, then progressing to listening skills, negotiating, conflict resolution, and setting limits.

From the teachers: "Input about how to set up a problem-solving environment, listening for feelings, problem-solving for problem behavior, and child-centered approaches to curriculum." The teachers with whom I spoke have been using this book and this approach for many years.

**Handwriting Without Tears** published by Handwriting Without Tears

[www.hwtears.com](http://www.hwtears.com)

This is a multisensory, developmentally appropriate way to teach handwriting to young children in about 15 minutes a day. A strong foundation of skills are developed using hands-on teaching strategies. By using a puppet, manipulatives, music and movement, each child's learning style can be addressed. A Language & Literacy and Math curriculum have been added to the HWT's educational offerings for young children. I have been using Handwriting Without Tears for over 10 years and have seen the long term benefits of providing a systematic, hands-on approach to handwriting. The actual teaching of handwriting carries through to the upper elementary classes and transitions to cursive. Each school can decide if exposure to and the learning of cursive is appropriate for them. Through the years I have heard many comments about the positive difference the upper elementary teachers have seen in the legibility and fluency of the students. Since a great deal of time is spent writing each day, giving the students an efficient way to do this just seems to make sense.

## **The Intentional Teacher**

Choosing the Best Strategies for Young Children's Learning

Ann S. Epstein (NAEYC)

This resource was written specifically for the NAEYC. First and foremost, it defines for the reader what it means to be **intentional**. It guides teachers to balance the learning experiences of young children between adult-guided and child-guided by building on the children's interests as well as what they will need to be successful in school and the world. This book is rooted in research and theory and supports this blended approach to learning. Epstein provides a framework for creating learning experiences that will have an impact on children across multiple domains of development. The book is divided into eight domains of learning, and each chapter begins with specific stories of real-life classroom situations. An overview of the domain is provided and followed by identification of knowledge and skills children seem to acquire primarily through child-guided versus adult-guided learning experiences. Many practical teaching strategies are also presented and illustrated with anecdotal examples. Each chapter ends with a box of questions/considerations for further reflection. I began reading this book in my quest for resources that support my thinking in actively and intentionally engaging children through a play-based curriculum with purpose and understanding. I feel this would be a good resource for programs undergoing change, as it may spur further debate and the sharing of ideas. It will also be valuable for those needing guidance and inspiration to reflect on their ideas and practices and open their minds for thinking about how to intentionally engage young children with the world across multiple domains.

## **Literacy Beginnings**

A Prekindergarten Handbook by Gay Su Pinnell & Irene C. Fountas

Heinemann, 2011

Written by two leaders in the field of literacy, this is a rich, comprehensive resource that helps the reader to understand how to tap into the natural curiosity of young children's curiosity and immerse them into the world of literacy in engaging and developmentally appropriate ways. It will help you to create a play-based classroom community that prepares your little ones for the literacy-rich world in which they live. It also includes wonderful appendices that contain lists of songs, rhymes, mentor texts, inquiry projects, and 35 simple lessons that support children in their discovery of balanced literacy through play, language, and literary experiences. This resource also contains the *Continuum of Literacy Learning, PreK*. This continuum is designed to help the teacher pin down the particulars of the expectations for language and literacy learning in prekindergarten. I have been using this resource for the past 4 years. I found it to be an easy-to-read book that is filled with pertinent information specifically designed for the prekindergarten population. Each chapter is followed by a list of key understandings for the reader to think about. I found it very helpful to interact with the questions because they really guided me to reflect in a direction that helped me to change my practice and understand that literacy goals are appropriate for preschoolers. The book is a great go-to resource as well. Laminated tabs divide each section and are so helpful when searching for something

specific. Another great feature of this resource is the observation questions provided in the assessment section. The questions guide the teacher toward accurate assessment of a child's functioning. I believe you will find this to be a staple resource for use in any quality classroom.

### **Omnibus Guidelines: Preschool through Third Grade**

Margo Dichtelmiller, Judy Jablon, Dorothea Mardsen, Samuel Meisels  
Rebus Planning Associates

From Pearson: Developmental Guidelines cover seven major curriculum areas: personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematical thinking, scientific thinking, social studies, the arts, and physical development and health. This easy-to-use tool helps you:

- Collect information on the child's work and compare it to grade-specific guidelines
- Identify what children are learning, what they are beginning to master, and what they still need to work on
- Use your observations and simplify the process of recording and interpreting them
- Inform curriculum and instruction planning

From the teachers: "For ages three through eight, developmental indicators and examples of what they look like in the classroom. Very complete, very developmentally appropriate examples. Shows a continuum of development across domains."

We have used this in preparing early childhood teachers at Alverno College for many, many years.

### **Powerful Interactions: How to connect with children to extend their learning**

Amy Domkro, Judy Jablon, Charlotte Stetson  
NAEYC

From Amazon: A teacher interacts with the children all day long. It's how the warm and responsive relationships in which young children learn best are built. But interactions in which teachers intentionally promote learning can be few and far between. A "Powerful Interaction" may last only a few minutes, but in that time the teacher tunes out any distractions, tunes into the child, and then presents a learning experience tailored to that child at that moment.

Written by the authors of *The Power of Observation*, this book will guide you through these three steps of a Powerful Interaction (Be Present, Connect, Extend Learning) in a series of self-guided lessons enlivened with tips, hints, invitations to reflect, and vignettes.

From the teachers: "The important concepts are-be present, connect, extend learning, take culture and language into account."

The teachers with whom I spoke have been using this book and this approach for two years.

### **Roots and Wings: Affirming Culture in Early Childhood Programs**

Stacey York

Redleaf Press

From Amazon: "Roots and Wings will open doors to beginners in cultural diversity education, and will enrich the more experienced readers. It is a grand tool for assisting early childhood educators to address the many-faceted and complex issues of cultural diversity and racial prejudice. . . . I recommend this book to any teacher, caregiver, or parent who wants to begin learning what it means to foster young children's respect for themselves and others."—Louise Derman-Sparks, author, *AntiBias Curriculum*. More than a decade ago, *Roots and Wings* was published as the first practical resource for early childhood teachers on the then new topic of multicultural education. This invaluable guide is now completely updated to respond to present day anti-bias issues in educating young children.

*Roots and Wings* provides a thorough, clear, and practical introduction to working with diverse children and families in early childhood settings. With more than 100 new and revised activities, practical examples, and staff training recommendations, the revised edition includes new chapters on bilingual education, culturally responsive teaching, and children and prejudice. Seamlessly blending theory and practice, *Roots and Wings* is an ideal resource for preschool teachers, early childhood programs at colleges and universities, and training workshops.

From the teachers: "This is a classic that has been revised more than once to include information about working with children in a culturally responsive way."

We have used this in preparing early childhood teachers at Alverno College for many, many years.

### **Super Science Concoctions**

Jill Frankel Hauser

Williamson Publishing Company

From Amazon: Fizz, gurgle, bubble, and brew! Hours of outrageous science fun await kids with Jill Hauser's incredible science concoctions. Kids explore a world of amazing science--from capillary action to liquid density to emulsions to plastics--all while making magical mixtures they concoct themselves!

Over 50 safe inexpensive science mixtures, using household ingredients, encourage kids to discover and think creatively. Explore density with hovering veggies, explode colors in milk to learn about molecular movement, and cross-link polymers to make plastic blubber. Concoct sticky water, gooblek, jigglin' gelatin worms, lava, liquid lasagna, and creepy water ghosts. Simple experiments with spectacular results make the wonder of science accessible to every child.

From the teachers: "Love this for hands-on science experiences, with a focus on how children can think like scientists"

The teachers with whom I spoke have been using this for about five years.



## **The Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS)**

This excellent resource document is published by Collaborating Partners, a Wisconsin agency dedicated to supporting high quality early childhoods. According to their website, "The Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards specify developmental expectations for children from birth through entrance to first grade. The standards reflect attention to all the domains of a child's learning and development." The site goes on to say the document allows users to, "Share a common language and responsibility for the well-being of children from birth to first grade..." In other words, it says, "This is how we all agree to view early childhood."

WMELS is now used extensively throughout the Wisconsin EC community as a unifying force in understanding development and as a spring board for curriculum development. It is aligned with NAEYC, Common Core, and DPI standards. The majority of the book contains what its authors name 'the continuum', a graphic way to show developmental expectations for children, from birth to six, breaking everything down into domains and sub-domains. The continuum is the publication's strongest feature and quite useful. It is well-constructed, useful and of very high quality. The publication is actually part of a much larger package that includes a good deal of supporting documents found on the Collaborating Partners Website. To use them one typically attends trainings. The supporting documents include assessment, activity planning, and other areas related to teaching and understanding young children.

## **The Wisdom of Play, edited by David Elkind and published by Community Playthings (the block manufacturer out of Rifton, New York).**

This is an excellent short collection of essays on the subject of play, particularly freeplay, written by top authors on the subject. Though it is a corporation, Community Playthings has produced a number of very high quality resources for those in the EC field, nearly all of them free for the asking at their website (<http://www.communityplaythings.com/resources>). For example, check out their room planners, their DVD on block play, and a companion volume on outdoor play.

If one wanted to distill the messages of several recently published and highly regarded books outlining the value of play, *The Wisdom of Play* would be that document. The reason is simple: The authors of many of those same books wrote the essays. For some, the most appealing part is that the entire publication could be read in a single sitting, or casually read over a week's time. The essays are lively, engaging and thoughtful.

I picture a skeptical parent watching freeplay in process and complaining, "When are they going to start learning?" At this point I would answer, "Great question." After a comment or two on brain development, I might hand her *The Wisdom of Play*. "You might want to take a look at

this..." I'd be safe in knowing that parent was in good hands.

## **ONLINE RESOURCES:**

### **ASSESSMENT**

**CLASS Observation Tool:** <http://teachstone.com/the-class-system/> An observation system designed to capture the quality of classroom interactions that support teaching and learning in classrooms. The CLASS has observations tools for Infant/Toddler, PreK, K-Grade 3. The CLASS looks at three domains of classroom interaction (Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, Instructional Support) with several dimensions and indicators that represent each domain. The observations are live or video-taped and cover 2 hours of instructional time (four 30-minute cycles). The CLASS has been heavily researched and verified. It is built on developmental theory that suggests "that interactions between students and adults are the primary mechanism of student development and learning" (Pianta, et al. 2008, p. 1).

Further information about YoungStar is found at:

<http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/default.htm>

To get information about NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) and their accreditation process, go to:

<http://www.naeyc.org/academy/>

To get information about NAC (National Council of Accreditation), a part of AELL (Association of Early Learning Leaders) and their accreditation process, go to:

<http://www.earlylearningleaders.org/?>

### **VIDEO LINKS:**

This provides a link to all the free publications at Community Playthings, the first of which is *The Wisdom of Play*.

<http://www.communityplaythings.com/resources/literature>

This is another link at Community Playthings with separate articles and blog posts.

<http://www.communityplaythings.com/resources/topics/role-of-play-in-learning>

This is the link for the youtube channel for Allison Gopnik, who wrote *The Scientist in the Crib*. It has a whole string of things with her in them, so you can browse titles and chose the ones that seem relevant. Her focus is on babies, but many of the concepts carry through preschool and are certainly related.

[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=Scientist+in+the+crib](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=Scientist+in+the+crib)

#### ARTICLES:

- "Let the Kids Learn Through Play" by David Kohn.  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/17/opinion/sunday/let-the-kids-learn-through-play.html>
- NY Times: "Kindergartens Ringing the Bell for Play Inside the Classroom" written by Motoko Rich  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/10/education/out-of-the-books-in-kindergarten-and-into-the-sandbox.html>
- "Building Blocks of a Good Pre-K – Nancy Nager  
[http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/22/opinion/the-building-blocks-of-a-good-pre-k.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/22/opinion/the-building-blocks-of-a-good-pre-k.html?_r=0)