Chapter 5
Teaching: A Professional Commitment
Today’s Early Childhood Teachers

• One can teach in different settings
• Have varied educational backgrounds
• Share common experiences
  – Plan, observe, listen, help, learn, play, console, discipline, confer, comfort, and teach young children
Comparison with Teaching in Other Educational Settings

• Early childhood teachers teach what other teachers teach
• Early childhood teachers and their elementary and high school counterparts share many frustrations of the teaching profession
• They share the joy of teaching
## Teacher Diversity


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Level</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Hispanic/Latino</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Care Worker</td>
<td>78.3</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>19.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preschool &amp; Kindergarten</td>
<td>82.7</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary &amp; Middle School</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teacher Diversity

• 44 percent of classrooms had Spanish-speaking students, but only half were staffed by a Spanish-speaking teacher
• Nearly 50 percent had Chinese-speaking students, but only 7 percent had a staff member who spoke Chinese
• Parents in these programs reported difficulty communicating because of language barriers
The Early Childhood Teacher’s Role: Professionalism in the Classroom

• Interacting with children
  – Responsive and reciprocal relationships

• Managing the classroom
  – Safe environment
  – Observe and listen to children
  – Teacher trainer of other adults
  – Supervisor of student teachers
  – Liaison and communicator with parents

• Setting the tone
  – Create an atmosphere
  – Alive and supportive air
  – Setting for learning
  – Sensitivity to moods
  – Positive attitudes to all children and families
  – Respect for each other
The Early Childhood Teacher’s Role: Professionalism in the Classroom (cont.)

• Planning and evaluating curriculum
  – Based on what is seen and heard in the classroom
  – Building curriculum on children’s developmental needs
  – Watching and observing children
  – Collecting data for planning
The Early Childhood Teacher’s Role: Professionalism in the Classroom (cont.)

• Record keeping
  – Based on the purpose for which the records will be used
  – Based on the philosophy of the school
  – Part of the teacher-training process
  – Part of an accreditation process
  – Commitment to quality and appropriate child development practices
  – Means of family information and education
  – Means of developing curriculum
The Early Childhood Teacher’s Role: Professionalism in the Classroom (cont.)

- Attending meetings
  - Staff meetings
  - Parent-teacher conferences
  - Parent education meetings
  - Professional meetings
  - Student-teacher conferences
  - Home visits

- Organizing and collecting materials
- Making contacts
- Working with families
Personal Attributes of Early Childhood Educators

• Self-awareness
  – Who, what, and why I am?
  – Self-acceptance
  – Self-knowledge

• Attitudes and biases
  – Avoid prejudices—personal beliefs on race, culture, gender, abilities, and economic status
  – Anti-bias curriculum accepts that all children are born equal and worthy of respect
  – Teacher must confront own anxieties and accept and enrich opportunities for all
Personal Attributes of Early Childhood Educators (cont.)

- Teacher burnout
  - Highest occupational turnover rates in the nation
  - Low morale, stress, and disillusionment
  - Need healthy, happy, and positive work environment
    - Clearly defined roles
    - Emphasis on personal and professional growth
    - Comfortable environment
    - Success and satisfaction in the workplace
    - Fairness and equity
Professional Standards for Teacher Preparation: What Today’s Teachers Should Know and Do

• Promote child development and learning
• Build family and community relationships
• Observe, document, and assess to support young children and families
• Use developmentally effective approaches to connect with children and families
• Use content knowledge to build meaningful curriculum
• Become a professional
• Field experience
Essential Attributes of a Professional Teacher

• Knowledge and skills
• Abiding by a code of ethics
• Continuing education and professional development
• Professional affiliations
Essential Attributes of a Professional Teacher

- Knowledge of career options
- Cultural competency
- Advocacy
- Becoming a whole teacher
Possess the Knowledge and Skills

• Studying child development, family relations, parent education, and curriculum planning
• Progression along a continuum of development
• State regulations may provide for professionalism of early childhood teachers
• A career lattice: regulations for each level
• General role definitions
Abide by a Code of Ethical Conduct

• Doing what is right is difficult at times
• Moral dilemmas occur often
• NAEYC’s Code of Ethical Conduct
  – Provides wisdom and advice from broad base in the profession
  – Provides teachers with a core of professional values
Core Values of NAEYC’s Code of Ethical Conduct

• Appreciate childhood as a unique and valuable stage
• Base our work on knowledge of child development
• Appreciate and support close ties between child and family
Core Values of NAEYC’s Code of Ethical Conduct

• Recognize children within context of family, culture, community
• Respect dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual
• Help children and adults achieve their full potential
Participate in Continuing Education, Professional Development, and Affiliations

- In-service training programs
  - Workshops, seminars
  - Sharing information and new techniques among staff
  - Resource specialist to help and assist

- Library resources and films, books, videos

- Parents who are professionals share their knowledge
Participate in Continuing Education, Professional Development, and Affiliations (cont.)

• Professional affiliation
  – National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
  – Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI)
  – Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) and others

• Knowledge of career options
  – See career options table Figure 5-7

• Engage in reflective teaching
Become Culturally Competent and Advocate for Children and Families

- Must be aware of changing diversity issues
- Requires pluralistic mindset
- Ability to communicate across cultures

- Educate public on issues relating to young children
- Call attention to the moral and social responsibility nation has to its young
Other than the lead/master teacher, who else is helping children learn?
Team Teaching: Professional Collaboration

- The Team Approach
  - Other teachers, aides, and student teachers
  - Volunteers
  - Program directors and administrators
  - School support personnel
  - Families
  - Consultants and specialists

- Team composition

  Why is there more than 1 teacher in the classroom?
  lead teacher, assistant, resource teacher (art, music, physical development)

- Role definition and satisfaction

  - Each individual teacher has talents that they can bring into the classroom
  - Teachers need to clearly understand their roles and responsibilities Why?
Team Teaching: Professional Collaboration (cont.)

- **Flexibility**
  What are some examples?

- **Open and frequent communication**
  - To share information
  - To contribute new ideas
  - To solve problems

- **Who am I?**
  What are my strengths/weaknesses as a teacher?

  What kind of a leader/follower am I?

- **Mutual respect and acceptance**
  - Collegiality
    - Can I offer help?
    - A willingness to share the spotlight

- **Evaluations**
• Why do you think team teaching works?
Why Team Teaching Works

- Variety of adult role models
- Support for children
- Lightened workload
- Enriched program
Performance Assessment: Key to Improved Teaching Practices

• Teachers are the single most important factor in determining program quality
• Assessment promotes continual professional improvement and growth
• Teachers self assess to guide them to more effective teaching
Purposes for an Annual Performance Review

- To define and clarify job responsibilities
- To monitor teacher effectiveness
- To identify strengths and challenges
- To create a plan for professional development
- To determine employment
- To meet accreditation requirements
Components of an Effective Assessment

• Who are the evaluators?
  – Self-evaluation
  – Supervisor evaluation

• Types of assessments
  • Performance-based- observable, specific information about teacher's activities and responsibilities
  • Competency-based- outline exactly what a teacher must do to show their competency in their job responsibilities

  – Follow through
    goals are set
    follow up is done to see if goals are met

  – Cultural sensitivity
Types of Assessments

• Performance-based assessment
  – Observable, specific information about a teacher’s activities and responsibilities

• Competency-based assessment
  – Observable, specific information about a teacher’s activities and responsibilities, paired with specific goals and expectations
Portfolio-Based Assessment

• Not an assessment tool in itself, but a display and collection system to show professional growth
• Documentation is systematic, offers concrete evidence
• Is ever changing and reflects individuality
Cultural Sensitivity

• Time sense
• Space
• Verbal and nonverbal communication
• Values
• Concepts of authority
Learning Through the Practicum Experience

• Connect knowledge and theory with classroom experience
• Discover how children function in groups with other children and adults
• Collaboration techniques for working as a team member
• Intensive self-searching through self-assessment and reflective dialogue
• Work with an on-site supervisor or mentor teacher
Learning Through the Practicum Experience (cont.)

- Conduct group times and plan curriculum
- Gain insights into yourself through ongoing feedback
- Approaches and strategies for developing relationships with children
- Engage in developmentally appropriate practices
- Appreciate the role of families in their children’s development and learning