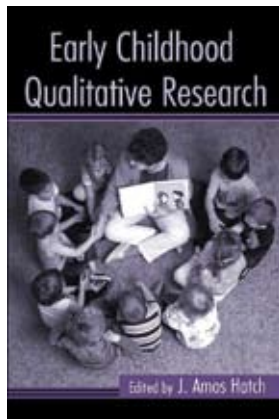


New books

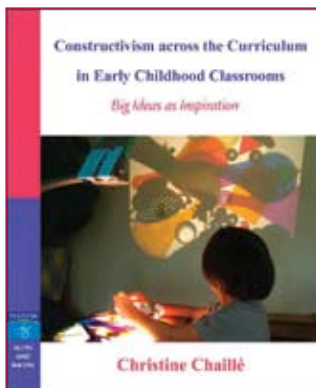


Hatch, J.A., ed. 2007. *Early Childhood Qualitative Research*. New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis. 251 pp. ISBN 9780415953412. \$29.95.

Hatch documents why qualitative research offers special ways of generating knowledge that are essential to the future of the early childhood profession. Contributors use their experience in conducting and teaching and writing about early childhood qualitative research to present a state-of-the-art summary and discussion of the critical issues and dilemmas.

The content is both theoretical and pragmatic. Theoretical discussions address such topics as the impact of postpositivist, constructivist, critical/feminist, and poststructuralist beliefs on research projects and the implications of using a hermeneutic analysis of play to explore classroom events (see, for example, Vivian Paley). The book provides practical strategies, such as using digital video in field-based research and conducting action research in early childhood settings, and criteria researchers can use to guide and improve the quality of their research projects.

Descriptions of early childhood studies highlight how researchers make decisions about their work and the range of methodologies used to capture the complex nature of the lives of children and of adults working in the field. These studies demonstrate how to look at critical issues in our field, such as factors that influence preschool children's cultural and racial understanding over time or the way a new early childhood teacher preparation and professional development system was implemented and experienced across one state. The authors discuss the unique ways qualitative research can provide insight into the lives and thinking of young children, such as by involving the children in the design and production of research.



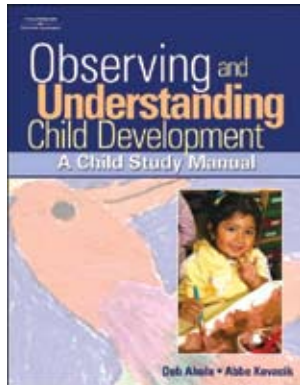
Chaillé, C. 2008. *Constructivism across the Curriculum in Early Childhood Classrooms: Big Ideas as Inspiration*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon/Pearson Education. 208 pp. ISBN 9780205348541. \$32.99.

Chaillé shows how teachers can use big ideas and constructivist theory as a fresh approach to developing integrated curriculum in preschool and primary classrooms. Structuring learning around broad primary concepts helps children construct a deep understanding of subject matter as they engage with the curriculum at different levels, depending on their interests, backgrounds, and skills. The reader learns how the process unfolds by following teachers and children as they explore seven big ideas: light, sound, balance, zooming in and out, upside down and inside out, chain reactions, and transformation. The author describes innovative activities, learning materials, and teaching resources and strategies to spark children's interest and provoke their thinking.

Documentation of children's spontaneous discoveries helps the teachers create opportunities for children to make connections between their experiences and relate to the bigger picture as investigations spill over subject matter borders into many areas of the curriculum. For example, in the study of light, children begin by investigating the scientific properties of reflection, contrasts of light and dark, and different light sources (shining flashlights covered with

Titles are selected from the many new books received by NAEYC. Educator **Gail Perry** writes the brief annotations. The books are available from the publishers listed, your local bookstore, or online retailers.

colored cellophane into the water table and glass objects), and then by looking for reflections on a walk outside. Their exploration extends into *creative arts*; inspired by a video of Chihuly's floating glass sculpture in a Venice Canal, children construct "glass" sculptures using colored cellophane, cardboard, and wire. Study of light and dark spaces in and outside the classroom leads to study of contrasts in *language* and *literacy* (children create lists of opposites and role-play opposite emotions) and *social studies* (children examine stark contrasts in climate, dress, and among themselves).



Ahola, D., & A. Kovacik. 2007. *Observing and Understanding Child Development: A Child Study Manual*. Clifton Park, NY: Thomson Delmar Learning. 314 pp. ISBN 9781418015367. \$21.95.

The authors provide the tools and background knowledge needed to complete an in-depth study of an infant, toddler, and preschooler. Authors give detailed steps for recording and interpreting anecdotal records, conducting structured observations in which the observer sets up a situation to elicit specific behaviors (interviews or games), and collecting documentation, such as photographs or audio and video recordings of children involved in everyday activities. Instructions are included for interviewing parents and for using, creating, and evaluating checklists, rating scales, and parent questionnaires.

The authors summarize the major developmental domains as well as areas like brain development, the *theory of mind* concept, creativity, and literacy. Next they present summaries of major theorists to help teachers interpret their findings.

Early childhood students and practitioners will find this guide easy to use, with anecdotal examples and extras like a running glossary of unfamiliar terms at the bottom of each page and a CD with resources and video streams of children that exemplify the developmental concepts.



Henderson, A.T., V. Johnson, K.L. Mapp, & D. Davies. 2007. *Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships*. New York: The New Press. 338 pp. ISBN 9781565848887. \$25.00.

A parent in Boston states, "I chose this school because it was the only public school where parents got any respect and counted and where teachers and parents and kids worked together in a genuine way." Offering anecdotes that highlight successful family-school practices across the country, the authors demonstrate the way to establish partnerships that benefit the children, the families, and the school. The authors present innovative processes and actions schools can initiate on topics like making the school environment family friendly, helping difficult parents become cooperative partners, and developing systemwide policies and practices that support families.

Practical suggestions address how teachers can collaborate with parents on improving children's learning; how schools can navigate the complex and sensitive issues surrounding ethnicity, class, and culture; and strategies for gaining public support for the school.

Ready-to-use resources and tools provide help, such as examples of ways to talk with families to gain support and convey respect, a parent-meeting activity designed to explore parent and staff attitudes about sharing power and responsibility, and checklists to evaluate and plan the program. Although the book is designed for schools serving students ages 3 through 18, teachers and administrators in public and private early childhood educational settings will find the ideas useful and easy to implement.

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