

Winton, P.J., J.A. McCollum, & C. Catlett, eds. 2008. *Practical Approaches to Early Childhood Professional Development: Evidence, Strategies, and Resources*. Washington, DC: ZERO TO THREE. 285 pp. ISBN 9781934019191. \$69.95.

The editors discuss contemporary issues and challenges facing those involved in early childhood preservice and in-service education and recommend future actions needed to improve this critical component of the early childhood profession. Drawing from extensive reviews of the literature on professional development and the limited body of research, authors describe the features of effective teacher education, training, and ongoing support needed to create and sustain a quality workforce. The chapters address the content and promising approaches for designing, implementing, and evaluating course work, fieldwork, and in-service training experiences.

The authors discuss the ever-increasing knowledge base on professional development, such as work on knowledge utilization—the adaptation and use of new knowledge by practitioners, linking research and practice. This process of translating and applying knowledge in ways that lead to changes in practices, programs, and systems is central to the goals of early childhood professional development. The book includes many practical resources and examples of syllabi, class assignments and activities, coaching and mentoring techniques, instructional tools, and collaboration and discussion strategies for faculty, consultants, mentors, and administrators responsible for designing professional development. An accompanying CD includes resources, additional activities, and course syllabi.

Ray, K.W., & M. Glover. 2008. *Already Ready: Nurturing Writers in Preschool and Kindergarten*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. 240 pp. ISBN 9780325010731. \$24.50.

As the title tells us, this book illustrates how 3- and 4-year-olds are already ready to be readers and writers—in their own age-appropriate ways. Ray and Glover offer new insight into the nature of both the preschool writer and the writing process to help teachers broaden the scope of what is possible for young children. The authors urge us to rethink the meaning of writing development and explain why children making books as a daily choice and their composing process should be the central focus of supporting preschool writing.

In each chapter the reader meets 3- and 4-year-old authors and illustrators eager to share their stories. As these children from Matt Glover's early childhood school read, reread, and edit their books, the authors highlight the complex thinking processes involved as well as the responses from teachers that enable young children to write. Teaching strategies include different approaches to some familiar literacy teaching practices and beliefs. For example, the authors explain why taking oral dictation from children is not the best practice for supporting a young writer and why children do not have to be able to print words before they become writers.

Elliott, S., ed. 2008. *The Outdoor Playspace Naturally for Children Birth to Five Years*. Castle Hill, NSW, Australia: Pademelton Press. 214 pp. ISBN 9781876138271. \$80.00. Distributed by The Olive Press, [www.theolivepress.com](http://www.theolivepress.com); 800-797-5002.

Young children are increasingly cooped up inside or playing on generic, synthetic playgrounds with limited opportunities for exploration, discovery, and learning in the natural world.

This book makes a compelling case for early childhood programs to support the needs of children and foster an appreciation of Earth's resources by creating outdoor play areas that feature the natural environment. Authors describe the steps necessary to design and build natural play spaces that integrate such factors as aesthetics, key elements of nature, topography, sustainability, safety, and curriculum goals.

Two-hundred color photographs bring to life a wide array of attractive and intriguing play spaces that reveal possibilities for early childhood programs. Infants, toddlers, and preschoolers explore secret places and tunnels created by plants and boulders, crawl up a small grassy mound, play on a deck shaded by overhanging foliage, follow winding stone paths around trees, cross bridges, and go under plant arches. They collect seed pods in quiet indigenous gardens, investigate a homemade frog pond, and pour water from a rainwater tank into the solar water fountain for birds that is built with nearby pebbles.

Case studies show how staff, children, families, and neighbors collaborated to build the play spaces over time and how each reflects the local culture with mosaics, sculpture, stonework, and hand-painted tiles made by the children, local gardeners, carpenters, and artists.

Lindfors, J. 2008. *Children's Language: Connecting Reading, Writing and Talk*. New York: Teachers College Press. 144 pp. ISBN 9780807748855. \$22.95.

Why do so many children have difficulty learning to read and write when they have so easily accomplished the seemingly more challenging task of learning all about the world and our ways of representing it in talk? A professor of 27 years and author of texts on language learning examines the way teachers can build on children's competence in communicating through talk to help them master a second expression system—written language.

Lindfors identifies five essential features of oral language learning that continue to be important as children learn to read and write. Children communicate for a purpose (*authenticity*); there is a focus on the *meaning*, not grammar; language is learned in *collaboration* with others; learning language is a process of *apprenticeship*; and each child's expression is unique (*individuality*). The author details the way these features develop and continue to shape children's literacy learning. The concepts are illustrated by the author's experiences and by literacy examples from the 5- to 7-year-old children at a charter school in a domestic violence center where Lindfors introduced books and writing to children individually and in small groups.

This book is designed for teacher educators, study group leaders, literacy specialists, and experienced teachers. An Instructor's Guide is included, with strategies and activities to teach the ideas in courses, classroom assignments, and workshops.

### Correction

The review of *Early Childhood Education: An International Encyclopedia* (New Books, January 2008) mistakenly described the work as the first encyclopedia dedicated solely to early childhood education. This credit should be attributed to *The Encyclopedia of Early Childhood Education*, published in 1992, edited by Leslie R. Williams and Doris P. Fromberg.

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..