

**Kostelnik, M.J., & M.L. Grady. 2009. *Getting It Right from the Start: The Principal's Guide to Early Childhood Education*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press; Alexandria, VA: National Association of Elementary School Principals. 320 pp. ISBN 9781412949507. \$38.95.**

An increasing number of states are gearing up to serve 3- and 4-year-olds in their elementary schools. This comprehensive reference manual was created to help principals understand what high-quality early education programs look like and how to launch and support preschool education in the school. The authors begin with an overview of the current state of the field, including core beliefs, a brief history, and hot-button issues. The 15 chapters offer a crash course in early childhood education, addressing topics like how very young children learn and the implications for curriculum design and setting up indoor and outdoor environments. The authors present practical strategies to help school leaders in tasks like working with stakeholders and finding and keeping qualified early childhood teachers. The appendices include useful tools such as Guidelines for Structuring On-site Observations and Conducting Candidate Interviews. While intended for principals, this guide can also serve as an excellent introduction for policy makers, community leaders, researchers, or other professionals interested in learning about or improving early education programs.

**Mraz, M., B. Algozzine, & B. Kissel. 2009. *The Literacy Coach's Companion: PreK–3*. 2009. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press; Newark, DE: International Reading Association. 160 pp. ISBN 9781412960731. \$28.95.**

This comprehensive guide takes the reader through all the steps to becoming an effective coach. Chapters address the primary responsibilities of the literacy coach—helping teachers improve their reading instruction in the classroom by fostering professional collaborations with them, promoting thinking through reflective inquiry, and helping teachers develop ongoing assessment activities to monitor each student's reading progress and inform the teacher's literacy practices.

The authors explain how to have successful conferences with teachers. They include suggestions for forming collaborative and trusting relationships characterized by two-way communication and for helping teachers evaluate their strengths and plan next steps, as well as strategies for meeting common coaching challenges. Other topics include scheduling, organizing, documenting, and working with administrators to establish learning communities and professional development initiatives in a school. Vignettes and transcripts of coaching sessions offer detailed examples of effective coaching practices, while samples of practical forms provide further illustration. For example, there are protocols for observing and conferencing with teachers, tables citing the types of questions that facilitate genuine inquiry, and record-keeping logs to track the coach's activities. This is a valuable professional resource especially for those new to the role of literacy coach.

**Stacey, S. 2009. *Emergent Curriculum in Early Childhood Settings: From Theory to Practice*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press. 176 pp. ISBN 9781933653419. \$29.95.**

Stacey makes a convincing case for engaging in emergent curriculum as she brings to life the underlying values and processes of this way of teaching. She shows how often we accept

without questioning our traditional patterns of teaching in early childhood programs—our teaching scripts—and how this can interfere with children's learning. For example, the teacher's use of time in the daily schedule influences how everyday curriculum unfolds, and the scripts in turn control what kind of curriculum happens. If children's days are overscheduled into short time frames (15 minutes for circle time, 15 minutes for story time), this allows little time for them to construct complex ideas.

The book's strength is in the author's ability to communicate how key teaching patterns can play out to nurture learning and how a teacher can engage in the kind of reflective practice that capitalizes on children's interests. Stacey illustrates the process through the experiences of teachers and directors in toddler, preschool, and family child care settings. They demonstrate the process of planning curriculum by observing and documenting children, followed by staff meetings to consider each other's interpretations of the children's actions and understandings. This enables teachers to form theories about what is happening in the classroom and to make informed choices about the activities or materials that would allow the children to explore a topic in further depth.

The text addresses practical issues such as how to plan the schedule or organize children when only a small group is interested in a topic. The author introduces innovative ideas like using many different forms of documentation and an open shared journal for all staff to record brief notes in during the day.

**Kieff, J. 2009. *Informed Advocacy in Early Childhood Care and Education: Making a Difference for Young Children and Families*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education. 216 pp. ISBN 9780131707337. \$29.67.**

Kieff argues that advocating for young children and their families is an ethical responsibility and an essential role of early childhood professionals. She describes how to effectively advocate in six contexts: for individual children and families, for early childhood programs, for the profession, in the private sector, as political activism, and in the global arena.

Vignettes illustrate a wide range of advocacy activities. A teacher initiates the process of getting help for an abused 3-year-old child in her class. A group of child care directors petitions the city to create a discounted fare on public transportation for volunteers in their centers and schools. Advocates in the private sector work with businesses and corporations to promote the well-being of young children. After observing Spanish-speaking grandparents showing children labels in a local supermarket to help them learn English, a kindergarten teacher persuades the store to print nursery rhymes and literacy tips in Spanish and English on their grocery bags to encourage families to read to their children. She felt the strategy would help English language learners in her class who were struggling to read.

Kieff explains how to develop an advocacy agenda and provides a wealth of information and advocacy strategies. The book covers topics like testifying at meetings, constructing an information kit, and collaborating with others in advocacy groups. Resources include advocacy Web sites like that of the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood. Discussion questions and activities designed to increase advocacy skills and knowledge make this a good text for professional preparation programs and center-based training.

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.