

Villareale, C. 2009. *Learning from the Children: Reflecting on Teaching*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf. 121 pp. ISBN 9781933653716. \$17.95 paper.

How do you become the kind of teacher children can trust? Through engaging descriptions of her own classroom experiences with preschoolers and keen insight into the relationships between teachers and children, the author demonstrates what good teaching is all about.

Villareale describes key components of good teaching, such as nurturing each child's uniqueness, and offers practical ideas teachers can use to address each area. For example, the teacher identifies children's particular talents and plans one opportunity a week per child for developing that talent, such as giving a quiet child an opportunity to express thoughts in a safe environment. She creates a display using stories or photos of children expressing their personalities.

Villareale tackles the challenges of teaching and offers teachers strategies for being present and available to children when there is so much to focus on—evaluating the kind of play taking place, telling a parent about an incident, or noting important conversations in the block area. She discusses how to avoid teacher burnout by determining what drains your energies (like an upset parent) and what renews your energies (a walk outside, quiet reading with one child), and including those energizing activities in your weekly plan. The chapters are short (4–8 pages), easy to read, and well suited for staff development discussions.

Meier, D., ed. 2009. *Here's the Story: The Use of Narrative to Promote Children's Language and Literacy Learning*. New York: Teachers College Press. 176 pp. ISBN 9780807749791. \$26.95 paper.

By highlighting the ways stories connect children's words, ideas, feelings, and sense of self, this book will help teachers strengthen their understanding of effective language and literacy practice. Contributors include teachers, a family child care director, a professional storyteller, a children's book author, and teacher educators. They offer an interesting range of perspectives on the meaning of story for toddlers, preschoolers, and primary-age children, including second language learners.

The writers describe their experiences in helping toddlers become emerging storytellers by using personal stories, dictated stories, and wordless picture books, allowing room for children's input. To ease the transition from home to center, a teacher uses social stories—books with photos capturing the child, with a parent, being welcomed by the teacher; engaged with a toy, an activity, or another child; and being comforted in the arms of the teacher. A first grade teacher moves reluctant children into writing by giving them a video camera to record classroom life and narrate and edit the video story. The storyteller and the children's book author discuss what makes a good story and how they design characters, plots, text, and illustrations to engage children and help them explore beyond the boundaries of their personal experiences.

In his charismatic commentary, Meier conveys a special appreciation for the magical nature of words and story that inspires children and teachers.

Lubawy, J. 2009. *Visions of Creativity in Early Childhood: Connecting Theory, Practice and Reflection*. Castle Hill, NSW, Australia: Pademelon. 246 pp. ISBN 9781876138295. \$59.00 paper (available from rodneyk@pademelonpress.com).

Lubawy shows how to nurture children's creative expression throughout the day and the curriculum, including math and science. At the book's core are the 3- and 4-year-olds she has worked with for 30 years. The captivating narratives of the children as they discover, theorize, create, and interact with each other and the teacher vividly illustrate how to set up an environment filled with opportunities for interesting and meaningful experiences and interactions between teachers and children.

The author reaches beyond the field of early childhood education to include theories and pertinent quotations of educators, philosophers, poets, psychologists, scientists, and politicians that support or explain teaching ideas—Maya Angelou, Lilian Katz, Winston Churchill, and others.

Organized around Howard Gardner's dimensions of intelligence, the book presents chapters on visual and aesthetic, musical, kinesthetic, mathematical and logical, naturalist, linguistic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal abilities. One chapter covers programming, planning, evaluation, and documentation. Teachers will find practical suggestions for creative materials and activities and for teaching interactions, such as how to help children try something new without pushing them too quickly out of their comfort zones. This book is a visual treasure, with beautiful use of color in the formatting and brilliant images of children that capture spontaneous moments and support the text.

Edwards, P.A. 2009. *Tapping the Potential of Parents: A Strategic Guide to Boosting Student Achievement through Family Involvement*. New York: Scholastic. 96 pp. ISBN 9780545074773. \$16.99 paper.

This guidebook is designed to help administrators, teachers, and other professionals at the elementary school level who want to create a genuine working partnership with parents. Edwards suggests that educators rethink the traditional way of conducting family involvement. She offers techniques to evaluate current policies and practices at their schools and tools to develop school and classroom demographic profiles.

Edwards shows how to create an environment in which parents feel welcome as participants in their child's education. She discusses challenges that families and schools face, such as student mobility—children changing schools frequently due to factors like homelessness, foster care, poverty, and immigration. She describes school- and classroom-level practices that help ease the transition when leaving a school or entering a new one.

The author bases her approach on the understanding that parents are not all the same and effective family involvement programs must be parentally appropriate—that is, a school's expectations and parent activities must be compatible with the parents' capabilities. The text includes tools to help teachers understand the parents' vision for their child and their concerns; for example, holding interviews with families in which parents share anecdotes from home and conducting informal parent focus groups. This slim book is well organized and easy to read, making it a valuable resource for busy educators and in teacher education courses.

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.