

Gelman, R., K. Brenneman, G. MacDonald, & M. Román. 2009. *Preschool Pathways to Science (PrePS): Facilitating Scientific Ways of Thinking, Talking, Doing, and Understanding.* Baltimore, MD: Brookes. 160 pp. ISBN 9781598570441. \$29.95.

Preschool Pathways to Science (PrePS) is not a set curriculum that must be taught in a prescribed sequence. Rather, it shows how to build on children's natural curiosity, spontaneous explorations, and knowledge-seeking activities and embed science content and practices across the curriculum. PrePS is based on current research on cognitive development that demonstrates the young child's surprising abilities for abstract thinking.

Vignettes of interactions between children and teachers show how teachers can help children make connections between activities and ideas, link questions and solutions from one activity to another, and understand transformations that unfold over time. Examples illustrate a range of science content and appropriate materials and tools to allow children to consider everyday activities in scientific and mathematical ways. Chapters include ways of recording and documenting children's discoveries, such as creating a graph comparing nutshells and people's skin. This approach to science offers unique insights into providing challenging learning experiences.

Honig, A.S. 2009. *Little Kids, Big Worries: Stress-Busting Tips for Early Childhood Classrooms.* Baltimore, MD: Brookes. 160 pp. ISBN 9781598570618. \$24.95.

Contrary to viewing childhood as carefree and innocent, Alice S. Honig, a longtime expert on the development and care of young children, underscores the need to recognize and alleviate worrisome stressors in the lives of children as early as infancy. Honig describes the biological and interpersonal factors that influence a child's stress level and helps teachers become sensitive to the various ways children respond to and express stress. These include body signals that confirm emotional vulnerabilities and inner distress, even when children cannot tell us in words.

Vignettes from infant/toddler and preschool settings and personal examples help illustrate stress-reducing strategies teachers can use with individual children and the group as a whole. The author describes ways to decrease stress in early education settings, such as creating cozy places where children can soothe themselves or storing a personal photo album in each child's cubby. Two chapters discuss how teachers can reduce stress in their own lives. This book provides practical and sensitive tools to address this compelling concern.

Edwards, S. 2009. *Early Childhood Education and Care: A Sociocultural Approach.* Castle Hill, NSW, Australia: Pademelon. 96 pp. ISBN 9781876138301. \$29.95. enquiry@pademelonpress.com.au

With an interesting blend of theory and practice, this short book offers educators and early childhood education students a provocative, accessible introduction to sociocultural theory and how it translates into early childhood practice. The text is the result of a 12-month research project in which a group of Australian preschool teachers examined the beliefs and values about early childhood education that underscore their teaching. They participated in professional development sessions on the ideas and theories of Vygotsky, Rogoff, and Gardner and the

approach of Reggio Emilia. In their classrooms they conducted action research, developing new formats for observations and exploring different ways of working with children, based on their understanding of sociocultural theory.

The author presents teaching principles generated from the teachers' discussions of theory, excerpts from their reflective journals, and examples from their practice. Edwards discusses the meaning of early childhood education as a professional community of practice and describes how sociocultural theory helped to shape the teachers' understandings of child development and play-based experiences.

Ballenger, C. 2009. *Puzzling Moments, Teachable Moments: Practicing Teacher Research in Urban Classrooms.* New York: Teachers College Press. 141 pp. ISBN 9780807749937. \$24.95.

Increasingly, teachers must be able to connect with children whose ways of making sense of their experiences are shaped by different cultures and languages or by contexts of poverty. The author presents a fresh teaching approach for helping these children participate in the intellectual life of the classroom. Ballenger introduces the practices of teacher research to help teachers gain insight into children's thinking and how children use their personal experiences to connect to the curriculum content. Included are strategies for analyzing transcripts of taped class discussions that enable teachers to examine their own expectations for children's participation in intellectual talk in the classroom.

The author discusses how to expand accepted ways of talking in the classroom to support children as they use dialogue to develop their ideas. Ballenger shows how to plan curriculum based on children's ideas and promote discussions that allow children to experience themselves as thinkers, both publicly and privately. Engaging narratives from the author's classroom of third- and fourth-graders bring the process to life and let readers see how serious curriculum discussions unfold as the children debate questions and theories of their peers—Do plants grow every day? Is the sun alive?

Leach, P. 2009. *Child Care Today: Getting It Right for Everyone.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 350 pp. ISBN 9781400042562. \$25.95.

This state-of-the-art critique addresses a wide range of child care in the United States, the United Kingdom, and other Western countries. It includes care by parents and grandparents, nannies and au pairs, and care and education in family child care homes, preschool centers, and school-age before- and after-school programs. Leach draws from current published research, particularly in the United States and Britain, and her own research on the effects of various forms and combinations of care on children's development from birth through school age.

The author discusses child care issues and highlights the challenge of fitting the unchanging needs of children into society's changing demands and the tug-of-war between work and home commitments for parents. One section focuses on what constitutes good care from the viewpoints of researchers, parents, and children and spotlights children's happiness as a key measure of care. Leach makes an impassioned case for improving the care of children and gives recommendations to stakeholders as they consider where to go from here and what good care should look like.

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.

This column is available in an online archive at www.naeyc.org/yc/columns.