



# Early Childhood Language Arts

Sixth  
Edition

Mary Renck Jalongo

sixth edition

# Early Childhood Language Arts

**Mary Renck Jalongo**

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

**PEARSON**

Boston Columbus Indianapolis New York San Francisco Upper Saddle River  
Amsterdam Cape Town Dubai London Madrid Milan Munich Paris Montreal Toronto  
Delhi Mexico City Sao Paulo Sydney Hong Kong Seoul Singapore Taipei Tokyo

*To the early childhood educators who function as advocates for every young child in their centers and classrooms, support all children's efforts to become literate, and sustain a commitment to developmentally effective practices and educational equity throughout their professional careers.*

M. R. J.

**Vice President and Editor-in-Chief:** *Aurora Martínez Ramos*

**Acquisitions Editor:** *Kathryn Boice*

**Editorial Assistant:** *Michelle Hochberg*

**Executive Marketing Manager:** *Krista Clark*

**Editorial Production Service:** *Cenveo*

**Manufacturing Buyer:** *Linda Sager*

**Electronic Composition:** *Cenveo*

**Interior Design:** *Cenveo*

**Photo Credits for Design Icons:** *Michaeljung/Fotolia (Teacher Concerns); Matka Wariatka/Fotolia (Classroom Activities); Woodapple/Fotolia (Research-based Literacy); Jaimie Duplass/Fotolia (Links with Literature); Darrin Henry/Fotolia (ELLs); Anyaberkut/Fotolia (How Do I).*

**Photo Credits for Figure 13.7:** *Sergey Skryl/Fotolia; Letizia/Fotolia (1); Kremimaia/Fotolia; Matthew Cole/Fotolia (2); Multik79/Fotolia; Valebisba/Fotolia (3); Hans-Jürgen Krabl/Fotolia; Okalinichenko/Fotolia (4); Alexey Bannykb/Fotolia; Unnibente/Fotolia (5).*

Credits and acknowledgments borrowed from other sources and reproduced, with permission, in this textbook appear on the appropriate page within the text.

Many of the designations by manufacturers and sellers to distinguish their products are claimed as trademarks. Where those designations appear in this book, and the publisher was aware of a trademark claim, the designations have been printed in initial caps or all caps.

---

Copyright © 2014, 2011, 2007, 2003 Pearson Education, Inc., All rights reserved.  
Manufactured in the United States of America. This publication is protected by Copyright, and permission should be obtained from the publisher prior to any prohibited reproduction, storage in a retrieval system, or transmission in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or likewise. To obtain permission(s) to use material from this work, please submit a written request to Pearson Education, Inc., Permissions Department, One Lake Street, Upper Saddle River, NJ, 07458, or you may fax your request to 201-236-3290.

### **Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Jalongo, Mary Renck.

Early childhood language arts / Mary Renck Jalongo. -- Sixth edition.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-13: 978-0-13-335844-5

ISBN-10: 0-13-335844-5

1. Language arts (Preschool) 2. Language arts (Early childhood) I. Title.

LB1140.5.L3J35 2014

372.6--dc23

2013023261

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1                      17 16 15 14 13

**PEARSON**

www.pearsonhighered.com

ISBN 10: 0-13-335844-5

ISBN 13: 978-0-13-335844-5

# Mary Renck Jalongo, Ph.D.



Mary Renck Jalongo is a teacher, writer, and editor. As a classroom teacher, she taught preschool, first grade, and second grade; worked with children of migrant farm workers; and taught in the laboratory preschool at the University of Toledo. Currently, she is a professor at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, where she earned the university-wide outstanding professor award and coordinates the Doctoral Program in Curriculum and Instruction.

Dr. Jalongo has written, co-authored, and edited more than 35 books, many of them textbooks in the field of early childhood education, such as *Creative Thinking and Arts-Based Learning* (6th ed., Pearson), *Exploring Your Role: An Introduction to Early Childhood*

*Education* (4th ed., Pearson), and *Major Trends and Issues in Early Childhood Education* (2nd ed., Teachers College Press). Publications for practitioners include two National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) books, *Learning to Listen, Listening to Learn* and *Young Children and Picture Books*; and an edited book for the Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI), *The World's Children and Their Companion Animals: Developmental and Educational Significance of the Child/Pet Bond*. She is also the author of two award-winning Position Papers for ACEI.

Since 1995, Dr. Jalongo has served as editor-in-chief of the Springer international publication, *Early Childhood Education Journal*. Since 2005, she has served as editor of Springer's book series, *Educating the Young Child: Advances in Theory and Research, Implications for Practice*, and has made presentations on various aspects of early childhood education throughout the world. Her current projects include two edited books: *Teaching Compassion: Humane Education in Early Childhood* and *Young Children and the Electronic Media: Integrating Information Literacy and Technology in Early Childhood Settings* (with Kelly Heider), both in production with Springer.

# Contents

Preface    xiii

## PART ONE    Language Learning in Context

### chapter one

Appreciating Diversity and Educating the Young  
Language Learner    1

**FACT FILE** on Diverse Language  
Learners    1

**What Is the Cultural Context and Home  
Literacy Environment?**    3

**Collaboration with Families and  
Professionals**    8  
    Contributions and Consequences    8

**Meeting the Needs of Children with  
Language Differences**    9

**Overview of Children's Language  
Differences**    12  
    Autism Spectrum Disorders    12  
    English Language Learners    12  
    Children with Gifts and Talents in  
    Language    12  
    Language Disabilities    13  
    Language Delay    14  
    Dialectical Differences    14



**TEACHER CONCERNS AND BASIC  
STRATEGIES**    16

**WEB 2.0 TEACHER TOOLS  
FOR WORKING WITH DIVERSE  
LEARNERS**    18

**CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES TO  
SUPPORT DIVERSE LANGUAGE  
LEARNERS**    19

**APPS AND SITES FOR CHILDREN IN  
MULTIPLE LANGUAGES**    21

**Conclusion**    22

### RESEARCH-BASED LITERACY STRATEGIES    22

Story Retelling Using  
Technology    22

Books for Children with Low Book  
Interest    22

Dolch Sight Word List    23

### FOCUS ON THE INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S DIGITAL LIBRARY    23

Courtesy of Rae Ann Hirsh    23

**LINKS WITH LITERATURE** Books that Celebrate  
Diversity    24

**PICTURE BOOK PICKS:** Recently Published  
Multicultural Literature    26

**ELLS** Who Is the Young English Language  
Learner?    28

**HOW DO I . . .** Find High-Quality Picture Books  
Using the Internet?    30

**chapter two**Optimizing Every Child's Language Growth  
through Family Literacy 32**FACT FILE** on Families 32**W**hat Is Family and Community  
Engagement In Schools? 34**C**ollaboration with Families and  
Professionals 34Contributions and  
Consequences 35**O**verview of Parents' and Families'  
Contributions to Early Literacy 35Engaging Families as Observers of  
Children 38Engaging Families as Environment  
Arrangers 38

Engaging Families as Interactors 39

**E**ngaging Families as Motivators and  
Encouragers 39**TEACHER CONCERNS AND BASIC  
STRATEGIES** 40**WEB 2.0 TEACHING TOOLS:  
LANGUAGE GAMES TO RECOMMEND  
TO FAMILIES** 44**CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES TO  
SUPPORT FAMILY LITERACY** 44**APPS AND SITES FOR EARLY  
LITERACY RESOURCES** 49**C**onclusion 49**RESEARCH-BASED LITERACY STRATEGIES** 50Providing Access to Books through  
Pediatricians 50Training Parents and Families as  
Reading Partners 50Building Vocabulary by Reading  
Aloud 51**FOCUS ON A STORY BEFORE BED** 52

Contributed by Rae Ann Hirsh 52

**LINKS WITH LITERATURE** Multicultural  
Bookpacks 53**PICTURE BOOK PICKS:** Recently Published Books  
about Families 54**ELLS** Internet Resources for Promoting Print  
Awareness at Home 55**HOW DO I . . .** Conduct Meetings with  
Families? 56**PART TWO Oral Language****chapter three**Understanding Language Development in Early  
Childhood 60**FACT FILE** on Language  
Development 60**W**hat Is Language? 62**C**ollaboration with Families and  
Professionals 64

Contributions and Consequences 65

**H**ow Do Children Learn to  
Communicate? 65**C**omponents of Language 67

Pragmatics 68

Semantics 69

Syntax 70

Graphophonics 71

**Overview of Language Development** 72

**Theories of Language Acquisition** 74



TEACHER CONCERNS AND BASIC STRATEGIES 85

WEB 2.0 MULTILEVELED TEACHING TOOLS 86

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT 86

APPS AND SITES FOR TODDLERS 87

**Conclusion** 88

**RESEARCH-BASED LITERACY STRATEGIES** 88

Phonological Awareness and Learning to Recognize Rhymes 88

Using Environmental Print 89

Using Children's Names to Foster Language Development 89

**FOCUS ON TABLET APPS FOR LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT** 91

Contributed by Rae Ann Hirsh 91

**LINKS WITH LITERATURE** Books for Infants and Toddlers 91

**PICTURE BOOK PICKS:** Recently Published Books for Babies and Toddlers 93

**ELLS** The Affective Filter 94

**HOW DO I . . .** Teach Phonological and Phonemic Awareness? 95

**chapter four**

Helping Young Children Become Better Listeners 97

**FACT FILE** on Listening 97

**What Is Effective Listening?** 99

**Collaboration With Families and Professionals** 100

Contributions and Consequences 100

**Why Is Listening Important?** 101

**Overview of Children's Listening Development** 102



TEACHER CONCERNS AND BASIC STRATEGIES 108

WEB 2.0 TOOLS FOR TEACHING POETRY 110

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT LISTENING 110

APPS AND SITES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S LISTENING 115

**Conclusion** 116

**RESEARCH-BASED LITERACY STRATEGIES** 116

Audiobooks and the Playaway 116

Technology to Support Listening 117

Directed Listening/Thinking Activities and Discussion Webs 117

**LINKS WITH LITERATURE** Song Picture Books 118

**PICTURE BOOK PICKS:** Recently Published Song Picture Books 119

**FOCUS ON VOICE THREAD** 120

**ELLS** The Listening Environment 121

**HOW DO I . . .** Teach Onsets and Rimes (Word Families)? 122

**chapter five**Supporting the Speaking Abilities  
of the Very Young 124**FACT FILE** on Speaking 124**W**hat Is a Positive Talk  
Environment? 126**C**ollaboration with Families and  
Professionals 129Contributions and  
Consequences 129**D**efinition of Children's  
Speech 130**O**verview of Children's Speech  
Development 132Communicative and  
Noncommunicative Speech 132**U**nderstanding Young Children's  
Language Challenges 136**TEACHER CONCERNS AND BASIC  
STRATEGIES** 140**WEB 2.0 TOOLS TO TEACH SPEAKING  
SKILLS** 142**CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES  
TO DEVELOP CHILDREN'S  
SPEAKING** 143**APPS AND SITES THAT ENCOURAGE  
CHILDREN TO TALK** 152**Conclusion** 153**RESEARCH-BASED LITERACY STRATEGIES** 153

K-W-L Plus 153

Speech-to-Text Software 154

Electronic Talking Books 154

**FOCUS ON VOKI** 155

Contributed by Rae Ann Hirsh 155

**LINKS WITH LITERATURE** Poetry and Stories  
in Verse 155**PICTURE BOOK PICKS:** Recently Published  
Poetry Books 156**ELLS** Respecting Cultural Differences in  
Conversation 157**HOW DO I . . .** Encourage Extended Conversation  
with a Young Child? 158**chapter six**Using Narrative and Expository Texts to Foster  
Growth in Literacy 160**FACT FILE** on Narrative and Expository  
Texts 160**W**hat Are Narrative and Expository  
Texts? 161**C**ollaboration with Families and  
Professionals 165Contributions and  
Consequences 166**O**verview of Children's Narrative and  
Expository Styles 166**TEACHER CONCERNS AND BASIC  
STRATEGIES** 171**WEB 2.0 TOOLS FOR ANSWERING  
CHILDREN'S QUESTIONS** 172**CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES TO  
SUPPORT CHILDREN'S MASTERY  
OF NARRATIVE AND EXPOSITORY  
TEXTS** 173




APPS AND SITES TO PRODUCE NARRATIVE AND EXPOSITORY TEXTS	177		
<b>Conclusion</b>	177		
<b>RESEARCH-BASED LITERACY STRATEGIES</b>	<b>178</b>		
Storytelling Drama	178		
Captioned Video	178		
Graphic Organizers	180		
		<b>FOCUS ON STORYKIT</b>	<b>181</b>
		Contributed by Rae Ann Hirsh	181
		<b>LINKS WITH LITERATURE</b>	Folktales 181
		<b>PICTURE BOOK PICKS:</b>	Recently Published Information Books 182
		<b>ELLS</b>	Vocabulary Development 184
		<b>HOW DO I . . .</b>	Teach with Information Books? 184

## PART THREE Literacy with Print

### chapter seven

### Fostering Growth in Emergent Literacy 188

<b>FACT FILE</b>	on Emergent Literacy	188	
<b>What Is Emergent Literacy?</b>		190	
<b>Collaboration with Families and Professionals</b>		192	
Contributions and Consequences		193	
<b>Overview of Emergent Reading Development</b>		193	
Understanding What a Book Is		195	
Understanding How a Book Works		195	
Becoming a Listener and Participant		196	
Inventing Stories to Go with Illustrations		196	
	<b>TEACHER CONCERNS AND BASIC STRATEGIES</b>	200	
	<b>WEB 2.0 TOOLS FOR TEACHING THE ALPHABET</b>	205	
	<b>CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT EMERGENT READING</b>	205	
			<b>APPS AND SITES FOR EMERGENT READERS</b> 207
			<b>Conclusion</b> 208
			<b>RESEARCH-BASED LITERACY STRATEGIES</b> 208
			Word Walls and E-Sorts 208
			“Talking” Reading Support Programs 208
			Dialogic Reading 209
			<b>FOCUS ON LEAF SNAP</b> 210
			Contributed by Rae Ann Hirsh 210
			<b>LINKS WITH LITERATURE</b> Big Books and Shared Reading 210
			<b>PICTURE BOOK PICKS:</b> Recently Published Predictable Books 212
			<b>ELLS</b> A Strategy for Sharing Books with Dual Language Learners 213
			<b>HOW DO I . . .</b> Introduce New Words to Children? 213
			<b>CHAPTER APPENDIX 7.1:</b> Mel and Tod 215

**chapter eight**Supporting Early and Independent  
Reading 218

**FACT FILE** on Early and Independent  
Reading 218

**What Is Early and Independent  
Reading?** 220

**What Children Need to Become  
Readers** 223

Collaboration with Families and  
Professionals 224

Contributions and  
Consequences 225

**Overview of Children's Early  
and Independent Reading  
Development** 225

Print, Meaning, and Story  
Knowledge 225

Word Configuration and Sound/Symbol  
Correspondence 226

Coordinating Knowledge of Print and  
Story 226



**TEACHER CONCERNS AND BASIC  
STRATEGIES** 231

**WEB 2.0 APP AND SITE REVIEWS FOR  
EDUCATORS** 233

**CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES TO  
SUPPORT EARLY AND INDEPENDENT  
READING** 234

**APPS AND SITES FOR YOUNG  
READERS** 237

**Conclusion** 238

**RESEARCH-BASED LITERACY  
STRATEGIES** 238

Free Voluntary Reading 238

Readers' Theater 239

Repeated Oral Reading and  
Scaffolded Silent Reading  
(ScSR) 239

**FOCUS ON MY STORYMAKER** 240

Contributed by Rae  
Ann Hirsh 240

**LINKS WITH LITERATURE** Easy Readers and  
Learning to Read 241

**PICTURE BOOK PICKS:** Recently Published  
Series Books for Young Readers 243

**ELLS** The Literacy Achievement Gap 244

**HOW DO I . . .** Teach a Guided Reading  
Lesson? 245

**chapter nine**

## Leading Young Children to Literature 246

**FACT FILE** on Children's  
Literature 246

**What Is Literature for Young  
Children?** 248

**Collaboration with Families and  
Professionals** 248

Contributions and  
Consequences 250

**Overview of Children's Literature** 250

**Ways of Using Literature** 251

**Quality** 251

**Selection** 252

**Genres** 254

**Presentation** 257



TEACHER CONCERNS AND BASIC STRATEGIES 261

WEB 2.0 TOOLS FOR TEACHING WITH CHILDREN'S LITERATURE 262

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT RESPONSES TO LITERATURE 263

Conclusion 265

**RESEARCH-BASED LITERACY STRATEGIES 265**

Reading with Companion Animals 265

Joint Attention and Print Referencing 265

Comprehensible Input 266

**APPS AND SITES OF DIGITAL STORYBOOKS 267**

**ELLS** Bilingual Children's Literature and Second-Language Acquisition 268

**FOCUS ON DREAMWEAVER 269**

Contributed by Colleen Freyvogel DiBuono 269

**LINKS WITH LITERATURE** Literature Circles 270

**PICTURE BOOK PICKS:** Recently Published Books on the African American Experience 271

**HOW DO I . . .** Create a Book Guide? 272

**PART FOUR Written Language and Symbol Systems**

**chapter ten**

**Drawing and Writing to Communicate 275**

**FACT FILE** on Drawing and Writing 275

**What Is the Relationship Between Drawing and Writing?** 277

**Collaboration with Families and Professionals** 284

Contributions and Consequences 285

**Overview of Children's Drawing and Writing Development** 285

Prealphabetic Writing and Nonrepresentational Drawing 286

Alphabetic Writing and Representational Drawing 287

Teaching Handwriting 292



TEACHER CONCERNS AND BASIC STRATEGIES 295

WEB 2.0 TEACHING TOOLS THAT SUPPORT DRAWING AND WRITING 297

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S DRAWING AND WRITING 298

APPS AND SITES TO PRACTICE DRAWING AND WRITING 302

Conclusion 303

**RESEARCH-BASED LITERACY STRATEGIES 304**

"Talking" Drawings 304

Multimedia Composing 304

Gender Influences on Children's Drawing and Writing 304

**FOCUS ON MY STORY 305**

Contributed by Rae Ann Hirsh 305

**LINKS WITH LITERATURE** Picture Books to Inspire Drawing and Writing 306

**PICTURE BOOK PICKS:** Recently Published Books on Illustrating and Authoring 310

**ELLS** Metacognitive Strategies 311

**HOW DO I . . .** Use Dictation and Digital Language Experience Approaches Effectively? 312

**chapter eleven**Understanding Media Influences and Applying  
Technology 314

**FACT FILE** on Media Influences and  
Technology 314

**What Are the Media, and What Is  
Media Literacy?** 316

**Overview of Media Literacy** 321

**Collaboration with Families and  
Professionals** 322

Contributions and Consequences 323



**TEACHER CONCERNS AND BASIC  
STRATEGIES** 323

**WEB 2.0 REVIEWS OF THE MEDIA AND  
CURRICULUM RESOURCES** 327

**CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES TO  
SUPPORT MEDIA LITERACY** 328

**APPS AND SITES TO PROMOTE  
CRITICAL THINKING AND MEDIA  
LITERACY** 331

**Conclusion** 331

**RESEARCH-BASED LITERACY  
STRATEGIES** 332

Educational Television and  
Literacy 332

Online Publishing of Children's Drawing  
and Writing 332

Internet-Based Communication and  
E-Pals 333

**FOCUS ON TIMELINES** 333

**LINKS WITH LITERATURE** Information  
Literacy 334

**PICTURE BOOK PICKS:** Recently Published  
Books that Include Information Literacy  
Concepts 335

**ELLS** Environmental Print 337

**HOW DO I . . .** Integrate Technology to  
Support Diverse Learners? 337

**PART FIVE The Teacher of Language Arts****chapter twelve**Designing and Managing a Language  
Arts Program 340

**FACT FILE** on Language Arts  
Programs 340

**What Is a Balanced Curriculum?** 342

**Collaboration with Families and  
Professionals** 344

Contributions and Consequences 345

**Overview of How Early Childhood  
Educators Shape the Curriculum** 348

Reflecting on a Philosophy 348

Arranging the Physical  
Environment 348

Grouping for Instruction 351

Managing Student Behavior 353

Designing Learning Experiences 355



**TEACHER CONCERNS AND BASIC  
STRATEGIES** 355

**WEB 2.0 PLANNING RESOURCES FOR  
TEACHERS** 361



Definitions for literacy have extended well beyond the ability to read and write. In fact, literacy has become “a moving target, one we can never completely define because information and communication technologies continually change” (Leu, 1997, p. 62). Modern definitions of literacy also recognize it as “multimodal”; this means that literacy includes not only deciphering written words but also using gestures, oral language, technology, mathematical symbols, and a wide range of activities that engage students in using art, images, and artifacts for self-expression and communication (Binder & Kotsopoulos, 2012). In addition, literacy is conceptualized as beginning much earlier, well before formal schooling, and as a continuum of complex skills that begin to develop at birth (Wasik & Herrmann, 2004a; 2004b). Individuals of all ages use forms of communication for learning, enjoyment, storytelling, persuasion, employment, and exchange of information (National Council of Teachers of English, 2010). Technology has influenced the ways we communicate, how we understand the world, and the social and cognitive processes involved in literacy (MacArthur & Karchmer-Klein, 2010).

As a result of all of these changes, young children need a different kind of early childhood educator. Today’s teacher of very young children (from birth through age 8) is expected to be a much more knowledgeable and sophisticated professional than in years past. She or he is expected to integrate advanced technologies into teaching, collaborate with diverse families/communities/professionals, teach in ways supported by research, combine skills in special education and support for English language learners with the traditional competencies of early childhood education, and document young children’s growth as learners. Therefore, any textbook that hopes to serve as a resource for teacher preparation in the field of emergent and early literacy must reflect these understandings, trends, and goals. In response to rising expectations for early childhood educators’ effectiveness and student achievement, six significant changes have been made to the sixth edition of *Early Childhood Language Arts*.

## New to the Sixth Edition

*Early Childhood Language Arts* has been thoroughly revised; as a result, at least 30 percent of the material is new to the book. New tables, figures, resources, and references have been added to each chapter. With this, the sixth edition, there is a much greater emphasis on Web 2.0 tools suitable for young children and their teachers.

- 1. Web 2.0.** Web 2.0 refers to the “second generation” of the World Wide Web that is more user-friendly and interactive. This new feature is an annotated list of several interactive technology tools—apps and websites—that can be used to support more effective teaching.

2. **Apps and Sites.** This new feature suggests free or inexpensive apps and websites that are developmentally suited for young children.
3. **Focus on . . . .** This feature takes a more in-depth look at a top-rated technology tool and shows how it can be used in the classroom to support literacy learning at three different levels—prereader, emergent reader, and independent reader. Rae Ann Hirsh, a faculty member at Carlow College, contributed most of these examples through her work at the early childhood technology center. The one in Chapter 9 was provided by Colleen DiBuono, faculty member at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.
4. **Picture Book Picks.** Very recently published, high-quality picture books have been selected, and an age/grade level, annotated list is supplied in each chapter. Nicole Olbrish, a doctoral candidate at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, contributed many of these to the book.

The following features were thoroughly updated with the sixth edition:

1. **Fact Files.** Current statistics and research findings introduce each chapter as a way to challenge widely held assumptions, address common misconceptions, and provide scientific evidence to support each assertion.
2. **Margin Notes.** These have been completely revised to address four different aspects of language arts instruction. **Standards & Teaching** provides standards of leading professional associations that govern instruction in the language arts. **Brain & Language** informs students of the implications of neuroscience research for early childhood educators. **Infants & Toddlers** provides a research perspective on the language development of the youngest learners. **Research & Report** suggests individual investigation outside the classroom that culminates in a small-group, in-class activity focused on a timely topic related to each chapter's content.

## Focus of the Book

In preparing this sixth edition of *Early Childhood Language Arts*, my experiences with newcomers to the field continued to serve as a touchstone. Throughout the revision process, I kept asking myself, “What do early childhood educators really need to know, do, and understand in order to work effectively and compassionately with the very young?”

Michelle, a former student, immediately came to mind. During her early childhood teaching career thus far, Michelle has had memorable experiences with diverse groups of young language learners that have contributed to her professional development. As a student teacher in a rural public school kindergarten, she found out firsthand how a pervasive developmental disorder such as autism affects a child's development in general and language development in particular. Five-year-old Kevin, a boy in her class, talked but rarely used language to communicate to or with anyone. Michelle would often notice Kevin mouthing letters or talking to himself about things that captured his interest. He was particularly fascinated by letters, numbers, maps, and globes, and Michelle was surprised to discover that his reading skills were very advanced.

During Michelle's first full year of teaching as a long-term substitute in first grade, her class included Krystall, a child who used a motorized wheelchair and a communication board with a voice synthesizer to communicate. One of Michelle's most treasured teaching moments was observing Krystall and her friend Madeline,

a child who was hearing impaired, play together. Krystall would point to the icon on her electronic communication panel, Madeline would demonstrate the corresponding word using American Sign Language, Krystall would push the button so that the voice synthesizer would say the word, and both girls would giggle.

In her second year of full-time teaching, Michelle married and moved to California, where she took a job in a private preschool in an urban area. After she met her class for the first time, Michelle called me to say, “I have 15 children in my class, and there are 12 different languages represented! I’m going to learn so much this year!”

I share these stories about Michelle because they illustrate how important it is for teachers to be well informed about young children’s language and the strategies used to support language growth. Consider how, in just three years’ time, Michelle’s knowledge of children’s communication disorders and language development was enriched and enlarged. Consider also how she made the commitment to keep on learning and developing as a professional. I believe that Michelle was and will continue to be successful as an early childhood practitioner because she fully accepts her responsibility for fostering all young children’s language growth and because she continually seeks professional development. As her former college professor, I would also like to think that the quality of her teacher preparation program made a significant contribution to her excellence as a teacher.

What was apparent from the start was that Michelle did not approach the diverse language learners in her class or center as an inconvenience or a burden. Rather, these new situations sent her in search of support from authoritative sources to learn more—from the child’s family, the library, the Internet, experienced teachers, specialists from other professions, professional organizations, and community services. Michelle did not merely talk about being a facilitator of children’s language; she put her philosophy into action and truly helped every child reach his or her potential as a communicator. With this, the sixth edition of *Early Childhood Language Arts*, I, too, sought to capture essential elements of what enables a novice teacher to mature into a master teacher.

## Underlying Assumptions

I think that it is helpful for textbook authors to make their beliefs explicit to those people who are considering using the book. *Early Childhood Language Arts* is distinctive from many other early literacy books in that it includes oral language rather than concentrating on literacy with print. Beginning with the first edition and continuing now with the sixth, my approach has always been to integrate not only the language arts (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) but also the other subject areas, including the fine arts. The language arts are incomplete without these important connections. We know that learners of language come to us with wide variations in background experiences and abilities; therefore, it only makes sense that we respond in kind with a repertoire of teaching strategies rather than advocating one best method for all.

More specifically, some of the underlying assumptions that I make about young children as language learners include the following:

- The early years are “prime time” for language development; therefore, it is particularly important for young children’s teachers to be knowledgeable about ways of fostering language growth.



- The communication environment has changed dramatically in recent years. In this complex environment, children need to know how to use multiple symbol systems.
- Language is, first and foremost, a tool for social interaction; children need to use language to achieve important purposes.
- Learning to read and write is challenging and requires motivation; high-quality literature is a major means of motivating children to become literate.
- Literacy during early childhood typically begins with oral language; therefore, it is important to give equal time to listening and speaking because this is where language development begins.
- Literacy is more than mouthing words; children need dynamic role models to emulate so that they are “apprenticed” into literate behavior.
- High levels of literacy are expected in contemporary society; children and families need to be invited into literacy activities that will expand the range of options available to them in work and life.
- Becoming a competent teacher of young children requires knowing how to adapt to multiple demands; therefore, early childhood educators need to reflect deeply on their actions and the consequences of those actions for young learners.
- Early childhood educators cannot meet the needs of diverse groups of language learners alone; they need to collaborate with families and professionals in order to provide high-quality educational experiences.
- Literacy affects the ability of individuals to participate in society; therefore, a major purpose of literacy learning should be to enhance the power of individuals to influence institutions for the better.

## Audience for the Book

*Early Childhood Language Arts* is intended for teachers of young children (birth through age 8). The text is most appropriate for a four- or five-year teacher preparation program that leads to certification or licensure. The book would be suitable for a comprehensive community college course on young children’s language and literacy development as well. It is also appropriate for a graduate-level course for practicing teachers who are developing specialized expertise in the early childhood field.

## Structure of the Chapters

This book has been designed with two audiences in mind. One audience is the instructor who is seeking to provide a high-quality, interactive course that moves beyond the traditional lecture format. The other audience is the college or university student who seeks to develop a more thorough understanding of language and literacy development during the early years. The following chapter structure was designed with both of these audiences in mind.

## Fact File

Each chapter begins with a Fact File that serves as a support for the instructor by simultaneously synthesizing current research and addressing common misconceptions of students.

## What Is (Are) . . . ?

Next, each chapter defines the key topic to be addressed, such as the home literacy environment (Chapter 2) or narrative and expository texts (Chapter 6). After learning the terminology central to the chapter, students are invited to delve into the topic further via case material.

## Collaboration with Families and Professionals

This section of each chapter contains real-world case material that enables students to see how teachers are expected to work with professionals in other fields, with families, and with children. These cases are designed to provide readers with experience in collaboration, promote reflective thinking, and generate class discussion.

## Overview of...

This section provides a developmental perspective on the chapter content.

## Teacher Concerns and Basic Strategies

Every chapter contains sections that identify common concerns of teachers, basic strategies for effective language arts programs for the very young, and specific teaching activities that are developmentally appropriate.

## Classroom Activities to Support...

An array of sound pedagogical practices that teach the content of each chapter is supplied.

## Research-Based Literacy Strategies

Three instructional strategies that are supported by empirical research conclude every chapter. Each is described briefly and supported by empirical evidence.

The following features were continued from the fifth edition; all are designed to provide explicit, practical, research-based guidance for teachers of young children.

- **Links with Literature.** This feature leads students to classic and contemporary high-quality children's literature across various genres. Rather than being given lengthy lists of books, students are directed to online sources from leading professional organizations that are continually updated as well as being provided with "Names to Know." For example, Chapter 1 Links with Literature focuses on multicultural, multiethnic, and international children's books and also provides links to multicultural and international resources.
- **English Language Learners.** This feature provides the very latest research-based recommendations for working with students who are acquiring English.

- **How Do I . . . ?** This feature offers a step-by-step explanation of how perform a particular task, such as introducing new vocabulary words or planning a standards-based lesson.

## Instructor's Manual and Test Bank

For each chapter, the Instructor's Manual features the chapter focus, chapter objectives, key terms, student learning experiences, and teaching and learning resources, along with a sample syllabus and a sample project. The Test Bank includes new, scenario-type test items similar to those on the national teacher examination; the explanations for all correct and incorrect answers are provided. The Test Bank also includes the more traditional true/false, multiple-choice, and matching. Page references to the main text and suggested answers have been added to most questions to help instructors create and evaluate student tests. These materials are available for download from the Instructor Resource Center at [www.pearsonhighered.com/irc](http://www.pearsonhighered.com/irc).

## PowerPoint™ Presentation

Designed for teachers using the text, the PowerPoint™ Presentation consists of a series of slides that can be shown as is or used to make overhead transparencies. The presentation highlights key concepts and major topics for each chapter. These slides are available for download from the Instructor Resource Center at [www.pearsonhighered.com/irc](http://www.pearsonhighered.com/irc).

Speak with your Pearson sales representative about obtaining these supplements for your class!

## Acknowledgments

As any author can attest, no book is entirely the product of one writer's efforts. I am indebted to the writings of other authors whom I admire and have cited here and to my college students, who have taught me how to be a better professor over the past 31 years.

I want to thank my editors, Kathryn Boice and Erin Grelak. As an author, I am particularly grateful for Aurora Martínez's keen insights into the changing marketplace and her support of this book over many years as an editor and now as a vice president. My sincere appreciation also goes to the following reviewers, who thoughtfully evaluated the revision plan and the earlier drafts of the sixth edition: Deborah Ellermeyer, Clarion University of Pennsylvania; Patricia Gill, Queens College; Jane Horner, Ivy Tech Community College; and Traci Johnston, Pulaski Technical College.

Also deserving of recognition are my editors for previous editions at Allyn & Bacon, including Virginia Lanigan, Sean Wakely, and Nancy Forsyth. Nicole Olbrish and Mary Grace Stutzman, doctoral candidates at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, revised the Instructor's Manual, Test Bank and PowerPoint™ Presentation for the sixth edition based on the work that Michelle Amodei, faculty member at Edinboro University, had done for the fifth edition and Natalie Barnyak, faculty member at University of Pittsburgh Johnstown, had done previously.

Finally, I would like to thank my husband for his thoughtful commentaries on drafts of these chapters and for his forbearance as I pursued my passion for writing.

# Appreciating Diversity and Educating the Young Language Learner



Courtesy of Huachuan Wen and Ying Jiang



## **FACT FILE** on Diverse Language Learners

- There are 74.5 million children under the age of 5 in the United States; this means that more than one in four children are under the age of 5 (Children's Defense Fund, 2011).
- The United States has the highest number of families with low incomes since the Census Bureau began collecting data in 1959 (Cauchon & Hanse, 2011).
- Over 950,000 homeless children enrolled in U.S. schools during 2008–2009; children make up about half of the homeless population, and almost 50 percent of these children are under age 6 (National Center on Family Homelessness, 2011).

- The number and types of early childhood education programs have increased; so has the cultural and linguistic diversity of the children enrolled in these programs (Garcia & Frede, 2010).
- Children of color, who are now 44 percent of America's children, will be the majority of children in 2019 (Children's Defense Fund, 2011).
- Black children's chances of being poor are about 2.5 times greater than those of their white counterparts; 31 percent of white children and 69 percent of black children who are born poor spend at least half of their childhoods living in poverty (Ratcliffe & McKernan, 2010). Sixty-four percent of low-income children were born to immigrant parents (Chau, Kalyani, & Wigth, 2010).
- English Language Learners (ELLs)—children who are developing proficiency in English—constitute one in nine students in the United States and are projected to represent one in four students by 2025 (Pew Hispanic Center, 2011). Approximately 80 percent of these ELLs are native speakers of Spanish (Fortuny, Hernandez, & Chaudry, 2010).
- The number of ELLs enrolled in U.S. public schools increased by 51 percent between 1997 and 2008 (Education Week, 2013). Of the 2.7 million school-age children who spoke a language other than English at home and spoke English with difficulty in 2009, about 73 percent spoke Spanish (Aud et al., 2011).
- The majority of people in the world today are bilingual or multilingual (Baker, 2006); although many people in the United States are monolingual, this is changing due to immigration (August & Shanahan, 2008).
- Four major factors may contribute to the development of bilinguals: (1) the status of the languages involved, (2) the socioeconomic status (SES) of the child's family, (3) the amount of language input in each language, and (4) the language(s) the mother or caretaker uses with the child (Dixon, Wu, & Daraghmeh, 2011).
- In the United States as well as some other countries, English not only dominates but also is associated with status, education, wealth, and power; it is also the language of international business and technology (Dixon et al., 2011).
- Family SES usually is conceptualized as some combination of family income, parents' education level, and job status. In the United States, SES has been shown to be a predictor of school outcomes for bilinguals (e.g., August & Shanahan, 2008; ). Higher income can facilitate access to more language-learning resources such as books, technology, cultural events, tutors, and enrichment programs (Willingham, 2012 ).
- When families use English in the home, proficiency in the ethnic language often declines (Dixon et al., 2011). If there is a very dominant societal language, children may need more sources of input to preserve and enhance their knowledge of their first language (Gathercole & Thomas, 2009; Scheele, Leseman, & Mayo, 2010).

- Over 400 different languages are spoken by young ELLs. However, nearly 80 percent of the ELLs in the United States are children living in poverty whose first language is Spanish. The next most populous groups of ELLs in the United States are Vietnamese, Hmong, Cantonese, and Koreans (Kindler, 2002).
- As the student population has grown more diverse, the teaching force has become more homogeneous (Johnson, 2006). In 2003, nearly 40 percent of U.S. public school children were members of minority groups, while less than 10 percent of their teachers were members of minority groups (Snyder & Hoffman, 2003).

*Did any of this information surprise you? If so, what? Why? How will you use this knowledge to educate and care for the very young?*

## What Is the Cultural Context and Home Literacy Environment?

Every group and every individual has beliefs about language and its use, values and ideas about language and its speakers, and expectations for language teaching and learning (Park & King, 2003). Children bring to school the effects of one highly influential type of cultural context—the home literacy environment (HLE) (Burgess, 2011; Weigel, Martin, & Bennett, 2006a; 2006b; 2006c). The HLE is conceptualized in many different ways; however, the main idea is the amount of support that children get at home in their efforts to acquire literacy with print (Duursma et al., 2007; Hood, Conlon, & Andrews, 2008; Nutbrown, Hannon, & Morgan, 2005; Phillips & Lonigan, 2009). To illustrate differences in the HLE, hearing parents of children who are deaf (Stobbart & Alant, 2008) and parents and families of children with severe visual impairments (Murphy, Hatton, & Erickson, 2008) may have very different concepts of

### Standards & Teaching

Consult the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition's Short Turnaround Report titled *Key Demographics and Practice Recommendations for Young English Learners* (2011) at [www.ncela.gwu.edu/files/uploads/9/EarlyChildhoodShortReport.pdf](http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/files/uploads/9/EarlyChildhoodShortReport.pdf). How do these recommendations guide your professional practice?

their roles in supporting literacy. The HLE has both immediate and long-term consequences for learning (Melhuish et al., 2008).

Although it may be customary to think of reading aloud and visiting the library, families engage in all types of activities that involve literacy tasks, such as making a shopping list, communicating with family members via e-mail, planning a community garden (Starbuck & Olthof, 2008), or consulting an information board at the local store about upcoming events (McTavish, 2007). Naturally, there is great diversity in the family members present in each home (Mui & Anderson, 2008), the type and amount of media in children's homes, the time devoted to reading versus television, and the kinds of practice with oral and written language that each child acquires prior to beginning school (Bracken & Fischel, 2008; Linebarger, Kosanic, Greenwood, & Doku, 2004; Sonnenschein & Munsterman, 2002).

Some of the home activities associated with better academic performance in school include engaging young children in conversation, reading and discussing books,

providing writing materials, supporting play that incorporates literacy activities, demonstrating the purposes of literacy, and maintaining a joyful atmosphere around literacy activities (Denton, Parker, & Jasbrouck, 2003). If the home and school literacy environments are dramatically different, it often makes literacy learning more difficult for the child.

Children in today's classrooms are more culturally, socially, academically, and physically diverse than ever before. To illustrate, in a public school preschool classroom consisting of 16 students, one researcher found that 15 qualified, on the basis of their family's low income, for the free lunch program. Eleven of the students were ELLs, and three were on individualized education programs (IEPs) due to special needs. Languages spoken by the students—other than English and Spanish—included Arabic, Nuer, Dinka, Oromo, Tigrinya, Swahili, Kirundi, Bajuni, and Sign Language. Some children had a developmental delay, had a speech delay, were deaf or hard of hearing, or had an attention deficit disorder (Howes, Downer, & Pianta, 2011). Teachers of young children need to look beyond their own family experiences and customary ways of thinking (Bornstein, 2009; Christian, 2006; Gonzalez-Mena, 2008, 2009; Jones & Nimmo, 1999).

It is surprisingly easy to fall into the habit of thinking the group to which we belong sets the standard by which others should be judged. For example, preconceptions may cloud a teacher's views of a child with foster parents (Swick, 2007), a parent in prison (Clopton & East, 2008a, 2008b), lesbian or gay parents (Patterson, 2006), grandparents responsible for his or her care (Kenner, Ruby, Jessel, Gregory, & Arju, 2007), or parents who are recent immigrants and speak very little English (Moore & Ritter, 2008). A teacher's belief system might lead to favored treatment of or, conversely, unease with children from families for whom faith is of paramount importance to their family interactions and traditions (Peyton & Jalongo, 2008). Rather than expecting the child to switch to the middle-class values and attitudes that predominate in the school, the school needs to become more culturally responsive (Gay, 2000; Olsen & Fuller, 2007) and capitalize on each family's strengths (Carter, Chard, & Pool, 2009; González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005).

One reason that groups of children have become increasingly diverse has to do with public policy. In the 1930s and 1940s in the United States, most children with special needs were kept at home and did not attend school at all. During the 1950s and 1960s, they were completely isolated from peers in special classes. More often than not, these classrooms were located in the least well-equipped and most remote areas of the building. During the 1970s and early 1980s, children with special needs were brought from their special education classroom into the regular classroom periodically to work alongside peers, a practice called *mainstreaming*. In the 1990s and continuing into the new millennium, children with special needs are included, often full-time, in the classroom with typically developing peers. This practice is referred to as *inclusion* (Hooper & Umansky, 2009; Mallory & Rous, 2009; Mogharreban & Bruns, 2009; Odom, Buysse, & Soukakou, 2011). Inclusion means

individualizing the early childhood setting and [following] developmentally appropriate practices to maximize the possibility that a child is able to learn and grow to her

fullest potential. Inclusion strategies...support *all* children while offering thoughtfully designed supports and interventions to individual children based on their needs. (Parlakian, 2012, p. 71)

In the diverse early childhood settings you are going to encounter, some young children will have highly developed language, and others will face serious language difficulties. Teachers cannot afford to “aim down the middle” with their teaching in the hope that they will successfully reach the average student, that the children who are struggling will somehow catch up, and that the students who are advanced will take care of themselves. Diverse settings require *child advocates*, teachers who are committed to championing the cause of every child and believe that all children can learn. Overall, the research shows that inclusive early childhood programs work best when there is a clear philosophy, teacher support, a focus on the child, a continuum of services, and interprofessional collaboration (Sandall, Hemmeter, Smith, & McLean, 2005). A community of language learners emphasizes cooperation, collaboration, and mutual respect between and among children, parents, families, and professionals. High-quality early childhood language arts programs focus on the whole child. This means that there is attention to the child’s physical, emotional, social, intellectual, and aesthetic growth (Foundation for Child Development, 2008). Figure 1.1 summarizes what a literacy community looks like in action. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (2013) asserts that high-quality education is a fundamental right of all children and requires educators to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions to work successfully with children of all races, ethnicities, disabilities/exceptionalities, and socioeconomic groups to assure high-quality education for all children. Figure 1.2 provides suggestions on working with ELLs that reflect this perspective.

Meeting the needs of diverse language learners cannot be accomplished alone. It takes a team of professionals, all of whom are dedicated to the care, education, and support of the child and family (Division for Early Childhood, 2007). As it refers to teaching, *interprofessional collaboration* is the collective, coordinated effort of members of two or more professions focused on achieving learning goals with and for students and their families. The ability of a variety of professionals to share and collaborate effectively is crucial to program success (Anderson, 2013).

Suppose, for example, that one of your students has had surgery for a cleft palate and needs support to learn to speak clearly. In order to respond, you would need to meet at various times with the child’s parents or family and other educators. Additionally, you might work with other professionals, such as a pediatrician or a speech/language pathologist. Without the benefit of these blended perspectives and expertise, it would be exceedingly difficult to address the needs of the child.

A clear philosophy, commitment to every child, appropriate teacher support, and collaboration with families and professionals all make essential contributions to establishing a community of language learners (Halgunseth, Peterson, Stark & Moodie, 2009). The main principle that governs a learning community is that everyone matters (Batt, 2008). In the next section, you will meet Cheryl, my former student. Now a teacher, Cheryl illustrates how all of these principles can be put into practice.



**FIGURE 1.1** Literacy Communities in Action: What to Look For**Evidence of Collaboration with Parents, Families, Professionals, and the Larger Community**

Teachers who seek to communicate with parents and families in a variety of ways, who strive to make them feel welcome, who use different times and occasions as opportunities to confer about the child's progress, and who use community resources to enhance learning opportunities for children.

**What to Look For**

Information boards, flyers, newsletters, displays of children's work, notices about special events, support services information, notes in backpacks, thank-you letters, invitations to participate, classroom volunteer schedule, videos/audio recordings/books created by the class that can be checked out, and parenting resource books.

**Evidence of Support for Emergent Literacy and Reading**

Teachers who are avid readers themselves, both of professional materials and of children's books, and who immerse children in print and high-quality literature to support emergent literacy and reading.

**What to Look For**

Independent reading, paired reading, reading aloud, choral reading, chants, raps, rhymes, reading "big books," song charts, dictated stories, poems, child-constructed books, Readers' Theater, Thought for the Day, classroom helper board, visual aids for instruction.

**Evidence of Support for Drawing, Writing, and Spelling**

Teachers who provide support when they call children's attention to print; who model the writing process for children; who demonstrate enthusiasm for multiple symbol systems that children use to communicate; who offer support and encouragement to children engaged in drawing, writing, and spelling; and who use technology to support children's pictorial and graphic communication.

**What to Look For**

Children's handwriting, mailboxes with drawings and letters, stories accompanied by drawings, multimedia projects, scripts of plays, original picture books, class e-mail and web pages, message boards, word-processing software and computer printouts, signs and posters, peer editing, journal writing, class newsletter.

**Evidence of Support for Oral Language**

Teachers who talk and listen respectfully to children and families, who encourage conversations between and among children throughout the school day, and who provide time and materials for play and spontaneous language to support oral language.

**What to Look For**

Opportunities for peer interaction, extended conversations between adults and children, recorded books and equipment for listening to them, music center, literacy materials to use during play, props for dramatization, puppets, flannelboard cutouts, high-quality DVDs to view and discuss, computer software.

---

Note: See Wohlwend (2008) for additional resources.

**FIGURE 1.2** Guidelines for Working with English Language Learners**Respect Families**

Accept that children are members of diverse family and community systems and that they bring multiple gifts of language, culture, and wisdom. Recognize that families know their children in ways that can enrich and enlarge your understandings. Strive to build lines of communication among linguistically diverse families so that they can support one another.

**Analyze Beliefs and Attitudes**

Set aside negative myths and common misconceptions. Assure the child and family that their native language and culture are valued. Be aware that not all families are eager to have their children cared for outside the home and may not be entirely convinced of the value of early childhood education.

**Acquire Specialized Skills**

Seek out on-the-job training concerning issues such as the politics of race, language, and culture; strategies for furthering cross-cultural communication (e.g., effective use of translators); and assessment strategies suited to English language learners.

**Reach Out to Families**

Become better informed about each child's and family's language history. Make personal contact in the family's native language, if at all possible. Hold meetings at convenient times and in locations that families do not find intimidating, and give them support and incentives for participation (e.g., child care, transportation, snacks).

**Offer Comprehensive Services**

Take a family literacy approach and provide classes in English for parents/families so that they can participate more directly in literacy learning and see its positive effects.

**Create a Sense of Community**

Warmly welcome every member of the classroom community. Reflect diversity and give children authentic, integrated opportunities to participate in a vital learning community.

**Become a Keen Observer**

Collect evidence of the child's language use both in the native language and in English. Report these findings in ways that can be shared with families during conferences. Accept children's errors as a normal part of language development.

**Be an Advocate**

Endorse policies that address the needs of young, diverse language learners by working with organizations and leaders capable of addressing these needs.

---

Sources: Bouchard, 2001; Eihorn, 2001; Garcia, 2008; Harvey, 2001; Obiakor & Algozzine, 2001; Schwartz, 1996.

## Collaboration with Families and Professionals

Cheryl is a public school teacher in urban California. This year her class includes Victoria, a child from Venezuela who speaks and writes Spanish but almost no English; Caitlin, a child with a severe vision impairment called *macular degeneration* that will eventually lead to blindness; and Mei, a bilingual Hmong child, the son of two Vietnamese Hmong graduate students at the university. Cheryl uses a wide variety of strategies to facilitate the language growth of these children and give them a sense of belonging.

### Brain & Language

In a study of the young child's ability to perform short-term memory tasks, researchers found that most preschoolers were capable of explaining the strategies they used to recall information (Visu-Petra, Cheie, & Benga, 2008). The children described, for example, practicing in their minds and using words to remember the pictures. How could a teacher coach children to do this? Visit the Dana Foundation ([www.dana.org](http://www.dana.org)) website for the latest findings on neuroscience.

In Victoria's case, Cheryl reads about ways to support dual language learners. By getting to know Victoria's extended family, she finds out that the first-grader has an aunt in high school who has been in the United States for several years. The school day for secondary students ends early, so Victoria's aunt volunteers in Cheryl's classroom each afternoon from 2:30 to 3:30, a plan that also benefits her because she is enrolled in the child-care training program at the vocational school.

For Caitlin, the child with the vision impairment, Cheryl builds her understanding of vision problems and consults with special education teachers in her school district to plan appropriate activities. Additionally, she works with the local

Association for the Blind to get Caitlin's family in contact with a program that trains guide dogs for the blind so that Caitlin can get on the waiting list early. As Caitlin's vision deteriorates, she will need learning activities matched to her capabilities, such as electronic books designed for this population (Grammenos, Savidis, Georgalis, Bourdenas, & Stephanidis, 2009). These activities, planned by a professional team and shared with Caitlin's family, are referred to as an IEP. It is her right, under federal law, to have a *free and appropriate* public education and to be educated with her peers to the extent appropriate to her individual needs.

In the case of Mei, who is fluent in two languages, Cheryl involves him almost like a teacher's aide to help other Hmong children in the school who are newly immigrated to the United States and are just beginning to learn English. This arrangement has provided Mei with many challenging activities, such as translating some easy readers and recording the accompanying audio. The book/audio combinations created by Mei have been made available to be checked out of the library. Cheryl has also helped Mei locate a bilingual pen pal on the Internet.

As a result of Cheryl's efforts, all three of these children are progressing well in school and have a respected place among their peers.

### Contributions and Consequences

- *Contributions of the teacher:* How did the teacher play an active role in the lives of these children?

- *Contributions of the family:* How did each family support their child and get involved?
- *Contributions of other professionals:* How did professionals in other fields contribute to addressing the needs of these children and families?
- *Consequences of collaboration:* If the adults had refused to work together, what might have been the effect on the children's literacy learning?

Clearly, Cheryl is making every effort to promote collaboration in her daily classroom practices. The remainder of this chapter provides detailed information about how you, too, can become a successful teacher in diverse early childhood settings. To begin, look at Figure 1.3 to get a preview of the general recommendations for working with diverse learners in the language arts classroom.

## Meeting the Needs of Children with Language Differences

Without question, the United States is a diverse society, yet our nation's track record in working with language differences in the classroom is not a source of pride. When my mother, Felicia, attended public school in the city of New York in the early 1930s, it was customary to punish children for speaking their native languages (e.g., by forcing them to write "I will speak English at school" 1,000 times). One day Felicia was caught speaking Italian to a little boy who had just moved to the United States from Italy and had asked her for help in finding his classroom. While she stood frozen with fear, awaiting her punishment, her teacher said, "Oh, Felicia. You speak Italian. I think it would be wonderful to learn another language, especially one as beautiful as Italian!" When little Felicia shared this incident with her mother, the teacher was invited to the most sumptuous six-course lunch that my Italian grandmother could prepare, complete with her hand-crocheted table linens and real china and crystal!

Even though there were some enlightened teachers who went against common practices, the prevailing attitude toward any language other than English prior to the 1960s was to extinguish it. As support for this point of view, educators pointed to the bilingual child's tendency to mix the two languages as if they were one, combining words from each (e.g., a Spanish-speaking child who says "I like el gato" for "I like the cat"). This *code switching*, as it is called, was cited as evidence that a child's first language interfered with learning English; however, we now know that skill in one language supports and complements learning another language (Conteh, 2007; Jalongo & Li, 2010).

When young children are faced with a new culture where the predominant language is associated with high prestige and social success, their first language may be sacrificed (Fillmore, 1991; Gathercole & Thomas, 2009). Yet, if this happens before these children have mastered English, they often become fluent in neither language. Moreover, when children abandon their native tongue, it is in some ways a rejection of the culture represented by their first language (Bunten, 2010; Fillmore, 1991; Ogbu, 1988). Nevertheless, many places throughout the world continue to violate children's

**FIGURE 1.3** Recommendations for Working with Diverse Groups of Language Learners

### **Attitude**

Maintain a positive attitude and focus on children's strengths rather than their limitations, saying, for example, "Ask Jon. He can answer you on his Vox," rather than "Jon can't talk." Be patient and encourage children to do likewise.

### **Fairness**

Realize that being fair is much more than "treating everyone the same." Actually, you will need to treat children differently while being fair and just. It isn't fair, for example, to criticize a child with Tourette's syndrome (a physiological disorder that causes people to have unpredictable verbal outbursts) for talking when you have asked children to listen quietly to the story.

### **Rules**

Make expectations clear and establish a very small number of rules with the children. For instance, have rules about health and safety, such as "No hurting other people," to include hitting, biting, kicking, shoving, and so on.

### **Directions**

Give directions in clear, concise, and sequential fashion and support the directions with demonstration. For example, show children how to use the listening center and walk them through the procedures, one step at a time, instead of merely telling them about it.

### **Manner of Presentation**

Use concrete examples and demonstrate how to proceed whenever possible, such as showing children how to form the letters of the alphabet by writing with a finger dipped in paint, in sand, with a marker on chartpaper, on the chalkboard, with a laser pointer, on an overhead transparency, and so forth. Use multisensory approaches.

### **Time**

Break up instructional time—for example, a 10-minute large-group discussion in the morning and 10 minutes at the end of the day, rather than 20 minutes at one time. Give children more time to complete a task if they need it.

### **Adaptations**

Individualize activities; for example, a child who has great difficulty writing might be asked to write just the first letter of his or her name. Others in the class might be expected to write their entire names. Give every child a chance to be successful.

### **Narration**

Interpret the behavior of children with special needs for the other students so that they begin to understand them better. For instance, you might say, "Shannon is coming over to play house with you. Look, she's starting up her wheelchair. Now she's ready to be the mother. Give her a baby doll to put on her tray."

### **Encouragement**

Instead of using stock phrases (e.g., "very good," "good job"), give specific feedback that urges the child to the next level, such as "Tony, I noticed that you know so many things about trucks when we talked about our story today. I'm going to loan you this book to take home and show to your mom and grandma. Tomorrow, there will be a story about airplanes that I think you will like."

### **Small Spaces**

Many children prefer small, comfortable spaces where they can read, work without distraction, or simply "get away from it all." Designate a quiet area. It could be a corner with pillows and a book center with low shelves, for instance.

### **Parents and Families**

Dispel fears that the child will be excluded or caused to feel incompetent. Share successes often so that parents and families can really see how their children are benefiting from the program.

### **Professionals**

Know who to turn to for particular types of support and when it is appropriate to do so. Do not consider it a personal failure if you cannot "make it all better" for a child who has profound problems.

### **Celebrations**

Celebrate successes, large and small. For a child with autism, it might be a note that reads "Gabriel talked today! He knew the answer to a subtraction problem."



Katelyn Metzger/Merrill Education/Pearson Education

Every group of children reflects diversity in language learning.

linguistic rights and fail to respect their first language (Cummins, 2003; Reyes & Azuara, 2008).

As teachers, we must be aware of our language biases. Why is it that the same adult who cringes when hearing an Appalachian child say “I didn’t do nothing” or a Hispanic child pronounce *chocolate* as “shocolate” is thoroughly charmed when hearing a British child pronounce *schedule* as “shedule” or finds the New England pronunciation of *idea* as “idear” appealing? Evidently, some language differences win social approval because they are associated with individuals who have higher social status.

If you doubt that you have such biases, consider what occurs when a college teacher is not a native speaker of English. College students will sometimes complain about or even ridicule instructors who do not speak English as their first language and protest that they do not understand these instructors. It is more often the case that some college students are not willing to make the extra effort to communicate, look down on those who are not fluent speakers of English, and/or feel superior because their families “were here first.” Everyone possesses some language biases; the challenge for teachers is to be aware of language discrimination and embrace the language differences that they encounter in their students (Batt, 2008; Murillo & Smith, 2011).

Early childhood educators are required to respect the child’s home language, even if no one in the community speaks that language (Nemeth, 2009, 2009b). Some excellent resources on second-language learning are in Web 2.0 Tools and Apps and Sites features of this chapter on page 18 and page 21.