

Glossary

ability: The means or skills to do something. In this book, we use the term *ability* more broadly than the traditional focus on cognition or psychometric properties to apply across all domains of development. Educators focus and build on each child's abilities, strengths, and interests, acknowledging disabilities and developmental delays while avoiding ableism.

active learning: The process of children's construction of knowledge and meaning making through their relationships, interactions with their environments, and their overall experiences.

adverse childhood experience (ACE): A potentially traumatic event that occurs in childhood. This can also include aspects of the child's environment that undermine their sense of safety, stability, and bonding (CDC 2019).

African American Vernacular English (AAVE): A variation of American English spoken by some members of the African American community (Craig et al. 2003).

agency: A person's ability to make choices and influence events, especially a child's ability to make choices and influence events in the context of learning activities; also referred to as *autonomy* or *child-directed learning*.

anti-bias: An approach to education that explicitly works to end all forms of bias and discrimination.

anti-racism: An approach that entails actively identifying and opposing racial discrimination.

assessment: A systematic procedure for obtaining information from observations, interviews, portfolios, projects, and other sources that is used to make informed judgments about learners' characteristics, understandings, and development to implement improved curriculum and teaching practices. See also *assessment tools, measures, or methods; authentic assessment; formal assessment; formative assessment; informal assessment; and summative assessment*.

assessment tools, measures, or methods:

Specific entities for collecting data on children's learning.

authentic assessment: Age-appropriate approaches and culturally relevant assessment in a language the child understands, across developmental domains and curriculum areas.

bias: Attitude or stereotype that favors one group over another. See also *explicit bias* and *implicit bias*.

child observation: Observation of a child to gather information on the child's development, behavior, levels of learning, interests, and preferences.

commonality: The current research and understandings of processes of child development and learning that apply to all children, including the understanding that all development and learning occur within specific social, cultural, linguistic, and historical contexts.

content knowledge: The knowledge of subject areas to be taught in the early childhood curriculum and the ability to implement effective instructional strategies; also referred to as *subject-area knowledge*.

context: The conditions in which something exists or occurs. This book recognizes the interconnectedness of many contexts (e.g., societal, cultural, historical, family, learning environment) and their influences on young children.

culture: Patterns of beliefs, practices, and traditions associated with a particular group of people. Culture is increasingly understood as inseparable from development. Individuals both learn from and contribute to the culture of the groups to which they belong. Cultures evolve over time, reflecting the lived experiences of their members in particular times and places.

cultural broker: A person who understands the languages, cultural practices, and unique needs and perspectives of families whose backgrounds are different from those of the educators (Massing, Kirova, & Hennig 2013; Paris & Alim 2017). The individual acts as a bridge between the culture of the program and that of the child and family.

culturally responsive: A teaching approach that uses “the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them” (Gay 2010, 31).

curriculum: The knowledge, skills, abilities, and understandings children are to acquire and the plans for the learning experiences through which their acquisition occurs. In developmentally appropriate practice, the curriculum helps young children achieve goals that are developmentally and educationally significant.

developmental progression: The sequences in which skills and concepts typically develop.

developmentally appropriate practice (DAP): A framework of principles and guidelines for practice that promotes young children’s optimal learning and development. DAP is a way of framing a teacher’s intentional decision making. It begins with three core considerations: (1) what is known about general processes of child development and learning; (2) what is known about the child as an individual who is a member of a particular family and community; and (3) what is known about the social and cultural contexts in which the learning occurs.

disability or developmental delay: Legally defined for young children under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), disabilities include intellectual disability; hearing, speech or language, visual, and/or orthopedic impairment; autism; and traumatic brain injury. Under IDEA, states define developmental delays to include delays in physical, cognitive, communication, social or emotional, or adaptive development.

diversity: Variations among individuals, as well as within and across groups of individuals, in terms of their backgrounds and lived experiences. These experiences are related to social identities, including race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, social and economic status, religion, ability status, and country of origin. The terms *diverse* and *diversity* are sometimes used as euphemisms for *non-White*. NAEYC specifically rejects this usage, which implies that Whiteness is the norm against which diversity is defined.

domains of development: The general categories of development and learning—physical, cognitive, social and emotional, and linguistic.

dominant culture: Cultural practices, norms, and values defined by the dominant groups (the social identity groups with the greatest structural power, privileges, and social status) as the norm or standard. In the United States, this has historically and generally speaking been that of White, middle-class, heterosexual, Protestant people of northern European descent.

dual language learner: A child developing knowledge and fluency in their home language while also developing skills in a second (or third) language; also referred to as *emergent bilingual*.

early childhood: The first period in child development, beginning at birth. Although developmental periods do not rigidly correspond to chronological age, early childhood is generally defined as including all children from birth through age 8.

early childhood education: A term defined using the developmental definition of birth through approximately age 8, regardless of programmatic, regulatory, funding, or delivery sectors or mechanisms.

early childhood educator: An individual who cares for and promotes the learning, development, and well-being of children birth through age 8 in all early childhood education settings while meeting the qualifications of the profession and having mastery of its specialized knowledge, skills, and competencies.

early learning settings: These include programs serving children from birth through age 8. *Setting* refers to the locations in which early childhood education takes place—child care centers, family child care programs, elementary schools, religious-based centers, and many others.

equity: The state that would be achieved if individuals fared the same way in society regardless of race, gender, class, language, ability, or any other social or cultural characteristic. In practice, equity means all children and families receive necessary supports in a timely fashion so they can develop their full intellectual, social, and physical potential.

executive function: The network of abilities that allow children to manage their thoughts, emotions, and behavior as they pursue goals. These include attention, working memory, self-regulation, reasoning, problem solving, and approaches to learning.

explicit bias: Conscious beliefs and stereotypes that affect one’s understandings, actions, and decisions.

formal assessment: A cumulative approach to assessment that is used to measure what a child has learned. It includes standardized testing, screenings, and diagnostic evaluation.

formative assessment: A method of assessment that is used to measure progress toward goals in which educators monitor children’s learning to inform and modify real-time instruction to improve learning outcomes.

free play: See *self-directed play*.

funds of knowledge: Essential cultural practices and bodies of knowledge embedded in the daily practices and routines of families.

guided play: A playful learning context in which an experience is initiated and supported by the teacher, is directed by the children, and involves a purposeful learning goal.

implicit bias: Beliefs that affect one’s understandings, actions, and decisions but in an unconscious manner. Implicit biases reflect an individual’s socialization and experiences within broader systemic structures that work to perpetuate existing systems of privilege and oppression.

inclusion: Embodied by the values, policies, and practices that support the right of every child and family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities, and society. Although the traditional focus of inclusion has been on addressing the exclusion of children with disabilities, full inclusion seeks to promote justice by ensuring equitable participation of all historically marginalized children (Beneke et al. 2019).

individuality: The characteristics and experiences unique to each child, within the context of their family and community, that have implications for how best to support their development and learning.

informal assessment: An ongoing approach to assessment that includes children’s work samples and quizzes and teachers’ anecdotal notes/records, observations, and audio and video recordings.

learning trajectory: Descriptions of how children’s skills and knowledge typically progress in a subject or content area.

LGBTQIA+: An acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual, and more, reflecting the expansive and fluid concepts of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

metacognition: Mental processes that strengthen memory, thinking, and reasoning; thinking about thinking.

microaggressions: Everyday verbal, nonverbal, or environmental messages that implicitly contain a negative stereotype or are in some way dehumanizing or othering. These hidden messages serve to invalidate the recipient’s group identity, to question their experiences, to threaten them, or to demean them on a personal or group level. Microaggressions may result from implicit or explicit biases. People who commit microaggressions may view their remarks as casual observations or even compliments and may not recognize the harm they can cause.

multilingual learner: A child developing knowledge and fluency in more than two languages.

norm, normative: The definition of certain actions, identities, and outcomes as the standard (“the norm” or “normal”), with everything else as outside the norm. For example, the terms *White normativity* refers to instances in which Whiteness is considered normal or preferred.

playful learning: A learning context in which children learn content while playing together freely (free play, or self-directed play), with teacher guidance (guided play), or in a structured game.

privilege: Unearned advantages that result from being a member of a socially preferred or dominant social identity group. Because it is deeply embedded, privilege is often invisible to those who experience it without ongoing self-reflection. Privilege is the opposite of marginalization or oppression that results from racism and other forms of bias.

self-directed play: Play that is initiated and directed by children; also referred to as *free play*.

self-regulation: Ability to identify and manage one’s emotions, thoughts, and responses.

social identity: Assigned memberships in groups defined by the society and shared with many other people. Identities include economic class, gender identity, heritage, racialized identity, ability status, country of origin, and religion. Each of these social identities is connected to societal advantages and disadvantages. Individual identity, in contrast to social identity, is about an individual’s specific personality, interests, abilities, and beliefs about themselves (self-concept).

subject or content areas: Areas of learning, including language, literacy, mathematics, social studies, science, art, music, physical education, and health; also referred to as *disciplines*.

summative assessment: A method of assessment that measures achievement at the end of a defined period or experience. It is used to measure child learning or concept retention.

universal design (UD): A concept that can be used to support access to environments in many different types of settings through the removal of physical and structural barriers. UD practices help provide access, participation, and progress—the keys to success that enable every child to take full advantage of the curriculum, be fully included in the learning community, and develop to their full potential (HHS & ED 2015). Universal design for learning (UDL) reflects practices that provide multiple and varied formats for instruction and learning.