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Preschool aged children undergo incredible physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development, processes that are in enormous flux, and that are highly individualized (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). The rapid, multifaceted and interconnected changes that children go through and that set the stage for their life-long development are inseparable from their experiences and interactions with caregivers and early childhood educators (Grindal, Hinton, & Shonkoff, 2012). By questioning some generally accepted early childhood and education pedagogical practices, *Teach the Whole Preschooler: Strategies for Nurturing Developing Minds* encourages educators to reconsider their teaching practices and routines in ways that improve early care and education.

Teach the Whole Preschooler has 12 practice-based chapters, in which Cindy Terebush shares her wealth of knowledge regarding early childhood education and makes a strong case
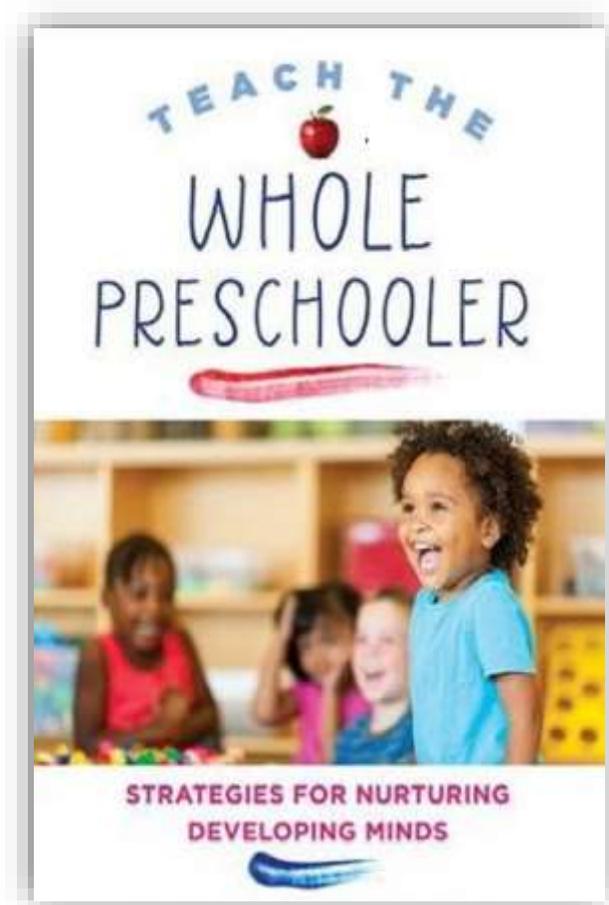
for thinking deeply about the "why" for the activities that we organize for young children, and the interactions that we have with their parents. The book is written with little jargon. An appropriate audience for *Teach the Whole Preschooler* could include practicing early childhood educators, pre-service teachers, college students studying child development, parents of young children, preschool classroom volunteers, and other early childhood practitioners. As an added bonus, the end of each chapter includes suggestions for discussions with families, a feature that is very useful for early childhood educators.

This review highlights key themes in the book and suggests, as a next step, that linguistic and cultural diversity topics be considered in future editions. First, we detail the importance of engaging families as they deal with expectations placed on children in early childhood and education settings. Second, we provide examples of common early childhood and education activities that point to the need to reconsider their implementation in order to promote developmentally appropriate learning. Lastly, we advance a few considerations of how the book could have been more inclusive if it had addressed issues of culturally and linguistically diverse children and families, as well as young learners with special learning needs.

Early in the book, Terebush issues a call to early childhood educators to be more intentional about children's individual developmental needs when navigating the tightrope between too few or too many academic expectations. It is at the latter extreme that we find many parents, as they worry, "Will [my child] emerge victorious in our society's version of survival of the fittest?" (p. 7). Throughout the book, Terebush asks educators to reexamine their expectations of children and of the children's parents. Intentional teachers, she suggests, are constantly questioning their words, goals, and environment to provide students with meaningful and impactful interactions.

Theoretically, *Teach the Whole Preschooler* is in line with the "Can Do Philosophy," the belief that all children bring to schools skills and experiences that advance their learning (WIDA, 2014, p.5). For instance, Terebush asks educators and families to rise above the "very human tendency to observe for the negative" (p. 17), and urges us to consider "What strengths, what gifts, does each child bring to the world that can enhance the environment?" (p. 175). Rather than relying on checklists of "age-appropriate" knowledge, skills, and behaviors, it is important for educators to observe and record affirmatively the abilities that students have already acquired as they move towards "age-appropriate" goals. Terebush observes, "Every single child brings skills to be learned and skills already mastered" (p. 176). We need to look more for what children *are* and what they *can do*, rather than focus on their deficits.

Terebush suggests that a key part of early childhood educators' work is to engage parents about appropriate practice. She uses daily "Did you know…?" communications, aimed at slowing down and re-centering parental focus on appropriate developmental milestones and experiences (p. 187). Through frequent personal communication, teachers can help parents find the right balance of expectations to fit their child's needs. Ultimately, she believes, "We cannot expect parents to understand how and what children learn when we keep it a secret" (p. 186). In Chapter 12, Terebush provides a well-reasoned set of rationales and practical approaches for easing a parent's fears about their child's development, especially in relation to readiness for reading and writing. Many of the fears expressed by parents are "not personal attacks on our abilities. We need to remove ourselves from the emotions and address the facts" (p. 194). Terebush reminds us,

> It is our job to teach everyone — children and parents — that providing a foundation based in

appropriate expectations, acceptance of individuality, and encouragement of independent thinking is what points a child toward a positive experience as the years go by (p. 194).

Throughout the book, Terebush makes the case for designing appropriate early childhood and education activities in various developmental domains. For instance, in Chapter 7, entitled "*Emotional capacity: Sometimes Children Have a Bad Day Too,*" Terebush challenges the unrealistic and common expectation that children "should always be happy" (p. 105). Terebush brings to light examples of how the socialization pressure to perform can negatively affect children's play experiences:

> I have watched attempts at forced play so often during my consulting work that I can't help but wonder when it became wrong for adults to say, "He doesn't want to play right now" (p. 72).

She also questions the educational value of common ways of responding to children's emotions. Terebush advocates teaching children coping skills and the vocabulary necessary so that children can identify and express their emotions. Later, in Chapter 9, the author urges educators to move away from art activities that focus almost exclusively on following directions. She reminds readers of the importance of ensuring that art and music are explored in ways that support children's decision-making and self-expression.

Because accountability pressures in K-12 schools have seeped downward into early childhood education, Terebush addresses the importance of supporting emergent literacy development through developmentally-appropriately designed literacy experiences, especially involving play and exploration. She states, "Dramatic playtime is essential for children to accept that one thing can be another" (p. 164). She reminds the reader that

symbolism is the first step to literacy development because it teaches children that one object can be a symbol for something else. She further explains that singing the ABC song is a memorization exercise for children and not an activity that develops their literacy. We suggest that children's emergent literacy can also be supported by encouraging children to use language in a functional way that serves their specific interests and needs, such as expressing an idea, recounting a story, or inquiring about a wondering (Cuéllar & Blanco, 2018).

While the book does treat a familiar set of early childhood concerns around developmentally appropriate practice and early learning domains, its message could be more relevant and impactful to early childhood educators if the author were to consider support for "whole" preschoolers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. How might the expectation tightrope affect students who are developing bilinguals? The communication recommendations at the end of each chapter would be strengthened if examples included conversations with culturally and linguistically diverse parents, to show how schools can create positive connections with the linguistic and cultural resources these students bring to school each day (Shafer Willner, Monroe, & Mancilla, 2016). Additionally, in the introductory chapter, Terebush briefly mentions the story of a young girl who processed information differently than other students her age (p. 12). The issue of intentional, developmental support for students with different learning and physical needs would be an excellent topic to explore further. Despite these gaps, *Teach the whole preschooler* offers early childhood educators an insightful process for questioning the many hidden assumptions embedded in their daily routines and examples of educational practices that support young children's learning and self-expression.

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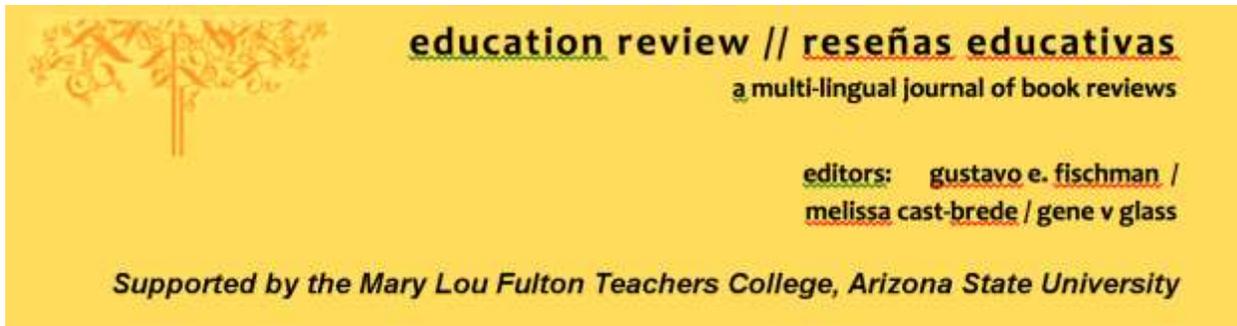
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