

Book review by

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The Program Administrator's Guide to Early Childhood Special Education

*Janen McCracken Taylor,
James R. McGowan & Toni Linder.,
Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc, Maryland, 2009*

This book has a characteristics of a guide book to clearly state how an early childhood special education system can be established, which is included by the system in this scope and how and how needs to take place within this system. It has been especially planned to be an instructive guide book for the professionals who would like to configure and bring into practice an early education system. Within this book, it was clearly explained the problems which may be encountered while establishing such a system in a complete manner and bringing it into action and how these problems may be handled, as well as the things which should be known in respect with the legal and educational aspects of this process. When we have a look at the cover of the book, it can be seen that many experts from different universities has participated to this book by the parts they have written.

When we have a look at the contents of the book, in general there are 16 chapters and attachments and indexes for these. It is seen that the chronology of the subjects within the book, just like in all books for early childhood special education, that it has started with the introduction parts where the historical process was told, that it is respectively followed by the subjects and the appendixes and indexes of the subjects such as screening and evaluation, planning and implementation, transitions and service coordination, supervision of professionals, budget and financing services, evaluation of the legal issues and early education program.

When we have a look at the first chapter, it is seen that the development of early education from the history up to now, has been stated and that it is introduced what the daily

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standards regarding the early education are. Besides this, it has been told what the main elements of an early education program are (Figure 1) and their relationship with each other. This part is an introduction, also in terms of its contents, which prepares the reader to the further parts.

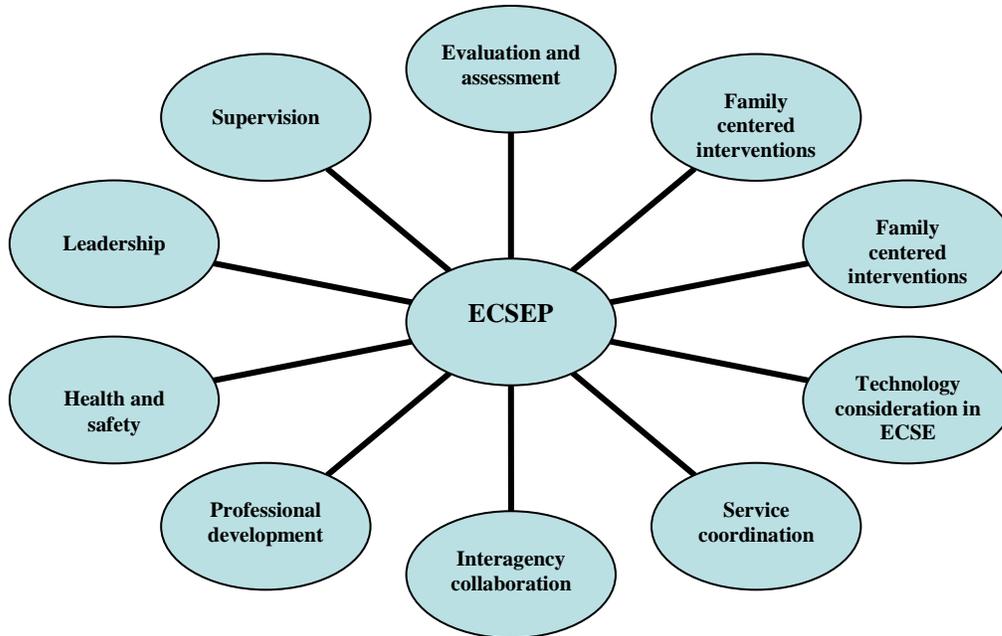


Figure 1. Components of High-Quality Early Childhood Special Education Programs

When looked at the second chapter, we can see that the subject of the unit is effective leadership. In this chapter, it has been clearly expressed how an effective leader should be in general sense, and what the impacts of the concepts of vision-mission and the leadership specialties are, when carrying out a program or a school. While these subjects are told, the leadership theories of 20th and 21st century have been given a focus. Besides this, within this part, it has clearly been told what the vision-mission concepts are and their sub-elements as well. Finally a special consideration has been given to the question of which elements are necessary in order to create a cultural education- teaching ambiance (Figure 2) and to their detailed definitions. As a result, within this part, it is emphasized that effective leadership is very important to carry out a program, at the same time that the leaders need to have a very open and net visions, he/she needs to gain the trusts of his/her personnel and of all the supporters taking place within the program.

In the Third chapter the leadership and interagency between different powers and the subjects for providing the collaboration have been mentioned. It is stated that, when the professionals want to get support from different areas, they need to state very well the positive yields to be created in the children, in the families of the children and in themselves.

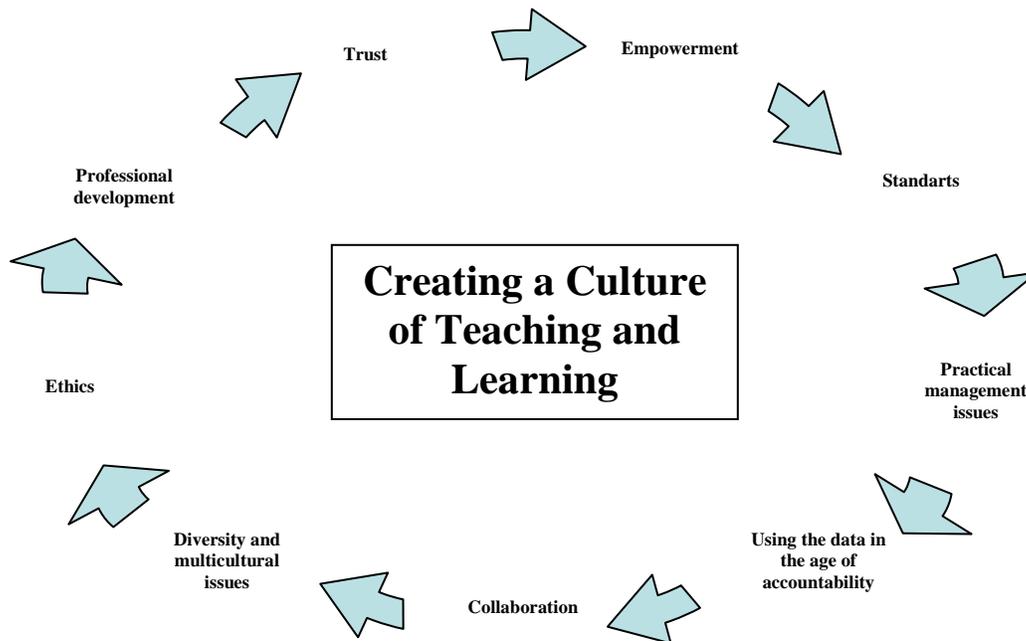


Figure 2. Creating a Culture of Teaching and Learning

It is seen that in the fourth chapter, screening and evaluation have been given focus. First of all, a consideration has been given to the fact how the screening and evaluation take place in IDEA law and then each of these has been expressed in a detailed manner. Secondly, the measuring tools have been introduced which are widely used in screening and evaluation areas (Table 1 & 2), and the differences between the formal and informal measuring tools have been emphasized and information has been given for the content of each one. Consequently it has been stated that screening, monitoring and evaluation processes have been modified within the years and nowadays family-centered approaches are rather being preferred and the families took place in the entire process anymore and the responsibilities and the roles of the families in this process have been indicated.

In the fifth chapter, planning programs for infants and toddlers and for their families and practical subjects regarding these have been handled. The elements to care about, while preparing an education program for infants and toddlers and their families and their connections with each other, have been expressed in a detailed manner. Especially, a special focus has been given to the supports and strategies which are necessary with the family-centered practices. Besides this, it has been emphasized that the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is important and that the cultural features also need to be taken into consideration in the practices planned. The legal requirements for the planning of the program, the individualized family service plan of the infants\toddlers and the family who would receive early education support, and family -centered practices have been handled

with details. It has been emphasized that the family members or the people who deals with the taking care of the child are the first and most important teachers for the child and that providing information and support, towards the requirements of the families, and taking the practices into the daily routines and life of the child would have positive effects on the child. As a consequence, it was emphasized that not the child needs to adapt to the curriculum but the curriculum needs to adapt to the child.

Table 1
Screening Instruments

<i>Name of instrument</i>	<i>Publisher</i>	<i>Age range</i>	<i>Domains</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>
<i>Denver II</i>	Denver Developmental Materials, Inc.	2 weeks- 6 years	Personal\social Fine motor Adaptive Language Gross motor	Normal Suspect Untestable Refer
<i>ASQ</i>	Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.	Birth-60 months	Communication Gross motor Fine motor Problem solving Personal-social skill	Numerical score indicates “may need further evaluation”
<i>DIAL-3</i>	Pearson Education	2-6 years	Motor Concepts Language Behavioral observation	Potential problems OK Potential advanced

In the seventh chapter, a focus has been given to how the technology should be included in the early childhood education settings. First of all, assistive technologies have been introduced; it was in a detailed manner handled how the students could make use of these while learning and how these could be used for the education. It was stated that one of the important missions of the early education is to make the children acquire quality education experiences and that the most important ways for acquiring these experiences is to include the assistive technologies to the daily routines of the children. It is stated that, in order to do this, the administrators, children and the people who are responsible for their education need to acquire the assistive technologies which may be used in the educations of the children, towards their requirements.

In the sixth chapter, the subject of preparing programs for preschoolers. Like always, it was started with the legal requirements and focused on education models for the children at preschool age who are disabled or not disabled, preparation of the programs and their adaptation. A focus has been given to the adaptation of the curriculum and the materials for the disabled children and it was in a detailed manner told how these adaptations would be

made and which activities they would include. Besides this, it was expressed what the elements of a quality curriculum program are and each of these has been briefly introduced.

Table 2

Selected evaluation and assessment instruments for use in determining the developmental status of young children or progress relative to their IFSP or IEPs

<i>Name of instrument</i>	<i>Publisher</i>	<i>Age range</i>	<i>Domains</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>
<i>BDI-2</i>	Riverside Publishing	Birth to 7 years 11 months	Personal social, adaptive, motor, communication, cognitive ability	Developmental levels in each domain
<i>Bayley-III</i>	Pearson Assessment	Birth to 42 months	Cognitive, language, motor, social-emotional, adaptive	Standardized scores for mental and motor development plus social emotional and adaptive behaviour descriptions
<i>CCITSN-3</i>	Brookes Publishing	Birth to 36 months	Person-social, cognition, cognition-communication, communication, fine motor, gross motor	Status in each domain of the curriculum
<i>CCPSN-2</i>	Brookes Publishing	2-5 years	Person-social, cognition, cognition-communication, communication, fine motor, gross motor	Status in each domain of the curriculum
<i>HELP Strands (0-3)</i>	VORT Corporation	Birth to 36 months	Regulatory\ sensory, cognitive, language, gross motor, fine motor, social-emotional, self-help	Approximate developmental age levels in each domain
<i>HELP-P</i>	VORT Corporation	3-6 years	Cognitive, language, gross motor, fine motor, social-emotional, self-help	Approximate developmental age levels in each domain
<i>LAP-D3</i>	Kaplan Early Learning Company	30-72 months	Fine motor, gross motor, cognition, language	Child's skill level in comparison to normative scores

When we have a look at the eighth chapter, it is seen transition in early childhood special education has been focused. In this part, first of all the definition of the transition, its types and the legal process have been explained and then a focus has been given to the effective transition strategies and the coordination between the people who are coordinating these and the family. In this part, a focus has been given to the transition experiences of the disabled children and their families, within a period of 5 years after their birth. With IDEA, the legal aspects of the transition services have been discussed and the agreements and the policies used during the transition services have been explained. It has been explained when the families and the school personnel need to start the transition process. It has been stated that the amount of the participation of the family to this process determined that the point of view of the professional and that the family needs to be included to all of the stages of this process gradually.

In the ninth chapter, professional development and guidance have been handled. A well planned professional development has numerous advantages in the early childhood special education. Lifelong learning is seen important for the development of family-centered practices, for the families as well as all professionals and pragmatics. This part starts with the role of professional development, its definition and its contents and has been finalized with the determination of the requirements for professional development, and the subjects how their evaluation and guidance (mentor) system can be planned and used. Besides this, some options have been offered for providing the professional development and each of these has been explained in a detailed manner. In order to obtain a quality professional development, the requirements of each participator must be met, participation must be provided by all of the participators to the decisions taken during professional development, a positive learning climate must be created and appropriate strategies must be chosen. As a consequence, in this part, it has been explained in a detailed manner how the mentoring system was created, its purposes, and how it can be established.

In the tenth chapter, the supervisions of the professionals and volunteers have been handled. First of all the supervision mechanism used in schools, then the system which needs to be applied and the standards have been introduced. And then the activities which are seen important for the supervision have been explained in a detailed manner. A plan definitely must be made before the supervision and data must be recorded within these plans. It has been emphasized that especially as a result of the administrators' and coordinators' giving importance to the supervision; a positive impact can be seen on the performances of special educators and other professionals working in this area.

When we look at the eleventh part, the health issues seen in the early education settings have been discussed. Any problems that may risk the health of the children and the strategies that may be used in order to prevent these have been handled, and information about the local health sources and some policies, practices and processes which can be developed regarding these subjects have been stated. In addition to this, the roles of the family and of other professionals which are in close contact with the child and the things they need to do have been explained. It has been stated that generally the health problems infects the children from each other in education environment and the precautions for these

have been explained. Likewise, it has been explained in a detailed manner that not only the children but also the people who are responsible for them are also under the risk group in term of many health problems and the solutions in order to prevent such health problems (as an example; daily health check, exclusion, hand washing, universal precautions and other health care measures). As a result, it has been stated that the personnel should be informed of such types of health problems which may occur and the appropriate environment should be arranged for the children.

In the twelfth chapter, the budget and finance in early childhood programs have been told. No matter how a good practice experience is available generally, the budget and finance issue has always created serious difficulties for the administrators. Especially due to the limited finance support, the transition processes are seen as a problem in early childhood education programs. In this unit, first of all it has been explained what the financial management is and the rules of this and what like an effective budget management must be and then a focus has been given to the fact that how the people performing the program should organize these. It has been stated that, since the administrator and the directors always need to take financial decisions, they need to act in accordance with the vision and missions of the institution while taking these decisions.

In the thirteenth chapter, grant management and writing proposal for providing this, have been expressed. Like in the previous unit, supply of the finance and budget sources and the subjects for managing these in an appropriate manner have been extended and continued. While these are being explained, a focus has been given on how the administrators should make use of local and national governments. It has been emphasized, in order to obtain income, to write project proposal and to receive projects from the local governments, associations and national institutions. It has been explained in a detailed manner to which issues have been focused while writing project proposal and besides this, whom and how it is necessary to make use of. The things necessary to perform in order to receive these grants and from whom assistance should be obtained, have been detailed in this part. Besides this, a focus has been given on the fact that writing a proposal is not such a difficult job, and only the process should be monitored and the methods should be known and followed. It has been emphasized that, when these grants are used properly, it is inevitable that it will be useful for both the child and for the family and also for the program carried out. At the end of the unit, it has been shown where the administrators can apply in order to receive a grant and the web site addresses of the relevant places have been given.

The fourteenth chapter is seen as the shortest written part in this book. In this unit, the legal grant issues have been explained which need to be known for establishing an early childhood special education program and for managing it. It has been explained that it is necessary to know the commercial aspects of the program besides the educational aspects, during the process where the program is performed and how the place carried out must be managed as a business. First of all, different managing structures have been introduced and it has been told that when the early childhood special education program is seen as a small business, that there are some legal rules which must be performed here just like all businesses and what should be made in order to fulfill these.

In the fifteenth chapter, the evaluation of the early childhood program has been introduced. It has been stated that the evaluation of the program is important as much as its application and an evaluation model has been offered for this purpose. According to IDEA, the ones who carry out the program legally need to create reports in three areas (social\emotional skills, use of knowledge and skills, and appropriate behaviors to meet their needs) and they should create a report and they should report the performance of the child in certain intervals. First of all, the purposes of the program evaluation process have been explained and then the evaluation process has been divided into stages and these stages have been explained one by one, respectively. As a consequence, ethical issues have been handled throughout the evaluation. Three sub clauses which are seen as most important in the ethical issues are; participation confidentiality, informed consent and evaluator integrity. The importance of three basic aspects in a good evaluation has been emphasized. These are; good evaluation questions, useful yields and programming.

In the sixteenth and the last chapter, the security and the issues for providing the security have been introduced. It has been stated that providing the security of a school is as important as the education performed inside it and that the administrators must perform such regulations within the framework of legal obligations. As a consequence, ten main rules have been stated which are necessary to be know in order to create a safe school ambiance and then each of these have been explained in a detailed manner.

As a result, when the book is examined, it can be seen that the book had been prepared in order to constitute a guide book in order to give information for those who would like to practice and create an early childhood special education program. The fact that the writing style and expressions are simple enough to provide everybody working in this area to understand it easily and that there are duplicable sample forms in the annexes part, about each subject, facilitates the liabilities of the people who are reading the book and who are working in the mentioned area.