

Educating the Young Child 4

Advances in Theory and Research, Implications for Practice

DeAnna M. Laverick

Mary Renck Jalongo *Editors*

Transitions to Early Care and Education

International Perspectives on
Making Schools Ready for Young Children

 Springer

Transitions to Early Care and Education

EDUCATING THE YOUNG CHILD

VOLUME 4

Series Editors:

Mary Renck Jalongo, Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Joan P. Isenberg, George Mason University
Kin Wai Michael Siu, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Editorial Board:

Dr. Wanda Boyer, University of Victoria, Victoria, BC, Canada
Dr. Natalie K. Conrad, University of Pittsburgh, Johnstown, PA, USA
Dr. Marjory Ebbeck, University of South Australia, Magill, Australia
Dr. Amos Hatch, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN, USA
Dr. Huey-Ling Lin, Alabama State University, Montgomery, AL, USA
Dr. Jyotsna Pattnaik, University of California at Long Beach, Huntington Beach, CA, USA
Dr. Louise Swiniarski, Salem State College, Salem, MA, USA
Dr. Kevin J. Swick, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC, USA
Dr. Sue Wortham, Emeritus University of Texas, Wimberley, TX, USA

This academic and scholarly book series will focus on the education and development of young children from infancy through eight years of age. The series will provide a synthesis of current theory and research on trends, issues, controversies, and challenges in the early childhood field and examine implications for practice. One hallmark of the series will be comprehensive reviews of research on a variety of topics with particular relevance for early childhood educators worldwide. The mission of the series is to enrich and enlarge early childhood educators' knowledge, enhance their professional development, and reassert the importance of early childhood education to the international community. The audience for the series includes college students, teachers of young children, college and university faculty, and professionals from fields other than education who are unified by their commitment to the care and education of young children. In many ways, the proposed series is an outgrowth of the success of *Early Childhood Education Journal* which has grown from a quarterly magazine to a respected and international professional journal that is published six times a year.

DeAnna M. Laverick • Mary Renck Jalongo
Editors

Transitions to Early Care and Education

International Perspectives on Making Schools
Ready for Young Children

 Springer

Editors

DeAnna M. Laverick, D. Ed.
Department of Professional Studies
in Education
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
570 South Eleventh Street
Indiana, PA 15705
USA
laverick@iup.edu

Mary Renck Jalongo, Ph. D.
Department of Professional Studies
in Education
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
654 College Lodge Road
Indiana, PA 15701-4015
USA
mjalongo@iup.edu

ISBN 978-94-007-0572-2 e-ISBN 978-94-007-0573-9
DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-0573-9
Springer Dordrecht Heidelberg London New York

Library of Congress Control Number: 2011921327

© Springer Science+Business Media B.V. 2011

No part of this work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, microfilming, recording or otherwise, without written permission from the Publisher, with the exception of any material supplied specifically for the purpose of being entered and executed on a computer system, for exclusive use by the purchaser of the work.

Cover design: eStudio Calamar S.L.

Printed on acid-free paper

Springer is part of Springer Science+Business Media (www.springer.com)

Preface

The assertion that early experience affects later experience represents a triumvirate of theory, research, and conventional wisdom. A basic tenet in the study of human development theory is that the early childhood years leave an indelible imprint across the lifespan. Likewise, research in neuroscience suggests that the brain seeks patterns in complexity, drawing upon previous experience to interpret subsequent experiences (Jensen 2005; Rushton and Larkin 2001). Even from the perspective of the general public, the conviction that initial experience shapes later experience is widely accepted and reflected in everyday expressions such as “starting out right,” “getting a head start,” or the old adage that “first impressions are lasting ones.” For all of these reasons, most parents/families, early childhood educators, and professionals from other fields are in agreement that children’s first experiences with child care, preschool, kindergarten, and other academic programs are important (Einarsdottir et al. 2008).

Some of the more common transitions that characterize the early years are from home care to group care, from home or preschool to kindergarten, and from kindergarten to more formal educational experiences. In addition to these fairly predictable transitions, individual children often are expected to make an extra effort of adaptation to many other circumstances, such as adjusting to a different cultural context, coping with changes in family configuration, or learning in a second language—to name just a few. Thus, transitions can be one of the most challenging issues for children, families, and educators because they frequently involve not just one change, but complex interactions among various changes. The child who cries on the first day of kindergarten also might be one who witnessed violence in his family, fears his mother will abandon him as his father did, lives at a shelter, grieves for the dog he was forced to surrender, and worries about expectations for him at school. In fact, researchers estimate that 48% of children experience moderate to serious problems with adjustment to kindergarten (Pianta et al. 2007). Other studies, including the recommendations of the National Governor’s Task Force on School Readiness (2005), research on parents’/families’ involvement in children’s transitions (McIntyre et al. 2007), teachers’ evaluations of young children’s adjustment issues (Rimm-Kaufmann et al. 2000), and cross-cultural comparisons of transition

practices all concur that transitions are not necessarily managed well when they very much need to be.

In this volume of the *Educating the Young Child* Series, we have gathered together the insights of a group of distinguished teachers/scholars on transition practices throughout the world. The book's primary purpose is to support early childhood educators as they strive to make transitions as seamless as possible. The ways in which such stressors are handled are etched into the child's memory and often have lifelong significance for ways of coping. Consider, for example, the situation of three-year-old Laura. She could not contain her disappointment when her sister, cousins, and friends boarded the big yellow school bus in late August and left her behind. Laura yearned to join their ranks and flatly refused to accept the explanation of "you're too little to go." Those "big kids" had backpacks and lunchboxes, library books and homework; they carried home tales about school that surprised and fascinated her. When Laura's aunt came to visit, she was well aware of the child's eagerness to attend school so she presented the three-year-old with a toy school bus loaded with chubby passengers and a plastic lunchbox that included containers for food and drink. These items led to hours of play about being at school, riding the bus, eating in the cafeteria, and the good/bad behavior of children. Laura would line up her stuffed toys to represent a group of students, scribble on the board, give them assignments, reprimand their misbehavior, and pretend to read them a book. Whenever possible, she would draw her extended family into the play, and new dramatic possibilities would be added to the school theme, such as being sent to the principal's office, having a mean teacher, or getting sick and needing to come home. This "going to school" theme dominated Laura's play for two years, an indicator of the personal relevance that transitions have for the very young.

Three points serve as preparation for readers as they explore these distinguished authors' perspectives on transitions during the early years of life. First, to consider the child's point of view; second, that adults often have misconceptions about the kind and amount of support young children need; and finally, that the human costs of poorly managed transitions are considerable.

Perhaps the first lesson adults need to learn is that the child's perspective is qualitatively different from that of grown-ups. The experience of five-year-old Justin underscores this point. He attended a church-affiliated preschool two days a week at ages 3 and 4, and was ready to begin kindergarten at the local public school. Justin's grandparents, who were his primary caregivers, attended an orientation program sponsored by the school district. Justin also had the opportunity to spend the afternoon at his new school prior to beginning. The evening before his first official day of kindergarten, his grandmother laid out the clothing Justin would wear. Together they equipped his backpack with school supplies and packed a special lunch. The next morning, Justin and his grandfather walked to the school a few blocks away and that afternoon, his grandfather accompanied him on the walk back home. Justin's grandparents were relieved to hear that things had gone very well. That evening, as they began preparations for the second day of kindergarten, the preschooler appeared to be puzzled and then said, "You mean I have to do this *every day*!?" As Justin's perspective illustrates, young children often have very different questions

and concerns than the ones adults anticipate. If ever we hope to effectively smooth transitions from one early childhood experience to another, we first need to identify with the child and really listen to what that child has to say.

Of course, adults can have misconceptions about the best way to support a young child's transitions; this is another important point addressed in this volume. Often, these misconceptions are based on what they recall from their own lives as children or spring from a desire to hasten the developmental process. When an international group of parents and their teachers convened for a workshop on helping their child adjust to a new country, language, culture, and school, a father from Germany asked it is best to ignore a crying child. The presenter said that being cold and rejecting, while *seeming* to be a way to put crying to a stop, would actually tend to have the opposite effect if a young child is genuinely distressed. She then stated, "I assume that you now have a warm, caring relationship with your son; otherwise, you would not have attended this session and bothered to ask." The father nodded affirmatively. "Then consider this," the presenter went on, "your son sees his big, strong father acting strangely. He understandably becomes worried, fearful, and clingy—and that is the very thing you had hoped to prevent. What he really needs is to 'borrow' some of your calm and emulate your confidence so that he can learn how to cope with stressful situations." The father appeared to be satisfied with this answer and afterwards, when the teachers were meeting with the presenter over lunch, they expressed their gratitude for explaining the issue in a way that the parents could understand. This is another goal that *Transitions to Early Care and Education: International Perspectives on Making Schools Ready for Young Children* strives to accomplish. The authors demonstrate how early childhood educators can bring all of their compassion, experience, and wisdom to bear on the issue of transitions as they work with families.

When a transition is managed poorly, it ripples out to affect every person in the process. If, for example, a child does not want to go to school and dreads it so much that he or she becomes physically ill before the bus arrives each day, then the family is in crisis, opportunities for that child's learning are diminished, peer relationships are disrupted, and reciprocal trust and respect between the family and school personnel is compromised. Consider the case of six-year-old Chris. His mother decided to keep him out of kindergarten for a year on the advice of family, friends, and neighbors. Chris was, in her words, "a little backward" and spoke with a lisp. When the child attended kindergarten, other children teased him about "talking like a baby" and his teacher would insist that he repeat after her, drawing out the "r" sound in words. One morning Chris arrived at his classroom door where the two kindergarten teachers stood and one of the teachers said derisively, "Here comes Cwis." Then both of them laughed.

When Chris came home that day, he went directly to his room and could not be coaxed into talking. Hours later, he said tearfully, "My teachers made fun of me today at school." The inexcusable behavior of Chris' first teachers formed a lifelong rift between his family and the educational system; they never again viewed the school or district positively because of this one, thoughtless and heartless act. From that point forward, Chris believed that he wasn't good at anything. His teachers were worse than incompetent, they are a disgrace to the profession.

As educators enter the early childhood field, they must, above all, embrace their solemn responsibility to put children first. We need to identify with the very young, advocate for their needs, protect them from harm, support their development, and optimize their learning. As children wend their way through various educational programs, settings, and policies, our role is to offer gentle guidance and support. We have an obligation to make new educational experiences, affirming and welcoming ones; we need to make schools ready for young children.

Mary Renck Jalongo

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| 1 Introduction | 1 |
| DeAnna M. Laverick | |
| Part I Programs and Practices | |
| 2 Transition to Group Care for Infants, Toddlers, and Families | 7 |
| Nancy Balaban | |
| 3 Examining the State of the Science | 21 |
| Laura Lee McIntyre and Leah K. Wildenger | |
| 4 Supporting and Sustaining the Transition to Formal Schooling for Children on the Autism Spectrum | 33 |
| Joann M. Migyanka | |
| 5 Early Literacy | 45 |
| Susan Hill | |
| 6 Teacher Outreach to Families Across the Transition to School | 57 |
| Annemarie H. Hindman, Lori E. Skibbe and Frederick J. Morrison | |
| Part II Policies and Issues | |
| 7 Critical Perspectives on Transition to School | 75 |
| Anne Petriwskyj and Susan Grieshaber | |
| 8 Transition in the Classroom | 87 |
| Margaret A. King | |
| 9 Preparing Preschoolers for Kindergarten | 93 |
| Sandraluz Lara-Cinisomo, Allison Sidle Fuligni and Lynn A. Karoly | |

| | | |
|--|---|-----|
| 10 | The School Readiness of Preschoolers from Urban Backgrounds | 107 |
| | Regena F. Nelson | |
| 11 | Culture, Health, and School Readiness | 117 |
| | Suzanne M. Winter | |
| Part III International Perspectives | | |
| 12 | Reconsidering Readiness | 137 |
| | Nancy K. Freeman and Beth Powers-Costello | |
| 13 | Preparing Young Children for Schools in China | 149 |
| | Yaoying Xu | |
| 14 | The Socio-Cultural Contexts of Early Education in Caribbean Societies | 163 |
| | Jaipaul L. Roopnarine and James E. Johnson | |
| 15 | Transition to School | 177 |
| | Magdalena Janus | |
| 16 | Schools as Integrated Hubs for Young Children and Families | 189 |
| | Tomoko N. Arimura, Carl Corter, Janette Pelletier, Zeenat Janmohamed, Sejal Patel, Palmira Ioannone and Saba Mir | |
| Index | | 203 |

About the Contributors

Tomoko N. Arimura is a doctoral candidate in the School and Clinical Child Psychology Program at OISE/University of Toronto. She is a member of the Toronto First Duty (TFD) research team, and has investigated effects of service integration on everyday family life.

Nancy Balaban has been on the Bank Street College Graduate School of Education faculty for many years as course instructor and advisor in the Infant and Family Development and Early Intervention Program. She is author of *Everyday Good-byes: Starting School and Early Care: A Guide to the Separation Process* (2006) and co-author of *Observing and Recording the Behavior of Young Children* (2009, 5th edn.), both published by Teachers College Press, as well as many articles and book chapters.

Carl Corter, Ph. D. is the Atkinson Charitable Foundation Chair in Early Child Development and Education and a professor in human development and applied psychology at OISE/University of Toronto. His research on parenting and early childhood programs is designed to inform policy and practice in schools and other community services.

Nancy Freeman is an associate professor of early childhood education and director of the Yvonne and Schuyler Moore Child Development Research Center at the University of South Carolina. She has published widely on professional ethics in early childhood, and issues related to quality programming, with a particular focus on preschoolers.

Allison Sidle Fuligni is assistant professor of child and family studies at California State University, Los Angeles, and associate research scientist in the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Her research focuses on longitudinal and evaluation studies of early development, school readiness, and the educational and family contexts supporting early development, with a particular focus on urban children living in poverty and dual-language learners.

Susan Grieshaber is professor of early years education at the School of Early Childhood, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia. Her research interests include early childhood curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and policy, with a focus on equity and diversity. She has published widely, and co-edits the international refereed journal *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*.

Susan Hill works in teacher education and conducts research in the area of language and literacy development in the years before school and the early years of schooling.

Annemarie H. Hindman is an assistant professor in the College of Education at Temple University. Her research focuses upon early language and literacy learning, particularly among children in poverty, with a particular interest in how families and educators can, independently and in collaboration, support these early skills.

Palmina Ioannone, Ph. D. is the director of research and evaluation at Invest in Kids. She has spent more than 15 years working with young children, families, and early childhood professionals in various settings including schools, childcare centers, and family support programs.

Zeenat Janmohamed is the coordinator of the Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto, and a faculty member in the School of Early Childhood Education at George Brown College. She is a member of the Toronto First Duty research team and a specialist in early childhood professional education.

Dr. Magdalena Janus is an associate professor at the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neuroscience at McMaster University where she holds the Ontario Chair in Early Child Development. Since joining the Offord Centre for Child Studies at McMaster University in 1997, Magdalena, together with the late Dr. Dan Offord, developed the Early Development Instrument (EDI), a measure of children's readiness to learn at school entry, which has been used widely in Canada and adapted in a number of international sites, e.g., Australia, Jamaica, Jordan, Kosovo, and Mexico. She regularly serves as a consultant with various national and international organizations, including the World Bank and UNICEF, on the measurement and indicators of early child development. Magdalena's research interests also include the transition to school, with a particular emphasis on children with special needs, and communities' engagement in children's early development and health.

James E. Johnson is professor of early childhood education at the College of Education, The Pennsylvania State University, USA.

Lynn A. Karoly is a senior economist with the RAND Corporation whose research has focused on child and family well-being, human capital investments, labor market behavior, and social welfare policy. In the area of child policy, she has examined the benefits and costs of early childhood programs and completed an in-depth study of preschool use and quality in California and the publicly funded preschool system in the state.

Margaret A. King is professor emerita in the School of Human and Consumer Sciences at Ohio University, Athens. She is a former teacher, director, and teacher educator. Her research interests are the schooling of young males and emotional maltreatment in the classroom.

Sandraluz Lara-Cinisomo is an assistant professor of child and family studies at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte. Her research focuses on early childhood academic and behavioral outcomes, teacher belief systems, school readiness, youth well-being among children from military families, and maternal mental health among civilian and military populations.

Laura Lee McIntyre, Ph. D. is an associate professor and director of the School Psychology Program in the Department of Special Education and Clinical Sciences at the University of Oregon. Her interests are in (1) parent training, education, and support, (2) kindergarten transition, and (3) child risk factors and family well-being.

Joann Migyanka taught children on the autism spectrum for 8 years in the public school system. She was awarded the Autism Professional of the Year from the Autism Society of America (ASA) in July 2000. She has presented at national and international conferences on topics related to autism spectrum disorders.

Saba Mir is a doctoral student in the Developmental Psychology and Education Program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto. She is the manager of the Toronto First Duty (TFD) research team.

Dr. Frederick J. Morrison is a professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Michigan. His program of research examines early language and literacy development, with a particular interest in identifying the cognitive and social foundations of this skill set and isolating the learning opportunities at home and school that support children's early competence in these domains.

Dr. Regena F. Nelson is a professor in early childhood education with over 20 years of research, teaching, and consulting experience in the field. She has conducted numerous research studies on school readiness, authentic assessment, early childhood program evaluation, culturally appropriate practices, and mentoring.

Sejal Patel, Ph. D. is a strategic training fellow of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and Peterborough K. M. Hunter Foundation Fellow at the Centre for Research on Inner City Health at St. Michael's Hospital. As a member of the Toronto First Duty (TFD) research team, she investigated parent engagement, outreach, and the effects of integrated early childhood program participation on children's developmental outcomes.

Janette Pelletier, Ph. D. is an associate professor in human development and applied psychology at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto. Her research examines children's perspectives and learning, family literacy programs, and early childhood service integration in several projects, including Toronto First Duty. She is a specialist in early childhood professional education.

Anne Petriwskyj is a lecturer in inclusive early childhood education and care at the School of Early Childhood, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia. She has extensive experience in the area of inclusivity and is currently challenging some deeply held beliefs about inclusive education. Her research focuses on transition to school and inclusive pedagogies in early childhood.

Beth Powers-Costello is an assistant professor of early childhood education at the University of South Carolina. She leads annual study abroad trips to Reggio Emilia through a partnership with Clemson University. She has published on early childhood education, curriculum, and teaching for justice.

Jaipaul L. Roopnarine is Jack Reilly Professor of Child and Family Studies and director of the Jack Reilly Institute of Early Childhood and Provider Education, Syracuse University, Department of Child and Family Studies, Syracuse, NY, USA.

Dr. Lori E. Skibbe is an assistant professor in the Department of Child and Family Ecology at Michigan State University. Her research examines children's literacy development in the context of schools and families, the optimal interventions for providing a strong foundation in this area, and the long-term consequences of depressed language and emergent literacy skills.

Leah K. Wildenger is a doctoral candidate in school psychology in the Department of Psychology at Syracuse University. She has interests in young children with developmental delays and disabilities, early intervention, and kindergarten transition.

Suzanne M. Winter is an associate professor of early childhood education and the principal investigator of early childhood research projects examining the health and school readiness of children with particular focus of on preschool obesity prevention strategies. She has sole-authored two books on theory and practice in inclusive early childhood classrooms and has published numerous research reports and articles in scholarly journals. Dr. Winter is currently serving a three-year term as the vice president for infancy and early childhood on the Executive Board of the Association for Childhood Education International.

Dr. Yaoying Xu is an associate professor in the Department of Special Education and Disability Policy at Virginia Commonwealth University. Dr. Xu's research focus is on early assessment and intervention for children and students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

About the Editors

DeAnna M. Laverick, D. Ed. is an assistant professor at Indiana University of Pennsylvania and a former kindergarten teacher. She most recently authored a book chapter titled “The Development of Expertise in Teachers of Early Literacy,” which was published in A. M. Columbus (Ed.), *Advances in Psychology Research* (vol. 69). Her other publications include “Starting School: Welcoming Young Children and Families into Early School Experiences” and “Motivation, Metacognition, Mentors, and Money: Ingredients that Support Teaching Expertise,” both of which were published in *Early Childhood Education Journal*. Dr. Laverick was interviewed by *Early Childhood Today* on “Using Stories for Character Development” and also wrote “Home Visits and More: How to Ease the Transition to Kindergarten,” which was published in *Classroom Leadership*. Dr. Laverick has made international conference presentations on topics that relate to transitions to new school experiences, literacy strategies, teacher expertise, and educational technology.

Mary Renck Jalongo, Ph. D. 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. She is a co-editor of Springer’s *Educating the Young Child* book series and has written, co-authored, or edited more than 25 books, including *Early Childhood Language Arts* (6th edn.), *Creative Thinking and Arts-Based Learning* (5th edn.), *Exploring Your Role in Early Childhood Education* (4th edn.), and *Major Trends and Issues in Early Childhood Education: Challenges, Controversies, and Insights* (2nd edn.). In addition, she has written two books (*Learning to Listen, Listening to Learn; Young Children and Picture Books*) for the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), edited two for the Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI), and earned various national awards for writing. Since 1995, Mary Renck Jalongo has served as editor-in-chief of the *Early Childhood Education Journal*.

Chapter 1

Introduction

DeAnna M. Laverick

There are many transitions to new experiences that occur throughout one's lifetime. From infancy to the onset of formal school, transitions in the early childhood years involve a variety of stakeholders in the process and evoke a myriad of feelings for all involved. By putting the needs of children and their families first, early childhood educators support the transition process. The diverse experiences, traits, and needs exhibited by young children and their families worldwide provide early childhood educators with what may be a potentially challenging role. Yet it is by putting the children's and their families' needs first that successful transitions transpire.

Purpose of the Book

Transitions to Early Care and Education: International Perspectives on Making Schools Ready for Young Children focuses on the transitions that young children make to early care and education settings, along with the issues that surround this very important time in their lives. The purpose of this book is to communicate an enlarged view of the transition process in early childhood education. Rather than approaching the topic from a deficit-based readiness for school view, a broader examination of transitions guides the reader to appreciate and honor the promise and potential of all children worldwide. This book responds to the call for helping early childhood educators become ready to recognize the strengths and meet the diverse needs of all children.

A plethora of research-based practices and strategies for promoting successful transitions for children in a variety of social and cultural contexts are described in this book. It serves as a resource for teacher education programs and in-service early childhood professionals. The book links early childhood educational theories

D. M. Laverick (✉)

Department of Professional Studies in Education, Indiana University of Pennsylvania,
570 South Eleventh Street, Indiana, PA 15705, USA
e-mail: laverick@iup.edu

with practical applications. Additionally, it provides international perspectives on the ways that schools can institute practices and policies that promote successful transitions for all young children. The recommendations and strategies discussed will assist the reader in responding to the diverse abilities and needs of children worldwide in order to promote successful transitions in the early childhood years.

Overview of the Book

The book is comprised of three parts, beginning with Part One: Programs and Practices. Key themes that emerge in this section include programs and practices that teachers employ to meet the diverse needs of children and their families through the transition process. Practices that support the needs of children with exceptionalities are a focus in this section. This focus aligns with research conducted by the National Early Childhood Transition Center, which associated positive transitions with “the consistent use of developmentally appropriate practices across programs, especially for children with disabilities” (Rouse et al. 2007, p. 15).

In the first chapter of Part One, Nancy Balaban describes transition to group care for infants, toddlers, and families. This chapter concludes with information on transition for children receiving early intervention. Chapter 3, written by Laura Lee McIntyre and Leah K. Wildenger, then reviews empirical research on kindergarten transition practices for students with disabilities. Chapter 4, written by Joann Migyanka, provides strategies for supporting transition to formal school for students on the autism spectrum. In Chap. 5, Susan Hill examines connections and disconnections between oral language and literacy. The last chapter of this section, Chap. 6, is an article written by Hindman et al. (2010) that was originally published in *Early Childhood Education Journal*. This article describes teachers’ outreach practices for families of children in preschool, kindergarten, and first grade and the impact that these practices make on early academic outcomes.

Part Two, Policies and Issues, begins with Chap. 7. This chapter, written by Anne Petriwskyj and Susan Grieshaber, reframes the debate about school transitions from the perspectives of critical theory and critical pedagogy. The focus then turns to the role of the teacher, with regard to teachers’ histories and beliefs about transitions in Chap. 8, written by Margaret King. Then, in Chap. 9, Sandraluz Lara-Cinisomo, Allison Sidle Fuligni, and Lynn A. Karoly share findings from a study on teachers’ beliefs about preschoolers’ transitions to kindergarten. The discussion continues to focus on preschoolers from urban areas in Chap. 10, as Regena Nelson reports research findings from a study of preschool teachers’ ability to work effectively with children from minority and low-income backgrounds. Chapter 11, written by Suzanne M. Winter, is the last chapter in this section and describes the linkages among culture, health, and school readiness.

Part Three, International Perspectives, begins with Chap. 12, written by Nancy K. Freeman and Beth Powers-Costello. This chapter provides a rationale for making schools ready for children by sharing practices in the United States and Northern

Italy. Transitions within the early childhood educational system in China are then described in Chap. 13 by Yaoying Xu. In Chap. 14, the socio-cultural context of early childhood education in English-speaking Caribbean countries is described by Jaipaul L. Roopnarine and James E. Johnson. The discussion then turns to perspectives from Canada. First, in Chap. 15, Magdalena Janus discusses influences on school readiness in Canada and Mexico. The book concludes with Chap. 16 as Tomoko N. Arimura, Carl Corter, Janette Pelletier, Zeenat Janmohamed, Sejal Patel, Palmina Ioannone, and Saba Mir share an integrated service model in which schools become hubs for support of children and their families.

Given the barriers that inhibit successful transitions, particularly for children with disabilities from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds (Rouse et al. 2008), the implementation of research-based developmentally effective transition practices is crucial. The authors' collective expertise provides readers with information to guide the transition process throughout the early years. Their work serves as a touchstone for early childhood educators worldwide as they strive to make programs at various levels and in different contexts ready for the children they serve.

References

- Hindman, A. H., Skibbe, L. E., & Morrison, F. J. (2010). Teacher outreach to families across the transition to school: An examination of teachers' practices and their unique contributions to children's early academic outcomes. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 38(4). doi:10.1007/s10643-010-0410-4.
- Rouse, B., Myers, C., & Stricklin, S. (2007). Strategies for supporting transitions of young children with special needs and their families. *Journal of Early Intervention*, 30(1), 1–18.
- Rouse, B., Schroeder, C., Stricklin, S. B., Hains, A., & Cox, M. (2008). *Transition issues and barriers for children with significant disabilities and from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds*. Lexington: University of Kentucky, Human Development Institute, National Early Childhood Transition Center. <http://hdi.uky.edu/SF/Home.asp>.

Part I
Programs and Practices

Chapter 2

Transition to Group Care for Infants, Toddlers, and Families

Nancy Balaban

The focus of this chapter is to shed light on the significance of infants, toddlers, and their families making the *transition* from care-at-home to out-of-home care. Parents or primary caregivers as well as their children profit from focused support during this process because the event arouses deep feelings and uncertainties. How the transition itself is accomplished sets the stage for the child's *entire* experience in the early care or Early Intervention (EI) group setting.

Infant and toddler care is a major and rapidly growing form of child care in this country today. With 56% of women with children under age three employed outside the home, child care for infants and toddlers is in high demand. Although nearly 6 million infants and toddlers spend all or part of their day being cared for by someone other than their parents, more than 40% of those infants and toddlers are in child care classrooms of poor quality (Cohen and Ewen 2008). This deeply disheartening fact challenges the accepted requirements for healthy early child development in quality care settings.

Good-quality childcare has been associated with a range of outcomes, including better cognitive, linguistic, and social development. Moreover, good-quality care can promote the school readiness and success of children from at-risk families. (Zigler et al. 2009, p. 90)

According to Zero to Three (2009), the pre-eminent national organization devoted to the optimal development of children from birth to age three and their families, the central components of *quality care* for infants and toddlers are:

- Small groups
- High staff-to-child ratio
- Primary caregiving (see p. 11)
- Adherence to health and safety policies
- A highly trained, well-compensated staff
- Well-planned physical environments
- Cultural and linguistic competence and continuity

N. Balaban (✉)

Bank Street Graduate School of Education, 610 West 112th Street, New York, NY 10025, USA
e-mail: nbalaban@bankstreet.edu