

Teaching science during the early childhood years



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Early educational programs, which are followed in day care centers, Montessori and pre-kindergarten centers, play a vital role in developing the overall skills of the children. Hence the teachers and instructors who are part of such centers have been entrusted with the most influential role as it is through them that the children first learn to observe, analyze, learn, read, and speak apart from encouraging their creativity, imagination and motor skills. These professionals include all the individuals who directly serve children right from their through the age of 8 (Who are Early Childhood Professionals). Thus such schools and centers help in the initial development of mental, physical and social growth of the child along with education. The importance of educators in these centers is evident from the fact that children in early childhood education programs require teachers who are not only academically qualified but also have a sound knowledge in child development. Though there are several institutes which offer a degree program in early childhood education in the US, merely obtaining a degree alone will not ensure the continuous learning and skills development of teachers. Instead a high-quality support system should be offered to teachers in addition to a competent pay package and opportunities for professional development (Hyson, Tomlinson and Carol). In order to gain high-quality knowledge on early childhood education it is necessary to enroll in programs that are based on the National Association for the Education of Young Children Standards (NAEYC) which help prepare graduates competently for this profession as it not only includes childhood education but also concentrates on learning the overall development of the child, to effectively communicate with the families, using assessments appropriately and altogether helps in becoming a through professional in this field.

Additionally enrolling as a full-time faculty in early childhood centers would enable educators to gain a varied experience in dealing with young children and their families and would also help them to grow up the career ladder. It is also necessary for the faculty to be updated about the latest research and they should focus on evidence-based practice (Hyson, Tomlinson and Carol). Teaching science in early childhood education has also been promoted to be useful as environmental influence has been found to be necessary for the cognitive and overall development of children. The guided inquiry-based approach of teaching science has been found to be very effective as children are required to play an active role in these activities which give them a sense of independent reasoning and thinking abilities. Merely relying on the text-book based approach in teaching has been found to be ineffective and it requires to be well supported by diagrams and illustrations that help explain the concept and also through citing examples which would kindle the cognitive thinking skills of children (Trundle). Educators in early childhood education can find employment in several centers such as child care programs, head start and early head start programs, kindergarten and primary grade, out-of-school-time programs, preschools or nursery schools and pre-kindergarten programs. In addition they can also work as family child care providers, educators for children with disabilities and other special children, home visitors in head start centers, child specialists in hospitals and as nannies who take care of children at their home. The training programs offered by the NAEYC provide opportunities for professionals in this field to broaden their knowledge and update themselves with the latest in the field of early childhood education (Who are Early Childhood Professionals). A rich and positive experience gained by educators after equipping themselves

with the various courses offered by recognized institutes can help in providing a sound foundation for young children and also remain as a constructive influence for the child's future learning (Hyson, Tomlinson and Carol). Thus through such effective teaching methods educators can advance in their early childhood teaching career especially in times of job recessions and bulk layoffs. Depending on their interest and educational qualifications early childhood educators can choose their field of specialization and broaden their knowledge about the latest teaching practices by enrolling in programs offered by recognized institutes which follow the educational standards in the field of early childhood education.

References 1. Hyson, Marilou., Tomlinson, Heather Biggar., and Carol, Morris A. S. " Quality Improvement in Early Childhood Teacher Education: Faculty Perspectives and Recommendations for the Future." *Early Childhood Research and Practice*, 11(1), 2009. Web. 11 July 2011. <http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v11n1/hyson.html> 2. Trundle, Kathy Cabe. " Teaching Science During the Early Childhood Years." *Best Practices in Science Education*. ngsp. com. Aug. 2009. Web. 11 July 2011. http://www.ngsp.com/Portals/0/downloads/SCL22-0429A_AM_Trundle.pdf 3. " Who are Early Childhood Professionals?" *National Association for the Education of Young Children*. naeyc. org. n. d. Web. 11 July 2011. <http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/ecprofessional/Who%20are%20Early%20Childhood%20Professionals.pdf>