

# Building Blocks

for Teaching Young Children  
in Inclusive Settings

**4<sup>TH</sup>**  
EDITION

Susan R. Sandall  
Ariane N. Gauvreau  
Gail E. Joseph  
Ilene S. Schwartz

Foreword by Mary Louise Hemmeter



FOR MORE, go to: [bpub.fyi/BB4](http://bpub.fyi/BB4)

# Building Blocks

**4<sup>TH</sup>**  
EDITION

for Teaching Young Children  
in Inclusive Settings

by

**Susan R. Sandall, Ph.D.**

University of Washington  
Seattle

**Ariane N. Gauvreau, Ph.D., BCBA-D**

University of Washington  
Seattle

**Gail E. Joseph, Ph.D.**

University of Washington  
Seattle

and

**Ilene S. Schwartz, Ph.D., BCBA-D**

University of Washington  
Seattle

· P A U L · H ·  
**BROOKES**  
PUBLISHING C<sup>o</sup>®

Baltimore • London • Sydney

FOR MORE, go to: [bpub.fyi/BB4](http://bpub.fyi/BB4)



**Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.**

Post Office Box 10624  
Baltimore, Maryland 21285-0624  
USA

[www.brookespublishing.com](http://www.brookespublishing.com)

Copyright © 2024 by Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.

All rights reserved.

Previous edition copyright © 2019.

“Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.” is a registered trademark of  
Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.

Typeset by Absolute Service Inc., Baltimore, Maryland.  
Manufactured in the United States of America by Sheridan Books, Inc.

All vignettes in this book are composites. Any similarity to actual individuals or circumstances is coincidental, and no implications should be inferred.

Purchasers of *Building Blocks for Teaching Young Children in Inclusive Settings, Fourth Edition* are granted permission to download, print, and photocopy the Appendices in the text for educational, clinical, and medical purposes. These forms may not be reproduced to generate revenue for any program or individual. Photocopies may only be made from an original book. *Unauthorized use beyond this privilege may be prosecutable under federal law.* You will see the copyright protection notice at the bottom of each photocopyable page.

#### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Sandall, Susan Rebecka, author. | Gauvreau, Ariane N., author. | Joseph, Gail E., author. | Schwartz, Ilene S., author.

Title: Building blocks for teaching young children in inclusive settings / by Susan R. Sandall, Ph.D., University of Washington, Seattle; Ariane N. Gauvreau, Ph.D., University of Washington, Seattle; Gail E. Joseph, Ph.D., University of Washington, Seattle and Ilene S. Schwartz, Ph.D., University of Washington, Seattle.

Description: Fourth edition. | Baltimore, Maryland : Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc., [2024] | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2024000770 (print) | LCCN 2024000771 (ebook) | ISBN 9781681257990 (paperback) | ISBN 9781681258003 (epub) | ISBN 9781681258010 (pdf)

Subjects: LCSH: Children with disabilities—Education (Preschool)—United States. | Children with social disabilities—Education (Preschool)—United States. | Inclusive education—United States. | Individualized education programs—United States. | BISAC: EDUCATION / Inclusive Education | EDUCATION / Special Education / General

Classification: LCC LC4019.2 .S26 2024 (print) | LCC LC4019.2 (ebook) | DDC 371.9—dc23/eng/20240123

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2024000770>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2024000771>

British Library Cataloguing in Publication data are available from the British Library.

2028 2027 2026 2025 2024  
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Excerpted from *Building Blocks for Teaching Young Children in Inclusive Settings, Fourth Edition*  
by Susan R. Sandall, Ph.D., Ariane Gauvreau, Ph.D., BCBA-D, Gail E. Joseph, Ph.D., and Ilene S. Schwartz, Ph.D., BCBA-D

# Contents

---

About the Online Materials .....	v
About the Authors .....	vii
Foreword <i>Mary Louise Hemmeter, Ph.D.</i> .....	ix
Acknowledgments .....	xi
<b>I Using the Building Blocks Framework .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1 Introduction .....	3
2 Evidence-Based Practice and the Building Blocks Framework .....	11
3 Keys to Teaming and Collaboration .....	21
4 Getting Started .....	31
<b>II Teaching Strategies .....</b>	<b>53</b>
5 Curriculum Modifications .....	55
Curriculum Modifications by Type .....	62
Curriculum Modifications by Learning Center and Routine .....	86
6 Embedded Learning Opportunities .....	133
7 Child-Focused Instructional Strategies .....	147
8 Ongoing Assessment and Instructional Decision Making .....	159
<b>III More About the Building Blocks Framework .....</b>	<b>171</b>
9 Implementing the Building Blocks Framework: Putting It All Together .....	173
10 Becoming More Independent .....	191
11 Friendships and Peer Relationships .....	197
12 Inclusive Interactions: Teaching Group Behaviors .....	203
13 Final Thoughts .....	211

<b>Appendices</b> .....	<b>213</b>
<b>A</b> Quality Classroom Assessment Form .....	214
<b>B</b> Classroom Action Worksheet .....	216
<b>C</b> Child Assessment Worksheet .....	217
<b>D</b> IEP/IFSP Planning Worksheet .....	219
<b>E</b> Child Planning Worksheet .....	220
<b>F</b> Child Activity Matrix .....	221
<b>G</b> Classroom Activity Matrix .....	222
<b>H</b> Staff Matrix .....	223
<b>I</b> Evaluation Worksheet .....	224
<b>J</b> ELO-at-a-Glance .....	225
<b>K</b> Instruction-at-a-Glance .....	226
<b>L</b> Inclusion Collaboration Checklist .....	228
<b>M</b> Clarifying the Schedule Checklist .....	229
<b>N</b> Clarifying the Child’s Objective .....	231
<b>O</b> Curriculum Modification Planning Form .....	232
<b>P</b> Curriculum Modifications Checklist .....	233
<b>Q</b> Teaching Episode Checklist .....	234
<b>R</b> Embedded Learning Opportunities Checklist .....	236
<b>S</b> Child-Focused Instruction Strategies Checklist .....	238
<b>T</b> Online Resources .....	240
References .....	242
Index .....	247

## About the Authors

---

**Susan R. Sandall, Ph.D.**, Professor Emeritus, College of Education, University of Washington, Seattle

Dr. Sandall is professor emeritus at the University of Washington. She directed personnel preparation projects, developed curriculum materials for all age groups, and published materials on educational practices to facilitate optimal outcomes for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with disabilities. Her scholarly interests are effective instructional practices for young children with disabilities in inclusive settings, the changing roles of teachers of young children, and effective approaches to professional development and knowledge utilization. She was principal investigator of the National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning for the Office of Head Start. Dr. Sandall served on the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) Commission on Recommended Practices and edited publications on the practices. She is on the editorial boards of *Journal of Early Intervention* and *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*. She received an honorary doctoral degree from Stockholm University.

**Ariane N. Gauvreau, Ph.D., BCBA-D**, Senior Director of Professional Development, Haring Center for Inclusive Education, University of Washington, Seattle

Dr. Gauvreau is the senior director of professional development at the Haring Center for Inclusive Education at the University of Washington. Dr. Gauvreau has extensive experience as a training facilitator, teaching professor, special education teacher, home visitor, behavioral consultant, and coach. She has developed and facilitated training on early intervention and autism, inclusive education, multi-tiered systems of support, universal design for learning, social-emotional learning, and family-centered practices. She has published many articles on inclusionary practices in early learning and serves on the editorial board for *Young Exceptional Children*. Her professional interests include effective professional development and inclusionary practices for all children and families.

**Gail E. Joseph, Ph.D.**, Bezos Family Professor of Early Learning, College of Education, University of Washington, Seattle

Dr. Joseph is the Bezos Family professor of early learning at the University of Washington. She teaches courses, advises students, provides service, and conducts community-engaged research on topics related to early care and education. Dr. Joseph has been involved in a number of research projects and training and technical assistance activities at the local, state, and national levels related to child care quality, teacher

preparation, and promoting children's social-emotional development as well as preventing challenging behavior in early learning settings. She is the founding executive director of Cultivate Learning and was the principal investigator and director of the Head Start Center for Inclusion ([Headstartinclusion.org](http://Headstartinclusion.org)) and co-principal investigator of the National Center for Quality Teaching and Learning funded by the Office of Head Start. At Cultivate Learning, she oversees the work of quality ratings in all licensed child care and state pre-K programs in Washington.

**Ilene S. Schwartz, Ph.D., BCBA-D**, Professor of Special Education and Director, Haring Center for Inclusive Education, University of Washington, Seattle

Dr. Schwartz is professor of special education and director of the Haring Center for Inclusive Education at the University of Washington. Dr. Schwartz is also the director of project DATA (Developmentally Appropriate Treatment for Autism), a school-based early intervention intensive behavioral intervention program for children with autism. She has an extensive background working with young children with special needs and their families, specifically with young children with autism and related disabilities. Dr. Schwartz is on the faculty of the Applied Behavior Analysis Program at the University of Washington. She is dedicated to creating inclusive schools so that all children, regardless of their background or ability, can attend the school of their choice and receive a high-quality education. Dr. Schwartz has published numerous chapters and articles about effective instructional strategies for children with autism, ethics in applied behavior analysis, and inclusive education.

## Foreword

---

*A high-quality early childhood program is, in part,  
one that is inclusive, culturally and linguistically responsive,  
and provides a sense of belonging for all children and their families.*

—U.S. Department of Health and Human Services &  
U.S. Department of Education (2023)

While preparing this foreword, I reflected on the complex issues involved in designing high-quality, inclusive early childhood learning environments to meet the needs of each and every child and family. These issues include, but are not limited to, 1) how we prepare personnel with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to meet each child where they are and design learning experiences that are developmentally appropriate, culturally affirming, and appropriately challenging; 2) how we build systems to support the inclusion and belonging of each child and prohibit the use of exclusionary practices; and 3) how we work across systems to ensure every child has access to high-quality, inclusive settings. I also reflected on the evidence that we, as a field, are not doing a great job of making this vision a reality. This evidence includes the following:

1. We have made almost no progress in the percentage of preschool children who are served in inclusive settings (Barton & Smith, 2015).
2. We continue to suspend/expel preschoolers at high rates, and we disproportionately suspend/expel young children of color and young children with disabilities.
3. Teachers continue to report their most significant training needs are related to supporting children with disabilities and children who engage in persistent, challenging behavior.

Although it is beyond the scope of a book to systematically address these issues, *Building Blocks for Teaching Young Children in Inclusive Settings, Fourth Edition* exemplifies the type of tools that, when used collectively and within supportive systems, have the potential to change the way we provide education to our youngest learners. At the heart of *Building Blocks* is the recognition that young children learn in different ways, have different areas of strength and need, and have varied interests, experiences, and assets. Although the previous editions focused on instruction for children with disabilities, the authors recognized that in inclusive settings, all young children will need varying levels of support at different points in time. While having a “disability” is one reason children might need more support, other children might need different levels of support because they are learning English, they have experienced trauma, or they have never been in a group care setting (to name a few). This led the authors to change the title from *Building Blocks for Teaching Preschoolers with Special Needs* to *Building Blocks for Teaching Young Children in Inclusive Settings* and to describe *Building Blocks* as a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS). These changes help the user understand the



need for high-quality universal practices for supporting all children as well as more targeted and intensive practices to meet the needs of small groups of children and, in some cases, individual children. These changes also dispel common misunderstandings, such as the belief that effective instruction and developmentally appropriate practice are somehow inconsistent with one another or that it is not possible to meet the intensive support needs of some children while also providing a high-quality environment for all children.

Although the change in title and alignment with MTSS represent “big picture” changes, the authors have been intentional in ensuring these changes are operationalized by providing concrete supports for programs. The *Building Blocks* framework provides a step-by-step planning process for designing high-quality learning experiences while also delivering increasingly more individualized supports to meet the needs of each and every child in an inclusive classroom. The book also includes practical strategies and ideas that are grounded in a planning process that recognizes the complexity of delivering instruction to all young children in a way that promotes participation, inclusion, and belonging. By including a framework for planning instruction, the book avoids being just a toolbox of good ideas with no understanding of how to use those ideas systematically to affect children’s outcomes. The fourth edition expands on these key features by including a chapter on ongoing assessment and instructional decision making; developing new checklists and planning forms; and expanding vignettes, examples, and content. These changes provide more focused information on how to implement the framework AND how to determine if it is working. This edition acknowledges and addresses the complexity of providing instruction in inclusive classrooms and provides guidance on issues that often are barriers to effective instruction, such as strategies for preventing challenging behavior, strategies for minimizing the impact of bias on classroom decisions, and the need for implementation supports. I was excited to see the expansion of information on how to work with coaches to ensure teachers have the support they need to implement practices with fidelity. These changes reflect an acknowledgment that high-quality inclusion is about more than what the teacher is doing in the classroom and places responsibility on program leadership to ensure the necessary supports are in place.

I could not be more excited about the fourth edition. Since the first edition came out, I have consistently turned to *Building Blocks* for practical information to share with teachers and those supporting teachers. The author team has a deep commitment to inclusion that shows in their work. Their understanding of the challenges associated with promoting inclusion and belonging of all children is based on years of experience administering and teaching in early childhood programs, preparing teachers to work with young children with disabilities, conducting research, and building systems of support. The fourth edition reflects this experience as well as their commitment to information that is useful to those who work directly with young children and their families. One of the greatest challenges in our field is bridging the gap between research and practice. *Building Blocks* reflects this unique combination of experience with and commitment to translating research into information that changes the way teachers teach and thus changes outcomes for children.

Mary Louise Hemmeter, Ph.D.  
Vanderbilt University

## REFERENCE

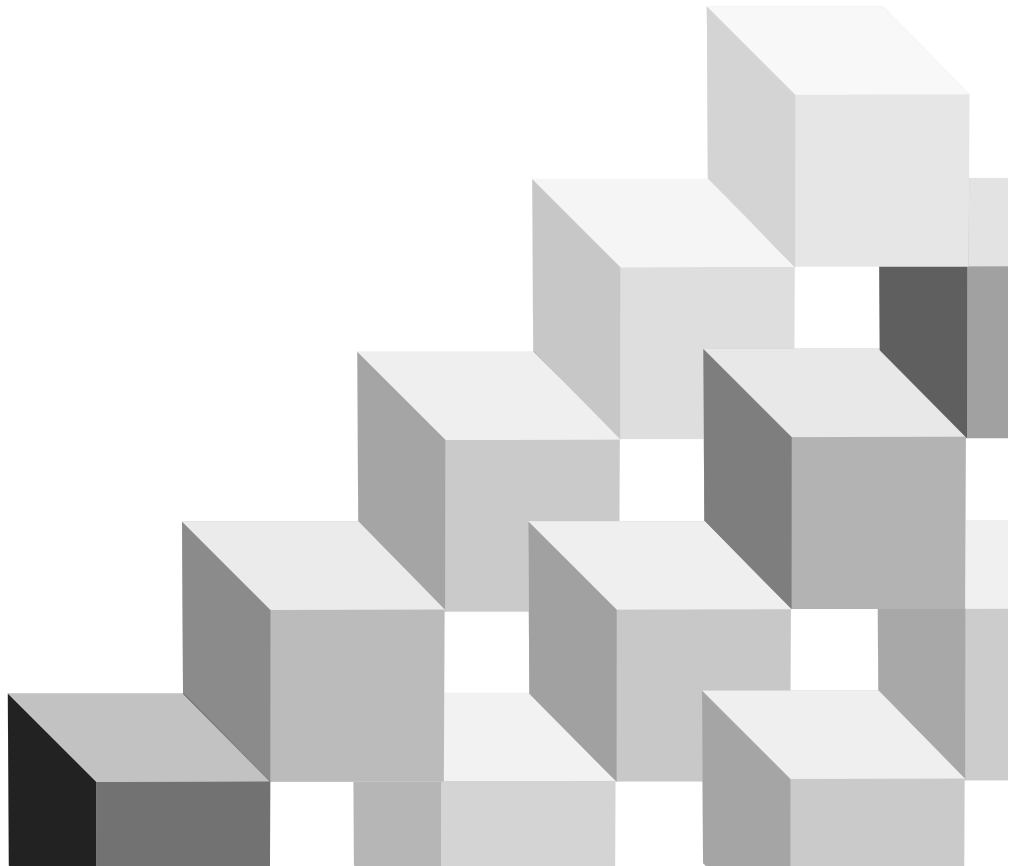
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services & U.S. Department of Education. (2023). *Policy statement on inclusion of children with disabilities in early childhood programs*. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ecd/policy-statement-on-inclusion.pdf>

FOR MORE, go to: [bpub.fyi/BB4](http://bpub.fyi/BB4)

SECTION **I**

---

# Using the Building Blocks Framework



The Building Blocks framework is the basis for planning for and providing individualized support and instruction for children with identified disabilities, developmental delays, and diverse abilities in their early learning programs. The framework grew out of extensive experience with teachers attempting to address the wide variety of children's learning needs within active, busy classrooms, including child care centers and homes. The Building Blocks framework also grew from our experience as researchers with the Early Childhood Research Institute on Inclusion.

In this section, we describe the Building Blocks framework and provide an overview of the evidence that informs the essential components of the framework. The foundation for all children is participation in a quality early childhood program. Key ingredients for a quality early childhood program include promotion of children's active engagement, participation, and learning. Quality programs also recognize and support the importance of relationships. There are many important relationships to consider in early learning programs, including relationships among children, teachers' relationships with children, family partnerships, and collaboration among colleagues. Quality programs create a caring environment. Nonetheless, for some children or for some of their learning needs, this quality foundation, while necessary, is not sufficient. The Building Blocks framework offers levels of support that differ in intensity and specificity to help teachers and teams address children's learning needs. For many needs, curriculum modifications and adaptations will provide appropriate levels of support. If modifications alone are not effective in helping children accomplish their learning objectives, then teachers and teams can use specially designed instruction. Such instruction can be embedded in learning opportunities that occur in typical activities and routines in the classroom, home, and community. Specially designed instruction can also occur more intensely, which we call child-focused instruction. Two more components are necessary to make the framework effective. One of these components is ongoing data collection to monitor individual children's progress and to make instructional decisions. The other essential component is collaboration. Collaboration is at the heart of effective inclusive programs to ensure that engagement, participation, learning, and belonging occur for all children and their families. The first four chapters of the book will give you, the reader, an understanding of the Building Blocks framework and will outline the steps so that you can use the framework in your program.

# Introduction

---

*Building Blocks for Teaching Young Children in Inclusive Settings, Fourth Edition*, describes examples of educational practices that support and enhance the inclusion of young children with identified disabilities, developmental delays, and diverse abilities in community-based classrooms and early learning programs. It is designed for two primary audiences. First, teachers, caregivers, and other team members who work in community-based programs that include children with diverse abilities will find the book useful for their planning and teaching. Second, itinerant or consulting teachers and coaches will find the book useful in their work with teachers in the community.

This book contains the Building Blocks framework—a set of educational practices designed to help teachers do a more effective job of including and teaching young children with diverse abilities in early childhood classrooms and programs. It provides teachers with a variety of methods and strategies to ensure that children learn important skills in their early learning environments. Teachers can use these practices to complement their current curriculum. For example, these practices fit nicely with widely used curricula, such as the Creative Curriculum (Teaching Strategies, 2022), the HighScope Curriculum (HighScope, 2021), and the *Assessment, Evaluation, and Programming System (AEPS) for Infants and Children, Third Edition* (Bricker et al., 2022a), and support individualization within the curriculum.

The Building Blocks framework is based on research on early childhood inclusion and effective early educational practices (Barton & Smith, 2015a, 2015b; Guralnick & Bruder, 2016; Odom, 2001; Odom et al., 2011). For all children, but especially for children with identified disabilities, developmental delays, and diverse abilities, teachers and teams should use educational methods and strategies that match each child's needs. The methods and strategies vary in terms of intensity and specificity. The Building Blocks framework is designed to help teams select the appropriate level of assistance for children. The theoretical and empirical evidence supporting the Building Blocks framework is described in Chapter 2.

## IMPORTANT TERMS

The Building Blocks framework uses a vocabulary that may already be familiar to many teachers; however, it is important to clarify what these terms mean in the context of the framework. This section defines several important terms that are used throughout the book.

### Inclusion

*Inclusion* is often defined as the active participation of young children with and without disabilities in the same classroom (e.g., Head Start, child care, preschool) and in community settings. But it is more than that. Inclusion is about ensuring that all children, staff, and families who participate in a program feel supported in that program. In other words, children, teachers, and families feel that they belong to the program and its community. A less traditional way of defining inclusion is to say that inclusion is the celebration of diversity put into action. An inclusive program celebrates what every individual brings to that program and provides each with the support to be a successful member of that program. Inclusion is defined in a joint statement by the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC):

Early childhood inclusion embodies the values, policies, and practices that support the right of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities, and society. The desired results of inclusive experiences for children with and without disabilities and their families include a sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships, and development and learning to reach their full potential. The defining features of inclusion that can be used to identify high quality early childhood programs and services are access, participation, and supports. (2009, p. 1)

### Children With Identified Disabilities, Developmental Delays, and Diverse Abilities

The term *children with identified disabilities and developmental delays* refers to children who are eligible for special education services and who have individualized education programs (IEPs) or individualized family service plans (IFSPs). The Building Blocks framework is also useful for children with *diverse abilities*, which are characteristics and needs related to varied factors such as language, culture, or approaches to learning. These children may need more individualized support or attention from their teachers. Throughout the book, we use people-first language. We believe it is important to emphasize that children with disabilities and/or diverse abilities are children first and should not be defined by a diagnosis.

### Dual Language Learners

Children who are dual language learners (DLLs) are children who have a home language other than English and are learning two or more languages at the same time or learning a second language while continuing to develop their first language. Because children may be learning more than two languages simultaneously, the term multilanguage learner is also used. Research indicates that learning more than one language from an early age can have wide-ranging benefits and that early childhood programs should provide DLLs with the individualized supports that may be needed.

## Individualized Education Program

An IEP is a document prepared for any student, ages 3 to 21, who is eligible for special education services. IEPs are required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) of 2004 (PL 108-446). Each IEP states 1) the child's present level of educational performance, 2) the child's annual goals and short-term objectives, 3) the special education and related services to be provided, 4) the extent to which the child will participate in the general education program, 5) the way in which the child's progress will be measured, and 6) the date of initiation and projected duration of services. The IEP also contains a plan for making the transition from high school to adulthood no later than age 16.

## Individualized Family Service Plan

An IFSP is a document developed by the family and the team for a child age birth to 3 years who is eligible for early intervention (EI) under Part C of IDEA. Each plan includes the following: 1) the child's present level of development; 2) a statement of the family's resources, priorities, and concerns; 3) the planned child and family outcomes; 4) the specific EI services to meet the outcomes; 5) a statement regarding natural environments; 6) the length, duration, frequency, intensity, and delivery method for the services; 7) the name of the service coordinator; and 8) the steps toward transition at age 3.

## Community-Based Classrooms

The term *community-based classrooms* refers to the types of early childhood classroom programs children typically attend. These include child care centers and homes, public school programs, Head Start programs, state and city prekindergarten (pre-K) programs, and private and cooperative preschools. Community-based classrooms do not include specialty clinics, laboratory classrooms, or other specialized schools. The term *natural environments* is found in Part C of IDEA. It refers to places and activities where children without disabilities spend time. There is an expectation that Part C EI services will take place in natural environments, such as the home and child care settings.

## Head Start

Head Start is a federally funded, comprehensive early childhood program that serves children from families with low income. Early Head Start programs serve infants and toddlers under age 3, their families, and pregnant women. Head Start requires that at least 10% of their enrollment include children with disabilities.

## Related Services

Related services include physical, occupational, and speech therapy; psychological services; and other services that a child who is eligible for IDEA services may require to receive the greatest benefit from their education. Such services are provided by or under the supervision of certified or licensed individuals (e.g., speech-language therapist, school psychologist).

## Team

Special education, EI, and related services are provided by a team. The *team* consists of family members and professionals who work together to plan and implement the child's educational program. Collaboration is essential for effective team functioning.

## Early Childhood Education

In this book, *early childhood education* (ECE) refers to educational programs and activities for young children prior to their formal school entry. The ECE teacher is an individual with training and preparation in child development and other content areas related to the education of young children. This individual may have certification in general ECE.

## Early Childhood Special Education

In this book, *early childhood special education* (ECSE) refers to educational programs, activities, and services for children who are eligible for IDEA services who are age 3 to 6 years. ECSE is guided by the requirements of federal and state policies and by research on effective educational practices. The ECSE teacher has more specialized training and preparation for working with young children with identified disabilities, developmental delays, and diverse abilities. This person may work directly with children (e.g., an itinerant teacher) or in a consulting role. A special certification or endorsement is often required.

## Early Intervention

*Early intervention* (EI) refers to services and supports for children with established conditions or developmental delays and, in some cases, children at risk who are under age 3 and their families. EI is guided by federal (Part C of IDEA) and state policies as well as research evidence. EI professionals include teachers and therapists. Services and supports occur in a variety of settings with a preference for natural environments.

## Universal Design for Learning

The *universal design for learning* (UDL) approach guides teachers in designing learning environments from the very beginning for the widest diversity of learners. UDL encompasses the following three principles: 1) multiple means of representation to give learners a variety of ways to gain access to information and content, 2) multiple means of engagement to gain and maintain learners' interest, and 3) multiple means of expression to provide learners with a variety of ways to demonstrate what they know (Center for Applied Special Technology [CAST], 2018).

## Specially Designed Instruction

*Specially designed instruction* is essentially what special education is all about. Specially designed instruction includes organized, planned, and individualized instructional activities needed by a child to accomplish IEP goals or IFSP outcomes and to help the child gain access to the general education curriculum. Specially designed instruction may include changes or adaptations to the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to meet the child's unique needs.

## Culturally Responsive Teaching

*Culturally responsive teaching* is an instructional approach that uses the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse children to make learning experiences more relevant and effective (Gay, 2010; NAEYC, 2019). A related term is *culturally sustaining practices*, which are practices that center more specifically on nurturing and expanding historically devalued cultures to promote linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism (Paris & Alim, 2017).

## Tiered Supports

Education has adopted a promotion, prevention, and intervention approach from the field of public health. Such a tiered approach helps to organize teaching and learning for all children in ways that promote development and learning through a high-quality program and research-based curriculum (tier 1), deploy effective practices to prevent (pre-) academic and behavioral problems (tier 2), and provide intensive, individualized intervention practices if needed for children who struggle (tier 3). Universal screening and progress monitoring and collaborative problem solving are key components as well. Often referred to as the multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) framework, this is a way to provide high-quality teaching and responsive caregiving through the delivery of differentiated support for all young children (DEC, 2021). Response to intervention (RTI) and positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) are examples. Building Blocks is also an example of an MTSS in early childhood (Sandall & Schwartz, 2013).

## Transition

Transition refers to the events, activities, and processes associated with key changes between environments and programs during the early childhood years and the practices that support the adjustment of the child and family to the new setting (DEC, 2014). Young children and families experience several transitions including from hospital to home, from home to EI, from EI to preschool, and from preschool into formal schooling. Some young children who are dually enrolled (e.g., in child care and in special services) may also experience numerous transitions from program to program.

## THE CHILDREN

The stories of five children and their teachers enrich the descriptions of educational practices in this book:



Nhan is a 4-year-old boy who receives special education services because of delays in cognitive, language, and social skills. He attends a child care center 5 days a week from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. His parents speak both English and Vietnamese. Both parents work outside their home. Nhan and his brother and sister were cared for at home by their Vietnamese-speaking grandmother until Nhan was 2 years old. He then began attending the child care center. His child care teachers became concerned about his slow progress and recommended to his parents that he be evaluated. He was identified as being eligible for special education and related services when he was 3 years old. Nhan and his family also received a comprehensive medical evaluation, and he was found to have a rare genetic disorder. Nhan continues to attend the child care center, and the school district provides an itinerant ECSE teacher and a speech-language therapist who visit Nhan in his child care classroom once a week. The district also provides a DLL consultant who provides services on request. There is one other child in the classroom who has an IEP, and another teacher comes to visit that child. Nhan's child care teachers use the Creative Curriculum (Teaching Strategies, 2022).





Tina is a 4-year-old girl with a medical diagnosis of Down syndrome and mild to moderate delays in most areas of development. Tina has been enrolled in special programs since she was 2 months old. When she was an infant, home visitors came to her home to provide services. As a toddler, she went to a program at a child development clinic. When she turned 3 years old, she went to a preschool class at a public school. This year, her mother transferred her to the Head Start classroom at the neighborhood center. This is the same program that her older brothers attended. There is one other child in Tina's classroom who has an IEP. An ECSE teacher and a speech-language therapist visit the classroom and work with the two children and the teachers once a week. A social worker provides family services for all families in the program. Tina's teacher, Dolores, has taught in Head Start for several years. All of the classrooms and teachers in this program use the HighScope Curriculum (HighScope, 2021).



Samisha is a 5-year-old girl with a medical diagnosis of cerebral palsy. She lives with her parents, grandmother, and three older siblings. She is learning to use a walker and, when motivated, can move quite quickly. In the classroom, she tends to move around by scooting on the floor. Samisha is very social, and she loves to be the center of attention. Her language skills are slightly delayed, and she does not demonstrate any cognitive delays. Although she is very interested in other children in her class, she is not very successful in peer interactions. She has a difficult time taking turns and sharing materials. She has good dramatic play skills when she suggests the story but has trouble changing her behavior to conform with a plan suggested by another child. Samisha attends a public school pre-K classroom that is team taught by ECE and ECSE teachers, Gia and David. She receives physical therapy once per week in the classroom. The classroom is composed of 15 children, six of whom qualify for special education services and have IEPs. The teachers use the Creative Curriculum supplemented with their vast collection of ECE activity books as resources.



Drew is a 3-year-old boy who lives with his parents and two brothers, one older and one younger. At 30 months, Drew was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder at the multidisciplinary clinic at the regional children's hospital. His cognitive skills are near age-appropriate levels, but he has significant delays in social and communication skills. He has an extensive vocabulary and can use sentences to express wants and needs, but he rarely comments or engages in social conversation. Drew can play independently for long periods of time with a few preferred toys. His favorites are trains, Disney figurines, and markers. He has little interest in and few skills with other materials. Some people consider his play to be repetitive or stereotypical. Drew is also not very interested in his brothers or the other children in his classroom. He is very attached to his mother, however, and seeks her out for comfort and when he wants something.

In addition, Drew engages in behaviors that challenge his teachers and other adults, such as yelling, physical aggression, and running away. He has a very difficult time following even simple adult directions and will often start to yell and flail if anyone says "no" to him. Drew attends an integrated preschool classroom in a public school and an extended day program specifically designed for children with autism at the same school. The head teachers in both classrooms are dually certified in ECE and ECSE. There are 15 children in Drew's preschool class; nine children have identified disabilities and have IEPs. The classroom curriculum is the AEPS for Infants and Children. The extended day program has eight students with autism and four staff members and implements The Project DATA Model (Schwartz et al., 2017). Between the two programs, Drew is at school for 25 hours a week.



Mateo is an almost 2-year-old boy whose family has a complicated school and work schedule. He is enrolled in a family child care home with six other children who range in age from a few months to 5 years, with a few older children joining for after-school care. The lead teacher and owner, Dara, has operated her child care home for over 10 years. Mateo's parents, along with Dara, noticed that he was not meeting his early developmental milestones and alerted his pediatrician before his first birthday. He was then referred to the county's EI program and became eligible for services. Although Mateo's global developmental delay does not have a name, he has low muscle tone and does not yet walk. He is attentive to adults and peers but rarely initiates interactions. He uses a few gestures and vocalizations to communicate. Mateo's mother drops him off early in the morning, and his dad picks him up in the late afternoon. The visiting early interventionist, Kate, visits Mateo weekly, alternating between his family child care home one week and his home the next week. Mateo also sees a physical therapist at the EI center once a month. Mateo's older sister receives after-school care at Dara's home. Dara draws from a variety of curricula, state standards, and her own knowledge and experience to create learning activities for the children.

You will learn more about Nhan, Tina, Samisha, Drew, Mateo, their teachers, and their classmates as you use this book. Their stories and the practices described in the book are offered to provide you with support, guidance, and practical suggestions for including children with identified disabilities and other individualized support needs in your early learning program, which can enhance the development and learning of all young children.

In the following chapters, you will learn more about the tiers or levels of support that make up the Building Blocks framework. You will learn strategies for identifying specific educational practices to address the interests and needs of individual children. In addition, you will learn how to implement the Building Blocks framework in order to help each and every child participate, learn, and thrive in their early learning program. A set of seven professional development modules accompanies the book and provides even more information to extend and use the Building Blocks framework.

**“Essential reading for practitioners who wish to meaningfully support young children in inclusive settings . . . filled with classroom scenarios, implementation examples, useful forms, and step-by-step guidance that ensure effective inclusive practices.”**

–Jennifer Grisham, Ed.D., Professor, Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education and Faculty Director, Early Childhood Lab, University of Kentucky

**“Brings together the best available research-based knowledge and professional wisdom to directly support the application of inclusive practices in early education and care programs . . . useful for anyone working with young children across the world!”**

–Elena P. Soukakou, Ph.D., Honorary Research Fellow, Special and Inclusive Education, University of Roehampton School of Education

**P**repare early childhood educators to teach all children in inclusive settings with the fourth edition of this bestselling guidebook!

Like the groundbreaking previous editions, this updated *Building Blocks* guide gives pre- and inservice teachers three types of practical, evidence-based inclusion strategies: **curriculum modifications, embedded learning opportunities, and child-focused instructional strategies**. Educators will learn how to apply these three strategies for the benefit of all children; review the latest research that supports the Building Blocks model; and find ready-to-use tips and guidance on key topics, from fostering friendships to promoting positive behavior. New reproducible forms support planning and assessment, and seven training modules make it easy to teach the Building Blocks framework in college courses and professional development sessions.

Equally useful as a student-friendly textbook and a go-to guide for practicing educators, this is a resource readers will return to again and again for proven, easy-to-use strategies that support all young learners.

**INCLUDES 7 TRAINING MODULES:** Using the Building Blocks framework ■ Conducting ongoing child assessment ■ Planning for the individual child ■ Using visuals to support learning ■ Applying the Building Blocks framework to math and science ■ Applying the framework to challenging classroom behavior ■ Extending the framework to infants and toddlers

## WHAT'S NEW

- All chapters updated
- New chapter on Ongoing Assessment and Instructional Decision-Making
- New chapter on Implementing the Building Blocks Framework
- 8 new checklists and planning forms to support implementation
- New section on the impact of implicit bias on teachers' perception of challenging behavior
- Expanded content on key topics such as collaboration, curriculum modifications, friendships, and social relationships
- Updated vignettes, terms, resources, and references

ABOUT THE AUTHORS: **Susan R. Sandall, Ph.D.**, is Professor Emeritus in the College of Education at the University of Washington, Seattle. **Ariane N. Gauvreau, Ph.D., BCBA-D**, is Senior Director of Professional Development at the Haring Center for Inclusive Education at the University of Washington, Seattle. **Gail E. Joseph, Ph.D.**, is the Bezos Family Professor of Early Learning in the College of Education at the University of Washington, Seattle. **Ilene S. Schwartz, Ph.D., BCBA-D**, is Professor of Special Education and Director of the Haring Center for Inclusive Education at the University of Washington, Seattle.