addition to educational-history literature in general and to publications about Montessori and her work in particular.

—Blythe Hinitz, *The College of New Jersey, Ewing Township, N.J.*

Enhancing Brain Development in Infants and Young Children: Strategies for Caregivers and Educators

Doris Bergen, Lena Lee, Cynthia DiCarlo, and Gail Bernett

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The authors of this accessible book connect the dynamic process of brain growth with specific activities for children from infancy through the primary-age years. In addition, there are suggestions for adults to modify offerings to adjust to special learning needs. It is noteworthy that the authors also include music and movement activities.

Seven chapters follow an introductory chapter. Each chapter includes vignettes of children with related sample activities. For example, adults could provide preverbal children with picture cards to help communicate a choice or, as needed, provide adaptive spoons. In addition, the authors suggest a daily schedule. Each chapter closes with "Questions for Discussion" and "Suggestions for further Reading/Listening." The first chapter, "The Brain Building Process," describes the physical process of brain development from the prenatal period through kindergarten and primary years. To help build neuronal connections, there are recommendations for exercises and good nutritional care. The authors continuously focus on providing a variety of present-time, direct experiences in a playful environment.

The second chapter, "Fostering Brain Development in the Infant Curriculum," begins with helpful advice for parents and caretakers that includes mimicking infants' expressions and sounds as well as describing their activities. The authors emphasize the importance of smiling, vocalizing, talking, and eye contact. They advocate for "human to human" contact instead of extended use of automatic movement devices. Sample music and movement activities provide practice in rhythmic pattern building and "crossing the midline."

Chapter 3, "Fostering Brain Development in the Toddler Curriculum," focuses on toddlers' particularly rapid brain growth. The authors spell out the power of play and the "as-if" significance of pretense in children's ongoing symbolic development. The authors emphasize the power of choices to support youngsters' sense of competence. Examples of modified activities include a chalk line instead of a balance beam, or modified game rules.

The fourth chapter, "Fostering Brain Development in the Preschool Curriculum," includes the suggestion that sample curricular activities can be adapted for either younger or older children. A framework of specific, engaging activities provides a continuum from oral language, three-dimensional objects, and visual representations into print. Children at this age

are rapidly developing their capacity to elaborate their pretend play and negotiate their social development. These experiences help youngsters develop their theory of mind—understanding that others have thoughts and feelings. At the same time, their spatial development grows as they explore and build with three-dimensional materials. Spatial development is so central to develop the imagery that supports mathematics, physical science, construction and engineering, and geographic learning. Physical adaptations during music and movement activities could help some children participate by tapping a table or the floor. Thicker drawing and writing instruments help other children represent their ideas and structures.

Chapter 5, "Fostering Brain Development in the Kindergarten/Primary Curriculum," includes the greatest number of specific curricular activities—a reflection of the expanding capacities of this age group. During the early elementary time, there is a wide range of brain maturation, and adults need to adapt to wider, different abilities. At about age seven, the density of brain connections is at its highest, before refinements take place. Concrete materials and engaging experiences underscore the development of logical thinking. A general principle is to sequence experiences by starting with a real activity before providing a book. Then, there could be opportunities to represent the activity with drawing-construction-print. As early writing and reading develop, the authors caution readers not to "just focus on children's paper-and-pencil or computer responses to prepared materials" (p. 80). In short, there is a need for balance to help children build both their creativity and self-confidence. Children can gain confidence and competence when they have choices, including the reasonable use of technology.

The sixth chapter, "Adapting Brain Development with Technology-Augmented Materials," also includes vignettes of children and sample curricular activities that adults might modify for other age levels and specific abilities. For example, there are computer programs that provide instant feedback to help individuals focus. Adaptive technology-augmented devices can support communication, safety, and enhanced equipment for individuals. As many children move through the primary grades, they become able to create artwork with captions, record their findings, and write stories with computers. The authors provide a checklist for sensible use of computer programs. They also caution that technological choices should supplement, not replace, physical interaction, face-to-face human interaction, and opportunities for children to practice self-regulation and emotional control. Infants and toddlers, in particular, need to maximize human and physical interactions rather than screen time.

The final chapter, "Contemporary and Future Issues Related to Children's Brain Development," discusses some contextual influences that could affect essential conditions for healthy brain development. The authors highlight future challenges that include the overuse of technology and passive consumption of music and entertainment. They specifically recommend limiting cell phone use to ensure time for self-directed physical activities and active play. They express concern for children's resilience in uncertain times and emphasize the importance

of opportunities for self-regulation, healthy human attachments, and positive educational experiences.

The authors provide a clearly accessible description of the parts of the brain and its functions. Sample materials and activities embody the sense of adults enjoying and appreciating their interactions with young children. It is important to consider how play becomes integrated with wholesome brain development. In fact, the dynamics of play mirror the dynamic nature of brain development. Young children explore physical and human interactions through contrasting patterns of connections, and their brains function with synaptic connections across neurons. A dynamic view of early curriculum is an active, play-based curriculum. Movements and contrasts support perception and connections between objects, events, and self and others. Meanings emerge through such contrasting patterns and connections. At a time when families and educators have concerns about academic achievements, it is particularly relevant to nurture children's brains with their active, imaginative, and playful pastimes.

This readable, slim book is a useful supplementary text for early childhood classes as well as a helpful resource for caregivers and teachers. Parents of young children could appreciate the many activity ideas, adaptations, and children's literature references. The book is devoid of either cuteness or lock-step approaches. It is a balanced accounting of the specific connections between accessible details about the brain, the brain's development, and active, engaging experiences for young children. It provides a refreshingly authentic respect for the unique competencies of infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and kindergarten and primary age children.

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What the Children Told Us: The Untold Story of the Famous "Doll Test" and the Black Psychologists Who Changed the World

Tim Spofford

Naperville IL: Sourcebooks, 2022. Foreword, acknowledgments, appendix, notes, select bibliography, about the authors, index. 368 pp. $14.89. hardcover. ISBN: 9781728248073

The book cover features a widely recognized photo taken by the renowned photographer, Gordon Parks, that is associated with the doll choice studies. Along with the title, *What the Children Told Us*, this helps author Tim Spofford lure the reader and mounts their expectations to hear from the children who participated in Kenneth and Mamie Clark's iconic doll choice studies. Who were they? What do they remember? Do they regret their doll preference? How did it impact their lives? For those who snuggle in their chair with a book in hand, disappointment will soon follow the prologue, but, hopefully, not for the totality of the book.

In the field of social sciences and communications, generally speaking, Kenneth and Mamie Clark have been wedded to the doll choice paradigm; in *What the Children Told Us*, Spofford weds them to each other. He offers a biographical sketch