Chapter 1 – Overview of the Profession

This chapter emphasizes:

- Understanding the essentials of early childhood education.
- The types of programs for young children.
- Funding sources for early childhood programs.
- The roles, responsibilities, and skills needed for teachers of young children.
- Current training of teachers in early childhood education
- Resources for professional development available to early-childhood educators.

Essential content

1. Five foundational components are all essential to quality early childhood programs.
   - Understanding child development
   - Play
   - Guidance
   - Working with parents, families, and communities
   - Diversity issues

2. Program types provide a way of categorizing early childhood options.
   - Infant/toddler programs
   - Preschool education
   - Child care programs (family home child care; child care centers; school-based child care; corporate child care; before-and-after school care)
   - Programs for children with special needs (integrated programs; early intervention programs)
   - Kindergarten education
   - Primary education (multi-age classrooms; looping; integrated curriculum; classroom centers)

3. Funding sources for early childhood programs include the public (through local, state, or federal funds) and the families of young children.
   - Programs run for profit
   - Cooperative programs
   - Federally-funded programs
   - State and locally-funded programs
   - Corporate child care
● College and university-supported programs

4. Roles of the early childhood teacher are far more challenging and rewarding than most people think.
   ● Facilitator of learning
   ● Counselor
   ● Janitor
   ● Cook
   ● Educational specialist
   ● Parent substitute

5. Responsibilities of those in early education are broad.
   ● Advocate for children and families
   ● Continuing education
   ● Engage in ethical conduct

6. Three broad categories of skills are needed to teach young children.
   ● Interacting with children
   ● Preparing the environment
   ● Working with other adults

7. Making a decision about teaching requires careful reflection.
   ● Observe early childhood teachers at work
   ● Spend time with young children
   ● Ask for feedback from others
   ● Self-analysis

8. Teacher preparation options vary, but generally fall into three categories.
   ● CDA credential
   ● Two-year college programs
   ● Four-year college/university degrees

9. Resources are available to help teachers continue their professional development.
   ● Professional organizations (NAEYC, ACEI)
   ● Journals
   ● Reference materials (books, ERIC, web sites)