

Name _____

Date _____

Instructor _____

Class time _____

Chapter 1: Begin with Yourself

Beginning Reflections

Read through the list below and check what's true for you.

1. Have you asked yourself why you plan your curriculum the way you do?
 - Do you follow the same daily routines and curriculum plans because it's the way you've always done it?
 - Do you obediently follow rules and regulations, not knowing or questioning the reasons why they exist?
 - Have you noticed that the children are restless and bored and that you are too?
 - Does your program reflect what you and the children really care about?
2. Is your work life stressful and fast-paced—your time filled with a continuous cycle of activity preparation and cleanup; parent notes, curriculum plans, reports, and newsletters to write; and e-mails, notices, new regulations, and articles to read?
 - Do you have few opportunities to slow down and spend quality time with children?
 - Are you exhausted at the end of each day, more because of what didn't happen with the kids than because of what did?
3. Are you concerned because your program has been invaded by commercialism and the media's idea of childhood?
 - Do children's toys, lunch boxes, and clothes reflect the latest superhero products from TV and movies?
 - Do you find the children following the scripts of these violent and stereotyped characters with play that is repetitive and lacking in creativity?
 - Do most of your interactions with children involve preventing fights and soothing hurt feelings?
 - Have you noticed that many toys are designed and packaged with predetermined themes and offer limited opportunity for investigation, invention, or using one's own ideas or imagination?
 - Are you concerned that when you provide open-ended, challenging activities and toys the children won't know how to begin without your help and some may be reluctant to even try?

4. Do you ever feel it's time to reexamine the icons of preschool culture—circle time, calendar time, cleanup time, paper plate and paper bag art projects, holiday themes, or the value of learning the ABC song?
- Do your holiday projects create additional stress and exhaustion for you and the children and convey an underlying message of commercialism?
 - Have any children in your program been overlooked because you assumed all families celebrate and value traditional Christian or European American-based holidays?
 - Have you discovered that getting children ready for kindergarten often really means teaching to the standards rather than engaging children's minds?
 - When you reflect on children's play, do you really understand how to support the learning quest they are on?