“Deliberating on Practices with Young Children in the U.S.” in *Early Childhood Studies: A Critical Companion*

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Purpose of Chapter

• Provide context of early childhood education and care in the U.S. for children, families & practitioners

• Discuss how given the spirit of freedom of choice in the U.S. system, practitioners must make decisions about care & education of young children and families based upon a philosophy of practice grounded in sound, ethical, and research-based principles

• Show common philosophical elements of popular models of practice in the U.S. are based on unifying principles of respecting children, partnering with families, planning organized environments, and assessing children’s strengths
1 Nation, 50 States, 50 Policies

Large, diverse nation with no single national early childhood policy; Heavily influenced by the philosophy of Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Major Issues & Challenges

• “Trilemma”: Quality, Affordability & Availability of early care and education for all young children & families

• Fair and equitable wages, compensation and recognition for professionals in early childhood care and education

• Tension between what practitioners know is ‘best’ in the early years and increased demand to show academic outcomes and achievement
Deliberate Early Years Practitioners

Define **PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY** grounded in carefully researched and reasoned beliefs

Engage in respectful, responsive and **ETHICAL PRACTICES** with young children & families

**OVERALL WELLBEING** for young children in their daily lives and in preparation for their futures
Unifying Principles of Popular Models

- Respecting and valuing children & families
- Partnering with families
- Responding sensitively to children’s communications
- Planning organized environments
- Seeing children as capable and strong
Final Thoughts

The deliberate practitioner is intelligent, flexible and ethical in thinking about all they do; sensitive, respectful, caring and compassionate in interactions with children, families and colleagues; deliberate, reflective life-long learners willing to grow and change as they gain new knowledge and experience. These characteristics and dispositions are necessary for ECEC practitioners who support healthy growth, development and learning outcomes for young children, one of the most important and exciting jobs in the world!