

Twelve Early Educators Whose Ideas Have Influenced Early Childhood Education

Martin Luther (1483-1546)

Universal education; literacy; use of native language in teaching and learning; importance of family; and importance of religion and literacy as the purposes and basis for education.

John Amos Comenius (1592-1678)

Wrote *The Great Didactic* and *Orbis Pictus*; humans born in image of God; advocate of universal education; natural order of education; and important role of sensory experiences.

John Locke (1632-1704)

Identified "tabula rasa" or blank tablet view of mind; important role of environment and experiences; and importance of the senses in learning.

Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778)

Wrote *Emile*, the life of a hypothetical child from birth to adolescence; return to nature and a naturalistic approach to education; idea of "unfolding;" basic innate goodness of children; and children develop through experiences with the environment.

Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827)

Back-to-nature concepts; started school at Neuhof and developed ideas of integrating of home life, vocational education, and education for reading and writing; and wrote *Leonard and Gertrude*, *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children* and *Book for Mothers*.

Robert Owen (1771-1858)

Environmentalist; believed that by controlling the circumstances and consequent outcomes of child-rearing, a new and more perfect society could be built; and opened an infant school in 1861.

Friedrich Wilhelm Froebel (1782-1852)

Identified as "Father of Kindergarten," developed a curriculum and methodology (gifts and occupations, role of play, rhymes and songs, etc.) and wrote *Mother's Songs, Games, and Stories*.

Maria Montessori (1870-1952)

Developed the Montessori Method, Philosophy, and Materials; and traveled widely to disseminate ideas of her work.

John Dewey (1859-1952)

Was the leader of the progressive education movement, emphasizing the child and his interests, the child-centered curriculum or child-centered school; and wrote several books, including My Pedagogical Creed which set forth his beliefs that education is "a process of living, not a preparation for future living".

Jean Piaget (1896-1980)

Developed a widely-accepted theory of intellectual development, identifying four major stages of intellectual thinking. His writings and ideas have made a major impact on early childhood education programs since the 1960s.

Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934)

Constructivist; believed that children's mental, language and social development is supported and enhanced by others through social interaction.

Howard Gardner (1943-)

A contemporary theorist who proposes that one unitary intelligence is not a good way to describe human intellect. Instead he proposes that there are many different ways in which we demonstrate our intelligence. His is a theory of multiple intelligences.