

**ILLUMINATING CARE**  
The Pedagogy And Practice Of Care  
In Early Childhood Communities  
Carol Garboden Murray

**CAROL GARBODEN MURRAY**

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Today, I hope that you feel cared for and that you will join me in inventing a new way to describe CARE as EDUCATION.

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**What is care?**

“Most people agree that the world would be a better place if we all cared more for one another, but despite that initial agreement we find it is hard to say exactly what we mean by caring.”

**Nel Noddings,**  
Starting at Home: Caring and Social Policy

**Nel Noddings – Feminist/Relational Care Ethics**  
Philosopher, Writer, Educator  
Mother of 10

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### The 7 lamps of



- Care is Education
- Care is a Right
- Care is a Partnership
- Care is Bodily
- Care is an Art
- Care is a Science
- Care is what makes us Human

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### Child care = education

The pedagogy of care dissolves the false dichotomy that there is a split between early education and care. In the past, caring may have been viewed as a minimum standard of keeping a child safe and clean, or as something anyone could do. In the emerging future, caring is viewed as an intentional teaching practice that connects us to one another, and requires specialized knowledge about children, about learning, growth, and human development.

carolgarbodenmurray.com  
#Illuminating Care

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### What are the Myths?

#### Care is Education

**MYTH**

Child care and early education are two separate things. Child care centers only provide custodial care while preschool provides education that prepares children for school.

**TRUTH**

Early education and care are inseparable. The highest quality programs for young children unite education and care.



#### Child Care = Early Learning

The way we care for children better than all else, their ability for perspective taking, and their capacity for empathy. These are not soft skills - these are the vital building blocks of a strong human.

**MYTH**

Care involves basic bodily functions while education teaches the mind.

**TRUTH**

The false dualism of mind and body and the historic divide between care and education does not stand still to an accurate understanding of early childhood development. Care rituals are critical natural learning opportunities that integrate needs-based learning prepare the child for future academic success and set the foundation for a sense of worthiness and agency in the world.

**CARING FOR CHILDREN IS AN INTELLECTUAL EXCHANGE**  
Intellectual development involves thinking, interpreting and making sense of the world. The rituals of care offer all these essentials. The child's bodily sensations and the child's interaction with the other through care, is a direct pathway to the growing mind. When adults understand the significance and potential of care, they meet mealtime, rest time, toilet learning, dressing, holding, comforting, and all the ways we care for children as an honorable teaching practice that grows the child's heart, body and mind.

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### The inseparability of early education and care

#### False Dualism

John Dewey described false dualism as the split between intellect & emotions. He examined that life is our true education and good schools should provide elements of home, domesticity, community and experiential learning in the wide wonderful world.

**MIND & BODY**  
**EMOTION & LOGIC**  
**WORK & PLAY**  
**THINKING & FEELING**  
**EDUCATION & CARE**

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#### Is it DANGEROUS to talk about care?

Some have said it is risky to talk about the work of teaching young children through the lens of feminist care ethics. They have said that talking about the labor of the body is dangerous to our profession, or to put it bluntly, no one wants to hear about preparing meals, wiping noses and changing diapers. But I say, I want to rescue care. I don't want to disguise care. I believe we must name it, and it is time to shape a new honest narrative about the strength of care.

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## Rescuing CARE is a social justice issue

Alicia Garza in her Ted Talk, *Care Givers are the Back Bone of Society* describes the inclusiveness of care as she explains that the care movement has the power to connect us all to one another. She says that taking steps to solve the care crisis in our country links us directly to the movement to end sexism, homophobia, ableism and racism. Care is not only about gender equity, but care is also about class and race. As we illuminate care, we seek inclusion, unity and healing.

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Care is NOT subordinate to Education.

Care is FOUNDATIONAL LEARNING.

### A hierarchy of needs

implies that one thing is ranked above another, but when we practice **the pedagogy of care**, we know that Maslow's hierarchy is not ranking - rather it is revealing that care is the essential foundation of our human potential. We transform the seemingly mundane care routines of holding, feeding, and dressing children into educational practices and honorable rituals that cannot be separated from the child's mind, intellect, and spirit. Care is what makes us human.



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## Can care be uncaring? Is caring natural?

Early childhood teachers may have inclinations towards caring, but it is not accurate to believe that caring is natural. Caring can be learned, analyzed and improved. When we practice the pedagogy of care, we treat care as an art, and a science, and an educational encounter. As professionals who care, we must grapple with the meaning of human growth, empathy, attentiveness and trust. Caring with this attitude makes care an honorable intellectual exchange.



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# BUT, I DIDN'T GET A DEGREE TO CHANGE DIAPERS!

AS AN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR, I DIDN'T FORESEE THE AMOUNT OF TIME I WOULD SPEND IN CARING RITUALS. IT TOOK ME YEARS TO SEE CARING AS THE CORE OF THE CURRICULUM, AND TO UNDERSTAND THAT A PEDAGOGY AND PRACTICE OF CARING FOR CHILDREN DURING TOILETING AND DRESSING ROUTINES IS CENTRAL TO EXCELLENT EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION.



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## Reflection Image of the teacher



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Care is strength -  
and naming  
care can be a  
REVOLUTIONARY ACT



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### Care for the sake of care

When we practice care as a relational ethic, we recognize the inherent worthiness of the person. We treat care as a way of teaching trust, respect, and the value of human relationships. Appreciating care for the sake of care is about understanding that caring for the child's body is the same as caring for the child's mind and spirit.

(page 26, Illuminating Care)

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How is the theme of **care** embedded naturally in the habitat of childhood?



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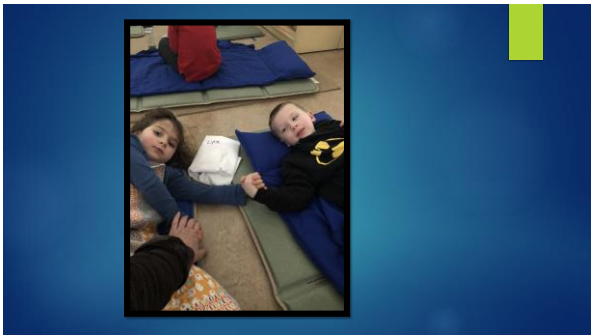
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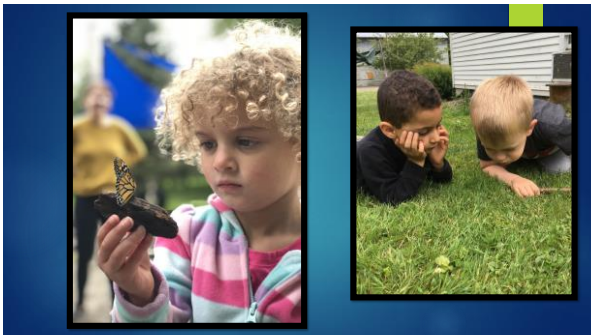
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**Carol Garboden Murray**



**THANK YOU FOR CARING!**

Look for **ILLUMINATING CARE** at **EXCHANGE**  
[Childcareexchange.com](http://Childcareexchange.com)

Or visit my website [carolgarbodenmurray.com](http://carolgarbodenmurray.com)

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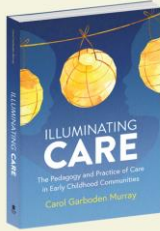
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