



# EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE) AND POPULATION EDUCATION

## WHAT IS EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION:

Research shows that Early Childhood Education (ECE) has the ability to yield significant long-term returns on investment. The goal of ECE is to prepare students for kindergarten and elementary learning.

[The High Scope Perry Preschool Study](#) found that ECE has lasting impacts on a child's education and can produce significant gains in level of education achieved and economic status, particularly for students in low income communities. Currently, states and the federal government are working to make ECE a priority in many American school districts.

**POPULATION EDUCATION**

A PROJECT OF POPULATION CONNECTION

[www.populationeducation.org](http://www.populationeducation.org)  
[poped@popconnect.org](mailto:poped@popconnect.org)

Sources:  
Armitage, K. C. (2007). 'The Child is Born a Naturalist': Nature Study, Woodcraft Indian, and the Theory of Recapitulation. *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, 6 (1), 43-70.

Restak, R. M. (1979) *The Brain: The Last Frontier*. Doubleday.

## HOW DOES POPULATION EDUCATION FIT INTO AN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE) CURRICULUM?

Young children learn through touch, movement, and experience. Studies have shown that many children do not become visual learners until the age of three and auditory acuity does not develop in some children until after the age of six (Restak, 1979). Therefore, it is important for early childhood educators to incorporate tactile and kinesthetic learning into their curriculum. Population Education addresses these challenges by providing students with a variety of modalities (kinesthetic, auditory, visual, and tactile) to master interdisciplinary concepts and themes, while fostering future global citizens who are prepared to make smart and informed decisions about the environment.

## WHAT CONCEPTS RELATED TO POPULATION EDUCATION ALIGN WITH EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION?

At a young age, environmental education is more responsive to the needs and development of children when it is focused on play, discovery, and exploration rather than formal instruction (Armitage, 2007). Furthermore, young children are naturally interested in the natural world and enjoy exploring and learning about different habitats and wildlife. The demonstrations, role-playing activities, and hands-on experiences found in Population Education curricula provide children with interactive and fun ways to learn about complex environmental issues that will impact their futures such as population growth patterns, resource use and scarcity, forest ecology, and carrying capacity.

### Population Education provides students with experiences that are:

- **Hands-on:** *Interactive and engaging.*
- **Relevant:** *Relates to real world issues and solutions.*
- **Interdisciplinary:** *Cross-cut a variety of subjects.*
- **Action Driven:** *Inspires and empowers students to take action in solving environmental issues.*

## WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO HELP INTEGRATE POPULATION EDUCATION INTO THE ECE CURRICULA?

Population Education offers a variety of classroom resources, lesson plans, and professional development opportunities to help teachers effectively implement environmental education in the classroom.

In Population Education lessons, students kinesthetically partake in scenarios that apply concepts of math, science, social studies, and English language arts to experience and explore contemporary environmental challenges. Resources are available on the Population Education website and through professional development opportunities offered nationwide each year.