

Understanding Young Children: Typical and Atypical Pathways

Monday 8:00 am – 10:45 am (plus 9 hour/week field)

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COURSE OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVES

This course covers the development of young children from birth to age eight. We will explore diversity among children and families in terms of culture, ability, context, and experience. This course will also introduce you to the role of teacher as researcher by examining many forms of observation, assessment, and documentation of children's development, behavior, and interactions. As a result of your readings, discussions, and fieldwork you will have the opportunity to:

- 1) Develop an understanding of how children develop and learn physically, socially, emotionally, linguistically, cognitively, and aesthetically from birth through age eight;
- 2) Explore how children vary in their developmental progression as a result of contextual, familial, cultural, socio-economic, and historical differences;
- 3) Understand the difference between developmental variations requiring intervention and those considered to be cultural differences;
- 4) Develop skills for observing, assessing, documenting, and applying knowledge about children, individually and collectively, in preparation for Block II student teaching;
- 5) Explore the roles of families in children's development and education;
- 6) Become familiar with many community agencies and institutions involved in serving young children and families;
- 7) Understand how knowledge of child development and families provides the foundation for curriculum planning and service coordination.

University policy 3342-3-18 requires that students with disabilities be provided reasonable accommodations to ensure their equal access to course content. If you have a documented disability and require accommodations, please contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to make arrangements for necessary classroom adjustments. Please note, you must first verify your eligibility for these through Student Disability Services (contact 330-672-3391 or visit www.kent.edu/sds for more information on registration procedures).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL COURSEWORK (15 POINTS)

As a foundational course in the first Block of your professional coursework, your performance (in class and in the field) reflects your commitment to teaching and learning. You are expected to come to class on time and be prepared to participate actively in all class activities. You are expected to complete all assignments on time and the finished products should represent your best work (i.e., proofread, spell-checked, neat, organized). You are advised to take notes during class, bring your field notes/journal with you to each class, and have reading materials on hand for in-class activities. You will earn a grade reduction(s) for tardiness, unexcused or frequent absences, and poorly prepared or late assignments. Professional, respectful communication is expected and rewarded.

You are also expected to actively engage in all group discussions; large portions of each class will require your personal investment in some form of teamwork. If one team member is missing or ill-prepared, it adversely affects the learning potential of the entire group. It is your responsibility to contact the course instructor to discuss any absence; if you miss a class for any reason (excused or unexcused), you may be responsible for completing an additional assignment in order to supplement the readings and the activities missed in class. The instructor reserves the right to determine what, if any, supplemental work is appropriate.

FIELD OBSERVATION REQUIREMENTS (60 POINTS)

There are **9 hours/week** of field experience assigned to this course and the other courses in Block I. In the field, you are expected to serve as an extra set of hands/assistant to the teacher as well as making time to sit quietly and observe/record children at play throughout the day. You will analyze data gathered (interpretations) and apply the information acquired to your professional development (reflection). This process will help you synthesize your new and existing knowledge about children and families, and help you develop an understanding of typical and atypical development. You will learn to interpret these observations through in-class activities, team discussions, sharing with your mentor teacher, and solitary introspection.

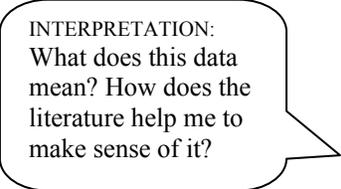
In order to successfully complete this course, you will demonstrate two kinds of observation:

Observations of child development using running records (data sheets, field notes)

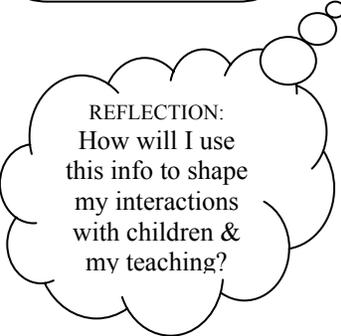
On a weekly basis, beginning the first week of field, you will record what you see and hear for a minimum of 30 minutes. At the conclusion of the first or second week, you will identify a child of interest to focus on for the remainder of the semester.

- ✓ Ten (10) observations of your focal child will be completed as you learn the skills of Observation, Interpretation, and Reflection (OIR). These observations will help you construct your Child Study Developmental Profile – see guidelines below.
- ✓ Six (6) will be graded for credit (5 points a piece) for a total of 30 points.

Programmatic observations - You will also be responsible for completing two (2) separate program observations outside of your field classroom. These will help you make sense of program options serving the developmental areas outside your field. You will use our readings to interpret these observations and reflect upon what you learn about children and teaching from the observations. Each program observation will be graded on a 15-point scale for a total of 30 points.



INTERPRETATION:
What does this data mean? How does the literature help me to make sense of it?



REFLECTION:
How will I use this info to shape my interactions with children & my teaching?

CHILD STUDY DEVELOPMENTAL PROFILE (20 POINTS)

As described above, you will choose one child at your site to observe each week throughout the semester. You will keep notes on the developmental milestones of your child in the following domains: physical, language and communication, cognitive, and social/emotional development. Be prepared to use your running records in class weekly and to turn them in on the dates specified in the schedule. As the semester progresses, you will add interpretations and reflections to the data sheets.

At the end of the semester, you will organize your data, synthesize your interpretations, and compile a brief *developmental profile* of your child. You will compare and contrast your focal child's development with the "widely held expectations" and developmental descriptions in the Developmentally Appropriate Practices and Early Childhood Development texts as well as drawing upon class discussions, notes from speakers and field trips, and readings assigned outside of this class. This project will also include a letter that you will write to the parent assessing the child's development (this WILL NOT actually be sent). The Developmental Profile and Narrative Assessment will be graded on a 20-point scale.

REFLECTION PAPERS ON FIELD TRIP/GUEST SPEAKERS (30 POINTS)

At the conclusion of each speaker's presentation or field trip, you will have the opportunity to reflect upon what you learned and express your appreciation in the form of a Thank You Note. You will be given a few minutes to compose this self-assessment and reflection (hence the name "minute paper") based upon your notes and readings. The "minute papers" will assess your comprehension of the material presented as well as your ability to critically assess your growing knowledge. I will collect five (5) "minute papers" for a total of 30 points.

In composing "minute papers" you are advised to consider the following prompts:

- 1.) What new information did you learn (pick out the most salient or personally relevant points)
- 2.) What surprised you? Briefly explain why you were surprised or how this is new knowledge.
- 3.) How will you use this information in your care and education of children with typical and atypical development?

AUTOBIOGRAPHY: PROJECT & PRESENTATION (25 POINTS)

You will independently research your own developmental story in order to compose a personal developmental "autobiography." Facts for your autobiography can be gathered from a variety of sources including, but not limited to: family documents (e.g., birth certificate, report cards); artifacts (e.g., photo album, videos, keepsakes); interviews (e.g., sibling, parent, grandparent, teacher, coach, physician).

CH. 1 Prenatal Development Period

CH. 2 Infant/Toddler Development Period

CH. 3 Preschool Development Period

CH. 4 K-Primary Development Period

At the end of the semester you will reflect on this experience by making personal and meaningful connections to each developmental period with your own experiences.

During finals week we will meet in small groups to share "highlights" of your developmental autobiography. Additional information will be provided later in the semester.

REQUIRED READINGS

Texts:

Bredenkamp, S. & Copple, C. (Eds.). (1997). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs* (Rev. ed.). Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Trawick-Smith, Jeffrey. (2006). *Early childhood development: A multicultural perspective (4th ed.)*. New Jersey: Pearson Education.

Articles:

Odom, S., Teferra, T., & Kaul, S. (2004). An overview of international approaches to early intervention for young children with special needs and their families. *Young Children*, 59 (5), 38-42.

Ryan, S., & Grieshaber. (2004). Critical theories, research, and teaching young children: It's more than child development: *Young Children*, 59 (6), 44-52.

Wingert, P. & Brant, M. (2005). Reading your baby's mind. *Newsweek*. August 15, 32-39.

Additional readings will be distributed to supplement this required reading list according to the interests and needs of the group. If you have an interest or question, let me know!

Summary of Assignments and Points

Attendance & participation in professional coursework	(15 points)
Observations of child development using running records	(30 points)
Programmatic observations	(30 points)
Child study developmental profile	(20 points)
Reflection papers on field trip/guest speakers	(30 points)
Autobiography: project & presentation	(25 points)
TOTAL	150 points

Final Grade

A	95-100%
A-	93-94%
B+	91-92%
B	88-90%
B-	86-87%
C+	84-85%
C	81-83%
C-	79-80%
D+	77-78%
D	72-76%
F	less than 72%

ADVICE FROM SUCCESSFUL GRADS OF 20163: * Start running records right away & use Dr. B's suggestions to get better at them. * Do the reading; there is so much useful information in the books! * Ask your mentor teacher lots of questions; don't be afraid. * Remember to Interpret (using books) and Reflect if you want to get an "A" in this class. * Enjoy the children!