

*George Mason University  
College of Education and Human Development  
Early Childhood Program*

**EDUT 411/511  
Developmental Pathways of Diverse Learners, Birth – Adolescence (3:3:0)  
Fall 2009  
4:30-7:10 Thursdays  
Robinson Hall B 103**

**Professor: Leslie La Croix**

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### **Course Description**

Examines child and adolescent development from diverse perspectives. Addresses typical and atypical physical, social, emotional, language, and intellectual development. Explores role of individual differences and culture in understanding and interpreting child and adolescent development. *Field Experience Required.*

### **Nature of Course Delivery**

The class will have lecture, discussion, group work formats and will require active participation of all students. Guest lecturers from the community may be utilized to support content from readings.

### **Learner Outcomes**

This course is designed to enable students to

- Describe the major theories of development and demonstrate the skill to critically examine the theories as they apply to the lives of culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse children and their families.
- Examine the transactional nature of overall development in the context of the family, community, socioeconomic conditions, and culture.
- Identify typical developmental milestones of diverse children from birth through adolescence and their cultural and socioeconomic variations.
- Observe and describe overall development in the social and emotional domains as well as physical and cognitive as it occurs in natural environments and through play.
- Identify environmental and biological/physical/medical at-risk factors that can contribute to possible developmental risk and atypical development across the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional domains.
- Discuss the etiology of major disabilities as well as giftedness and demonstrate the skill to select culturally and linguistically appropriate resources to use with diverse families and their children.
- Identify culturally and linguistically responsive professional practices that facilitate development in the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional domains.
- Plan and present a professional development session for adult learners on developmental

issues that affect diverse young children and support family-centered practices. These can focus on disabilities, giftedness, and family variables.

- Provide critical and constructive feedback to peers on issues related to development and diversity.
- Explain the affect of child abuse and neglect on development.

### **Professional Standards**

This concentration is approved for licensure in the Commonwealth of Virginia and it complies with the standards for teacher licensure established by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

The course content has been designed to address the following standards and competencies.

#### ***Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)***

- Standard 2 Development and Characteristics of Learners

#### ***National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)***

- Standard 1 Promoting Child Development and Learning

#### ***Virginia Professional Endorsement Competencies***

- Human growth and development (birth through adolescence)

#### ***Virginia Early Childhood Special Education Endorsement Competencies***

- Understanding of **normal growth and development** from birth through age 5

(Satisfies the Child Growth and Development requirement for alternate route to licensure: 3 semester hours)

### **Required Texts**

Korakek, D. (2004). *Spotlight on young children and play*. Washington, DC: NAEYC.

Trawick-Smith, J. (2005). *Early childhood development: A multicultural perspective (Latest Edition)*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Paley, V.G. (2004). *A Child's Work: the Importance of Fantasy Play*. Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press.

### **Required Readings found at [www.nap.edu](http://www.nap.edu)**

Shonkoff, J. P., & Phillips, D. A. (2000). *Neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development*. Washington, DV: National Academy Press. ISBN: 0309069882

## **Course Requirements**

### **General Requirements**

1. The completion of all readings assigned for the course is assumed. Because the class will be structured around discussion and small group activities, it is imperative that students keep up with the readings and participate in class.

2. Class attendance is important. If, due to an emergency, students will not be in class, they must call the instructor and leave a message.
3. The university requires that all pagers and cell phones be turned off before class begins. Laptops and other electronic devices are to be used for educational and learning purposes only and should not be used during class time to check email, surf the web, or communicate with people outside of the class unless part of the class activity.
4. It is expected that assignments will be turned in on time (the beginning of the class in which they are due). However, it is recognized that graduate students occasionally have serious problems that prevent work completion. If such a dilemma arises, students should speak to the instructor in a timely fashion.

### **Attendance**

Attendance in class is important to students' learning; therefore, students are expected to make every effort to attend class sessions. Absences, tardiness, and leaving early may negatively affect course grades. The following policy is from the university course catalog:

Students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they register. In-class participation is important not only to the individual student, but also to the class as a whole. Because class participation may be a factor in grading, instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of nonparticipation. Students who miss an exam with an acceptable excuse may be penalized according to the individual instructor's grading policy, as stated in the course syllabus.

### **Written Assignments**

All written assignments prepared outside of class will be evaluated for content and presentation as graduate-level writing. The American Psychological Association, Fifth Edition (APA) style will be followed for all written work. All written work unless otherwise noted must be completed on a word processor and should be proofread carefully. (Use spell check!) If students are not confident of their own ability to catch errors, they should have another person proofread their work. When in doubt, they should check the APA manual. Portions of the APA manual appear at the Style Manuals link on the GMU library web guide at <http://library.gmu.edu/resources/edu/>.

Students will

1. Present ideas in a clear, concise, and organized manner. (Avoid wordiness and redundancy.)
2. Develop points coherently, definitively, and thoroughly.
3. Refer to appropriate authorities, studies, and examples to document where appropriate. (Avoid meaningless generalizations, unwarranted assumptions, and unsupported opinions.)
4. Use correct capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar.

### **Grading Criteria**

A = 95 – 100	A- = 90 – 94	B+ = 87 – 89	B = 83 – 86
B- = 80 – 82	C = 70 – 79	F = < 70	

A+ is possible if work is of exceptional high quality and includes work above and beyond that required for the course.

## Grading Policy

Students in a graduate program must maintain a 3.000 GPA (B average). Endorsement coursework grades must be C or better for undergraduate courses, and B or better for graduate courses. Grades of B minus or better are required for all graduate-level education coursework for licensure. Students with a C or lower in a licensure course must re-take the course and earn a B minus or better to be recommended for Virginia licensure. Only two grades of C will be allowed for completion of the master's degree.

## Assignments

### Attendance and Participation (15 points)

Because active participation and engagement are imperative for optimal learning, preparation for and participation in in-class activities will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Students attend class, arrive on time, and stay for the entire class period.
- Students complete readings and prepare for class activities prior to class as is evidenced by their ability to discuss and write about the concepts presented and examined in the texts as well as participate fully in related activities.
- Students are actively involved in in-class learning experiences as is evidenced by (1) participating in all activities, (2) engaging in small and large group discussions, (3) completing written work related to the activities, and (4) supporting the participation and learning of classmates.
- Students show evidence of critical reflective thinking through in-class discussions, activities, and written reflections.

A Rubric will be utilized

### Child Abuse and Neglect Online Training (5 points)

**Students must complete an online mini course on Child Abuse and Neglect.** Students will upload a copy of the certificate of completion onto TaskStream. Further information will be provided by instructor.

### Developmental Theory Perspective (10 points)

In order that all class members leave this course with an overview of the most prominent developmental theories in the field of early childhood education and gain a critical perspective on the values and liabilities of different theories and their application, students will work in pairs or threes to research some of these. Some of these key theoretical perspectives include the following: Cognitive-developmental, maturationist, psychoanalytical, behaviorist, socio-cultural, ecological. Some prominent theorists include: Piaget, Erikson, Skinner, Vygotsky, Montessori, Dewey, and Bronfenbrenner. In the first class meeting, the class will decide which student pairs will research which theory, write about and report on it. The write-up (3 pages maximum) of the Developmental Theory Perspective should include the following elements:

- Brief description of the theory; key tenets; well-known theorists who have presented/promoted this perspective; milestones or stages; criticisms of the theory; how this theorist would explain, value or not value cultural differences that are apparent in development; examples of child behavior which demonstrates some of these concepts/stages; and how this theory might affect teaching methodology or approach. This assignment will

assist students in writing up their statement of understanding.  
A Rubric will be available

### **Written Child Observations (20 points)**

All teachers need to develop skills as observers of children. They learn most about children by studying their behavior directly, observing with objectivity, making careful notes and reflecting upon them thoughtfully. Accurate observations make valuable contributions toward planning for one child's learning or improving curriculum for the entire group. Observations help develop an understanding of the theories and how they developed to provide information about child development. There are a variety of informal and formal methods of observing, which will be explored in class. Students will experience note taking in class to learn about observing children. As a part of this assignment, they will write up two observations. Students will do the following:

- Bring to class a running record or a diary record of one child, using a free-writing format. Write up everything they see in their notebook. **Make sure they observe a child who is engaged in activities in different domains of development (physical, cognitive, etc.) Spend five minutes each time and observe the child for four times.** Play observations should be the central focus for gathering examples to describe children's cognitive, social/emotional, and physical/motor development.
- Bring to class a time sampling or event sampling observation that represents at least four entries in all domains of development.
- **In both write ups of their observations will address what connections they found between their observations and developmental theories discussed earlier.**

A rubric will be available

### **Family and Teacher Resource and Information Group Project (15 points)**

The Family and Teacher Resource and Information File which will be created by work in small groups, has a dual focus: 1) what the teachers need to know about the disabilities/risks factors/special needs (d/r/s) of some children and effective research-based intervention strategies and 2) what teachers can do to make this information more accessible to families so they may more effectively advocate for their child.

- Students will speak to at least 4 teachers/administrators at their school to find out the most common d/r/s they have encountered in the children they serve.
- These responses will be compiled and grouped in order for the class to decide which ones they want to research for inclusion in the Resource File.
- After selecting those d/r/s topics the class will research, students will select topics to research in groups. The research on each d/r/s needs to include the following:
  - a. Definition, characteristics, and etiology of the d/r/s
  - b. How it affects children's development across domains and stages
  - c. Impact that the d/r/s has on families at different ages/stages
  - d. Cultural views and/or socio-cultural factors influencing the d/r/s, including the effect of language, culture, and class
  - e. Education and intervention approaches and any controversy associated with these approaches
  - f. Research-based ideas/resources for professionals working with the child with this d/r/s
  - g. Family-centered criteria used to select relevant resources.

The final component of the Resource File is the section that addresses what the child's teacher needs to know and what they can do to make this information more accessible to families so they may more effectively advocate for their child.  
A Rubric will be available

**Statement of Understanding (35 points) *This is the NCATE 2 Content Knowledge Development Performance-Based Assessment that shows evidence of meeting CEC Standard 2 Development and Characteristics of Learners and NAEYC Standard 1 Promoting Child Development and Learning.***

The purpose of this assignment is to synthesize the theories and research related to development of children, birth – adolescence, and to link it to observations of children over the course of the semester to demonstrate students' understanding of cognitive, physical, social-emotional, and intellectual development and the milestones of that development. Students are expected to critically reflect on their personal view, assumptions, beliefs, and understandings about how children develop and the role of the socio-cultural context on development and how it affects children and families of diverse backgrounds.

**Format:** The following three major components are required: (1) review of major theories, including the key theorists associated with the view and examples of development, learning, and practice (**described above**); (2) discussion of development from birth - adolescence, including the research and personal examples; and (3) critical reflections focused on student's view of children of diverse backgrounds, including a discussion of challenges, strengths, practices, and questions.

**Major theories:** Students will use the report on a major theory as a basis for this section and compare and contrast the theory they reported on with another of their choice. They will not review all theories. The paper should provide an explanation of how both theories apply to children, birth - adolescence, in particular to children of culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse backgrounds. Discuss contractions, strengths, research, theorists/researchers, and personal observations/experiences that link to theories. They will discuss specific examples of how what they observed a child/children doing relates to the specific theory. Also, they will describe some of the common practices associated with each of the theories. They will give examples of interventions, professional practices, materials, and interactions observed or used that are examples of the tenets of the theory.

**Child development:** This section should rely on the textbooks, research findings, and personal observations/experiences/practices to describe children's cognitive, social/emotional, and physical/motor development and the issues related to atypical development and at-risk factors. The discussion of each domain should include a synthesis of the key concepts and milestones. Statements and explanations should be supported with direct links to the readings, presentations, and research. Citations should follow APA guidelines. Examples and observations should be used to demonstrate an understanding of how development manifests itself in young children of diverse backgrounds.

**Developmental influences and red flags:** As part of their discussion on developmental domains, students will need to identify developmental red flags and play activities which would help to

facilitate development for each of the areas of development discussed (cognitive development, social/emotional development, and physical and motor development). Students will use their observations, teaching and learning experiences, and readings of the science of childhood development to provide examples of the influences and red flags.

***Socio-cultural context:*** Within each domain, there should be a discussion of (a) family/community view of child/children's development, particularly their strengths or what they consider as significant evidence of appropriate level and (b) how the socio-cultural context (social, political, economic, historical, and personal family story) of the family and community mediates the domain.

***Own assumptions:*** (Undergraduate students are exempt from this section).

Students are to critically reflect on their assumptions, beliefs, and practices associated with young children and their families. Students will discuss how assumptions might influence their observations and professional practice.

**This assignment will be submitted on TaskStream. (See TaskStream Rubric attached)**

### **CEHD Syllabus Statements of Expectations**

All students must abide by the following:

- Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See <http://gse.gmu.edu/facultystaffres/profdisp.htm> for a listing of these dispositions.
- Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#Anchor12> for the full honor code.
- Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/policy/newpolicy/1301gen.html>. Click on responsible Use of Computing Policy at the bottom of the screen.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Disability Resource Center (DRC) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See <http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc/> or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.

**Note:** To determine whether the campus is closed due to inclement weather, call 703-993-1000 or go to [www.gmu.edu](http://www.gmu.edu).

Just in case:

Registration Dates: Apr 13, 2009 to Sep 15, 2009

Drop without Tuition Penalty Dates: Apr 13, 2009 to Sep 15, 2009

Drop with Tuition Penalty (and final drop deadline) Dates: Sep 16, 2009 to Oct 02, 2009

## Projected Course Topics and Schedule

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Assignments Due</b>
Week 1 9/3	Domains of development and major concepts	Welcome to Developmental Pathways of Diverse Learners, Birth – Adolescence	Think & Gather a Big Picture Understanding
Week 2 9/10	History of developmental theory	Trawick-Smith Chapters 1 & 2 Overview and Historical Perspectives	Child Abuse and Neglect Training Certificate On-line
Week 3 9/17	Culture and its role in development	Trawick-Smith Chapter 3 Theorists	
Week 4 9/24	Developmental domains	Trawick-Smith Chapters 4, 5, & 6 Infant Development	
Week 5 10/1	Physical and motor development Sensory integration	Trawick-Smith Chapters 7, 8, & 9 Infant Development	
Week 6 10/8	Including children with special needs	Trawick-Smith Chapters 10&14 Physical Development	Developmental Theorists Project Due
Week 7 10/15	Play as a context for development	Trawick-Smith Chapters 11 & 15 Cognitive Development	Part A: Major Theories Statement of Understanding Due
Week 8 10/22	Cognitive development	Trawick-Smith Chapters 13 &17 Social Development	1 <sup>st</sup> Observation Due (anecdotal)
Week 9 10/29	Brain research and development of symbolic thought	Trawick-Smith Chapters 12 &16 Language and Literacy Development	Family Resource File Due
Week 10 11/5	Play and language	Korakek :pages 2-35 Play and Development	Part B: Child-Development Statement of Understanding Due
Week 11 11/12	Social-emotional development in a cultural context	Korakek: pages 36-end Memory	2 <sup>nd</sup> Observation Due (Time-Sampling or Event Sampling)

Week 12 11/19	Play as a social activity	Shonkoff: Neurons to Neighborhoods (on-line) <a href="http://journal.naeyc.org/btj/200305/Chopsticks_Bodrova.pdf">http://journal.naeyc.org/btj/200305/Chopsticks_Bodrova.pdf</a>	Part C: Developmental Influences Statement of Understanding Due
Week 13 12/3	Family relationships and influences on development	Trawick-Smith Chapter 18 Families	Part D: Socio-Cultural Context Statement of Understanding Due
Week 14 12/9	Parent expectations and cultural variations	Paley: TBA	Part E: Own Assumptions Statement of Understanding Due <b>UPLOAD ENTIRE STATEMENT TO TASKSTREAM TO RECEIVE FINAL GRADE FOR PROJECT</b>
Week 15 12/16	Reflect and present statement of understanding	Paley: TBA	Evaluations and Gallery Walk