

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

ECED 401.001 Developmental Pathways of Diverse Learners, Birth-Adolescence  
3 Credits, Spring 2024, In-person  
1/16/2024-5/8/2024; Thursdays/ 1:30-4:10 pm  
West 1007, Fairfax Campus

**Faculty**

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**Prerequisites/Corequisites**

None

**University Catalog Course Description**

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

**Course Delivery Method**

This course will be delivered using a lecture and/or hybrid format.

**Learner Outcomes or Objectives**

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

1. Describe the physical, social, emotional, speech and language, and intellectual development of diverse learners from birth through adolescence and explain how to use these understandings to guide learning experiences and relate meaningfully to students.
2. Describe the major theories of development and critically examine the theories as they apply to the lives of culturally, linguistically, ability, and socioeconomically diverse children and their families, including children with economic, social, racial, ethnic, religious, physical, and intellectual differences.
3. Examine the transactional nature of overall development in the context of the family, community, socioeconomic status, and culture.
4. Identify environmental and biological/physical/medical at-risk factors that can contribute to possible developmental disabilities, developmental issues, and atypical development across the physical, social, emotional, speech and language, and intellectual domains.
5. Discuss the etiology of and use multiple criteria to identify developmental disorders, including attention deficit disorders, developmental disorders, and giftedness.
6. Identify typical developmental milestones of diverse children from birth through adolescence and their cultural and socioeconomic variations.

7. Observe and describe overall development in the physical, intellectual, speech and language, social, and emotional domains as it occurs in natural environments and through play.
8. Explain how research is currently documenting children's development across time.
9. Exhibit standards of professionalism, ethical standards, and personal integrity in interactions with classmates, the instructor, and others.
10. Use writing as an instructional and assessment tool to generate, gather, plan, organize, and to communicate for a variety of purposes; integrate correct written conventions (i.e., grammar, usage, mechanics, and spelling); and format using current APA style.

### **Professional Standards**

Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Standards, Division of Early Childhood (DEC) Professional Preparation Standards, National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Professional Standards and Competencies, and Virginia Professional Studies Competencies

### **Virginia Professional Studies Competencies**

Human Growth and Development (Birth Through Adolescence)

### **Required Texts**

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). ISBN: 9781433832178

Lightfoot, C., Cole, M., & Cole. S. (2018). *The development of children* (8th ed.). Worth. ISBN: 9781464178863

### **Resource Articles**

Bianco, F., Lombardi, E., Massaro, D., Castelli, I., Valle, A., Marchetti, A., & Lecce, S. (2019). Enhancing advanced theory of mind skills in primary school: A training study with 7-to 8-year-old. *Infant and Child Development, 28*(6), 1-16. doi:10.1002/icd.2155

Brink, K. A., Gray, K., & Wellman, H. M. (2019). Creepiness creeps in: Uncanny valley feelings are acquired in childhood. *Child Development, 90*, 1202-1214. doi:10.1111/cdev.12999

Burns-Nader, S., Scofield, J., & Jones, C. (2019). The role of shape and specificity in young children's object substitution. *Infant and Child Development, 28*(2), 1-18. doi:10.1002/icd.2124

Dillman, J., Gehb, G., Peterlein, C., & Schwarzer, G. (2019). Joint visual attention and locomotor experience: A longitudinal study of infants with treated idiopathic clubfoot. *Infant and Child Development, 28*(2), 1-15. doi: 10.1002/icd.2118

Forma, V., Anderson, D. I., Provasi, J., Soye, E., Martial, M., Huet, V., Granjon, L., Goffinet, F., & Barbu-Roth, M. (2019). What does prone skateboarding in the newborn tell us about ontogeny of human locomotion? *Child Development, 90*, 1286-1302. doi:10.1111/cdev.13251

Gómez, P. B., Griskell, H. L., Sobrevilla, Y. N., & Vazquez, M. (2019). Dual language and English-only learners' expressive and receptive language skills and exposure to peers' language. *Child Development, 90*, 471-479. doi:10.1111/cdev.13197

- Leach, J., Howe, N., & DeHart, G. (2019). “Let’s make a place where giants live!”: Children’s communication during play with siblings and friends from early to middle childhood. *Infant and Child Development*, 28(6), 1-17. doi: 10.1002/icd.2156
- Li, Z., Liu, S., Hartman, S., & Belsky, J. (2018). Interactive effects of early-life income harshness and unpredictability on children’s socioemotional and academic functioning in kindergarten and adolescence. *Developmental Psychology*, 54(11), 2101-2112. doi: 10.1037/dev0000601
- Liu et al. (2019). The unique role of father-child numeracy activities in number competence of very young Chinese children. *Infant and Child Development*, 28(4), 1-16. doi: 10.1002/icd.2135
- McCoy, D. C., Jones, S., Roy, A., & Raver, C. C. (2018). Classifying trajectories of social–emotional difficulties through elementary school: Impacts of the Chicago School Readiness Project. *Developmental Psychology*, 54(4), 772.
- Moser, T., Reikerås, E., & Egil Tønnessen, F. (2018). Development of motor-life-skills: variations in children at risk for motor difficulties from the toddler age to preschool age. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 33(1), 118-133.
- Nelson, T. D., James, T. D., Hankey, M., Nelson, J. M., Lundahl, A., & Espy, K. A. (2017). Early executive control and risk for overweight and obesity in elementary school. *Child Neuropsychology*, 23(8), 994-1002.
- Petrenko, A., Kanya, M., Rosinski, L., McKay, E. R., & Bridgett, D. J. (2019). Effects of infant negative affect and contextual factors on infant regulatory capacity: The moderating role of infant sex. *Infant and Child Development*, 28(6), 1-18. doi: [10.1002/icd.2157](https://doi.org/10.1002/icd.2157)
- Ramírez-Esparza, N., García-Sierra, A., & Kuhl, P. K. (2017). The impact of early social interactions on later language development in Spanish–English bilingual infants. *Child Development*, 88(4), 1216-1234.
- Shuwairi, S. M. (2019). Haptic exploration of depicted and real objects by 9-month-old infants. *Infant and Child Development*, 28(2), 1-18. doi:10.1002/icd.2125
- St. John, A. M., & Tarullo, A. R. (2019). Neighbourhood chaos moderates the association of socioeconomic status and child executive functioning. *Infant and Child Development*, 28(6), 1-19. doi: 10.1002/icd.2153

See Class Schedule for selected Position Statements from the Division of Early Childhood Education (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and the National Association for Gifted Children (NACG).

This course also requires reading published journal articles on human development. Example journals include the following: *Early Education and Development*, *Child Development*, and *Human Development*. These and other journals are available on the Mason library website.

### **Course Performance Evaluation**

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard, VIA, hard copy).

<b>Assignments</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Points</b>
Attendance and Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Periodic Participation Activities</li> </ul>	Ongoing	<b>25</b>
Considering Developmental Theories	2/1	<b>9</b>
Developmental Milestones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infant/Toddler</li> <li>• Preschool/Early Childhood</li> <li>• Early Elementary/Middle Childhood</li> </ul>	2/22 3/21 4/4	<b>21</b> 7 7 7
Multiple Influences on Young Children's Development Paper	4/18	<b>20</b>
Case Study Analysis – Infant/Toddler, Preschool, or Early Elementary	5/2	<b>25</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100</b>

- **Assignments and/or Examinations**

### **Considering Developmental Theories Paper (9 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 prepare a review of a developmental theory and associated theorists. Grand theories covered in the text include psychodynamic theories, behaviorist theories, Piaget's constructive theory, and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. Modern theories covered include evolutionary theories, social learning theories, information-processing theories, and systems theories. Students will use scholarly (peer-reviewed) sources to compose a two- to three-page summary that captures key tenants of the developmental theory and how it relates to children's developmental progression.

Students will select or be assigned one developmental theory and provide a summary of each of the following for that theory:

- important theorists associated with the theory
- key tenets of the theory
- how theory explains cultural differences that are apparent in development
- how theory explains variation in development, including disabilities
- weaknesses and strengths of theory
- the impact of the theory on education

Students may select or be assigned one of the following theories:

- Erikson (Psychosocial)
- Vygotsky (Sociocultural)
- Piaget (Constructivist)
- Operant conditioning (Behaviorism)
- -Classical conditioning (Behaviorism)
- Bronfenbrenner (Ecological systems)

Students will demonstrate accurate knowledge of APA formatting within the paper and begin to engage with professional journals for early childhood educators, as well as the textbook or other

course materials. Accordingly, students will find one article from the journal *YC Young Children* and one article from the journal *Young Exceptional Children* that provides complementary information related to the specific developmental theory. Information from each article will be briefly included in the summary and show evidence of appropriate APA citations for different writing practices including paraphrasing with in-text citations and using direct quotes with in-text citations.

### **Developmental Milestones (21 points, 7 points each)**

Students will prepare a milestone reference document for infant/toddler (6 months), preschool/early childhood (3 years), and early elementary/middle childhood (8 years). Students will identify the major milestones for each of the following domains: physical, social and emotional, speech and language acquisition, and intellectual/cognitive development. Students will identify typical developmental progressions. Students will use the text and/or other course materials for this project. All information presented needs to come from these resources. Students should see Blackboard for detailed instructions.

Students will also highlight a specific developmental theory for each of the milestone charts prepared as outlined below.

- Constructivism: Piaget (infant/toddler)
- Sociocultural: Vygotsky (preschool/prekindergarten)
- Psychosocial: Erikson (primary)
- Behaviorism: Classical conditioning (any of the 3 age levels)
- Behaviorism: Operant conditioning (any of the 3 age levels)

### **Multiple Influences on Young Children's Development Paper (20 points)**

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the ways that child development and the learning process occur in multiple contexts, including family, culture, language, community, and early learning setting, as well as in a larger societal context that includes structural inequalities. To that end, students will develop a five- to seven-page paper that describes how the following factors may impact child development and learning:

- family/family structure,
- socioeconomic status,
- language and culture,
- school,
- community, and
- social inequities.

Students will include a connection to Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory to support their analysis. Students will use in-text citations from the textbook or other course materials, and at least three professional/peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, reports, etc. (but none of the "Resource Articles") to support their discussions. Students will include a reference list in APA style.

### **Case Study Analysis (25 points)**

To demonstrate an understanding of the developmental period of early childhood from birth through age 8 across physical, cognitive, social and emotional, and linguistic domains, including

bilingual/multilingual development, students will develop an analysis with seven to nine pages of text (plus the title and reference pages) on a video case study randomly assigned from one of three age groups: Infant/Toddler, Preschool, or Early Elementary. They will view the video and then write a paper that discusses the children's unique characteristics and needs, and describes at least one developmental theory that supports their analysis of the video vignette.

**Part A:** Students will describe the child's current state of development, focusing on the child's unique characteristics and needs in relation to relevant developmental milestones. They will cite specific examples observed in the video case and support their assertions with current research from the course textbook and/or other course materials, which may be supplemented by information from external scholarly sources. They will discuss each of the following areas:

- Physical development,
- Intellectual development,
- Social and emotional development, and
- Speech and language development.

**Part B:** For the case study analysis, students will also identify and discuss one major developmental theory that supports their analysis of the video vignette. These include psychodynamic theory (Freud), psychodynamic theory (Erikson), behaviorist theory (classical conditioning), behaviorist theory (operant conditioning), Piaget's constructive theory, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, evolutionary theory, social learning theory, information-processing theory, and ecological systems theory. Students will explain how the developmental theory informs educators' understanding of the child's development.

Students will use the course textbook and/or other course materials, which may be supplemented by information from external scholarly (peer-reviewed) sources. Students will use in-text citations and include a reference list formatted in APA style.

- **Other Requirements**

**Attendance and Participation (25 points)**

Active participation and engagement are imperative for optimal learning. Therefore, students will prepare for and participate in in-class and online activities. Students will be expected to do the following:

- Attend class, arrive on time, and stay for the entire class period for all in-person and online synchronous class sessions.
- Complete all online asynchronous work by the due dates.
- Use laptops and personal devices for instructional purposes only during in-person and online synchronous class sessions.
- Complete readings and prepare for class activities prior to class as evidenced by the ability to discuss, write about, and engage in activities related to the concepts presented and examined in the texts.
- Complete participation activities across the semester that complement the scheduled course topic. *Note: Instructors will periodically collect artifacts from the activities.*
- Support the participation and learning of classmates. Students in attendance and who actively engage in the learning experience will receive credit for their efforts. Graded

participation activities are not announced and are implemented at the discretion of the instructor.

- Show evidence of critical reflective thinking through in-person, online synchronous, and online asynchronous discussions, activities, and written reflections.
- Display professional dispositions at all times when interacting with the instructor, classmates, and other professionals.
- Students complete participation activities across the semester that complement the scheduled course topic. Instructors will periodically collect artifacts from the activities. Students in attendance and who actively engage in the learning experience will receive credit for their efforts. Graded participation activities are not announced and are implemented at the discretion of the instructor.

### **Written Assignments**

All formal written assignments will be evaluated for content and presentation. The American Psychological Association, Seventh 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. Students may consult the Writing Center for additional writing support.

Students will do the following:

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.
5. Type the paper with double spacing, indented paragraphs, 1-inch margins all around, and 12-point Times New Roman font.

- **Grading**

A+ = 98 – 100 A = 93 – 97 A- = 90 – 92 B+ = 87 – 89 B = 83 – 86 B- = 80 – 82

C+ = 77 – 79 C = 70 – 76 D = 60 – 69 F = < 60

Incomplete (IN): At the student's request, this grade may be given to a student who is passing a course but who may be unable to complete scheduled coursework for a cause beyond reasonable control.

All CEHD students are held to the university grading policies as described in the Academic Policies section of the current catalog, which can be accessed at <http://catalog.gmu.edu>. Those students seeking Virginia initial teaching licensure must earn a B- or better in all graduate licensure coursework.

### **Professional Dispositions**

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times. See <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/>.

## Class Schedule

Module	Topics	Assignments & Readings Due
<b>Week 1</b> Jan 18	<p>Introductions</p> <p>Syllabus and Assignments Review</p> <p>Studying Human Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historical beliefs</li> <li>• Grand and modern theories of development</li> <li>• Methods to study development</li> </ul>	Lightfoot et al., Chapter 1
<b>Week 2</b> Jan 25	<p>Biological and Cultural Foundations of Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development in the context of culture</li> <li>• Development in the context of family</li> <li>• Biological/physical/medical factors that contribute to development</li> </ul> <p>Prenatal Development and Birth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The prenatal period</li> <li>• Maternal conditions and teratogens</li> <li>• Etiology of developmental disorders</li> <li>• The newborn</li> </ul>	<p>Lightfoot et al., Chapter 2, 3</p> <p>DEC Position Statement: <i>Low Birth Weight, Prematurity, and Early Intervention</i></p>
<b>Week 3</b> Feb 1	<p>Infancy: The First Three Months</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brain development</li> <li>• Theories of early development</li> </ul>	<p>Lightfoot et al., Chapter 4</p> <p><b>Due to Bb (2/1): Considering Developmental Theories</b></p>
<b>Week 4</b> Feb 8	<p>Infancy: Physical and Cognitive/Intellectual Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical growth and brain development</li> <li>• Fine and gross motor development</li> <li>• Cognitive/intellectual development</li> <li>• Attention and memory</li> <li>• Selecting appropriate resources</li> </ul>	Lightfoot et al., Chapter 5
<b>Week 5</b> Feb 15	<p>Infancy: Social and Emotional Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infant emotions</li> <li>• Relationships</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Guide learning experiences</li> </ul>	Lightfoot et al., Chapter 6



<b>Module</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Assignments &amp; Readings Due</b>
<b>Week 6</b> Feb 22	Early Childhood: Speech and Language Acquisition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phonological, semantic, grammar, and pragmatic development</li> <li>• Theories of language acquisition</li> </ul>	Lightfoot et al., Chapter 7  <b>Due to Bb (2/22): Developmental Milestones 1 Infant/Toddler</b>
<b>Week 7</b> Feb 29	Early Childhood: Physical and Cognitive/Intellectual Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theories of development</li> <li>• Physical growth and health</li> <li>• Fine and gross motor development</li> <li>• Cognitive/intellectual development, including students with disabilities/disorders and those who are gifted</li> </ul>	Lightfoot et al., Chapter 8
<b>Mar 7</b>	No class, Spring Break	
<b>Week 8</b> Mar 14	Early Childhood: Social and Emotional Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identity and moral development</li> <li>• Developmentally appropriate expectations for self-regulation and behavior</li> <li>• Nurturing social and emotional development, including children with disabilities/disorders and those who are gifted</li> </ul>	Lightfoot et al., Chapter 9
<b>Week 9</b> Mar 21	Middle Childhood: Physical and Cognitive/Intellectual Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theories of development</li> <li>• Individual differences, including disabilities/disorders and giftedness</li> <li>• Using multiple criteria to identify gifted students, including measuring IQ</li> </ul>	Lightfoot et al., Chapter 11  <b>Due to Bb (3/21): Developmental Milestones 2 Preschool/Early Childhood</b>
<b>Week 10</b> Mar 28	Middle Childhood: Social & Emotional Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theories of development</li> <li>• Moral development</li> <li>• Parental and peer influence</li> </ul>	Lightfoot et al., Chapter 13

<b>Module</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Assignments &amp; Readings Due</b>
<p><b>Week 11</b> Apr 4</p>	<p>Middle Childhood: School as a Context for Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School readiness</li> </ul> <p>Addressing developmental disabilities/disorders, giftedness, and developmental differences in schools</p>	<p>Lightfoot et al., Chapter 12</p> <p><b>Due to Bb (4/4): Developmental Milestones 3 Early Elementary/Middle Childhood</b></p> <p>NAEYC Position Statement: <i>Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children From Birth Through Age 8</i></p> <p>NAGC Position Statement: <i>Redefining Giftedness for a New Century: Shifting the Paradigm</i></p> <p>NAGC Position Statement: <i>Nurturing Social and Emotional Development of Gifted Children</i></p> <p>NAGC Position Statement: <i>Identifying and Serving Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Gifted Students</i></p>

Module	Topics	Assignments & Readings Due
<b>Week 12</b> Apr 11	Applying Development to Learning Experiences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting the needs of culturally, linguistically, and socioeconomically diverse and ability-diverse children and their families</li> <li>• Selecting culturally and linguistically appropriate resources</li> <li>• Guiding learning experiences and making them meaningful to students, including students with developmental disabilities/disorders and those who are gifted</li> </ul> Family, Cultural, and Community Contexts of Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parenting and development</li> <li>• Communities and culture influence on development</li> <li>• The role of media on early development</li> <li>• Intersectionality and social identity</li> <li>• Structural racism</li> </ul>	Lightfoot et al., Chapter 10
<b>Week 13</b> Apr 18	Adolescence: Physical and Cognitive/Intellectual Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theories of development</li> <li>• Puberty and physical development</li> <li>• Moral development</li> </ul>	Lightfoot et al., Chapter 14  <b>Due to Bb (4/18): Multiple Influences on Young Children's Development Paper</b>
<b>Week 14</b> Apr 25	Adolescence: Social and Emotional Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulating emotions</li> <li>• Parent and peer relationships</li> <li>• Identity</li> </ul>	Lightfoot et al., Chapter 15
<b>May 1-8</b>	Final Exams No Class	<b>Due to Bb (5/2): Case Study Analysis</b>  <b>Last day (5/6) to submit late assignments</b>

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

### Core Values Commitment

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles: <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>.

## GMU Policies and Resources for Students

### *Policies*

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/>).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students **solely** through their Mason email account.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <http://ds.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be silenced during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

### *Campus Resources*

- Support for submission of assignments to VIA should be directed to [viahelp@gmu.edu](mailto:viahelp@gmu.edu) or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/assessments>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>.

**Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking:** As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Non-Confidential Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per [University Policy 1202](#). If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as [Student Support and Advocacy Center \(SSAC\)](#) at 703-380-1434 or [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance or support measures from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing [titleix@gmu.edu](mailto:titleix@gmu.edu).

**For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website: <http://cehd.gmu.edu>.**