

EDUC 309: Early Childhood Development
Spring 2025*Erin Spring*

Land Acknowledgement: *The University of Calgary, located in the heart of Southern Alberta, both acknowledges and pays tribute to the traditional territories of the peoples of Treaty 7, which include the Blackfoot Confederacy (comprised of the Siksika, the Piikani, and the Kainai First Nations), the Tsuut'ina First Nation, and the Stoney Nakoda (including Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Goodstoney First Nations). The City of Calgary is also home to the Métis Nation of Alberta (Districts 5 and 6).*

Class Dates: May 5 – June 16, 2025

Last Day to Add/Drop/Swap: Due to the non-standard dates associated with this program, please check your Student Centre for the important dates pertaining to your section.

Pre-requisite: Due to the multiple pathways in the Bachelor of Education, please consult Undergraduate Programs in Education for questions related to pre-requisite courses.

Office Hours: By appointment

Email: Students are required to use a University of Calgary (@ucalgary.ca) email address for all correspondence.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: An examination of the science of early childhood and early brain development that accounts for the physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development of young children from birth to age eight, and a consideration of the implications with respect to children's healthy development and effective educational practices in the early school years.

LEARNER OUTCOMES:

Students will be knowledgeable about:

1. the major theoretical perspectives and research strategies researchers employ in the scientific study of human development,
2. the major physical, cognitive, and socioemotional developments that occur across development from conception to the adolescent years,
3. the impact of developmental contexts such as family life, schooling, peer groups, and media upon children's development, and
4. developmental issues.

COURSE DESIGN AND DELIVERY: This course will be delivered online via Zoom with possible engagement in a D2L environment. There is a D2L site for this course which contains required readings and other relevant class resources and materials (see d2l.ucalgary.ca).

REQUIRED RESOURCES:

Levine, L. E., Munsch, J. (2022). *Child development: An active approach to learning (Fourth edition)*. Los Angeles: CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

You may purchase/rent and download e-books from the following vendors: Apps available in Android and Apple devices. [Kobo](#); [BookShelf](#); [Google Play](#); [Amazon Kindle](#); [RedShelf](#) ; [ebooks.com](#)

LEARNING TASKS OVERVIEW

LEARNING TASK	DESCRIPTION OF LEARNING TASK	GROUP / INDIVIDUAL	WEIGHT	DUE DATE
Learning Task #1	<p>Weekly Reflections: Recognizing that educational research is continuously evolving, requiring lifelong learning by teachers; each week students will respond to the weekly questions or tasks, based on the readings, and posted in D2L.</p> <p>Students are responsible for producing and submitting weekly reflection tasks to Dropbox.</p>	Individual	40%	Weekly
Learning Task #2	Summary Handout(s)/Assigned Text Chapter(s) and Discussion of Chapters. For this Learning Task, students will demonstrate their ability to recognize and synthesize the major theoretical perspectives and research strategies researchers employ in the scientific study of human development.	Group	20%	Sign-up by May 8, Varied Due Dates
Learning Task #3 Part A	Developmental Area Inquiry Proposal. For this Learning Task, students will demonstrate their	Individual	10%	May 25

	ability to choose, and organize research related to a topic in Early Childhood Development.			
Learning Task #3 Part B	Area Inquiry Review Project. For this Learning Task, students will demonstrate their ability to synthesize human development research to demonstrate their understanding of a topic in Early Childhood Development.	Individual	30%	June 13

WEEKLY COURSE SCHEDULE:

Date	Topic	Readings and Tasks	Due Dates
Week 1: May 5-9	Introduction to Child Development & Discussion of Theory to Practice	Overview of Course Outline Task: Summary Handout (LT#2) Group Sign-up Weekly Reflection Tasks	May 8 Sunday May 11
Week 2: May 12-16	Theories of Child Development Physical Development	Course Readings: Chapters 2 and 6 Tasks: Weekly Reflection	May 13 & 15 May 18
Week 3: May 19-23	Cognitive Development Intelligence and Academic Achievement	Course Reading: Chapters 7 and 8 Tasks: Developmental Area Inquiry Proposal (LT#3A) Weekly Reflection	May 20 & 22 May 25 May 25
Week 4: May 26-30	Language Development	Course Reading: Chapter 9 and 10 Tasks:	May 27 & 29

	Emotional Development	Weekly Reflection	June 1
Week 5: June 2-6	Identity Development Social Development	Course Reading: Chapters 11 and 12 Tasks: Weekly Reflection	June 5 & 3 June 8
June 9-13	Media Health, Well-Being & Resilience	Course Readings: Chapter 14 and 15	June 10 & 12
June 16-20	June 16	Final Day of Semester LT 3A Inquiry Project Due	 June 16

CHANGES TO SCHEDULE:

Please note that changes to the schedule may occur to meet the emerging needs and dynamics of the participants in the course.

LEARNING TASKS AND ASSESSMENT

There are four (4) required Learning Tasks for this course.

1. LEARNING TASK 1: Reflections – DUE: Weekly (Sundays)

Each week, activities will be posed to compliment the assigned readings and in-class learning. Students will complete and submit the activities to the instructor via Dropbox. These activities are designed to serve multiple purposes including (1) to provide the instructor with feedback to inform subsequent emphasis and activities, (2) to conduct occasional formative assessments to provide feedback on interpretations of key concepts.

CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING TASK 1

This learning task is intended to be *For Learning*. Your grade on this task will be based on engagement with the material and completion.

2. TASK 2: Summary Handout and Discussion - DUE: Varies, see below

Each chapter in the textbook provides a comprehensive review of the core theories and research of areas in child development. In groups of 2-3, students will synthesize the information from the chapters and create a condensed chapter summary handout to be used as a resource in the future for

their peers. The handout should be 2-4 pages. Identify why this topic is important, cover the key content of your selected chapter, integrate additional research to supplement chapter information, and be visually appealing. Groups will present their summary by leading a synchronous discussion. *Students will sign up for one (1) topic/week each.* (Sign up process will be shared in class.)

Chapter & Topic	Due Date
Chapter 2 – Theories of Development	Tuesday May 13
Chapter 6 - Physical Development: The Brain and the Body	Thursday May 15
Chapter 7 – Theories of Cognitive Development	Tuesday May 20
Chapter 8 – Intelligence and Cognitive Achievement	Thursday May 22
Chapter 9 – Language Development	Tuesday May 27
Chapter 10 – Emotional Development and Attachment	Thursday May 29
Chapter 12 – Social Development: Social Cognition and Peer Relationships	Tuesday June 3
Chapter 11 – Identity: The Self, Gender, and Moral Development	Thursday June 5
Chapter 14 – Media	Tuesday June 10
Chapter 15 – Health, Well-Being and Resilience	Thursday June 12

CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING TASK 2

	Accomplished (9-10)	Developing (6-8)	Beginning (0-5)
Description of Importance of Information Provides a rationale for why this information would be important in relation to ECE	Rationale is described well and makes connections to day-to-day practice.	Rationale is missing some elements about the importance and connections to day-to-day practice.	Rationale is superficial and not relevant to day-to-day practice.
Accuracy of Information Includes accurate information. Uses additional sources to supplement chapter material	All information is accurate and based on research. Several (3+) additional scholarly sources are cited and add to the chapter information.	Most information is accurate or based on research. Some (2-3) additional scholarly sources are included but may not add to the chapter information.	Most information is inaccurate or debunked by research. Few (0-1), if any, additional scholarly sources are included or the sources restate information from the chapter.
Conveying Main Ideas and Supporting Details Information included is important for a teacher to understand in early child development	All main ideas are included and supported with only important details.	Most main ideas are included and supported with some important details.	The main ideas are missing and too few important details are included.

<p>Format and Visual Appeal Information is logically presented and flows. Handout includes sufficient ‘white space’ and is not visually overwhelming. Visuals are used to convey information. Grammar, mechanics, and references are appropriate.</p> <p>Class Discussion The group engaged the class in a meaningful discussion. Imagery, or games were used to engage the class in a meaningful discussion about the chapter. The discussion informed and challenged the knowledge of peers.</p>	<p>Presentation of information flows logically. The handout is visually appealing. It uses colour, pictures, and charts appropriately to engage reader or describe concepts. Handout is within the page limit. Few, if any, errors in grammar, mechanics, and references.</p> <p>Class Discussion The group engaged the class in a meaningful discussion. Imagery, or games were used to engage the class in a meaningful discussion about the chapter. The discussion slightly informed or challenged the knowledge of peers.</p>	<p>Presentation of information is segmented and somewhat challenging to follow. The handout uses colour, pictures, or charts that do not add to the information. Handout is slightly over the page limit. Some errors in grammar, mechanics, and references.</p> <p>Class Discussion The group engaged the class in a meaningful discussion. Imagery, or games were used to engage the class somewhat successfully in discussion. The discussion somewhat informed or challenged the knowledge of peers.</p>	<p>Presentation of information is illogical and difficult to follow. The information in the handout is crowded and/or not visually appealing. The use of colour, pictures, and charts detract from the information. Handout is significantly over the page limit. Many errors in grammar, mechanics, and references.</p> <p>Class Discussion The group engaged the class in a discussion of the chapter that was not meaningful, was not accurate, or did not challenge the knowledge of peers.</p>
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2. LEARNING TASK 3 A: Developmental Area Inquiry Proposal – DUE: Sunday, May 25

The Developmental Area Inquiry Proposal will support your Developmental Inquiry Review Project (LT#3) and provide you with formative feedback to apply to your project submission. As such, this learning task is **pass or fail**. **Students are required to resubmit until they receive a passing grade.** A passing grade is given once the proposal sufficiently addresses the required information below. Feedback will be provided to all students about considerations for their LT#3B. Proposals must include the overarching area of interest, a specific project question, an outline of the key information that will be examined, information about the modality they will use to present their information, and a list of references.

Some topic ideas include (but are not limited to):

- Diversity in Early Learning
- Dual-language learning

- Trauma in Early Childhood
- Play-based learning
- School readiness
- Outdoor and land-based learning
- Gender in Early Childhood classrooms
- Technology usage and children
- Inclusive Early Childhood classrooms
- Early Learning environments

Any modality is acceptable and creative modalities are encouraged!

Regardless of your modality, the equivalency should be to a 3000-word (or about 12 page) paper. For reference, this would be equivalent to about a 20-minute presentation/video. The intricacies of drawings and other visuals are more challenging to quantify but can convey complex information clearly. If you have any concerns prior to submitting your proposal, please contact your instructor. Some modalities can include: a podcast, an essay, a brochure, a presentation, a video (e.g. Ted Talk style), a comic book, a board game, a diorama with an audio explanation, a website, an infographic, a story book, and so much more!

CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING TASK 3A

CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING TASK 2

** Please use this checklist as a reference when submitting your proposal to avoid having to resubmit.

Proposal Section	Required Section Information to Pass
Proposed Area of Interest Your description should address a wider issue in child development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clearly describe your overarching area of interest. ○ Clearly describe how the area is important to learn about in early childhood development. ○ Include at least 250 words.
Project Question Your project question should be specific. Your question should logically flow from your area of interest and address a significant need or problem in early childhood development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Include a question (not a statement) ○ Allow for multiple interpretations (cannot be answered by a 'yes' or a 'no'. ○ Be researchable (with sufficient empirical research).
Key Areas You Will Examine (Outline) Provide information about the key areas you will research and report on. You do not need to have these fully developed but should include enough information to provide an overview of the likely content you	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Include at least 5 sections of information (e.g., introduction to topic, discussing theories, controversies, etc.) ○ Include at least 250 words describing key information that will be described in each of the sections. ○ Directly relate to your project question.

will include on your project (e.g., introduction to topic, discussing theories, controversies, etc.)	
Proposed Modality Provide a summary of the way you intend to represent your information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Include sufficient detail to understand how the modality will facilitate answering the project question. ○ Include information regarding how you will engage your audience (e.g., describe your visuals, writing or speaking style, etc.) ○ Include the proposed length of your project (e.g., pages, words, slides, minutes, graphics, etc.)
References Provide the references (in any style) that you have used in developing your proposal, as well as references that you will use for your inquiry project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use APA 7 with few styling errors ○ Include at least 5 scholarly references thin addition to the textbook (six total) (e.g., journal articles, published books). NOTE: other sources may be used in addition to the scholarly references, but the bulk of your information should come from these scholarly references. ○ Describe how the reference will be used to answer the project question (a few sentences per reference).

3. LEARNING TASK 3B: Developmental Area Inquiry Review Project – DUE: Monday, June 6

For this learning task, you will research an inquiry topic based on a key question related to early childhood development. Students will research one developmental issue and present their summaries in any modality. Topic, project question, and presentation modality will be approved by the instructor in the Developmental Area Inquiry Proposal (Learning Task 2). Minor changes from your proposal are acceptable; however, major changes will require approval from your instructor. Findings of the inquiry review project will be shared electronically on D2L on the date due. Please be aware that any videos may need to be shared via a link, rather than through direct uploading onto D2L. Be creative in the development of this learning task.

CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING TASK 3B

Required elements of this project include:

1. Quality and meaningfulness of the project in question:
 - i. Project question and importance – What do you want to know? Why do you want to know? How will it make a difference to your teaching/career/future?
2. Overall presentation of findings:
 - i. Organization – How easy is it to follow your train of thought and the key components? Is the content well connected? Are there appropriate transitions between concepts?

- ii. Content – Does information meaningfully answer your project question? Does your information consider the multiple possible answers to your project question?
 - iii. Extension questions – What questions about your project question do you still have? Have new questions come from your work?
3. Style:
- i. Design elements – Does the modality help to clarify the project question? Is the modality engaging? Are there distracting errors that take away from the quality of the project (e.g., spelling, figure errors, citation errors, etc.)? Is the length of your project consistent with what was described in your proposal?
4. References:
- i. Scholarly approach – Do the references rely on scholarly and academic sources to answer your project question? Are there a minimum of six scholarly references including the textbook? Is all your information appropriately cited in APA 7?

	Accomplished (9-10)	Developing (6-8)	Beginning (0-5)
Quality and Meaningfulness of Project Question			
Project Question and Importance	The project question is clearly stated, specific, and addresses a significant need or problem in early childhood development. The rationale for choosing the question is supported with personal interests in professional growth in this area. Considers and/or challenges common assumptions in this area. Direct links are made to how new knowledge in this area will support you in the future.	The project question is appropriate and clearly stated but is either too general or too narrow, leading to a multitude of sub-question or ruling out new possibilities. The supporting rationale is generally well0written but not relevant to personal interest or professional growth. Weak links are made to how new knowledge in this area will support you in the future.	The project question is roughly sketched and in need of refinement. The supporting rationale is weakly developed and/or does not address personal interest or professional growth. Few or no links are made to how this question will support you in the future.
Overall Presentation of Findings			
Content Organization	Analysis of the findings is: Presented in a logical format	Analysis of the findings is: Presented in an understandable format	Analysis of the findings is: Weak in formatting and organization

	Clearly organized and easily followed Skillfully transitions between concepts	Organizationally adequate Transitions between concepts are simplistic	Difficult to follow and understand Transitions between concepts are limited
Content Quality	Analysis of the findings is: Exceptional Comprehensively answers the project question Addresses multiple perspectives in answering the project question	Analysis of the findings is: Appropriate Thoroughly answers the project question Addresses only the dominant perspectives in answering the project question	Analysis of the findings is: Lacking in clarity or development Superficially answers the project question Does not adequately describe a perspective in answering the project question
Extension Questions	The remaining questions are related to the project question, are clearly stated, specific and not readily accessible in the literature.	The remaining questions are mostly related to the project question and clearly stated but is either too general or easily answered in the literature.	The remaining questions are not included, not related to the project question, or need of significant refinement.
Style			
Design Elements	The project employs engaging and clearly connected information. The project is error-free. The length of the project is consistent with what was described in the proposal.	The project includes mainly relevant and strong information. The project has a few errors that detract from the quality of the project. The length of the project is noticeably different than described in the proposal.	The project includes some connected information but may not be complete or may hold examples that are not connected to the inquiry project. The project has distracting errors that significantly detract from the quality of the project. The length of the project is significantly different than described in the proposal.
References			
Scholarly Approach	Attention is given to the choice of scholarly references in building a	Scholarly articles are referenced and used to support the findings/	Scholarly articles are referenced without clear connections to the

	thorough understanding of the issues, challenges and opportunities presented by the project question. All content is appropriately cited in APA 7. Minimum 6 scholarly references including the textbook.	suggestions but there is an over- reliance on non-academic sources. All content is appropriately cited in APA 7.	project question. The project relies heavily on on-academic sources (e.g., blog posts, videos, etc.). Content is not cited.
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THE EXPECTATION OF EXCELLENCE IN PROFESSIONAL WORK

Please review the Academic Calendar carefully. It describes the program and provides detailed schedules and important dates. It contains information on expectations for student work and professional conduct. In addition, procedures are described regarding concern about student performance in the program. Please pay especially careful attention to details and descriptions in the following topic areas:

- *The Importance of Attendance and Participation in Every Class*

As this is a professional program, experiences are designed with the expectation that all members will be fully involved in all classes and in all coursework experiences. As you are a member of a learning community your contribution is vital and highly valued, just as it will be when you take on the professional responsibilities of being a teacher. We expect that you will not be absent from class apart from documented instances of personal or family illness or for religious requirements.

- *Engagement in Class Discussion and Inquiry*

Another reason for the importance of attendance and participation in every class is that the course involves working with fellow students to share ideas and thinking. For example, each class you will work with a small group to engage fellow students in discussions on work being considered in class. You will also help other groups by providing ideas for scholarly inquiry in assignments. If you find that you are experiencing difficulties as a group collaborating, please inform the instructor.

EXPECTATIONS FOR WRITING

All written assignments (including, to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) but also general clarity and organization. Sources used in research papers must be properly documented. If you need help with your writing, you may use the writing support services in the Learning Commons. For further information, please refer to the official online University of Calgary

Calendar, Academic Regulations, E. Course Information, E.2: Writing Across the Curriculum:
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html>

LATE SUBMISSIONS

All late submissions of assignments must be discussed with the instructor **prior to the due date**. Students may be required to provide written documentation of extenuating circumstances (e.g. statutory declaration, doctor's note, note from the University of Calgary Wellness Centre, obituary notice). A deferral of up to 30 days may be granted at the discretion of the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Programs prior to the end of the course with accompanying written evidence.

ISSUES WITH GROUP TASKS

With respect to group work, if your group is having difficulty collaborating effectively, please contact the instructor immediately. If a group is unable to collaborate effectively or discuss course materials online in a timely manner, the instructor may re-assign members to different groups or assign individual work for completion.

GRADING

Grade	GPA Value	%	Description per U of C Calendar
A+	4.0	95-100	Outstanding
A	4.0	90-94	Excellent – Superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of the subject matter
A-	3.7	85-89	
B+	3.3	80-84	
B	3.0	75-79	Good - clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete
B-	2.7	70-74	
C+	2.3	65-69	
C	2.0	60-64	Satisfactory - basic understanding of the subject matter
C-	1.7	55-59	
D+	1.3	52-54	Minimal pass - Marginal performance
D	1.0	50-51	
F	0.0	49 and lower	Fail - Unsatisfactory performance

Students in the B.Ed. program must have an overall GPA of 2.5 in the semester to continue in the program without repeating courses.

Academic Accommodation

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations according to the University policies and procedures listed below. The student accommodation policy can be found

at: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/sites/default/files/teams/1/Policies-Student-Accommodation-Policy.pdf>. Students needing an accommodation because of a disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: [ucalgary.ca/legal-services/sites/default/files/teams/1/Policies-Accommodation-for-Students-with-Disabilities-Procedure.pdf](https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/sites/default/files/teams/1/Policies-Accommodation-for-Students-with-Disabilities-Procedure.pdf). Students needing an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to their Instructor.

Generative AI: Please note that all assignments are expected to be the original work of the student and students are not to employ generative AI (for example, ChatGPT).

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the University of Calgary Calendar at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Attendance/ Prolonged Absence

Students may be asked to provide supporting documentation for an exemption/special request. This may include, but is not limited to, a prolonged absence from a course where participation is required, a missed course assessment, a deferred examination, or an appeal. Students are encouraged to submit documentation that will support their situation. Supporting documentation may be dependent on the reason noted in their personal statement/explanation provided to explain their situation. This could be medical certificate/documentation, references, police reports, invitation letter, third party letter of support or a statutory declaration etc. The decision to provide supporting documentation that best suits the situation is at the discretion of the student.

Falsification of any supporting documentation will be taken very seriously and may result in disciplinary action through the Academic Discipline regulations or the Student Non-Academic Misconduct policy.

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/n-1.html>

The Freedom of Information Protection of Privacy Act prevents instructors from placing assignments or examinations in a public place for pickup and prevents students from access to exams or assignments other than their own. Therefore, students and instructors may use one of the following options: return/collect assignments during class time or during instructors' office hours, students provide instructors with a self-addressed stamped envelope, or submit/return assignments as electronic files attached to private e-mail messages.

For additional resources including, but not limited to, those aimed at wellness and mental health, student success or to connect with the Student Ombuds Office, please visit
<https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines>

Education Students Association (ESA) President for the academic year is Claire Gillis,
esa@ucalgary.ca.

Werklund SU Representative is Elsa Stokes, educrep@su.ucalgary.ca.