

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD ENVIRONMENT

56:300:509

Course Overview:

This course will develop the student's ability to critically analyze and enhance early childhood environments. It will provide a comprehensive overview of environments that encompass birth to age 8 settings to ensure students are able to plan and support developmentally appropriate environments that meet the diverse needs of children, staff, and families. (NJPST 1,2,3)

Course Learning Goals:

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Reflect how they can help children through the birth to age 8 continuum meet their learning potential by effectively designing indoor and outdoor learning environments.
2. Understand the critical link between being proactive observers and planners to prepare the indoor and outdoor environments to continually challenge children with diverse abilities.
3. Use assessment information to learn about children's unique qualities, guide instruction, and evaluate effective curriculum to maximize children's development and learning.

Textbook: *Creating Environments for Learning: Birth to Age Eight*; 3rd Edition

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Older, Newer, and electronic editions are acceptable, just be sure to find the appropriate topics

Accommodations: Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form at <https://webapps.rutgers.edu/student-ods/forms/registration>.

For more information: <https://success.camden.rutgers.edu/disability-services>

Plagiarism Statement:

Please be aware of the content reflected in the following website: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>

Course Policies:

Participation – your participation is essential for the success of this course and to your learning. All of us in the course depend on you to participate in online discussions, provide feedback to your peers, share your experiences, and so on. You are expected to participate in a variety of ways throughout the semester and this will be reflected in your participation grade. You will be expected to log in to our site at least once a week to access your assignments and participate in assignments as they are due

Technology - In order to make the most of your online learning experience, it is your responsibility to ensure that you have the appropriate technology capabilities to successfully complete assignments and activities. Even though technology can fail, you are still required to submit all assignments on time. *Technical glitches are not excuses for late work*. I encourage you to:

- Aim to complete all assignments one day early.
- Be sure your computer is in good working order BEFORE the course begins.
- Be sure to arrange access to a 2nd computer for backup purposes.
- Test any websites or open documents assigned as soon as you receive the assignment.
- Create back-up copies of your work.
- Double-check work. Make sure assignments are uploaded and posts are submitted.

Assignment Submission & Grading Policy - Assignments are due as indicated in the weekly modules set up in Canvas. You are responsible for knowing all due dates. Unless arrangements are made in advance of the due date, **LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED**. Please note that you will be responsible for any weekly information that is posted on Canvas. If I need to communicate any urgent information and/or class changes to you, I will also follow these postings with an email. If an assignment or request is sent to me directly, I will send a reply to you that acknowledges that I have received it. If you do not receive an email acknowledgement from me, do NOT assume that I have received your assignment! It is your responsibility to retain email proof of acknowledgement, so please do not delete any messages from me that indicate I have received your coursework.

Online Etiquette - Please remember that communicating online should not be any different from when you communicate in a face-to-face class. All communications should be courteous and professional. Although some of your assignments do allow for more informal conversations, please refrain from using Internet slang, abbreviations, and acronyms.

Please contact the instructor immediately if you are experiencing difficulty with accessing assignments or with the Canvas site. For technical Canvas questions/concerns, please make use of the help desk/help line.

The following percentage scale will be used to assign final course letter grades:

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|----|---|--------|---|---|-------|
| A | = | 90-100 | C | = | 70-76 |
| B+ | = | 87-89 | | | |
| B | = | 80-86 | F | = | 0-69 |
| C+ | = | 77-79 | | | |

Course Components:

Module One –

- **Participation – 17%** - this includes timely and thoughtful participation in all discussion boards, case studies, and other electronic discussions and activities. See rubric below.
- **Kindergarten Red-shirting – 10%** - see description below
- **Quiz 1 – 6.7%**

Module Two –

- **Participation – 16%** - this includes timely and thoughtful participation in all discussion boards, case studies, and other electronic discussions and activities. See rubric below.
- **High Stakes testing – 10%**
- **Quiz 2 – 6.7%**

Module Three –

- **Participation – 17%** - this includes timely and thoughtful participation in all discussion boards, case studies, and other electronic discussions and activities. See rubric below.
- **Persuasive essay – 10%** - see description below
- **Quiz 3 – 6.7%**

The Rutgers University Program seeks to prepare pre-service professionals who are proficient in communication. Grades in our professional preparation courses will reflect both mastery of content and the ability to convey the content in standard English. Students should be aware that considerations related to mechanics of the written word such as spelling, grammar, and organization, as well as style and usage will play a significant role in the determination of their grades on all assignments

Participation Rubric (50% - between all three modules) Components include all of the activities listed in the modules.

| Criterion: | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| Interaction / Participation in Discussions | Always a willing participant, responds frequently to questions, routinely volunteers point of view but does not dominate discussion | Often a willing participant, responds occasionally to questions; occasionally volunteers point of view | Rarely a willing participant; rarely able to respond to questions; rarely volunteers point of view | Never a willing participant; never able to respond to questions; never volunteers point of view |
| Interaction / Participation in learning activities | Always an active participant, thoughtfully completes electronic assignments – wikis and online discussions | Often an active and willing participant, completes some electronic assignments with some specificity | Rarely a willing participant, completes few electronic assignments | Never a willing participant, does not complete electronic assignments |
| Integration of course readings and outside learning materials | Often cites from readings and/or experiences; uses readings/experiences to support points | Occasionally cites from readings/ experiences; sometimes uses readings/ | Rarely able to cite from readings/ experiences; rarely uses readings/ | Unable to cite from readings/experiences; cannot use readings/experiences |

| | | | | |
|--------------------|---|--|--|---|
| | | experiences to support points | experiences to support points | es to support points |
| Preparation | Always prepared for class with assignments and required class materials | Almost always prepared for class with assignments and required class materials | Usually prepared for class with assignments and required class materials | Rarely prepared for class with assignments and required class materials |

Kindergarten Red-Shirting assignment (10%):

Watch the videos in the module and then respond to the scenario below.

The school district "cut-off" date in the town you reside is October 1. This means if a child was born after October 1, let's say October 15, he would be one of the oldest children in the class. However, your child's birthday is September 30th. This policy makes your child one of the youngest in his class.

As a parent, what would you do? Would you hold him back (kindergarten red-shirt) or would you comply with the district policy and send him to school? Why? Please provide a 1-2 page response to the scenario. Please fully explain your reasoning, **taking on the role of a parent (in other words be the parent) in your response.**

What variables would impact your decision (think child development - social and emotional, motor development, etc.)? How do you feel being the youngest (or oldest) in the grade can impact your child? How could (or would) this impact your child in the future? I am interested in hearing your opinion on issues that are relevant to Early Childhood Education and reading how you make a defense for your choice. Your response should provide relevant documentation to support your defense. Use your textbook, videos, and other resources. Be sure to give an examples and detail why that particular example is important.

RUBRIC:

1-2 pages in length

Provides clear information regarding development

Takes on the role of PARENT

Gives examples of the developmental variables that impact the decision

Is graduate-level writing and contains no grammar or spelling errors

High-Stakes Testing Assignment (10%):

In the past NJ has used the PARCC for high stakes testing. While this specific test is not used any more, it serves as a good example of standardized tests in general.

To inform your response, first take a look at the sample/practice tests provided on the link in the module. Click through and view several math problems.

1. What do you think about the questions listed on the 4th grade mathematics section? Are the questions developmentally appropriate for a 4th grader? Think about the cognitive stage s/he might be in at that age.

2. How do you feel about using technology for high stakes testing? Is it appropriate? Remember the PARCC was a computer-based assessment. The children taking the PARCC took the test on the computer. In your response for this part, you MUST select to be "in support" or "not in support" of using technology for high stakes testing and tell us why. If you are neutral, pick the one that you lean toward. I will be deducting points if you do not pick "in support" or "not in support".

RUBRIC:

Your response should be 1-2 pages in length

Response addresses if you think the math questions are developmentally appropriate (USE EXAMPLES)

Response addresses whether or not you are in support of the use of technology for high stakes tests for 4th graders.

Response is graduate-level writing and contains no grammar or spelling errors

Persuasive Essay (10%):

You live in a community that has full day kindergarten. In the past, the kindergarten classrooms in your district contained learning centers including blocks, dramatic play, science, math, literacy, art, music, and manipulative. Children had at least an hour for center time and were allowed a choice of how they spent this time. However, with more pressure to raise test scores and with a new principal, all centers have been removed from kindergarten classrooms and children are spending more time in large groups receiving direct instruction. The principal has stated to you, "I am concerned that the children in your kindergarten class will not be prepared if they spend so much time playing, so you need to remove center time".

Your job is to write a 3-4 page paper (DOUBLE SPACED) in defense of using learning centers in your kindergarten classroom. It should be compelling, rich in research, and written in an engaging way *from the perspective of the teacher*. You will want to support and promote child initiated, integrated learning through the use of learning centers and you will want to describe what the children gain from their time in centers. You will also want to provide examples that support your research. Please remember that I want to hear your voice, what you have learned, and your experience in this paper.

RUBRIC:

At least 3-4 pages in length

Provides clear information regarding developmentally appropriate practices with regard to centers

Gives at least one example of a center and illustrates its use with students

Is graduate-level writing and contains no grammar or spelling errors