



This course supports the assessments for AHT1. The course covers 7 competencies and represents 4 competency units.

Introduction

This course of study is aligned to the AHT1 performance assessment. The same study materials are utilized in the AHC1 objective assessment. If you have previously completed the AHC1 assessment, then you should have already completed the required study activities found in this course. You may wish to review the assignments here, but you are not required to repeat these activities. If you have not yet completed the AHC1 assessment, then please proceed through this course in full.

Overview

The activities in this course have been designed to help you develop and hone your skills in the field of early childhood education. If at any time you have questions or require additional assistance during your progression through this course, please feel free to contact the course instructor.

This course will guide you through learning resources and activities that will help you develop and refine your professional skills. You may find that you can also draw on many of your own experiences and insights as you become an increasingly reflective practitioner.

Watch the following video for an introduction to this course:

Note: View the video in full screen at 720p for best results.

This course provides guidance to help you demonstrate the following 7 competencies:

- **Competency 607.4.1: Relationships and Interactions**
The graduate develops positive relationships and employs supportive, high-quality, culturally sensitive, inclusive interactions.
- **Competency 607.4.2: Incidental Teaching and Social Interaction**
The graduate chooses and employs effective approaches, strategies, and tools for early education, drawing from a continuum of appropriate teaching strategies and capitalizing on incidental teaching and social interactions.
- **Competency 607.4.3: Environments and Routines**
The graduate chooses and employs effective approaches, strategies, and tools for early education that support learning through appropriate environments and routines.
- **Competency 607.4.4: Characteristics, Needs, and Interests**
The graduate chooses effective approaches, strategies, and tools for early education that appropriately focus on the characteristics, needs, and interests of infants, toddlers, and young children.
- **Competency 607.4.5: Play in Childhood**
The graduate employs play in support of teaching and learning for infants, toddler, and



young children.

- **Competency 607.4.6: Challenging Behaviors**

The graduate chooses and employs effective approaches, strategies, and tools appropriate for early education to address challenging behaviors in infants, toddlers, and young children.

- **Competency 607.4.7: Promoting Positive Outcomes**

The graduate designs, implements, and evaluates meaningful, challenging early childhood curriculum to promote positive outcomes in infants, toddlers, and young children.

Teaching Dispositions Statement

Please review the [Statement of Teaching Dispositions](#).

Course Instructor Assistance

As you prepare to successfully demonstrate competency in this subject, remember that course instructors stand ready to help you reach your educational goals. As subject matter experts, mentors enjoy and take pride in helping students become reflective learners, problem solvers, and critical thinkers. Course instructors are excited to hear from you and eager to work with you.

Successful students report that working with a course instructor is the key to their success. Course instructors are able to share tips on approaches, tools, and skills that can help you apply the content you're studying. They also provide guidance in assessment preparation strategies and troubleshoot areas of deficiency. Even if things don't work out on your first try, course instructors act as a support system to guide you through the revision process. You should expect to work with course instructors for the duration of your coursework, so you are welcome to contact them as soon as you begin. Course instructors are fully committed to your success!

Preparing for Success

The information in this section is provided to detail the resources available for you to use as you complete this course.

Learning Resources

The learning resources listed in this section are required to complete the activities in this course. For many resources, WGU has provided automatic access through the course. However, you may need to manually enroll in or independently acquire other resources. Read the full instructions provided to ensure that you have access to all of your resources in a timely manner.

Purchase Learning Resources

Listed below are the learning resource materials you will need to obtain.

Textbooks

Purchase the following textbook:

- Copple, C., & Bredekamp, S. (Eds.). (2009). *Developmentally appropriate practice in*



early childhood programs serving children from birth through age 8 (3rd ed.).
Washington, DC: NAEYC.

You may purchase this text from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). After accessing the NAEYC website, click on the "Learn More" link for this book to order. NAEYC members receive a discount on this purchase. It is recommended that you join NAEYC as you work through your program.

Note: This text will be used in multiple Early Childhood Education courses. Be certain to purchase the 3rd edition of this text that includes the free CD. You will be using the CD as a learning resource. We apologize for our inability to provide this as a digital e-text included in your tuition due to the special nature of this program.

Automatically Enrolled Learning Resources

You will be automatically enrolled at the activity level for the following learning resources. Simply click on the links provided in the activities to access the learning materials.

VitalSource E-Texts

The following textbooks are available to you as e-texts within this course. You will be directly linked to the specific readings required within the activities that follow.

- [Wortham, S. \(2010\). *Early childhood curriculum: Developmental bases for learning and teaching* \(5th ed.\). Boston, MA: Pearson Merrill. ISBN: 0137152337](#)
- [Hooper, S. R. & Umansky, W. \(2009\). *Young children with special needs* \(5th ed.\). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall. ISBN-10: 0131590146; ISBN-13: 9780131590144](#)
- [Kaiser, B., & Rasminsky, J. \(2007\). *Challenging behavior in young children: Understanding, preventing, and responding effectively* \(2nd ed.\). Boston, MA: Pearson Allyn & Bacon. ISBN: 0205493335.](#)

Note: These e-texts are available to you as part of your program tuition and fees, but you may purchase hard copies at your own expense through a retailer of your choice. If you choose to do so, please use the ISBN listed to ensure that you receive the correct edition.

Teachscape

You will access video modules from Teachscape at the activity level within this course. The Teachscape modules include video lectures, exercises, and interactive elements.

Other Learning Resources

You will use the following learning resources for this course.

Annenberg Media's "The Whole Child"

You will be directly linked in the activities that follow to Annenberg Media's "The Whole Child: A Caregivers Guide to the First Five Years" through the Teacher Resources and Education website.



To access a specific video, follow these instructions:

1. Click on "Individual Program Descriptions" on the right side of the page.
2. Find the name of the video.
3. Click on the "VoD" icon next to the video title to watch.

Note: Be sure your pop-up blocker is turned off while accessing this resource.

Additional Preparations

Join a Local Affiliate of the NAEYC

If you have not already done so, consider joining the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) at the [NAEYC website](#).

Many benefits result from membership in the NAEYC, including a discount on all materials purchased through its website. As you become a professional, membership in this association will be a significant benefit to you. Take advantage of this resource by joining now, if you can, though it is not mandatory for this course.

Most affiliates have a greatly reduced membership fee for students of any early childhood education (ECE) university program, including WGU's.

Pre-Clinical Experiences (PCE)

Your pre-clinical experiences will provide the opportunity to observe and participate in different classrooms and at different developmental levels. You will have the opportunity to complete observations, teaching tasks, and other work in actual early childhood settings.

You must not do any PCE activity until your full PCE application has been approved. Arranging for your PCE can take time. If you have not yet completed the PCE application process, please do so as quickly as possible. Failure to do so may significantly delay your successful completion of this course and the related assessments.

Pacing Guide

The pacing guide suggests a weekly structure to pace your completion of learning activities. It is provided as a suggestion and does not represent a mandatory schedule. Follow the pacing guide carefully to complete the course in the suggested timeframe.

- [Pacing Guide: Contexts of Learning in Early Childhood Education](#)

Note: This pacing guide does not replace the course. Please continue to refer to the course for a comprehensive list of the resources and activities.

Early Childhood Curriculum

There are many factors to consider when developing and implementing curriculum.

How Children Learn

If you have not already done so, you will begin visiting in early childhood classrooms to



complete your pre-clinical experiences (PCE) while working through this course of study. Before you reach the Demonstration Teaching component of your program, you will have completed 60 or more hours (depending on your state's requirements) of observations, teaching activities, and other classroom activities.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 607.4.7: Promoting Positive Outcomes**

The graduate designs, implements, and evaluates meaningful, challenging early childhood curriculum to promote positive outcomes in infants, toddlers, and young children.

An Early Childhood Resource Slide Show

Check with your PCE teachers to determine the conditions in which you can take photos of classroom environments, activities, and children. Begin assembling a multimedia presentation or slide show (e.g., PowerPoint) in which you use your photos, graphics, and bulleted statements to demonstrate the concepts you are learning and observing. Use this resource as you prepare for exams, seek employment in the field, and communicate with parents about early childhood education.

The Learning Classroom

Access the following module through Annenberg Media:

- [The Learning Classroom](#)

This video-based course is an exploration of learning theory appropriate for grades K–12 and all subject areas. It is hosted by Stanford University professor Linda Darling-Hammond, one of the nation's leading educators. The 13 modules illustrate a variety of learning theories with applications to classroom practice.

Note: Be sure your pop-up blocker is turned off when you access this resource.

As you go through each of the modules, be sure to access the associated website and supplemental print guides. Also complete the background readings, questions for discussion, and ongoing assignments that bring theory into practice.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice

You will review and refine what you know about developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) and develop your understanding of its relationship to curriculum.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 607.4.7: Promoting Positive Outcomes**

The graduate designs, implements, and evaluates meaningful, challenging early childhood curriculum to promote positive outcomes in infants, toddlers, and young children.



DAP Exploration

In order to understand early childhood curriculum, it is essential that you refine your understanding of developmentally appropriate practices.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is a clearinghouse for information about all things related to early childhood education. Take some time and explore the NAEYC website. Pay particular attention to the "DAP" tab, from the core elements of DAP to the many resources available for early childhood educators.

Watch the following video on the CD-ROM that accompanies the *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs* textbook:

- video 2 ("What Does Developmentally Appropriate Practice Look Like?")

Revisit your reflective journal entry on DAP (from the Development and Learning in Early Childhood Education Course) and the position statement on DAP from your portfolio. Based on what you have learned since you wrote those two pieces, how have your thoughts changed and your understanding of DAP deepened? Share your insights on the message board.

DAP in Action

Watch the following videos on the CD-ROM that accompanies the *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs* textbook:

- video 3 ("Helping Children Achieve Challenging Learning and Developmental Goals")
- video 4 ("Intentional Teaching Includes Using a Variety of Teaching Strategies")
- video 5 ("An Example of a Developmentally Appropriate Kindergarten Study")

Take notes on what you observe about the implementation of developmentally appropriate practices in your journal.

Respond to the following questions:

- What did you see that surprised you?
- What did you see that you would like to implement in your own classroom?

Principles of Curriculum

As an early childhood professional, you will make many decisions, filtered through the lens of your educational philosophy. The curriculum approach or model you choose (e.g., Montessori, High/Scope, Reggio Emilia, Bank Street) will influence many of the decisions you make.

The National Research Council report offers the following recommendations for early childhood curriculum:

- Effective curriculum engages and builds on children's current understanding.
- Children's concept development is enhanced when opportunities for information



acquisition and skill development coincide.

- Curriculum activities that encourage children to reflect, predict, question, and hypothesize help children acquire not just information but cognitive skills for more effective learning.

Curriculum is the foundation of an early childhood program. The approach or model in which the curriculum is situated determines the shape of the curriculum.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 607.4.7: Promoting Positive Outcomes**

The graduate designs, implements, and evaluates meaningful, challenging early childhood curriculum to promote positive outcomes in infants, toddlers, and young children.

Models of Early Childhood Curriculum

Read the following chapter in *Early Childhood Curriculum*:

- [chapter 3 \("The Need for Quality Programs in Early Childhood Education"\)](#)

Focus on the characteristics of the models presented in the chapter. Consider how theories influence program development in early childhood classrooms.

Perform an Internet search using the phrase "models of early childhood curriculum" (or variations of that phrase).

In your notes, jot down names and one or two defining characteristics of each of the models you find. Are these models commercial products, or are they curriculum approaches based on a particular philosophy? After you have made your list, reflect on the qualities of the curriculum models you find most appealing.

On the discussion board in the learning community, post your thoughts on which curriculum model(s) you feel most closely align with your philosophy of early childhood education.

Child-Centered Learning

A child-centered approach to education (teaching/learning, classroom management, etc.) boils down to the idea that the child comes first, and that you plan your instruction and your classrooms around the child's needs.

- Look up child-centered curriculum in the [Early Childhood Curriculum](#) text.

Do an Internet search to further your understanding. The following websites are examples of resources that may provide more insight:

- [Child-Centered Education](#)
- [Students at the Center of Their Own Learning](#)



- [Child Centered Planning: Individualizing for Success](#)

Add a section about the child-centered approach to learning to your slide show and share your insights on the message board.

Curriculum Decisions

Explore your local school district's website for information about their curriculum.

Visit with an elementary school teacher (K-3) and ask if you can take a look at this teacher's guides for the reading, math, or science curriculum. Explore the scope and sequence chart, as well as any resources available. Is the program highly scripted, or is there room for a teacher to make adjustments depending on the needs of the children?

Interview the teacher about the curriculum and its implementation. Include the following questions in your interview:

- Who made the curriculum decisions/was involved in the decision-making process?
- How often is the curriculum changed?

Compare your findings with those of your classmates on the discussion board in the learning community.

Infants and Toddlers

Out-of-home child care has been a reality in the lives of many U.S. families since the Great Depression. Concerns over the quality of care available, particularly for infants and toddlers, continue today while efforts to make improvements are ongoing. Research on brain development in very young children has caused a shift in thinking from simply providing care for infants and toddlers toward providing support of infant and toddler learning.

Infants and toddlers are sponges for learning about the world around them. This section connects what you know about infant and toddler development with the programs and contexts supporting their care and learning.

Characteristics, Needs, and Interests of Infants and Toddlers

Very young children grow and develop quickly. A well-rounded early childhood professional has an understanding of the full continuum of development and learning in early childhood.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 607.4.4: Characteristics, Needs, and Interests**
The graduate chooses effective approaches, strategies, and tools for early education that appropriately focus on the characteristics, needs, and interests of infants, toddlers, and young children.

Quality Programs for Infants and Toddlers

Based on what you currently know about infant and toddler development, jot down your



thoughts concerning the following questions:

- What would you say are the characteristics of a quality early childhood program for these very young children?
- What are the characteristics of a quality teacher for infants and toddlers?

Skim the following chapters in *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs*:

- chapter 2 ("Development in the First Three Years of Life")
- chapter 3 ("Developmentally Appropriate Practice in the Infant and Toddler Years—Ages 0–3: Examples to Consider")

Read the following chapter in *Early Childhood Curriculum*:

- [chapter 5 \("Organizing Infant–Toddler Programs"\)](#)

Skim the following chapter in *Early Childhood Curriculum*:

- [chapter 6 \("Infant-Toddler Curriculum: Birth to Age 2"\)](#)

Complete the study questions at the end of chapter 6.

Exploration

View the following video in the Annenberg video series [The Whole Child](#):

- [video 3 \("Babies are Children, Too"\)](#)

Note: Be sure your pop-up blocker is turned off while accessing this resource.

Respond to the study questions at the end of the following chapters in *Early Childhood Curriculum*:

- [chapter 5 \("Organizing Infant–Toddler Programs"\)](#)
- [chapter 6 \("Infant-Toddler Curriculum: Birth to Age 2"\)](#)

Return to your pre-reading notes and consider how you would add to or change your list of characteristics.

Preschool: Ages 3 ? 5

Children learn best when learning is purposeful and meaningful. There are many ways for the early childhood professional to provide appropriate materials, learning opportunities, and support for learning in the preschool classroom. The teacher's ability to provide developmentally appropriate materials and activities is an indicator of the teacher's effectiveness.

Characteristics, Needs, and Interests of Preschoolers



As children grow and develop, their needs change. This section builds on what you already know about infants and toddlers and expands your repertoire of knowledge to meet the needs of preschool-age children.

Preschool-age children continue to develop independence and a sense of self as they interact with the world around them. Early childhood professionals, in cooperation with families, carry the responsibility of providing an environment that promotes development and enhances the learning of each child in the program. This can be a challenge, as every child has unique areas of strength as well as areas of development that need more support from caring adults.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 607.4.4: Characteristics, Needs, and Interests**

The graduate chooses effective approaches, strategies, and tools for early education that appropriately focus on the characteristics, needs, and interests of infants, toddlers, and young children.

Exploration

Read the following chapter in *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs*:

- chapter 4 ("Developmentally Appropriate Practice in the Preschool Years—Ages 3–5: An Overview")

Skim the following chapter in *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs*:

- chapter 5 ("Developmentally Appropriate Practice in the Preschool Years—Ages 3–5: Examples to Consider")

Read the following chapter in *Early Childhood Curriculum*:

- [chapter 7 \("A Developmental Model for Preschool Programs"\)](#)

Skim the following chapters in *Early Childhood Curriculum*:

- [chapter 8 \("Preschool Curriculum: Ages 3 to 5: Language and Cognitive Development"\)](#)
- [chapter 9 \("Preschool Curriculum: Ages 3 to 5: Social and Physical Development"\)](#)

Adapting the Curriculum

View the following video in the Annenberg video series *The Whole Child*:

- [video 7 \("Everybody's Special"\)](#)

Note: Be sure your pop-up blocker is turned off while accessing this resource.



Complete the following Teachscape module:

- [Pre-Kindergarten Response to Intervention](#)

Respond to the study questions and prompts as you go through all sections of the module.

Select an activity from the [Early Childhood Curriculum textbook](#) appropriate for preschool-age children. Using the [Young Children With Special Needs textbook](#), explain on the message board how you would adapt the activity you selected to meet the needs of a child with special needs.

Determining a Child's Interests

Knowing what a child finds interesting can be useful in many different areas of the curriculum. For example, knowing that the family of one of the children in your class has just acquired a new pet may lead you to add some books (both fiction and nonfiction) to your classroom library about pets.

For this activity, create an "interest inventory." This inventory might include a list of simple, open-ended questions you could ask a child in a one-on-one situation, a list of simple, open-ended questions you could ask a group of children, and some prompts for yourself of things to watch for as you observe children at play. These things could give you some insight into the children's interests.

If you have an opportunity to informally interview a preschool-age child after creating your interest inventory, post your findings on the message board.

Fostering Social and Emotional Security

View the following videos in the Annenberg video series [The Whole Child](#):

- video 4 ("Dealing with Feelings")
- video 5 ("I'm Glad I'm Me")
- video 6 ("Listening to Families")
- video 10 ("Respecting Diversity")

Note: Be sure your pop-up blocker is turned off while accessing this resource.

As you view these videos, take notes on various social and emotional characteristics of infants, toddlers, and young children.

Interview one or more early childhood educators about their observations regarding the impact of home and school on the social and emotional development of infants, toddlers, and young children.

Interview two or three parents of young children about their perspective on the impact of home and school on the social and emotional development of infants, toddlers, and young children.

School Readiness



Most states, districts, and schools have kindergarten readiness or kindergarten preparation programs. Some focus on specific populations such as low income families or families for whom English is not a native language. Other states, districts, or schools have kindergarten readiness programs for all students.

Create a kindergarten readiness information packet that could be shared with families of pre-kindergarten students by completing the following activities.

Research your state office of education website, local school district website, and other online resources.

Speak with a kindergarten teacher in your PCE school about the skills and characteristics that help a child have a successful kindergarten year.

Create a document or brochure that includes the following items:

- kindergarten requirements (such as cutoff dates, documentation, immunizations, etc.)
- kindergarten readiness skills
 - o self-help skills
 - o social/emotional skills
 - o large motor skills
 - o small motor skills
 - o math skills
 - o language and literacy skills
- helpful resources
 - o families of preschool students
 - o families of young children with special needs
 - o families with ELLs
- ideas for parents to help children prepare for a school experience
- tips for successful beginnings in kindergarten

Young Children: Ages 5 ? 8

Young children are active learners who construct knowledge through their interaction and involvement with information and materials. They have a wide variety of backgrounds and prior experiences.

An effective early childhood professional takes the time to learn what young children bring with them to the classroom and assist the children in building new knowledge on their foundation of prior knowledge.

Characteristics, Needs, and Interests of Young Children

Young children ages 5 — 8 gain increasing mastery in every area of learning and development. Development and learning continue to be holistic; any one domain can influence and be influenced by progress in other domains.

This topic addresses the following competency:



- **Competency 607.4.4: Characteristics, Needs, and Interests**

The graduate chooses effective approaches, strategies, and tools for early education that appropriately focus on the characteristics, needs, and interests of infants, toddlers, and young children.

Exploration

Read the following chapters in *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs*:

- chapter 6 ("Developmentally Appropriate Practice in the Kindergarten Year— Ages 5–6: An Overview")
- chapter 7 ("Developmentally Appropriate Practice in the Kindergarten Year— Ages 5–6: Examples to Consider")
- chapter 8 ("Developmentally Appropriate Practice in the Primary Grades— Ages 6–8: An Overview")
- chapter 9 ("Developmentally Appropriate Practice in the Primary Grades— Ages 6–8: Examples to Consider")

Read the following chapters in *Early Childhood Curriculum*:

- [chapter 10 \("Planning Programs for Children Ages 5 to 8"\)](#)
- [chapter 11 \("The Transitional Curriculum: Ages 5 to 8: Language Arts"\)](#)
- [chapter 12 \("The Transitional Curriculum: Ages 5 to 8: Mathematics and Science"\)](#)

Adapting the Curriculum

Find a curriculum activity from chapters 7 — 9 of [Early Childhood Curriculum](#) on preschool-age children (3 – 5 years old). Based on what you have learned about the characteristics of learners in kindergarten through third grade, make note of how you would adapt the preschool activity to meet the needs of children in an older classroom.

Using the [Young Children With Special Needs](#) textbook, explain how you would adapt the activity you selected to meet the needs of a child with special needs. Post an explanation of both types of adaptations on the message board.

Now that you have gained competence in understanding the differing characteristics, needs, and interests of infants and toddlers, preschoolers, and young children, go back to the [Early Childhood Curriculum](#) textbook and explore the changing role of the teacher in each of the different age groups.

Teaching and Learning

Taking advantage of children's natural curiosity and interests is known as incidental teaching.

You can act on "teachable moments" in a child-centered approach in order to elaborate on and extend the child's curiosity. Since these teachable moments are often very organic, they are an excellent tool for engaging children in social interaction through open-ended questioning.



Incidental Teaching and Social Interaction

When early childhood educators take a topic in which children have expressed interest and expands it into a unit or project in the classroom, it can also be referred to as emergent curriculum or emergent learning because the topic emerged from the child's curiosity.

This interactive, collaborative-style instruction allows teachers and children to seek answers together. Teachers continue to make plans, but adjust them as they learn more about what interests the children and what emerges from their questions and problem solving. This is a great way to motivate and engage children in exploration and learning.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 607.4.2: Incidental Teaching and Social Interaction**

The graduate chooses and employs effective approaches, strategies, and tools for early education, drawing from a continuum of appropriate teaching strategies and capitalizing on incidental teaching and social interactions.

Curriculum, Projects, and Themes

As you work through the following activities, consider the difference between teacher-directed and child-initiated learning and activities. Where do you see learning occur? How do the teachers in these videos capitalize on the children's interests in order to meet learning goals and objectives?

Exploring Social Interaction and Learning

View the following video in the Annenberg video series [The Whole Child](#):

- video 13 ("Growing Minds")

Note: Be sure your pop-up blocker is turned off while accessing this resource.

Next, use your notes from the DAP video clips in the "Developmentally Appropriate Practice" topic of this course, your notes from the Early Childhood Curriculum textbook, and your notes from the WGU Library, to explore the connection between social interaction and learning, particularly as it relates to emergent learning and incidental teaching.

Write a short statement about how you perceive the relationship between social interaction and learning. Post your statement on the message board and engage in a conversation with your classmates about how early childhood classrooms support learning through social interaction and incidental teaching.

Complete the following Teachscape module:

- [Social and Emotional Learning](#)

Respond to the study questions and prompts as you go through all sections of the module.



Learning Through Play

You will have the opportunity to examine the relationship between play and learning and to discover how adults can provide time, material, and opportunities for children to play.

Play

A stimulating play environment provides many opportunities to support a child's advancement in all developmental areas. It fosters exploration, divergent thinking, self-expression, and imagination. When children are allowed the opportunity to play, they are encouraged to be curious observers, creative thinkers, and problem solvers.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 607.4.5: Play in Childhood**

The graduate employs play in support of teaching and learning for infants, toddler, and young children.

Exploring Play and Play as Learning

Using the subject index in the [Early Childhood Curriculum](#) textbook, explore what play looks like at different age levels and how curriculum and play can support one another.

View the following video in the Annenberg video series [The Whole Child](#).

- video 11 ("Creativity and Play")

Note: Be sure your pop-up blocker is turned off while accessing this resource.

Make notes on the key ideas and respond to the questions raised during the video. Pay particular attention to the value of play as outlined in the video, as this will help you complete the next activity, "Position Statement."

Position Statement

As an early childhood professional, you will encounter people who challenge the notion that young children learn through play. You need to be able to respond appropriately to their arguments.

1. Use the [WGU Library](#) to find two journal articles supporting play in the early childhood environment.
 1. Once in the library, click on Federated Database Search.
 2. Enter search criteria such as *play in early childhood development* in the *Research databases* search box.
 3. You will be provided with numerous article options in the federated search that opens.
 4. Place a check mark in the box labeled *Full Text* in order to produce only full article results.
 5. You're welcome to explore other researching avenues within the library as well.



2. Write a brief (one page) paper explaining why you believe play is an appropriate learning strategy in an early childhood environment, using the information from the research to support your statement. Put your position statement in your portfolio.

Early Childhood Learning Environments

Young children encounter a wide variety of environments (e.g. home, center-based or home child care, public or private school, after-school care). Each of these environments has tremendous potential as an active learning environment if careful thought is given to planning the physical environment, material selection, schedule, and routine.

Every state has requirements and guidelines governing early childhood environments, so it is important you become familiar with them. Your state's website should have links that will help you find this information.

Qualities of Early Childhood Environments

The environment has a strong influence on the way people feel and how they act. The goal in planning an early childhood environment is to help both the teacher and children feel welcome, safe, and engaged. A priority in designing the environment is the safety and well-being of young children. This section explores the qualities of early childhood environments and activities.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 607.4.3: Environments and Routines**

The graduate chooses and employs effective approaches, strategies, and tools for early education that support learning through appropriate environments and routines.

Annenberg Media: The Whole Child

View the following video in the Annenberg video series [The Whole Child](#):

- video 2 ("By Leaps and Bounds")

Note: Be sure your pop-up blocker is turned off when you access this resource.

As you watch this video, make a list of aspects in the environment you might like to incorporate into an early childhood classroom. What is it that draws you to each item you select? Share your ideas on the message boards.

Teachscape Classroom Management Module

As you work through the module sections, pay careful attention to how these teachers have arranged their classrooms, the kinds of materials available, and the flow of children and adults through the room. Consider how room arrangement, curriculum, and behavior are related.

Access the following Teachscape module:

- [Classroom Management](#)



Complete the following module sections:

- section 3 ("Setting Up the Room")
- section 6 ("Managing Centers")

Post your responses to these activities on the message board.

Exploring Early Childhood Environments

Use the subject index in the [Early Childhood Curriculum](#) textbook to locate and read information about classroom environments.

Task 1 Performance Task

Complete the following task in Taskstream:

- Contexts of Learning App: Task 1

For details about this performance assessment, see the "Assessment" tab in this course.

In this task, you will go to your PCE placement sites to conduct observations of the learning environments at three levels: infant and toddler, preschool, and school age.

The most commonly used environment rating scales are the following:

- Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale, Revised (ITERS-R)
- Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, Revised (ECERS-R)
- School Age Care Environment Rating Scale, Revised (SACERS-R)

Complete information about the scales is available at the following web page:

- "[Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale](#)"

Please browse this web page and familiarize yourself with each of the scales.

For tips on using the scales, you can read the "[Classroom Environments \(ITERS/ECERS/SACERS\)](#)" section at the Child Care Resources Inc. website on the "Tip Sheets for Child Care Professionals" page.

To complete the task, utilize online resources to locate a checklist based on the ITERS/ECERS/SACERS, such as the following:

- [Readiness Checklist](#)
- [Classroom Checklist](#)

By using these checklists in conjunction with the official ERS website, you can adapt the checklist to fit each of the three environments you will be observing.



Schedules and Routines

Predictable schedules and regular routines are important components of a developmentally appropriate early childhood environment. They are purposeful and allow children time to pursue their interests and make decisions, which contributes to a feeling of psychological safety. Predictable and consistent schedules and routines can even help prevent occurrences of challenging behaviors.

Routines

One of the best ways to get a sense of how you would like to set up your classroom schedules and routines is to visit several different classrooms to see how they work in action. A child care center will have a different schedule or routine than a kindergarten classroom in a public-school setting.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 607.4.3: Environments and Routines**

The graduate chooses and employs effective approaches, strategies, and tools for early education that support learning through appropriate environments and routines.

Schedules and Routines Exploration

Check the websites for school districts in your area to learn whether each district has a policy in place regarding daily schedules. Sometimes these can be found by linking to the actual school websites; in other instances, daily schedules may be part of the district's curriculum link. Make note of what you find.

For example, some districts will mandate a 90 minute literacy block. Do you feel this is developmentally appropriate? How do you think you might balance the requirements of your district with your philosophy of education?

Keep these questions in mind as you complete the remaining activities in this section. Then include your thoughts when you report on the informal interview with an experienced educator.

Teachscape Classroom Management Module: Sections 4 and 5

Access the following Teachscape module:

- [Classroom Management](#)

Complete the following module sections:

- section 4 ("Getting Off to a Good Start")
- section 5 ("Developing Rules and Routines")

Post your responses to these activities on the message board.

Classrooms and Routines



View the following video in the Annenberg video series The Whole Child.

- [video 1 \("It's the Little Things"\)](#)

Note: Be sure your pop-up blocker is turned off while accessing this resource.

Make note of the key ideas presented in this video. In your notes, compare and contrast the classrooms and routines presented in The Whole Child series with the Teachscape Classroom Management modules. What elements fit with your philosophy of early childhood education?

Meeting the Needs of All Children

Talk with your PCE teachers or other educators and post your findings about the following questions on the message board:

- How do they handle schedules, routines, and transitions for children with special needs in their classrooms?
- How do they support both vigorous and quiet play?
- How does the arrangement and equipment of the classroom influence the way children experience the daily routine?
- Why is it necessary for adults to support children's active learning throughout the daily routine?
- How do young children, particularly those with special needs, learn the daily routine?
- How do you balance the needs of the children with the requirements of the school district?

Guidance of Young Children

One of the hurdles new teachers face is dealing with challenging behavior in the classroom (both indoors and out). You will build on your knowledge of child development and early childhood settings to develop a sense of how you will work with the challenging situations that can arise when working with young children.

Understanding Guidance of Young Children

Before you start, consider the following terms:

- guidance
- discipline
- punishment
- classroom management

Are these terms the same? Different? Write down your personal definitions in your notebook before beginning the following activities.

This topic addresses the following competencies:

- **Competency 607.4.1: Relationships and Interactions**
The graduate develops positive relationships and employs supportive, high-quality,



culturally sensitive, inclusive interactions.

- **Competency 607.4.6: Challenging Behaviors**

The graduate chooses and employs effective approaches, strategies, and tools appropriate for early education to address challenging behaviors in infants, toddlers, and young children.

Understanding Guidance of Young Children

Before you start, consider the following terms:

- guidance
- discipline
- punishment
- classroom management

Are these terms the same? Different? Write down your personal definitions in your notebook before beginning the following activities.

Web Quest

Use an Internet search engine to explore each of the following terms:

- guidance
- discipline
- punishment
- classroom management

It may be useful to add "early childhood" or "young children" to your search phrase (i.e., "guidance of young children"). How are the terms defined? Which terms seem to be related? Which are positive and which are negative?

Make note of any websites offering approaches or suggestions that resonate with you, and explain why you think they are helpful. Post a list of those sites on the message board with a brief explanation of what each site offers and why you felt each site was helpful.

Finally, go back to your personal definitions in your notes, and make any additions or clarifications.

Guiding Young Children

You may find it helpful to skim chapter 1 in the *Challenging Behavior in Young Children* textbook for some background information and context before you complete the activities below.

View the following video in the Annenberg video series [The Whole Child](#).

- video 9 ("Building Inner Controls")

Note: Be sure your pop-up blocker is turned off while accessing this resource.



Access the following Teachscape module:

- [Classroom Management](#)

Complete the following module section:

- section 2 ("About Classroom Management")

Post your responses to these activities on the message board.

Annenberg Media: The Whole Child

View the following video in the Annenberg video series [The Whole Child](#):

- video 8 ("Getting Along Together")

Note: Be sure your pop-up blocker is turned off while accessing this resource.

Take notes as you watch this video.

When you are finished, write a personal statement regarding your understanding of how social development and adult support help children develop characteristics that help them succeed in school. You may want to do additional research as you prepare your statement. Add your completed statement to your portfolio.

Philosophy of Teaching and Responding to Challenging Behavior

Go back to the philosophy of teaching statement you created for your portfolio in the Development and Learning in Early Childhood Education Course. Carefully read through what you identified as your approach to working with young children.

Reflect on the relationship between your philosophy of teaching and how you anticipate responding to challenging behaviors in your classroom. Choose a scenario from the following list, and decide how you would respond. How does your response reflect your philosophy of teaching?

- A third-grade child reveals a knife and seriously threatens to cut you.
- While talking with a small group of children, you observe two children on the opposite side of the room tossing paper airplanes.

The lesson has not been about airplanes.

- During small-group work, a few first graders are aimlessly wandering around the room.

You ask them to take their seats, but they refuse.

- Although chewing gum is against school rules, you observe a child chewing what you suspect to be gum.



- During the viewing of a video, two children on the opposite side of the room from you are quietly whispering.
- At the start of class, when a child is about to sit, a classmate pulls the chair away. The child falls to the floor.
- You are reading aloud to the class. Two children in the back of the group begin talking while you are reading.
- A child in your kindergarten class has hidden under the table and refuses to come out.

Participate on the discussion board by responding to one of the scenarios above or by describing a challenging situation you found yourself in and how you handled it.

Challenging Behaviors

It is likely that, because you are going to be working with children, you will eventually encounter a child with challenging behavior. Child care facilities, schools, and other settings typically have a policy in place for teaching and reinforcing appropriate behavior and for responding to inappropriate behavior. While it can be overwhelming to imagine dealing with challenging behavior, you will be better able to prevent and manage challenging behavior effectively if you have the necessary knowledge and skills. This will enable you to provide a safe environment for all the children in your care.

Working With Children With Challenging Behaviors

How do you react when a child misbehaves? Do you view it as a challenge to your authority? Or do you see inappropriate behavior as an opportunity to teach? Your perceptions have a big impact on how you will handle the challenging behaviors of the children you work with. You can build success by understanding the roots of challenging behavior by dealing with one behavior at a time, one child at a time, and by setting realistic goals.

As you complete the modules, consider why a supportive and interesting classroom environment or relationship prevents challenging behaviors in young children.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 607.4.6: Challenging Behaviors**
The graduate chooses and employs effective approaches, strategies, and tools appropriate for early education to address challenging behaviors in infants, toddlers, and young children.

Handling Conflict and Respecting Children's Individuality

Read the following chapter in *Challenging Behavior in Young Children*:

- [chapter 1 \("What Is Challenging Behavior?"\)](#)

Skim the following chapters in *Challenging Behavior in Young Children*:

- [chapter 2 \("Risk Factors"\)](#)
- [chapter 3 \("Protective Factors"\)](#)



- [chapter 4 \("Behavior and the Brain"\)](#)

Access the following Teachscape module:

- [Classroom Management](#)

Complete the following module sections:

- section 7 ("Handling Conflict")
- section 8 ("Respecting Children's Individuality")

Post your responses to these activities on the message board, paying particular attention to the importance of supporting and teaching social skills and pro-social behavior.

Special Needs Students with Behavioral Concerns

Complete the following Teachscape module:

- [Understanding Special Needs](#)

Respond to the study questions and prompts as you go through all sections of the module.

Relationships and Interactions in Early Childhood

In a safe, caring relationship, children feel free to explore the world, learn to value themselves, and believe in their own personal power. Children look to sensitive, responsive adults as guides and models for their behavior. Challenging behavior occurrences can sometimes get in the way of these positive relationships.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 607.4.6: Challenging Behaviors**

The graduate chooses and employs effective approaches, strategies, and tools appropriate for early education to address challenging behaviors in infants, toddlers, and young children.

Exploration

Read the following chapters in the *Challenging Behavior in Young Children*:

- [chapter 5 \("Relationship, Relationship, Relationship"\)](#)
- [chapter 6 \("Understanding the Child's Family and Culture"\)](#)

Both chapters address the relationships you have with your students and their families and the impact those relationships have on supporting children's well-being and development, particularly as it relates to challenging behaviors.

Read the following scenario in the *Challenging Behavior in Young Children*:



- ["Breaking the Code" \(p. 86\)](#)

The scenario describes some characteristics of communication among varying cultures.

After reading through this list, observe the interactions among people in a group setting. What do you notice about their communication styles? How do they differ from your own? Talk with a friend, co-worker, or teacher about their observations about differing communication styles, and write any tips they have for enhancing communication with someone whose style differs from yours.

Use this information to guide your development of the presentation in in the second performance task.

Task 2 Performance Task

Complete the following task in Taskstream:

- Contexts of Learning App: Task 2

For details about this performance assessment, see the "Assessment" tab in this course.

In this task, you will design an orientation presentation for adults who wish to volunteer in your classroom. The presentation will include information about the curriculum, classroom environment and routines, cultural responsiveness, and classroom management.

Bullying

The interactions young children learn in early childhood can have an impact on bullying. This section delves into the consequences and appropriate response to challenging behavior.

Bullying in Early Childhood

Research shows that bullying is a learned behavior that can be unlearned and prevented. Building positive relationships with the children and families with whom you work is a vital component in preventing bullying.

This topic addresses the following competencies:

- **Competency 607.4.1: Relationships and Interactions**
The graduate develops positive relationships and employs supportive, high-quality, culturally sensitive, inclusive interactions.
- **Competency 607.4.6: Challenging Behaviors**
The graduate chooses and employs effective approaches, strategies, and tools appropriate for early education to address challenging behaviors in infants, toddlers, and young children.

Understanding Bullying

Read the following chapter in *Challenging Behavior in Young Children*:



- [chapter 14 \("Bullying"\)](#)

Respond to the "What do you think?" questions from the end of the chapter in your notes.

Bullying is in the media on a frighteningly regular basis. Do a quick search of your favorite Internet news sites and explore some of the ways bullying is evident in today's society.

Talk with a friend or colleague about how you would respond to the various scenarios shared in this chapter.

Children's Literature List

Search the Internet for children's books that address bullying; make a list of titles that would be appropriate for the age level you would like to teach. You may wish to look for books that would address the issues raised in the scenarios in chapter 14 of *Challenging Behavior in Young Children* or issues that you have encountered in previous experiences with children.

Visit your local public library and use your list to locate and read several titles. Ask the librarian for additional recommendations. Select one particularly good example and share the title, author, and brief summary of the book on the learning community discussion board.

Tolerance

Teaching Tolerance is an organization that provides anti-bias educational materials and ideas for teachers.

Go to the [Teaching Tolerance](#) website and investigate the resources available on bullying. Engage in the discussion on bullying in the learning community discussion board.

Outdoor Learning Environments

As early childhood professionals prepare to meet all the developmental needs of young children, it is important not to overlook the advantages of the outdoor learning environment. The outdoors can be viewed as an extension of the indoor learning environment and can be set up to take full advantage of children's curiosity about the world outside the classroom.

Outdoor Environments and Routines

Providing outdoor places for play and learning involves understanding child development, integrating the flow between indoor and outdoor environments, providing adequate and varied materials and activities, and fostering exploration of the natural world to meet the needs of the whole child. It is critical to consider how the playground, outdoor spaces, and materials can be adapted to include children with disabilities.

Now that you have a solid understanding of curriculum, learning environments, characteristics of young children, and guidance, it is time to bring it all together and design an outdoor learning environment.

This topic addresses the following competencies:



- **Competency 607.4.3: Environments and Routines**
The graduate chooses and employs effective approaches, strategies, and tools for early education that support learning through appropriate environments and routines.
- **Competency 607.4.4: Characteristics, Needs, and Interests**
The graduate chooses effective approaches, strategies, and tools for early education that appropriately focus on the characteristics, needs, and interests of infants, toddlers, and young children.
- **Competency 607.4.5: Play in Childhood**
The graduate employs play in support of teaching and learning for infants, toddler, and young children.
- **Competency 607.4.6: Challenging Behaviors**
The graduate chooses and employs effective approaches, strategies, and tools appropriate for early education to address challenging behaviors in infants, toddlers, and young children.
- **Competency 607.4.7: Promoting Positive Outcomes**
The graduate designs, implements, and evaluates meaningful, challenging early childhood curriculum to promote positive outcomes in infants, toddlers, and young children.

Safety Guidelines for Outdoor Environments

Visit the playground and outdoor spaces of one or more of your PCE schools. Take photos or sketch the layout. Answer the following questions:

- What do you see that supports the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of young children?
- What safety precautions are apparent?
- Are there obvious safety concerns?

Visit the following website:

- [Developing Great Schoolyards: A Handbook for Elementary Schools](#)

Based on what you have learned previously and what you learn from this website, how would you modify the playground or outdoor space you observed? Share your thoughts with fellow students on the message board.

Complete an Internet or library search for safety guidelines for playgrounds and outdoor spaces for infants, toddlers, and young children. Make a reference sheet or bulleted list of outdoor safety precautions for early childhood teachers or other professionals. Add a section on outdoor environments to your slideshow.

Now that you have a solid understanding of curriculum, learning environments, characteristics of young children, and guidance, it is time to bring it all together and design an outdoor learning environment.

Task 3 Performance Task



Complete the following ask in Taskstream:

- Contexts of Learning App: Task 3

For details about this performance assessment, see the "Assessment" tab in this course.

In this task, you will design an outdoor learning environment, complete with materials, activities, and an explanation of how it meets the needs of all children within an early childhood curriculum approach.

Resources that may be helpful to you include pages 117–119, 136–137, 186–187, 208, 254, 277–280, 301, and 371 of the [Early Childhood Curriculum](#) textbook, the topic "Physical Development" in *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs*.

As you locate other resources you find helpful, please share that information with your classmates on the message board.

Final Steps

Congratulations on completing the activities in this course! This course has prepared you to complete the assessments associated with this course. If you have not already been directed to complete the assessments, schedule and complete your assessments now.