This course supports the assessment for Development and Learning in Early Childhood Education. The course covers 5 competencies and represents 5 competency units.

**Introduction**

**Overview**
This course will support you as you gain a fundamental understanding of how infants, toddlers, and young children learn and grow. It will also guide you as you consider the typical and atypical development and learning of children from conception through early childhood. You will use this knowledge to design developmentally appropriate learning environments for infants, toddlers, and young children.

One of the key activities in this course is the creation of your professional portfolio, which you will expand and refine as you move through your program. The experience of working through the reading assignments and learning activities in this course will help you find a new appreciation for the amazing field of early childhood development and learning.

An essential aspect of the early childhood program is the field experiences component. Your field experiences will include the early pre-clinical experiences (spread across many courses of study and assessments) and a culminating demonstration teaching (student teaching) experience in your final term(s).

**Teaching Dispositions Statement**
Please review the [WGU 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.

**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.

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


*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.*

**Purchase Learning Resources**

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

**Textbooks**

Purchase the following textbook:


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.*

**Additional Preparations**

**NAEYC's Position on Early Childhood Education**

As you become a professional, membership in the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) may be a significant benefit to you. Most affiliates have a greatly
reduced membership fee for students of any early childhood education university program, including WGU.

Take a few minutes to explore the NAEYC site to explore some NAEYC membership options and then read "NAEYC's Official Positions." Write a summary in your notes of a position statement that particularly catches your attention.

**Pre-Clinical Experiences (PCE)**
Check with your mentor to determine if it is the right time for you to begin the application process for your PCE.

**Organizing Your Portfolio**
The trigger for the portfolio is found in the EET unit. If you have had this unit provided as transfer credit, the portfolio set-up trigger will occur in a future term. Contact the course instructor for further information.

If you have the EET unit in your term, go in TaskStream, to the "Folios & Web Pages" tab under Early Childhood Education create and name a presentation folio.

The items in the portfolio that undergo the first grading are in the (REET4) task. The portfolio will undergo subsequent grading in future units.

**Beginning Your Reflective Journal**
Establish the format you will use for your reflective journal throughout the remainder of the Early Childhood Education program (e.g., online journal, blog, hardcover journal, loose-leaf binder).

Record your first reflection on the following question:

- "What kind of early childhood professional will you be?"

At the end of the course, you will read over this first reflection and ask yourself if you are closer to that ideal than you were when you wrote your thoughts.

**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: Promoting Development and 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.*

**Developmentally Appropriate Practice**

Consider the following two snapshots. In Teacher 1's play-based kindergarten class the children are busily engaged in various learning centers. Three children are playing in the "restaurant"
(taking orders and dishing up plates of pretend food). Two more are building a castle with blocks. Others are painting at easels, while others are engaged in various independent activities. In Teacher 2's academically focused kindergarten class, the children are intently listening to the teacher reading a story. Afterwards, they will all draw a picture of an aspect of the story before moving on to math time. These are two different approaches to the education of young children. Is one approach better than the other? That is a question you may want to consider as you explore the principle of developmentally appropriate practice.

**Developmentally Appropriate Practice**

In 1987, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) introduced principles known as developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) for children from birth to age 8. DAP has become a rallying point for early childhood educators. It is strongly supported and advocated by the NAEYC, and it has become the standard against which all early childhood programs are measured. Everything you do as an early childhood professional should be considered within the context of DAP.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 607.1.1: Theories of Child Development and Learning**
  The graduate incorporates developmentally appropriate practices based on accepted theory and knowledge of human development when working with infants, toddlers, and young children.

**Reading: NAEYC Position on DAP**

Read the following pages in *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* about the NAEYC position on DAP:

- pages 1–24

Write a short paragraph defining and describing DAP in your notes.

Read the following chapter in *The Exceptional Child: Inclusion in Early Childhood Education*:

- chapter 17 ("Facilitating Pre-Academic and Cognitive Learning")
  Examples 1 and 2 on CD

On the CD-ROM that accompanies *Developmentally Appropriate Practice*, watch the following video examples:

- example 1 ("Intentionality in Early Childhood Practice")
- example 2 ("What does Developmentally Appropriate Practice Look Like?")

**Expanding Your DAP Paragraph**

Expand your paragraph defining DAP that you completed in the "Video: Designing Developmentally Appropriate Days" activity to become a position statement reflecting your beliefs in regard to DAP. You may choose to include this statement in your professional portfolio.
Reflective Journal: Asking Questions

As you come to the end of the first section of this course, reflect on what you have learned. Record your thoughts and ideas in your reflective journal. Consider these questions:

- What do you know now that you did not know before?
- How will this impact your work with young children?
- What are you still a bit confused or concerned about?
- How can you clarify that confusion or concern?
- What is your next step?
- What are you looking forward to?

You are now ready to proceed to the next section. Remember to return to the "Observing in a Pre-Clinical Experience" activity in order to complete your observations if you have not yet completed them.

Theories and Models of Early Childhood Development

From the earliest civilizations, philosophers have attempted to describe the processes inherent in human development. Several leading theorists have introduced theories that provide insight into how children move through childhood to become adults that can help early childhood practitioners better support infants, toddlers, and young children.

Theories of Early Childhood Development

As an early childhood practitioner, you will become familiar with the major theories and contributors in the field. This topic will help you guide your research on the theories and theorists who guide the field.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- Competency 607.1.1: Theories of Child Development and Learning
  The graduate incorporates developmentally appropriate practices based on accepted theory and knowledge of human development when working with infants, toddlers, and young children.

Reference Charts

Complete the following two chart activities.

Chart 1
Fill in Chart 1: "Overview of Theories and Theorists of Early Childhood Development" as you research the theorists listed on the chart. Use any reliable resources available to you including your texts and the Internet. Information on many of these theorists can be found using the index of these eTexts.

- Index (Teaching Young Children)
- Index (The Young Child)
Prenatal and Infant Development

In this section, you will look at some of the specific details of human development from conception through infancy.

Prenatal Development

Prenatal development influences the growth, development, and learning of a person for life. It is amazing how biological and environmental factors work together to create a completely unique human being. This next section will look at the process of human development that occurs before birth. The knowledge you gain will help you as an early childhood professional to understand the developmental needs of families and children.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 607.1.5: Prenatal, Infant, and Toddler Development**
  The graduate applies theoretical and research-based knowledge of prenatal, infant, and toddler development to support the growth and well-being of infants, toddlers, and young children.

The Young Child: Chapter 3

Read the following chapter in *The Young Child*:

- **chapter 3 ("The Family Before Birth")**

Make note of the terms and definitions for any unfamiliar terminology. Ask yourself if you could comfortably use these terms in conversation with expectant parents. Review the key terms on page 90.

Create a Reference Document

Create a reference document you can refer to throughout your career as an early childhood professional. Include information on the following topics:

- Stages of prenatal development, including important markers of physical development for each of the nine months of gestation. (include stages of delivery; see pp. 93-98 in chapter 4 ("The Child and Family at Birth") of the *The Young Child*)
- Healthy maternal practices during pregnancy (include diet, exercise, medical
supervision, etc.)

- Risk factors in prenatal development (include a wide range of factors including genetic factors, substance use/abuse, cultural expectations, maternal/paternal health, education, environment, etc.)
- Standards of adequate prenatal care

You have the option of accessing TaskStream and post your document in your portfolio under section "Development and Learning," subsection "Prenatal Development."

**Infant Development and Learning**

Many early childhood educators never work with infants or toddlers; however, a strong understanding of infant development and learning helps any early childhood professional better understand the needs of any child, at any age, and in any area of development. Whether or not you plan to work closely with infants or toddlers in your personal or professional life, pay close attention to the important information you will work with in these sections on infant and toddler development and learning.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 607.1.5: Prenatal, Infant, and Toddler Development**
  The graduate applies theoretical and research-based knowledge of prenatal, infant, and toddler development to support the growth and well being of infants, toddlers, and young children.

**Physical and Motor Development of the Infant**

Read the following chapter in *The Young Child*:

- **chapter 4 ("The Child and Family at Birth")**

Note examples that involve

- genetic and chromosomal disorders,
- low birth weight complications,
- immediate and future needs of newborns,
- family and friend reactions to newborns,
- post-partum depression, and
- the role of childhood professionals working with newborns and their families.

For contrasting opinions, read the following chapters in *The Young Child*:

- **chapter 5 ("Physical and Motor Development of the Infant")**
- **chapter 8 ("Physical and Motor Development: Ages One Through Three")**

Create and post example problems on the message board that involve

- kangaroo care,
primitive reflexes,
- survival reflexes,
- object permanence,
- differing professional opinions, and
- how differing opinions impact those who care for infants.

Add insight you may have on problems that other students post.

**Social/Emotional Development in Infants**

Read the following chapter in *The Young Child*:

- **chapter 6** ("Social and Emotional Development of the Infant")

Make a descriptive list of ways infants play. You have the option to access TaskStream and insert your list into the following subsection of your professional portfolio's section on development:

- "Infant/Toddler"

**Brain Development**

Read the following pages in *The Young Child*:

- pages 120–132 of **chapter 5** ("Physical and Motor Development of the Infant")
- pages 168–172 of **chapter 6** ("Social and Emotional Development of the Infant")
- pages 198–200 of **chapter 7** ("Cognitive, Language, and Literacy Development of the Infant")
- pages 259–260 of **chapter 9** ("Social and Emotional Development: Ages One Through Three")

Select one of the following activities to solidify your understanding of brain development in early childhood:

- Participate in the monthly chat on infant brain development (see the community schedule for times and dates).
- Create an outline noting the specific events in the development of the human brain focusing on the time period from prenatal through age 3.
- Lead a discussion on the topic of brain development in the Early Childhood (EC) program community.

**Caring for Infants**

As an early childhood professional, not only will you be expected to know how to care properly for infants, toddlers, and young children, you will also be called on, from time to time, to teach others how to care for infants in very specific ways.

Research each of the following subjects and create a document that contains a set of instructions or a summary paragraph detailing important procedures and considerations for
supporting infants in each area. Include any additional areas you feel will be helpful.

- breast and bottle feeding
- burping a baby
- diapering
- calming and soothing
- returning a baby back to sleep
- tummy time
- immunizations
- bathing
- introducing solid foods
- supporting security and attachment
- promoting oral language development

You have the option to access TaskStream and insert the document you have created into the following subsection of your professional portfolio’s section on development:

- "Infant/Toddler"

**From Infants to Toddlers: Development and Learning**

As an early childhood professional, your goal is to fully understand the processes of rapid learning and development without ever becoming immune to the wonder of it all.

**Infant and Toddler Development and Learning**

In this section you will continue your study of the stage of infancy and then begin to study toddler development. Pay particular attention to the ways your role as an early childhood professional changes in relation to the development of a toddler.

This topic addresses the following competencies:

- **Competency 607.1.1: Theories of Child Development and Learning**
  The graduate incorporates developmentally appropriate practices based on accepted theory and knowledge of human development when working with infants, toddlers, and young children.

- **Competency 607.1.5: Prenatal, Infant, and Toddler Development**
  The graduate applies theoretical and research-based knowledge of prenatal, infant, and toddler development to support the growth and well being of infants, toddlers, and young children.

**Health and Safety for Infants and Toddlers**

Continue your research in conjunction with the reading you completed previously and check your knowledge on the following questions:

- What is shaken baby syndrome? Why is it such a serious form of abuse?
- What is food security? What practices should you have with a child who has food insecurity?
● Why is the increase in incidences of asthma such a concern?
● What influence does poverty have on health and safety for infants, toddlers, and young children in general?

Review the text-based articles of the CD-ROM that accompanies *Developmentally Appropriate Practice*. Complete the following to access the text:

● Click on "Print Readings" and then on "By Age Group."
● Select either the category "Infants" or "Toddlers."
● Select any desired selection by clicking on the title.

**Attachment in Infants and Toddlers**

Create a list and identify how the relationships or actions of a caregiver can positively or negatively impact the security of attachment in infants, toddlers, or young children.

Read the following pages from *The Young Child*:

● pages 263–266 of chapter 9 ("Social and Emotional Development: Ages One Through Three")

Using the note-taking function in this course, make a list of 10 emotionally supportive strategies that promote security of attachments in infants, toddlers, and young children.

**Observing an Infant/Toddler**

If you can, observe an infant or toddler in a natural setting. Note how the young child responds to parents, peers, siblings, and/or caretakers. What types of attachment or separation issues do you observe. How do the parents, peers, and caretakers respond to the young children?

If you do not have an opportunity for observation in a live setting, view the video "Separation Anxiety".

**Temperament in Infants and Toddlers**

Read the following article from the CD-ROM that accompanies *Developmentally Appropriate Practice*:

● article 57 ("Self Regulation: A Cornerstone of Early Childhood Development")

*Note: Select article number 57 by clicking on the title.*

Select a child you know well or with whom you interact regularly. Rate the child on each of the temperament scales found on the Temperament Rating Scale document. Remember that there is no level (high, low, or in between) that is right or wrong, better or worse. After you have rated the child, rate yourself on each of the continua.

Using the message board for your response, compare your ratings of yourself with your ratings of the child. Describe similarities and differences in temperament. Are their advantages to
viewing the child from a temperament perspective?

**The Toddler Stage**

The toddler stage—commonly referred to both as "the terrible twos" and as "the age of wonder"—is definitely a dynamic time for learning and development. Whether or not you plan to work with toddlers in your personal or professional life, pay close attention to the important information you will work with in this section on toddler development and learning.

This topic addresses the following competencies:

- **Competency 607.1.1: Theories of Child Development and Learning**
  The graduate incorporates developmentally appropriate practices based on accepted theory and knowledge of human development when working with infants, toddlers, and young children.

- **Competency 607.1.5: Prenatal, Infant, and Toddler Development**
  The graduate applies theoretical and research-based knowledge of prenatal, infant, and toddler development to support the growth and well-being of infants, toddlers, and young children.

**The Young Child: Chapter 8**

Read the following chapter in *The Young Child*:

- chapter 8 ("Physical and Motor Development: Ages One Through Three")

Use the note-taking function in this course and reflect upon these concepts as you read:

- What are the developmental milestones of the different periods between ages 1 and 3 in both large and small motor capabilities?
- Give examples of toys or activities that can enhance a toddler's large motor coordination.
- How does small motor coordination develop? Perceptual-motor development?
- What is the purpose of pretend play?
- What are the developmental markers of language and literacy?
- What physiological events and development must be in place for toilet learning to be successful?
- How is gender identity formed?

**Social and Emotional Development in Toddlers**

When children are 3, 4, and 5 years old, they change socially and in how they respond to their environment. In this section you will learn about the many ways toddlers change.

This topic addresses the following competencies:

- **Competency 607.1.1: Theories of Child Development and Learning**
  The graduate incorporates developmentally appropriate practices based on accepted theory and knowledge of human development when working with infants, toddlers, and young children.
• Competency 607.1.5: Prenatal, Infant, and Toddler Development
  The graduate applies theoretical and research-based knowledge of prenatal, infant, and toddler development to support the growth and well being of infants, toddlers, and young children.

The Young Child: Chapter 9

Read the following from The Young Child:

• pages 160–166 and pages 172–179 of *chapter 6 ("Social and Emotional Development of the Infant")*
• *chapter 9 ("Social and Emotional Development: Ages One Through Three")*

Using the note-taking function in this course of study, consider the following questions:

• What are some ways to develop empathy in toddlers?
• What are transitional objects? What are some examples of transitional objects that you—or others whom you know—had? What role do transitional objects play in the emotional development of the toddler?
• Describe the importance of play in the life of the toddler. What types of toddler play are typical?
• What strategies are recommended for helping young children develop self-control and self-regulation?

After reading about these developmental topics, consider interviewing a parent of a toddler to find out the parent's and the toddler's experiences with these aspects of development. In your reflection journal, reflect on the similarities and differences between the theory you read and the actual real-life experience of families and toddlers.

Ages and Stages in Early Childhood Development: 4 - 8 Years of Age

Teachers need to understand the developmental characteristics of young children in order to successfully prepare environments, materials, activities, and lessons. The ages of 4 through 8 constitute the time when a child's success in academic environments is often set for life. Early childhood educators have the responsibility of knowing and meeting the developmental needs of each child in their care in order to help assure an optimum beginning in school. Since children with special needs may have additional needs beyond those of children who are developing normally, early childhood professionals must understand and prepare to support the learning and development of all children.

Development of the 4- to 8-Year-Old Child

Educational leaders advocate that kindergartens and preschools become more academic, similar to second and third grade. Four-year-olds and eight-year-olds are grouped together in this section. Pay attention to the similarities and differences in the development of preschoolers and elementary children. As you work through the next topics, consider the ways you do and do not philosophically support academic kindergarten and preschool trends.
This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 607.1.1: Theories of Child Development and Learning**
  The graduate incorporates developmentally appropriate practices based on accepted theory and knowledge of human development when working with infants, toddlers, and young children.

**The Young Child: Chapter 11**

Read the following chapter in *The Young Child*:

- **chapter 11 ("Physical and Motor Development: Ages Four Through Five")**

Using the note-taking function in this course, consider these questions:

- What are general physical characteristics of 4- and 5-year-olds?
- What is the scope of small and large motor development?
- What are some issues of diet, nutrition, and fitness?
- How much responsibility for oneself can a 4- or 5-year-old reasonably take?

Using the note-taking function in this course, consider the following:

- The general physical characteristics of 6- to 8-year-olds
- The scope of small and large motor development, and issues of diet, nutrition, and fitness.

**Safety**

Read the following chapters in *The Young Child* for information about keeping children safe:

- **chapter 11 ("Physical and Motor Development: Ages Four Through Five")**
- **chapter 14 ("Physical and Motor Development: Ages Six Through Eight")**

Compile a list of safety concerns facing young children. Include the following concerns and any additional issues you may run across in your research:

- automobile and transportation safety
- physical, verbal, or sexual abuse
- playground safety
- fire
- water (e.g., swimming pools)
- nature hazards (e.g., lightening, rivers, poisonous animals and insects)
- bullying
- disease
- becoming lost
- household cleaning products and chemicals
- strangers
- weapons (e.g., guns, knives)
bicycle, tricycle, and other wheeled or riding toys
medications
risky or impulsive behaviors

In TaskStream, you have the option of placing this list in the following subheading of the "Development and Learning" section of your professional portfolio:

- "Development in the Preschool and Primary Years"

This is a great activity on which to collaborate with colleagues and other ECE students. On the message board, share your findings and discuss strategies for creating safe environments and activities for children.

- Provide at least one strategy adults can employ to guard against injury for each concern.
- Add another strategy for each concern to help teach children to stay safe in that regard.

Nutrition

Read the following pages from The Young Child to learn more about nutritional guidelines recommended for maintaining health and fitness in children:

- pages 324–326 of chapter 11 ("Physical and Motor Development: Ages Four Through Five")
- pages 425–430 of chapter 14 ("Physical and Motor Development: Ages Six Through Eight")

What insight have you gained regarding the nutritional needs of young children, the eating habits of young children, and concerns leading to under or overconsumption of food and needed nutrients?

Create a list of 30 nutritious snacks based on caloric and nutritional value.

You have the option of accessing TaskStream and placing the list in your professional portfolio in the following subsection

- "Development in the Preschool and Primary Years."

Social and Emotional Development Activities

Review the following chapters in The Young Child:

- chapter 12 ("Social and Emotional Development: Ages Four Through Five")
- chapter 15 ("Social and Emotional Development: Ages Six Through Eight")

Development of Self-Concept and Self-Esteem

Drawing on your reading, personal experiences, and the theories of Rogers, Erikson, and Maslow, use the note-taking function in this course to describe
• how self-concept develops in either positive or negative ways,
• what types of sensitive and responsive interactions promote healthy self-concept in children, and
• ways children learn to express and manage strong emotions and behaviors such as anger and aggression.

Moral Development

Describe an experience you have witnessed that illustrates either the level of moral development of a child or the development of conscience. Share your experience on the message board for others to respond to. Respond to the posting of others.

Describe a philosophy of child guidance that promotes moral development and the development of conscience in children from age 4 to 8.

Friendship and Play Behaviors

Developing social competence is one of the primary developmental tasks of early childhood. Play is the tool that children use to build social competence, and friendship is the structure children use to frame their emerging competence.

This topic addresses the following competency:

• Competency 607.1.1: Theories of Child Development and Learning
  The graduate incorporates developmentally appropriate practices based on accepted theory and knowledge of human development when working with infants, toddlers, and young children.

Challenges in Developing Friendships

In your notes, list several issues and challenges children face in developing friendships and building social competency. Include the following issues and at least two others:

1. Describe adult roles and behaviors that support a healthy development of social competency in children.

2. Describe the importance of play and unstructured time for children.

3. Describe strategies for supporting positive sibling relationships among young children.

Stress and Fears

Children experience many stress-inducing situations as well as fears regarding real or imagined possibilities. Stress and fears have the potential of creating either positive or negative reactions in children.

Make a list of at least 12 high-stress events commonly experienced by young children.

Make a list of at least 20 common responses children have to stress. List at least three positive responses. How will you be alert to the indicators of undue fear or stress in a child?
Gender Awareness

Early childhood is an important time in which children form gender-role expectations and behaviors. In your notes, explain the development of gender identity, gender stability, and gender constancy.

Brain Development

Read the following pages from *The Young Child*:

- page 353 of chapter 12 ("Social and Emotional Development: Ages Four Through Five")
- page 451 of chapter 15 ("Social and Emotional Development: Ages Six Through Eight")

You have already studied brain development in infants. Add to your research in regard to children from 4 to 8 years old and chose to complete one or more of the following activities:

- Participate in the monthly chat on infant brain development (see the community schedule for times and dates).
- Write a research paper on the development of the human brain focusing on the time period from prenatal through age 3.
- Lead a discussion on the topic of brain development in the Early Childhood (EC) Learning Community. Provide feedback to others who respond to your postings. Pose additional questions and create a good atmosphere for learning.
- Become an active participant in at least three threads regarding brain development in the EC Learning Community.

Atypical Development

As you continue through this next section, please consider how you can support each child (regardless of any special needs) both as an individual with great contributions to make to the community and as one with important needs, wants, and dreams.

Understanding Atypical Development in Early Childhood

The range of disabilities that impact human beings is vast. This section will provide you with a broad overview of the primary disabilities you are most likely to encounter in your work as an early childhood professional.

Note: This section involves a large segment of reading. You should first skim over the entire recommended readings in chapters 6–8 of the text *The Exceptional Child: Inclusion in Early Childhood Education* so you have a broad understanding of what is included. Then return to various selections, as needed, to review in greater depth.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- Competency 607.1.4: Atypical Development—Applications
  The graduate employs appropriate strategies and procedures in meeting the needs of
infants, toddlers, and young children with atypical development.

Read The Exceptional Child

Read the following chapters in *The Exceptional Child: Inclusion in Early Education*:

- chapter 4 (“Normal and Exceptional Development”)
- chapter 5 (“Developmental Disabilities: Causes and Classifications”)
- chapter 6 ("Sensory Impairments: Hearing and Vision")
- chapter 7 (“Physical Disabilities and Health Problems”)
- chapter 8 ("Learning and Behavior Disorders")

As you read, answer the following questions in your notebook:

1. What are the distinguishing characteristics between typical and atypical development for each of the various disabilities, disorders, impairments, and health concerns?

2. How do different disabilities impact a child's overall development in various areas (cognitive, social/emotional, physical growth, motor skill development, language/communication, and so on)?

3. How do different disabilities impact a child's specific growth and learning (including development of independence and the ability to care for oneself in areas such as toileting, eating, sleeping patterns, interpersonal interactions and communication, shyness, etc.)?

4. What impact do different developmental disorders have on the families of young children?

5. What are the disorders or disabilities that most often manifest in infancy (or during toddlerhood, preschool, or elementary years)?

6. What types of assistance or treatment are often recommended?

7. What factors contribute to the over representation of culturally or linguistically diverse students in programs for young children with special needs?

**Understanding Specific Disabilities in Early Childhood**

Make a list of disorders, maladaptive behaviors, disabilities, and health and developmental concerns. Note the cause(s) or origin(s) of each one (e.g., genetic disorder, central nervous system disability, disease or infection during pregnancy, complication of delivery, disease or infection after birth, accident, environmental toxin such as lead, parental substance abuse, lack of opportunity.

Take an in-depth look at three different types of disorders. Take the information you gathered in the previous section for autism (and autism spectrum disorders), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and one other commonly experienced disorder, disability, or concern of your choosing. Add the following to the information you have already gathered:
A description of the symptoms or manifestations of the disorder or disability
Ages or circumstances under which the disorder or disability typically emerges
Commonly prescribed treatments or services provided to infants, toddlers, or young children who experience this.

Parent/Teacher Interview

If possible, interview a parent or teacher of a child with one of the three conditions you have researched. Ask the following questions:

1. How has the disability or disorder impacted the child's overall development in various areas (e.g., cognitive, social or emotional, physical growth, motor skill development, language or communication)?

2. How has the disability or disorder impacted the child's specific growth and learning tasks (e.g., independence and self-care in areas such as toileting, eating, sleeping patterns, interpersonal interactions and communication, shyness)?

3. What impact has this had on the family of the child?

4. At what age did the symptoms or condition manifest itself?

5. What types of resources are available to the child in the community or school system?

6. What assistance or treatment is the child receiving?

7. What technologies, medications, or other options exist but are not available to the child?

8. Are there types of assistance available that the family chooses not to take advantage of?

Note: Be sensitive when asking personal questions; some of these questions may go beyond the boundaries of appropriateness if you are not directly related to the family.

Compare the information you receive with that which you found in your earlier research. Are there discrepancies? If so, to what do you attribute them?

Post a brief summary (one page or less) of your thoughts, findings, or other insights on the course message board for this topic. Be certain you do not include any specific information that would identify the child to whom you are referring.

Atypical Development: Assessment and Intervention

Previously in this course you studied the types of atypical development that may occur in early childhood. In this section you will draw on that information and look at how the early childhood practitioner can support the learning of all children with and without atypical developmental concerns.

Identifying Atypical Development in Early Childhood
Parents are often the ones to first suspect that a child may be developing atypically. However, many times it is a caregiver or teacher who is the first to detect a motor, visual, or hearing problem or to recognize a cognitive, emotional, or learning disability. In this section you will study the range of tools and strategies designed for assessing and identifying areas of atypical development including the use of technology.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 607.1.3: Atypical Development—Assessment**
  The graduate uses accepted methods of assessment to identify atypical developmental patterns in order to meet the needs of infants, toddlers, and young children who are atypically developing.

Read *The Exceptional Child*

Read the following in *The Exceptional Child: Inclusion in Early Childhood Education*:

- page 43 of [chapter 2 ("Federal Legislation: Early Intervention and Prevention")](#)
- [chapter 10 ("Assessment and the IFSP/IEP Process")](#)
- [chapter 11 ("Characteristics of Effective Teachers in Inclusive Programs")](#)

**Identifying Specific Disabilities in Early Childhood**

Do a self-check on your understanding of the following terms:

- accommodations
- accountability
- achievement test
- alignment
- alternative assessment
- aptitude test
- assessment
- authentic assessment
- benchmarks (performance standards)
- content standards
- criterion-referenced test
- developmental assessment
- documentation
- early learning standards
- evaluation
- formal assessment
- indicators
- informal assessment
- norm-referenced test
- observational assessment
- outcomes
- performance standards
- performance-based (alternate, alternative, authentic) assessment
Add to Your List

Add to the list of the disorders, maladaptive behaviors, disabilities and health or developmental concerns you created in the "Understanding Specific Disabilities in Early Childhood" activity by including an assessment strategy for each of your listed concerns.

Atypical Development: Laws and Ethics

Previously in this course you studied the types of atypical development that may occur in early childhood. In this section you will look more specifically at the practical, legal, and ethical implications of atypical development.

Supporting Children With Atypical Development

Now that you have spent time recognizing, understanding, and identifying developmental concerns in early childhood, it is time to consider how you will use this information to support the learning and development of the young children with whom you work.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- Competency 607.1.4: Atypical Development—Applications
  The graduate employs appropriate strategies and procedures in meeting the needs of infants, toddlers, and young children with atypical development.

Read The Exceptional Child

Read the following in *The Exceptional Child: Inclusion in Early Childhood Education*:

- chapter 1 ("An Inclusive Approach to Early Education")
- chapter 2 ("Federal Legislation: Early Intervention and Prevention")
- chapter 3 ("Inclusive Programs for Young Children")
- chapter 19 ("Planning Transitions to Support Inclusion")

Review the following in *The Exceptional Child: Inclusion in Early Childhood Education*:

- chapter 17 ("Facilitating Pre-Academic and Cognitive Learning")

Federal Legislation and Legal Considerations for Young Children With Special Needs

Beginning in the 1960s, governments, agencies, and individuals in general began to consider...
the needs and rights of all human beings. While change is often slow, controversial, and sometimes hard fought, many important and groundbreaking policies have been implemented in the past fifty years to better provide for all children.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 607.1.4: Atypical Development—Applications**
  The graduate employs appropriate strategies and procedures in meeting the needs of infants, toddlers, and young children with atypical development.

**Read About IDEA**

Review the following in *The Exceptional Child: Inclusion in Early Childhood Education*:

- chapter 1 ("An Inclusive Approach to Early Education")
- chapter 2 ("Federal Legislation: Early Intervention and Prevention")
- chapter 3 ("Inclusive Programs for Young Children")
- chapter 10 ("Assessment and the IFSP/IEP Process")

Review your understanding of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Make note of the key provisions of IDEA, which include the least restrictive environment.

Make certain you can identify appropriate implementation strategies of the following practices for including children with common disabilities (e.g., ASD, ADHD, learning disorders) in the least restrictive environment:

- inclusion
- due process
- assurances under the IDEA for nondiscriminatory evaluation, eligibility, services, or placement

**Case Law Activity**

Visit the Wrightslaw site and review several cases that relate to early childhood special education.

Consider this scenario: A child is 4 and a half years old and has been diagnosed with Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) and Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The child's parents have taken the child to a pediatric psychiatrist after the child was dismissed from two preschools (a small daily preschool in a neighbor's home and a three-day-a-week program run by the family's church) and a nationally accredited childcare center. The local school district has refused to evaluate the child because of the behavioral concerns.

Write a paragraph describing your opinion regarding the child's rights to service according to current legislative policy, and share it on the message board.

**Services and Support for Children With Special Needs**

Early childhood professionals may be called on to recommend and/or arrange for services to
meet the needs of children in their care. This section will introduce you to many of those services designed to support the development and learning of infants, toddlers, and children with special needs.

As you review this subject, consider the following questions:

- Based on your own experiences as well as insight from the passages of reading, can you explain why early identification of developmental or learning problems in infants, toddlers, and young children is important?
- Why is it necessary to provide intervention services during such early years?
- What are some of the common obstacles to early intervention with infants, toddlers, and young children?

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 607.1.4: Atypical Development—Applications**
  The graduate employs appropriate strategies and procedures in meeting the needs of infants, toddlers, and young children with atypical development.

**Early Intervention**

Read the following in *The Exceptional Child: Inclusion in Early Childhood Education*:

- chapter 9 ("Partnership with Families")
- chapter 12 ("The Developmental-Behavioral Approach")
- chapter 14 ("Facilitating Self-Care, Adaptive, and Independence Skills")
- chapter 15 ("Facilitating Social Development")
- chapter 16 ("Facilitating Speech, Language, and Communication Skills")
- chapter 18 ("Managing Challenging Behaviors")
- chapter 19 ("Planning Transitions to Support Inclusion")

Review the following in *The Exceptional Child: Inclusion in Early Childhood Education*:

- chapter 17 ("Facilitating Pre-Academic and Cognitive Learning")

Investigate the information available through the [Center for Parent Information and Resource website](#).

**Transitions**

Many services for infants and toddlers from birth through at least age 3 are provided in the home or directly to families typically through state-run early intervention programs. Depending on the state where you live, transitions to a school district-based model of service delivery may begin as early as age 3 or anytime up to age 5. Review the information from the [Center for Parent Information and Resource website](#), which provides excellent information on the transition process.

**Complete: Task 2 Performance Task**
Complete the following performance task in TaskStream:

- Prmt Dev & Learn in EC Appl: REET Task 2

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

**Response to Intervention (RTI)**

Use Internet resources such as the [National Center on Response to Intervention website](https://www.rti.org) to gain an understanding of the basic philosophy of RTI. You will be ready to move on once you can identify the key components of each instructional level of RTI and explain various roles and purposes of assessment in RTI. This may involve assessing to:

- identify the existence of a delay or disability,
- determine eligibility for services,
- guide the development of the IEP/IFSP goals/objectives,
- monitor an individual child's progress,
- determine effectiveness of a current set of interventions,
- evaluate a program as a whole, or
- to determine accountability.

**IEP and IFSP Activities**

Visit the [Center for Parent Information and Resource website](https://parentcenter.info/), which provides excellent information on the development of IFSPs and IEPs.

Follow the links from this site to your own state's agencies in order to determine the guidelines for creating IFSPs and IEPs.

Using the resources above as guides, outline the necessary steps for creating both an IFSP and an IEP. Include a description of what should be included in each plan. Share your findings on the community.

**Service Providers**

No single person will have all the expertise needed to adequately support a child with special needs. A multitude of specialties have qualified service providers to provide the needed support for the optimal development of each child.

It is not only the children with disabilities who need added support but individual family members may have need of additional emotional, physical, and educational support as well.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 607.1.4: Atypical Development—Applications**
  The graduate employs appropriate strategies and procedures in meeting the needs of infants, toddlers, and young children with atypical development.

**Create List of Providers**
Create a list of the types of specific therapeutic providers that might be involved in providing support to infants, toddlers, and young children with disabilities as outlined in an IFSP or IEP (e.g., occupational therapists, speech/language pathologists). Be certain that you understand the roles and functions of each type of provider.

**Assistive Technology Activities**

Read the following article on the CD-ROM that accompanies *Developmentally Appropriate Practice*:

- article 5 (“Assistive Technology: Supporting the Participation of Children with Disabilities”)

Review the information about assistive technology in the following chapter of *The Exceptional Child: Inclusion in Early Childhood Education*:

- chapter 17 ("Facilitating Pre-Academic and Cognitive Learning")

Create a list in your notes of seven to ten assistive technology/adaptive equipment, devices, or processes and indicate a specific purpose for each device or process.

**Early Childhood Environments**

The early childhood professional knows that the environment is one of the key indicators to a successful and challenging learning experience for the growing child. The environment must be a safe environment based on nurturing and healthy inclusions.

**Early Childhood Environments**

Infants, toddlers, and young children in general spend more time indoors today than at any other time in the last century. Early childhood educators need to understand the principles of designing developmentally appropriate, safe, and challenging indoor environments in order to support the learning and development of all children.

This topic addresses the following competencies:

- **Competency 607.1.2: Learning Environments**
  The graduate creates safe, healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging learning environments based on theory and knowledge of human development for infants, toddlers, and young children.

- **Competency 607.1.4: Atypical Development—Applications**
  The graduate employs appropriate strategies and procedures in meeting the needs of infants, toddlers, and young children with atypical development.

Read *Henniger Chapter 9*

Read the following chapter in *Teaching Young Children*:

- chapter 9 (“Planning the Physical Environment: Indoors”)

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Take notes on age-appropriate classrooms, inclusion strategies: creating an environment for children of all abilities and needs in an inclusive setting, health and safety issues, centers, and classroom floor plans and layout.

**Developmentally Appropriate Practice**

Read the following from *Developmentally Appropriate Practice*:

- chapter 2 ("Development in the First Three Years of Life")
- chapter 4 ("Developmentally Appropriate Practice in the Preschool Years–Ages 3–5: An Overview")
- chapter 6 ("Developmentally Appropriate Practice in the Kindergarten Year–Ages 5–6: An Overview")
- chapter 8 ("Developmentally Appropriate Practice in the Primary Grades–Ages 6–8: An Overview")
- pages 79–84
- pages 96–100
- pages 152–153
- pages 221–222
- pages 293–294

Pay attention to the special environmental needs of each developmental level.

**Critiquing Floor Plans**

Select one of the floor plans from the *Teaching Young Children* text (figures 9–1, 9–2, or 9–3 on pp. 256–260 of chapter 9 ("Planning the Physical Environment: Indoors"). Critique (giving both positive and negative characteristics) the plan you have selected in terms of:

- developmental appropriateness, including support of 1) social/emotional development, 2) cognitive development/academic learning, 3) physical/motor needs;
- health and safety issues; and
- mobility concerns for students with physical disabilities (e.g. wheel chairs, vision/hearing concerns).

List three adjustments you would make to the floor plan based on your own preferences. Briefly describe why you would make these adjustments.

Share one of your ideas for an adjustment on the course message board thread for the corresponding floor plan. Comment and provide feedback for your peers.

**Outdoor Learning Environments**

The increasing loss of outdoor playtime means that the environments that support the open-air experiences of infants, toddlers, and young children are even more important. This section will consider principles of safe and effective outdoor environments that support early learning and development.

This topic addresses the following competencies:
• **Competency 607.1.2: Learning Environments**
The graduate creates safe, healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging learning environments based on theory and knowledge of human development for infants, toddlers, and young children.

• **Competency 607.1.4: Atypical Development—Applications**
The graduate employs appropriate strategies and procedures in meeting the needs of infants, toddlers, and young children with atypical development.

**Read and Critique for Outdoor Playtime**

Read the following chapter from *Teaching Young Children*:

• chapter 10 ("Planning the Physical Environment: Outdoors")

Take notes on

• outdoor health and safety issues,
• accessibility issues (creating an outdoor environment for children of all abilities and needs),
• different types of areas, structures, and materials, and
• family and community involvement.

Read the following articles on the CD-ROM that accompanies *Developmentally Appropriate Practice*:

• article 31: "Experiences in Nature: A Pathway to Standards"
• article 39: "Infants and Toddlers Meet the Natural World"

**Critiquing Outdoor Designs**

Select one of the playground designs from *Teaching Young Children* (figures 10–1, 10–2, or 10–3 on pp. 281–285 of chapter 10 ("Planning the Physical Environment: Outdoors").

Critique (both positive and negative characteristics) the plan you have selected in terms of

• health and safety issues;
• variety of options;
• mobility concerns for students with physical disabilities (e.g., wheel chairs, vision/hearing concerns); and
• other practical considerations such as ability for an adult to oversee and assure the safety of all children in the environment, ease of maintenance, financial considerations, etc.

List three adjustments you would make to the playground designs based on your own preferences. Briefly describe why you would make these adjustments on the message board.

Share one of your ideas for an adjustment in the course of study message board thread for the corresponding floor plan. Comment and provide feedback for three (or more) of your peers.
Childcare Environments
Increasingly, childcare is seen as an important opportunity to support the development of young children. Childcare settings (either family- or center-based) are a third type of environment distinctly different from home or school settings. Interesting information on the occupational outlook for childcare workers can be found on the Department of Labor and Statistics website. Not only does childcare have value in and of itself, it can and should include the concept of the "natural environment" and "least restrictive environment" (Part C, IDEA).

This topic addresses the following competencies:

- **Competency 607.1.2: Learning Environments**
  The graduate creates safe, healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging learning environments based on theory and knowledge of human development for infants, toddlers, and young children.

- **Competency 607.1.4: Atypical Development—Applications**
  The graduate employs appropriate strategies and procedures in meeting the needs of infants, toddlers, and young children with atypical development.

**Reading**

Read the following pages in *Teaching Young Children*:

- pages 9–19 of chapter 1 ("Overview of the Profession")

As you read, consider how the needs of infants, toddlers, and young children in childcare settings differ from their needs when attending traditionally academic settings such as part-day preschools, kindergarten (half or full day), and elementary school. View the following clips. As you watch, consider the differences among the various settings.

- infant toddler setting
- childcare setting
- kindergarten classroom
- primary grades

Also read the following pages in the *The Young Child*:

- pages 182–184 of chapter 6 ("Social and Emotional Development of the Infant")

**Compare Childcare Settings**

Construct a table or chart for your portfolio comparing and contrasting various types of childcare settings and environments. Include the following:

- care provided by relatives and friends
- Family or in-home care
- Intergenerational
- Center-based
Inclusive settings
Employer-based care, including corporate day care
Military
Co-ops
Before- and after-school care
Therapeutic, including sick child/back-up/emergency care
Proprietary childcare

Include columns for comparing the ability of each type of setting or environment to 1) support varying cultural contexts, 2) meet the needs of various ages or developmental stages, 3) serve the realities of families with greater economic needs, and 4) meet the needs of children or parents with special needs including accessibility, etc.

When you are satisfied that your task is accurate and complete, access TaskStream and post the table to your portfolio in the following subsection of "Development and Learning":

- "Theories and Models in Early Childhood Education."

**Inclusion Environments**
The learning environment can pose innumerable obstacles for children with special needs. This section will ask you to consider the adaptations and accommodations that will allow for safe and fully inclusive indoor and outdoor opportunities for all children.

This topic addresses the following competencies:

- **Competency 607.1.2: Learning Environments**
The graduate creates safe, healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging learning environments based on theory and knowledge of human development for infants, toddlers, and young children.

- **Competency 607.1.4: Atypical Development—Applications**
The graduate employs appropriate strategies and procedures in meeting the needs of infants, toddlers, and young children with atypical development.

**Task 3 Performance Task**
Drawing on your study and research, particularly in *The Exceptional Child: Inclusion in Early Childhood Education*, and using the same environmental plans or designs you selected previously in this section for both the indoor and outdoor environments,

- make three additional recommendations for each design to accommodate the needs of children with disabilities; and
- share one of your ideas in the course message board thread for inclusion environmental plans.

Review the following chapters in *The Exceptional Child: Inclusion in Early Childhood Education*:

- chapter 1 ("An Inclusive Approach to Early Education")
Now that you have carefully considered the implications of early childhood environments and studied infant and toddler development, you are prepared to complete the following performance task in TaskStream:

- Prmt Dev & Learn in EC Appl: REET Task 3

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

Creating Learning Environments

Drawing on your study and research, particularly in The Exceptional Child: Inclusion in Early Childhood Education, and using the same environmental plans or designs you selected previously in this section for both the indoor and outdoor environments,

- make three additional recommendations for each design to accommodate the needs of children with disabilities; and
- share one of your ideas in the course of study message board thread for inclusion environmental plans.

Review the following chapters in The Exceptional Child: Inclusion in Early Childhood Education:

- chapter 1 ("An Inclusive Approach to Early Education")
- chapter 2 ("Federal Legislation: Early Intervention and Prevention")
- chapter 3 ("Inclusive Programs for Young Children")

Read the following chapter in The Exceptional Child: Inclusion in Early Childhood Education:

- chapter 13 ("Arranging the Learning Environment")

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.

The WGU Library

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For more information about using the WGU Library, view the following videos on The WGU
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