

Infant Mental Health

Syllabus: Online Course

Instructor:

Contact:

Course Description

This is a survey course of infant and early childhood development that uses an infant and early childhood mental health (IECMH) framework. It focuses on risk and protective factors that may impact the development and well-being of infants, toddlers, and their families, as well as research-based principles and approaches to providing effective, relationship-based support.

Three goals of this course are to increase your understanding of:

- The importance of early relationships in supporting resilience and mitigating risk in young children and families.
- The range of factors that influence developmental trajectories in early childhood: neurobiological, psychological, relational, and contextual.
- Reflective practice, a way of studying your own experience to increase awareness, understanding, and connection to others.

Objectives

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Use infant and early childhood mental health observation and reflective practice skills in case studies and in early learning settings.
- Apply a social ecological model to explain how risk and protective factors affect children, families, and outcomes in early childhood.
- Explain typical features and challenges during the transition to parenthood and ways to support new parents.
- Describe early development, starting in utero, and responsive caregiving practices.
- Explain individual differences in sensory processing and temperament and ways to support children with different profiles.
- Describe the causes of challenging behavior in infants and toddlers and effective ways to respond.
- Explain attachment theory and patterns and their implications for your work as an early childhood educator.
- Apply an equity lens in considering issues that affect children and families.
- Use relationship-based principles and practices that support children and families.
- Describe links between early toxic stress and trauma, learning, and lifelong health, and ways to respond to the needs of young children who have experienced trauma.
- Explain steps you can take to manage your own stress and promote resilience while working as an early learning professional.

Grading

Quizzes	20%
Discussions	20%
Video Activities	20%
Summative Assignments	20%
Capstone Assignments	20%

Expectations

Quizzes

You are expected to be able to demonstrate knowledge on the session topic by answering auto-graded questions. You can leave the quiz page to look-up information and then Resume Quiz to continue answering questions. You have 1 attempt at most quizzes and 2 attempts on the last quiz of the course.

Discussions

Discussions will focus on the case studies presented in each session. These class activities require you to work in small groups called CORP (Communities of Reflection and Practice), respond to prompts about the case, and respond to other students in your group.

Video Activities

At a handful of times during this course, you will film yourself interacting with children in an early learning setting. Sometimes, these will require that you do an activity first. Be sure to look at all the assignments for each session in plenty of time to complete any required filming for that session.

In community reflection assignments, you will share your videos with CORP members where your peers and instructors will provide support and feedback. Your participation in this group is meant to help you form personal connections with one another, facilitate high-level collaboration, and improve your ability to provide quality feedback to yourself and peers.

Summative Assignments

Summative assignments provide student-focused time to make meaning from course readings, videos, and lectures. You are expected to complete assignments in a timely manner and contact the instructor as soon as possible if you are unable to do so.

- Reading assignments: In this course, you will complete required readings and watch video. You will synthesize your thoughts from the readings and video in reflection submitted each session.

Capstone Assignments

Becoming a better educator is a never-ending journey. The capstone assignment gives you an opportunity to show what you have learned. You will have the opportunity to demonstrate competencies from each session of this course as you complete a case study about a real child.

Note on Filming

As noted above, in some assignments participants will be asked to film classroom interactions, review video footage, and edit several small clips for the instructor and peers to view. Instructors will include guidance for this process by providing training and a detailed guide on filming and editing video clips for use with the EarlyEdU Coaching Companion.

Time Estimations

The estimated time commitment for each session is 5 to 8 hours. Some sessions may include assignments that require more than 5 hours out of class (e.g., completing the planning, video, reflecting, and feedback cycles) while others may take less. Additionally, some participants may complete assignments more quickly than others. Some participants may review readings and videos multiple times and spend more time on their assignments. There is no exact time designation; you are encouraged to communicate with your instructor for any questions on due dates, extensions, and workload.

Accommodations

(Note: Institutions will need to update this section as required. Initial text is provided; institutions will need to provide all their own details here).

We want you to have the best possible experience in this class. At the _____ (your institution) _____ we aim to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you experience barriers, please contact _____ *Insert the department or person at your institution responsible for special accommodations* _____ to discuss and address them. If you have already established accommodations with that office, please inform your instructor as soon as possible so we can discuss your needs in this course.