

CDEC 1311
Educating Young Children
online
Fall 2026



CREDIT

3 Semester Credit Hours

MODE OF INSTRUCTION

Online

PREREQUISITE/CO-REQUISITE:

none

COURSE DESCRIPTION

An introduction to the education of the young child. Includes developmentally appropriate practices and programs, theoretical and historical perspectives, ethical and professional responsibilities, and current issues.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Explain child development and name the 4 main domains.
2. Identify different types of early childhood programs.
3. Know key people and ideas in early childhood education.
4. Understand what early childhood teachers do.
5. Talk about the future of early childhood education.
6. Describe what makes a program good for young children.

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFORMATION

Instructor: **Sharon Kruger, M.Ed.**

LIT Email: skruger@lit.edu

Office Phone: **409-241-3163**

Office Location: **Technical Center (TC) Room 220**

Office Hours: **See Starfish for Available Office Hours**

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK AND MATERIALS

Require a laptop or device to allow you to access LIT Blackboard

Both of the required textbooks are very large documents. Therefore, **please do not print them.**

Required Textbook: Stephens, C., Peterson, G., & Eyrich, S. (2020). *Principles and practices of teaching young children*. College of the Canyons.

This open educational resource (OER) textbook, developed by College of the Canyons, provides a comprehensive overview of the fundamental principles and practical applications for teaching young children. The publication, an early release of Version 1.0 from 2020, incorporates contributions from Nikki Savage and derivative changes by Jennifer Paris, who also served as a peer reviewer. Edited by Alexa Johnson and Jennifer Paris, the text is enhanced with graphics by Trudi Radtke. The content likely covers key topics in early childhood education, offering valuable insights for students and practitioners in the field. As an OER, it is freely accessible and adaptable, promoting wider access to quality educational materials. <https://canyons.commonslibretexts.org/book/socialsci-86379>

Required Textbook: Texas Early Learning Council, & Children's Learning Institute, University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. (n.d.). *Texas infant, toddler, and three-year-old early learning guidelines*.

These guidelines were developed through a collaborative effort between the Texas Early Learning Council and various Texas stakeholders, with the goal of enhancing school readiness across the state. Housed at the Children's Learning Institute, University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, the Texas Early Learning Council played a pivotal role in their creation. The document outlines age-appropriate expectations for children from birth through three years across different developmental domains and provides strategies for caregivers to support healthy development and learning. As a foundational resource, it aims to improve the quality of early care and education for young children in Texas. <https://childrenslearninginstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Texas-Infant-Toddler-and-Three-Year-Old-Early-Learning-Guidelines.pdf>

All course materials will be provided on the Blackboard LMS system.

DROP POLICY

If you wish to drop a course, you are responsible for initiating and completing the drop process. If you stop coming to class and fail to drop the course, you will earn an "F" in the course.

This course adheres to the add/drop standards for each term as stated by Lamar Institute of Technology. For more details, refer to the <https://www.lit.edu/Student-Success/2026-2027-College-Calendar>

Course Calendar

All coursework is due the Monday after the due date of the module/week

Week 1 The course begins on Aug. 25, 2026.	Course introduction and policies What is Early Childhood Education? And why is it important?	The required readings are embedded in this week's learning module class. Discussion post(s) Assignment(s)
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		Journal(s) Quiz on this week's material PRE Course Self-Assessment of current knowledge in Educating Young Children
Week 2	A Look Back – The History of Early Childhood Education Students will analyze the historical development of early childhood education and how it has influenced current practices. -Identify at least three key figures in early childhood education and describe their contributions.	Read Principles and Practices of Teaching Young Children pages 12 to 20 Discussion post(s) Assignment(s) Journal(s) Quiz on this week's material
Week 3 No Class Monday, Labor Day, September 7, 2026	Defining the Young Child Students will identify the unique developmental ages and stages of young children and the practices that best meet the developmental needs.	Read pages 92 to 115 in Principles and Practices of Teaching Young Children Discussion post(s) Assignment(s) Journal(s) Quiz on this week's material
Week 4	What Is Development? Students will learn what development means, name and describe the four main areas of child development, give two examples of milestones in each area for a chosen age group, and explain how all the areas of development connect and affect one another.	Read pages 21 to 73 in the Infant Toddler Early Learning Guidelines (ITELG) Discussion post(s) Assignment(s) Journal(s) Quiz on this week's material
Project 1 Due Week 4	★ Project 1: All About Me (Due Week 4)	Create a timeline showing how you grew in all 4 domain areas (physical, emotional, social, thinking). Use words or pictures.
Weeks 5 & 6	Understanding Theories of Child Development Student will be able to: Identify major child development theories. Explain how biology, family, stress, and culture affect growth. Describe how children develop in connected areas. Use simple teaching strategies to support young children in play-based, caring classrooms.	In your <i>Principles and Practices of Teaching Young Children</i> OER book, read page 22 to 46. This is finishing Chapter 1 and reading all of Chapter 2. Discussion post(s) Assignment(s) Journal(s) Quiz on this week's material

Project 2 Due Week 6	 Project 2: Meet a Theorist (Due Week 6)	Make an infographic, poster or a slide presentation (slide presentation has to be 10 slides) about a famous developmental psychologist. Include who they were and their theory about the growth and development of young children.
Weeks 7 & 8	Curriculum Basics Students will learn how to plan, use, and review activities and interactions in early childhood classrooms. They will also: Understand basic curriculum ideas for young children. Identify key parts of early childhood curriculum, including play-based learning, behavior needs, and different curriculum models.	Read Chapter 6 <i>Principles and Practices of Teaching Young Children</i> Discussion post(s) Assignment(s) Journal(s) Quiz on this week's material
Weeks 9 & 10	Creating an Effective Learning Environment Students will learn about different early childhood programs, rules, and quality standards. They will also: Understand the physical, social, and time-based parts of an early learning environment. Explain why a well-planned environment helps young children grow and learn.	Read Chapter 7 <i>Principles and Practices in Teaching Young Children</i> Discussion post(s) Assignment(s) Journal(s) Quiz on this week's material
Week 11	Observation, Documentation and Assessment Student will be able to develop observational skills that will form the foundation of working effectively with young children.	Read Chapter 4, <i>Principles and Practices of Teaching Young Children</i> Discussion post(s) Assignment(s) Journal(s) Quiz on this week's material
Project 3 Due Week 11	 Project 3: Build a Dream Classroom (Due Week 11)	Draw or design a classroom for 4-year-olds. Label areas for reading, play, art, and quiet time. Explain how each space helps kids.

Week 12	Partnering with Family Student will be able to examine effective relationships and interactions between early childhood professionals, children, families, and colleagues, including the importance of collaboration.	Read Chapter 8 <i>Principles and Practices of Teaching Young Children</i> Discussion post(s) Assignment(s) Journal(s) Quiz on this week's material
Project 4 Due Week 12	★ Project 4: Behavior Toolbox-Guiding Young Children (due week 12)	Show how you would guide behavior in a positive way. Make a "Behavior Toolbox" using a slide presentation, drawing, infographic, or a poster. Include at least 5 positive guidance strategies (like calm talking, redirection, or giving choices). Describe a short example of how you would use each one in a real classroom. Include a minimum of 5 'tools'
Week 13	Ethic and Professionalism Student will be able to: Examine effective relationships and interactions between early childhood professionals, children, families, and colleagues, including the importance of collaboration.	Read Chapter 3 <i>Principles and Practices of Teaching Young Children</i> Discussion post(s) Assignment(s) Journal(s) Quiz on this week's material
Week 14 No classes Nov. 25 to 27, 2026 – Thanksgiving Break	Current Trends and issues in Early Childhood Education Student will learn about the top early childhood policy trends of the 2020s and how they affect young children. The student will be able to: Describe five big policy trends: universal pre-K, teacher support, social-emotional learning, technology use, and "everyone can succeed" programs. Explain how these policies change access, quality, and outcomes in early learning.	The required readings are embedded in this week's learning module class. Discussion post(s) Assignment(s) Journal(s) Quiz on this week's material

	Look at real data to understand challenges like teacher shortages, high costs, and low public funding.	
Week 15 Last day of classes is Dec. 2, 2026	Review of CDEC 1311	Complete POST-Course Self-Assessment of current knowledge in Education Young Children
Project 5 Due Week 15	★ Project 5: Future of Teaching – Message to Myself (Due Week 15)	Write or record a message to your future self about what you learned and what kind of teacher you want to be.

Final grades will be calculated according to the following criteria:

Grading Policy and Evaluation

ASSIGNMENTS	% of total grade
Discussion posts & respond to discussion posts	15%
Assignments	10%
Quiz: open book quizzes and/or video quizzes	15%
Journal Reflection	10%
Project 1	10%
Project 2	10%
Project 3	10%
Project 4	10%
Project 5	10%
TOTAL	100%

Instead of taking a final exam, you will complete five projects (presentation) that will be submitted at different times during the semester.

A 90 to 100%

B 80% and less than 90%

C 70% and less than 80%

D 60% and less than 70%

F 0% and less than 60%

MAKE-UP WORK

Late Submission Policy ---

Assignments submitted more than 4 days after the due date will receive a deduction of up to 10%.

Please check the grading rubric for the exact amount. If no rubric is provided, a flat 10% deduction will be applied. If you need to request an exception to this policy, please send me a message. Review the grading rubric prior to each submission.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

The latest technical requirements, including hardware, compatible browsers, operating systems, etc. can be online at <https://lit.edu/online-learning/online-learning-minimumcomputer-requirements>. A functional broadband internet connection, such as DSL, cable, or WiFi is necessary to maximize the use of online technology and resources.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT STATEMENT

It is the responsibility of all registered Lamar Institute of Technology students to access, read, understand, and abide by all published policies, regulations, and procedures listed in the *LIT Catalog and Student Handbook*. The *LIT Catalog and Student Handbook* may be accessed at www.lit.edu. Please note that the online version of the *LIT Catalog and Student Handbook* supersedes all other versions of the same document.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE STATEMENT

Lamar Institute of Technology (LIT) recognizes the recent advances in Artificial Intelligence (AI), such as ChatGPT, have changed the landscape of many career disciplines and will impact many students in and out of the classroom. To prepare students for their selected careers, LIT desires to guide students in the ethical use of these technologies and incorporate AI into classroom instruction and assignments appropriately. Appropriate use of these technologies is at the discretion of the instructor. Students are reminded that all submitted work must be their own original work unless otherwise specified. Students should contact their instructor with any questions as to the acceptable use of AI/ChatGPT in their courses.

For this online course: You are responsible for the content of any work submitted for this course. Use of AI to generate your first draft of text is permitted, BUT you must review and revise any AI-generated text before submission. AI text generators can be useful tools but they are often prone to factual errors, incorrect or fabricated citations and misinterpretations of abstract concepts. Utilize them with caution.

In your submissions:

- Make sure you provide personal specific and relevant information while writing your submissions.
- NO factual errors from AI or that will result in a zero on the assignment

STARFISH

LIT utilizes an early alert system called Starfish. Throughout the semester, you may receive emails from Starfish regarding your course grades or academic performance. You can also login to Blackboard or

MyLIT and click on the Starfish link to view academic alerts and detailed information. It is the responsibility of the student to pay attention to these emails and information in Starfish and consider taking the recommended actions. Starfish is used to help you be a successful student at LIT.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Students found to be committing academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, or collusion) may receive disciplinary action. Students need to familiarize themselves with the institution's Academic Dishonesty Policy available in the Student Catalog & Handbook at

<http://catalog.lit.edu/content.php?catoid=3&navoid=80#academic-dishonesty>

Remember this: Netiquette (Online Etiquette) Statement

Always sign your name to any contribution you choose to make.

Be constructive in your responses to others in the class.

Do not use all caps (Doing so may be interpreted as shouting).

Re-read your postings before sending them.

Always think before you write. Respond respectfully.

Use appropriate grammar and structure. Spell-check your postings.

Use short paragraphs focused on one idea.

Response Times

During the workweek, I expect to respond to your emails within 24 hours. For the most expedited response, please email me directly. All discussion posts/responses, journals, quizzes, and assignments are usually graded by Thursday morning of the next Module/Week.

Student Success Requirements

Success in this course is dependent on your active participation and engagement throughout the course. As such, students are required to complete all assignments by the due date, and to actively participate in class discussions. Online students should expect to spend at least as much time on this course as in the traditional, face-to-face class.

Additionally, students are expected to:

- Log on at least three times a week, on different days, to complete assignments, assessments, discussions and/or other Module/Weekly deliverables as directed by the instructor and outlined in the syllabus.
- Participate in threaded Discussion Board topics. Participation is required in the discussion posts by responding to the thread, then posting engaging comments or questions to at least two other peers' posting.
- Spend 8 – 12 hours per week actively engaged within this course.
- Cheating will not be tolerated.

If you find that you cannot meet the class's minimum requirements, please contact your instructor as soon as possible.

Course Instructor Evaluation

Instruction as well as student performance is subject to evaluation. Procedures for instructor evaluation will be provided near the end of this course via email from Lamar Institute of Technology. Save a screenshot of your instructor's evaluation completion page and upload it to the appropriate spot for extra credit.