Early Childhood
Infant & Toddler Mental Health:
Issues & Information for Educators

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Introduction

Welcome to *Infant & Toddler Mental Health: Issues & Information for Educators*, an interactive computer-based instruction course designed to help you achieve a better understanding of infant and toddler mental health, child development, and strategies you can use to promote positive relationships with children and their families. This course provides information that will help you to understand and identify your role as a child care provider, educator, and early childhood professional. *Infant & Toddler Mental Health* will provide you with research-based information on early child development, attachment, temperament, and curriculum. This course also lists resources for both teachers and parents who would like more help or information about infant and toddler mental health.

This computer-based instruction course is a self-supporting program that provides instruction, structured practice, and evaluation all on your home or school computer. Technical support information can be found in the Help section of your course.

Course Materials (Online)

Title:	*Infant & Toddler Mental Health: Issues & Information for Educators*
Publisher:	Virtual Education Software, inc. 2007, Revised 2010, Revised 2014, Revised 2018, Revised 2021
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Academic Integrity Statement

The structure and format of most distance-learning courses presume a high level of personal and academic integrity in completion and submission of coursework. Individuals enrolled in a distance-learning course are expected to adhere to the following standards of academic conduct.

Academic Work
Academic work submitted by the individual (such as papers, assignments, reports, tests) shall be the student's own work or appropriately attributed, in part or in whole, to its correct source. Submission of commercially prepared (or group prepared) materials as if they are one's own work is unacceptable.

Aiding Honesty in Others
The individual will encourage honesty in others by refraining from providing materials or information to another person with knowledge that these materials or information will be used improperly.

Violations of these academic standards will result in the assignment of a failing grade and subsequent loss of credit for the course.

Level of Application
This course is designed to be an informational course with application to early childhood education or childcare settings. The curriculum and strategies presented are designed for children from birth to thirty-six months of age. Some alterations may be needed when working with children with sensory processing disorders or other developmental disabilities. This course also incorporates the applicable Division for Early Childhood (DEC) *Recommended Practices in Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education*, in addition to the newest National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation Standards (2018), and the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA),* which was signed into law on December 10, 2015. ESSA both sustains and expands the nation's investment in increasing access to high-quality early childhood education for all children. This course is designed for anyone planning programs for young children: childcare providers, early childhood educators, and healthcare or social services providers, to name a few.

Course Objectives
- To define infant and toddler mental health and explain why it is so important;
- To discuss core concepts in early development from birth to thirty-six months;
- To explore current research on brain development, including examining conditions for healthy development and the effect of adverse experiences;
- To increase the ability to observe typically developing infants and toddlers, as well as to identify infants and toddlers with mental health issues;
- To provide information and best practice methods used in the care of infants and toddlers and their families;
- To increase knowledge in the research areas of attachment and temperament; and
- To provide resources for early childhood educators and care-providers to help them strengthen the children and families with whom they work.

Course Description
The *Infant & Toddler Mental Health* course has been divided into four chapters that are designed to inform parents, professionals, and care providers by: providing an overview of the core concepts of early development; reviewing developmental milestones; exploring current research on brain development; examining what curriculum looks like for infants and toddlers; exploring the importance of early attachment; reviewing different temperament traits; and providing suggestions for strengthening families. Upon completing this course you should have the *basic* framework for understanding the critical role of infant and toddler mental health, as well as developmental knowledge of children from birth to thirty-six months.

Student Expectations
As a student you will be expected to:
- Complete all four information sections showing a competent understanding of the material presented in each section.

- Complete all four section examinations, showing a competent understanding of the material presented. **You must obtain an overall score of 70% or higher, with no individual exam score below 50%, and successfully complete ALL writing assignments to pass this course**. ***Please note: Minimum exam score requirements may vary by college or university; therefore, you should refer to your course addendum to determine what your minimum exam score requirements are.**
- Complete a review of any section on which your examination score was below 50%.
- Retake any examination, after completing an information review, to increase that examination score to a minimum of 50%, making sure to also be achieving an overall exam score of a minimum 70% **(maximum of three attempts)**. ***Please note: Minimum exam score requirements may vary by college or university; therefore, you should refer to your course addendum to determine what your minimum exam score requirements are.**
- Complete all course journal article and essay writing assignments with the minimum word count shown for each writing assignment.
- Complete a course evaluation form at the end of the course.

Course Chapters Overview

Chapter 1: Early Childhood Development

Chapter One is an Introduction to *Infant & Toddler Mental Health*. In this chapter we will clarify what infant and toddler mental health is, discuss why it is so important, and review three core concepts of early development. We will look at current research on brain development and discuss optimal conditions for the development of brain architecture in young children. We will also look at the life-long implications that adverse early childhood experiences have on the developing brain. Lastly, we will discuss how the interaction of biology, relationships, and environment impacts brain development in very young children, and review the core values that support the philosophy of this course.

Chapter 2: Additional Areas of Development

In Chapter Two we will look at child development from infancy to thirty-six months. We will briefly review what experts have to say about the following topics related to child development: child development theory, development of emotions, development of self, human development, SIDS, brain development, nutrition, development of vision and hearing, and finally, language development.

Chapter 3: Personal & Classroom Issues

In Chapter Three we will discuss the importance of infant and toddler curriculum. You will learn some vital information concerning curriculum, such as what is appropriate, what is meaningful, and what promotes the relationship between you, the child, and the child's family. We will review the latest information about play and how it benefits a child's development. Finally, we will discuss school-readiness and look at several key characteristics of school-ready children.

Chapter 4: Personal & Family Issues

In Chapter Four we will discuss the important role attachment plays in the development of young children. We will discuss different types of attachment and examine several risk factors that impede healthy attachment in young children. We will look at methods for fostering secure attachment. We will define temperament, examine specific temperament traits, and review research about the impact of temperament on child development. We will discuss numerous practical strategies for supporting all children, regardless of their temperament. Finally, we will briefly discuss variables such as language and literacy, culture, gender, race, and socio-economic status that may influence connections with families (these variables will be thoroughly examined in another course in this series called *Family-Centered Services*). We will explore ways in which we can work to strengthen families, which ultimately has a positive impact on the well-being of the children we serve.

Examinations

At the end of each chapter, you will be expected to complete an examination designed to assess your knowledge.

You may take these exams a total of three times. Your last score will save, not the highest score. After your third attempt, each examination will lock and prevent further access. The average from your exam scores will be printed on your certificate. However, this is not your final grade since your required writing assignments have not been reviewed. Exceptionally written or poorly written required writing assignments, or violation of the academic integrity policy in the course syllabus, will affect your grade. As this is a self-paced computerized instruction program, you may review course information as often as necessary. You will not be able to exit any examinations until you have answered all questions. If you try to exit the exam section before answering all questions, your information will be lost. You are expected to complete the entire exam in one sitting.

Writing Assignments
All assignments are reviewed and may impact your final grade. Exceptionally or poorly written assignments, or violation of the Academic Integrity Policy (see course syllabus for policy), will affect your grade. Fifty percent of your grade is determined by your writing assignments, and your overall exam score determines the other fifty percent. *Refer to the Essay Grading Guidelines which were sent as an attachment with your original course link. You should also refer to the Course Syllabus Addendum which was sent as an attachment with your original course link, to determine if you have any writing assignments in addition to the Critical Thinking Questions (CTQ) and Journal Article Summations (JAS). If you do, the*

COURSE SYLLABUS ADDENDUM
Important - Please Read - Do Not Discard

It is each student's responsibility to read all course materials, including course syllabus and addendum, and to know and understand the course requirements, exam score minimum requirements, and deadlines. Students enrolled in VESi courses are required to check their email for any communications regarding the course until their final grade is posted with the college or university. Once your course materials are received by VESi and have been reviewed, the GRADE IS FINAL.

Grading Criteria:
==You must obtain an overall score of 70% or higher, with no individual exam score below 50%, and successfully complete ALL writing assignments to pass this course==. This course requires a minimum overall passing grade of "C-" to receive credit. The average from your exam scores will be printed on your certificate. However, this is not your final grade since your required writing assignments have not been reviewed. Exceptionally written or poorly written required writing assignments, or violation of the academic integrity policy in the course syllabus, will affect your grade. Fifty percent of your grade is determined by your writing assignments, and your overall exam score determines the other fifty percent.

No grade will be submitted for partial completion of course assignments, regardless of partial score. An F will be reported if course is not completed by the end of the term enrolled. Exceptions only apply to those that request an extension (must have extenuating circumstances) prior to course deadline.

Letter grades will be assigned as follows:	90% to 100% A
	80% to 89% B
	70% to 79% C
	69% - lower F

Course Completion Information:
Grading will take approximately two weeks from the time your materials are received by the instructor, after which we will submit grades to the college/university weekly. If you have a timeline to meet certain school or state requirements, please keep this time period in mind when planning your course completion dates.

Course Completion Instructions

- **Once you have completed all of the course requirements, follow the instructions from the Complete Course toolbar to submit your materials to VESi's office for processing.** You can only submit the course ONE TIME. Be sure that you have completed all requirements and exams.
- **Course Evaluation:** Please take a moment to fill out the course evaluation which is also found under the Complete Course toolbar.

- **Print Certificate:** You can print a copy of your course certificate for your records.

Accessing your NDSU Transcript:
After the grade for your course(s) is posted, approximately two weeks after the course submission, you can access your NDSU transcript for documentation of course completion and performance. Instructions are found at this link: [Transcript Instructions | Distance and Continuing Education | NDSU](#)

Drops & Refunds:
Once learners have received the course materials, they are no longer eligible for a refund. Appeals will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Questions or Concerns:
Please direct any questions or concerns regarding this class to ndsu.dce@ndsu.edu. Please include the title of the course in your correspondence.