
The Developing Child: Toddler and Preschoolers

HDCD/PSYC 6320/HCS 6359 (001), Spring 2025

Wed, 8:30 to 11:15 AM, HH 2.706

Contact Information

Instructor	Email	Office Phone	Office Hour
Meridith Grant, Ph.D.	Mgrant@UTDallas.edu	972-883-4108; messages only; I receive a voice-to-text email	Tuesdays, 11 to 12 in person, GR 4.820

During office hours, you are invited to meet with Dr. Grant to discuss course material, graduate school life or to simply say "hi". No appointment is required.

Cannot make office hours? The best way to reach me is by email me using your UTD email account or Teams message, not by phone, or eLearning. When you email, include the course name, as well as your first and last name. I will do my best to respond to your message within 24 hours on regular workdays. Anticipate longer delays on weekends, holidays, and during busy times in the semester.

General Information

Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions

BBSC majors only or departmental consent required. You will get the most from this class by taking HDCD 6319 The Developing Child: Infants and Toddlers first, but students with a strong background in child development coursework are welcome.

Description

Parents, teachers, early intervention specialists, doctors, psychologists, and many others who work with children need to have an accurate understanding of child development. This course will explore the ways that children change (and how they stay the same) in their physical, cognitive, and social development focusing on ages 24 to 60 months and beyond. Students will also develop skills to evaluate and communicate about empirical research in development, with emphasis on application to real-world problems that impact children.

Required Materials

1. The instructor-designed textbook excerpt from John Santrock, Jennifer Lansford and Kirby Deater-Deckard (2022) *Children* (15th ed.), McGraw Hill. Our ISBN is 9781307931600 (hard copy, \$42.00 new, \$31.50 used) or 9781307971804 (ebook, \$29.25). To purchase the ebook, you need to obtain an access code from the UTD bookstore. Then, go to this link: <https://www.mheducation.com/highered/custom/product/9781307971804.html> and enter the connect code. Note: A complete (used) copy of the textbook is acceptable too.
2. A charged laptop computer with Internet access (to reach eLearning) for use in the classroom throughout the semester. *Bring your device to class already charged.* Should you need, the OIT has computers available in some situations (<https://oit.utdallas.edu/news/student-computer-checkout-availability/>) and the library offers a laptop checkout system (<https://library.utdallas.edu/about-the-library/library-policies/userguide/>).
3. Additional mandatory readings and other media will be assigned and posted in eLearning.



Learning Outcomes

Evaluation(s)

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|---|--|
| 1. Apply knowledge about typical and atypical child development across multiple domains (e.g., physical, sensory/motor, language, cognitive, and socioemotional development). | Student presentations and final exam |
| 2. Critically evaluate research evidence to promote best practices in intervention and working with families. | Class engagement and final exam |
| 3. Build professional skills through conscientious completion of responsibilities, meaningful participation in the collaborative learning environment, and development of professional repertoire (e.g., skills in presentation, active listening, time management, continuous learning). | Student presentations and class engagement |

Learning Opportunities: Quizzes, Presentations, Final Exam & Class Engagement

Quizzes

Quizzes are designed to support learning and memory for major milestones and research findings in development. Quizzes also motivate preparation for meaningful class discussion. Quizzes will cover assigned textbook content, including review questions, and any articles assigned for discussion on the day the quiz is administered. (See the course timeline for details.)

You will have the first 30 minutes of class to complete the multiple-choice quiz questions administered through eLearning. The quiz will automatically close at 9:00 AM. *To take any quiz, you must be in the classroom in person during class at the time the quiz is administered and have access to a personal laptop that is charged.*

There will be 10 quizzes offered during the semester, worth 10 points each. Although there will be 100 points offered through quizzes, you need only 90 points to earn full credit towards your quiz grade. Therefore, you have 10 points “wiggle” room. Quiz grades are capped; You cannot earn more than 90 points towards your quiz grade.

No make-up quizzes will be administered.

Learning Opportunities, cont.

Presentations

Presentations are designed to build a deeper understanding of major milestones and to support developing skills to inform others about healthy child development. On the first day of class, you will sign up to present sections of the assigned textbook readings at two times during the semester. Each of your presentations should last between 5 and 15 minutes. Your presentation should be supported by PowerPoint slides. You may also choose to include activities within your presentation time (e.g., discussion questions, Quizlet) but are not required to do so.

PRIOR to your presentation, upload your PowerPoint slides to two platforms. The:

1. shared box file with *your name, the chapter number, and the topic(s)* listed as the title of the presentation (e.g., Smith_8_perceptual development). Your classmates will be able to access your materials in this way.
2. assignment submission portal provided through eLearning. Your instructor will grade your presentation in this way.

There will be 2 presentation opportunities worth 40 points each for a total possible presentation score of 80 points.

If you are absent on the day of your presentation, there will be a 5-point deduction to your presentation grade and you will be required to present during the next class period at 8:30 AM prior to administration of the weekly quiz. The quiz time will be adjusted accordingly. If you are absent or late to your rescheduled presentation time, there will be a 10-point deduction to your presentation grade and you will be required to present later in the semester at a time to be determined by the instructor.

Presentation weighted rubric

	Novice	Competent	Proficient	Exceptional
34% Content and organization <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information is presented in a logical sequence• Terms are well defined and appropriate for audience• Presentation covers all pertinent content• Expertise demonstrated answering any questions asked• Demonstrates knowledge with examples and elaboration	75%	85%	95%	100%
33% Delivery <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Speaker is appropriately animated and enthusiastic• Speaker is audible, clear, and poised and smooth• Delivery is well-paced/uses time wisely• Holds audience's attention with use of direct eye contact/seldom use of notes	75%	85%	95%	100%
33% Materials and instructions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Slides are well prepared, informative, effective and not distracting• Length of presentation is 5 to 15 minutes• Materials are uploaded per instructions	75%	85%	95%	100%

Learning Opportunities, cont.

Final Exam

The cumulative final exam is designed to support you in building longer-term memory for major milestones in development and deepening your critical thinking about the main themes from class. The final exam will consist of three parts: (1) open-note, take-home essay questions on all class content; (2) closed-note, in-class multiple choice questions on textbook content; and, (3) a final class discussion. *Unless otherwise specified, to take the final exam you must be in person at the time the exam is administered and have access to a personal laptop that is charged. Bring a power cord as backup.* The final exam is worth 50 points.

Class Engagement

Class engagement will be monitored throughout the semester. You are expected to attend every class meeting on time and prepared, having read all assigned materials. If you miss a class for any reason, you are responsible for obtaining the notes from another classmate, not the professor.

You will be provided with early feedback (20 points) about your class engagement grade as indicated on the syllabus. The remainder of your class engagement score (60 points) will be assigned at the end of the semester.

Class engagement weighted rubric

	Novice	Competent	Proficient	Exceptional
25% Preparation: The best students are consistently well prepared in knowledge of class content and have access to the assigned readings during discussions.	75%	85%	95%	100%
25% Active participation: The best students proactively and regularly contribute to discussion.	75%	85%	95%	100%
25% Quality of contributions: The best students make contributions that promote deeper analysis, with regular connections to reading assignments, general impressions, opinions, other research and thoughtful criticisms. <i>Contributions rarely (if ever) rely on anecdote or personal experience alone.</i>	75%	85%	95%	100%
25% Active listening skills: The best students listen without interrupting and incorporate and expand on the comments of other students. They are not attending to their phones, computers or other distractions.	75%	85%	95%	100%

Your Grade

Evaluation	Points Possible
Quizzes (10 quizzes, 10 points each; Quiz grades are capped at 90 points max)	90
Presentations (2 presentations; 40 points each)	80
Final Exam	50
Class Engagement (20 points early feedback, 60 points end of semester)	80
Total	300

Final Letter Grade Determinations

Letter Grade	Minimum Points	Maximum Points
A	269	300
B	239	268
C	209	238
D	179	208
F	0	178

A note about grade-related concerns: You *can* be successful in this class with diligent and thoughtful work from the beginning of the semester, and I am here to support your efforts to earn the grade you desire.

Final grades are *final* unless there is a mistake in the calculation of that grade. Do not put me in an uncomfortable position at the end of the semester by requesting that I "bump" your grade. It is unethical and unfair to other students in the class.

Course Schedule

Date	Work Due	Class Agenda
Wed, Jan 22		Research design practice activity; course overview; sign up for presentation times
Wed Jan 29	Review research design practice, Student presentations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quiz 1 (8:30 – 9:00): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research design terms • Reading: Wouri, 2024: Chapters 1 2. Discussion of reading (9:00 – 9:50): Wouri, 2024: Chapters 1 3. Break (9:50 – 10:00) 4. Student presentations (10 – 11:15): Physical Development in Early Childhood - How does a child's body and brain grow and change? How do motor skills develop?
Wed Feb 5	Quiz 2 readings, Student presentations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quiz 2 (8:30 – 9:00): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text: Physical Development in Early Childhood - How does a child's body and brain grow and change? How do motor skills develop? • Reading: London et al., 2015 2. Discussion of reading (9:00 – 9:50): London et al., 2015 3. Break (9:50 – 10:00) 4. Student presentations (10 – 11:15): Physical Development in Early Childhood (cont.) - What are some important aspects of young children's health?
Wed Feb 12	Quiz 3 readings, Student presentations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quiz 3 (8:30 – 9:00): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text: Physical Development in Early Childhood (cont.) - What are some important aspects of young children's health? • Reading: Hill et al., 2016, including the corrigendum 2. Discussion of reading (9:00 – 9:50): Hill et al., 2016 3. Break (9:50 – 10:00) 4. Student presentations (10 – 11:15): Physical Development in Early Childhood (cont.) - What are best practices to support children's health globally?
Wed Feb 19	Quiz 4 readings, Student presentations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quiz 4 (8:30 – 9:00): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text: Physical Development in Early Childhood (cont.) - What are best practices to support children's health globally? • Reading: Hair et al., 2015 2. Discussion of reading (9:00 – 9:50): Hair et al., 2015 3. Break (9:50 – 10:00) 4. Student presentations (10 – 11:15): Cognitive Development in Early Childhood – How do young children learn? How accurate are young children's memories? <p data-bbox="586 1604 1330 1633"><i>*Class engagement early feedback grades posted at the latest.*</i></p>

Course Schedule (cont)

Date	Work Due	Class Agenda
Wed Feb 26	Quiz 5 readings, Student presentations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quiz 5 (8:30 – 9:00): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text: Cognitive Development in Early Childhood – How do young children learn? How accurate are young children's memories? • Reading: Sun, Norton & Nancekivell, 2023 2. Discussion of reading (9:00 – 9:50): Sun, Norton & Nancekivell, 2023 3. Break (9:50 – 10:00) 4. Student presentations (10 – 11:15): Cognitive Development in Early Childhood (cont.) - How do executive functioning and TOM skills develop? What are some important individual differences?
Wed Mar 5	Quiz 6 readings, Student presentations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quiz 6 (8:30 – 9:00): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text: Cognitive Development in Early Childhood (cont.) - How do executive functioning and TOM skills develop? What are some important individual differences? • Reading: Savina, 2020 2. Discussion of reading (9:00 – 9:50): Savina, 2020 3. Break (9:50 – 10:00) 4. Student presentations (10 – 11:15): Cognitive Development in Early Childhood (cont.) - What are variations on and controversies in early childhood education? How can we improve education for young children growing up in poverty?
Wed Mar 12	<i>Flex Day</i>	
Wed Mar 19	UTD Spring Break	
Wed Mar 26	Quiz 7 readings, Student presentations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quiz 7 (8:30 – 9:00): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text: Cognitive Development in Early Childhood (cont.) - What are variations on and controversies in early childhood education? How can we improve education for young children growing up in poverty? • Reading: Lillard et al., 2021 2. Discussion of reading (9:00 – 9:50): Lillard et al., 2021 3. Break (9:50 – 10:00) 4. Student presentations (10 – 11:15): Socioemotional Development in Early Childhood - What characterizes young children's emotional and personality development?
Wed Apr 2	Quiz 8 readings, Student presentations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quiz 8 (8:30 – 9:00): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text: Socioemotional Development in Early Childhood - What characterizes young children's emotional and personality development? • Reading: Radesky et al., 2022 2. Discussion of reading (9:00 – 9:50): Radesky et al., 2022 3. Break (9:50 – 10:00) 4. Student presentations (10 – 11:15): Socioemotional Development in Early Childhood (cont.) - What are the contexts and consequences of child maltreatment?

Course Schedule (cont.)

Date	Work Due	Class Agenda
Wed Apr 9	Quiz 9 readings, Student presentations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quiz 9 (8:30 – 9:00): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text: Socioemotional Development in Early Childhood (cont.) - What are the contexts and consequences of child maltreatment? • Reading: Afifi et al., 2017 2. Discussion of reading (9:00 – 9:50): Afifi et al., 2017 3. Break (9:50 – 10:00) 4. Student presentations (10 – 11:15): Socioemotional Development in Early Childhood (cont.) - What are the changing roles of families, peers and media for young children?
Wed Apr 16	Quiz 10 readings, Student presentations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quiz 10 (8:30 – 9:00): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text: Socioemotional Development in Early Childhood (cont.) - What are the changing roles of families, peers and media for young children? • Reading: Weir, 2021 2. Discussion of reading (9:00 – 9:50): Weir, 2021 3. Break (9:50 – 10:00) 4. Presentation of Final Exam Instructions
Wed Apr 23	Final exam Part I: Take-home short essay questions due 11:59 PM Wed Apr 23	
Wed Apr 30	Final exam Part II: In class multiple choice questions (about text) and final class discussion	
Wed May 7	<i>Flex Day</i>	

*Timeline is subject to change at the discretion of the professor

AI Policy

AI tools can sometimes be beneficial for various tasks, including research, idea generation, overcoming writer's block, and grammar editing. However, solely relying on AI-generated content without proper attribution can lead to plagiarism. To promote the responsible and ethical use of AI in this class and to align with the academic integrity policies at the University, here are my requirements:

1. Identification and Citation: As with any other tool, use of AI in your writing must be explicitly identified, citing the tool/generator, date of query, and text of query. See APA citation guidelines that follow.
2. Transparent Attribution: Be transparent in how you used AI tools in your work by distinguishing what was AI-generated and what is your original writing. At the end of your submission, create an "AI Acknowledgment" section and in your own words, answer the following:
 - how AI was utilized
 - what prompts you used to obtain results
 - how you revised AI outputs
 - what you learned by using AI
3. Compliance: Take full responsibility for ensuring the use of AI tools does not infringe upon copyright or intellectual property laws and does not plagiarize without citation. Verify the accuracy and reliability of any AI content, and do not assume what is generated is automatically correct. I recommend you cross-reference with credible sources. Exercise sound judgement to ensure the integrity and impartiality of your work prior to submission.
4. Detection: Written submissions are subject to evaluation by AI detection tools to verify compliance with guidelines. Violations will be grounds for reporting, in accordance university policies.

Throughout the course, there may be instances in which AI tools may be used, abiding by these guidelines. It is my hope that we recognize the potential of AI and collectively foster a learning environment where AI is used critically alongside our human integrity.

Policy adapted from Meera Gatlin at Tufts University; [Developing Syllabus Statements for AI - Center for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching \(tufts.edu\)](#)

APA Guidelines for Citing AI

Cite the AI company as the author and list the date that you used it (where you see "Jan 1" below). Some models may not list the version date; in that case, list the version number like 3.5 or 4 for ChatGPT.

APA Sample Reference Page Entries:

- Company. (Year). AI App (Version or version date) [Large language model]. link
- Microsoft. (2024). Copilot (3.5) [Large language model]. <https://bing.com/chat>
- OpenAI. (2024). GPT-4 (4) [Large language model]. <https://chat.openai.com/chat>

APA Sample In-Text Citations

- End of Sentence: Citations are important (Microsoft, 2024).
- In the Sentence: According to OpenAI (2023), citations are important.

You can view more details at: <https://www.apa.org/pubs/databases/academic-writer>

Additional Information and Policies

Late/Makeup Policy It is very important that students keep up with the course schedule. Assignments are due on the dates designated. Even when regular but unfortunate life events occur (for example, minor illness, tricky childcare situations, emotionally difficult life events), makeup quizzes will not be administered; there is “wiggle room” built in your grade to accommodate for these types of events. Makeup exams may be administered only in the event of sudden emergencies that are professionally communicated about in a timely manner, ideally before the missed exam. Missed quizzes/exams will earn a grade of 0. You should communicate with the professor if you miss a class meeting for any reason.

Professionalism Attend class meetings prepared. For example, (1) You are responsible for bringing a laptop to take ALL QUIZZES AND EXAMS. If you arrive without one, you will not be permitted to take the quiz or exam. You will receive a grade of “0”. (2) Stay up to date with any changes to the course schedule. To do so, check eLearning at least twice weekly; set your accounts to receive eLearning notifications; and, monitor your UTD email. (3) Engage in the behaviors that we would generally expect of outstanding employees.

No Extra Credit No extra credit work will be available. The course requirements have been established so that there are a number of opportunities that contribute to your course grade.

Academic Honesty This class is designed to support the development of a community of learners who are actively engaged in the process of learning facts about child development and the science behind that. The community model is built on trust, and I trust you to do the right thing. No form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated. Recall the Comet Creed, voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by.

Comet Creed: “As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do.”

Submissions on eLearning Verify that what you submit can be viewed in eLearning. If you can’t see it, I can’t see it to evaluate your hard work. Notify eLearning tech support by email at assist@utdallas.edu or call the UT Dallas Computer Help Desk at 972-883-2911 if you have technical problems.

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University’s policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus. Please go to [UT Dallas Syllabus Policies](#) webpage for these policies. **The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.**