

Course Description

Development and mental health in infancy and early childhood I

Aim of the course

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The course focuses on early development, especially on the typical development and on its developmental contexts. The course stresses the importance of child-parent relation and early attachment. Our special aim is to provide an insight into the philosophy and function of daily child care services (kindergarten, daily nursery), thus these institutions are the most important parts of early childhood secondary socialization. The course also provides insight into competencies of applied psychologists working on this field and of professional colleagues that are taking role in supporting early childhood development.

Besides providing up-to-date and profound knowledge in early development and measurement, we are aiming to support students to improve their professional curiosity, openness and critical thinking. Students also get an insight into evidence based knowledge and practice. However, students are required to actively partake in the knowledge acquisition in form of both individual and group works. Students are required to visit families with appropriate aged children and institutions supporting early childhood development.

Learning outcome, competences

knowledge:

- global knowledge about typical development in infancy and early childhood
- up-to-date and profound understanding of the role of environment in typical development
- importance of early attachment, disorders and research
- measurement of development between the ages of 0-5, measurement opportunities and limits
- general knowledge about daily child care services (kindergarten, daily nursery)
- competencies of professions working in early childhood services

attitude:

- instead of accepting the authoritarian and habitual practice, acquiring a critical and reflective way of professional decision making and thinking
- openness to professionally grounded knowledge, and innovations
- developmentally based approach
- accepting and respecting the individuality and uniqueness
- respecting children's and parents' rights
- maintaining partnership with the colleagues in a multidisciplinary team
- maintaining a balance between cooperation with other professionals and our own professional integrity
- openness to theoretical perspective taking/changing
- empathy in professional relationships with the children, parents, and colleagues

skills:

- developmentally based understanding of a child's current developmental state
- ability to recognize and respect the variability of typical development
- ability to professional perspective taking if necessary
- in order to understand development, students become able to synthesize various dimensions of different theoretical models
- ability to use general knowledge in order to understand the individual

- ability to flexibly use theoretical knowledge when visiting a family while respecting and considering all ethical principles
- ability to make methodically grounded inferences by using the given measurement tools (considering the possible limits of the measurement tools)

Content of the course

Topics of the course

- Research in early attachment and its relevance
- Global knowledge in human development, including: neural development, motor development, development of language and communication, social cognition, cognitive development
- Measurement of human development by using Bayley-III scale: 0-3.
- Consideration of the importance of developmental context (ecological system, HOME inventory)
- Importance of the social environment in development: from interactions to cultural belief-systems
- The most important institutions supporting early childhood development: role and tasks of kindergarten and daily nursery – theory and practice
- Competencies of professionals in kindergarten and daily nursery – meeting the colleagues and getting to know the professional boundaries
- Getting to know the tools that enable psychologist to get a well-grounded picture about the child and family: tests, interview techniques, observation

Learning activities, learning methods

- lecture
- group activity in class
- individual literature preparation
- read and present literature
- project work (group work) on field with individual field tasks
- presentation of the project work
- individual field task

Evaluation of outcomes

Learning requirements, mode of evaluation, criteria of evaluation: requirements

- written test/exam
- individual and group activity in class
- individual work on the field
- project work
- presentation

Mode of evaluation: a five-point grading scale based on the different course activities

Criteria of evaluation:

- professional knowledge in the written test/exam
- individual effort in implementation of the individual and group tasks and the quality of the task-implementation
- quality of the presentations
- quality of the project work

- individual and creative ideas and solutions

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reading list

Required readings

- Bremner, J. G. and Wachs, T. D. (eds.). (2010). The Wiley-Blackwell Handbook of Infant Development, Volume 1. Basic Research, Wiley-Blackwell.
- Cassidy, J. & Shaver, P.R. (Eds.) (2016). Handbook of Attachment: Theory, Research, and Clinical Application, The Guilford Press.

Recommended readings

- Bremner, J. G. and Wachs, T. D. (eds.) (2010). The Wiley-Blackwell Handbook of Infant Development. Volume 2 Applied and policy issues