

## CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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### CONTEXT

For early childhood teachers to be effective, there is the need to be abreast with contemporary issues in early childhood education locally and internationally. This course has been designed to expose the prospective early childhood teacher to contemporary issues that affect the delivery of quality early childhood education.

<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Contemporary issues in Early Childhood Education</b>						
<b>Course Code</b>	<b>EBS 404</b>	<b>Course Level:</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>Credit Value:</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Semester</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pre-requisite</b>	Teacher trainees understand emerging issues in early childhood education across the globe.						
<b>Course Delivery Modes</b>	<b>Face -to -face <sup>1</sup> X</b>	<b>Practical Activity <sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Work-Based Learning <sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Seminars <sup>4</sup></b>	<b>Independent Study <sup>5</sup> X</b>	<b>e-learning opportunities<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>Practicum <sup>7</sup></b>
<b>Course Description for significant learning (indicate NTS, NTECF, BSC GLE to be addressed)</b>	Early childhood is critically important to children’s overall development. These years are impacted through a range of complex issues, such as policy development, practice-related issues and the workforce. This course aims as critically investigating these issues within the framework of equipping trainee teachers in providing quality early childhood education in Ghana. Trainee teachers will be equipped with knowledge and insights needed to develop a good grasp of key issues in the field and how these can enhance their practice in supporting children within the early years. <i>(NTECF; NTS 1a, 1b, 1e, 1f, 1g, 2a, 2e, 3c, 3k, 3l, 3m)</i>						
<b>Course Learning Outcomes <sup>8</sup>: including INDICATORS for each learning outcome</b>	Outcomes On the successful completion of the course, student teachers will be able to:  <b>CLO1.</b> Demonstrate a critical awareness and understanding of early childhood education policies and appreciate the differences in policy across contexts (NTS 1a, 2a)				Indicators:  1. Explain what an education policy is  2. Identify the components of ECE policies used in Ghana  3. Analyse the Ghanaian ECE policy in relation to its context, text and consequences		

	<p><b>CLO2.</b> Demonstrate a critical understanding of what quality in early childhood education involves and its importance, identifying the gaps within the Ghanaian context (NTS 1a, 3c)</p> <p><b>CLO3.</b> Demonstrate a critical engagement with the literature on age-appropriate pedagogies in early childhood education and identify issues and challenges within the Ghanaian context (NTS 1a, 2e, 3e)</p> <p><b>CLO4.</b> Demonstrate an understating of supporting children’s whole development (NTS 2e, 3o)</p> <p><b>CLO5.</b> Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of assessing children for learning and development (NTS 3k, l, m)</p> <p><b>CLO6.</b> Demonstrate an understanding of child protection issues and the importance of safeguarding young children (NTS 1a, 1b)</p> <p><b>CLO7.</b> Identify key issues facing the early childhood workforce locally and internationally and suggest possible strategies to address these (NTS 1a, 1b)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Critically assess and discuss the gap between the ECE policy in Ghana and implementation in early childhood classrooms</li> <li>5. Identify the key features of quality ECE.</li> <li>6. Critically examine the role of teachers, communities and state in ensuring quality ECE provision in Ghana</li> <li>7. Explain what effective pedagogies in ECE are</li> <li>8. Discuss the use of Montessori and play as a pedagogy in ECE and their importance</li> <li>9. Discuss factors that hinder the use of play in ECE</li> <li>10. Discuss the importance of the environment in supporting learning through play</li> <li>11. Identify the challenges impeding the use of age-appropriate pedagogies in Ghana.</li> <li>12. Critically examine the importance of supporting children’s holistic development</li> <li>13. Explain the differences between assessment of and for learning</li> <li>14. Explain the importance of assessing children for learning</li> <li>15. Explain what child protection and safeguarding in ECE is</li> <li>16. Explain the implications of child protection policy on practice</li> <li>17. Explain key issues confronting the early childhood education workforce and suggest possible ways of addressing them.</li> </ol>
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Course Content	Units	Topics	Sub-topics (if any):	Teaching and learning activities to achieve learning outcomes
	1	Policy and research	Policy agenda for ECE in Ghana: A brief overview  Quality in ECE: what does it involve, and does it matter?	<b>ACTIVITIES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For each topic, ask students to read the assigned reading text(s) prior to the scheduled lesson.</li> <li>• Introduce each topic by brainstorming to generate ideas about the assigned texts.</li> <li>• In small groups, ask student to discuss the topics and share their thoughts with the class</li> <li>• Ask students to identify the key ideas in assigned reading text(s)</li> <li>• Ask students to reflect on the issues discussed and what they think and feel about their own practice</li> <li>• In small groups, ask students to discuss the practice questions and share their thoughts with the class</li> <li>• In small groups, ask students to select a topic, work on it and present in class</li> </ul>
	2	Practice	Age-appropriate pedagogies and practices in ECE  Supporting children’s cognitive, academic and socio-emotional development  Assessment in ECE: Moving beyond test scores  Safeguarding children in ECE: The social and legal context for protecting children	
	3	Workforce	Workforce issues in ECE: Global and local trends	
<b>Course Assessment Components<sup>9</sup>: (Educative assessment of, for and as learning)</b>	<b>Component 1:</b> Assessment (quiz) Summary of Assessment Method: Quiz/Quizzes on Unit 1 (core skills to be developed: critical thinking) Weighting: 20% Assesses Learning Outcomes: CLO1 and CLO2 (Unit 1: Sub-units 1 and 2) <b>Component 2:</b> Assessment (Quiz) Summary of assessment method: Quiz on Unit 2. (core skills to be developed: critical thinking and communication skills) Weighting: 20% Assesses Learning Outcomes: CLO3, CLO4 (Unit 2: Sub-units 1 and 2)			
<b>Instructional Resources</b>	Projector and computer			

<p><b>Required Text (core)</b></p>	<p><b>UNIT 1</b></p> <p><b>Sub-unit 1</b></p> <p>Ghana Education Service (2021). Early childhood education policy. Ghana.</p> <p>Ghana Education Service (2021). Guidelines for the early childhood policy implementation. Ghana. Pages 1 – 16</p> <p><b>Sub-unit 2</b></p> <p>Whitebread, David, Kuvalja, Martina &amp; O’Connor, Aileen (2015). Quality in early childhood education: an international review and guide for policy makers. Technical Brief. Pages 20 – 31</p> <p>Wechsler, M., Melnick, H., Maier, A., &amp; Bishop, J. (2016). The Building Blocks of High-Quality Early Childhood Education Programs. California Policy Brief</p> <p><b>UNIT 2</b></p> <p><b>Sub-unit 1</b></p> <p>Department of Education (Australia). Age-appropriate pedagogies for the early years of schooling: Foundation paper. (pages 7 – 29)</p> <p>Briddle, Kimberly., Garcia-Nevarez, Ana., Henderson, Wanda., &amp; Valero-Kerrick, Alicia (2013). Early Childhood Education: Becoming a Professional – Play and the learning environment. Sage. Pages 258 – 274</p> <p><b>Sub-unit 2</b></p> <p>Child Development and Early Learning: A Foundation for Professional Knowledge and Competencies. (pages 1 – 13)</p> <p>Catholic Relief Services (2016). Early childhood development-Basic concepts: Training for early childhood caregivers and teachers. Pages 7 – 20</p> <p>Briddle, Kimberly., Garcia-Nevarez, Ana., Henderson, Wanda., &amp; Valero-Kerrick, Alicia (2013). Early Childhood Education: Becoming a Professional – Play and the learning environment. Sage. Pages 268 – 272</p> <p>Whitebread, David, Kuvalja, Martina &amp; O’Connor, Aileen (2015). Quality in early childhood education: an international review and guide for policy makers. Technical Brief. Pages 8 – 14</p> <p><b>Sub-unit 3</b></p>
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	<p>Evidence Paper. Practice Principle 7: Assessment for learning and development. Melbourne, Australia: Melbourne Graduate School of Education, The University of Melbourne. (pages 6 – 16).</p> <p>Grisham-Brown, Jennifer, Hallam, Rena &amp; Brookshire, Robyn (2006). Using Authentic Assessment to Evidence Children’s Progress. <i>Early Childhood Education Journal</i>, 34 (1). pages 45 – 51.</p> <p>Stella Lungui, Beatrice Matafwali, &amp; Madalitso K. Banja (2021). Formative and summative assessment practices by teachers in early childhood education centres in Lusaka, Zambia. <i>European Journal of Education Studies</i>, 8(2), pages 46 and 47.</p> <p><b>Sub-unit 4</b></p> <p>Child Protection Guidelines for Health Workers (2018). UNICEF. Pages 15 – 17; Pages 21 – 24</p> <p>Ward, Harriet &amp; Brown, Rebecca (2013). Safeguarding children in the early years. (Sections to note are colour-coded)</p> <p><b>UNIT 3</b></p> <p><b>Sub-unit 1</b></p> <p>Early Childhood Education Directorate (2017). Early Childhood Education Workforce issues in Australian and international contexts, Australia, (pages 5 – 18)</p> <p>Association for the development of education in Africa (2016). Developing the Education Workforce in Africa: Focusing on the Role of Families/Communities (pages 8 – 10)</p>
<p><b>Additional Reading List</b> <sup>10</sup></p>	

**PART 2: PRESENTATION OF MATERIALS FOR THE VARIOUS UNITS OF THE OUTLINE**

Materials required for each unit and subunits are provided in the course outline. Refer to ‘Required text (core)’ section. Each of these materials will be made available in softcopy.

**PART 3: LEARNING GUIDE**

**WEEK 1: Policy agenda for early childhood education in Ghana: A brief overview**

**Course learning outcome:** (1). Demonstrate an understanding of the policy on early childhood education in Ghana and compare with the policies of the countries discussed in the WEEK 1 (NTS 2a). (2). Demonstrate an understanding of how the policy on early childhood education in Ghana can help improve early childhood education (NTS 1a).

**TEACHING ACTIVITY:** In this second, you will extend the knowledge and discussion from the week 1. You will focus on early childhood education policy in Ghana. Compare the Ghanaian policy document to the ones based on the selected countries already discussed. Note the similarities and differences in these documents.

**Reading materials:**

- Republic of Ghana (2004). Early childhood care and development policy. Ghana
- Ghana Education Service (2021). Guidelines for the early childhood policy implementation. Ghana. Pages 1 – 16

**Practice questions**

- In what ways do you think the policy on early childhood education in Ghana will help improve early education and care?
- What challenges do you consider there are in ECE policy in Ghana and implementation? What do you consider as the gap between the ECE policy in Ghana and current practices?
- Consider the implications of the Ghana ECE policy. What role(s) does the teacher and government need to play in ensuring its implementation?

**WEEK 2: Quality in early childhood education: What does it involve, and does it matter?**

**Course learning outcome:** Demonstrate a critical understanding of what quality in early childhood education involves and its importance, identifying the gaps within the Ghanaian context (NTS 3 b, c and d)

**TEACHING ACTIVITY:** In this third week, you will focus on quality issues in early childhood education. When reading the assigned materials, focus on the features of quality (structural and process elements) in ECE. Also, pay particular attention to why quality in early childhood matters. Critically assess your practice as a teacher and identify the gaps in quality early childhood education provision in Ghana.

**Reading materials:**

- Whitebread, David, Kvalja, Martina & O'Connor, Aileen (2015). Quality in early childhood education: an international review and guide for policy makers. Technical Brief. Pages 20 – 31
- Wechsler, M., Melnick, H., Maier, A., & Bishop, J. (2016). The Building Blocks of High-Quality Early Childhood Education Programs. California Policy Brief.

**Practice questions:**

- Based on your understanding of the two main elements of quality, what do you think about the quality current ECE practices in Ghana? What do you think should be done?
- What does quality mean? How can the state, communities and school contribute to quality ECE in Ghana?
- How different is structural quality from process quality? How do these interact to improve quality in ECE?

**WEEK 3: Age-appropriate pedagogies and practices in ECE**

**Course learning outcome:** (1). Understand what effective age-appropriate pedagogies are? (2). Demonstrate a critical engagement with the literature on age-appropriate pedagogies in early childhood education and identify issues and challenges within the Ghanaian context

**TEACHING ACTIVITY:** In this fourth week, you will focus on what effective pedagogies in the early years. Pay particular attention to the characteristics of early learners and age-appropriate pedagogies. Also, pay attention to the research works that have been done to inform age-appropriate pedagogies. Furthermore, note what the reading materials say about play as an early childhood pedagogy.

**Reading materials:**

- Department of Education (Australia). Age-appropriate pedagogies for the early years of schooling: Foundation paper. (pages 7 – 29)
- Briddle, Kimberly., Garcia-Nevarez, Ana., Henderson, Wanda., & Valero-Kerrick, Alicia (2013). Early Childhood Education: Becoming a Professional – Play and the learning environment. Sage. Pages 258 – 274

**Practice questions:**

- Explain five characteristics of age-appropriate pedagogies
- What are the indicators of playful learning?
- Why should children learn through play? Discuss
- To what extent do you use play as a pedagogy in your class activities? What factors serve as a stronghold or barriers to the use of play in ECE in Ghana?

**WEEK 4: Supporting children's cognitive, academic and socio-emotional development**

Course learning outcome: Demonstrate an understating of supporting children's whole development

**TEACHING ACTIVITY:** In this fifth week, you will focus on supporting children's whole development. From the materials, pay particular attention to the domains of development. Discuss why it is important for children to be supported in all these areas. Discuss how play can be used to support the domains of development.

**Reading materials:**

- Child Development and Early Learning: A Foundation for Professional Knowledge and Competencies. (pages 1 – 13)
- Catholic Relief Services (2016). Early childhood development-Basic concepts: Training for early childhood caregivers and teachers. Pages 7 – 20
- Briddle, Kimberly., Garcia-Nevarez, Ana., Henderson, Wanda., & Valero-Kerrick, Alicia (2013). Early Childhood Education: Becoming a Professional – Play and the learning environment. Sage. Pages 268 – 272
- Whitebread, David, Kvalja, Martina & O’Connor, Aileen (2015). Quality in early childhood education: an international review and guide for policy makers. Technical Brief. Pages 8 – 14

**Practice questions:**

- Explain four domains of child development
- How important are these domains for early childhood education?
- How can teachers support children’s development in these domains through play?

**WEEK 5: Assessment in early childhood education: Moving beyond test scores**

Course learning outcome: Demonstrate an understanding of how to approach assessment from different ways that transcends the use of grades and test scores.

**TEACHING ACTIVITY:** In this sixth week, you will focus on assessment in the early years. From the materials, pay particular attention to the difference among assessment of learning, assessment as learning and assessment for learning. Note why it is important that assessment for young children moves beyond the use of test scores.

**Reading materials:**

- Evidence Paper. Practice Principle 7: Assessment for learning and development. Melbourne, Australia: Melbourne Graduate School of Education, The University of Melbourne. (pages 6 – 16).
- Grisham-Brown, Jennifer, Hallam, Rena & Brookshire, Robyn (2006). Using Authentic Assessment to Evidence Children’s Progress. Early Childhood Education Journal, 34 (1). pages 45 – 51.
- Stella Lungui, Beatrice Matafwali, & Madalitso K. Banja (2021). Formative and summative assessment practices by teachers in early childhood education centres in Lusaka, Zambia. European Journal of Education Studies, 8(2), pages 46 and 47.

**Practice Questions:**

- Distinguish between assessment of learning and assessment for learning. Support your answers with examples
- Why should children be assessed?
- What are the characteristics of authentic assessment practices? Reflecting on your practice, what are the barriers to using this assessment approach?



- How can a teacher assess for learning and development?

### **WEEK 6: Safeguarding children in ECE: The social and legal context for protecting children**

Course learning outcome: Demonstrate an understanding of the social causes of child abuse and the legal framework for child protection in Ghana.

**TEACHING ACTIVITY:** This week, you will focus on the causes of child abuse and how this extends to the early childhood classroom as well as the legal framework for child protection. Pay attention to the causes and impact of abuse on children’s development. Also note the legal framework for protecting young children. Reflect on your role as a practitioner in responding to child abuse and maltreatment.

Reading materials:

- Child Protection Guidelines for Health Workers (2018). UNICEF. Pages 15 – 17; Pages 21 – 24
- Ward, Harriet & Brown, Rebecca (2013). Safeguarding children in the early years. (Sections to note are colour-coded)

#### **Practice questions:**

- What does “child safeguarding” mean? Discuss three approaches that can be adopted to ensure children are better safeguarded in early childhood settings in Ghana?
- Discuss three social causes of child abuse.
- Discuss two impacts of abuse on early childhood development
- In the Ghanaian legal framework, children have the rights to protection from abuse, neglect and violence. Explain the roles you have in upholding these rights?

### **WEEK 7: Workforce issues in ECE: Global and local trends**

**Course learning outcome:** Identify key issues facing the early childhood workforce locally and internationally and suggest possible strategies to address these.

**TEACHING ACTIVITY:** In this final week, you will focus on issues facing the ECE workforce. Pay attention to the challenges affecting the workforce within international context and Africa. Reflect on how these challenges relate with the Ghanaian workforce and the possible ways that these challenges can be addressed.

Reading materials:

- Early Childhood Education Directorate (2017). Early Childhood Education Workforce issues in Australian and international contexts, Australia, (pages 5 – 18)

- Association for the development of education in Africa (2016). Developing the Education Workforce in Africa: Focusing on the Role of Families/Communities (pages 8 – 10)

**Practice questions:**

- From the reading materials, identify and explain two challenges affecting the early years workforce in Ghana. What measures can be used to address these identified challenges?
- Why do you think there are few men working with children? What benefits do you think there might be for increasing the number of men workforce in the early years?
- What brought you to the early years workforce? What are your aspirations for the future? What might affect the realisation of those aspirations?