

California Community Colleges Curriculum Alignment Project (CAP) Lower Division 8 Courses

Since 2006, the California Community Colleges Curriculum Alignment Project (CAP) has engaged faculty from across the state to develop a lower-division program of study supporting early educators' preparation. The Lower Division 8 represents evidence-based courses that are intended to become a foundational core for all early educator professionals and are intended to prepare students with the skills and abilities that best support the success of young children.

Child Growth and Development

This course examines the major physical, psychosocial, and cognitive/language developmental milestones for children, both typical and atypical, from conception through adolescence. There will be an emphasis on interactions between maturational processes and environmental factors. While studying developmental theory and investigative research methodologies, students will observe children, evaluate individual differences, and analyze characteristics of development at various stages.

Child, Family, and Community

An examination of the developing child in a societal context focusing on the interrelationship of family, school and community and emphasizes historical and socio-cultural factors. The processes of socialization and identity development will be highlighted, showing the importance of respectful, reciprocal relationships that support and empower families.

Health, Safety and Nutrition

Introduction to the laws, regulations, standards, policies and procedures, and early childhood curriculum related to child health, safety, and nutrition. The key components that ensure physical health, mental health, and safety for both children and staff will be identified along with the importance of collaboration with families and health professionals. Focus on integrating the concepts into everyday planning and program development for all children.

Principles and Practices of Teaching Young Children

An examination of the underlying theoretical principles of developmentally appropriate practices applied to programs, environments, emphasizing the key role of relationships, constructive adult-child interactions, and teaching strategies in supporting physical, social, creative, and intellectual development for all children. This course includes a review of the historical roots of early childhood programs and the evolution of the professional practices promoting advocacy, ethics, and professional identity.

Introduction to Curriculum

This course presents an overview of knowledge and skills related to providing appropriate curriculum and environments for young children from birth to age 6. Students will examine the teacher's role in supporting development and fostering the joy of learning for all young children using observation and assessment strategies emphasizing the essential role of play. An overview of content areas will include but not be limited to: Language and literacy, social and emotional learning, sensory learning, art and creativity, math, and science.

Teaching in a Diverse Society

Examination of the development of social identities in diverse societies including theoretical and practical implications of oppression and privilege as they apply to young children, families, programs, classrooms, and teaching. Various classroom strategies will be explored emphasizing culturally and linguistically appropriate anti-bias approaches supporting all children in becoming competent members of a diverse society. Course includes self examination and reflection on issues related to social identity, stereotypes and bias, social and educational access, media, and schooling.

Observation and Assessment

This course focuses on the appropriate use of assessment and observation strategies to document development, growth, play and learning in order to join with families and professionals in promoting children's success and maintaining quality programs. Recording strategies, rating systems, portfolios, and multiple assessment methods are explored.

Practicum-Field Experience

A demonstration of developmentally appropriate early childhood teaching competencies under guided supervision. Students will utilize practical classroom experiences to make connections between theory and practice, develop professional behaviors, and build a comprehensive understanding of children and families. Child centered, play-oriented approaches to teaching, learning, and assessment; and knowledge of curriculum content areas will be emphasized as student teachers design, implement, and evaluate experiences that promote positive development and learning for all young children.