



Unit 3 – Physical Development: Getting Ready for the Unit and Connecting to Experience

Focus of Getting Ready for Unit 3

Students think about their roles in planning curriculum related to physical development by reflecting on their own early experiences with physical activities and connecting these experiences to those of the children they will teach.

Curriculum Alignment Project (CAP) Student Learning Outcomes

The Curriculum Alignment Project's (CAP) lower division eight courses and student learning outcomes are mapped onto each instructional guide key topic. See Appendix A for the specific student learning outcomes, objectives, and examples of course content and topics for the courses listed below.

- Child, Growth, and Development
- Child, Family, and Community
- Introduction to Curriculum
- Principles and Practices of Teaching Young Children
- Health, Safety, and Nutrition
- Teaching in a Diverse Society
- Practicum-Field Experience

Instructional Methodologies

- Lecture
- Brainstorming
- Reflection—personal
- Pairs work and pairs discussion
- Small group work
- Class discussion
- Creation of a visual representation
- Individual reflection



California Early Childhood Educator Competency Areas to Consider

The Faculty Initiative Project will be undertaking a comprehensive process in the future to map the content of the instructional guides to the California Department of Education, Child Development Division's California Early Childhood Educator Competencies. The "Competency Areas to Consider" below are listed in this instructional guide as a preliminary exploration of how particular competency areas might be addressed through these key topics.

- Child Development and Learning
- Culture, Diversity, and Equity
- Relationships, Interactions, and Guidance
- Family and Community Engagement
- Dual-Language Development
- Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation
- Learning Environments and Curriculum
- Health, Safety, and Nutrition
- Professionalism



Unit 3 – Physical Development: Getting Ready for the Unit and Connecting to Experience

Getting Ready for the Unit



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Chapter 3 of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 2* begins with the following statements on page 132:

“Young children learn best by *doing*. Active physical play supports preschool children’s brain development and is a primary means for them to explore and discover their world.

Physical activities enhance all aspects of development, including cognitive, emotional, social, as well as physical.

Active physical play also has clear benefits for children’s health and fitness.

All children, no matter their ability levels or backgrounds, benefit from engaging in physical activities.”

Preschool teachers have an important role in planning curriculum that promotes and supports children’s active physical play and their physical development. Therefore, it is important that students become familiar with the concepts and skills described in the physical development foundations of the *California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 2*.

If students have not had an opportunity to explore these foundations, instructors may want to begin this unit with one of the learning experiences in the *Instructional Guide for the California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 2*:

- Learning Experience 3: Piecing Together the Physical Development Domain Content Puzzle (pp. 151–161) provides an opportunity for the students to review the strands, substrands, and foundations as well as how they are organized.
- Learning Experience 5: Exploring the Content of the Physical Development Domain Through Vocabulary (pp. 171–179) helps students become familiar with the specific terminology related to movement, motor skills, concepts, and active physical play.



- Learning Experience 6: Exploring the Research and Rationale for the Physical Development Domain (pp. 180–185) allows students to learn more about the importance of physical activity and development for young children.

Students can also learn about some of the basic concepts of the physical development domain in the following introductory material from the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 2*:

- Introduction to Chapter 3 (pp. 132–133)
- Introduction to the Fundamental Movement Skills strand (p. 139)
- Introduction to the substrands on Balance, Locomotor Skills, and Manipulative Skills (pp. 140, 147–148, and 156–157)
- Introduction to the Perceptual-Motor Skills and Movement Concepts strand (pp. 176–177)
- Introduction to the substrands on Body Awareness, Spatial Awareness, and Directional Awareness (pp. 178, 181, and 186)
- Introduction to the Active Physical Play strand (p. 192)
- Introduction to the substrands on Active Participation, Cardiovascular Endurance, and Muscular Strength, Muscular Endurance, and Flexibility (pp. 193, 199, and 202)

Like the other domains in Volumes 1 and 2 of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework*, the physical development domain is organized by the same strands and substrands of its counterpart—Volume 2 of the *California Preschool Learning Foundations*. And also like the other domains in the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volumes 1 and 2*, the physical development domain includes these elements: guiding principles at the domain level; strategies for engaging families and reflection questions at the strand level; and vignettes, teachable moments, and interactions and strategies at the substrand level. Research highlights are at both the domain and strand levels. However, there is one difference from the other domains—the physical development domain has a list of environmental factors instead of environments and materials. These factors are at the domain level.

Motivator and Connection to Experience

Before You Start

This learning experience provides an opportunity for students to reflect on their current physical activities, when and how they learned or began to do them, and what influences their personal experiences might have on their approaches to physical development as teachers. It is important to be aware that some students may not see themselves as very active nor currently doing anything that they feel is physical activity. If so, instructors may choose to revise the instructions to ask students to list past activities and/or current ones.



Students may also feel that physical activities mean some kind of individual or team sports. Remind them that walking, running or jogging, gardening or performing other yard work, cleaning house, practicing yoga, doing weight training, using aerobic machines, shoveling snow, pushing a stroller, washing a car, and carrying out jobs that involve extensive standing or walking are also types of physical activity.

Students may think that young children’s physical development primarily occurs naturally and that the preschool teacher’s role is simply to provide adequate outdoor free playtime. Students may not be aware of the connections between children’s active physical play and brain development and how physical activities support children’s cognitive, emotional, and social development. The many ways that teachers can help children learn and master new physical skills may also be new information for some students.

It may be useful to begin this learning experience by having students review some of the introductory material in the physical development domain chapter of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 2* that describes the importance of active physical play and the teacher’s role. Specific sections are suggested in the “Information Delivery” section

One of the environmental factors for the physical domain unit suggests that a teacher’s role in providing quality instruction in physical development may at times include actively joining in physical play with the children. Depending on many factors and experiences, students may feel comfortable or uncomfortable with this concept. Their own current fitness levels and interests and engagement in physical activities may impact how they plan and support the physical play of children in their preschool programs. It will be important to be aware of the possible diverse responses by students to this concept and plan ways to address them in any class discussions.

Information Delivery



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The following introductory sections of the physical development chapter of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 2* may help students become more aware of several important key aspects of active physical play and physical development:

- Introduction to Chapter 3 (pp. 132–133)
- Introduction to the Fundamental Movement Skills strand (p. 139)
- Introduction to the Perceptual-Motor Skills and Movement Concepts strand (pp. 176–177)
- Introduction to the Active Physical Play strand (p. 192)

This information may be summarized and presented in a short lecture, or instructors may choose to ask students to read these pages prior to class.



Active Learning

Getting it started

Ask students to choose a partner and brainstorm all the physical activities they currently do. Students may choose to do their own lists individually first and then share them. By doing the brainstorm together, students may help their partners identify additional activities they might not think of on their own. Each student then picks two activities they like the most or that they do the most.

Keeping it going

Each student then thinks back to when they learned each activity, how they learned it, any remembrances of doing it as a young child, and why it's a favorite or why they do it frequently.

Taking it further

Next have students take turns sharing one of their favorite or most frequent activities with the class. As each student takes a turn, students with the same or very similar activity join the others to form a group. If a student's first choice does not match any of the others, see if the second choice does. Continue until all the students are in a group. If a group is much larger than the others, instructors may want to have the students divide into two groups.

Students then compare their activity background stories in their groups and identify common themes and differences. Ask them to pay particular attention to any childhood memories: learning from a parent, older sibling, relative, friend, or other adult; doing the activity with other children; feeling proud of being able to do the activity; going to an event about that activity; and getting better at the activity. Also ask the students to think about how they as teachers might someday be part of children's memories of learning or doing physical activities.

Online Options

Students could brainstorm their lists individually and then post their favorite or most frequent activity online with the background story. The small groups could then be determined prior to coming class.

Putting it together

Conclude the class session by asking each group to share some highlights from their discussions.

- What were some common themes that emerged? What were some unique occurrences?
- What surprised you from a classmate's story? What seemed really familiar to you?



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- Why do you think it's useful to reflect on your own experiences with physical activities when fostering young children's physical development and active play?
- What is something from your own current or past experience with physical activities that you want to share with young children?



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Another approach

Instead of brainstorming their current physical activities, students brainstorm activities they did as young children. Students could then write a favorite childhood activity on large Post-it® Notes or half sheets of 8 ½" x 11" paper. Suggest that they illustrate their activity as well.

Students then post their activities on the wall to form a quilt; the idea of a quilt is taken from an activity developed by participants at the Faculty Initiative Project 2012 Seminar at American River College on March 9, 2012.

After the quilt is completed, give students a few minutes to read all the activities in the quilt. Then have a class discussion in which students volunteer to tell a story or share a memory about their favorite childhood activities.

Conclude the discussion by asking students to respond to the following questions:

- What did you notice about the quilt?
What surprised you from a classmate's story? What seemed really familiar to you?
- What were some common themes that emerged?
- Why do you think it's useful to reflect on your own childhood experiences with physical activities when fostering young children's physical development and active play?
- What is something from your childhood experiences or current physical activities that you want to share with young children?

Reflection



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Students may also answer the reflective questions suggested in the "Putting it together" section or "Another approach" section individually.

This second set of questions is more general and can be used for individual reflection here and with the other key topics.



- What part of this class session stood out most for you today?
- Which ideas or concepts from today's work reinforced what you have already learned or experienced? Which ones gave you a new perspective or insight?
- How might you apply a new idea or perspective to your work now or in the future?
- What information or support do you need to do this?
- What is a first step you could take to locate this support or information? What steps could you take to start applying the new idea or perspective?