



## Unit 4 – Health: Getting Ready for the Unit and Connecting to Experience

### Focus of Getting Ready for Unit 4

Students think about their roles as teachers in planning curriculum related to health, safety, and nutrition. Through reflecting on their own early experiences in learning health, safety, and nutrition practices in their families and communities, students connect 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
- Introduction to Curriculum
- Principles and Practices of Teaching Young Children
- Health, Safety, and Nutrition
- Teaching in a Diverse Society
- Practicum-Field Experience

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### Instructional Methodologies

- Personal reflection
- Pairs work and discussion in pairs
- Small group work
- Class discussion
- 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
- Learning Environments and Curriculum
- Health, Safety, and Nutrition
- Professionalism



## Unit 4 – Health: Getting Ready for the Unit and Connecting to Experience

### Getting Ready for the Unit



Slides 2-6

The health domain in the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 2* provides resources for early care and education professionals to support the development of healthy lifestyles in preschool children.

The domain consists of three strands: Health Habits, Safety, and Nutrition. Each strand is further organized into substrands. These are summarized on page 232 of the curriculum framework. There is also, on pages 290–293 of the framework, a glossary of health-related terms that will be found in the domain. Because many of these terms are unique to this domain, it is highly recommended that faculty be familiar with these terms before beginning to introduce students to this domain.

It will be important to make students aware of the relationship of this *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 2* to the foundations in the *California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 2*. The foundations are goal-like statements that describe **what** children—at 48 and 60 months of age—typically learn and develop with optimal support. The curriculum framework provides guidance for **how** teachers can intentionally support this learning and development in young children. In Key Topic 1 of this domain, students are specifically introduced to the parallel content of the foundations and the curriculum frameworks, and, as students explore the organization of the domain, it will be important to stress that the curriculum does not provide specific suggestions for children to achieve specific foundations. It is crucial that instructors be familiar with the health foundations and understand their relationship to the curriculum.

Several features of this domain are especially important in early care and education. First, the importance of addressing health in the early years is emphasized. Lifelong habits and attitudes can be shaped as young children are guided to develop health-promoting, safe behaviors, and nutritional choices. However, there is a wide range of family and community priorities and preferences in these choices, and this range must be recognized and respected. Family and community preferences, habits, and values will be important mediators of the content of this domain. It is up to early care and education professionals to partner with families and caregivers to understand the practices of home and how the health-promoting habits of this domain can fit with those practices. Specific ways of doing this are suggested in the curriculum



framework on pages 31–34, as well as in Key Topic 4 of this domain.

Next, health-promoting habits can be integrated into attention to the other domains of the *California Preschool Curriculum Frameworks, Volumes 1 and 2*, but health-promoting habits also are instilled as children are intentionally taught about health, safety, and nutrition. Intentional teaching of health habits, safety, and nutrition is addressed in Key Topic 3 of this domain. Integration across domains is specifically addressed in Unit 5 of this instructional guide and on pages 15–17 of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 2*.

Finally, young dual language learners will benefit from intentional support as they learn the practices and vocabulary of this domain. Key Topic 3 of Unit 5 in this instructional guide is devoted solely to working with young dual language learners across the three domains in *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 2*. This is also addressed in the introduction to the curriculum framework on pages 11–14, “English-Language Development and Learning in All Domains.” It is important that instructors become familiar with the information on these pages, as well as the *Preschool English Learners: Principles and Practices to Promote Language, Literacy, and Learning—A Resource Guide (Second Edition)* and the English-language development domain foundations in the *California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 1*.

This information should inform all work with young dual language learners as health, safety, and nutrition are addressed. Instructors might want students to become familiar with these pages through reading or lecture before beginning the key topics for this domain in this instructional guide.

### **Motivator and Connection to Experience**

#### ***Before You Start***

Health is a topic that is particularly likely to bring early care and education professionals in touch with diverse family and community practices. Children come to preschool with a variety of skills and habits relating to health, safety, and nutrition. To explore some of what this might look like in their own lives, students are asked to think about the health, safety, and nutrition habits they remember from their family experiences.

For a more in-depth exploration of student’s habits related to health, safety, and nutrition, there is a self-assessment that can be found in Learning Experience 1 of the health domain in the *Instructional Guide for the California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 2*. This self-assessment could be used here as well.

Maintaining a fun and informal atmosphere will provide a safe place for students to explore the diverse health habits of individuals and families.



## Active Learning



Slides 7-10

### Getting it started

Remind students that we all have learned health, safety, and nutrition habits in our families and communities of origin. The discussion that follows will allow us to explore some of the similarities and differences in those habits.

Instructors could utilize the following questions, asking pairs of students to talk about how they, as children, learned health habits, noting similarities and differences. Instructors could ask students to consider either one set of questions at a time or the full range of questions.

What do students remember about each of the following areas:

1. Handwashing -  
What were your family's handwashing practices? Do you remember seeing your parents or siblings washing their hands at specific times? Were there specific times, such as right before meals, when you or your family members were reminded to wash hands?
2. Brushing teeth -  
How often and when were you taught to brush your teeth? Were you reminded by your family or others to floss?
3. Mealtime -  
Did your family eat meals together? Which ones? Around a table or special place? How was food put onto plates? Individually and then brought to the table? Served at the table? From shared dishes? Did the family eat from shared dishes?

What were some foods that your family enjoyed together? What were some special foods that were related to holidays or celebrations?

4. Safety -  
Are there safety rules that you remember from when you were a child? Were these rules from your family or from school?

What were you taught about crossing streets? Electrical outlets? Using appliances? What do you remember learning about staying safe while participating in sports?

**Keeping it going**

After about 10–15 minutes, ask student groups to pair into groups of four. Ask students to share the similarities and differences from their initial pairings. Enlarging the discussion should illuminate even more similarities and differences within groups. Again, ask students to note significant differences and similarities within the larger pairing's responses. If too few differences have emerged, ask students to consider the different ways their friends, families, and children might experience these health-related habits.

**Putting it together**

Reconvene as a whole group, and discuss what was discovered. Review each question, and give each group of four an opportunity to respond with the similarities and differences they discovered.

This can be charted, either with chart paper for each question or electronically. However, the value of this learning experience is realized as a conversation, wherein students recognize that there are differences in the way we carry out some of our most basic activities.

**Reflection**

Slide 11

The questions for reflection below can be used as a whole group experience, as a journaling experience, or as an online response.

**Online Options**

Students could post their responses to the reflection questions online for either instructor and/or class review.

- What did you hear that you had not known or thought about?
- How did this help you understand your own health, safety, and nutrition habits?
- What did you learn about how family influences might impact how children build health-promoting habits?
- How will this influence your approach to teaching health, safety, and nutrition to young children?