



Physical Development: Exploring the Research and Rationale for the Physical Development Domain

Focus Statement

Students become familiar with some of the research base for the physical development domain by reviewing introductory and bibliographic material related to specific topics around children's physical development.

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 learning experience. 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
- Observation and Assessment
- Health, Safety and Nutrition
- Teaching in a Diverse Society
- Practicum-Field Experience

Instructional Methodologies

- Literature review
- Note-taking outline or guide
- Presentation
- Reflection—individual or large group
- Short paper
- Small group work



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 learning experiences.

- Child Development and Learning
- Culture, Diversity, and Equity
- Relationships, Interactions, and Guidance
- Family and Community Engagement
- Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation
- Health, Safety, and Nutrition
- Professionalism
- Administration and Supervision



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Before You Start

Having students become familiar with some of the research base and rationale for the physical development foundations will help students increase their understanding of the importance of physical activity and physical development in the preschool years and the role of preschool programs. Students need to be aware of the many ways teachers can support children's overall development in the preschool years through well-planned physical activities and experiences.

Some students may believe that young children's physical development is solely a naturally occurring neuromotor process that does not require much intentional teaching. However, the research points out that there are many aspects to children's physical development:

- What actually are foundational movement skills and concepts
- The important role of physical development and activity in children's long-term health
- The links between physical development and children's development in other areas such as cognitive and social-emotional
- The relationship of children's physical play and the natural world
- The influence of families and culture on children's physical development
- What teachers should know about developmentally appropriate activities that support children's physical activity and development

In this learning experience, several topics are suggested for students to research. However, you may wish to identify your own topics or have students come up with their own based on some initial reading of the physical development chapter of the *California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 2*.

Information Delivery

The following sections from the *California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 2* (PLF, V2) will be used in this learning experience:

- Introductory material (pp. 37–45)



- Bibliographic Notes (pp. 58–60)
- References and Source Materials (pp. 64–69)

You may have students read these sections before class or provide time for them to do so.

Active Learning



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Getting it started

Begin by having students review the introductory material and bibliographic notes and ask them to pull out key points related to one of the following topics:

- Sequential development of fundamental movement skills
- Importance of movement and physical play and activity
- Relationship of physical activity and health
- Relationship of physical activity and academic performance
- Importance of adult instruction in children's development of physical skills
- Relationship of children's physical play and social-emotional development
- Physical development and children with disabilities

Online Options

Individual students could be assigned to list the key points from introductory material and the bibliographic notes on one of the seven topics. Students would then post their notes online.



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Keeping it going

Students next choose one topic and select one research study for their chosen topic. They can use a reference listed in the introductory material, bibliographic notes, or references and source materials in the *California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 2* (pp. 37–44, 58–60, 64–69).

Putting it together

Students are then to write a short paper that describes the research and findings and which foundations are addressed through the research.

Taking it further

Ask students who chose the same topic to form a group and share their papers. They then summarize their papers in one document that includes this information:



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- Listing and overview of the research articles
- Summary of the findings
- Discussion of how the findings relate to specific foundations

These papers can then be shared with the whole class.

Another approach/way

Instead of students initially preparing individual papers and then consolidating their findings, you could have students begin by forming small groups and selecting a topic for further study. They then prepare a joint paper on the topic to share with the other students. If you choose this approach, you may want to make sure that each group selects a different topic.

You may also choose to have students prepare some kind of classroom presentation instead of writing papers.

Reflection

Conclude this learning experience by having students respond to these questions individually, such as through reflective journals, or in a class discussion:



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- What key finding from the research really caught your attention?
- What were some new insights you gained?
- Which studies or findings did you find most relevant to your understanding of the foundations?
- How did a finding challenge or affirm your beliefs?
- What question(s) did the research raise for you?
- What is a next step you will do in answering this question?

Online Options

Students could post their papers online and then respond to the reflection questions in an online discussion.

Deeper Understanding

Depending on students' experience with and exposure to research studies, you could ask students to do a more comprehensive literature review on their chosen topic. They could then develop a paper or presentation that includes the following elements:

- Overview of the research
- Summary of findings, key points, and recommendations from



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the studies

- How the research relates to particular foundations
- Possible implications for practice—ways that preschool teachers can support children’s acquisition of the knowledge and skills described in the physical development foundations