

## **CHILD DEVELOPMENT TRAINING *COURSE DESIGN***

### ***Intent***

In private child care settings the availability of well-trained teachers is key to achieving positive outcomes for preschool children. However, early childhood teachers face many barriers in furthering their education, including cost, time away from work and family, and location of the education program. We intend to develop a computer-based training for Early Care and Education (ECE) Providers that focuses on child development, how children learn, and identifying developmentally appropriate practices. The training will be targeted to those with little or no formal education. The goals of this course will align with the goals of the Child Development Associate (CDA) National Credentialing Program, a major national movement to improve the quality of child care.

### ***Goals***

#### **Mission**

- To develop a quality curriculum that will allow for students to have a basic understanding of child development.
- To develop curriculum that will allow for students to practice their knowledge and gain feedback from a mentor teacher.
- To develop a CBT that is accessible to learners who do not have access to more “traditional” forms of instruction.

#### **Goals for Curriculum**

- The student will be able to comprehend how children learn and ages and stages of cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development.
- The student will be able to observe children, from birth through age 8, looking for the different stages of development and produce an observation report.
- The student will be able to practice applying the knowledge gained by responding to a situational question.
- The student will be able to identify developmentally appropriate practices.
- The student will be able to apply child development practices in interaction with children.

### ***The Instructional Framework***

#### **Content**

Based on our Needs Assessment, we have identified two main knowledge areas for this training:

- How children learn
- Stages and milestones of cognitive, physical, emotional, and social development

The following skills will be focused on so that participants can apply the above knowledge:

- Observation of children
- Implementing developmentally appropriate practices

Other features of this training include a mentoring relationship between the learner and a more experienced person who we're calling a mentor. Whether it be a director in a child care center, an Education Specialist in the center, or a teacher in a high school program, the mentor will observe the learner in his or her interactions with the children in their care, see how they are applying the information they are learning, and provide the learner with feedback. To facilitate this, we will provide mentors with tools to help them conduct assessments such as forms, sample observations reports, and checklists. We will also provide guidelines for "reflective supervision," giving tips to create an open dialog between the mentor and the learner.

We are also hoping that the mentor component can solve some of the challenges we are experiencing in developing a CBT on this topic. Many of the instructional strategies that we'd like so use, such as classroom discussion, are not possible through this instructional medium. So, hopefully the mentor component can make up for some of that, providing the learner a person to bounce ideas off of, and so forth.

## **Outline**

### Module 1: Stages and Milestones of Development

#### *Content to be covered*

- Physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of children from birth through age 8

#### *Activities*

- Pretest: Have learners watch a video clip showing preschool age children and write about what they can tell about these children based on their "observations." (This will also serve as a "lead in" to Module 2.)
- Direct instruction

#### *Assessment*

- Test on the stages and milestones of development

### Module 2: Observations

#### *Content to be covered*

- The purpose of observations
- The observer's role and confidentiality
- Subjective verses objective observations
- Preparing to observe
- Observation types
- How to do observations

#### *Instructional Strategies/Activities*

- Direct instruction

- Identify objective and subjective observational comments
- Practice observations, both checklist and running record

*Assessment*

- Learners will create a running record observation report on a child from birth to age 8, which will be reviewed by their mentor.

Module 3: Developmentally Appropriate Practice

*Content to be covered:*

- Developmentally appropriate practice (DAP)
- Designing DAP experiences

*Instructional Strategies/Activities*

- Direct instruction regarding DAP
- Mock exercise that is not DAP for this audience as an example
- Practice identifying DAP in a classroom setting
- Practice designing a DAP experience for a group of preschool children

*Assessment*

- Test: The learner will identify DAPs by identifying which scenarios of those given describe DAPs.

Module 4: How children learn.

*Content to be covered*

- What is learning?
- Mental processes important to learning, including assimilation, accommodation, and adaptation
- The role of the teacher as coach and encourager

*Instructional Strategies/Activities*

- Direct instruction
- Reflecting on one's own learning
- Exercise learning something that has no context and no meaning, such as a make-believe language, etc.

*Assessment*

- Develop and teach a lesson that will be observed and evaluated by the mentor.
- Discuss lesson with mentor to get feedback.

Mentor Handbook

*Content will include*

- Sample observation forms that align with the Modules
- Observation checklists and other means to do an evaluation
- Tips on discussing the evaluation with the learner, including ways to facilitate an open dialog, posing questions, and so forth