

**Child Development – PSY 301 – Fall 2025**  
Grand Valley State University - Department of Psychology

Section 03	Section 06
8:30 – 9:45 am	11:30 – 12:45 pm
Tues & Thurs	Tues & Thurs
2132 Au Sable Hall	1310 Au Sable Hall

**Instructor:** Naomi J. Aldrich, PhD

**Prerequisite:** PSY 101, 201, or HNR 234  
(minimum grade of D or higher)

**Office:** 2205 Au Sable Hall  
**Email:** [aldrichn@gvsu.edu](mailto:aldrichn@gvsu.edu)

**Required Course Materials:**

**Office Hours:** 1:30-2:30 pm (T/TR)  
(Additional hours available per request)

**Access to a Computer & High-Speed Internet**  
Must meet Blackboard browser requirements & have speakers

**To Make Appointment** go to:  
<https://aldrichn.youcanbook.me/>  
or scan below:



**E-book with Achieve Access (Cost: \$110.00)**  
*How Children Develop*, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition (Siegler et al., 2024) – ISBN: 2810500010946

***You will access these materials through our Blackboard course;*** you do not need to purchase anything else (see page 2 for more information)

**GVSU Save Program and Textbook Information**

Our course is participating in the GVSU SAVE program which means your course material will be available through the course's Blackboard page. You should have received a "Welcome Email" that explains the GVSU SAVE program. You have been charged for your course material as part of your tuition. The deadline to opt-out of the SAVE program is midnight on Friday, Sep. 5th. Please be aware, if you opt-out you will be responsible for purchasing the required course material on your own.

For the instructions to opt-out, and more information about the program visit the GVSU SAVE website at: <https://lakerstore.gvsu.edu/gvsusave>

If you have any questions or are experiencing any issues, please contact:  
[lakersave@gvsu.edu](mailto:lakersave@gvsu.edu)

### How to Access the Textbook:

- Go to our Blackboard Course
- Click on the “E-Book and Achieve Access” folder.
- Click on the “Student Registration – Start Here” link.
- You DO NOT need a code and you DO NOT need to enter any payment information (this is all taken care of through the GVSU SAVE program).

### Helpful Achieve Information:

- Recommended web browser is the latest version of **Google Chrome** or **Firefox**. Go here for links to check your version, update, or install a new version: <https://mhe.my.site.com/macmillanlearning/s/article/Achieve-General-Troubleshooting-Tips>
- **You must allow session cookies and make sure you have disabled your pop up blocker** (if it's on, a red dot will appear in the address bar when you try to open Achieve via Blackboard) [How to Disable Pop Up Blocker in Chrome](#)
- Students will also need to **clear cache/cookies** regularly (especially if assignments do not open): [How to Clear Cache and Cookies](#)
- It can also be helpful to **try an Incognito Window** in Chrome, if you're experiencing loading issues (due to cookies/cache). Here's how: [Incognito Window](#)
- Need Help? Contact Macmillan Achieve Customer Support via [online chat](#)
- For **urgent/time sensitive issues**, please **CALL** Achieve tech support at [\(800\) 936-6899](#)

## **Course Description**

**Overview:** The material for this course will be presented in a mixed-methods format meaning that I will use in-class activities and discussions (both instructor-led and student-led), and videos to supplement the course readings and lectures. In doing so, I expect you to become engaged with the material in a manner that deviates from strictly memorizing facts. We will focus on an overview of the theories, methods, and phenomena of child psychology, and will examine the implications of this information for enhancing child development. Multiple aspects of development, including physical, cognitive/intellectual, and social/emotional development from conception to adolescence, will be considered. The approach to the course topics is scientific, with an emphasis on recent research findings in developmental psychology.

**Course Objectives:** Upon successful completion, students will be able to:

- 1) demonstrate an understanding of the basic concepts and theoretical paradigms that direct the field of Developmental Psychology
- 2) describe, and think critically about, changes within the developing person from conception to adolescence
- 3) discuss both traditional and current explanations for trends in children's physical, cognitive, and social/emotional growth
- 4) understand the scientific method and apply it to the understanding of child behavior and development
- 5) apply knowledge regarding child development to both observations of children and to interactions with children

## **Important GVSU Resources**

**Student Resources:** GVSU offers a variety of support for students. These include assistance with basic needs (such as food, housing, and laptops), academic support (such as tutoring and career advice), and wellness resources (such as health/mental health and opportunities to become more engaged with other students).

Here is a link to some of the resources currently available to students:

<https://www.gvsu.edu/care/campus-resources-15.htm> Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions or if you are looking for a certain type of support. If I do not know the answer, I will try to find someone who does 😊.

**Student Accessibility Resources:** If you need academic accommodations because of a learning, physical, or other disability, please contact Student Accessibility Resources at 331-2490 or [access@gvsu.edu](mailto:access@gvsu.edu) to develop a plan of assistance that you can provide to me.


### **Need Support? Connect with Psych Friends!**

**Psych Friends Peer-to-Peer Mentors** are trained, upper-level psychology and behavioral neuroscience students ready to help you succeed. They offer support in key areas like study strategies, exam prep, understanding major requirements, career/grad school planning, and student well-being. Follow on Instagram [@gvsu.psychfriends](https://www.instagram.com/gvsu.psychfriends) and schedule your online or in-person meeting at <https://www.gvsu.edu/navigate>

**University Counseling Center:** The University Counseling Center (UCC) provides personal, career, and group counseling to GVSU students for free. Furthermore, the UCC offers many self-help resources to students, including personal development assistance in dealing with issues of depression, loneliness, and how to manage stress, as well as study skill assistance such as test taking strategies, tips on how to successfully speak in front of a classroom, as well as guidance in writing research papers. For more information, please visit: <http://www.gvsu.edu/counsel/>  
Phone: 331-3266, Email: [gvcounsel@gvsu.edu](mailto:gvcounsel@gvsu.edu) The UCC is located at:

Allendale Campus: 206 STU (Monday – Friday: 8am – 5pm)

Downtown Pew Campus: DeVos 101B (Monday, Wednesday, Thursday: 8am – 5pm)  
Telehealth Appointments Available

<p><b>If you or someone you know is in crisis, please reach out for support.</b></p> <p><b>Available:</b> <b>Any time, Any day, All year</b></p>		<p><b>Suicide &amp; Crisis Lifeline</b> <b>Call or Text 988</b></p> <p><b>Crisis Text Line</b> <b>Text HOME to 741741</b></p>
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### **Class Etiquette**

**Communication with me:** The best way to reach me is through email. If you do not include “PSY 301” in the subject line, I may not read or respond to your email. Please use complete sentences and check for spelling errors. Also, please sign your full name and include your section number so I know who you are and what class you attend.  
**Also, please make sure to read your syllabus as the answer may be listed in these pages.**

**Classroom behavior:** Students are expected to behave appropriately during class. You may use the following principles to guide your classroom behavior: **Your behavior should not be disruptive or distracting to the instructor or your classmates.** The following will help you determine appropriate classroom behaviors. The following list is not exhaustive.

- 1) **Come to class on time.** Your late entrance is distracting to everyone.
- 2) **Stay for the entire class period.** If you must leave early, sit near the exit and leave quietly.
- 3) **Put your cell phone on vibrate before coming to class.**
- 4) You may eat or drink quietly during class, but **please clean up after yourself.** Also, no food or drinks during exams.
- 5) **Talk only when you have been given the floor.** Talking with the people next to you is distracting to everyone. If you are asking your neighbor a question about the course, it is likely that everyone will benefit if you raise your hand & ask your question of the instructor.
- 6) **Be attentive.** You may not realize it, but it is distracting to your instructor if you read a magazine in the back of the classroom or doze off during class. I cannot focus on the information I am trying to convey if I am worried that I am boring you.

### **Course Policies**

**Attendance:** It is your responsibility to be in class during the scheduled times and to be on time. Coming in late is rude to the other students. Failure to attend class regularly can negatively affect your grade as there will sometimes be opportunities for in-class points. **The dates on the class schedule for all assignments, exams, and presentations are firm.** Except for students with extenuating circumstances (with documentation provided), I do not allow students to make up assignments/exams or turn in work late. Please email me or see me during office hours if you know ahead of time that you will miss class.

**Academic Integrity:** Academic integrity often feels ambiguous, as the specific behaviors that are considered misconduct vary somewhat across disciplines and courses. My guiding principle is that **I want to know what YOU have learned in this course.** Behaviors that facilitate your learning the material are acceptable; behaviors that make it *appear* as if you have learned the material when you have not, are unacceptable. Behaviors that create the appearance of an unfair advantage or allow others to question whether you have really learned the material, such as having access to unapproved materials during an assignment/exam, are also unacceptable.

Students are expected to work within GVSU's Code of Student Conduct. Please see <http://www.gvsu.edu/studentcode/> for more information and familiarize yourself with these policies regarding dishonorable conduct. **No matter how mild or severe the cheating is, it is entirely unacceptable, and I will enforce the current policies fully.**

**Plagiarism:** As described by the GVSU Student Code, “Offering the work of someone else as one's own is plagiarism...” “Any ideas or material taken from another source for either written or oral presentation must be fully acknowledged.” **“Depending on the instructor's judgment of the particular case, he/she may...give a failing grade for the ... entire course.”** Simply rearranging the words or substituting synonyms in the original source is still plagiarism. **Furthermore, students should not self-plagiarize, that is, reuse their own work from another course.**

**Peer Collaboration:** Collaborative work will be assigned in this course. Collaborative work means sharing ideas with your peers and working together to complete an assignment/project. Collaboration does not mean giving completed work to your peers to use. If you have questions about what kind of collaboration is allowed, please ask.

**Artificial Intelligence:** You are expected to complete all work, and all phases of work, without any assistance from advanced automated generation tools (AI or machine learning tools, such as ChatGPT, Dall-E 2, etc.). Using them may interfere with your achievement of the course's outcomes. If you feel that AI would be beneficial to your learning in this course, please see me to obtain permission in advance. If permission is granted, you will need to properly document and credit the use of the tool as well as provide a brief (2-3 sentences) description of how you used the tool (e.g., what specific tool was used, what prompt and settings were used to generate material, and how that material was incorporated into the assignment).

**It is always OK to:**

- Ask questions.
- Study with classmates.
- Work together with classmates on homework or projects, so long as each of you performs your own work and, in the end, can explain it in your own unique words.
- Use sources (not including generative AI tools without prior permission) to support your ideas and arguments, so long as you (1) restate the material in your own words, showing me what you think it means rather than copying and pasting or narrowly paraphrasing, and (2) you give credit to the original source with a citation. The words should be yours, but you still need to give credit to the source of the ideas.

**It is never OK to:**

- Have any materials (e.g., textbooks, notes in any form) accessible during quizzes/exams unless I have explicitly given you permission. This includes access to electronic devices (e.g., smart watches) that could conceivably be used to store notes; I want you to avoid even the appearance of improper behavior.
- Present anyone else's words or work as if they are your own. If you are defining terms, you should state them in your own words and cite the source. In this course, there is no reason to use direct quotations.
- Use a generative AI tool for assignments/projects in this course during any stage of completion without prior permission from the instructor.
- Allow anyone else to present your words or work as their own. Enabling someone else's academic misconduct is also academic misconduct, even if you are not benefiting from it.
- Share assignments or quiz/exam questions or details with anyone who has not yet completed the work or taken the quiz or exam.

**These lists are not exhaustive – if you have any questions at all, please ask.**

**This course is subject to the GVSU policies listed at:**

**<http://www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies/>**

## Evaluation Criteria

**Introduction to Course Assignments (due by 11pm on Sunday August 31st):** To familiarize yourself with the requirements and materials you will need to be successful in this course (and to help guide my teaching) you are expected to complete these assignments during the first week of class:

- Read this syllabus; yep, the entire thing 😊
- Achieve Orientation Assignment = 5 points
- Blackboard Pre-Test Assessment = 5 points (for completing)

✚ **Total Intro Assignment Points = 10 points**  
✚ **Together, intro assignment points count for 1% of your final grade**

**Developing Lives – Virtual Parent Experience:** In this course you will have the opportunity to experience “parenthood” by using a program called Developing Lives. This is a wonderful opportunity for you to think through the different stages of development a child goes through, from conception through adolescence, and to consider the choices parents make each and every day!

During this semester-long assignment, you will “raise” a virtual child from sperm and egg to teenager, encountering decisions based on planned and unforeseen life events, both big and small. Each choice you make will affect your child, as in real life.

There are 6 units in this system: Introduction (creating your parent profile), Prenatal, Babies & Toddlers, Early Childhood, Middle Childhood, and Adolescence. The units require you to complete activities to raise your child and quizzes regarding the child’s developmental period. **I suggest completing these assignments as we progress through the appropriate developmental periods in class. However, Developing Lives assignments are due by December 4<sup>th</sup> by 11:00pm.**

\*\*\*Please note that: 1) You must complete each unit before moving on to the next unit within the program, and 2) your grade for the activities will not show up in the gradebook until you have finished “raising” your child.

✚ **Total Activity Points = 35 points**  
✚ **Each Quiz is worth 4 points**  
✚ **Total Quiz Points = 6 quizzes x 4 points = 24 points**  
✚ **Together, Developing Lives counts for 5.9% of your final grade**



**Learning Curve:** You have been assigned a “Learning Curve” adaptive quiz tool for each reading (23 total). These can be helpful for learning the material and identifying areas you should spend more time studying to understand the material. The purpose of the Learning Curves is to encourage students to keep up with the readings and will be available in Achieve weekly. There is a target score you must reach to obtain the full 2 points for each Learning Curve, but you can continue to practice the material as long as you wish. **Learning Curves are due by the Sunday (at 11:00pm) before: Exam #1 (Learning Curves 1a – 5b), Exam #2 (Learning Curves 6a – 10b), and Exam #3 (Learning Curves 11a – 14a).** Because Learning Curves will document a student’s class readiness, there are no make-ups.

- ✦ **Each Learning Curve is worth 2 points**
- ✦ **Total Learning Curve Points =  $23 \times 2$  points = 46 points**
- ✦ **Together, Learning Curve counts for 4.6% of your final grade**

**Exams:** Each student will take three examinations (and a final “conference” exam discussed below). Dates for these exams are indicated on the last pages of the syllabus. Exams 1, 2, and 3 will each include 50 multiple-choice questions and are closed book; they will evaluate what you have learned in the readings and through lectures, class activities, and videos. All material in the assigned textbook chapters is testable. There will be no make-up exams without extenuating circumstances.

- ✦ **Exams 1, 2, and 3 are each worth 150 points**
- ✦ **Total Exam Points =  $3 \text{ exams} \times 150 \text{ points} = 450 \text{ points}$**
- ✦ **Together, Exams 1 – 3 count for 45% of your final grade**

**Group Learning Activity:** Each student will sign up for a learning activity topic (topics listed on the class schedule) during the first week of class. There are 10 learning activity groups with 2-5 students in each. Each group will be given a source article on their topic (available on Blackboard) and members will work together to design a 15-20 minute in-class activity of the assigned topic. **The primary goal of the activity is to develop an in-class demonstration that will creatively engage your fellow classmates in learning the material.** The ways in which the group decides to approach this goal is left up to the group. Possibilities include, but are not limited to: creating a game, role-playing, video demonstrations, etc. I strongly suggest that groups meet with me to discuss their ideas before presentation to the class. Rubrics will be distributed in class for grading of the group activity (also available on Blackboard and will be discussed more in class).

- ✦ **My grading of your Learning Activity is worth 80 points**
- ✦ **Classmates’ grading of your Learning Activity (averaged) is worth 20 points**
- ✦ **Your group members’ evaluation of your contribution (averaged) is worth 20 points**
- ✦ **Total Learning Activity Points =  $80 + 20 + 20 = 120$  points**
- ✦ **The Learning Activity counts for 12% of your final grade**

**Observation Project:** The study of developmental psychology is greatly enhanced by the opportunity to observe children and conduct research. Therefore, there is an outside observation project required for PSY 301. Details for completing the Observation Project are available on Blackboard and will be discussed more in class. Rubrics will be posted for grading of the group conference presentation and your contribution to the group.

**Each student is required to complete both the individual and group requirements listed below:**

**Individual Requirements:**

- Interview/test 2 children: one “younger” (4-7 years) and one “older” (8-11 years)
- Complete a data packet (6 developmental assessments) per child
- Turn in FOR EACH CHILD:
  - ✓ A picture of a signed parental consent form
  - ✓ A picture/screenshot of you working with child
  - ✓ A complete data packet submitted via Qualtrics (online) survey

✦ **Individual Data Collection is worth 90 points**  
✦ **Individual Data Collection counts for 9% of your final grade**

### **Group Requirements:**

- Join an Observation Project Group when prompted in Blackboard based on your interests
- Create appropriate coding/scoring method for your assessment data
- Complete data analyses (e.g., compare “younger” to “older” children’s performance using class’s data)
- Each group is required to:
  - ✓ Create a PowerPoint presentation to summarize their project
  - ✓ Present their project and findings at our “Child Development Conference”
  - ✓ Submit 10 multiple-choice questions on their project and findings to class via Blackboard for possible inclusion on final “conference” exam.

- ✦ **My grading of your group’s performance is worth 80 points**
- ✦ **Classmates’ grading of your group’s performance (averaged) is worth 20 points**
- ✦ **Your group members’ evaluation of your contribution (averaged) is worth 20 points**
- ✦ **Total Conference Presentation Points = 80 + 20 + 20 = 120 points**
- ✦ **The Conference Presentation counts for 12% of your final grade**

**Final “Conference” Exam:** There will be a 35-multiple-choice question exam on the last day of class after our Child Development Conference. The questions will cover information from the observation project presentations during the conference. I will choose 5 of the 10 questions submitted by each group to include on the final exam as well as 5 additional questions written by me.

- ✦ **Final Conference Exam is worth 105 points**
- ✦ **Final Conference Exam counts for 10.5% of your final grade**

**Extra Credit Opportunities (not required):** There are three opportunities for extra credit in this course (additional opportunities may become available but are not guaranteed). Extra credit opportunities will always be made available to the class as a whole – individuals may not negotiate special arrangements for extra credit. Additional extra credit will **NOT** be given in any circumstances after final grades have been posted.

You will have the opportunity to complete three **Goal-setting & Reflection Surveys** in Achieve for 5 points each (15 points total). These surveys focus on ways to help students develop greater self-awareness and study habits to succeed in this course. The three surveys will be available at different points in the semester (see below).

**Please note that the deadlines for completing the extra credit assignments are firm and listed in Achieve and below:**

- **Intro Survey** – available first 2 weeks of course (due by 11pm on Sun. 9/7)
- **Checkpoint Survey #1** – available after Exam #1 (due by 11pm on Sun. 11/2)
- **Checkpoint Survey #2** – available after Exam #2 (due by 11pm on Sun. 11/30)

### **Additional Course Support in Achieve**

**Skills for Success (not required):** Students come to this course with varying levels of school experience, academic performance, and interest in Child Development. Although this course can be challenging, it is structured so that students with different learning styles and preferences can all succeed. For students who feel they may want an introduction or a review of skills needed to succeed in this course (or any college course!), you have access to a learning module within Achieve, ***Skills for Development Psych Success***. Within this module, you will find the following assignments:

- How to Read and Use a Syllabus
- How to Take Notes
- How to Read a Research Article
- How to Manage Your Time

**\*\*Please note that these are optional and will not count towards your grade. They are available for those who would like to use them. I hope they are helpful 😊.**

### **Grade Evaluation**

As indicated above, credit for this course will be based on student performance in these areas. You can track your grades here:

### **Grading scale to determine your final grade for the course:**



<b>Student Assessment:</b>	<b>Points Earned:</b>	<b>Points Possible:</b>
<b><i>Intro Assignments</i></b>		
Achieve Orientation		5
Pre-Test (for completion)		5
<b><i>Developing Lives</i></b>		
Activities (total)		35
Introduction Quiz		4
Prenatal Quiz		4
Babies & Toddler Quiz		4
Early Childhood Quiz		4
Middle Childhood Quiz		4
Adolescence Quiz		4
<b><i>Learning Curves</i></b>		
One per reading (23 total x 2 points)		46
<b><i>Learning Activity</i></b>		120
<b><i>Exam #1</i></b>		150
<b><i>Exam #2</i></b>		150
<b><i>Exam #3</i></b>		150
<b><i>Observation Project</i></b>		
Data Collection		90
Conference Presentation		120
Final Conference Exam		105
<b><i>Extra Credit</i></b>		
<b>Total Points Earned</b>		<b>1,000</b>

<b>Grade:</b>	<b>Percentage:</b>	<b>Points Needed:</b>
A	93% and above	at least 925
A-	90% - 92%	at least 895
B+	87% - 89%	at least 865
B	83% - 86%	at least 825
B-	80% - 82%	at least 795
C+	77% - 79%	at least 765
C	73% - 76%	at least 725
C-	70% - 72%	at least 695
D+	67% - 69%	at least 665
D	63% - 66%	at least 625
F	62% or lower	624 or fewer

### Course Schedule:

Class #	Dates	Readings (To be done before class)	Topics & In-Class Activities	
			Lecture	Activity & Deadlines
1	8/26		Introduction to Class	
2	8/28	Welcome to Achieve, Ch 1.1 Review topics & sign-up	Why Study Children?	Group Meet Up
3	9/2	Ch. 1.2 & 1.3	Child Development Themes	
4	9/4	Ch. 1.4	Research Methods	Validity
5	9/9	Ch. 2.1 & 2.2	Prenatal	
6	9/11	Ch. 2.3 & 2.4	Childbirth & Newborn	
7	9/16	Ch. 3.1 & 3.2	Nature & Nurture	
8	9/18	Ch. 3.3 & 3.4	Brain & Body	
9	9/23	Ch. 4.1 & 4.2	Piaget & Info-Processing	Group: Piaget
10	9/25	Ch. 4.3, 4.4, & 4.5	Sociocultural & Dyn. Systems	Group: Vygotsky
11	9/30	Ch. 5.2	Motor Development	<b>Observation Data Due!</b>
12	10/2	Ch. 5.3	Learning & Memory in Infancy	
13	<b>10/7</b>	<b>Study for Exam</b>	<b>Exam #1 (Chapters 1 - 5)</b>	
14	10/9	Ch. 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, & 6.4	Communicative Behaviors	<b>*Obs. Groups Assigned</b>
15	10/14	Ch. 7.1 & "Causality" in 7.2	*Conceptual Knowledge on BB*	<b>*Project ½ Workday</b>
16	10/16	Ch. 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, & 8.5	Intelligence – Testing & Influences	Intelligence Tests
	<b>10/21</b>	<b>No Class! Fall Break!</b>		
17	10/23	Ch. 9.1 & 9.2	Psychoanalytic & Learning	Group: Erikson
18	10/28	Ch. 9.3 & 9.4	Social Cognition & Ecological	Group: Bronfenbrenner
19	10/30	Ch. 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 10.4, & 10.5	Emotion Regulation, Influences & Understanding	Group: Temperament
20	<b>11/4</b>	<b>Study for Exam</b>	<b>Exam #2 (Chapters 6 - 10)</b>	
21	11/6	Ch. 11.1	Attachment	Group: Harlow
	<b>11/7</b>	<b>Deadline for Withdrawal</b>		

**Course Schedule continued**

Class #	Dates	Readings (To be done before class)	Lecture	Activity / Deadlines
22	11/11	Ch. 11.2	Self-Identity	Group: Marcia
23	11/13	Ch. 12.2	Family Dynamics	Group: Baumrind
24	11/18	Ch. 12.1, 12.3, & 12.4	*Family Structure & Context on BB*	<b>*Project ½ Workday Final Exam Questions Due at end of class!</b>
25	11/20	Ch. 13.1, 13.2, 13.3, & 13.4	Friendship & Peer Groups	Group: Sociometric Status
26	11/25	Ch. 14.1	Morality	Group: Kohlberg
	<b>11/27</b>	<b>No Class! Thanksgiving Recess!</b>		
27	12/2	<b>Study for Exam</b>	<b>Exam #3 (Chapters 11 - 14)</b>	
28	12/4	Conference Preparation	<b>Project Workday</b>	
<b>Finals Week</b>		Conference Preparation...	<b>Our Child Development Conference!</b>	
			<b>Final Exam (over conference presentations)</b>	
			 <b>meets in same classroom, see below</b> 	

<b>Section 03 (8:30am section) 2132 Au Sable</b>	<b>Section 06 (11:30am section) 1310 Au Sable</b>
8:00 – 9:50 am	10:00 – 11:50 pm
Thursday	Tuesday
December 11 <sup>th</sup>	December 9 <sup>th</sup>