![Grand Valley State University logo]

Program Area: Psychology
Course Number: PSY 301
Course Title: Child Development
Term/Year: Fall 2025
Course Location: Online
Day & Time: Asynchronous
Instructor: Carla A. Kevern (Pronouns: she/her/hers)
Office Hours: By zoom - email to set appointment
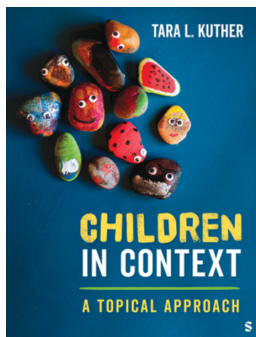**Phone**: 231-215-3877 (text me if you have an urgent question)
Email: kevernca@gvsu.edu (expect a response within 24 hours on weekdays)

Course Overview: Students will examine biological, cognitive, emotional, and social influences on development from prenatal stages through adolescence. Emphasis is placed on the interaction between children and their environments, including families, culture, and society. Through readings, discussions, and applied assignments, students will gain a comprehensive understanding of developmental processes and their relevance to education, healthcare, and human services.

Textbook: Children in Context: A Topical Approach by Tara L. Kuther
Textbook link: GVSU Save (Found in the course)

Helpful Resources
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLkdPuvIrx4zDE-M7cfBcXIp8vZd9Fy4aC
https://www.apa.org/topics/children
https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/early-childhood

Technology Requirements:
1. Access to Blackboard Learning Management System
2. Regular access to a computer or tablet
3. Reliable, high-speed internet connection
4. A computer with a video camera and microphone

If you do not have a computer or reliable internet access, please **contact me and/or review the resources available on campus, including on-campus computer labs.

Class Format: The class sessions will utilize lectures, discussions, and additional methods to foster active participation. Class sessions and the text supplement each other – both cover material that will not (and cannot) be covered in the other format. Because class sessions highlight essential concepts within the text, students are strongly encouraged to complete assigned readings **before** the corresponding lecture and attend all class sessions. Educational research suggests that students should devote around two to four hours per credit hour they take. PSY301 is a three-credit course, so this equates to spending around six to nine hours a week on this class, which includes time spent in the classroom.

This course includes:
1. Assigned reading (Approximately two hours per week)
2. Recorded lectures (Approximately two and a half hours per week)
3. Additional assignments (Approximately half an hour per week)

**Please consider how the remaining one to four hours of this course are spent.

Date(s)	Chapter(s)	Topic(s)	Assignments Due
08/25/2025	Ch. 1	Introduction to Child Development: Themes, Theories, and Research	Intro Video due Wed 8/27 Intro Video Comments due Sat 8/30 Reading activities and Quiz due Fri 8/29 Syllabus Quiz due Fri 8/29
09/01/2025	Ch. 2	Biological and Environmental Foundations of Development	Labor Day Recess (No Classes Aug 31–Sep 1) Discussion Post due Wed 9/3 Comments due Sat 9/6 Reading activities and Quiz due Fri 9/5
09/08/2025	Ch. 3	The Prenatal Period, Birth, and the Newborn	Discussion Post due Wed 9/10 Comments due Sat 9/13 Reading activities and Quiz due Fri 9/12
09/15/2025	Ch. 4	Brain, Perception, and Motor Development	Discussion Post due Wed 9/17 Comments due Sat 9/20 Reading activities and Quiz due Fri 9/19
09/22/2025	Ch. 5	Physical Development and Health	Discussion Post due Wed 9/24 Comments due Sat 9/27 Reading activities and Quiz due Fri 9/26
09/29/2025	Ch. 6	Cognitive Change: Cognitive-Developmental and Sociocultural Approaches	Discussion Post due Wed 10/1 Comments due Sat 10/4 Reading activities and Quiz due Fri 10/3
10/06/2025	—	Review Study Guide	Exam 1 Due Fri 10/10 @ 11:59 pm Case Study 1 Due Sat 10/11

Date	Chapter	Topic	Assignments
10/13/2025	Ch. 8 Ch 7	Intelligence Information Processing Theory	Discussion Post due Wed 10/15 Comments due Sat 10/18 Reading activities and **Quizzes** due Fri 10/17
10/20/2025	Ch. 9	Language Development	Discussion Post due Wed 10/15 Comments due Sat 10/18 Reading activities and Quiz due Fri 10/17
10/27/2025	Ch. 10	Emotional Development	Discussion Post due Wed 10/29 Comments due Sat 11/1 Reading activities and Quiz due Fri 10/31
11/03/2025	Ch. 11	Self, Identity, and Personality	Discussion Post due Wed 11/5 Comments due Sat 11/8 Reading activities and Quiz due Fri 11/7
11/10/2025	Ch. 12	Moral Development	Discussion Post due Wed 11/12 Comments due Sat 11/15 Reading activities and Quiz due Fri 11/14
11/17/2025	Ch. 13	Gender	Case Study 2 open Due Sat 11/22
11/24/2025	Ch. 14	Families	Thanksgiving Recess (Nov 26–30) Discussion Post due Tue 11/25 Comments due Tue 12/2 Reading activities and Quiz due Fri 12/5
12/01/2025	Ch. 15	Contexts of Development	Discussion Post due Wed 12/3 Comments due Sat 12/6 Reading activities and Quiz due Fri 12/5
12/08/2025	—	Review Study Guide	Final Exam Due Sat 12/13 @ 11:59 pm

*This schedule (including assigned readings) is subject to change. Students are responsible for any changes announced in class or on Blackboard.

Course Objectives (Outcomes):

Subject	Outcomes
Introduction to Child Development	Explain key themes, theories, and research methods in child development; Identify major historical and contemporary perspectives on development.
Biological and Environmental Foundations	Describe the interaction of genetics, biology, and environment in shaping development; Explain how heredity, prenatal influences, and contexts affect growth.
Prenatal Development, Birth, and Newborns	Outline stages of prenatal development and major influences on health; Describe newborn capabilities and early adaptation.
Brain, Perception, and Motor Development	Summarize brain development and plasticity in childhood; Explain how perception and motor skills develop and interact with experiences.

Physical Development and Health	Identify patterns of growth and health across childhood and adolescence; Discuss influences of nutrition, physical activity, and health care.
Cognitive Development	Compare cognitive-developmental and sociocultural theories of development; Apply key concepts from Piaget, Vygotsky, and contemporary perspectives.
Information Processing	Describe attention, memory, and problem-solving processes; Explain how information-processing skills develop across childhood.
Intelligence	Define intelligence and explain major theories and assessments; Discuss influences of genetics, environment, and culture on intelligence.
Language Development	Describe stages of language acquisition and theories explaining development; Explain the influence of biology and environment on language learning.
Emotional Development	Identify key emotional milestones in childhood; Explain the role of temperament, attachment, and regulation of emotions.
Self, Identity, and Personality	Explain how self-concept, self-esteem, and identity form and change; Describe personality development and factors influencing individual differences.
Moral Development	Summarize theories of moral reasoning and behavior; Explain how family, peers, and culture influence moral development.
Gender	Differentiate between biological sex, gender identity, and gender roles; Explain how gender develops and affects social experiences.
Families	Describe how families influence development across childhood; Identify diverse family structures and their roles in development.
Contexts of Development	Analyze the influence of schools, peers, media, and culture on development; Apply knowledge of context to support children's growth and well-being.
Introduction to Child Development	Explain key themes, theories, and research methods in child development; Identify major historical and contemporary perspectives on development.

Assignments:

Reading Assignments (10 points) Students are expected to complete the reading assignments including readings, polls, knowledge checks, and videos. *These reading assignments are due every Friday.*

(10 points) Students are expected to complete Chapter Quizzes for the corresponding Chapters assigned for the week. **There may be multiple quizzes posted for one week. Please refer to your syllabus to ensure you are aware of the number of quizzes required for that week.** *These quizzes will cover important information from your readings and will be due every Friday.* You must complete the readings and review the quiz questions, as these quizzes will help better prepare you for the two exams.

Discussions (5 points) Each week, the students will complete a discussion post in the appropriate section on Blackboard for that week. **There may be multiple discussions posted for one week. Please refer to your syllabus to ensure you are aware of the number of discussions required for that week.** These posts should include five questions and comments total about the readings. *One of the comments must explain how you would apply the week's topic to your current or future career.* The

discussion posts will be due on Wednesday of that week. Include the readings in your discussions to gain full points.

Discussion Comments (5 points) The students are expected to post discussion comments responding to their classmates' discussion posts each week. These comments should answer at least one of your classmates' discussion post questions. *Each student must comment on at least three discussion posts per week to receive full credit.* **If there are multiple discussion assignments, you must respond to at least three discussion posts in each thread.** Thus, each student should have three separate comments each week. These discussion comments will be due every Saturday.

Below is the grading rubric that will be used for the discussion and discussion comments:

Points Given:	5	4	3	2	0
Clarity: The student communicates clearly and effectively. The use of linguistic conventions (grammar, syntax, organization) and of language enable the reader to follow the argument.	Very clear – all points understood	Mostly clear	Kind-of clear	Not very clear	Did not complete
Accuracy: Student demonstrates accurate knowledge and understanding of the definitions and their relationships.	Concepts described accurately	Mostly accurate	Kind-of accurate	Not very accurate	Did not complete
Detailed/Specific: Student adequately develops their ideas with an appropriate length.	Very detailed	Mostly detailed – some gaps	Kind-of detailed	Not very detailed	Did not complete
Classmate Response: The student responds to their classmates' posts in a thoughtful manner. (minimum 50 words)	Thoughtful response- detailed explanation	Mostly detailed/ Thoughtful but some gaps	Kind-of detailed	Not very detailed, minimum requirement not met	Did not complete

Case Studies (15 points). Students will conceptualize two case studies across the course of the semester. These case studies will require the students to identify the symptoms, effects, etiology, and basic treatment considerations. Case studies will be available for six days and close on a Saturday.

Exams (50 points). Students will complete two exams throughout the course. These exams may include multiple-choice, matching, true and false, fill-in-the-blank, and essays. The first exam will be open for five days and close on a Friday. The second exam will be available for six days and close on a Saturday. Students have a two-hour time limit to complete each exam. Study guides will be provided.

Late Work/Make-up Policy: Given all assignments can be completed throughout the week, there are no make-up opportunities for assignments, and late assignments are not accepted. In general, deadlines for assignments are at 11:59 p.m. on the due date. Late assignments will be penalized four points each day it is late unless accommodations apply. Late discussion boards will not be accepted. See below for more information regarding the Late Work/Make-up Policy.

Grading

Assignments	Points	Grading Scale	
Discussion Posts	70	95%+	A
Discussion Comments	70	90-94%	A-
Quizzes	150	87-89%	B+
Reading Assignments	150	83-86%	B
Case Studies	30	80-82%	B-
Exam 1	50	77-79%	C+
Exam 2	50	73-76%	C
		70-72%	C-
		67-69%	D+
		63-66%	D
Total Possible	390	Below 62%	F

1. Incomplete grades are given only with a doctor's excuse for not being able to complete the course during the term. You must be passing the course at the time to receive an incomplete.
2. Make-up examinations are not among my favorite things and will only be given for illnesses accompanied by a doctor's note; deaths, also supported by documentation and or other catastrophes. An exam conflicting with your vacation is **not** a sufficient excuse for missing an exam.

University Policies and Resources

This course is subject to the GVSU policies listed at *http://www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies/*.

Withdrawing from a Course: The ultimate deadline for withdrawing from this course (or any course at GVSU) is November 10th at 5pm.

Mask Policy: Face coverings, such as masks, must be worn in the classroom at all times under all Alert Levels except 0. When GVSU is under Alert Level 0, students and professors can choose to wear masks in classrooms if they wish and are required to wear masks if exposed to COVID-19 or showing symptoms. Masks are available at campus offices. GVSU's policy on face coverings is posted on the Lakers Together website. Students unable to wear a face covering due to a medical condition should contact Disability Support Services (DSR) to discuss their situation.

Attendance Policy: Attendance is not required at class sessions but is strongly encouraged. If you miss class, you are strongly encouraged to access the PowerPoint outlines, fill these in with notes from your classmates, and contact your professor if you have any questions about this material.

Accommodations for Late Work/Make-Ups: Although attendance at class sessions is not required, your professor must monitor missed deadlines and determine standards and a process by which

students can make up missed work. Importantly, suppose a student misses the deadline for an assessment and is seeking an accommodation (i.e., permission to turn it in late). In that case, they must **contact the professor via email within 48 hours of the deadline with an explanation**. From there, **the professor will grant accommodations based upon 1) the cause for the missed deadline and 2) the extent to which the student's ability to complete the assignment was impaired**.

Specifically, the reason for the missed deadline is critical. The University distinguishes between "excused" and "unexcused" absences. Although we aren't keeping track of absences, this language is useful for characterizing the types of missed deadlines – we can miss deadlines for "excused" reasons (due to something unexpected or beyond our control, despite our best efforts) or "unexcused" reasons. Consistent with University policy, missed deadlines are excused and eligible for accommodations for the following reasons:
1) active participation in an intercollegiate event;
2) observance of religious holidays,
3) military duty;
4) jury duty, or appearance in court or other government hearings;
5) student medical conditions that limit time or ability to engage with the course material;
6) birth or adoption of child;
7) attendance at an academic and/or professional conference;
8) medical or professional appointments (e.g., job interviews);
9) medical conditions of a loved one if the student is serving as a caretaker;
10) funerals or memorial services; and
11) previously scheduled family celebrations (e.g., weddings, etc.).

As you might guess, unexcused reasons include forgetting or mixing up deadlines, failure to properly upload the assignment on BB, leaving campus early for the weekend, etc. Ideally, documentation should be provided and readily available for most of the reasons listed above, but if documentation is not available, we can discuss that. If you are unsure whether you are eligible for an accommodation or need to provide documentation, please reach out. Academic life continues to be strange and challenging, and we all know that the pandemic can have both physical AND psychological impacts on a person. Please reach out if you need help.

Blackboard Access: The course Blackboard (BB) website is essential to your success. It is the student's responsibility to visit BB regularly and stay up to date with the material posted in this forum. BB will be used in the following ways:

> **1) Grades**: All grades will be posted in the BB Gradebook in a timely manner. For security reasons, I only discuss grades over email if the student initiates that conversation and uses their GVSU email account.
> **2) Assignments/Assessments**: Assignments will be posted in corresponding folders in the Assignments section of BB. These folders will also have a place to upload completed assignments (as Word or PDF documents).
> **3) Announcements**: All major announcements and reminders will be posted on BB. Announcements posted on BB are also sent to students via email.
> **4) Discussion Board**: A discussion board forum will be used to post topic engagement activities.

Classroom Conduct: Please conduct yourself civilly and respectably. In the spirit of academic discourse, you are encouraged to comment, question, and critique ideas from your professor or classmates. Still, you should not attack an individual or otherwise express disrespect. Think about what

you want to say, edit if necessary, then speak (or type). Please be mindful of how your behavior may impact others and limit distracting behavior (e.g., side conversations in class or using your computer for things other than taking notes). Cell phones should be silenced in some way during class unless the class session activities require cell phone use or there is an urgent matter that requires you to be available via phone (in which case, let your professor know!). Let's maintain the social contract of mutual respect. Disrespectful or distracting students will be called out and warned; persistent issues can result in grade deductions.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: If you have a learning, physical, or other disability, please contact your professor as well as Disability Support Resources (DSR) at (616) 331-2490 for assistance as soon as possible. Even if you have already documented your disability with DSR, please connect with your faculty member to discuss your specific needs. Furthermore, if you have a disability and think you will need assistance evacuating the classroom and/or building in an emergency during in-person meetings, please make your professor aware so that the university can develop a plan to assist you. You may also access resources at http://www.gvsu.edu/dsr. The university is eager to work with you to meet your learning goals. All discussions related to disabilities will remain confidential.

Statement on Academic Dishonesty: The following is adapted from the Student Code, Sections 223.00 and 223.01: The principles of truth and honesty are recognized as fundamental to a community of teachers and scholars. This means that all academic work will be done by the student to whom it is assigned without unauthorized aid of any kind.

    a. No student shall knowingly procure, provide or accept any materials which contain questions or answers to any examination or assignment.

    b. No student shall complete, in part or in total, any examination or assignment for another person.

    c. No student shall allow any examination or assignment to be completed, in part or in total, by another person.

    d. No student shall submit work that has been previously graded, or is being submitted concurrently to more than one course, without specific authorization from the instructor(s) of the class(es) to which the student wishes to submit it.

    e. No student shall knowingly plagiarize or copy the work of another person and submit it as his/her own. Offering the work of someone else as one's own is plagiarism. Any ideas or materials taken from another source for either written or oral presentation must be fully acknowledged. The language or ideas taken from another may range from isolated formulas, sentences, or paragraphs, to entire articles copied from the internet, books, periodicals, speeches, or from the writings of other students. The offering of materials assembled or collected by others in the form of projects or collections without acknowledgement also is considered plagiarism. In short, any student who fails to give credit in written or oral work for the ideas or materials that have been taken from another is guilty of plagiarism.

Students can (and are encouraged to) study together, but all academic work should be the sole work of the individual student unless otherwise stated. Students should strive to avoid the *appearance* of dishonesty; these are behaviors associated with academic dishonesty (i.e., checking your phone during quizzes, completing quizzes together) that raise concerns that you may be potentially dishonest in your work. Any violation of academic integrity, even on a small scale, can result in a failing grade in the course. The University is implementing a new oversight process for cases of academic dishonesty – this process requires all professors to report all cases to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution, which then investigates each case and decides.

Psych Friends Resource: If you feel you could use some extra help/guidance/support in any academic domain or for your well-being, please consider scheduling an appointment with a mentor through Psych Friends. Psych Friends mentors are upper-level undergraduate peer mentors who are trained to provide support in many areas including: effective study and time management techniques, exam preparation and reflection skills, psychology and behavioral neuroscience major requirements, tips for engaging in the field, strategies for education continuation, methods for maintaining physical and mental health. Schedule an appointment here: https://www.gvsu.edu/navigate. Questions? Email psychfriends@gvsu.edu .

AI Policy Statement
We treat AI-based assistance, such as ChatGPT and Copilot, the same way we treat collaboration with other people: you are welcome to talk about your ideas and work with other people, both inside and outside the class, as well as with AI-based assistants.
However, all work you submit must be your own. You should never include in your assignment anything that was not written directly by you without proper citation (including quotation marks and in-line citation for direct quotes). Including anything you did not write in your assignment without proper citation will be treated as an academic misconduct case. If you are unsure where the line is between collaborating with AI and copying from AI, we recommend the following:

1. Never hit "copy" within your conversation with an AI assistant. You can copy your own work into your conversation, but do not copy anything from the conversation back into your assignment. Instead, use your interaction with the AI assistant as a learning experience, then let your assignment reflect your improved understanding.

2. Do not have your assignment and the AI agent open at the same time. Similar to above, use your conversation with the AI as a learning experience, then close the interaction down, open your assignment, and let your assignment reflect your revised knowledge. This includes avoiding using AI directly integrated into your composition environment: just as you should not let a classmate write content directly into your submission, so also avoid using tools that directly add content to your submission.