

CHLD 101: Introduction to Early Childhood Education

Historical Milestones Early Learning Center and Preschool

Learning Outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Analyze critical, current trends and issues in early childhood field as they reflect the historical roots of early childhood education, emphasizing the impact of the dominant culture and the influence of other diverse cultural groups.3. Compare and contrast funding sources, organization’s structure, program practices and legal requirements, and policies for diverse early childhood settings and programs.9. Identify observation, screening, and assessment techniques and demonstrate competencies in observation techniques, synthesis, and analysis by observing in diverse early childhood programs and analyzing information gathered with respect to the role and influence of culture, linguistic, and ability diversity.
DEC Recommended Practices	<ol style="list-style-type: none">C6. Learning environments meet accepted standards of quality including curriculum, child-staff ratios, group size, and physical design of classroom.
NAEYC Standards	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1c. Using developmental knowledge to create healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging learning environments.4d. Reflecting on their own practice to promote positive outcomes for each child.

For this observation you will be visiting Milestones Early Learning Center & Preschool. Milestones is one of the oldest child care centers in North America. The doors first opened in January of 1908 as the Day Nursery Association. They will be sharing both their history with you and their plans for the future. The purpose of this field experience is for you to reflect on how changes over time and in the dominant culture have influenced their target audience over the history of the center.

Before your observation:

- Review Chapter 2: History of Early Childhood Education. Study Milestones Early Learning Center & Preschool’s web page. Available from: <http://celebratemilestones.org/> You will need this information to write your description of the setting. This site also provides many interesting facts about Milestone’s history, as well as answers to some of the observation questions.
- Call (309)829-4202 to schedule an appointment for observing their center. Indicate to the staff that this is your field experience for the Introduction to ECE class. They will plan to give you a brief tour and then visit with you.

Part I: Center Visit. Be prepared to observe within the environment for an hour. While observing, take objective notes on what you observe using one of the observation methods outlined on the class handout “Common Observation Strategies.”

Please remember: When you are undertaking a field experience within an ECE environment, you are looking at one point in time. As a result, what you see may be a specific response to a unique situation and not always reflective of common practices. Therefore, field experiences must be conducted with an

open mind.

Part II: Reflection. Based on your observation completed during Part I, please respond to each of the following:

- Questions pertaining to method:
 - What method of observation did you use to collect data?
 - What did you see as the strengths and weaknesses of this method?
- Questions pertaining to environment:
 - Describe the setting you were observing within, including:
 - Type of facility and classroom
 - Number of children
 - Number of staff
 - Activities occurring during observation time period
 - Other relevant information (whether families were in the room, how children responded to strangers, etc.)
 - What environmental and interaction strategies are used to support child and family diversity?
 - What did you see as the environment's strengths?
 - What did you see as the environment's challenges?
- Questions pertaining to children:
 - Describe the diversity-related characteristics of children within the classroom environment.
 - How were children interacting with the environment?
 - Did you feel there was a sense of classroom community?
 - Did the children seem engaged?
 - Would you suggest any strategies to support further engagement?
- Questions pertaining to staff:
 - How was the staff interacting with the children and each other?
 - Did the staff seem engaged?
 - Would you suggest any strategies to support further engagement?
- Questions specific to Milestones:
 - When, why and how were they founded?
 - How have they changed over their 103 years of operation?
 - Has their target audience changed?
 - How has the influence of diverse cultural groups changed their mission?
 - What are their plans for the future?
- Links to your learning:
 - In what ways did your field experience complement what you have learned in the course?
 - In what ways did your field experience contradict what you have learned in the course?
 - How do observed practices reflect evidence-based practices you have learned about in the course?
 - Did you feel the program was individually and developmentally appropriate?

After you complete your field experience:

- Submit your objective notes collected in Part I and your Reflection developed in Part II to your instructor.