

CHLD 101: Introduction to Early Childhood Education

Montessori Children's Center

Learning Outcomes	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	C4. Play routines are structured to promote interaction, communication, and learning by defining roles for dramatic play, prompting engagement, prompting group friendship activities, and using specialized props.
NAEYC Standards	1c. Using developmental knowledge to create healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging learning environments.

The local Montessori program states on their web site "Our mission is to provide our children with a safe environment, outstanding personal care and love, and exceptional educational development opportunities." The purpose of this field experience is to familiarize you with an example of a historically significant model of early childhood education.

To prepare for this field experience:

- Review Chapter 8: Theories and Approaches.
- Study the local Montessori web page to familiarize yourself with the model and the center and to gather information that you will need later for your description of the setting. Available from: <http://www.montessorichildren.net>
- Call (309) 663-8736 and schedule an appointment. Indicate to the staff that this is your field experience for CHLD 101: Introduction to Early Childhood Education.
- Equip yourself with materials for good note taking - pencils, notebook, etc.

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 Montessori Children's Center
 - Montessori programs refer to their environment as the "third teacher." What did you see to support this claim?
 - Montessori programs use some very specific materials such as items that are self-correcting. What unique toys and/or materials did you see?
 - Did you observe the teachers' roles as being different than in other centers you have visited? If so, how?
- 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?

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