Creative Experience for Young Children

ECYF 252
Fall 2026

Course Overview
Creative and play experiences are essential to the young child's growth and development. Early childhood teachers must have the depth and breadth understanding of the importance of play and creativity for young children as well as the multiple roles that adults assume in the education of young children. This course will give students a foundation for understanding the developmental processes, how children learn through play, and enhancing children's creativity. It will also provide an introduction to design physical and social/emotional learning environments and an opportunity to critically reflect on teaching beliefs and practice in relation to child development theory and personal experience.

Course Objectives
To assist potential teachers to:

1. Understand creativity and the creative process. [InTASC 1, 4, 5, 8] [NAEYC 1, 3 & 4]
2. Identify qualities of creativity and characteristics of creative persons. [InTASC 1] [NAEYC 1 & 3]
3. Become aware of criteria for a creative classroom environment for young children. [InTASC 1, 4, 5, 8] [NAEYC 1, 3, 4 & 5]
4. Learn strategies for helping young children develop their natural creative tendencies. [InTASC 1, 4, 5, 8] [NAEYC 1, 3 & 4]
5. Plan and implement creative art, music, language arts, and play experiences which are appropriate for young children. [InTASC 1, 4, 5, 8] [NAEYC 1, 3, 4 & 5]
6. Understand the value of play for young children's physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and creative development. [InTASC 1] [NAEYC 1]
7. Become skilled in systematically observing the social and cognitive levels of children's play. [InTASC 5, 8] [NAEYC 3]

Required Texts:
Bohart, H., Charner, K., & Koralek, D. (Ed.) (2015). *Spotlight on young children: Exploring Play.* Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Jones. E & Reynolds, G. (2011). *The play's the thing: Teachers' roles in children's play* (2nd Ed). New York: Teacher's College Press.

Other Required Reading: All reading package is on **Canvas**.

All required course materials can be obtained through the Ball State First Day program. All students are automatically enrolled each semester. Please check your bsu.edu email for information about delivery of physical and digital materials. Students who wish to opt out during the Fall 2026 semester must do so by August 30, 2026. Students who opt out are responsible for obtaining all required course materials on their own through the Ball State Bookstore or another retailer. If you opt out, your digital access will expire shortly after, and you will lose access to publisher-provided course content, online assignments, quizzes, and exams.

Policies

University Statement
We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse.

Disability Statement
If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact me as soon as possible. Ball State's Disability Services office coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or dsd@bsu.edu.

Attendance Policy:
This course will adhere to the policy published in the BSU Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities. You are required to attend class on-time and stay for the duration of the class. Not attending class may affect student financial aid. Absences should be discussed with the instructor AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. Missed classes may result in loss of class participation scores or missed assessments. Any make-ups are at the discretion of the instructor and on presentation of a documented excuse satisfactory to the course instructor. No assignments will be accepted past the designated due date without documentation of extenuating circumstances. You will be responsible for any missed class information. Instructor will NOT redistribute or review materials/demos/class notes that were provided during your absence. You will be responsible for arranging to get the class notes and handouts from a fellow student OR for obtaining that class contents from Canvas. Please do not allow lateness or absences to have a negative impact on your success in this class.

Communication (via Canvas ANNOUNCEMENTS and BSU email)
The professor will primarily communicate with you via Canvas ANNOUNCEMENTS. Therefore, it will be critical you always read ALL ANNOUNCEMENTS. Please be certain your CANVAS Account settings are set to notify you when course ANNOUNCEMENTS post. Please check your BSU EMAIL frequently as well.
Open communication throughout the course will be a key factor during our journey. As questions emerge throughout the semester, please email directly to me via BSU email (please indicate in your email which course and section you are enrolled in and are referencing).
My office door will be open throughout the semester for appointments (Tues. & Thurs. 10 – 11 am). Please allow 48 hours' notice for scheduling and confirmation.

Email:
The professor will be readily accessible via BSU account email. However, please do not expect that the professor will be available 24/7. Please allow at least 24 hours for a response. If you didn't receive my response in 48 hours (2 days), please send reminding email to me again with what you've sent it (I always receive so many emails every day. Sometimes I missed important emails with others.). Also, please aware that my email response to you during the weekend will be slower than usual. It is important to note that email is another form of communication and students should present themselves in a professional manner. As such, it is expected that emails from students to the professor contain a salutation, as well as proper grammar and capitalization.

Late Assignments/Late Work:
Due to the length of time provided to complete each assignment, LATE submissions will NOT be accepted unless documentation of a physician's note is submitted to the course instructor for late submission consideration. Late assignments will ONLY be accepted on a case-by-case basis and upon

instructor approval. In the event of an emergency or death in the family, please contact the course instructor as soon as possible to coordinate "instructor approved," alternative due date(s). You must email to the instructor before the due date for asking the instructor approval. If accepted late, they will be subject to **10% point deduction to ANY ABSENCES**.
The final project will NOT be accepted late and revision. Before submit your assignments via Canvas, please recheck your files are included everything needed. Keep in mind your submission is always final.

Participation & Professionalism
In terms of participation, you will be responsible for reading any assigned material ahead of time in order to dialogue with peers and contribute to the broader class discussion. You will be responsible for bringing all required materials (articles, books, journals, etc.) to weekly class meetings. Active engagement in discussions and activities is required and will impact your final grade (see course points breakdown) and includes but is not limited to:

- Listening to others actively
- Voicing disagreement without being disrespectful
- Observing carefully
- Recognizing that multiple points of view are essential
- Reflecting critically on our own ideas and viewpoints
- Understanding teaching as a research process, full of ambiguity and uncertainty
- Demonstrating passion for teaching and learning
- Communicating commitment to high quality education for all children

In terms of professionalism, your actions and words in the field and in the classroom should exemplify the highest respect for children and their families, consideration for others, and maintenance of confidentiality. Disrespectful or disruptive behavior of any kind will not be tolerated. Cell phones, tablets, and laptops are expected to be powered down during all discussions, lectures, and activities unless otherwise indicated by your professor. If you are on your cell phone during class time, you will be marked absent. Photos, videos, or any information about your work in the field must not be shared via social media. Violating your ethical responsibility to maintain confidentiality of the children, families, and colleagues in your field site is considered a serious offense and will result in consequences determined the program and, if necessary, the college and university.

Freedom of Expression
In this course, we are committed to fostering a learning environment that values intellectual diversity, encourages free expression, and promotes open inquiry. As members of the Ball State Community, we treat each person in the Ball State community with civility, courtesy, compassion, and dignity and respect and learn from differences in people, ideas, and opinions. Please review Ball State University's Statement on Freedom of Expression, the resources on Ball State's Freedom of Expression webpage, and Ball State's Beneficence Pledge.

Title IX / Sex Discrimination
Ball State University is committed to maintaining an educational environment free from sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, dating and domestic violence, and stalking. Students who experience or witness conduct that may violate University policy are encouraged to seek support and assistance. The Title IX Office can provide information about reporting options, supportive measures, and available resources. Contact the Title IX Office at 765-285-1545 or titleix@bsu.edu.

Please Note: As your instructor, I am a mandatory reporter. If you disclose information to me about

conduct that may constitute sex discrimination or sexual misconduct, I am required to notify the Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Office will reach out to discuss available resources, supportive measures, and reporting options. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, you may contact the Counseling Center or the Center for Survivor Support.

Pregnancy and Related Conditions
Ball State University provides reasonable modifications for students affected by pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. Students seeking academic, housing, or other modifications are encouraged to contact the Title IX Office as early as possible to discuss available options and support. For assistance, contact the Title IX Office at 765-285-1545 or titleix@bsu.edu.@

University Grade Appeal Policy
If you believe you received a final course grade that does not reflect your performance due to fairness or a procedural issue, you have the right to file an appeal within 5 school days after final grades are posted by the Office of the Registrar. Review the University Grade Appeal Policy and Process.]

Student Academic Ethics Policy
Honesty, trust, and personal responsibility are fundamental attributes of the university community. Academic dishonesty and other forms of academic misconduct threaten the foundation of an institution dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and will not be tolerated. To maintain its credibility and reputation, and to equitably assign evaluations of scholastic and creative performance, Ball State University is committed to maintaining a climate that upholds and values the highest standards of academic integrity. Visit the VPAA's academic integrity website (Students tab) for resources on understanding academic integrity, citing sources properly, and avoiding inadvertent academic dishonesty. To learn about BSU's academic integrity expectations and students' rights, please read the University Student Academic Ethics Policy.

Academic integrity violations include giving or receiving an unfair academic advantage (cheating), presenting someone else's ideas or work as your own (plagiarism), and falsifying academic records. Unless otherwise indicated, you must work independently by yourself. Check with me if you are unsure whether something constitutes academic dishonesty. Examples of academic integrity violations include but are not limited to:

- Using resources not authorized by the instructor (including devices, AI tools, hidden notes, and open books).
- Using a generative AI system or a person to complete academic assignments such as response papers, discussion posts, essays, or any other assignment when such use is not explicitly permitted by the assignment instructions or the instructor.
- Utilizing another person or a generative AI system to take a quiz, examination, or similar evaluation in place of oneself.
- Presenting as one's own work the ideas, representations or words of another person or of a GenAI system without customary and proper acknowledgment of sources or of the AI tool(s) used.
- Using generative AI systems to analyze data, conduct research, or generate content that is included in an assignment (images, graphs, charts, tables, etc.) without proper documentation, citation, and attribution of this AI use.
- Using commercial study websites to find answers to graded assignments (Chegg, Course Hero, StudyPool, OneClass, etc.).
- Without the instructor's written permission, giving away, buying, or selling graded assignments class notes, exams, study guides, or other course materials to other students or to third-party vendors (Course Hero, Chegg, 24HourAnswers, etc.).
- Working with another person on any assignment other than authorized group projects.
- Sharing or allowing others to access your files, whether done with permission or not.

- Reusing your own work from another semester, course, or section.
- Sharing answers with others during exams (passing notes, texting, whispering, gesturing)
- Discussing exam questions and answers with students who have not taken the exam.
- Soliciting others to complete work for you.

We are strongly committed to assigning grades based on students' honest efforts on exams and other class assignments. All students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty. There will be no excuses accepted for plagiarism, cheating, or any other act that suggests the student has not fulfilled his/her academic responsibilities in this course. Consequences of academic dishonesty will be determined by the professor after meeting with the student suspected of a violation of this policy; faculty members are authorized to assign penalties up to an "F" in the course.

AI Statement
As you work on and submit assignments this semester, know that using generative AI tools to complete your assignments is a violation of Ball State's Academic Ethics Policy unless the AI use is explicitly approved by the faculty member. In general, students may not submit any work generated by an AI program as their own. Doing so is plagiarism. In courses and assignments where AI use is permitted, faculty will have guidelines for that use. Work created outside of those guidelines will be considered an Academic Ethics Policy violation. If a student's grade is affected by an academic ethics violation, faculty are required to report the violation to the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs who oversees the Student Academic Ethics policy and maintains records of its violations.

No Generative AI Use (No GenAI use permitted for any coursework)
All work produced and/or submitted in this course should reflect your own ideas and demonstrate your current knowledge, abilities, and skills. Therefore, GenAI should not be used to complete any portion of the assignment(s). Doing so constitutes a violation of Ball State University's Student Academic Ethics Policy.

Electronic Device Policy (e.g., Cell Phone/iPad or iPod/MP3 Player or a Laptop):
Turn off all electronic devices before the beginning of class: Texting or cell phone usage is not allowed at any time. You may only use a laptop for group discussion via Canvas or read required texts (digital texts). If you have a special need for keeping your cell phone on during class, please inform your instructor ahead of time, and then, if approved, please keep the phone on vibrate so as not to disturb class presentations, discussions, or videos.

Course Content Ownership
As the course instructor, I retain the rights to all course content, including this syllabus. Students may not reproduce, distribute, or publicly post course materials without my permission. Selling or distributing course materials may violate the Ball State Code of Contact and/or The Information Technology Users' Privileges and Responsibilities Policy.
https://ballstate.policytech.com/dotNet/documents/?docid=244&public=true

Any violations will be referred to Dr. Mike Gillilan, Director of Student Rights and Community Standards.

Respect Policy:
You are expected to act in a respectful manner toward your professor and classmates. Use of profanity, rudeness, and angry outbursts, or refusal to participate in classroom activities, repeated tardiness, and leaving the classroom prior to class dismissal are just some examples of disruptive behavior. If you engage in disruptive behavior, I will ask you to change your conduct and will inform you of possible suspension or dismissal from the class.

Diversity Statement
Ball State University aspires to be a university that attracts and retains a diverse faculty, staff and student body. We are committed to ensuring that all members of the campus community are welcome through our practice of valuing the various experiences and world views of those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse as evident in our Beneficence Pledge. For Bias Incident Response information, go to http://cms.bsu.edu/campuslife/multiculturalcenter/bias-incident-reporting or email mc2@bsu.edu.

Statement about Indiana Standards:
All lesson and activity plans created in EDEL Core Classes need to include standards from the Indiana State Academic Standards available at www.doe.in.gov/standards.

Emergency Response Guidelines
The Ball State University Response Guidelines are available at http://cms.bsu.edu/about/administrativeoffices/emergencyprepared. We will review the procedures for responding to emergencies during the first week of class.

Emergency Preparedness
While participating in P-6 schools, teacher candidates should familiarize themselves with emergency response protocols of all kinds. Many types of emergencies can occur while you are in a school; such as severe weather, active shooter, or fire to name a few. It is your responsibility to request that your cooperating practicum teacher review the emergency response guidelines for your class and for the school. In addition, all teacher education candidates are required to complete CRASE (Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events) training during their academic career at BSU. Please notify your instructor at the beginning of the semester if you have special needs or will require assistance related to your ability to prepare for or respond to emergencies.

Classes Canceled – Campus Closings:
Announcements of class cancellations and/or campus closings will be made on the campus home page. In the case of an emergency, weather-related or otherwise, please check the web page at cms.bsu.edu for information on the buildings and times of the closing. While information may be broadcast by radio and television, this should be confirmed by the web page, which is the official announcement of the campus and which will be the information used to determine issues related to student attendance, rescheduling of tests, and other concerns.

Classes Changed to Canvas (online)
In the case of an emergency, or weather-related, we will have classes at Canvas class instead of Face to Face meetings. This should be confirmed by email as early as possible. Please check your BSU email or Canvas Announcements for information on changing to Canvas classes.

BSU Writing Center:
Upon graduation with a teaching degree you will be qualified to teach reading and writing. Therefore, it is imperative that you have, and can demonstrate, adequate writing skill. Spelling, grammar, and organization will count toward your grade in all written work and oral presentations. Please proofread all work.
All writers improve with practice and feedback, so as a student in this course, you are encouraged to use the Writing Center to get additional feedback on your writing. The Writing Center can help you at any stage of the writing process, whether you're just getting started and need help brainstorming or when you're wrapping up a project and just want a second set of eyes. We work with writers from all disciplines and with all kinds of writing, including essays, reports, reflections, research projects, web content, lesson plans, slideshows, poster presentations, resumes, and other digital or print texts.

You can choose from three appointment types: getting started on a new project (Planning appointment), discussing an existing draft (Feedback appointment), or scheduling time to work, with a tutor on hand to keep you motivated (Accountability appointment). To schedule a free appointment, go to bsu.edu/writingcenter. We offer online appointments any time we're open, or you can meet a tutor face-to-face in Robert Bell 295 during weekdays and Bracken Library First Floor West in the evenings. Make sure you plan ahead, because appointments book quickly!

High-Impact Practices

Ball State University seeks to provide each undergraduate student a premier educational experience. As such, a strategic imperative, as defined by our strategic plan, is that every student will complete at least one course that includes one of the following high-impact practices.

Undergraduate Research
Immersive Learning
Study Abroad or Away
Societal Issues or Global Challenge

This course includes societal issues in schools about crisis of creativity and play.

InTASC Standards

InTASC standards 1, 3, 4, 5, and 8 will be emphasized in this course. They are:

Standard 1: Learner Development.

The teacher understands how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, and designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences.

Standard 3: Learning Environments

The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self motivation.

Standard 4: Content Knowledge.

The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content.

Standard 5: Application of Content

The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issue

Standard 8: Instructional Strategies.

The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.

NAEYC Standards

NAEYC standards 1, 3, 4, and 5 will be addressed in this course. They include:

Standard 1: Child Development and Learning

Early childhood education teachers have a broad and comprehensive understanding of young children's development, diversity, and learning, and demonstrate the ability to provide experiences for all children that promote development and learning.

Standard 3: Observation, Documentation, and Assessment

Early childhood education teachers have a broad and comprehensive understanding of observation, documentation, and assessment, and demonstrate the ability to use these procedures to positively influence development and learning for young children.

Standard 4: Developmentally Appropriate Methodology for Early Education

Early childhood education teachers have a broad and comprehensive understanding of developmentally appropriate methods, instructional strategies, and learning tools, and demonstrate the ability to plan and use these methods, strategies, and tools to positively influence young children's development and learning.

Standard 5: Learning Environment

Early childhood education teachers have a broad and comprehensive understanding of learning environments, and demonstrate the ability to establish safe, supportive, and productive learning environments for young children.

Course Assignments/ Requirements

Assignment Submission Policy

- All assignments should be submitted as Word documents with extensions of .doc or .docx unless otherwise indicated in the assignment description.
- Assignments, unless otherwise indicated, should be submitted using the assignment link in the module**.**

Grading Policy

- It is my policy that appropriate evaluation of your academic performance is an integral part of your learning experience.
- In the absence of mistakes, fraud, bad faith or incompetence, I will be the key decision-maker on the assignment of grades.

The course requirements listed below are brief descriptions of each assignment. **Further details and assignment rubrics will be announced via Canvas.** Those more detailed descriptions are considered to be an extension of this syllabus and all criteria contained in them will be assessed as part of each assignment.

Be prepared for all assignments including **readings** for understanding the class **discussions and activities.**

Extra Credit points are NOT provided. Please concentrate on completing assignments to the best of your ability. I am always willing to review drafts of assignments, but need to have 24 hours in order to complete the review. Also, questions about assignments will not be answered after 8:00 pm the evening before an assignment is due, so be sure to plan ahead!

Written work is assessed on its quality and accuracy. All written work must be submitted using the American Psychological Association (APA) format 7th ed.) for citations and bibliography. There are many web sites with APA format guidelines (I recommend Purdue Owl) or you can purchase the APA format book at the bookstores.

Please make sure your papers are **free of spelling and grammatical errors. All Papers** should be **typed in Times New Roman**, 12 point font, double-spaced, have **page numbers**, with your name, and **name your documents in the following way Last name_assignment name.**

Correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization and sentence structure will all be assessed on every assignment.

1. Syllabus confirmation (5 pts.) & Introduction Activity (10 points)

Syllabus confirmation: Due by Aug 28 (Fri)

Introductory activity: Due by Aug 30 (Sun)

2. Assignments **15 pts X 5 Assignments = 75 pts. Total**

During designed classes either in person classes or Canvas Learning Days, activity assignment directions are released, and you may need to submit Activity Assignments by designed due dates via Canvas. Each assignment detail directions and rubrics will be provided in class and via Canvas.

Assignment #1: Due 9/17 (Thursday)
Assignment #2: Canvas Discussion Board
Due Initial posting by 9/27 (Sunday) & 3 Replies by 10/1 (Thursday)
Assignment #3: Due 10/1 (Thursday)
Assignment #4: Canvas Discussion Board
Due Initial posting by 10/22 (Thursday) & 3 Replies by 10/25 (Sunday)
Assignment #5: Canvas Discussion Board
Due Initial posting by 11/8 (Sunday) & 3 Replies by 11/12 (Thursday)

3. "Playful Learning Environment" Presentation- *Invitation for Learning* **75 points**

You will develop an activity plan for a creative prekindergarten/kindergarten/primary experience. In this plan, you will design and arrange materials in the environment to promote children's engagement / play around a particular focus. The goal of this assignment is a) to have students experience the planning and implementation of a plan that allows children to learn specific concepts/standards through a creative or playful experience, b) to have students experience for preparing the materials that promote thinking and curiosity along with the design qualities or display of the materials, and c) to have student observation experience.

All activities in the plan must be "here and now" experiences which can actively involve and be discovered by the children through the use of the five senses. Abstract concepts, worksheets, craft ideas, or other experiences disconnected from the actual current realities of the children will receive **NO** credit.

The Learning Activity will be presented to the class for **active** participation, thus you should plan to have the necessary materials for the activity available the day that you are scheduled to present to your classmates.

Drafts and revisions of your plan will be reviewed by the instructor to assist you in developing an appropriate creative learning experience for prekindergarten/kindergarten/primary children. It is in your best interest to write detailed drafts to prepare for the final plan you develop.

****Explain the play presentation on October 1st (Thursday)****

DUE:
Activity Plan (15 pts.): October 18 (Sunday)
Presentation (30 pts.): October 27 (Tue) & October 29 (Thur) ***Presentation will not be accepted late ***
Written Reflection (15 pts.): November 1 (Sun)
Participation Forms (15 pts.): November 1 (Sun)

4. Final Project: Play Study (Observation and Documentation of children's play) 75 points

The purpose of this assignment is to examine key elements of children's play in order to support children's emotional, social, and cognitive development through play.
******Detail direction of *"Play Study"* will be released on November 3rd, Tuesday) ******

You will document several episodes of sociodramatic and constructive play to craft a Learning Story. You will provide an interpretation of the roles, themes, social rules, relationships, and ideas within the play in order to suggest ways to extend or enhance this or future play scenarios.
You will observe children's play and take observation notes & pictures what/how children are playing. With these documents and photos, you will create a learning story PowerPoint and write a reflection paper.
******Explain contents of 'Learning Story' on November 10 (Tuesday) ******

"Play Study" includes three components below. **Due: December 8 (Tuesday)**

Three (3) Observation Records (45 pts)
Learning Story PowerPoint (15 pts)
Reflection Paper (15 pts)

5. Class Participations & Professionalism 50 points

Regular attendance and active participation are essential components of this course and are reflected in your final grade. Participation points are earned through meaningful engagement in class activities and discussions. Therefore, any absence—excused or unexcused—as well as late arrivals may result in a loss of participation points, regardless of the reason.

You are expected to complete assigned readings and demonstrate your preparation through thoughtful contributions to discussions. Active interaction with classmates and engagement in all class activities are required. If you miss a class, you are responsible for all course content covered, obtaining any materials or handouts, and submitting assignments by their scheduled due dates.

Please communicate with your instructor in advance if circumstances may affect your attendance or participation.

ASSESSMENT

A total of 290 points is possible for this course:

Syllabus Confirmation & Introductory Activity	15 points
Assignments	75 points
Play Study	75 points
Play Presentation	75 points
Class Participations & Professionalism	50 points

Grading Scale.

A	94 – 100%	C	74 – 76.99
A-	90 – 93.99	C-	70 – 73.99
B+	87 – 89.99	D+	67 – 69.99
B	84 – 86.99	D	64 – 66.99
B-	80 – 83.99	D-	60 – 63.99
C+	77 – 79.99	F	below 60%