



Unit 1 – Current Issues in Early Childhood Education

Key Topic 4: A Closer Look at School Readiness

Focus Statement

Students increase their understanding of school readiness by reviewing the history and current elements of school readiness and considering how to share this information with families.

Curriculum Alignment Project (CAP) Student Learning Outcomes

The Curriculum Alignment Project's (CAP) lower division eight courses, CAP expansion courses, and student learning outcomes are mapped onto each instructional guide learning experience. See Appendix A for the specific student learning outcomes, objectives, and examples of course content and topics for the courses listed below.

- Child Growth and Development
- Child, Family and Community
- Principles and Practices of Teaching Young Children
- Practicum-Field Experience
- Administration I: Programs in Early Childhood Education
- Administration II: Personnel and Leadership in Early Childhood Education

Instructional Methodologies

- Class discussion
- Class presentation
- Lecture
- Pairs or small groups
- Peer review and feedback
- Reflective discussion



California Early Childhood Educator Competency Areas to Consider

These competency areas are from the California Department of Education, Early Education and Support Division's *California Early Childhood Educator Competencies* (CDE 2011). The "Competency Areas to Consider" below are listed in this instructional guide as a preliminary exploration of how particular competency areas might be addressed through these learning experiences.

- Child Development and Learning
- Relationships, Interactions, and Guidance
- Family and Community Engagement
- Leadership in Early Childhood Education
- Professionalism
- Administration and Supervision



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Key Topic 4: A Closer Look at School Readiness

Before You Start

This key topic reviews the information about school readiness found on pages 10–11 of Chapter 1 of the *California Preschool Program Guidelines*. After reading about and discussing the three components of school readiness and the five essential domains of children’s readiness, students consider how they could explain school readiness to families.

It is suggested that faculty share a brief history of the National Education Goals to provide some of the national context about the issue of school readiness. The 1995, 1997, and 1998 National Education Goals reports listed in the reference for Chapter 1 can be accessed through ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center):

- *The National Education Goals Report: Building a Nation of Learners, 1995*
<http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED389097> (accessed January 20, 2016)
- *The National Education Goals Report: Getting a Good Start in School, 1997*
<http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED412025> (accessed January 20, 2016)
- *The National Education Goals Report: Building a Nation of Learners, 1998*
<http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED421553> (accessed January 20, 2016)

In addition to reading the two pages in Chapter 1, students also review two documents from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC):

- School Readiness: A position statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children
- NAEYC Where We Stand Summary on School Readiness

Both documents can be downloaded from the NAEYC Web site at https://www.naeyc.org/positionstatements/school_readiness (accessed January 20, 2016).



For additional work on school readiness, there is a learning experience in Unit 2, Key Topic 2 of this instructional guide that guides students through a crosswalk of the five essential domains of children's readiness and the nine domains in the California preschool learning foundations.

If students do not have copies of the *California Preschool Program Guidelines*, the Portable Document Format (PDF) version can be downloaded from the California Department of Education Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/documents/preschoolproggdlns2015.pdf> (accessed January 20, 2016).

Information Delivery



Slides 2-3

Chapter 1 in the *California Preschool Program Guidelines* includes a section on school readiness and what this means for children, schools, families, and communities. It may be helpful for students to recognize that the concept of school readiness has roots in Goal 1 of the National Education Goals, which were developed and adopted at a national education summit by the nation's governors in 1989. In 1994, the Goals 2000: Educate America Act became law with the addition of two more goals.

Goal 1 states "By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn." The first objective under this goal references high-quality preschool:

- All children will have access to high-quality and developmentally appropriate preschool programs that help prepare children for school.

The concept of school readiness has come to mean much more than children being considered ready to start school.



Slides 4-5

"As the NAEYC's position statement on school readiness suggests, school readiness involves more than children being prepared for school; it involves ensuring that families, schools, and communities are ready to support children's success in school. Past conceptualizations of school readiness that focused primarily on children's specific skills in areas such as literacy and mathematics have recently been broadened to include areas such as social and emotional development and executive functioning" (*California Preschool Program Guidelines*, p. 10).



The following documents may be useful references for faculty in delivering a lecture or for students in their reading:

- *School Readiness – A Position Statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children* (Adopted July 1990, Revised July 1995)
- NAEYC Where we STAND on school readiness (2009)

Active Learning

Getting it started

Begin this key topic by providing a history of school readiness as one of the objectives of National Education Goal 1: Ready to Learn. Ensure that students understand that school readiness is currently defined as having three components that are described on page 10 of the *California Preschool Program Guidelines*:



Slide 6

- Children’s readiness for school
- Schools’ readiness for children
- Family and community support and services that contribute to children’s readiness for school success

Furthermore, children’s readiness is defined to include five domains or dimensions:



Slide 7

- Social and emotional development
- Language and literacy development
- Cognition and general knowledge
- Physical well-being and motor development
- Approaches to learning



Slide 8

Keeping it going

Next ask students to read pages 10–11 of the *California Preschool Program Guidelines*, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) position statement on school readiness, and the NAEYC “Where we STAND on school readiness.” Then they are to discuss the three documents, noting how they are related.



Online Options

If there is a method for online discussion, the instructor can facilitate a class discussion of the three readings: pages 10–11 of the *California Preschool Program Guidelines*, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) position statement on school readiness, and the NAEYC “Where we STAND on school readiness.” Discussion threads could include the following questions:

- What points stand out for you from your reading?
- How are the three documents related?
- What information do you feel is the most relevant to your current understanding of school readiness? Your practice as a preschool teacher?



Slide 9

Taking it further

Explain that students are now to consider how they could explain school readiness to families of preschool children. Ask them to think about the most important messages to share with families and how to effectively present this information. Students then form small groups of three or four to develop this presentation. Encourage students to be creative and consider using materials and activities typically found in preschool classes to help convey or illustrate key points. The presentations should be about 10–15 minutes long.

Putting it together

The groups then take turns demonstrating how they would explain school readiness to families. Provide time after each presentation for the rest of the class to ask questions and share some observations and feedback.

Reflection



Slide 10

This key topic can be concluded by asking students to reflect on the following questions:

- What images, words, or phrases from the presentations do you remember?
- What information came through very clearly? What seemed the most important?



Slide 11

- How do you think family members would respond to the presentations? Are there things that weren't evident in these presentations that would be critical to consider?
- What might you do differently in your presentation after watching your classmates' presentations?

This second set of more general reflective questions can be used in this and other key topics for additional class discussion or to guide individual student journaling.



Slides 12-14

- Which ideas or part of this class session stood out most for you?
- What seemed familiar or reinforced what you already know or have experienced? What gave you a new perspective or insight that causes you to think differently about teaching preschool children and/or engaging their families?
- Why do you think the content of this class session was presented the way it was? How did this approach help you understand the content? What else would have helped? What does this tell you about how you learn?
- How will you decide what to apply from this class session in your work with preschool children and families? What will you do to ensure you will implement what you have decided to use?