



DEPARTMENT Humanities and Social Sciences

COURSE OUTLINE - Winter 2026

SW1120(A3): Social Work with Children - 3 (3-0-0) 45 Hours for 15 Weeks

Northwestern Polytechnic acknowledges that our campuses are located on Treaty 8 territory, the ancestral and present-day home to many diverse First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people. We are grateful to work, live and learn on the traditional territory of Duncan's First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation and Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, who are the original caretakers of this land.

We acknowledge the history of this land and we are thankful for the opportunity to walk together in friendship, where we will encourage and promote positive change for present and future generations.

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OFFICE HOURS:

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CALENDAR DESCRIPTION: This course prepares students for social work practice with children. Students will explore developmental stages from a cross-cultural and social work perspective. Students will also examine the roles of parents and society and an overview of child welfare legislation, policies, and services.

PREREQUISITE(S):
Complete the following:
SW1000 with a minimum grade of C-

COREQUISITE(S):
None

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

Webb, N. B. (2018). *Social Work Practice with Children* (4th ed.). Guilford Publications, Inc.

Makokis, L., Bodor, R., Calhoun, A., & Tyler, S. (2020). *ohpikinâvasovin : growing a child : implementing Indigenous ways of knowing with Indigenous families*. Fernwood Publishing. **(You will need this book for multiple classes)**

DELIVERY MODE(S): On-Campus

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Apply developmental theories and analyze the impact of trauma, environment, and systemic factors on children.
- Examine diverse child-rearing practices and develop culturally responsive social work strategies.
- Analyze policies, legislation, and services, identifying challenges and proposing solutions within the child welfare system.
- Construct and interpret genograms to assess family dynamics and child well-being.
- Address ethical dilemmas, advocate for children's rights, and navigate family and societal roles.
- Synthesize research and present findings effectively through written and group work.

TRANSFERABILITY:

Please consult the Alberta Transfer Guide for more information. You may check to ensure the transferability of this course at the Alberta Transfer Guide main page <http://www.transferalberta.alberta.ca>

**** For courses with alpha (letter) grading, a grade of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability**

EVALUATIONS:

Assignment	Description	Grade	Due Date
Assignment 1	Understanding Trauma in Children	20%	Jan 20 th
Assignment 2	In Class Case Study x3	20%	On-going
Assignment 3	Genogram	20%	Mar 12 th
Assignment 4	Cultural Considerations in Child welfare	30%	Apr 2 nd
Participation	Students will submit a 1-page paper on participation in class	10%	Final Week

GRADING CRITERIA:

Please note that most institutions will not accept your course for transfer credit **IF** your grade is **less than C-**.

Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines	Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines
A+	4.0	95-100	C+	2.3	67-69
A	4.0	85-94	C	2.0	63-66
A-	3.7	80-84	C-	1.7	60-62
B+	3.3	77-79	D+	1.3	55-59
B	3.0	73-76	D	1.0	50-54
B-	2.7	70-72	F	0.0	00-49

Note: A minimum grade of C- in SW1120 is required as a prerequisite for SW2500. The Social Work Diploma program requires a minimum grade of C- in all SW courses to successfully complete the program.

COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

Week	Topic	Readings	Assignments
Jan 6/8	Challenge of meeting children's needs; challenges for practitioners in helping children	Chapter 1&2 SW Practice with Children	
Jan 13/15	Building relationships with all relevant systems; the biopsychosocial assessment of the child	Chapter 3,4, SW Practice with Children	
Jan 20/22	Connecting, planning interventions, and tracking progress	Chapter 5 SW Practice with Children	Assignment 1
Jan 27/29	Helping the family help their child Igniting spiritual fires Colonial Past in social Work	Chapter 6, SW Practice with Children The Mothering Project - APIN - Adolescent Parent Interagency Network Chapter 6 Growing a child	



Feb 3/5	Group work with children; school based interventions	Chapter 8, 9 SW Practice with Children	
Feb 10/12	Children living in kinship and foster home placements; children in single parent, divorcing and blended families	Ch 10, 11 SW Practice with Children	
Feb 17/18	Winter Break – No Class		
Feb 24/26	Children in families affected by illness and death; Children in substance-using families	Chapter 12, 13 SW Practice with Children	
Mar 3/5	Child victims and witness of family and community violence	Chapter 14 SW Practice with Children Home Fire Video	
Mar 10/12	Genograms	Provided in class	Assignment 3
Mar 17/19	Miyawata Family Teachings on Turtle Island	Chapter 2 Growing a Child	
Mar 24/26	Immigrant and Refugee Children	Chapter 16 SW Practice with Children	Presentations
Mar 31 Apr 2	The impact of a changing world on practice with and for children	Chapter 17 SW Practice with Children	Presentations
Apr 7/9	Class recap		



A minimum of 3 references is expected in all written assignments and presentations.

Understanding Trauma in Children (20%)

Students will explore the effects of trauma on children's mental health and behavior, analyze the role of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and apply social work interventions to support affected children. Research Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Define ACEs and explain their significance in child development. Explore how ACEs affect brain development, emotional regulation, and social behavior. Examine the long-term effects of trauma on health, education, and relationships. Select a case study (from research, media, or a fictional scenario) of a child who has experienced trauma. Provide background on the child's experiences, including family dynamics, social environment, and support systems. Identify signs and symptoms of trauma in the child's behavior and emotional well-being. Discuss the child's needs based on their trauma history and risk factors. Identify evidence-based social work interventions, such as trauma-informed care, play therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), or family support services. Explore the role of resilience and protective factors in mitigating trauma's impact. Consider ethical and cultural considerations when working with traumatized child. This will be showcased through a 7–8-page paper utilizing APA formatting.

Child Development Case Study in Class Work 1, 2, &3 (20%)

Analyze a child's development through the lens of social work theories. Choose a child (real or fictional) and describe their cognitive, emotional, and social development. Apply a child development theory (e.g., Piaget, Erikson, Bronfenbrenner) to explain their behavior. Discuss how environmental and social factors impact their well-being. The class will break-out into groups for the discussion on this topic, they will then bring their findings back to the class to share. Each student will then hand-in a one-to-two-page reflection on this process. This will be done three times in class.

Genogram and Family Dynamics in a Dyad (20%)

Students will work in pairs (dyads) to create and analyze a genogram, exploring family structures, patterns, and dynamics that impact children's well-being. Each student will pair with a classmate to share (as comfortable) details about their family system. Discuss family structures, relationships, and key life events that may have influenced childhood experiences. Use a three-generation model (e.g., self, parents, grandparents) to map out family members. Include relevant symbols to represent relationships, mental health concerns, substance use, intergenerational trauma, or other relevant dynamics. Hand-drawn or digital tools (e.g., GenoPro, Canva, Word) can be used. Identify patterns (e.g., cycles of trauma, resilience, parenting styles). Discuss the impact of these dynamics on childhood development and well-being. Compare and contrast experiences within the dyad what similarities or differences exist? After completing the genogram and discussion with your partner, each student will write their own individual paper using APA formatting. Your paper should:

- Summarize key patterns, strengths, and challenges identified in your genogram.
- Analyze how family dynamics (e.g., attachment, communication, roles, intergenerational trauma, or resilience) have influenced childhood development and well-being.



- Compare and contrast your experiences with your partner's, noting any similarities or differences in family structures, values, or coping strategies.
- Reflect on what you learned from this exercise about working with children and families in social work practice. Consider how understanding family systems can inform assessment, intervention, and culturally responsive practice.
- Conclude with insights or questions that emerged for you about family systems, cycles of change, or social work approaches to supporting children within their family contexts.

Cultural Considerations in Child Welfare – Group Assignment (30%)

Students will work in groups to explore how cultural values, traditions, and systemic barriers impact child welfare interventions. The goal is to develop culturally responsive social work strategies that respect diverse family practices while ensuring child well-being. Form groups of 3-5 students. Each group will select a cultural community (e.g., Indigenous, African American, Latinx, South Asian, Middle Eastern, etc.). Research child-rearing practices, community values, and historical or systemic challenges in child welfare. Investigate traditional parenting approaches, family structures, and support systems within the chosen culture. Identify common challenges in child welfare, including cultural misunderstandings, biases, or systemic inequities. Explore real-world cases or policies affecting children from this cultural background. Propose strategies for social workers to engage with families in culturally competent ways. Consider culturally appropriate interventions, strengths-based approaches, and advocacy efforts. Students will then create a presentation no more than 20 minutes and will allow 5 additional minutes for questions and discussion (total of 25 minutes). The group will also provide a one-page handout/infographic for their classmates and instructor to view.

Participation (10%)

Active participation is an essential component of professional learning in social work. Engaging in discussions, skill practice, and collaborative learning supports the development of self-awareness, communication skills, and ethical practice. This assignment encourages students to reflect on their engagement and growth throughout the course.

Throughout the semester, students are expected to:

- Attend class regularly and arrive on time.
- Contribute meaningfully to discussions, skill-building activities, and breakout sessions.
- Demonstrate respect, curiosity, and professionalism in group interactions.
- Provide and receive constructive feedback with peers.

At the end of the semester, submit a one-page reflection (approximately 300–400 words) that addresses the above expectations and give yourself a score of 1 out of 10.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

It is expected that each student show up for class, if they miss more than 3 classes they risk losing out on important information.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

Academic Misconduct will not be tolerated. For a more precise definition of academic misconduct and its consequences, refer to the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy available at <https://www.nwpolytech.ca/about/polytechnic-leadership/policies-directory>.

**Note: all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: