



ECH 326

Children, Families and Communities in a Diverse Society

S2 Day 2013

Institute of Early Childhood

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff Unit Convenor Cathrine Neilsen-Hewett cathrine.neilsen@mq.edu.au Contact via cathrine.neilsen@mq.edu.au
Credit points 3
Prerequisites 39cp
Corequisites
Co-badged status
Unit description This unit examines the contexts of childhood, family conditions, neighbourhood, environmental contexts and social policies, and identifies the implications for early childhood professionals and school practitioners. Theoretical approaches to the study of families are explored, along with issues for children related to the structural and cultural diversity of families in Australia. Interconnections between children, families and communities are examined along with implications for practice.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- Have an understanding of the broad theoretical approaches to the study of families, including ecological theory, family systems theory, life cycle approaches, and theories of risk and resilience.
- Have a detailed knowledge of the diversity of families in terms of structure and cultural background, language and communication, and belief systems and understand how these differences influence parenting and links to the community.
- Understand how children are affected by the families and communities in which they live.
- Have a detailed knowledge of contemporary issues concerning children and families,

issues such as divorce, the role of the extended family, child abuse and neglect, substitute care and community violence.

Have an understanding and knowledge of the range of formal and informal supports available to families with young children.

Be able to find relevant information about families, communities and early childhood services from a range of sources including the library, newspapers and electronic sources.

Identify bias, differences between fact and opinion and omissions in information; consider information from a variety of perspectives; as well as the usefulness, accuracy, reliability and validity of information.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
Assessment 1	20%	29th August
Assessment 2	45%	10th October
Exam	35%	Exam period

Assessment 1

Due: **29th August**

Weighting: **20%**

Both assignments in ECH326 are related and involve conducting a case study on a topic relating to questions of diversity and familial stress and supports. In the first part of the assignment you need to provide a rationale for why you have chosen your particular family as well as develop an interview schedule.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Have a detailed knowledge of the diversity of families in terms of structure and cultural background, language and communication, and belief systems and understand how these differences influence parenting and links to the community.
- Understand how children are affected by the families and communities in which they live.
- Have a detailed knowledge of contemporary issues concerning children and families, issues such as divorce, the role of the extended family, child abuse and neglect, substitute care and community violence.
- Have an understanding and knowledge of the range of formal and informal supports available to families with young children.

- Be able to find relevant information about families, communities and early childhood services from a range of sources including the library, newspapers and electronic sources.

Assessment 2

Due: **10th October**

Weighting: **45%**

Assessment 2 represents the second part of this task and involves conducting the interview and the formal writing up of your case study.

Please note. More detailed information on unit assessment can be accessed through the unit guide on your ilearn site.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Have a detailed knowledge of the diversity of families in terms of structure and cultural background, language and communication, and belief systems and understand how these differences influence parenting and links to the community.
- Understand how children are affected by the families and communities in which they live.
- Have a detailed knowledge of contemporary issues concerning children and families, issues such as divorce, the role of the extended family, child abuse and neglect, substitute care and community violence.
- Have an understanding and knowledge of the range of formal and informal supports available to families with young children.
- Be able to find relevant information about families, communities and early childhood services from a range of sources including the library, newspapers and electronic sources.
- Identify bias, differences between fact and opinion and omissions in information; consider information from a variety of perspectives; as well as the usefulness, accuracy, reliability and validity of information.

Exam

Due: **Exam period**

Weighting: **35%**

There will be a 2-hour exam consisting of two parts: Part A (40 multiple choice and short-answer questions based on Part 1 and Part 2 of the unit) and Part B (2 short essay questions based on Part 3 of the unit)

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Have an understanding of the broad theoretical approaches to the study of families, including ecological theory, family systems theory, life cycle approaches, and theories of risk and resilience.
- Have a detailed knowledge of the diversity of families in terms of structure and cultural background, language and communication, and belief systems and understand how these differences influence parenting and links to the community.
- Understand how children are affected by the families and communities in which they live.
- Have a detailed knowledge of contemporary issues concerning children and families, issues such as divorce, the role of the extended family, child abuse and neglect, substitute care and community violence.
- Have an understanding and knowledge of the range of formal and informal supports available to families with young children.

Delivery and Resources

Textbook and Reading

A textbook has been set for this unit:

Bowes, J., Grace, R., Hodge, K. (2012). *Children, families and communities: Contexts and consequences*. (4rd Edition) Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

The book is an edited collection of up-to-date chapters written about many of the themes in this unit. It was first developed as a direct result of the need for a reference book with Australian content for this unit and other courses about family and community contexts that influence children in their development.

You are also encouraged to read more widely using the list of additional suggested articles listed on the unit website and through electronic searches in libraries or through the Internet. Increasingly, there are rich collections of information about families available on these databases and at various addresses on the Internet. You might like to try some of the following:

Classes and Timetable

The timetable for classes can be found on the University web site at: <http://www.timetables.mq.edu.au/>

- Two 1 hour lectures will be held on Monday from 12-1 and again from 1-2 in Y3AT1
- 2 hour tutorials will be held weekly for internal students (beginning Week 1)
- Those students enrolled in the Monday tutorial which follows the lectures are expected to attend. Failure to attend may jeopardise student placement in that tutorial. It is expected that students attending the Tuesday and Thursday tutorials will either attend the lecture or listen online prior to

coming to class. For external students it is expected that students listen weekly online

- External students are to attend on campus day, Monday 17th and Tuesday 18th September.
- External students are to attend the on-campus days, Monday 16th and Tuesday 17th September.

In order to be eligible for a passing grade, students must meet the following attendance requirements:

- Internal students must attend at least 80% of all tutorials
- External students must attend both compulsory on-campus sessions

Unit Schedule

Part 1: Approaches to the Study of Families and Communities

1. Children, Families and Communities: Interconnections
2. Parenthood and Family Life-Cycle Transitions
3. Family Functioning: The Family as a System
4. Risk and Resilience in Children and Families

Part 2: Family Diversity and Community Support

5. Structural Variations Amongst Australian Families: Divorce, Remarriage and Single-Parent families
6. Structural Variations Amongst Australian Families: Same-Sex Couples and Fathering
7. Indigenous Families and Community Connections
8. Extended Family: Issues of Family Support and Grandparenting
9. Cultural Diversity in Australia: Understanding Culture in the Family Context
10. Cultural Diversity in Australia: Immigration, Refugee Families & Community Connections

Part 3: Family and Community Interconnections, Stressors and Supports

11. Out-of-Home Care of Children
12. Child Abuse and Neglect: Family and Community Perspectives
13. Death and Dying: Supporting Children and Families
14. Family Isolation: Rural, Remote and Other Isolated Families
15. Poverty and Homelessness: Impact on Families and Children
16. Family Policy and Practice: Implications for Educators, Parents and Children

17. Significant Community Events: The Impact of Violence, Natural Disasters, and International Conflict

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

Assessment Policy <http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy <http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

Grade Appeal Policy <http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Grievance Management Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grievance_management/policy.html

Special Consideration Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/special_consideration/policy.html

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of Academic Student Support Services. Details of these services can be accessed at: <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

UniWISE provides:

- Online learning resources and academic skills workshops http://www.students.mq.edu.au/support/learning_skills/
- Personal assistance with your learning & study related questions.
- The Learning Help Desk is located in the Library foyer (level 2).
- Online and on-campus orientation events run by Mentors@Macquarie.

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

Details of these services can be accessed at <http://www.student.mq.edu.au/ses/>.

IT Help

If you wish to receive IT help, we would be glad to assist you at <http://informatics.mq.edu.au/help/>.

When using the university's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use Policy](#). The policy applies

to all who connect to the MQ network including students and it outlines what can be done.

Graduate Capabilities

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Assessment task

- Assessment 2

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Have an understanding of the broad theoretical approaches to the study of families, including ecological theory, family systems theory, life cycle approaches, and theories of risk and resilience.
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Assessment tasks

- Assessment 1
- Assessment 2

- Exam

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Have an understanding of the broad theoretical approaches to the study of families, including ecological theory, family systems theory, life cycle approaches, and theories of risk and resilience.
- Have a detailed knowledge of the diversity of families in terms of structure and cultural background, language and communication, and belief systems and understand how these differences influence parenting and links to the community.
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Assessment tasks

- Assessment 1
- Assessment 2
- Exam

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and

they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Have a detailed knowledge of the diversity of families in terms of structure and cultural background, language and communication, and belief systems and understand how these differences influence parenting and links to the community.
- Understand how children are affected by the families and communities in which they live.
- Have a detailed knowledge of contemporary issues concerning children and families, issues such as divorce, the role of the extended family, child abuse and neglect, substitute care and community violence.
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- Identify bias, differences between fact and opinion and omissions in information; consider information from a variety of perspectives; as well as the usefulness, accuracy, reliability and validity of information.

Assessment tasks

- Assessment 1
- Assessment 2
- Exam

Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Assessment tasks

- Assessment 1
- Assessment 2

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms

effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Identify bias, differences between fact and opinion and omissions in information; consider information from a variety of perspectives; as well as the usefulness, accuracy, reliability and validity of information.

Assessment tasks

- Assessment 1
- Assessment 2
- Exam

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Have a detailed knowledge of contemporary issues concerning children and families, issues such as divorce, the role of the extended family, child abuse and neglect, substitute care and community violence.
- Have an understanding and knowledge of the range of formal and informal supports available to families with young children.

Assessment task

- Assessment 2

Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Understand how children are affected by the families and communities in which they live.
- Have an understanding and knowledge of the range of formal and informal supports available to families with young children.