UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

# COURSE SYLLABUS

# Developmental Change and Promotion of Psychological Growth

**2526-1-F5111P002**

## Learning area

Models and Techniques for assessing psychological functioning

## Learning objectives

*Knowledge and understanding*

• Awareness, knowledge and understanding of the relevance of developmental processes.
• Proactive support to child development as crucial for the prevention of psychological and social distress.
• Promotion of the development of the child's cognitive and socio-affective skills and care for the contexts in which this development takes place.
• Interactions between mind and body during development.
• The development of the ability to mentalize and Theory of Mind.

*Applying knowledge and understanding*

• Identification of the key factors for promoting development.
• Development as the foundation of individual well-being.
• Good practices for enhancing learning processes in early childhood, preschool and school age.
• Play as a promoter of development and as a method of intervention.
• The effects of persistent anxiety and fear on mental development.
• Poverty and individual development.
• Adverse caregiving experiences and individual development.
• Ability to apply knowledge of the principles that guide development to the understanding of atypical and/or at risk developmental conditions (neurodevelopmental syndromes, preterm birth).
• The link between early environment and emotional well-being.
• Ability to identify early indicators of typical and atypical development

*Making Judgements*
Through open discussions and classroom debates on the topics covered in the course, the program aims to foster a critical perspective on developmental processes, encouraging personal reflection and enhancing reasoning skills and independent judgment.

*Communication skills*
Communication skills will be strengthened through continuous interaction between the instructor and students during lessons, aimed at improving the use of appropriate scientific and professional language and encouraging the analysis of complex processes, such as those involved in child development.

*Learning skills*
The ability to pursue independent study will be supported through the provision of in-depth materials and frequent reference to documentary and bibliographic sources related to developmental processes.

## Contents

Support for child development is of fundamental importance for the prevention of psychological and social distress. Prevention and support to human development therefore represent a fundamental objective for the clinical psychologist, who may operate not only within a perspective of intervention and rehabilitation, but also by acting proactively to promote the development of the child's cognitive and socio-affective skills and to support the contexts in which such development takes place. The course aims to offer students awareness, knowledge and understanding of the relevance of development processes for the individual wellbeing.

## Detailed program

• Development of the human mind.
• Factors promoting human development.
• Sensitive periods and the relevance of early experiences.
• Early implicit learning processes and development of complex cognitive and socio-affective skills.
• Effects of adverse experiences on the development of the child.
• Cognitive, metacognitive and affective-motivational aspects in preschool and school age learning.
• Play activity as a means of promoting cognitive, emotional, affective and social development and as an intervention tool in ecological contexts.
• Development of the ability to mentalize and Theory of Mind.
• Interactions between early skills, environment and developmental outcomes in atypical or risky developmental trajectories (neurodevelopmental syndromes, preterm birth, exposure to adverse experiences).
• Early indicators of typical and atypical development in different areas of psychological functioning and programs aimed at supporting development in vulnerable conditions.

## Prerequisites

Knowledge of classical theories of psychological development.

## Teaching methods

All lessones will be held in person and in Italian.
Together with classroom lectures (about 70% of lessons), the course will offer several opportunities of interactive teaching, such as guided discussions, video presentations, and practical trainings. Lectures and interactive teaching will be alternated also within the same lesson.
The material (slides, scientific articles and, when possible, videorecordings of lessons) is made available on the e-learning site of the course.

## Assessment methods

The exam is written with oral interview upon request. The written exam includes multiple choice questions and open questions. Multiple choice questions provide extensive evaluation of knowledge acquisition; open questions evaluate students' critical thinking on such knowledge.

Students may ask to attend an oral interview, in addition to the written exam, on all the topics included in the Syllabus.

Evaluation criteria are as follows: response accuracy for multiple choice questions, adequacy of contents, formal organization and terminology for the answers to open questions.

Although this course is held in Italian, for Erasmus students, course material can also be available in English, and students can take the exam in English if they wish to do so

## Textbooks and Reading Materials

Detailed information regarding the textbooks and the didactical material will be published on the e-learning page associated with the course.

## Sustainable Development Goals

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING