



June 9, 2026

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Creating Modified Career-Based Programming to Support High School Special Education Students

(With a Focus on Early Childhood Education)



The Career Academy

Dual Credit High School

Joint Partnership with Southeast Community College and Lincoln Public Schools. Student earn upwards of 24 college credit hours.

Career Education Focus

16 career based pathways ranging from traditional STS pathways to those with a 4 year college pathway.

Serves Lincoln Population

- Public school students
- Private school students
- Home school students



the **career** academy

TCA Models

Traditional



the **career** academy

- All 16 pathways
- Dual credit college courses
- 1 weekly LPS graduation requirement

ECED Pathway



Early Childhood
Education Pathway

11th and 12th Graders

- Focus on birth-age 8
- 2 year program = 28+ college credits & 100+ practicum hours
- Members of Educators Rising

CDA



- 13 competencies in 8 subject areas
- Over 120 classroom hours
- Work Experience towards their 480 hours
- Serving special education students

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Why?

A glimpse into our program



Career-Based Training

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Child Development Associate

- Nationally recognized certification in Early Childhood Education
- Administered by the Council for Professional Recognition
- 120 classroom hours required in 13 competencies
- 480 work experience hours in birth-age five
- Prepare students for for success in careers



Building CDA Curriculum

Professional Portfolios

- Competency Statements
- Proof of Work Experience Hours
- Assignments completed to demonstrate acquired skills and knowledge of the subject
- Certifications (CPR)

Competency Statements

- Students could complete all 13 competencies in two years at TCA
- Year One: Competencies 1-7
- Year Two: Competencies 8-13
- Curriculum is a modified version of SCC content

Work Experience

- 16 students were placed at four child care centers in Lincoln
- Lincoln Littles helped find quality locations interested in partnering
- Year 1: Attended one day/week for 2 hours
- Year 2: 2 days/week for 2 hours work experience
- 3 students interviewed and hired over the summer!

Modifying CDA Curriculum

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Choosing and Evaluating Books for Young Children

Objective:

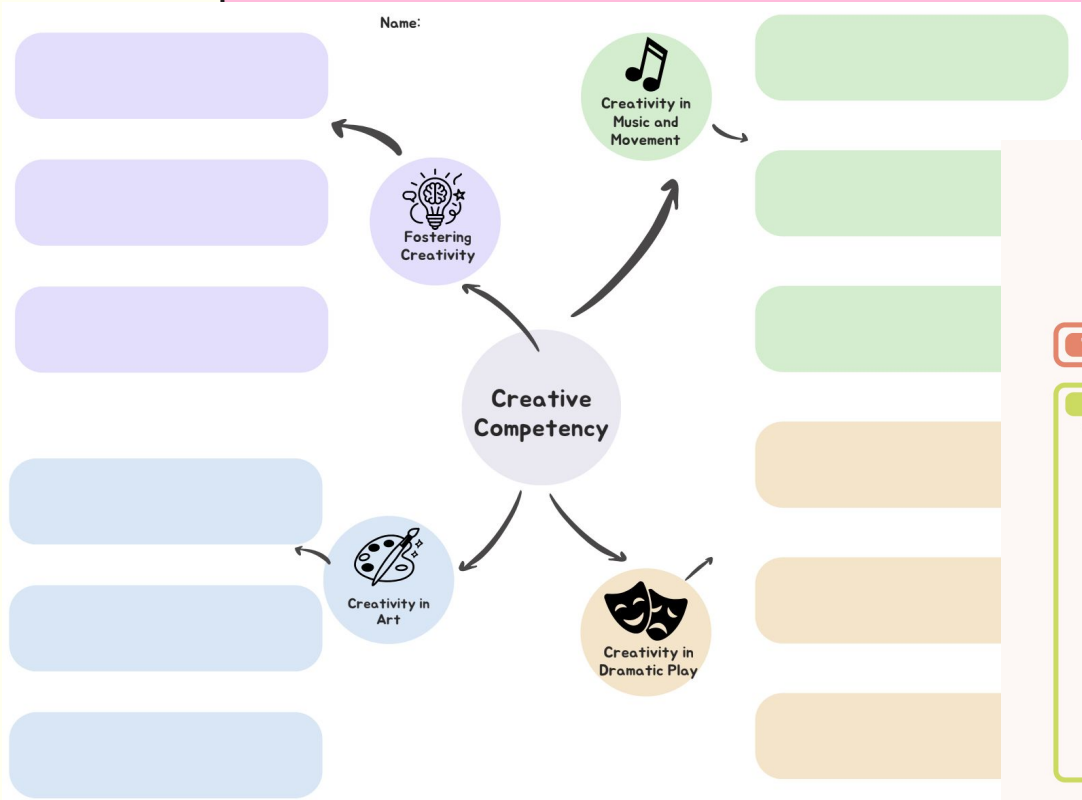
To learn how to select developmentally appropriate books for young children and evaluate their quality based on early literacy standards.

Instructions:

1. Choose two children's books
 - o One book for infants/toddlers (ages 0-3)
 - o One book for preschoolers (ages 3-5)
2. Evaluate each book using the following criteria: (pg 281 in your textbook)
 - o Is the book free of all bias- including gender, ethnicity, culture, age, family structure, income status, abilities, and sexual orientation?
 - o Does the book enable children to see their own experiences reflected?
 - o Does the book offer a glimpse into the experiences of others?
 - o Does the book contain large, bright, colorful illustrations?
 - o Are the pages easy to turn?
 - o Will the story spark conversation?
 - o Will children want to reread the book?
 - o Will children be motivated to seek out another book by this author or illustrator on the same topic?
 - o Is the book worthy of children's time?
 - o Does the book have an engaging story or provide interesting information?
 - o Does the book have a purpose other than to promote toys, television shows, movies, or merchandise?
3. Book gallery walk- display the two quality books you've chosen so we can walk around and see all the great books!

LANGUAGE Are the words rhythmic and repetitive? YES NO What age may this be developmentally appropriate for? Why?	SETTING Is the setting (or place) familiar to make them feel comfortable? YES NO What other recognizable elements are there?	
ART Is the art interesting to look at? YES NO How do the pictures help improve kids' language?	BOOK TITLE:	PLOT Is there a clear beginning, middle, and end? YES NO What is the problem the characters are trying to overcome? Can kids identify it?
CHARACTERS Can kids relate to the characters? YES NO What qualities may kids see in themselves that characres share?	OVERALL RATING: ☆☆☆☆☆	LESSON Is there a lesson the book is trying to teach? YES NO What lesson is the book trying to teach them?

Modifying CDA Curriculum



NAME _____

COMPETENCY #6

TITLE _____

WHAT YOU DO	HOW YOU DO IT	WHY IT MATTERS
What is your goal as a childcare worker for communication development?		

Lincoln Littles-Community Partnerships



Lincoln Littles was a partner from the beginning!

- Lincoln Littles served on the committee when the CDA program at TCA was first proposed!
- They helped form community partnerships for our student's work experience sites, which was a valuable part of the success of the program!

Celebrations!

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Practicum to Employment!

- 25% of students received jobs at their practicum site after their experience!



Q&A

