Introduction (10-15 minutes):
Introduce the Critical Windows by showing the Brain Development of Young Children – Critical Windows Poster Series. Provide a brief description of each Critical Window and hang each poster in a separate area of the classroom.

Activity #1 (10-15 minutes):
Divide the class into six groups. Assign each group one Critical Window. Provide each student in each group with the corresponding page from the Brain Development of Young Children – Critical Windows Tear Pads. Allow groups to gather information on their assigned topic by reading aloud the factual statements on the tear pad sheets and the recommended caregiver strategies from the reverse side. Next, each group should brainstorm a list of 10-15 activity ideas for young children that promote their assigned Critical Window.

Activity #2 (10-15 minutes):
Each student in the group should select one idea from the group’s list to develop into a specific activity to use with young children. Students may reference various early childhood curriculum resources available in the classroom. You may provide students with a formal activity plan document for them to complete. Otherwise, have students create a name for the activity and identify the Critical Window that the activity is designed to promote, the recommended ages of children to use the activity with, a comprehensive list of materials and supplies needed, step-by-step procedures for carrying out the activity, and justification of the activity’s importance in promoting the identified Critical Window.

Conclusion (10-15 minutes):
Have all students in the classroom reassemble into a large group. Move to each of the Brain Development of Young Children – Critical Windows Posters in the classroom, one at a time. While at each, distribute a Brain Development of Young Children – Critical Windows Tear Pad sheet for the corresponding poster to each student in the classroom. Have students from the group assigned to each Critical Window explain their learning on the topic, share the activity ideas that they developed, and justify to the class how each of the activities will promote the identified Critical Window. Post the activities next to the corresponding poster.

Classroom to Community Ideas:
• Assemble the activity ideas into a book. Arrange the book into six sections — one section for each Critical Window. Offer the book to a Family Resource Center or other organization in the community.
• Organize a community Brain Awareness Day and allow students to set up small stations to implement a variety of the activities with young children in the community. Students could also develop additional resources on the Critical Windows of Early Brain Development to share with parents and caregivers that attend the event.
FCS Lessons

Creative Activities for Critical Windows
Grade Level: High School

National FCS Standards:
Implement learning activities that meet the developmental needs of children.

Critical-Thinking Question:
Can you design a developmentally appropriate activity to promote a critical window of early childhood brain development?

Resource — Developing Higher-Level Thinking Skills Flip Chart: A Teacher’s Resource (WA26543H)

Formative Assessment:
Students will create a developmentally appropriate activity for young children to promote critical window(s).

Materials List:
- Brain Development of Young Children – Emotional Development Critical Window Tear Pad. Use the Brain Development of Young Children – Emotional Development Critical Window Poster to describe factual information regarding the emotional development of young children. Have students turn the page over and read aloud the caregiver strategies offered to promote healthy emotional development in young children.
- Various Early Childhood Curriculum Resources, such as:
  - Creative Resources for the Early Childhood Classroom (SB30780H)
  - Complete Resource Book: An Early Childhood Curriculum (WA23718H)
  - The Giant Encyclopedia of Theme Activities for Children 2 to 5 (SB23081H)
  - Brilliant Brain Games for Kids to Enjoy (WA26379H)

Introduction (10-15 minutes):
Introduce the lesson by stating the Critical-Thinking Question. Provide an example to the students by reading aloud a children’s picture book that addresses common feelings and/or emotions, such as How are you Peeling? by Saxton Freymann and Joost Elffers or My Many Colored Days by Dr. Seuss. Next, tap into students’ prior knowledge and experiences by using Nasco’s Feelings Toss-Up Ball. Toss the ball around the room. As a student catches the ball, have them make a gesture to depict, describe, or tell of a situation that would bring about the feeling that is closest to their left thumb. Give several students the opportunity to participate.

Activity #1 (10-20 minutes):
Lead the class in a brainstorming session to create a list of feelings or emotions experienced by young children. As students offer ideas, record these on the whiteboard. Prompt students to recall the emotions or feelings mentioned in the children’s book read aloud earlier, or those from Nasco’s Feelings Toss-Up Ball.

Activity #2 (20-30 minutes):
Restate the Critical-Thinking Question. Allow students to investigate a large variety of children’s picture books to locate an example of a book they would recommend to parents and caregivers. Students should evaluate the book’s developmental appropriateness for young children and assess the book’s ability to teach about an emotion or feeling. As each student locates a book, have them write a one paragraph recommendation for the book (including reasoning for selection) for parents or caregivers.

Conclusion (10-15 minutes):
If time permits, have students share the books they selected and read aloud the written recommendations.

Classroom to Community Ideas:
- Compile the recommendations and provide them to parents and caregivers of young children in the community.
- Have students in the class serve as “guest readers” for story time at the local elementary school or public library.
FCS Lessons

Creative Activities for Critical Windows
Grade Level: High School

National FCS Standards:
Implement learning activities that meet the developmental needs of children.

Critical-Thinking Question:
Can you design a developmentally appropriate activity to promote a critical window of early childhood brain development?

Resource — Developing Higher-Level Thinking Skills Flip Chart: A Teacher’s Resource (WA26543H)

Formative Assessment:
Students will create a developmentally appropriate activity for young children to promote critical window(s).

Materials List:
- Brain Development of Young Children – Emotional Development Critical Window Tear Pad. Use the Brain Development of Young Children – Emotional Development Critical Window Poster to describe factual information regarding the emotional development of young children. Have students turn the page over and read aloud the caregiver strategies offered to promote healthy emotional development in young children.
- Various Early Childhood Curriculum Resources, such as:
  - Creative Resources for the Early Childhood Classroom (SB30780H)
  - Complete Resource Book: An Early Childhood Curriculum (WA23718H)
  - 125 Brain Games for Toddlers and Twos (WA21105H)
  - The Giant Encyclopedia of Theme Activities for Children 2 to 5 (SB23081H)
  - Brilliant Brain Games for Kids to Enjoy (WA26379H)

Introduction (10-15 minutes):
Introduce the lesson by stating the Critical-Thinking Question. Provide an example to the students by reading aloud a children’s picture book that addresses common feelings and/or emotions, such as How are you Feeling? by Saxton Freymann and Joost Elffers or My Many Colored Days by Dr. Seuss. Next, tap into students’ prior knowledge and experiences by using Nasco’s Feelings Toss-Up Ball. Toss the ball around the room. As a student catches the ball, have them make a gesture to depict, describe, or tell of a situation that would bring about the feeling that is closest to their left thumb. Give several students the opportunity to participate.

Activity #1 (10-20 minutes):
Lead the class in a brainstorming session to create a list of feelings or emotions experienced by young children. As students offer ideas, record these on the whiteboard. Prompt students to recall the emotions or feelings mentioned in the children’s book read aloud earlier, or those from Nasco’s Feelings Toss-Up Ball. Once there is a list of 10-15 emotions or feelings listed, lead the students in a discussion regarding ways in which young children deal with feelings or emotions that they are unable to describe. Responses may include tantrums, biting, yelling, hitting, withdrawal, crying, etc.

Activity #2 (20-30 minutes):
Restate the Critical-Thinking Question. Allow students to investigate a large variety of children’s picture books to locate an example of a book they would recommend to parents and caregivers. Students should evaluate the book’s developmental appropriateness for young children and assess the book’s ability to teach about an emotion or feeling. As each student locates a book, have them write a one paragraph recommendation for the book (including reasoning for selection) for parents or caregivers.

Conclusion (10-15 minutes):
If time permits, have students share the books they selected and read aloud the written recommendations.

Classroom to Community Ideas:
- Compile the recommendations and provide them to parents and caregivers of young children in the community.
- Have students in the class serve as “guest readers” for story time at the local elementary school or public library.
Introduction (10-15 minutes):
Introduce the Critical Windows by showing the Brain Development of Young Children – Critical Windows Poster Series. Provide a brief description of each Critical Window and hang each poster in a separate area of the classroom.

Activity #1 (10-15 minutes):
Divide the class into six groups. Assign each group one Critical Window. Provide each student in each group with the corresponding page from the Brain Development of Young Children – Critical Windows Tear Pads. Allow groups to gather information on their assigned topic by reading aloud the factual statements on the tear pad sheets and the recommended caregiver strategies from the reverse side. Next, each group should brainstorm a list of 10-15 activity ideas for young children that promote their assigned Critical Window.

Activity #2 (10-15 minutes):
Each student in the group should select one idea from the group’s list to develop into a specific activity to use with young children. Students may reference various early childhood curriculum resources available in the classroom. You may provide students with a formal activity plan document for them to complete. Otherwise, have students create a name for the activity and identify the Critical Window that the activity is designed to promote, the recommended ages of children to use the activity with, a comprehensive list of materials and supplies needed, step-by-step procedures for carrying out the activity, and justification of the activity’s importance in promoting the identified Critical Window.

Conclusion (10-15 minutes):
Have all students in the classroom reassemble into a large group. Move to each of the Brain Development of Young Children – Critical Windows Posters in the classroom, one at a time. While at each, distribute a Brain Development of Young Children – Critical Windows Tear Pad sheet for the corresponding poster to each student in the classroom. Have students from the group assigned to each Critical Window explain their learning on the topic, share the activity ideas that they developed, and justify to the class how each of the activities will promote the identified Critical Window. Post the activities next to the corresponding poster.

Classroom to Community Ideas:
- Assemble the activity ideas into a book. Arrange the book into six sections — one section for each Critical Window. Offer the book to a Family Resource Center or other organization in the community.
- Organize a community Brain Awareness Day and allow students to set up small stations to implement a variety of the activities with young children in the community. Students could also develop additional resources on the Critical Windows of Early Brain Development to share with parents and caregivers that attend the event.

National FCS Standards:
Put into effect strategies that promote children’s growth and development.

Critical-Thinking Question:
What children’s books would you recommend to promote healthy emotional development in young children?

Resource — Developing Higher-Level Thinking Skills Flip Chart:
A Teacher’s Resource (WA26543H)

Formative Assessment:
Students will select developmentally appropriate books for young children that promote healthy emotional development.

Materials List:
- Nasco’s Feelings Toss-Up Ball (WA22823H)
- Brain Development of Young Children – Emotional Development Critical Window Poster (WA28530H) and Tear Pad (WA28537H)
- Complete Set of six Critical Windows Posters (WA28534H) and Tear Pads (WA28541H)
- Access to a variety of children’s picture books (elementary school or public library)