Course Description
Surveys current knowledge about young children with disabilities within the context of human growth and development and learning expectations in the preschool years. Includes historical factors and legislation affecting service delivery. Field experience required.

Nature of Course Delivery
The class will have lecture, discussion, group work formats and will require active participation of all students. Guest lecturers from the community may be utilized to support content from readings.

Learner Outcomes
This course is designed to enable students to do the following:
1. Explore the philosophical, social, cultural and legal factors that have shaped and continue to affect education, and specifically early childhood special education, in the United States.
2. Describe the legal and historical development of the field of special education and in education in general.
3. Discuss issues and trends in special education, including legislation and litigation, including legislative and judicial mandates related to education and special education (e.g., the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, § 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Assistive Technology Act and use of innovative technology.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of evidence-based principles that influence education, including early childhood special education
5. Describe factors that place young children at-risk for disabilities.
6. Describe characteristics of major handicapping conditions.
7. Describe the role of assessment in identification, eligibility, and service delivery for young children and their families.
8. Describe current regulations and procedures governing special education to include individualized education program (IEP) development and individualized family service plan (IFSP).
9. Describe disciplinary practices, policies, and procedures and alternative placements in schools.
10. Describe typical settings and service delivery models appropriate for work with infants, toddlers, and young children who are at-risk or who have disabilities and their families.

11. Demonstrate an understanding of models of interpersonal and inter-professional collaboration in working with families on behalf of their young children.

12. Explore the role of students’ own personal, social, and cultural experiences and perspectives in their professional decision making.


14. Consider critically course topics and readings through the lens of services for children and families from diverse cultural and linguistic communities.

15. Explore social development issues related to major disabling and at-risk conditions.

16. Explain the standards of professionalism related to serving young children with disabilities and at-risk conditions.

**Professional Standards**

This concentration is approved for licensure in the Commonwealth of Virginia and it complies with the standards for teacher licensure established by the Council for Exceptional Children. The course content has been designed to address the following standards and competencies.

**Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)**

- Standard 1 Foundations

**VA State Endorsement Competencies**

- Understanding of the nature and characteristics of major disabling and at-risk conditions
- Understanding of the foundation of the legal aspects associated with students with disabilities

**VA State Professional Standard**

- Foundations of education

**Required Text**


**Recommended Text**


**Recommended Web Resources**

- [http://nectac.org/](http://nectac.org/) (website of the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center)
- [http://www.infantva.org/](http://www.infantva.org/)
- [http://www.naeyc.org/](http://www.naeyc.org/)
- [http://www.zerotothree.org/site/PageServer](http://www.zerotothree.org/site/PageServer)
Course Requirements

General Requirements

1. The completion of all readings assigned for the course is assumed. Because the class will be structured around discussion and small group activities, it is imperative that students keep up with the readings and participate in class.

2. Class attendance is important. If, due to an emergency, students will not be in class, they must call the instructor and leave a message.

3. The university requires that all pagers and cell phones be turned off before class begins. Laptops and other electronic devices are to be used for educational and learning purposes only and should not be used during class time to check email, surf the web, or communicate with people outside of the class unless part of the class activity.

4. It is expected that assignments will be turned in on time (the beginning of the class in which they are due). However, it is recognized that graduate students occasionally have serious problems that prevent work completion. If such a dilemma arises, students should speak to the instructor in a timely fashion.

Attendance

Attendance in class is important to students’ learning; therefore, students are expected to make every effort to attend class sessions. Absences, tardiness, and leaving early may negatively affect course grades. The following policy is from the university course catalog:

   Students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they register. In-class participation is important not only to the individual student, but also to the class as a whole. Because class participation may be a factor in grading, instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of nonparticipation. Students who miss an exam with an acceptable excuse may be penalized according to the individual instructor’s grading policy, as stated in the course syllabus.

Written Assignments

All written assignments prepared outside of class will be evaluated for content and presentation as graduate-level writing. The American Psychological Association, Fifth Edition (APA) style will be followed for all written work. All written work unless otherwise noted must be completed on a word processor and should be proofread carefully. (Use spell check!) If students are not confident of their own ability to catch errors, they should have another person proofread their work. When in doubt, they should check the APA manual. Portions of the APA manual appear at the Style Manuals link on the GMU library web guide at http://library.gmu.edu/resources/edu/.

Students will

1. Present ideas in a clear, concise, and organized manner. (Avoid wordiness and redundancy.)

2. Develop points coherently, definitively, and thoroughly.

3. Refer to appropriate authorities, studies, and examples to document where appropriate. (Avoid meaningless generalizations, unwarranted assumptions, and unsupported opinions.)

4. Use correct capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar.
Grading Criteria

A = 95 – 100   A- = 90 – 94   B+ = 87 – 89   B = 83 – 86
B- = 80 – 82   C = 70 – 79   F = < 70

A+ is possible if work is of exceptional high quality and includes work above and beyond that required for the course.

Grading Policy

Students in a graduate program must maintain a 3.000 GPA (B average). Endorsement coursework grades must be C or better for undergraduate courses, and B or better for graduate courses. Grades of B minus or better are required for all graduate-level education coursework for licensure. Students with a C or lower in a licensure course must re-take the course and earn a B minus or better to be recommended for Virginia licensure. Only two grades of C will be allowed for completion of the master's degree.

Submission of Performance-Based Assessment

This course has a Program Performance-Based Assessment (PBA) that MUST be uploaded and submitted to Task Stream for evaluation when the assignment is due. Only PBAs posted to TaskStream will be graded. This means that NO final grades will be posted until all materials are on TaskStream.

Assignments

Attendance and Participation (5 points)

Because active participation and engagement are imperative for optimal learning, preparation for and participation in in-class activities will be evaluated based on the following criteria:
- Students attend class, arrive on time, and stay for the entire class period.
- Students complete readings and prepare for class activities prior to class as is evidenced by their ability to discuss and write about the concepts presented and examined in the texts as well as participate fully in related activities.
- Students are actively involved in in-class learning experiences as is evidenced by (1) participating in all activities, (2) engaging in small and large group discussions, (3) completing written work related to the activities, and (4) supporting the participation and learning of classmates.
- Students show evidence of critical reflective thinking through in-class discussions, activities, and written reflections.

Group Presentation about Legislative and Judicial Mandates (15 points)

Each student will participate in a group reading activity. Groups will be assigned by instructor. Each group will locate information related to legislative and judicial mandates related to education and early childhood special education (e.g. the Individuals with Disabilities Education
Act, 540 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, The Americans with Disabilities Act, The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Assistive Technology Act and the use of innovative technology). Each student is responsible for locating information and then working as a group to develop a 15-20 minute presentation regarding the piece of legislation assigned. Pay particular attention to the content applicability, relating it to your development as an early childhood special educator and how it applies/impacts culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse young children and their families. Supplemental topical research is encouraged. Relevant handouts should be provided and Powerpoint used for your presentation.

Professional Code of Ethics: (10 points)

Review the GMU CEHD Professional Dispositions at http://gse.gmu.edu/facultystaffres/profdisp.htm and Professional Standards from NAEYC and DEC. Then reflect on readings, class discussions, and your own knowledge about children, families, instruction, and early childhood practices. Develop a minimum of 10 professional ethics/standards of professionalism related to serving culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse young children and their families with disabilities and how you that you will strive to honor and abide by as you work in the field of early childhood special education especially as it applies to culturally, linguistically and ability diverse young children. Each ethic should have a brief but thorough rationale accompanying it. You do not need to cite specific research, but it should be clear to the reader that your values are informed by your studies and professional experiences. This paper should have an introduction and conclusion in narrative format. The paper should be approximately 3-4 pages in length.

Pamphlet About a Disability (20 points)

Students will develop a pamphlet that can be used by families as a resource for understanding the complex nature of a disability that a preschool child might have. They will include 1) the defining features/characteristics of the disability; 2) how it is expressed from birth through age five across the main developmental areas (Social-Emotional, Language and Literacy, Cognitive, Physical, and Sensory Areas); 3) major services usually provided; 4) whether medicines are used, which ones, and why; 5) the typical specialists that serve these children; and 6) write three goals which could be included in an IFSP or IEP.

Students should be prepared to discuss their pamphlet in class. They will bring enough copies for the class and the instructors. In addition to the handout, they will prepare a brief paper for the instructors: In one-page, they will critically evaluate what they learned from the perspective of families from diverse cultural and language groups. On a separate page, list references (legitimate resources must be used, do NOT use a reference you have not reviewed). Provide references you found especially useful and provide a brief annotation for each.

Critical Issues Presentation (30 points)

With a partner, students will research a current topic/issue in the field of early intervention and early childhood special education. As a pair, they will research the topic and prepare an in-class presentation to help the class better understand the nature of this issue and how it is currently being viewed. The session should be structured like a ‘Parent Information Session’ about the
group’s particular topic. On the night of their presentation, they are to bring to class a handout which contains the following: 1) an agenda; 2) an annotated resource list (ten references, which were reviewed by the GROUP); and 3) a copy of one useful article for each class member. The presentation should be 45 minutes and should be structured to engage classmates in one or more activities to help them better understand the issue.

Topics include the following: Over-representation of African American children in special education; services to children whose home language is other than English; services for young children with autism; inclusive services in early education; challenging behaviors; transition issues; RTI – response to intervention, assistive technology.

Take-Home Final (20 points): This is the NCATE 1 Content Knowledge Foundations Performance-Based Assessment that shows evidence of meeting CEC Standard 1 Foundations.
The exam will cover material from readings, lectures, videos, and class discussions. More information on exams will be provided in class. Exams will be a mix of essay and objective questions.

CEHD Syllabus Statements of Expectations
All students must abide by the following:

- Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See [http://gse.gmu.edu/facultystaffres/profdisp.htm](http://gse.gmu.edu/facultystaffres/profdisp.htm) for a listing of these dispositions.
- Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See [http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#Anchor12](http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#Anchor12) for the full honor code.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Disability Resource Center (DRC) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See [http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc/](http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc/) or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.
# Course Topics

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings and Assignments Due</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 2</td>
<td>Introduction to Early Childhood Special Education as a profession</td>
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<td>Sept 9</td>
<td>Bedrock principles influencing services to young children – the role of families, appropriate practices, natural environments</td>
<td>Read Chapter 3</td>
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<td>Sept 16</td>
<td>Foundations of Education, including Early Childhood Special Education</td>
<td>Read Chapters 1 and 2</td>
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<td>History, legislation, and policy affecting the field</td>
<td>Group Presentations (legislation)- DUE</td>
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<td>Sept 23</td>
<td>Assessment for eligibility and for planning and evaluation</td>
<td>Read Chapters 4 and 5</td>
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<td>Sept 30</td>
<td>Defining disabilities: Types of disabilities and characteristics</td>
<td>Pamphlet about Disability DUE</td>
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<td>Oct 7</td>
<td>Service delivery approaches, collaboration, and consultation</td>
<td>Presenter: Cheri Takemoto, Director of</td>
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<td>Current Issues in ECSE: Inclusive services</td>
<td>Read Chapter 6</td>
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<td>Legal decisions and developing IEPs and IFSPs</td>
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<td>Oct 14</td>
<td>Defining curriculum and approaches to curriculum</td>
<td>Presenter: Denise Robinson, FCPS, Kindergarten Teacher</td>
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<td>Read Chapter 7</td>
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<td>Oct 21</td>
<td>Environments for effective service delivery</td>
<td>Presenter: Lori Rousseau, FCPS</td>
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<td>Early Childhood Program Manager.</td>
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<td>Read Chapter 8</td>
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<td>Professional Code of Ethics Assignment DUE</td>
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<td>Oct 28</td>
<td>Instructional strategies in early education/early childhood special education</td>
<td>Read Chapter 9</td>
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<td>Nov 4</td>
<td>Current Issues in ECSE: Over-representation of minorities</td>
<td>Read Chapter 10</td>
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<td>Services for English language learners</td>
<td>Critical Issues Group Presentation</td>
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<td>Nov 11</td>
<td>Assistive Technology</td>
<td>Critical Issues Group Presentation</td>
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<td>Transition issues</td>
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<td>Nov 18</td>
<td>Young children with autism</td>
<td>Presenter: Sky Dantinne, Parent</td>
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<td>Readings: TBA</td>
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<td>Critical Issues Group Presentation</td>
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<td>Nov 25</td>
<td><em>No Class: Thanksgiving Holiday</em></td>
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<td>Dec 2</td>
<td>Current Issues in ECSE: Challenging behaviors and alternative placements</td>
<td>Critical Issues Group Presentation</td>
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| Dec 9  | Response to Intervention (RTI) | Critical Issues Group Presentation  
Final Exam will be distributed |
| Dec 16 | Final Exam                      |