

*George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Early Childhood Education Program*

**EDSE 405/505
Introduction to Early Childhood Special Education (3:3:0)
Fall 2009
Wednesdays, 4:30 – 7:10 pm
Engineering Building 1107**

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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.
13. Demonstrate person-first respect and understanding of young children and their families.
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

Gargiulo, R., & Kilgo, J. L. (2005). *Young children with special needs* (2nd ed.). New York: Delmar. ISBN: 1401860826.

Recommended Text

American Psychological Association (APA). (2001). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: APA.

Recommended Web Resources

<http://nectac.org/> (website of the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center)

<http://idea.ed.gov/> (website of the U.S. Department of Education, with resources related to IDEA 2004)

<http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/sped/earlychildhood.html>

<http://www.infantva.org/>

<http://www.dec-sped.org/index.aspx>

<http://www.cec.sped.org/am/template.cfm?section=Home>

<http://www.naeyc.org/>

<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> for a listing of these dispositions.
- Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#Anchor12> for the full honor code.
- Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/policy/newpolicy/1301gen.html>. Click on responsible Use of Computing Policy at the bottom of the screen.
- 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/> or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.

Course Topics

Date	Topics	Readings and Assignments Due
Sept 2	Introduction to Early Childhood Special Education as a profession	
Sept 9	Bedrock principles influencing services to young children – the role of families, appropriate practices, natural environments	Read Chapter 3
Sept 16	Foundations of Education, including Early Childhood Special Education History, legislation, and policy affecting the field	Read Chapters 1 and 2 Group Presentations (legislation)-DUE
Sept 23	Assessment for eligibility and for planning and evaluation	Read Chapters 4 and 5
Sept 30	Defining disabilities: Types of disabilities and characteristics	Pamphlet about Disability DUE
Oct 7	Service delivery approaches, collaboration, and consultation Current Issues in ECSE: Inclusive services Legal decisions and developing IEPs and IFSPs	Presenter: Cheri Takemoto, Director of of Read Chapter 6
Oct 14	Defining curriculum and approaches to curriculum	Presenter: Denise Robinson, FCPS, Kindergarten Teacher Read Chapter 7
Oct 21	Environments for effective service delivery	Presenter: Lori Rousseau, FCPS Early Childhood Program Manager. Read Chapter 8 Professional Code of Ethics Assignment DUE
Oct 28	Instructional strategies in early education/early childhood special education	Read Chapter 9
Nov 4	Current Issues in ECSE: Over-representation of minorities Services for English language learners	Read Chapter 10 Critical Issues Group Presentation
Nov 11	Assistive Technology Transition issues	Critical Issues Group Presentation
Nov 18	Young children with autism	Presenter: Sky Dantine, Parent Readings: TBA Critical Issues Group Presentation

Nov 25	<i>No Class: Thanksgiving Holiday</i>	
Dec 2	Current Issues in ECSE: Challenging behaviors and alternative placements	Critical Issues Group Presentation
Dec 9	Response to Intervention (RTI)	Critical Issues Group Presentation Final Exam will be distributed
Dec 16	Final Exam	