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

EDSE 505  
Introduction to Early Childhood Special Education (3:3:0)  
Spring 2010  
Mondays, 7:20 – 10:00 pm  
Innovation Hall 215G  

Professor: Dr. Kimberly Sopko  
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Email address: ksopko@gmu.edu  
Office hours by appointment  

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.  

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 course 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**


Supplemental readings posted on Blackboard and/or shared in class.
Recommended Texts

Recommended Web Resources (also review links posted on Blackboard)

http://nectac.org/ (website of the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center)
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/sped/earlychildhood.html - Virginia Department of Education
http://www.infantva.org/ - Virginia Infant and Toddler Connection
http://www.cec.sped.org/ - Council for Exceptional Children
http://www.dec-sped.org/index.aspx - CEC Division of Early Childhood
http://www.naeyc.org/ - National Association for the Education of Young Children
http://www.zerotothree.org/ - Zero to Three

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.
Guidelines for Success

• Students are responsible for their own learning. They will read the material, reflect upon their experiences, and ask questions to fellow students, colleagues, and the instructor. When they are unclear about concepts or assignments, they should communicate with the instructor through telephone, email, or office hours.

• Due to the high volume of email, it is helpful to standardize the SUBJECT line information to assist in identifying email. Students should identify the course they are referring to and the topic of their question in the subject line.

Students will provide the following information within their email:
  - Their full name
  - Their contact information (phone # at home and work) and where is best to reach them
  - A complete description of their question so that the instructor can appropriately assist them

Written Assignments

All written assignments prepared outside of class will be evaluated for content and presentation as graduate-level writing. The American Psychological Association, Sixth 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 Mason 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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>EDSE 505</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>118-125 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>112-117 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>108-111 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>103-107 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>100-102 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>87-99 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>86 points and below</td>
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A+ is possible if work is of exceptional high quality and includes work above and beyond that required for the course.
Grading Policy

All CEHD undergraduate and graduate students are held to the university grading policies as described in the Academic Policies section of the catalog: http://catalog.gmu.edu/content.php?catoid=5&navoid=104. Those students enrolled in a CEHD licensure program, however, must earn a B- or better in all licensure coursework. A degree-seeking graduate student will be dismissed after accumulating grades of F in two courses or 9 credits of unsatisfactory grades (C or F) in graduate courses. A 3.0 grade point average is required for completion of the graduate 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 Task Stream.

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.

Assignments

Attendance and Participation (15 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.

**Websites / Resources (5 points)**

Students will identify 3 websites and/or resources that describe federal legislation and/or state regulations relevant to special education and/or individuals with disabilities (e.g. Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the Assistive Technology Act). One of the websites must be user-friendly for parents—help parents understand legislation, shares related information and identifies additional resources for parents. For each website, student will provide the URL, the name/title of the website, and a brief summary of why the website is useful.

**Article Critique (20 total points)**

Students will read and critique one research or theory-building article related to services for diverse young learners. Once the student finds an article in a journal regarding early childhood special education, he/she will email the citation for the article and the reasons for choosing it to the instructor for permission to proceed with the review. The student will read the article and summarize it in a one-page critique detailing the following: Author, title, topic, article citation, article summary, his/her thoughts/opinions; e.g., how this article helped them better understand the field of early childhood special education and the implications for an early childhood special educator’s practice.

Students will post the critique on Blackboard in their designated space. (10/20 points)

In addition, students are responsible for reading the article critiques written by all other EDSE 505 students in this class and discussing their critiques via the Blackboard on-line discussion board. (10/20 points)

**Professional Code of Ethics (10 points)**

Students will review the GMU CEHD Professional Dispositions at [http://gse.gmu.edu/facultystaffres/profdisp.htm](http://gse.gmu.edu/facultystaffres/profdisp.htm) and Professional Standards from NAEYC and DEC and reflect on readings, class discussions, and their own knowledge about children, families, instruction, and early childhood practices. They will develop five (5) professional ethics/standards of professionalism related to serving culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse young children with disabilities and their families that they will strive to honor and abide by as they work in the field of early childhood special education. Each ethic should have a brief but thorough rationale accompanying it. They do not need to cite specific research, but it should be clear to the reader that the students’ values are informed by their studies and professional experiences. This paper should have an introduction and conclusion in narrative format. The paper should be less than 3 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 the following: 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) good sources for more information.

Students will post their pamphlet on the Blackboard site. They will be prepared to discuss their pamphlet in class and will bring enough copies for the class and the instructor. In addition to the handout, students will prepare a brief paper for the professor: 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, they will list references they found especially useful and will 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.

Students must send a detailed agenda for their presentation with a brief description of the activity, the power point presentation (if one is used), and any links to videos or other supporting materials by 5:00 pm the Wednesday BEFORE their group presentation.

Students will e-mail a teacher/parent friendly article to instructors and classmates by 5:00 the Friday BEFORE their group’s presentation. All students are expected to read the article prior to the group presentation.

On the night of their presentation, students are to bring to class a handout that contains the following:

1) an agenda (for ENTIRE class)
2) an annotated resource list (ten references, which were reviewed by the GROUP-with 5 peer reviewed research based articles/book about research & 5 teacher/parent-friendly articles/books; the resource list must also be provided in digital form (may be emailed) to the instructor so it can be posted on Blackboard.
3) Group presentation rubric

The presentation MUST be ONLY 45 minutes and structured to engage classmates in one VERY meaningful and memorable activity to help them better understand and remember 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; RTI – response to intervention, transition issues, assistive technology.

Take-Home Final (25 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. The exam will have a mix of essay and objective questions. EDSE 505 students will also respond to questions raised in a brief case study to demonstrate practical application of knowledge acquired through this course.

Course Schedule

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings &amp; Assignments Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 25</td>
<td>Introduction to Early Childhood Special Education as a profession</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 1</td>
<td>Foundations of Education, including Early Childhood Special Education</td>
<td>Raver, Ch. 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>History, legislation, and policy affecting the field</td>
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<td>Feb 8</td>
<td>Bedrock principles influencing services to young children – the role</td>
<td>Raver, Ch 2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>of families, communication, collaboration/teams, and consultation</td>
<td>Websites due</td>
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<td>Feb 15</td>
<td>Assessment for eligibility and for planning and evaluation, legal</td>
<td>Raver, Ch. 3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>decisions and developing IEPs and IFSPs, monitoring skill acquisition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 22</td>
<td>Service delivery approaches and environments for effective service</td>
<td>Raver, Ch. 1 &amp; 4 (pp. 80-86) Disability Pamphlet Due</td>
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<td></td>
<td>delivery; Appropriate practices and natural environments; Defining</td>
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<td>curriculum and approaches to curriculum</td>
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<td>Mar 1</td>
<td>Instructional strategies in early education/early childhood special</td>
<td>Raver, Ch. 4 (pp. 86-105)</td>
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<td>education; Inclusion</td>
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<td>Mar 8</td>
<td>Spring Break – No Class</td>
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<td>Mar 15</td>
<td>Defining Disabilities: Types and characteristics of Communication</td>
<td>Raver, Ch. 5</td>
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<td>and Language disabilities; and promoting skill development</td>
<td>Professional Code of Ethics Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 22</td>
<td>Defining Disabilities: Types and characteristics of Cognitive</td>
<td>Raver, Ch. 6</td>
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<td>disabilities and literacy; and promoting skill development</td>
<td>(505 students also Ch. 9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 29</td>
<td>Defining Disabilities: Types and characteristics of Motor disabilities; and promoting skill development</td>
<td>Raver, Ch. 7</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(505 students also Ch. 10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 5</td>
<td>Defining Disabilities: Types and characteristics of Social-emotional</td>
<td>Raver, Ch. 8</td>
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<td></td>
<td>disabilities; and promoting skill development</td>
<td>Critical Issues Group Presentation Article Critique by EDSE 505</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Current Issue in ECSE: Autism</td>
<td>students due</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 12</td>
<td>Current Issues in ECSE: Over-representation of African-Americans;</td>
<td>Critical Issues Group Presentation</td>
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<td>Services for English Language Learners</td>
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<td>Teaching Tolerance</td>
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<td>Apr 19</td>
<td>Current Issues in ECSE: Challenging behaviors and alternative</td>
<td>Critical Issues Group Presentation</td>
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<td>placements</td>
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<td>Apr 26</td>
<td>Current Issues in ECSE: Inclusion</td>
<td>Critical Issues Group Presentation</td>
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<td>May 3</td>
<td>Response to Intervention (RTI); Review</td>
<td>Critical Issues Group Presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>Final Exam will be distributed</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 10</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>MUST BE UPLOADED To TASKSTREAM for grades to be released.</td>
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