

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

**EDSE 505  
Introduction to Early Childhood Special Education (3:3:0)  
Fall 2010  
Thursdays, 7:20-10:00  
Enterprise 274**

**Professor: Eva Thorp, Ed.D.**

**Telephone: 703.993.2035**

**Email address: ethorp@gmu.edu**

**Office hours:** Thursday, 4:30-6:00 or 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.
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 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**

Howard, V.F., Williams, B., & Lepper, C.E. (2010). *Very young children with special needs: A foundation for educators, families, and service providers*. Boston: Pearson.

Anderson, W., Chitwood, S., Hayden, D., and Takemoto, C. (2008). *Negotiating the special education maze: A guide for parents and teachers*.

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

### **Recommended Resource Texts**

Teaching Tolerance Project & Paley, V. G. (2003). *Starting small: Teaching tolerance in preschool and the early grades*. Montgomery, AL: Southern Poverty Law Center.

### Recommended Web Resources (also review links posted on Blackboard)

- <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> - 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 turned off during class time** unless the instructor requests their use as 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. **Any work handed in late, without the prior approval of the instructor, will have points deducted.**

#### 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, 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 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

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 in in-class discussion and small group activities. *Collaboration is a central theme in special education; as a result, your ability to support the participation of others demonstrates your professional development in this area and will be graded according.*
- 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 how the website is useful for understanding the field of early childhood special education.

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

Students will review the GMU CEHD Professional Dispositions at <http://gse.gmu.edu/facultystaffres/profdisp.htm> and Professional Standards from NAEYC and DEC, as well as the Code of Ethics of each of these professional organizations. Reflecting on 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; 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. The exam will have a mix of essay and objective questions.

### Course Schedule

Date	Topics	Readings & Assignments Due
Sept. 2	Introduction to Early Childhood Special Education as a profession	
Sept. 9	Foundations of education, including history of early childhood special education	Howard et. al, Ch. 1
Sept. 16	<b>No on-site class. On-line work.</b> Legislation and policy affecting the field	Howard et. al., Ch. 10 <b>Begin to share websites</b>
Sept. 23	<b>Class will meet in JC 116, from 7:30 to 8:45; We will meet in our regular room from 9:00 to 10:00. Guest Speaker, Karen Roberts (GMU ECSE grad), reading from and discussing her book – Embracing Autism in Preschool.</b>  Bedrock principles influencing services to young children – the role of families, communication, collaboration/teams, and consultation	Howard et. al., Ch. 2
Sept. 30	Assessment for eligibility and for planning and evaluation, legal decisions and developing IEPs and IFSPs, monitoring skill acquisition. Service delivery approaches and environments for effective service delivery.	Anderson et. al., Ch. 4-7 <b>Websites due</b>
Oct. 7	Defining curriculum and approaches to curriculum. Instructional strategies in early education/early childhood special education	Anderson et al., Ch. 8,9,10,12,13, 14 – reading responsibility will be divided among class members

Oct. 14	Early Intervention for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities; appropriate practices and natural environments;	Howard et al., Ch. 9; Anderson et al., Ch. 11 <b>Code of Ethics Due</b>
Oct. 21	Development: Typical and atypical; sources of Risk for Young Children; defining disabilities	Howard et al., Ch. 3-5
Oct. 28	Defining Disabilities: Conditions affecting neurological function and inborn variations of development.	Howard et al., Ch 6-7
Nov. 4	Defining Disabilities: Sensory impairments and infections; types and characteristics of motor disabilities.	Howard et al, Ch 8 Class Disability Resource Fair <b>Disability Pamphlet Due</b>
Nov. 11	Defining Disabilities: Types and characteristics of Social-emotional disabilities. Current Issue in ECSE: Autism	<b>Critical Issues Group Presentation</b> Read group assigned article
Nov. 18	Current Issues in ECSE: Disproportionality; Services for English Language Learners Teaching Tolerance	<b>Critical Issues Group Presentation</b> Read group assigned article
Nov. 25	<b>No Class – Thanksgiving Break</b>	
Dec. 2	Current Issues in ECSE: Challenging behaviors and positive behavior supports	<b>Critical Issues Group Presentation</b> Read group assigned article
Dec. 9	Response to Intervention (RTI); Review	<b>Critical Issues Group Presentation</b> Read group assigned article Final Exam will be distributed
Dec. 16	Final Exam	<b>MUST BE UPLOADED To TASKSTREAM</b> for grades to be released.