



College of Education and Human Development

Early Childhood Education Program
4400 University Drive, MS 4B3, Fairfax, Virginia 22030
Phone: 703-993-3844; Fax: 703-993-4370; email: earlyed@gmu.edu
<https://gse.gmu.edu/programs/earlychildhood/>

ECED 524/EDSE 665 Families of Children With Special Needs (3:3:0)
Fall 2011 Tuesday, 7:20 pm-10:00 pm West 1001

Instructor: Kimberly Sopko, Ed.D.

Office: Robinson A 103A

Telephone: 757-348-5051

Email address: ksopko@gmu.edu

Office hours by appointment

Course Description

Focuses on strategies for developing culturally appropriate family-professional partnerships to benefit children with special needs. Explores theories and research supporting a family-centered approach. Includes family and professional rights and responsibilities in the special education process.

Prerequisite: Admission to the Early Childhood Education program or approval of course instructor

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

1. Discuss theories and research supporting a family-centered approach to special education.
2. Discuss the role of cultural context in attitudes, beliefs, values, and child rearing practices.
3. Analyze personal values, beliefs, and cultural biases that influence their work with families.
4. Describe underlying principles and ways to work with families that are both effective and enabling.
5. Identify strategies that support and assist families to identify their priorities, resources, and concerns for their children with special needs.
6. Create tailored opportunities for collaborating with families in the ongoing education of children with special needs.
7. Utilize family systems theory to describe and understand family perspectives.
8. Identify specific components of IDEA that support family voices in the special education process.
9. Adopt a strengths-based problem solving perspective when analyzing dilemmas related to partnering with families.

10. Demonstrate understanding of the theories and techniques of family-centered intervention, including issues related to families from diverse backgrounds and multicultural education.

Professional Standards

This course is aligned with the standards established by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC).

Required Texts

Turnbull, A., Turnbull, R., Erwin, E., & Soodak, L. (2011). *Families, professionals, and exceptionality: Positive outcomes through partnerships and trust (6th edition)*. Columbus, OH: Prentice Hall. ISBN: 9780137070480

GMU ECED 524/ EDSE 665 Course Packet Fall 2011 - www.universityreaders.com

Recommended Texts

Kalyanpur, M., & Harry, B. (1999). *Culture in special education: Building reciprocal family-professional relationships*. Baltimore: Brookes.

Lynch, E., & Hanson, M.J. (2004). *Developing cross-cultural competence: A guide for working with children and their families*. Baltimore: Paul Brookes.

Additional Course Resources

Beck, M. (1999). *Expecting Adam*. New York: Berkley Books.

Chen, D., Brekken, L., & Chan, S. (1995). *Culturally responsive and family focused training*. Northridge, CA: California State University Northridge, Project CRAFT.

Edwards, K. (2005). *The memory keeper's daughter*. New York: Penguin.

Fadiman, A. (1997). *The spirit catches you, and you fall down: A Hmong child, her American doctors, and the collision of two cultures*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux Housden, M. (2003). *Hannah's gift*. Bantam.

Flynn, N., Thorp, E., Evans, K., & Takemoto, C. (2001 ed.) *Multicultural early childhood team training*. Fairfax, VA: Helen A. Kellar Institute for Human disAbilities, Fairfax, VA.

Gonzalez, N., Moll, L., & Amanti, C. (2005). *Funds of knowledge*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Harry, B., Kalyanpur, M., & Day, M. (1999). *Building cultural reciprocity with families: Case studies in special education*. Baltimore: Paul Brookes.

Plous, S. (ed.). (2003). *Understanding prejudice and discrimination*. Boston: McGraw Hill.

Reston, J. (2006). *Fragile innocence*. New York: Harmony Books.

Staton, J. (1995). *Listening to Families*. Washington, DC: Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. (15-part video series).

College of Education and Human Development Expectations and Resources

Student Expectations

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].

- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

Campus Resources

- The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].
- The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>].

Note: To determine whether the campus is closed due to inclement weather, call 703-993-1000 or go to www.gmu.edu.

College of Education and Human Development Core Values

In the context of an enduring college-level and university-level commitment to teaching, research and service, the College of Education and Human Development also holds the following core values:

Collaboration

Collaboration is an important human activity that involves shared responsibility in promoting healthy, productive lives and educational success. We commit ourselves to work toward these goals in genuine partnerships with individuals, families, community agencies, schools, businesses, foundations, and other groups at the local, regional, national and international levels.

Ethical Leadership

In all professions represented by the college, leadership is an essential component denoting ability and willingness to help lead professional practice to higher levels. We commit ourselves to practice ethical leadership through deliberate and systematic attention to the ethical principles that guide all leaders in a moral society.

Innovation

We have a history of creating dynamic, innovative programs and we are dedicated to continue creating innovative approaches in all areas of our work. We commit ourselves to seeking new

ways to advance knowledge, solve problems, improve our professional practice and expand on our successes.

Research-Based Practice

The best practice in any discipline is based upon sound research and professional judgment. We commit ourselves to basing our instruction, scholarship and policy recommendations on well-established principles that, wherever possible, emerge from research and reflection on its implications for professional practice.

Social Justice

Social justice embodies essential principles of equity and access to all opportunities in society, in accordance with democratic principles and respect for all persons and points of view. We commit ourselves to promoting equity, opportunity, and social justice through the college's operations and its missions related to teaching, research, and service.

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. All in-class usage of electronic devices, which includes telephones, laptops, etc., must have approval of course instructor. 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 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. 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 may consult the Writing Center for additional writing support.

Students will do the following:

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 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 current catalog, which can be accessed at <http://catalog.gmu.edu>. Those students enrolled in a CEHD Licensure Graduate Certificate 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.

Specific Course Assignments

Assignments	Due Dates	Points
Attendance & Participation	Ongoing	15
Journal Submission # 1	Sept 20	5
Journal Submission # 2	Oct 4	5
Family Partnership & Collaboration Opportunities	Oct 25	25
Journal Submission # 3	Nov 1	5
Family Stories Project: Part 1 and Part 2 Part 3	Nov 22 Dec 6	45
TOTAL		100

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 and online discussions, activities, and written reflections.

Personal Journal/ Reading Reflections (Individual work – 15 points)

These assignments require that students reflect on the course content and discussions as they relate to their own family experience and how that may impact their work with families of children with disabilities. Students will use this opportunity to interview their own family members to identify early memories that may influence their practice. They will consider differences in their family growing up and their current family.

Students should maintain a weekly journal to collect their thoughts about the readings, reflecting on what they are learning, and connecting it with their own family experience. Students will benefit more from this course when they use classes as a jumping off point for further thought

and reflection and maintain a weekly reflective journal. Throughout the course, students will consider the following questions and issues when writing their journal:

- What are your thoughts about the readings?
- In what way do the readings relate to your family experience?
- In what ways do your cultural experiences influence your work with families?

Students will submit three summative submissions.

1. In their first journal submission students will summarize their own family background and discuss how their background and family experiences contributed to who they are today.
2. In their second journal submission, students will discuss how their “family lens” influences their perspectives of and interactions with families, particularly families with cultural, linguistic, or socioeconomic backgrounds different from their own.
3. In their third journal submission, students will identify specific information, either theory or practice, that they learned and will now integrate into their work with families with cultural, linguistic, or socioeconomic backgrounds different from their own and explain why it is important to do so.

Students are not graded on what they say or how they say it but that they say something that reveals their ability to engage in critical thinking.

Family Partnership & Collaboration Opportunities (Individual work – 25 points)

This assignment asks students to look critically at current practices and opportunities for partnerships with families in their setting. If students are not currently teaching, they should contact their classmates and visit their program. Look at the entire school environment, the secretary, the PTA, the pictures on the walls etc. Then, look very closely at the classroom/setting and analyze it as well.

In their paper, students should do the following:

- 1) Describe
 - the physical and social setting
 - family collaboration opportunities that exist
 - ways families receive messages that are welcoming
 - how families from varied cultures might experience the environment
- 2) Analyze the practices of this program from the perspective of the readings;
- 3) Analyze these practices from the perspective of the families in this setting based upon their understanding of the individual and cultural perspectives of the families;
- 4) Analyze these practices from the perspective of providing family-centered services to families from various backgrounds; and
- 5) Provide a proposal for how current practices in this program can be improved to promote family centered practices.

Students will be given some time to discuss this in-class with a peer and will, then, turn in their paper the following week. They must provide specific references to the readings used in class.

Family Stories Project (45 points)

This is the NCATE 7 Family Stories Project that shows evidence of meeting CEC Standards. *This assignment must be submitted on TaskStream.* See the assessment description and scoring rubric attached. Students will have the opportunity to share a brief review of their family story project with the class. The presentation will include a brief summary of the family's system and insights learned from working with the particular family studied.

ECED 524 / EDSE 665 Course Schedule and Topics

Date	Topics	Readings & Assignments Due
Aug 30	Syllabus review, beginning with our stories	
Sept 6	Family System's Perspective Identify partner for collaboration opportunities assignment	Turnbull: Chs. 1 & 2
Sept 13	The Developmental Process of Parenting	Turnbull: Chs. 3 & 4
Sept 20	Historical View on Family Roles in Education Programs	Turnbull: Ch. 5 1st journal reflection due
Sept 27	Socio-Cultural Perspective on Disability	Turnbull: Ch. 6
Oct 4	Collaboration With Families of Children With Special Needs	Turnbull: Ch. 7 Course Packet – Building cultural reciprocity with families 2nd journal reflection due
Oct 11	No class due to Columbus Day	
Oct 18	Historical Perspective on the Role of Professionals	Turnbull: Ch. 8 Course packet - Carissa: A Family with a Vision-On a Mission
Oct 25	Family Dilemmas Resources for Families IDEA and Families	Turnbull: Ch. 9 Course Packet - Skilled Dialogue: Strategies for Responding to Cultural Diversity in Early Childhood Family partnership & collaboration opportunities due
Nov 1	Special Issues: Homelessness and Poverty	Turnbull: Ch. 10 3rd journal reflection due
Nov 8	Family Strengths and Coping	Course Packet 3 - Rafael: "La Alegria de La Casa"
Nov 15	Family Partnership in Assessment & Intervention	Turnbull – Ch. 11 & 12
Nov 22	Family Partnerships, Collaboration & The Use of Family Stories	Step One & Two of Family Story Project Due
Nov 29	Family Story and Resource Sharing	

Dec 6	Family Story and Resource Sharing	Step Three (Reflection) of Family Story Project Due
Dec 13	Family Story and Resource Sharing Family Wrap-up	

**Course schedule subject to change based on class needs at discretion of the professor.*

Early Childhood Special Education NCATE Assessment 7

Families Stories Project

Early Childhood Special Education NCATE Assessment 7 Family Stories Project is in ECED 524 Families of Children With Special Needs. This assessment shows evidence of meeting CEC Standard Elements 1c, 2e, 3b, and 3c.

Assessment Overview

In this assessment, students will explore human diversity and the impact of diverse experiences on individual's ability to learn, interact socially, and live as fulfilled contributing members of society as well as the impact of diversity on familial and community relationships and the delivery of educational services. Students will interview and summarize a family's story, conduct research on the family's cultural context, and reflect upon the experience and what they learned. Students will do the following:

- Identify, within the first month of class, a family that has a child with special needs whose socio-cultural context and perspective is different from their own
- Establish a relationship with the family and learn about the family (characteristics, language, culture, goals, unique circumstances, etc.) through at least three meaningful exchanges and use this as an opportunity to see different perceptions of parenting a child with special needs as well as different perceptions of early childhood programs and services
- Describe the family and their story using a family systems framework
- Research information that increases their understanding of the family's socio-cultural context and the potential socio-cultural impacts on an individual's learning in school and community settings
- Reflect upon the familial and cultural diversity experienced through interactions with a family, discuss what was learned about themselves through the experience, and integrate the reflections with information from class readings and class discussions

CEC Standards Assessed

CEC 1c Impact of human diversity on families, cultures, and schools as well as the delivery of early childhood special education services

CEC 2e Impact of experiences of individuals with ELN on families, as well as the individual's ability to learn, interact socially, and live as fulfilled contributing members of the community

CEC 3b Effects of beliefs, traditions, and values across and within cultures on relationships among and between students, their families, and the school community

CEC 3c Impact on and interaction of primary language, culture, familial backgrounds, and individual's exceptional condition on the individual's academic and social abilities, attitudes, values, interests, and career options

Students will respond to each of the following steps and questions for the Family Stories Project.

Step One: Students will briefly describe the selected family's socio-cultural context and identify how it is different from their own socio-cultural context (*CEC 3b*). Students will do the following:

- Identify why this family was chosen, being sure to identify family beliefs, traditions, and values and consider how they impact perceptions on relationships (individual, family, school, work, and community)
- Describe the three meaningful interactions:
 - a. When did the interactions occur? Where did the interactions occur? Who was present during the interaction?
 - b. What was the primary focus of each interaction?
- Consider what they need to know about the family's culture in order to understand them and discuss background socio-cultural information they researched after meeting this family and why they researched that specific information
- Identify what they learned to increase their understanding of the impact of socio-cultural contexts on individual's learning in school and community settings

Step Two: Students will describe the family and the family's story using a family systems and sociocultural perspective (*CEC 2e, 3c*). Students will do the following:

- Analyze the family as a system and identify
 - a. family inputs—characteristics of the family as a whole; characteristics of individual members; and unique circumstances
 - b. family subsystems and interactions—marital, parental, sibling, extended family, including a discussion of cohesion and adaptability
 - c. prominent family functions (affection, self-esteem, spiritual, economics, daily care, socialization, recreation, education, etc.)
 - d. the current life cycle stage for this family, transitions they experienced, and transitions they are preparing for and how
- Discuss how these family system components influence the child with special needs' ability to learn, interact socially, and live as a fulfilled contributing member of society
- Describe how the family's socio-cultural context impacts the child with special needs' academic and social abilities, attitudes, values, interests, and career *options*

Step Three: Students will provide a personal reflection on socio-cultural diversity (*CEC 1c*). Students will do the following:

- Describe the process of learning the family's story and sociocultural context, their reaction to the family story, and how their views changed over the semester
- Describe the individual child's characteristics from their perspective and from the family's perspective, including the differences in perspectives and the sociocultural context that influences these perspectives

- Discuss what they learned about themselves through the experiences with this family and compare it to their own family experiences while integrating information from readings and class discussions
- Describe how their improved understanding of family systems and socio-cultural contexts will help them deliver high quality education services

ECE PROGRAM OUTCOME STANDARDS (Aligned With State and CEC Standards)	Assessment Measure Descriptions			
	Exceeds Criteria	Meets Criteria	Partially Meets Criteria	No Evidence
Early Childhood Special Education NCATE ASSESSMENT 7 Family Stories Project ECED 524 Families of Children With Special Needs				
CEC 1c Impact of human diversity on families, cultures, and schools as well as the delivery of early childhood special education services	Provides thorough and comprehensive reflection that identifies what was learned about human diversity from an interviewed family and draws comparisons to own family; discusses extensively how this new information will help them deliver high quality education services; and considers a wide variety of aspects relevant to delivery of education services	Provides comprehensive reflection that identifies what was learned about human diversity from an interviewed family; draws comparisons to own family; and discusses how this new information will help them deliver high quality education services	Provides a brief reflection that minimally identifies what was learned about human diversity from an interviewed family; draws minimal comparisons to own family; and/or minimally discusses how this new information will help them deliver high quality education services	Does not provide a reflection or discussion
CEC 2e Impact of experiences of individuals with ELN on families, as well as the individual's ability to learn, interact socially, and live as fulfilled contributing members of the community	Provides thorough discussion about how experiences of an interviewed family influence the ability of an individual with ELN to learn, interact socially, and contribute to society integrating all components of a family system model	Provides discussion about how experiences of an interviewed family influence the ability of an individual with ELN to learn, interact socially, and contribute to society integrating most components of a family system model;	Provides a brief discussion about how experiences of an interviewed family influence the ability of an individual with ELN to learn, interact socially, and contribute to society integrating a few components of a family system model;	Does not provide a discussion

<p>CEC 3b Effects of beliefs, traditions, and values across and within cultures on relationships among and between students, their families, and the school community</p>	<p>Provides thorough discussion about how an interviewed family's beliefs, traditions, and values affect relationships among students, families, and school communities an integrates research findings into discussion</p>	<p>Provides discussion about how an interviewed family's beliefs, traditions, and values affect relationships among students, families, and school communities</p>	<p>Provides a brief discussion about how an interviewed family's beliefs, traditions, and values affect relationships among students, families, and/or school communities</p>	<p>Does not provide a discussion</p>
<p>CEC 3c Impact on and interaction of primary language, culture, familial backgrounds, and individual's exceptional condition on the individual's academic and social abilities, attitudes, values, interests, and career options</p>	<p>Provides thorough discussion about interviewed family's language, culture, background, and the individual's exceptional condition and demonstrates a strong understanding of how it impacts the individual's academic and social abilities, attitudes, values, interests, and career options</p>	<p>Provides discussion about interviewed family's language, culture, background, and the individual's exceptional condition and how it impacts the individual's academic and social abilities, attitudes, values, interests, and career options</p>	<p>Provides a brief discussion about interviewed family's language, culture, background, and/or the individual's exceptional condition and how it impacts the individual's academic and social abilities, attitudes, values, interests, and/or career options or Does not discuss all identified components</p>	<p>Does not provide a discussion</p>