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

ECED 504.001/P01 Engaging Families of Diverse Young Learners  
3 Credits, Fall 2017  
Tuesdays/ 7:20 – 10:00 pm  
Thompson Hall L014, Fairfax Campus  

Faculty  
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Email Address: lalderma@gmu.edu  

Prerequisites/Corequisites  
None  

University Catalog Course Description  
Focuses on strategies for developing culturally appropriate family professional partnerships to benefit children, including children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and children with special needs. Explores theories and research supporting a family centered approach, including family and professional rights and responsibilities, especially in the special education process.  

Course Overview  
Not Applicable  

Course Delivery Method  
This course will be delivered using a lecture and discussion format.  

Learner Outcomes or Objectives  
This course is designed to enable students to do the following:  
1. Describe the historical, philosophical, and sociological foundations underlying the role, development and organization of public education in the United States.  
2. Discuss the legal status of teachers and students, including federal and state laws and regulations, school as an organization/culture, and contemporary issues in education.  
3. Discuss theories and research supporting a family-centered approach to early childhood education.  
4. Discuss the role of cultural context in attitudes, beliefs, values, and child rearing practices.  
5. Analyze personal values, beliefs, and cultural biases that influence their work with families.
6. Describe underlying principles and ways to work with families that are both effective and enabling.
7. Identify strategies that support and assist families to identify their priorities, resources, and concerns for their children, including children with special needs.
8. Create tailored opportunities for collaborating with families in the ongoing education of children, including children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and children with special needs.
9. Utilize family systems theory to describe and understand family perspectives.
10. Identify specific components of IDEA that support family voices in the special education process.
11. Adopt a strengths-based problem solving perspective when analyzing dilemmas related to partnering with families.
12. Demonstrate understanding of the theories and techniques of family-centered intervention, including issues related to families from diverse backgrounds and multicultural education.

Professional Standards (Council of Exceptional Children and National Association for the Education of Young Children)
Upon completion of this course, students will have met the following professional standards:

NAEYC Standard Elements

NAEYC 2a Knowing about and understanding diverse family and community characteristics
NAEYC 2b Supporting and engaging families and community through respectful, reciprocal relationships

Required Texts
See Additional Course Readings list following the Class Schedule.

Course Performance Evaluation
Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard, Tk20, hard copy).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
<th>Points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; Participation</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Spotlight</em> Discussion</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Visit Project</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Part 1 Characteristics Memo</td>
<td>October 3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Part 2 Families Analysis and Reflection</td>
<td>October 31</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Full Home Visit Project uploaded to</td>
<td>November 21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Assignments and/or Examinations

**Spotlight on Young Children and Families Discussion (10 points)**
Students, along with two or three of their peers, will be responsible for leading a discussion about an assigned chapter from the *Spotlight on Young Children and Families* text. Students are expected to lead a discussion (they may NOT use PowerPoint and should not just summarize the reading) and include one hands-on activity as part of the discussion. *A sign-up sheet will be provided on the first night of class.*

**Home Visit Project (35 points)**
This is the Key Assessment 7 Home Visit Project that shows evidence of meeting CEC and NAEYC Standards. This assignment must be submitted on Blackboard. See the assessment description and scoring rubric attached.

**Online Family Resource (10 points)**
Students will investigate, identify, and share a resource (e.g. a family service, an individual or particular service provider, a handbook or other written material, a local event, etc.) that would be of great use to the family (or a similar family) they chose for the Home Visitation Project. Students will search for appropriate resources and create and upload to Blackboard a one-page handout describing the resource with all relevant elements and contact information. Students will post their family resource in the discussion board, and bring enough copies to class to share with their colleagues. Students will present on their resource for one to two minutes during class.

**Family Story Presentation (5 points)**
Students will present what they have learned as a story. Each student presentation will be a total of eight minutes, with five to six minutes for the presentation of the family story and two to three minutes for peer/instructor questions and discussion. The presentation should not sound like a clinical case presentation. Students should be creative with their story presentation and consider how they would like their own story to be told.

**Statement of Philosophy for Working with Families and Communities (25 points)**
Students will use their experiences with the children and families in their setting, any community connections they have made, as well as course content including readings and discussion to create a **one- to two-page (single-spaced) statement of their philosophy** for working with families and communities. This will include not only why they believe it is important to engage with families and communities as a teacher/practitioner but also the ways they believe are most effective for doing this. They will include academic, both research- and theory-based, literature as well as concrete examples from the readings. It is expected that experiential, empirical, and
theoretical (research- and theory-based from course readings) knowledge will be used in this paper. All course readings should be cited appropriately.

• Other Requirements

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 and online 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.

Written Assignments
All formal written assignments 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 at http://infoguides.gmu.edu/content.php?pid=39979. 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.
Type the paper with double spacing, indented paragraphs, 1-inch margins all around, and 12-point Times New Roman font.

• Grading

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

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.

**Professional Dispositions**
Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

**Class Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Assignments &amp; Readings Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 29</td>
<td>Intro to Course &amp; Family Engagement</td>
<td>Welcome to ECED 504!</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Family Box Activity - Bring Item</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 5</td>
<td>Defining Family Intro to Ecological Model and Family Systems Theory</td>
<td>Grant &amp; Ray, pp. 31-46 See BB for additional readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 12</td>
<td>Contemporary Families: Demographics, Structures, and Functions</td>
<td>Grant &amp; Ray, Ch. 4 Turnbull, Ch. 3 (Family Functions) Spotlight I on YC and Families, pp. 4-11 See BB for additional readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 19</td>
<td>Developmental Process of Parenting</td>
<td>Grant &amp; Ray, Ch. 3 Spotlight II on YC and Families, pp. 16-19 See BB for additional readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 26</td>
<td>Implicit Bias &amp; Sociocultural Perspective</td>
<td>Spotlight III on YC and Families, pp. 38-43 View: <em>The Danger of a Single Story on BB</em> See BB for additional readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 3</td>
<td>Family Diversity: Immigration, Low-Income Families, Single-Parent Families</td>
<td>Grant &amp; Ray, Ch. 5 Spotlight IV on YC and Families, pp. 44-49 DUE to Bb – Part 1 Diverse Family and Community Characteristics Memo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 10</td>
<td><strong>No Class – Monday Classes Meet on Tuesday</strong></td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Reading Material</td>
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<td>Oct 17</td>
<td>Family Diversity: Families With Children With Disabilities, Inclusion</td>
<td>Grant &amp; Ray, Ch. 11 Spotlight V on YC and Families, pp. 28-37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 24</td>
<td>Family Diversity: LGBTQI Families, Families in Transition</td>
<td>Grant &amp; Ray, Ch. 6-8 Spotlight VI on YC and Families, pp. 24-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 31</td>
<td>Additional Family Theories &amp; Tools for Understanding Diverse Families</td>
<td>Spotlight VII on YC and Families, pp. 20-23 Spotlight on YC and Families, pp. 4-11 (no student presentation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 7</td>
<td>Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Partnering With Families, The Importance of Partnerships at all Levels: FEA, SEA, LEA</td>
<td>Grant &amp; Ray, pp. 1-16 &amp; 46-59 Spotlight VIII on YC and Families, pp. 2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 14</td>
<td>Family Engagement: Cultural Competence as an Ongoing Process Cultural Humility</td>
<td>Grant &amp; Ray, pp. 79-90 &amp; Ch. 9 Spotlight IX on YC and Families, pp. 50-54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 21</td>
<td>Family Engagement: Communication and Navigating Systems Creating our Collective Class Story</td>
<td>Grant &amp; Ray, Ch. 10 Spotlight X on YC and Families, pp. 12-15</td>
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<td>Nov 28</td>
<td>Family-Teacher Community Connections,</td>
<td>Grant &amp; Ray, Ch. 12 or 13 Spotlight XI on YC and Families, pp. 55-57</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Due Details</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 5</td>
<td>Turnbull’s Seven Principles of Trust</td>
<td>DUE: Poster Session: Family Resource</td>
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<td>DUE to BB – Family Resource</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Student Presentations</td>
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<td>Wrap-Up</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lessons Learned</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lessons-to-be-Learned Celebration!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 12</td>
<td>No Class Reading Day</td>
<td>DUE: Family Story Online</td>
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<td>DUE to Writing Partner – Statement of Philosophy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 19</td>
<td>No Class – Finals Week</td>
<td>DUE to BB – Statement of Philosophy (final)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

**Core Values Commitment**
The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles: [http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/](http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/).

**GMU Policies and Resources for Students**

*Policies*

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see [http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/](http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/)).

- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see [http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/](http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/)).

- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason 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 with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see [http://ods.gmu.edu/](http://ods.gmu.edu/)).

- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be silenced during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
Campus Resources

- Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed to tk20help@gmu.edu or https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to http://coursessupport.gmu.edu.

- For information on student support resources on campus, see https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus.

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website https://cehd.gmu.edu.

Additional Course Readings


Graue, & Hawkins (2010). “I always feel they don’t know anything about us”: Diverse families talk about their relations with school. In M. Miller-Marsh & T. Turner-Vorbeck (Eds.), (Mis)understanding families: Learning from real families in our schools. (pp. 109-125). New York: Teachers College Press.


Early Childhood Education Key Assessment 7
Engaging Families: Home Visit Project

Description of Assessment
Early Childhood Education Key Assessment 7 Engaging Families is the Home Visit Project that provides candidates an opportunity to apply their knowledge and learning of the influence of families, culture and schools on a child’s learning while engaging families in respectful and reciprocal relationships. This assessment takes place in ECED 404/504 Engaging Families of Diverse Young Learners.

How the Assessment Aligns With the Standards
NAEYC Standard Elements
NAEYC 2a Knowing about and understanding diverse family and community characteristics
NAEYC 2b Supporting and engaging families and community through respectful, reciprocal relationships

Description of Assignment
Candidates will focus on developing culturally appropriate family professional partnerships to benefit children, including children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and children with special needs. Candidates will support and engage families through respectful, reciprocal relationships by conducting a home visit, including an interview with at least one of the primary caregivers, and a family observation during a family event with a family of a young child (birth-8 years old) whose family is marginalized by U.S. society based on the following: race, ethnicity, immigrant status, family structure, socioeconomic status, sexuality, child or parent’s ability status or religion and whose perspective on early childhood education and parenting is likely to be different from their own. They will apply their knowledge and understanding of diverse family characteristics through their observations and interaction with the family during the home visit.

Part 1: Diverse Family and Community Characteristics
Candidates will plan for their home visit by describing their rationale for selecting the family, including the following: (a) a description of the family selected and an explanation of the ways they think the families’ experiences are different from their own; (b) a discussion of what they have observed about how society views or assumes about the child and their family (based on race, ethnicity, family structure, sexual orientation, religion, etc.); (c) and honest attempt to identify and describe any assumptions the candidate has about the family. Candidates will describe how they plan to introduce themselves by finding common ground with the family based on gender, work, education, experiences, etc. as these help with initial introductions. Finally, in this first part of the home visit process, candidates will brainstorm questions that they will ask the parents to learn about the child (e.g., likes, dislikes, interests, experiences, etc.) and about the parents and family (e.g., parents’ experiences, perspective on their children, daily routines, etc.).
Part 2: Understanding, Supporting, and Engaging Families
Candidates will meet with the family to conduct an interview and a family observation. This may occur in one visit or over the course of multiple visits.

Primary caregiver interview. Candidates should try to learn as much as possible through meaningful exchanges. Candidates should challenge themselves to understand how families make sense of the world and how the parents’ and families’ realities of the world are different from their own. The focus should be to engage respectfully with the family member on his or her own terms and turf (if possible), rather than conducting a formal interview. Candidates should meet with the parent in a relaxed framework. It is recommended that candidates “ask, ask, ask.” They should ask the family for clarification or meaning when something is confusing or feels very different to them. Candidates should reflect on their own culture, experiences, and stories as they learn about their families’ stories.

Observation. At the end of this informal meeting, candidates should ask the family if they might be able to join them at a family event (e.g., birthday party, family gathering, etc.). Candidates will conduct an observation of the family and focal child at a family event. It can be a routine event or a special event. Candidates must spend at least an hour with the family. During this event, candidates will engage the family in an informal conversation to find out about the meanings of their actions, describing and making meaning of their learning experience with the family.

Following these meetings with the family, candidates will examine their previous assumptions about the family given new information garnered through the interview and family observation experiences. As such, candidates will include an analysis after the interview and family observation that includes the following:

• What they learned about the family in these interactions and which questions were most helpful in garnering this understanding,
• What they learned about themselves and their assumptions through coming to know this family, and
• What this experience might mean for them as an early childhood educator.
Scoring Guide for the Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early Childhood Education Key Assessment 7</th>
<th>Exceeds</th>
<th>Meets</th>
<th>Approaches</th>
<th>Does Not Meet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engaging Families: Home Visit Project</strong></td>
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</table>

**Part 1: Diverse Family and Community Characteristics**

| NAEYC 2a Knowing about and understanding diverse family and community characteristics | Candidate provided a description that met criteria and reflected an extensive knowledge and understanding of the child’s family, community, life experiences, values and culture. | Candidate provided a description of a diverse family’s characteristics and background that demonstrated an understanding of the child’s family, community, life experiences, values, and culture. | Candidate attempted to provide a description of a diverse family’s characteristics and background that demonstrated an understanding of the child’s family, community, life experiences, values, and culture. However, candidate provided limited information about the family. | Candidate did not provide a description of a diverse family’s characteristics and background that demonstrated an understanding of the child’s family, community, life experiences, values, and culture. |

**Part 2: Understanding, Supporting, and Engaging Families**

| NAEYC 2b Supporting and engaging families and community through reciprocal relationships | Candidate provided an analysis that met expectations and demonstrated an in-depth understanding of how this interaction with a family informs his/her ideas on developing relationships as an early childhood educator. | Candidate provided an analysis of his/her interaction with the family, including what the candidate learned about him/herself and how this understanding informs the candidate’s ideas on developing relationships as an early childhood educator. | Candidate attempted to provide an analysis of his/her interaction with the family, including some understanding of what he/she learned. However, candidate did not explain how this understanding informed his/her ideas on developing relationships as an early childhood educator. | Candidate did not provide an analysis of his/her interaction with the family and did not show understanding of how to develop relationships as an early childhood educator. |