

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

ECED 504.001 Engaging Families of Diverse Young Learners  
3 Credits, Spring 2019  
Mondays/ 4:30 – 7:10 pm  
Krug Hall 19, Fairfax Campus

**Faculty**

Name: El Brown  
Office Hours: By Appointment  
Office Location: Thompson Hall 1200, Fairfax Campus  
Office Phone: 703-993-3844  
Email Address: [ebrown26@gmu.edu](mailto:ebrown26@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. Offered by Graduate School of Education. May not be repeated for credit.

**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. Discuss theories and research supporting a family-centered approach to the education of children birth – sixth grade.
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. Identify underlying principles and ways to work with families, including examining methods of improving communication between schools and families, especially regarding social and instructional needs of children.
5. Review strategies that support and assist families to identify their priorities, resources, and concerns for their children, including children with special needs.
6. Create tailored opportunities for collaborating with families in the ongoing education of children, especially in terms of increasing family engagement in student learning at home and in school, particularly among families from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and with children with special needs.
7. Identify how families experience substance abuse, trauma—including child abuse and neglect—and other adverse childhood experiences, and family disruptions.

8. Utilize family systems theory to describe and understand family perspectives.
9. Identify specific components of IDEA that support family voices in the special education process.
10. Adopt a strengths-based, problem-solving perspective when analyzing dilemmas related to partnering with families.
11. Discuss the theories and techniques of family-centered intervention, including issues related to families from diverse backgrounds and multicultural education.
12. Complete study in child abuse recognition and intervention in accordance with curriculum guidelines developed by the Virginia Board of Education in consultation with the Virginia Department of Social Services.

**Professional Standards – Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC), Council of Exceptional Children (CEC), and National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**

**Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Standard Elements**

*InTASC 1k* The teacher values the input and contributions of families, colleagues, and other professionals in understanding and supporting each learner’s development.

*InTASC 2m* The teacher respects learners as individuals with differing personal and family backgrounds and various skills, abilities, perspectives, talents, and interests.

**National Association for the Education of Young Children (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**

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author. ISBN: 9781433805615

Grant, K. B., & Ray, J. A. (2016). *Home, school, and community collaboration: Culturally responsive family engagement* (3rd ed.). Washington, DC: Sage. ISBN: 9781483347547 [white cover/ jacket]

Koralek, D. (2007). *Spotlight on young children and families*. Washington D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children. ISBN: 9781928896425

Additional course readings listed on the class schedule are posted in Blackboard.

**Course Performance Evaluation**

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

Assignments	Due Dates	Points
Attendance & Participation	Ongoing	15
<i>Spotlight</i> Discussion	Ongoing	10
Child Abuse and Neglect Module	April 1	5
Critical Reflections (5)	February 18, March 25, and April 22	15

Home Visit Project		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Part 1 Diverse Family and Community Characteristics (Memo 1)</li> </ul>	March 4	15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Part 2 Understanding, Supporting and Engaging Families (Memo 2)</li> </ul>	April 8	20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full Home Visit Project with any necessary corrections uploaded to Tk20</li> </ul>	April 22	
Family Story Presentation (in class)	April 29 and May 6	5
Statement of Philosophy (Draft to Peer)	April 15	15
Statement of Philosophy (Final)	May 13	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100</b>

- Assignments and/or Examinations**

***Spotlight on Young Children and Families Discussion (10 points)***

Students, along with a peer, 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 (students may NOT use PowerPoint and should not just summarize the reading) and include one hands-on activity as part of the discussion. This hands-on activity should demonstrate at least two of the following: ways to improve communication between schools and families; instructional practices that are sensitive to culturally and linguistically diverse learners and informed by families; ways of communicating with families regarding the social and instructional needs of children; ways of increasing family engagement in student learning in home and school. *A sign-up sheet will be provided on the first night of class.*

**Critical Reflections (5 @3 points each = 15 points)**

Students will critically reflect every other week on the course material. Their post is due by 11:59PM on the due date. They will ensure that they create a thread (**thread should be named with the student's name**) and provide at least one comment for one of the other student threads in order to receive full points. Comments on peers' posts are due two days after due date of original post by 11:59PM, so on Wednesdays. If they prefer to keep their reflection private, they may email the instructor their critical reflection.

**\*Expectations for critical reflections:** Reflections must be a minimum of 300 words in length, be thoughtful and relevant, and include original and/or critical thought. The point of these reflections is NOT for students to simply provide a summary of the issues at hand; ***rather, students are to think critically about what is being discussed/ learned in class, form and state an opinion, and provide coherent points to support or illustrate their perspective.*** Students might consider the following in Their responses: How is your perspective regarding families and working with families is shifting and changing? What assumptions or biases (that you hold) are emerging? How are you thinking in new ways regarding working with families from diverse backgrounds? How will you use the knowledge and experiences you are gaining in this course as you work in a classroom with young diverse learners and their families? How do the readings relate to your own family experiences and/or the experiences of the families you work with each day? Keep these same expectations in mind for commenting on other students' posts. **Comments**

**on other students' posts should be at least 100 words. Comments on others' posts must be posted within two days of the due date of the original post**

### **Home Visit Project (35 points)**

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

### **Family Story Presentation (5 points)**

Students will present what they have learned from their family visits as a story. Each student presentation will be a total of 8 minutes, with 5 to 6 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. Students should include the following in their presentation: (a) their home visit family's story; (b) suggestions for improving communication and increasing this family's engagement with their child's school; and, (c) one way they would incorporate the family's culture and/or language into their instructional practices.

### **Statement of Philosophy for Working with Families and Communities (15 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 2- to 4-page, double-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. Specifically, students will include: developing family engagement in student learning in home and school; strategies for communicating with families, particularly regarding their children's social and instructional needs; one way they would incorporate the family's culture and/or language into their instructional practices. 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.

### **Child Abuse and Neglect Module (5 points)**

Students will complete an online module focused on child abuse recognition and intervention in accordance with curriculum guidelines developed by the Virginia Board of Education in consultation with the Virginia Department of Social Services.

- **Other Requirements**

### **Attendance and Participation (15 points)**

Because active participation and engagement are imperative for optimal learning, preparation for and participation in in-class and online activities will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Students attend class, arrive on time, and stay for the entire class period.
- Students use laptops and personal devices for instructional purposes only.

- Students complete readings and prepare for class activities prior to class as 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 evidenced by (a) participating in all activities, (b) engaging in small- and large-group discussions, (c) completing written work related to the activities, and (d) supporting the participation and learning of classmates.
- Students show evidence of critical reflective thinking through in-class and online discussions, activities, and written reflections.
- Students display professional dispositions at all times while interacting with the instructor and other students.
- Students complete participation activities across the semester that complement the scheduled course topic. Instructors will periodically collect artifacts from the activities. Students in attendance and who actively engage in the learning experience will receive credit for their efforts. Graded participation activities are not announced and are implemented at the discretion of the instructor.

### **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 website 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.
5. 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 = 80-86   C = 70-79   F = < 70

Incomplete (IN): This grade may be given to students who are passing a course but who may be unable to complete scheduled coursework for a cause beyond reasonable control.

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. See <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/>.

**Class Schedule**

Date	Topics	Assignments & Readings Due
<b>January 28</b>	Intro to Course & Family Engagement	Wheatley- <i>Willing to be Disturbed</i> View: <i>The Danger of a Single Story</i> (posted in Bb)
<b>UNIT 1: Research, Theories, and Tools for Understanding Diverse Families and Communities</b>		
<b>February 4</b>	Defining Family Intro to Ecological Model and Family Systems Theory	Grant & Ray, pp. 32-46 Choose <b>one</b> : Stewart (2007) <i>Who is Kin</i> Weigel (2008) - <i>The Concept of Family</i>
<b>February 11</b>	Contemporary Families: Demographics, Structures, and Functions	Grant & Ray, Chapter 4 Spotlight I on YC and Families, pp. 4-11 <i>Applying Family Systems Theory to Early Childhood Practice</i>  Choose <b>one</b> : Casper & Bianchi (2002) <i>Changing Families in a Changing Society</i> Walsh (2003) <i>Changing Families in a Changing World</i>
<b>February 18</b>	Developmental Process of Parenting	Grant & Ray, Chapter 3 Spotlight II on YC and Families, pp. 16-19 <i>Sharing the Care of Infants and Toddlers</i>  <b>Due to Bb – Critical Reflections</b>  Choose <b>one</b> : Lareau (2008) <i>Excerpts from ‘Unequal Childhoods’</i> Bianchi, Robinson, & Milkie (2006) <i>Parenting: How has it changed?</i>
<b>February 25</b>	Family Diversity: Implicit Bias & Sociocultural Perspective	Spotlight III on YC and Families, pp. 38-43 <i>Culture and the Promotion of Inclusion in Child Care</i>  View: <b>Tricia Rose Keynote on Structural Racism (on Bb)</b>

		<p>State of the Science (2014)- Implicit Bias Review (Kirwan Institute) [pp. 12-21]:  <a href="http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/2014-implicit-bias.pdf">http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/2014-implicit-bias.pdf</a></p> <p>State of Science (2013)- Implicit Bias Review (Kirwan Institute) [pp. 30-34]:  <a href="http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/docs/SOTS-Implicit_Bias.pdf">http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/docs/SOTS-Implicit_Bias.pdf</a></p> <p>Choose one:  Lea (2012) <i>Cultural reciprocity as a transformative journey in research and practice.</i>  Graue &amp; Hawkins (2010) <i>“I always feel they don’t know anything about us”</i>: <i>Diverse families talk about their relations with school.</i>  Wlazlinski &amp; Cummins (2011) <i>Using family stories to foster parent and preservice teacher relationships.</i></p>
<b>March 4</b>	<p>Family Diversity: Immigration, English Language Learners, Culturally-Diverse Families, Low-Income Families, Single-Parent Families</p>	<p>Grant &amp; Ray, Ch. 5  Spotlight IV on YC and Families, pp. 44-49 <i>Working with Diverse Families to Enhance Children’s Early Literacy Development</i>  Anderson (2003) <i>The Diversity, Strength, and Challenges of Single-parent Households</i></p> <p>Choose one:  Stitt &amp; Brooks (2014) <i>Reconceptualizing Parent Involvement: Parent as Accomplice or Parent as Partner?</i>  Hock &amp; Mooradian (2013) <i>Defining Coparenting for Social Work Practice: A Critical Interpretive Synthesis</i></p> <p><b>Due to Bb – Part 1 Diverse Family and Community Characteristics Memo</b></p>
<b>Enjoy Spring Break! Be Safe!</b>		
<b>March 18</b>	<p>Family Diversity: Families With Children With Disabilities, Inclusion</p>	<p>Grant &amp; Ray, Chapter 11</p> <p>Spotlight V on YC and Families, pp. 28-37 <i>A Team Approach: Supporting Families of Children with Disabilities in Inclusive Programs</i></p> <p>Choose one:  Prezant &amp; Marshak (2006) <i>Helpful Actions Seen Through the Eyes of Parents of Children with Disabilities</i></p>

		Woodgate & Secco (2008) <i>Living in a World of Our Own: The Experience of Parents Who Have a Child with Autism</i> Riojas-Cortez (2011) <i>Culture, Play, and Family: Supporting Children on the Autism Spectrum</i>
<b>March 25</b>	Family Diversity: LGBTQ+ Families, Families in Transition, Families Facing Adversity (trauma, abuse, neglect)	Grant & Ray, Ch. 8 and, Ch. 6 or 7 Spotlight VI on YC and Families, pp. 24-27 <i>Creating Safe, Just Places to Learn for Children of Lesbian and Gay Parents</i> <b>Due to Bb – Critical Reflections</b>  Choose <b>one</b> : Gates (2008) <i>Diversity among Same-sex Couples and their Children</i> Moreno, Lewis-Menchaca, & Rodriguez (2011) <i>Parental involvement in the home: Critical view through a multicultural lens</i>
<b>April 1</b>	Additional Family Theories & Tools for Understanding Diverse Families: Family Stress Theory, Family Resiliency Framework	Spotlight VII on YC and Families, pp. 20-23 <i>Mapping Family Resources and Support</i> Ingoldsby, Smith, & Miller (2004) <i>Exploring Family Theories (Ch. 6)</i> <b>Due to Bb – Child Abuse and Neglect Module Completion Certificate</b>
<b>Unit 2: Partnering with and Engaging Diverse Families</b>		
<b>April 8</b>	Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Partnering with Families	Grant & Ray, pp. 1-16 & 46-57 Spotlight VIII on YC and Families, pp. 50-54 <i>Leave No Parent Behind</i> Halgunseth et al (2009) <i>Family engagement, diverse families, and early childhood education programs: An integrated review of the literature</i> <b>Due to Bb – Part 2 Understanding, Supporting, and Engaging Families Analysis and Reflection</b>
<b>April 15</b>	Family Engagement: Cultural and Linguistic Competence & Home-School Learning	Grant & Ray, pp. 79-88 & Ch. 9 Vesely & Ginsberg (2011) <i>Strategies and Practices for Working with Immigrant families in Early Education Programs</i> <b>Due – SoP draft to critical writing partner</b>
<b>April 22</b>	Family Engagement:	Grant & Ray, Ch. 10

	Communication & Home-School Learning	Spotlight IX on YC and Families, pp. 12-15 <i>Partnerships for Learning: Conferencing with Families</i> (No presentation) <b>Due to Tk20 on Bb – Home Visit Project (Parts 1 and 2 compiled)</b> <b>Due to Bb – Critical Reflections</b> <b>Due to Bb – SoP (reviewed draft due to partner)</b>
<b>April 29</b>	<b>Student Presentations</b>	
<b>May 6</b>	<b>Student Presentations</b>	
<b>May 13</b>	<b>Finals week – no class</b>	<b>Due to Bb – Statement of Philosophy (final draft)</b>

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/>.

### **GMU Policies and Resources for Students**

#### *Policies*

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/>).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <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/>).
- 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](mailto:tk20help@gmu.edu) or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <http://coursesupport.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/students/>.**