

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

ECED 404.002 Engaging Families of Diverse Learners, Birth – Grade 6  
3 Credits, Fall 2019  
8/26 – 12/18, Mondays & Wednesdays/ 12:00 – 1:15 pm  
Thompson Hall L019, Fairfax Campus

**Faculty**

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**Prerequisites/Corequisites**

None

**University Catalog Course Description**

Focuses on strategies for developing culturally appropriate family professional engagement to benefit children, birth – sixth grade, 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 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 family engagement and a family-centered approach to the education of children birth – sixth grade.
2. Discuss the role of cultural and familial contexts 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 standards of professionalism and ethical standards, 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. Describe 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 racial, ethnic, cultural, religious,

linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds and with children with special needs, including children who are gifted.

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 dynamics.
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 family engagement.
11. Discuss the theories and techniques of family-centered intervention, including issues related to families from diverse racial, ethnic cultural, religious, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds and multicultural education.
12. Complete study in child abuse and neglect recognition and intervention in accordance with curriculum guidelines developed by the Virginia Board of Education in consultation with the Virginia Department of Social Services.
13. Exhibit standards of professionalism, ethical standards, and personal integrity with children, families, and professionals in the field and in interactions with classmates, the instructor, and others.
14. Use writing as an instructional and assessment tool to generate, gather, plan, organize, and to communicate for a variety of purposes; integrate correct written conventions (i.e., grammar, usage, mechanics, and spelling); and format using current APA style.

**Professional Standards** – Virginia Professional Studies Competencies, Virginia Early Childhood Special Education Endorsement Competencies, Virginia Early/Primary Education PreK-3 EPK3 Endorsement Competencies, Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Standards, Council of Exceptional Children (CEC) and Division of Early Childhood (DEC) Standards, and National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Standards

Upon completion of this course, students will have met the following professional standards:

### **Virginia Professional Studies Competencies**

Human Growth and Development (Birth Through Adolescence)  
Curriculum and Instruction

### **Virginia Early Childhood Special Education Endorsement Competencies**

Family-Centered Intervention

### **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. (2019). *Home, school, and community collaboration: Culturally responsive family engagement* (4th ed.). Washington, DC: Sage. ISBN: 978-1506365732 [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).

<b>Assignments</b>	<b>Due Dates</b>	<b>Points</b>
Attendance & Participation	Ongoing	<b>25</b>
<i>Spotlight</i> Discussion	Ongoing	<b>10</b>
Child Abuse and Neglect Recognition and Intervention Training Module	Oct 23	<b>5</b>
Home Visit Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part 1 Diverse Family and Community Characteristics (Memo 1)</li> <li>• Part 2 Understanding, Supporting and Engaging Families (Memo 2)</li> <li>• Full Home Visit Project with any necessary corrections uploaded to Tk20</li> </ul>	Oct 2  Oct 30  Nov 13	<b>35</b> 15  20
Family Story Presentation (in class)	Nov 25, Dec 2, Dec 4	<b>5</b>
Statement of Philosophy (Draft to Peer)	Nov 11	
Statement of Philosophy (Final)	Dec 16	<b>20</b>
<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.*

**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 from a strengths-based, problem-solving perspective. 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 (20 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 two- to four-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 the following: 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 Recognition and Training 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 (25 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+ = 98 – 100   A = 93 – 97   A- = 90 – 92   B+ = 87 – 89   B = 83 – 86   B- = 80 – 82  
 C+ = 77 – 79   C = 73 – 76   C- = 70 – 72   D = 60 – 69   F = < 60

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 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 seeking Virginia initial teaching licensure must earn a B- or better in all licensure coursework.

### 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>Week 1</b>		
Mon, Aug 26	Intro to Families & Family Engagement	Wheatley- <i>Willing to be Disturbed</i> View: <i>The Danger of a Single Story</i> (posted in Bb)
Wed, Aug 28	Defining Family Standards of Professionalism and Ethical Standards in Working with Families	Grant & Ray, Ch. 2
<b>UNIT 1: Research, Theories, and Tools for Understanding Diverse Families and Communities</b>		
<b>Week 2</b>		
Mon, Sep 2 (No Class)		
Wed, Sep 4	Intro to Theories and Research for Understanding the Role of Families in Children's Development  Using a Strengths-Based, Problem-Solving Approach	Choose <b>one</b> : Stewart (2007) <i>Who is Kin</i> Dreby & Adkins (2012)- <i>The strength of family ties: How US Migration shapes children's ideas of family</i>
<b>Week 3</b>		
Mon, Sep 9	Contemporary Families: Diversity (racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, linguistic, and socioeconomic)	Grant & Ray, Chapter 4 Spotlight I on YC and Families, pp. 4-11 <i>Applying Family Systems Theory to Early Childhood Practice</i>
Wed, Sep 11	Demographics, Structures, and Functions	Turnbull, Ch. 3 (Family Functions)
<b>Week 4</b>		
Mon, Sep 16	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>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Assignments &amp; Readings Due</b>
Wed, Sep 18	Developmental Process of Parenting	Listen: “School Success: Inspire Motivation” (from <a href="#">Peace at Home Parenting</a> look in Bb for accessing webinar)
<b>Week 5</b>		
Mon, Sep 23	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>  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>
Wed, Sep 25	Analyzing Personal Values, Beliefs, and Cultural Biases	View: <b>Tricia Rose Keynote on Structural Racism (on Bb)</b>
<b>Week 6</b>		
Mon, Sep 30	Family Diversity: Immigration, English Language Learners, Ethnically, Racially, and Culturally-Diverse Families, Low-Income Families, Single-Parent Families	Grant & Ray, Chapter 5 Spotlight IV on YC and Families, pp. 44-49 <i>Working with Diverse Families to Enhance Children’s Early Literacy Development</i>
Wed, Oct 2	Cultural and Familial Contexts in Attitudes, Beliefs, Values, and Child Rearing Practices	Vesely et al. (2013)- Capitalizing on ECE: Low-income immigrant mothers’ use of ECE to build human, social, and navigational capital <b>Part 1 Diverse Family and Community Characteristics (Memo 1) DUE</b>
<b>Week 7</b>		
Mon, Oct 7	Family Diversity: Families with Children with Disabilities and Families with Children Who Are Gifted, Inclusion	Grant & Ray, Chapter 11  Spotlight V on YC and Families, pp. 28-37 <i>A Team Approach: Supporting Families of Children with Disabilities in Inclusive Programs</i>
Wed, Oct 9	Priorities, Resources, and Concerns of Families  How IDEA Supports Family Voices in Special Education	McGee & Hughes (2011) <i>Identifying and Supporting Young Gifted Learners</i>
<b>Week 8</b>		
Tues, Oct 15 (Monday classes meet on Tuesday)	Family Diversity: LGBTQ+ Families, Families in Transition	Grant & Ray, Chapter 6 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>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Assignments &amp; Readings Due</b>
Wed, Oct 16	Families Facing Adversity (substance abuse, trauma, abuse, neglect), Family Disruptions	Grant & Ray, Chapter 7 and 8
<b>Week 9</b>		
Mon, Oct 21	Additional Family Theories & Tools for Understanding Diverse Families and their Role in Children's Development: Family Stress Theory, Family Resiliency Framework	Spotlight VII on YC and Families, pp. 20-23 <i>Mapping Family Resources and Support</i>  Walsh (2003)- <i>Family Resilience: Strengths Forged through Adversity</i>
Wed, Oct 23	Using Family Systems Theory to Understand Family Dynamics and Family-Centered Intervention	Ingoldsby, Smith, & Miller (2004) <i>Exploring Family Theories (Ch. 6)</i>  <b>Due to Bb – Child Abuse and Neglect Recognition and Intervention Training Module Completion Certificate</b>
<b>Unit 2: Partnering with and Engaging Diverse Families</b>		
<b>Week 10</b>		
Mon, Oct 28	Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Family Engagement	Grant & Ray, Ch. 1 Spotlight VIII on YC and Families, pp. 50-54 <i>Leave No Parent Behind</i>
Wed, Oct 30	Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Family Engagement	US Department of Health and Human Services & US Department of Education (2016)- <i>Policy Statement on Family Engagement</i>  <b>Due to Bb – Part 2 Understanding, Supporting, and Engaging Families Analysis and Reflection (Memo 2)</b>
<b>Week 11</b>		
Mon, Nov 4	Family Engagement: Cultural and Linguistic Competence & Home-School Learning	Grant & Ray, Chapter 9 Case Study: <i>What's going on with Tomasito?</i>
Wed, Nov 6	A Family-Centered Approach to Education  Creating Tailored Opportunities for Collaborating with Families	Grant & Ray, Chapter 13 Vesely & Ginsberg (2011) <i>Strategies and Practices for Working with Immigrant families in Early Education Programs</i>



Date	Topics	Assignments & Readings Due
<b>Week 12</b>		
Mon, Nov 11	Family Engagement: Communication & Home-School Learning	Grant & Ray, Chapter 10 Spotlight IX on YC and Families, pp. 12-15 <i>Partnerships for Learning: Conferencing with Families (No presentation)</i> <b>Due – SoP draft to critical writing partner</b>
Wed, Nov 13	In-class SoP workshop	<b>Due to Tk20 on Bb – Home Visit Project (Parts 1 and 2 compiled)</b> <b>Due to Bb – SoP (reviewed draft due to partner in class)</b>
<b>Week 13</b>		
Mon, Nov 18	Standards of Professionalism and Ethical Standards in Working with Families	Grant & Ray, Chapter 12 Berrera & Corso (2003)- <i>Skilled Dialogue-Foundational Concepts</i>
Wed, Nov 20	Content Wrap-up	
<b>Week 14</b>		
Mon, Nov 25	<b>Student Presentations</b>	
Wed, Nov 27	<b>No Class</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Holiday</b>
<b>Week 15</b>		
Mon, Dec 2 Wed, Dec 4	<b>Student Presentations</b>	
Dec 9-10	Reading Days – No Class	
<b>Week 16</b>		
Dec 16	Exam Period – No class meeting	<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://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/students/>.**