

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

ECED 691.002 Policy Perspectives in Early Childhood Education
3 Credits, Fall 2023
10/16/2023-12/3/2023, Tuesdays/ 5:30–8:10 pm
Thompson Hall L019, Fairfax Campus

Faculty

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Prerequisites

Enrollment limited to students with a class of Advanced to Candidacy, Graduate, Non-Degree or Senior Plus. Enrollment is limited to Graduate, Non-Degree or Undergraduate level students. Students in a Non-Degree Undergraduate degree may **not** enroll.

University Catalog Course Description

Explores historical and current trends and issues involving legislation and policy in early childhood education, multilingual education, early childhood special education, and multicultural education. Focuses on historical role of social advocacy, development of advocacy skills, and collaboration and consultation with other professionals and staff in early childhood education of services and context of service delivery.

Course Delivery Method

This course will be delivered using a lecture/discussion format and Blackboard.

Learner Outcomes or Objectives

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

1. Describe the legislation and policy-making process related to culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse young children and their families.
2. Describe the continuum of services and the fiscal and regulatory context of service delivery at the local, state, and national levels.
3. Describe the administrative aspects and legal mandates for early childhood programs.
4. Analyze a current policy issue related to the lives of culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse young children and their families.
5. Describe the historical role of social advocacy and the role of educators in advocating for young children to ensure equity and access in service delivery.
6. Identify characteristics of advocates/leaders and analyze own leadership skills.
7. Plan and implement an appropriate awareness/advocacy/leadership response.
8. Demonstrate the ability to implement actions through collaboration and consultation with professional peers and staff.

Professional Standards – Division of Early Childhood Professional Preparation Standards and National Association for the Education of Young Children Professional Standards and Competencies

Upon completion of this course, students will have met the following professional standards:
Not Applicable

Required Texts

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). Author.

Levine, S. (2008). *School lunch politics: The surprising history of America’s favorite welfare program*. Princeton University Press. ISBN: 9780691146195

Rose, E. (2010). *The promise of preschool: From Head Start to universal pre-kindergarten*. Oxford University Press. ISBN: 9780199926459

Garcia, O., & Kleifgen, J. (2018). *Educating emergent bilinguals: Policies, programs, and practices for English Language Learners*. Teachers College Press. ISBN: 9780807758854

Recommended Texts

Anyon, J. (2014). *Radical possibilities: Public policy, urban education, and a new social movement*. Routledge. ISBN: 9780415950992

Chaudry, A., & Morrissey, T. (2017). *Cradle to kindergarten: A new plan to combat inequality*. Russel Sage. ISBN: 9780871545572

Santa Ana, O. (2004). *Tongue-tied: The lives of multilingual children in public education*. Rowman & Littlefield. ISBN: 9780742523838

Zigler, E., Gilliam, W., & Barnett, W. S. (2011). *The pre-k debates: Current controversies and issues*. Brookes. ISBN: 9781598571837

Course Performance Evaluation

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

Assignments	Due Dates	Points
Attendance & Participation • Self-Evaluation	Ongoing November 29	25
Reading Log	Ongoing November 22	15
Policy Issue Final Project		60
Part 1: Research a Critical Issue in ECE	November 14	15
Part 2: Policy Brief & Counterargument	November 21	15
Part 3: Group Presentation	November 29	15
Part 4: Advocacy Letter	December 3	15
TOTAL		100

*Assignments are due by 11:59 pm ET on the day listed.

- **Assignments and/or Examinations**

Reading Logs (15 points)

The readings for this course are divided into three groups. “Required Readings” are listed first in the schedule. These are readings that everyone will complete prior to class. “Additional Readings” are posted in the week’s course content folder. Students may choose from these which to read (or listen or watch, as some will be videos and/or podcasts). “Self-Selected Readings” will begin halfway through the course. These readings are meant to correspond to the policy issue students choose for their final project, and may be book chapters, research or news articles, podcasts, documentaries, or other forms of high-quality media.

Reading for this course will look different for everyone, and thus, it will be students’ responsibility to track their reading across the semester with a reading log (template will be provided) and submit it at the end of the course.

Small-Group Policy Issue Final Project (60 total points)

A major portion of the grade for this course involves a team-based project learning assignment that covers a broad policy topic area and a team-identified critical issue related to culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse young children and their families. Within the first half of the semester, students will select a broad topic to be the focus of a project-based learning assignment designed to explore the various components of policy.

Over the course of the semester, working individually and as a collaborative team, students will become novice policy analysts in their broad policy topic. Teams will meet online via Blackboard Collaborate or another virtual platform, but not in person.

Teams will be created around a shared interest in a critical policy issue relevant to culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse children and families and will collaborate on a series of assignments leading up to a final group presentation. As the semester progresses, teams can refine or reframe this issue to garner broad understanding and agreement. As a team, students will build a case to support the issue. Each student is responsible for participating in all parts of the project, but individuals may take leads on different parts.

Part 1: Research a Critical Issue in ECE (15 points)

Research a critical issue in ECE and enacted and/or proposed policy/legislation/regulation that addresses this critical issue (approximately five to seven pages, double-spaced). Part 1 will include the following:

- Summary of issue (*10 points*)
 - Share own experiences with this critical issue (in the classroom/school where they teach, in their own education) (Each group member shares an experience)
 - Summarize research or reporting that describes the depth and breadth of this problem
- Resource list: Include a reference page and a list of additional reading and/or resources (*5 points*)

Part 2: Policy Brief & Counterargument (15 points, 10 & 5, respectively)

Students will write an overview of an existing policy related to their critical issue, and make policy recommendations for better addressing the critical issue (approximately seven pages). Students will do the following:

- Identify a policy related to this critical issue and the level of government where it was created.
- Include the history of the policy (influential court decisions, changes to the policy), key definitions, challenges, relevant research, etc.
- Write a policy position statement that identifies how they think this policy should be changed (amended, abolished, or new policy)
- As a separate piece, write a strong counter argument for this issue (What do the critics say?). They will locate and appropriately cite relevant research that provides evidence for counter argument (approximately two pages, double-spaced).

Part 3: Group Presentation (15 points)

Groups will submit a 10- to 15-minute presentation on their critical issue and policy recommendation to be viewed asynchronously by other classmates. Groups will do the following:

- Present information in the form of choice (a Prezi, PowerPoint with recorded audio, video, or podcast) that will be posted on Blackboard with the group's Policy Brief.
- Use visuals and integration of multi-media (relevant video, graphics, audio), keeping in mind that creativity is encouraged!
- Include an overview of the critical issue, the policy relevant to this issue, a policy position statement, and additional resources.
- Include how members of the group are impacted by this policy in their classroom, school, or own educational experiences.
- Include instructions for how to be an advocate for this issue (Who could you write a letter to? What events could you participate in? What organizations could you support or contact for more information?).
- Create a discussion thread on Bb for your critical issue, and respond to classmates' and professor's questions.

Part 4: Advocacy Letter (15 points) (Individual)

Students will write a convincing letter to a decision-maker or letter to the editor supporting the group's argument (approximately one page single-spaced, formal letter format). Alternatively, students can write an advocacy letter on a different policy topic covered in the semester that they feel passionate about. Students must identify a person and include his/her position and mailing address to which to send the letter.

- **Other Requirements**

Attendance and Participation (25 points)

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

- Students complete readings and online content 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 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 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 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.
- Students submit an attendance and participation self-evaluation.

Written Assignments

All formal written assignments will be evaluated for content and presentation. The American Psychological Association, Seventh 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. 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 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 and Themes	Readings & Assignments Due
<p>Week 1 October 17</p>	<p>Class Introduction Why study policy? Why be an advocate?</p> <p>Policy Focus: Public Education, Civil Rights, and Democracy - Part 1</p> <p>Advocacy Focus: Your values as an advocate for children and families</p>	<p>Required Readings: Dever – “Advocating for Young Children”</p> <p>Additional Readings: none</p>
	<p>Policy Focus: Public Education, Civil Rights, and Democracy - Part 2</p> <p>Advocacy Focus: Your positions on issues regarding children and families</p>	<p>Required Readings: Jill Lepore – “Is Education a Fundamental Right?”</p> <p>Additional Readings: <i>Choose from media posted on Blackboard</i></p>
<p>Week 2 October 24</p>	<p>Policy Focus: School Choice, Charter Schools and Public Schools</p> <p>Advocacy Focus: Engaging in Personal Advocacy</p>	<p>Required Readings: Rose, Ch. 1-3</p> <p>Additional Readings: <i>Choose from media posted on Blackboard</i></p>
	<p>Policy Focus: Preschool Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Head Start Program • Targeted vs. Universal Preschool Policy Approaches <p>Advocacy Focus: Locating other advocates</p>	<p>Required Readings: Rose, Ch. 4-5</p> <p>Additional Readings: <i>Choose from media posted on Blackboard</i></p> <p>Assignments: Sign up on our Google Doc for policy topic for group project.</p>

Date	Topics and Themes	Readings & Assignments Due
Week 3 October 31	Policy Focus: School Curriculum and Standardized Testing Part 1 Advocacy Focus: Finding information on your position from researchers, authors, and journalists.	Required Readings: Gloria Ladson-Billings – “From the Achievement Gap to the Education Debt” Additional Readings: <i>Choose from media posted on Blackboard</i>
	Policy Focus: School Curriculum and Standardized Testing – Part 2 Advocacy Focus: Reading journalism critically.	Required Readings: Levine, Ch. 1-2 Additional Readings: <i>Choose from media posted on Blackboard</i>
Week 4 November 7	Policy Focus: The National School Lunch/School Breakfast Programs Alternative Programs to Address Child Nutrition Crisis in U.S. (Farm-to-School, School Gardens, etc.) Advocacy Focus: Engaging in Public Advocacy: Organization spotlight	Required Readings: Levine, Ch. 3-5 Additional Readings: <i>Choose from media posted on Blackboard</i>
Week 5 November 14	Policy Focus: Disability Rights and Schools Advocacy Focus: Engaging in Public Advocacy: Organization Spotlight	Required Listening: FreshEd Podcast – Special Ed Law Additional Readings: <i>Choose from media posted on Blackboard and/or self-selected</i> Assignments: Due to Bb (11/14): Part 1: Critical Issue Summary (Group submits 1)
	Policy Focus: Transgender Rights and Schools Advocacy Focus: Engaging in Private-Sector Advocacy	Required Readings: Garcia, Ch. 1-2 Additional Readings: <i>Choose from media posted on Blackboard and/or self-selected</i>

Date	Topics and Themes	Readings & Assignments Due
Week 6 November 21	Policy Focus: Language Policies Part 1 Advocacy Focus: Engaging in Private-Sector Advocacy	Required Readings: Garcia, Ch. 3 + 10 Additional Readings: <i>Choose from media posted on Blackboard and/or self-selected</i> Assignments: Due to Bb (11/21): Part 2: Policy Brief & Counterargument
	Policy Focus: Language Policies Part 2 Advocacy Focus: Writing persuasive letters	Assignments: Due to Bb (11/22): Reading Log
Week 7 November 28	Final Group Presentations Advocacy Focus: Writing persuasive letters	Assignments: Due to Bb (11/29): Part 3: Group Presentation Due to Bb (11/29): Attendance and Participation Self-Evaluation Due to Bb (12/3): Part 4: Advocacy Letter

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 <https://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://ds.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 VIA should be directed to viahelp@gmu.edu or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/assessments>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>.

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking: As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Non-Confidential Employee” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per [University Policy 1202](#). If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as [Student Support and Advocacy Center](#) (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance or support measures from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730 or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

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