

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

ECED 405.001 Introduction to Early Childhood Special Education  
3 Credits, Spring 2024, In-person  
1/16/2024-5/8/2024; Wednesdays/ 4:30 pm-7:10 pm  
Thompson L003, Fairfax Campus

**Faculty**

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**Prerequisites/Corequisites**

None

**University Catalog Course Description**

Surveys current knowledge about young children with disabilities within the context of human growth and development and learning expectations in the preschool years. Includes historical factors and legislation affecting service delivery. Notes: Field experience required.

**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 nature and characteristics of major disabling and at-risk conditions for young children, including children with diverse cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds.
2. Describe the services and pathways for service delivery for children birth through age five with disabling and at-risk conditions, including methods for instructional services and programs, curriculum development, and tiered instruction.
3. Provide an overview of early intervention and early childhood special education programs.
4. Describe the historical perspective and philosophical and sociological foundations underlying the role, development, and organization of special education in the United States.
5. Discuss legislation and legal aspects associated with students with disabilities, including legislative and judicial mandates related to education and special education (e.g., the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, § 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act) and legal decisions related to person with disabilities and explain how it intersects with current issues and influences professional practice.
6. Describe current regulations and procedures governing special education to include Individualized Education Program (IEP), Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA), and Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) development.

7. Describe the development process of IEPs and IFSPs, including case management, collaboration, co-teaching, interagency coordination, inclusive practices, least restrictive environment, and transition.
8. Describe disciplinary practices, policies, and procedures, and alternative placements in schools in relation to young children with disabling conditions and at-risk conditions.
9. Describe the role of assessment in identification, eligibility, service delivery, and program development/improvement for young children and their families, including children and families with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
10. Describe effective strategies for training, managing, and monitoring paraprofessionals.
11. Exhibit standards of professionalism, ethical standards, and personal integrity with children, families, and professionals in the field experience setting (e.g., early intervention, home-based, school-based, community-based) and in interactions with classmates, the instructor, the field experience coordinator, and others.
12. 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**

Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Teaching Standards, Division of Early Childhood (DEC) Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards for Early Interventionists/Early Childhood Special Educators (EI/ECSE), National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators, Virginia Professional Studies Endorsement Competencies, and Virginia Early Childhood Special Education Endorsement Competencies

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

### **Virginia Professional Studies Endorsement Competencies**

Supervised Clinical Experiences

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

Nature and Characteristics of Major Disabling and At-Risk Conditions

Foundations of Legal Aspects

Standards of Professionalism

Supervised Experiences

### **Required Texts**

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). Author. ISBN: 9781433832178

Deiner, P. L. (2013). *Inclusive early childhood education: Development, resources, and practice* (6th ed.). Wadsworth, Cengage Learning. ISBN: 9781111837150

### **Recommended Texts**

Gargiulo, R. M., & Kilgo, J. L. (2020). *An introduction to young children with special needs: Birth through age eight*. Sage. ISBN: 9781544322063

### Required Online Documents

Council for Exceptional Children Division for Early Childhood. (2020). *Initial practice-based professional preparation standards for early interventionists/early childhood special educators (EI/ECSE) (initial birth through age 8)*. Retrieved from [https://d4ab05f7-6074-4ec9-998a-232c5d918236.filesusr.com/ugd/95f212\\_6e8952cda15f48b3935a7729dddc50d.pdf](https://d4ab05f7-6074-4ec9-998a-232c5d918236.filesusr.com/ugd/95f212_6e8952cda15f48b3935a7729dddc50d.pdf)

Council for Exceptional Children. (2015). *What every special educator must know: Professional ethical and standards*. Author. Retrieved from <https://www.cec.sped.org/Standards/Ethical-Principles-and-Practice-Standards>

Division for Early Childhood. (2014). *DEC Recommended Practices*. Retrieved from <https://divisionearlychildhood.egnyte.com/dl/tgv6GUXhVo>

### 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).

Assignment	Due Date	Points
Attendance and Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Self-Evaluation</li></ul>	Ongoing May 1	25
Field Experience Documentation	Ongoing	15
Foundational Knowledge and Current Issues Paper	February 14	15
Individualized Education Program (IEP) Writing Group Project	April 3	30
Reflection on Practice and Lifelong Learning	April 24	15
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>

#### • Assignments and/or Examinations

#### Field Experience Documentation (15 points)

This course requires a minimum of 15 hours of field experience. Students will use videos provided by the instructor and obtain placement in an early childhood special education (ECSE) environment which may include classrooms, early intervention programs, and experiences in family homes. As students watch the videos and observe in an ECSE environment, they will complete the field experience documentation charts provided on Blackboard by summarizing, in writing, what they observed in relation to the Division for Early Childhood's (DEC) Recommended Practices. Using the DEC Recommended Practices (RP) as a foundation, students will describe how their observations exemplify specific RPs, strategies for ECSE professionals to implement specific RPs in ECSE environments, and strategies for ECSE professionals to implement specific NAEYC Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) in ECSE environments.

Upon completion of the field experience hours, students will write a three- to four-page reflection that summarizes how each of the seven topic areas of the DEC Recommended Practices were implemented in the ECSE environment. Students will describe evidence as it relates to specific topic areas. Students may propose an alternative method of reflecting on the

field experience and must obtain permission from the instructor prior to completing an alternative method of field experience reflection.

### **Foundational Knowledge and Current Issues Paper (15 points)**

Students will cite information from the course textbook, class discussions and handouts, and/or other relevant peer-reviewed sources to support the information they provide regarding special education legislation. The student will explain the historical, philosophical, and sociological foundations of special education by doing the following:

- Describe key elements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, including citations from course materials;
- Identify the professional ethical standards and practices within that guide the field of special education; and
- Identify three ways special education law will influence their practice in the settings they currently or plan to work. Each of these should align with special education law.

Students will choose from one of the following options and are welcome to email the instructor proposing an alternative option:

- write a three- to four-page, double-spaced paper, OR
- create a video, OR
- create a detailed graphic organizer, OR
- submit an alternative option approved in advance by the instructor.

### **Individualized Education Program (IEP) Writing Group Project (30 points)**

Collaboratively, students will conduct a mock IEP meeting and write an IEP for a case-study child with their peers using the IEP form posted to Blackboard. Students will write the IEP together in a virtual meeting with their group while also using a checklist to act out a typical IEP meeting. Students should connect the first week of class to (a) determine their communication system and schedule, (b) decide how they will record their IEP meeting, and (c) complete a roles and responsibilities plan. Roles include (a) scribe (individual who will type), (b) submitter (individual who will submit the assignment and who will share feedback with group once graded), (c) facilitator (individual who will organize meetings and keep track of time). Additionally, students should decide the roles each group member will take during the “IEP Meeting” (e.g., parent/legal guardian, educator, etc.) The IEP will include the following (see Diener, 2013, p. 113 and <http://idea.ed.gov>):

- Case-study child’s present level of performance that includes a detailed discussion of the child’s family, medical history, previous early intervention and/or educational services, family’s cultural and/or linguistic background, and the child’s strengths and areas of need across the developmental domains
- Measurable annual goals with at least one goal addressing a behavior and/or social emotional area of need
- Special education and related services
- Projected time frame for services
- Expected participation with children without disabilities and explanations of the extent to which the case study child is not participating with children without disabilities (least restrictive environment statement)

- Accommodations and modifications

Group members will include their names on the front of the IEP form. Each student will submit a link to their Google document containing the IEP and video link.

### **Reflection on Practice and Lifelong Learning (15 points)**

Upon reviewing the DEC practice videos, students will reflect on their observations and the Division for Early Childhood's Recommended Practices. Students will:

- Identify the DEC Recommended Practice strands and practices,
- Provide a summary of their observations of each strand including the setting in which it was observed,
- Specify the DEC practice strands and practices that include elements of diversity specific to families, cultures, and early childhood learning environments,
- Provide a summary of their observations of each of these practices including how diversity is embedded,
- Identify three ways they will continue to learn about DEC Recommended Practices (e.g., conferences, webinars, publications),
- Identify three ways they will gain support in applying these practices within the early childhood environment they will work (e.g., peer observation and feedback, self-recording, taking data on practice), and
- Identify three ways they will disseminate recommended practices to colleagues (e.g., communities of practice, feedback).

Students will choose from one of the following options and are welcome to email the instructor proposing an alternative option:

- four- to five-page report, OR
- presentation video with verbal description, OR
- graphic organizer/visual, OR
- alternative option approved in advance by the instructor.

### **● Other Requirements**

### **Attendance and Participation (25 points)**

Active participation and engagement are imperative for optimal learning. Therefore, students will prepare for and participate in in-class and online activities. Students will be expected to do the following:

- Attend class, arrive on time, and stay for the entire class period for all in-person and online synchronous class sessions.
- Complete all online asynchronous work by the due dates.
- Use laptops and personal devices for instructional purposes only during in-person and online synchronous class sessions.
- Complete readings and prepare for class activities prior to class as evidenced by the ability to discuss, write about, and engage in activities related to the concepts presented and examined in the texts.
- Complete participation activities across the semester that complement the scheduled course topic. *Note: Instructors will periodically collect artifacts from the activities.*

- Support the participation and learning of classmates. 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.
- Show evidence of critical reflective thinking through in-person, online synchronous, and online asynchronous discussions, activities, and written reflections.
- Display professional dispositions at all times when interacting with the instructor, classmates, and other professionals.
- 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+ = 98 – 100   A = 93 – 97   A- = 90 – 92   B+ = 87 – 89   B = 83 – 86   B- = 80 – 82  
C+ = 77 – 79   C = 70 – 76   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 C or better in all undergraduate 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
<b>Week 1</b> Jan 17	Syllabus and Assignments Review  Setting up the Field Experience  Standards of professionalism, ethical standards, personal integrity	Syllabus  Review course website  Bb Readings (CEC and DEC Documents)
<b>Week 2</b> Jan 24	The Early Childhood Special Education Profession <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Collaboration, co-teaching</li> <li>● Coordination</li> <li>● Inclusive practices and least restrictive environment</li> </ul> Lifelong learning	Deiner, Ch 1  <u>Recommended Readings</u> Gargiulo & Kilgo, Ch 1, 2
<b>Week 3</b> Jan 31	Early Childhood Special Education: History and Legislation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Historical perspective</li> <li>● Philosophical and sociological foundations</li> <li>● Legislation and legal aspects</li> </ul> Early Childhood Special Education: History and Legislation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Rehabilitation Act</li> <li>● PL 94-142, PL 99-457</li> <li>● ADA</li> <li>● IDEA</li> <li>● Legislative and judicial mandates</li> </ul>	Deiner, Ch 2
<b>Week 4</b> Feb 7	Foundational Knowledge and Current Issues in Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● CEC standards</li> <li>● DEC recommended practices</li> <li>● NAEYC standards and developmentally appropriate practices</li> </ul>	<u>Recommended Readings</u> Gargiulo & Kilgo, Ch 3  <b>Due to Bb (2/7): Field Experience Documentation: Family</b>

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
<b>Week 5</b> Feb 14	<p>Overview of Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education: Service Delivery Pathways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home-based services</li> <li>• Partnering with families</li> <li>• Resource services</li> <li>• Inclusive settings</li> <li>• Self-contained classrooms</li> <li>• Related services</li> <li>• Case management</li> </ul> <p>Program development/improvement</p>	<p>Bb Readings</p> <p>Deiner, Ch 3</p> <p><b>Due to Bb (2/14): Foundational Knowledge and Current Issues Paper</b></p>
<b>Week 6</b> Feb 21	<p>Assessment in ECSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation, assessment, and eligibility</li> <li>• Progress monitoring</li> <li>• Functional assessment</li> <li>• Service delivery</li> <li>• Functional behavior assessment (FBA)</li> </ul> <p>Curriculum Standards in ECSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Milestones of Child Development</i></li> <li>• <i>Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning: Comprehensive Standards for Four-Year-Olds</i></li> <li>• Other standards</li> </ul>	<p><u>Recommended Readings</u></p> <p>Gargiulo &amp; Kilgo, Ch 4, 5</p> <p><b>Due to Bb (2/21): Field Experience Documentation: Assessment</b></p>
<b>Week 7</b> Feb 28	<p>IFSP and IEP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team, meetings, and content</li> <li>• PLAAFP, summary of child</li> <li>• Functional assessment</li> <li>• Annual goals</li> <li>• Short-term objectives</li> <li>• Services and service delivery options</li> <li>• Least restrictive environment</li> <li>• Transition</li> </ul>	<p><u>Recommended Readings</u></p> <p>Gargiulo &amp; Kilgo, Ch 6, 7, 8</p> <p><b>Due to Bb (2/28): Field Experience Documentation: Teaming and Transition</b></p>
<b>March 6</b>	Spring Break, no class	



<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
<b>Week 8</b> March 13	Instructional/ Intervention Methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Curriculum development</li> <li>● Tiered instruction</li> <li>● Embedded learning opportunities</li> <li>● Universal design for learning</li> <li>● Accommodations</li> </ul> Instructional/Intervention Methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Functional behavior assessment and Behavior Intervention Plans</li> </ul>	Deiner, Ch 4, 5  <b>Due to Bb (3/13): Field Experience Documentation: Instruction</b>
<b>Week 9</b> Mar 20	Children with Communication/Language Disorders Children who are English Language Learners Children with Specific Learning Disabilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Nature and characteristics</li> <li>● Impact on social and emotional development</li> <li>● Impact on developmentally appropriate behavior expectations and behavior management</li> <li>● Within context of family, culture, and linguistic background</li> <li>● Instructional considerations in ECSE</li> </ul>	Deiner, Ch 8, 11, 12  <b>Due to Bb (3/20): Field Experience Documentation: Interaction and Environment</b>
<b>Week 10</b> Mar 27	Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders Children with ADD/ADHD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Nature and characteristics</li> <li>● Impact on social and emotional development</li> <li>● Impact on developmentally appropriate behavior expectations and behavior management</li> <li>● Within context of family, culture, and linguistic background</li> <li>● Instructional considerations in ECSE</li> </ul>	Bb Readings  Deiner, Ch 10, 13

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
<b>Week 11</b> Apr 3	Children who are Gifted and Talented Children with Social, Emotional and Behavioral Disorders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature and characteristics</li> <li>• Impact on social and emotional development</li> <li>• Impact on developmentally appropriate behavior expectations and behavior management</li> <li>• Within context of family, culture, and linguistic background</li> <li>• Instructional considerations in ECSE</li> </ul>	Deiner, Ch 9, 15  <b>Due to BB (4/3): Writing and IEP Project</b>
<b>Week 12</b> Apr 10	Children with Orthopedic and Neurological Impairments Children with Special Health Care Needs Children with Intellectual Disabilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature and characteristics</li> <li>• Impact on social and emotional development</li> <li>• Impact on developmentally appropriate behavior expectations and behavior management</li> <li>• Within context of family, culture, and linguistic background</li> <li>• Instructional considerations in ECSE</li> </ul>	Deiner, Ch 14, 16, 17
<b>Week 13</b> Apr 17	Children with Hearing Impairments Children with Visual Impairments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature and characteristics</li> <li>• Impact on social and emotional development</li> <li>• Impact on developmentally appropriate behavior expectations and behavior management</li> <li>• Within context of family, culture, and linguistic background</li> <li>• Instructional considerations in ECSE</li> </ul>	Deiner, Ch 18, 19
<b>Week 14</b> Apr 24	Working with Professionals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration</li> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Managing</li> <li>• Monitoring</li> </ul>	Bb Readings  <b>Due to Bb (4/24): Reflection and Practice on Lifelong Learning</b>
<b>May 1-8</b>	Final Exams	<b>Due to Bb (5/1): Attendance and Participation Self Evaluation</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 <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](mailto: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](mailto:titleix@gmu.edu).

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