

Proposal for Area of Concentration in Early Intervention  
Early Childhood Education Program

The field of early childhood education historically has focused on the development of the whole child. Preparation programs for professionals include content on the emotional, social, behavioral, intellectual and physical development of young children from birth through age 8. Upon program completion professionals were prepared with the knowledge to plan, implement, and assess lessons and learning environments that supported children's growth in all developmental areas.

A growing body of research on young children with special needs provides strong support for beginning intervention programs as soon as possible. The research indicates that the earlier intervention is begun the more effective it will be. While teacher preparation programs remain focused on the development of the whole child, more emphasis is being placed on identifying children who may benefit from adaptive and differentiated curriculum and teaching strategies. The proposed concentration in Early Intervention includes course work, field experiences and a practicum that give students experiences in arranging learning environments, planning curriculum, and implementing lessons for young children with special needs. All students in the Early Childhood Education program will take 12 hours of courses and field based experiences in the area of concentration. The courses or each semester are described below.

Junior Year – Fall Semester (4 credits)

E 349 Teaching and Learning for All Young Children I: Birth to Age 3 (3 cr.). Students connect theory with the pedagogical skills needed for teaching young children with special needs. Students become keen observers of children and acquire proficiency in designing, implementing, and assessing environments that are developmentally appropriate and literacy-rich.

M301 Field Experience (1 cr.) Experience with infants and toddlers with special needs in inclusive classrooms. Students will plan and implement activities to meet the developmental needs of infants and toddlers. Focus is on developing expertise in designing accommodations based on children's individual needs and providing appropriate care.

Junior Year – Spring Semester (4 credits)

K 307 Methods for Teaching Students with Special Needs (3 cr.) This course prepares future teachers to work with students with diverse abilities in inclusive settings. Participants learn to use learning modalities, varied rates, and complexity of instruction, and to make use of individual interests and preferences. Additionally, differentiating and/or individualizing instruction for all learners is emphasized.

M470 Practicum (1 cr.) Instructional experience with young children with special needs in inclusive classrooms. Students will plan and implement lessons and learning activities to meet the developmental needs of preschool-aged children. Focus is on developing expertise in designing accommodations based on children's individual needs and providing differentiated instruction.

Senior Year – Fall Semester (4 credits)

K305: Teaching the Exceptional Learner in the Elementary School (3 cr.). Students develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills basic to the education of exceptional learners in the regular elementary classrooms. Topics include historical and international perspectives, the law and public policy, profiling the exceptional learner, a responsive curriculum, teaching and management strategies, teachers as persons and professionals.

M401 Field Experience (1 cr.) Instructional experience with primary-aged children with special needs in inclusive classrooms. Students will plan and implement lessons and learning activities to meet the developmental needs of primary-aged children. Focus is on developing expertise in designing accommodations based on children's individual needs and providing differentiated instruction.