

# EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION M.ED.

Degree: Master of Education

<https://www.towson.edu/coe/departments/earlychildhood/grad/earlychildhood/>

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The M.Ed. in Early Childhood Education is an advanced degree program designed to prepare the degree candidate for a future professional role, to increase competence in a current career role or to provide a step toward further study in the field of early childhood education. It is not an initial teaching certification or licensure program, but an opportunity for increased professional development at the graduate level. The M.Ed. in Early Childhood Education is recommended for practitioners in a wide range of programs for children from birth through age 8 in a variety of community settings. Their roles may include administration, supervision and mentoring in early childhood programs; pre-elementary or primary grade teaching; family/community support; early intervention; resource and referral; program licensing; infants and toddlers specialist; and many others. Guiding principles include an interdisciplinary perspective, collaboration, mentoring and advocacy, with a foundation of the most current knowledge base in early childhood and best practice for all young children and families.

The M.Ed. in Early Childhood Education is aligned with National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation in Advanced Programs. The 33-unit program consists of seven required courses and four elective courses that are designed to provide each student with a deeper understanding of the knowledge base in the field, while supporting individual areas of professional specialization and academic interest. The faculty in the Department of Early Childhood Education has developed specific courses to support students in their professional development and in their future contributions to the field of early childhood education through their chosen career paths.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation in Advanced Programs recognizes possible specializations as “areas of focus” that include, but are not limited to:

- Early Childhood Accomplished Teacher: Advanced professional study to develop candidates as master teachers and mentors in their professional settings and may prepare candidates for NBPTS certification.
- Early Childhood Administrator/Program Director: Advanced professional study to prepare candidates to become or to increase their effectiveness as administrators, supervisors or directors in schools, centers and non-traditional programs for young children and families.
- Early Childhood Family Specialist: Advanced professional study to prepare candidates to specialize in work with the families of young children in a variety of roles and settings, and to meet the requirements for a post-baccalaureate Family-Professional Collaboration Certificate.

## Requirements

### Admission Requirements

Application deadlines and a full listing of materials required for admission can be found on the website.

### Degree Requirements

The Master of Education in Early Childhood Education requires a minimum of 33 units, including the following:

- Completion of required prerequisite courses
- Goals Statement: At the beginning of the program, students will identify an individualized area of focus to guide their professional growth in their graduate study and will submit a Goals Statement. This document will serve as a plan so that students may achieve their individual professional and academic objectives.
- Graduate Professional Portfolio: Students present a professional portfolio as an exit requirement of the program. Along with ECED 773 (or ECED 898), the portfolio will provide a capstone experience. It will demonstrate integrated graduate-level learning and evidence of essential professional dispositions, and will reflect the students’ growth as professionals and leaders in their areas of specialization within the field of early childhood education. As an ongoing collection of graduate work, it will serve as a synthesis of learning throughout degree course work and reflect NAEYC Standards for Advanced Professional Preparation.

### Course Sequence

The first two courses of the graduate program are ECED 611 and ECED 609. These two courses must be completed before other courses are taken, except for students who begin degree course work during the summer.

### Non-Thesis Option

For students pursuing the non-thesis option, the final, capstone course is ECED 773, in which students are provided an opportunity to develop a creative and interdisciplinary statement of their professional identity, as they articulate their views on why they care about children and why they do what they do. All other course work must be completed either prior to or concurrent with taking this course.

Code	Title	Units
<b>Required Courses</b>		
ECED 607	LEARNER DIVERSITY, CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS, AND INCLUSION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION	3
ECED 609	GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNG CHILDREN	3
ECED 610	LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS: CURRICULUM AND TECHNOLOGY	3
ECED 611	TEACHER AS RESEARCHER: RESEARCH METHODS IN EDUCATION	3
ECED 619	ASSESSMENT, OBSERVATION AND EVALUATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION	3
ECED 665	CURRICULUM THEORY AND DEVELOPMENT	3
ECED 773	SEMINAR IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION <sup>1</sup>	3

**Electives**

These courses support the student's individualized area of focus as indicated on the initial Goals Statement, and are to be selected from departmental courses or up to 6 units from another department with permission

12

**Total Units**

33

<sup>1</sup> ECED 773 must be completed with a grade of B or higher. (Course may be repeated)

**Thesis Option**

This option is available for students who may wish to pursue doctoral studies at a later date or who have identified a strong commitment to a specific topic of inquiry they wish to pursue in great depth. Students who elect the Thesis Option will take 6 units of ECED 897 or ECED 898 in place of the 3-unit ECED 773 and 3 elective units. Students must meet with adviser one term prior to enrolling in this course.

Code	Title	Units
<b>Required Courses</b>		
ECED 607	LEARNER DIVERSITY, CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS, AND INCLUSION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION	3
ECED 609	GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNG CHILDREN	3
ECED 610	LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS: CURRICULUM AND TECHNOLOGY	3
ECED 611	TEACHER AS RESEARCHER: RESEARCH METHODS IN EDUCATION	3
ECED 619	ASSESSMENT, OBSERVATION AND EVALUATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION	3
ECED 665	CURRICULUM THEORY AND DEVELOPMENT	3
ECED 897 or ECED 898	EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION THESIS <sup>1</sup> EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION THESIS	6

**Electives**

These courses support the student's individualized area of focus as indicated on the initial Goals Statement, and are to be selected from departmental courses or up to 6 units from another department with permission

9

**Total Units**

33

<sup>1</sup> Students can enroll in 6 units of ECED 897 in one term or 3 units of ECED 898 over two terms.

**Post-Baccalaureate Certificate Options within the M.Ed.****Post-Baccalaureate Family-Professional Collaboration Certificate**

Family/home collaboration is a vital aspect of Early Childhood professional practice. Graduate students interested in developing expertise as a family specialist may complete the requirements for the Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Family-Professional Collaboration within their master's degree program. These students must also meet with the director of the Post-Baccalaureate Certificate Program in Family

Studies for advising on course requirements for the certificate program. Students take the following courses as three of their electives in the M.Ed. in order to obtain the Family Studies Certificate:

Code	Title	Units
FMST 601	APPLIED FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS	3
FMST 610	FAMILY-PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION	3
FMST 620	PROJECT IN FAMILY FOCUSED PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT	3
<b>Total Units</b>		<b>9</b>

For more information about the Post-Baccalaureate Family-Professional Collaboration Certificate, see the description in the Interdisciplinary Programs section of the catalog.

**Post-Baccalaureate Certificate Program in Autism Studies**

Graduate students interested in developing expertise in Autism Studies may complete the requirements for the Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Autism Studies within their master's degree program. These students must also meet with the director of the Post-Baccalaureate Certificate Program in Autism Studies for advising on course requirements for the certificate program. Students will take the following courses as three of their electives in the M.Ed. in order to obtain the Autism Studies Certificate:

Code	Title	Units
IDHP 770	SPECIAL TOPICS IN THE FIELD OF AUTISM	3
IDHP 791	DIRECTED READINGS IN THE FIELD OF AUTISM	3
IDHP 792	INDEPENDENT STUDY IN THE FIELD OF AUTISM	3
<b>Total Units</b>		<b>9</b>

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Preparation: NAEYC Standards addressed in the M.Ed. required courses are aligned with the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Graduate students who are teachers in public school settings may further focus their elective courses to work toward preparation of the portfolio and documentation required for this certification and recognition as master teachers.

**Learning Outcomes****NAEYC STANDARD 1. CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING IN CONTEXT**

Early childhood educators (a) are grounded in an understanding of the developmental period of early childhood from birth through age 8 across developmental domains. They (b) understand each child as an individual with unique developmental variations. Early childhood educators (c) understand that children learn and develop within relationships and within multiple contexts, including families, cultures, languages, communities, and society. They (d) use this multidimensional knowledge to make evidence-based decisions about how to carry out their responsibilities.

**Key Competencies<sup>1</sup>**

1a: Understand the developmental period of early childhood from birth through age 8 across physical, cognitive, social and emotional, and linguistic domains, including bilingual/multilingual development.

1b: Understand and value each child as an individual with unique developmental variations, experiences, strengths, interests, abilities, challenges, approaches to learning, and with the capacity to make choices.

1c: Understand the ways that child development and the learning process occur in multiple contexts, including family, culture, language, community, and early learning setting, as well as in a larger societal context that includes structural inequities.

1d: Use this multidimensional knowledge—that is, knowledge about the developmental period of early childhood, about individual children, and about development and learning in cultural contexts—to make evidence-based decisions that support each child.

## **NAEYC STANDARD 2. FAMILY-TEACHER PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS**

Early childhood educators understand that successful early childhood education depends upon educators' partnerships with the families of the young children they serve. They (a) know about, understand, and value the diversity in family characteristics. Early childhood educators (b) use this understanding to create respectful, responsive, reciprocal relationships with families and to engage with them as partners in their young children's development and learning. They (c) use community resources to support young children's learning and development and to support children's families, and they build connections between early learning settings, schools, and community organizations and agencies.

### **Key Competencies**

2a: Know about, understand, and value the diversity of families.

2b: Collaborate as partners with families in young children's development and learning through respectful, reciprocal relationships and engagement.

2c: Use community resources to support young children's learning and development and to support families, and build partnerships between early learning settings, schools, and community organizations and agencies.

## **NAEYC STANDARD 3. CHILD OBSERVATION, DOCUMENTATION, AND ASSESSMENT**

Early childhood educators (a) understand that the primary purpose of assessments is to inform instruction and planning in early learning settings. They (b) know how to use observation, documentation, and other appropriate assessment approaches and tools. Early childhood educators (c) use screening and assessment tools in ways that are ethically grounded and developmentally, culturally, ability, and linguistically appropriate to document developmental progress and promote positive outcomes for each child. Early childhood educators (d) build assessment partnerships with families and professional colleagues

### **Key Competencies**

3a: Understand that assessments (formal and informal, formative and summative) are conducted to make informed choices about instruction and for planning in early learning settings.

3b: Know a wide range of types of assessments, their purposes, and their associated methods and tools.

3c: Use screening and assessment tools in ways that are ethically grounded and developmentally, ability, culturally, and linguistically appropriate in order to document developmental progress and promote positive outcomes for each child.

3d: Build assessment partnerships with families and professional colleagues

## **NAEYC STANDARD 4. DEVELOPMENTALLY, CULTURALLY, AND LINGUISTICALLY APPROPRIATE TEACHING PRACTICES**

Early childhood educators understand that teaching and learning with young children is a complex enterprise, and its details vary depending on children's ages and characteristics and on the settings in which teaching and learning occur. They (a) understand and demonstrate positive, caring, supportive relationships and interactions as the foundation for their work with young children. They (b) understand and use teaching skills that are responsive to the learning trajectories of young children and to the needs of each child. Early childhood educators (c) use a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate and culturally and linguistically relevant, anti-bias, and evidence-based teaching approaches that reflect the principles of universal design for learning.

### **Key Competencies**

4a: Understand and demonstrate positive, caring, supportive relationships and interactions as the foundation of early childhood educators' work with young children.

4b: Understand and use teaching skills that are responsive to the learning trajectories of young children and to the needs of each child, recognizing that differentiating instruction, incorporating play as a core teaching practice, and supporting the development of executive function skills critical for young children.

4c: Use a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically relevant, anti-bias, evidence-based teaching skills and strategies that reflect the principles of universal design for learning

## **NAEYC STANDARD 5. KNOWLEDGE, APPLICATION, AND INTEGRATION OF ACADEMIC CONTENT IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM**

Early childhood educators have knowledge of the content of the academic disciplines (e.g., language and literacy, the arts, mathematics, social studies, science, technology and engineering, physical education) and of the pedagogical methods for teaching each discipline. They (a) understand the central concepts, the methods and tools of inquiry, and the structures in each academic discipline. Educators (b) understand pedagogy, including how young children learn and process information in each discipline, the learning trajectories for each discipline, and how teachers use this knowledge to inform their practice. They (c) apply this knowledge using early learning standards and other resources to make decisions about spontaneous and planned learning experiences and about curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation to ensure that learning will be stimulating, challenging, and meaningful to each child.

### **Key Competencies**

5a: Understand content knowledge—the central concepts, methods and tools of inquiry, and structure—and resources for the academic disciplines in an early childhood curriculum.

5b: Understand pedagogical content knowledge—how young children learn in each discipline—and how to use the teacher knowledge and practices described in Standards 1 through 4 to support young children's learning in each content area.

5c: Modify teaching practices by applying, expanding, integrating, and updating their content knowledge in the disciplines, their knowledge of curriculum content resources, and their pedagogical content knowledge.

## **NAEYC STANDARD 6. PROFESSIONALISM AS AN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR**

Early childhood educators (a) identify and participate as members of the early childhood profession. They serve as informed advocates for young children, for the families of the children in their care, and for the early childhood profession. They (b) know and use ethical guidelines and other early childhood professional guidelines. They (c) have professional communication skills that effectively support their relationships and work with young children, families, and colleagues. Early childhood educators (d) are continuous, collaborative learners who (e) develop and sustain the habit of reflective and intentional practice in their daily work with young children and as members of the early childhood profession.

### **Key Competencies**

6a: Identify and involve themselves with the early childhood field and serve as informed advocates for young children, families, and the profession.

6b: Know about and uphold ethical and other early childhood professional guidelines.

6c: Use professional communication skills, including technology-mediated strategies, to effectively support young children's learning and development and to work with families and colleagues.

6d: Engage in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice.

6e: Develop and sustain the habit of reflective and intentional practice in their daily work with young children and as members of the early childhood profession.