

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
Required Courses		
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 ¹	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

¹ 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
Required Courses		
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 ¹ 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

¹ 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
Total Units		9

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
Total Units		9

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. PROMOTING CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING**

Candidates prepared in early childhood degree programs are grounded in a child development knowledge base. They use their understanding of young children's characteristics and needs, and of multiple interacting influences on children's development and learning, to create environments that are healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging for each child.

1a. Knowing and understanding young children's characteristics and needs, from birth through age 8.

1b. Knowing and understanding the multiple influences on early development and learning.

1c. Using developmental knowledge to create healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging learning environments for young children.

NAEYC STANDARD 2. BUILDING FAMILY AND COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

Candidates prepared in early childhood degree programs understand that successful early childhood education depends upon partnerships with children's families and communities. They know about, understand, and value the importance and complex characteristics of children's families and communities. They use this understanding to create respectful, reciprocal relationships that support and empower families, and to involve all families in their children's development and learning.

2a: Knowing about and understanding diverse family and community characteristics.

2b: Supporting and engaging families and communities through respectful, reciprocal relationships.

2c: Involving families and communities in young children's development and learning.

NAEYC STANDARD 3. OBSERVING, DOCUMENTING, AND ASSESSING TO SUPPORT YOUNG CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Candidates prepared in early childhood degree programs understand that child observation, documentation, and other forms of assessment are central to the practice of all early childhood professionals. They know about and understand the goals, benefits, and uses of assessment. They know about and use systematic observations, documentation, and other effective assessment strategies in a responsible way, in partnership with families and other professionals, to positively influence the development of every child.

3a: Understanding the goals, benefits, and uses of assessment including its use in development of appropriate goals, curriculum, and teaching strategies for young children.

3b: Knowing about and using observation, documentation, and other appropriate assessment tools and approaches, including the use of technology in documentation, assessment and data collection.

3c: Understanding and practicing responsible assessment to promote positive outcomes for each child, including the use of assistive technology for children with disabilities.

3d: Knowing about assessment partnerships with families and with professional colleagues to build effective learning environments.

NAEYC STANDARD 4. USING DEVELOPMENTALLY EFFECTIVE APPROACHES

Candidates prepared in early childhood degree programs understand that teaching and learning with young children is a complex enterprise, and its details vary depending on children's ages, characteristics, and the settings within which teaching and learning occur. They understand and use positive relationships and supportive interactions as the foundation for their work with young children and families. Candidates know, understand, and use a wide array of developmentally appropriate approaches, instructional strategies, and tools to connect with children and families and positively influence each child's development and learning.

4a: Understanding positive relationships and supportive interactions as the foundation of their work with young children.

4b: Knowing and understanding effective strategies and tools for early education, including appropriate uses of technology.

4c: Using a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate teaching / learning approaches.

4d: Reflecting on own practice to promote positive outcomes for each child.

NAEYC STANDARD 5. USING CONTENT KNOWLEDGE TO BUILD MEANINGFUL CURRICULUM

Candidates prepared in early childhood degree programs use their knowledge of academic disciplines to design, implement, and evaluate experiences that promote positive development and learning for each and every young child. Candidates understand the importance of developmental domains and academic (or content) disciplines in early childhood curriculum. They know the essential concepts, inquiry tools, and structure of content areas, including academic subjects, and can identify resources to deepen their understanding. Candidates use their own knowledge and other resources to design, implement, and evaluate meaningful, challenging curriculum that promotes comprehensive developmental and learning outcomes for every young child.

5a: Understanding content knowledge and resources in academic disciplines: language and literacy; the arts music, creative movement, dance, drama, visual arts; mathematics; science, physical activity, physical education, health and safety; and social studies.

5b: Knowing and using the central concepts, inquiry tools, and structures of content areas or academic disciplines.

5c: Using own knowledge, appropriate early learning standards, and other resources to design, implement, and evaluate developmentally meaningful and challenging curriculum for each child.

NAEYC STANDARD 6. BECOMING A PROFESSIONAL

Candidates prepared in early childhood degree programs identify and conduct themselves as members of the early childhood profession. They know and use ethical guidelines and other professional standards related to early childhood practice. They are continuous, collaborative learners who demonstrate knowledgeable, reflective and critical perspectives on their work, making informed decisions that integrate knowledge from a variety of sources. They are informed advocates for sound educational practices and policies.

6a: Identifying and involving oneself with the early childhood field.

6b: Knowing about and upholding ethical standards and other early childhood professional guidelines.

6c: Engaging in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice; using technology effectively with young children, with peers, and as a professional resource.

6d: Integrating knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives on early education.

6e: Engaging in informed advocacy for young children and the early childhood profession.

NAEYC STANDARD 7. EARLY CHILDHOOD FIELD EXPERIENCES

Field experiences and clinical practice are planned and sequenced so that candidates develop the knowledge, skills and professional dispositions necessary to promote the development and learning of young children across the entire developmental period of early childhood in at least two of the three early childhood age groups (birth age 3, 3 through 5, 5 through 8 years) and in the variety of settings that offer early education (early school grades, child care centers and homes, Head Start programs).

7a: Opportunities to observe and practice in at least two of the three early childhood age groups (birth age 3, 3-5, 5-8).

7b: Opportunities to observe and practice in at least two of the three main types of early education settings (early school grades, child care centers and homes, Head Start programs).