EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION M.ED.

Degree: Master of Education
https://www.towson.edu/coe/departments/earlychildhood/grad/earlychildhood/

Program Director: Dr. Stephen Schroth
Phone: 410-704-4832
Email: ecedgrad@towson.edu

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.

Admission Requirements

- A baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university**.
- A minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.00 is required for full admission and 2.75 for conditional admission to the program. All GPA calculations are based on the last 60 units of undergraduate and post-baccalaureate study.
- A current résumé to be submitted with the application for admission as well as all post-secondary transcripts. Submit the online application at www.towson.edu/academics/graduate/admissions.
- Experience/background in the field with young children and families.
- Two professional narrative letters of recommendation.
- A brief (two-page) admission essay discussing the applicant’s experiences working with young children and families, and rationale for earning a master’s degree related to professional goals and career aspirations.

One or more of the following:

- An undergraduate degree or graduate course work in Early Childhood Education, child development, family studies or a related field OR
- Teacher certification in early childhood education OR
- Teacher certification in elementary education plus 6 units in early childhood education OR
- A minimum of three years of professional experience in an early childhood program or related setting serving young children from birth to age 8 OR
- Undergraduate courses in the following areas:
  - educational psychology or psychology of learning
  - child growth and development
  - curriculum and methods in early childhood education

Exceptional candidates who do not meet the specific experience/background criteria above may be considered for admission if they intend to work in settings with children from birth through age 8. In these instances, an interview with the program director is required.

NOTE: The M.Ed. in Early Childhood Education is an advanced program and does not lead to initial teacher certification in early childhood education. Individuals interested in post-baccalaureate initial certification should apply for the M. Ed. Certification Option.

Non-immigrant international students: See additional admission information in Graduate Admissions (http://www.towson.edu/academics/graduate/admissions/apply/international.html)

**See Exceptions to Policy in Graduate Admissions (http://www.towson.edu/academics/graduate/admissions/apply/policies.html)

M.Ed. Certification Option

The program offers a certification option for Early Childhood Education graduate students who already have a background in the field of early childhood education, in addition to increased professional development at the graduate level. The M.Ed. in Early Childhood Education is recommended for graduate students with undergraduate degrees or significant experience in early childhood education, child development, or child and family studies, or who are practicing professionals working with young children and families. The M.Ed. Certification Option consists of the seven required courses and four elective courses that are geared toward certification, as well as additional units in specific areas to meet certification requirements. These additional units will be determined
based on prior course work, and will likely include courses in the teaching of reading and internship. The M.Ed. Certification Option will likely require more than the 33 units for the basic M.Ed.

In addition to the admissions requirements above, applicants for the M.Ed. Certification Option must also provide qualifying scores on the Praxis CORE exam (as determined by MSDE) or other approved testing alternative (qualifying SAT, ACT, or GRE scores).

**Degree Requirements**

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

- Completion of required prerequisite courses
- Course work for the degree
- 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. The final, or capstone, course is ECED 773. In ECED 773, 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. All students must complete ECED 773 with the grade of “A” or “B” (the course may be repeated) or successfully complete ECED 898.

### Thesis Option

As an alternative to ECED 773, students may elect the ECED 898. 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 the 6-unit 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.

### 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:

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<td>3</td>
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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:

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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).