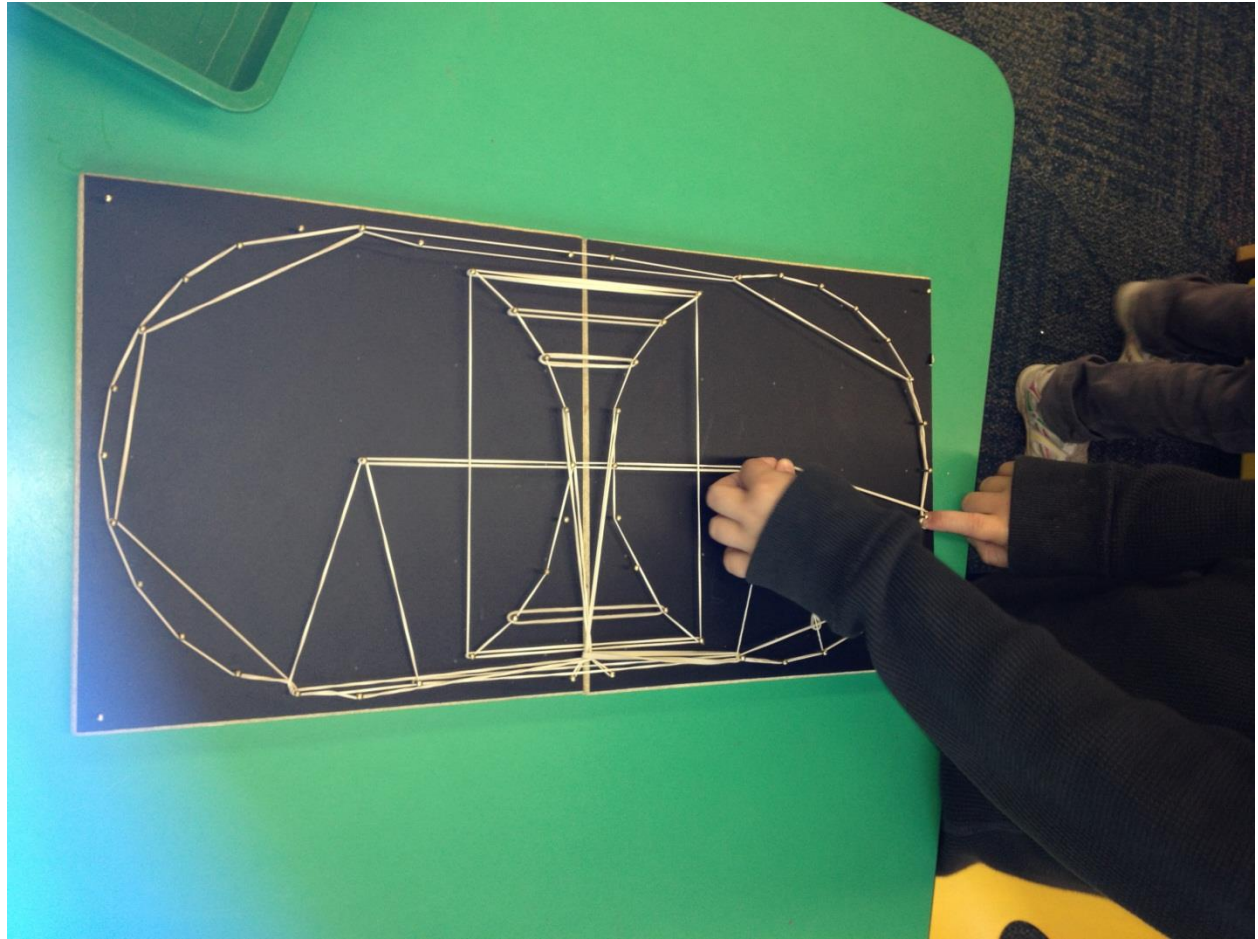# Introduction to Early Childhood Fall 2012

Tuesday and Thursdays • 9:30 to 10:45
Sheila Skahan, M.S.
Associate Professor

860.383.5252 Three Rivers Community College
Office Hours Tuesday, Thursday 11:00 – 12:30
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Course Name: Introduction to Early Childhood Education
Common Course Number: ECE*101 (formerly CDV K111) ; 3 Credit Hours
This course introduces students to a study of the historical, anthropological, psychological, philosophical, and social perspectives of early care and education for children ages 0-8. The course acquaints students with trends in educational settings including the organization, history, and governance of American schools. The course includes the study of child development, learning models, and the multiple roles in the early childhood education profession. Field trips and observations of early childhood programs will be required.
 Prerequisites: ENG* K100 eligibility or permission of instructor.

Required Texts:
Gordon, Ann and Kathryn Browne. Beginnings and Beyond: Foundations in Early Childhood
        Education. 8th Edition. Wadsworth. 2011.
        ISBN 10:0-495-80817-2
The Connecticut Framework, State of CT, State Board of Education, 1999.

 Additional readings will be assigned throughout the semester.

Course Outcomes:
Upon completion of the course, the students will be able to:
- Understand the history, social perspective and theoretical foundations for Early Childhood Education learning models, environments and programming.
- Demonstrate familiarity with a broad spectrum of roles, responsibilities and expectations of the Early Childhood Education professional.
- Understand the core principles of child development, home-school-community partnerships, and strategies that guide quality Early Childhood Education programming.

Key Learning Goals

- Identify the evolution and history of childhood for the past 400 years . (NAEYC Standard 5a)
- Define the philosophies of John Dewey, Friedrich Froebel, Lev Vygotsky, Jean Piaget and Howard Gardner. (NAEYC Standard 5a)
- Define the characteristics of Waldorf schools, Montessori schools, Reggio Emilia, School Readiness, Head Start and Perry Preschool programs; (NAEYC Standard 6c)
- Identify key characteristics of the multiple settings in which children are provided early learning experiences and / or care; (NAEYC Standard 6a, 6c)
- Compare and contrast the theories of human development including but not limited to; Behaviorist Theory, Cognitive Theory, Socio-Cultural Theory, Humanistic Theory, and Multiple Intelligence Theory; (NAEYC Standard 5a, 5b)
- Identify the key learning domains commonly associated to child development such as Social-Emotional, Language, Motor, Creative, & Cognitive; (NAEYC Standard 1a)
- Recognize age appropriate and culturally appropriate development expectations for the young child; (NAEYC Standard 2c)

- Define differing learning styles and teaching strategies of the learning process; (NAEYC Standard 4b)

- Define the importance of social-emotional relationships between teacher and child and family including current research and personal experiences; (NAEYC Standard 2a, 2c)

- Identify how observations help you assess young children and what methodologies of assessment are best practice (NAEYC Standard 3a)

- Integrate language, literacy, math, science, art, music and social studies into a learning unit for a young child; (NAEYC Standard 5b)

- Identify positive approaches to discipline using child guidance alternatives and behavioral assessment strategies; (NAEYC Standard 1b,)

- Evaluate early childhood learning environments with particular attention with respect for diversity, learning climates, and quality interactions; (NAEYC Standard 2c)

- Identify the resources for defining requirements and educational requirements needed to be certified in the State of CT for both child care and elementary ECE teachers; (NAEYC Standard 6b)

- Recognize the ethical concerns and dilemma's related to early care and education; (NAEYC Standard 6b)

- Identify resources for determining state and federal legislation and its' effect on the early childhood system and learning gaps for programs servicing children ages 0-8; (NAEYC Standard 6c)

- Demonstrate writing and literacy skills aligned with the State of Connecticut Teaching Competencies; (NAEYC Supportive Skills, 2, 3, 4, 5)

- Define the current issues associated with Universal Preschool; (NAEYC Standard 6c)

- Use Writing Center and library as needed to complete writing requirement (NAEYC Supportive Skills 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

Policies:
Active participation in class discussions and activities is required. Candidates are expected to complete assigned readings prior to class and come to class prepared to discuss them. Candidates are encouraged to utilize the Blackboard Learning System, to review course materials, and view articles and other materials for the course. Throughout the course there will be other written assignments to help guide your studies which will be handed in and counted as part of your participation grade.

Class attendance is required. The greatest amount of learning occurs during class time, where group activities and interactive assignments allow for learning not covered by the text and required assignments. Two late arrivals or early departures may count as one missed class. For each class missed five to ten points may be deducted, upon the fourth absence you may be asked to withdraw from the class. Attendance is taken at the beginning of class.

Candidates are urged to devote their time and energy to fulfilling stated class requirements. Please note that a credit hour 'work expectation' equates to one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class candidate work. So for this three credit course you should expect to spend a minimum of three in class and six out of class hours (total of nine hours) per week on this course.

It is assumed that all assignments will be completed and turned in on time. As a class you will create your own policy on late assignments. Assignments will not be accepted beyond a one-week extension.

Take home tests will not be accepted beyond the scheduled due date. Make-ups must be done in a timely manner.

Spelling and grammar will be included as part of the grade for all written work. Thus, proper spelling and careful proofreading are important. A candidate's written work is expected to be original and done independently unless otherwise indicated. Citations and references must be used to **acknowledge the source and to avoid plagiarism**. Violations of academic integrity will be referred to the Dean with in accordance with the college policy.

As part of the course, candidates may be required to spend additional time observing and/or working with children in actual or simulated child development settings.

Lap top computers and tape recorders may be used during class time, with prior permission and for the purpose of note taking only. Computers and other forms of technology are prohibited during tests. Cell phones, pagers, ipods, and other similar devices must be turned off during class. **Texting or using your cell phones during class is wildly frowned upon. JUST DON'T..ok?**

The candidate is responsible for all materials covered in class as well as the assignments. If a candidate misses a class, it is the candidate's responsibility to get the notes from another candidate. **Do not contact the Instructor and ask for a review of the class**. Learn to rely on your syllabus and/or another candidate. You may want to share your contact information with other candidates to help facilitate this process.

TRCC does not follow the local school closing schedule. The TRCC website offers the most updated information about school closings and/or early dismissals. It is recommended that all candidates sign up for the electronic notification system to receive instant alerts and messages. In the event that class is cancelled, separate from the college, the instructor may notify candidates using the Blackboard messaging system and/or the email contact available through TRCC. Please be sure the college has your updated contact information.

If you **have problems with the course or material,** please see me or call to arrange for an appointment. Candidates who are not able to complete the course need to speak to me immediately as we will try to work together to have you complete the class successfully. This is your first class in education – there is LOTS to take in.

Candidates with disabilities who may need academic accommodations should discuss options with the instructor as early as possible. You will need to provide written documentation of your disability to the Candidate Services Counselors (Disabled Candidate Counselor). Appropriate accommodations will be provided to candidates who have completed this procedure.

Please refer to the Institutional Policies available in the Office of the Dean of Candidate Development and Services as well as on line, which include regulations regarding candidate conduct and the disciplinary code.

Method of Evaluation:
- Class participation and individual contribution
- Final Comparison Model Paper
- Short essay and matching terminology examinations
- Chapter Summaries
- Candidate group professional presentations (oral and written)
- Field Visits and Experiences
- Notebook Reading Summaries
- Responsive Classroom Participation
- Reaction Papers
- Professional Teaching Dispositions
- Technology through media and WebCT

Welcome to the ECE Program! For the past few years, our students, staff and the community have worked on creating a document that best explains who we are a learning entity and community. To date, this is our current beliefs - as an active member of our program, we will be asking you to review this framework and to help us adopt it, modify it and embrace it!!

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The mission of the Early Childhood program is to offer a well rounded and rewarding post-secondary education which emphasizes: Teaching and Learning, Integrity and Service and Community and Diversity with an emphasis on critical thinking, and effective communication. The primary goal of our program is to prepare passionate educational leaders, providers and teachers to serves as community resources for people and institutions within our region. Our candidates will demonstrate the disposition, temperament and high academic standards to create positive environments and relationships in diverse settings with all children ages 0-8 years.

The Early Childhood Program incorporates instruction that stresses connection to real life expectations in the field based on theoretical understanding of all aspects of developmentally appropriate practices. The TRCC ECE program promotions professionalism and supports the development of leadership through a program that stresses academic rigor through development of oral, written, expressive and receptive competencies. Candidates are encouraged to take responsibility for oneself, one's peers, one's colleagues and one's community.

The TRCC early childhood program is a community based educational program that prepares, supports and embraces individuals in their pursuit of an early childhood education working with children ages 0-8. Trust and confidence in our academic programs are built through an academic plan of study that involves observation and involvement in local schools and child care facilities from the onset of the ECE plan of study. TRCC staff believes that all candidates are able to learn; although not everyone is ready to teach. Our program provides access for all regardless of age, race, ethnicity, culture, gender, orientation, or disability. It is our intent to graduate candidates who believe that all children are capable of learning.

Within the field of early childhood the following topics / research has most influenced how we teach 1) NAEYC standards and skills, 2) Intentional Teaching, 3) DAP / DCAP, and 4) Learning theories including but not limited to the socio-constructivist theory and multiple intelligences. The conceptual framework in conjunction with NAEYC standards and supportive skills has been designed to allow students the opportunity to apply concepts as they relate to best practice in a variety of activities and assignments to develop a foundation for real life application. The intent of our program is to create a cohesive plan of study current in National and State Competencies and standards.

Points given for requirements are as follows: PLEASE KEEP TRACK OF YOUR OWN GRADES DURING THE SEMESTER. This is not a magical number- you simply earn it or not.

Assignment	Points	Your Grade	Confirmed
Observation of TWO SITES	250		
Midterm	150		
Notebook Chapter Summaries	100		
Group Curriculum Project	150		
Reaction Papers (add all 3; divide by 3; multiply by 2)	150		
Vocabulary Tests	100		
EXTRA CREDIT • Advocacy & Professionalism: Attend public hearing on legislation relative to early childhood issues, or an NAEYC meeting or Readiness Council meeting in your town. • Charter school or any other Public School. The TRCC Social Science's "Teach In" also qualifies. Bring in educational artifacts. Lastly, any workshops or conferences that address the TRCC theme, "Politics of Food." • Demonstrate active involvement in the Early Childhood Education Club participates in early childhood events or tutors / supports another classmate in their understanding of course content. • Community Service activity	Extra credit Up to 5 points added to final grade		
Attendance and participation: All missed classes, late arrivals and LATE ASSIGNMENTS work against your grade. This is an intense course – participation and attendance are critical to your success. Each class missed will count against your grade. Off tasks behaviors, negative attitudes and unprofessional class time conversations will be taken from this point average. Outside research, assisting others outside of class, positive leadership and taking extra steps to read, study, and investigate the observation process will warrant extra points. Each candidate will have a voice so please allow them this freedom by LISTENING – thanks.	100		
Ask QUESTIONS!!!! Total	1000 / 10 = grade		

Grading System:
The following numerical grade system will be used:

Grade	Equivalent	Quality Points
A	94-100	4.0
A-	90-93	3.7
B+	87-89	3.3
B	83-86	3.0
B-	80-82	2.7
C+	77-79	2.3
C	73-76	2.0
C-	70-72	1.7
D+	67-69	1.3
D	63-66	1.0
F	<65	0.0

Extra credit points may be considered if a candidate is active in the Early Childhood Education Club, participates in early childhood events, or tutors/supports another classmate in their understanding of course content.

SPRING 2012

Jan 16   Martin Luther King Day – **college closed**
Jan 17   New student orientation
Jan 18   Professional Day
Last day for full tuition refund
Jan 19   **Classes begin**/late registration begins
Add/Drop period begins
Jan 25 l   Instructor signature required to add classes

Feb 1   Last day of Add/Drop and partial tuition refund
Feb 2   College Professional Day – **classes not in session**
Feb 15   Last day to select audit option
Feb 20   President's Day observed – **classes not in session**

Mar 18-25   Spring Break - **classes not in session**

Apr 5   Last day to select Pass/Fail option
Last day to submit incomplete work from Fall '11 semester and Intersession '11.
Apr 6-8   **Spring Recess – college closed**
Apr 13   Faculty System Professional Day – **classes in session**

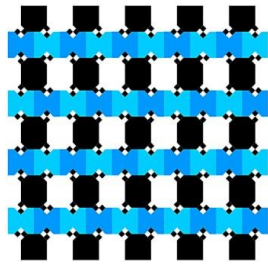**May 7**   Last day to withdraw from classes
May 15 ,16 Make-up/supplemental sessions **- instructor discretion**
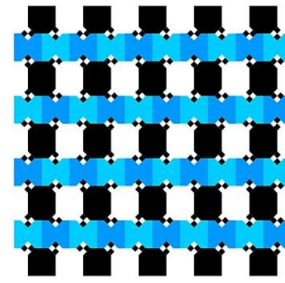**May 18**   Final grades due Registrar's Office
May 19   **Commencement**
May 23   Student grades available on web
May 28   Memorial Day - **college closed**

INTRO TO ECE SYLLABUS

This syllabus is subject to change. Typically given the dynamic nature of this course, a revised syllabus is revamped and distributed mid semester. Please use the blank calendar on following pages to record changes.

Course Outline: Spring 2012

Week #	Dates	Chapters	Assignments	Objective	NAEYC Standards for Professional Preparation Programs
1	Jan 19	Class Overview Begin to Read Chapter 1	Begin to Read Chapter 1 Assign First Reaction Paper	-Identify resources for determining state and federal legislation and its' effect on the early childhood system and learning gaps for programs servicing children ages 0-8	**6a:** Identifying and involving oneself with the early childhood field
2	Jan 24, 26	Major Milestones of History – and Myths	First Reaction Paper Due Assign Second Reaction Paper	-Identify the evolution and history of childhood for the past 400 years	**6a:** Identifying and involving oneself with the early childhood field
3	Jan 31, Feb 2	Chapter 1 History of ECE	Second Reaction Paper Due	-Identify the evolution and history of childhood for the past 400 years	**6a:** Identifying and involving oneself with the early childhood field
4	Feb 7, 9	Chapter 2	Get Caught up on Your reading- Library Visit	-Identify resources for determining state and federal legislation and its' effect on the early childhood system and learning gaps for programs servicing children ages 0-8 -Define the characteristics of Waldorf schools, Montessori schools, Reggio Emilia, School Readiness, Head Start and Perry Preschool programs	*6a: Identifying and involving oneself with the early childhood field*
5	Feb 14, 16	Chapter 3 Young Children DEVELOPMENTAL OBSERVATIONS at onsite Child Care	Third Reaction Paper Due	-Identify the key learning domains commonly associated to child development such as Social-Emotional, Language, Motor, Creative, & Cognitive -Recognize age	*1a: Knowing and understanding young children's characteristics and needs* *1b: Knowing and understanding the multiple influences on development and learning*

				appropriate and culturally appropriate development expectations for the young child	
6	Feb 21, 23	Chapter 4 Developmental Theories	Read Chapter 4 – begin to build cards and research for Midterm (Chapters 1-4)	-Define the philosophies of John Dewey, Friedrich Froebel, Lev Vygotsky, Jean Piaget and Howard Gardner -Define the characteristics of Waldorf schools, Montessori schools, Reggio Emilia, School Readiness, Head Start and Perry Preschool programs	**4a.** Understanding positive relationships and supportive interactions as the foundation of their work with children
7	Feb 28, 30	Chapter 4 Developmental Theories	Work on Midterm and Complete and Write First Observation. TWO WEEKS TO COMPLETE.	-Define the philosophies of John Dewey, Friedrich Froebel, Lev Vygotsky, Jean Piaget and Howard Gardner	**4a.** Understanding positive relationships and supportive interactions as the foundation of their work with children
8	March 6, 8	Classroom Management and CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS – Field TRIP		-Identify positive approaches to discipline using child guidance alternatives and behavioral assessment strategies	**2a:** Knowing about and understanding diverse family and community characteristics
9	**March 13th**	Class/ Catch Up Day. Review			
9.5	**March 15th**	OBSERVATION CLASS- PLAN YOUR DAY TO VISIT SCHOOL	GO with others.. Take the Challenge	Thursday is your day to go out and conduct your second visit.. USE YOUR TIME	*1b: Knowing and understanding the multiple influences on development and learning*
	SPRING BREAK March 19 - 23	**SPRING BREAK March 19 - 23**	**SPRING BREAK March 19 - 23**	**SPRING BREAK March 19 - 23**	**SPRING BREAK March 19 - 23**
10	March 27, 29	Chapter 6 Observation and Assessment	Chapter Summary Due	-Identify how observations help you assess young children and what methodologies of assessment are best practice	**3a:** Observing, Documenting and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families
11	April 3, 5	Guest Speaker Chapter 9 Environments **FIELD TRIP**	Chapter Summary Due	-Using developmental knowledge to create healthy, respectful, supportive and challenging learning environments	
12	April 10, 12	Chapter 10 Curriculum Basics	Chapter Summary Due	-Evaluate early childhood learning environments with particular attention with respect for diversity, learning climates, and quality interactions	**5a:** Understanding content knowledge and resources in academic disciplines

13	April 17, 19	**FINAL OBSERVATION PAPER DUE – No exceptions** Chapter 10 Curriculum Essentials		-Identify the key learning domains commonly associated to child development such as Social-Emotional, Language, Motor, Creative, & Cognitive -Recognize age appropriate and culturally appropriate development expectations for the young child	**4a:** Understanding positive relationships and supportive interactions as the foundation of their work with children
14	April 24, 26	Children with Special Needs	MANDATORY CAPSTONE VOCABULARY; Quiz	-Knowing and understanding young children's characteristics and needs -Using a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate teaching learning approaches	**1b:** Knowing and understanding the multiple influences on development and learning
15	May 1, 3	**Group Curriculum Project at Onsite Child Care program**		-Engaging in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice	**5b:** Knowing and using the central concepts, inquiry tools, and structures of content areas or academic disciplines
FINAL WEEK	May 8th	Last Class Review/ Final Submissions			

ECE K101 Introduction to Early Childhood Education

Reference List

Bibliography:

Bredekamp, S. (1997). Developmentally appropriate practice: The early childhood educator as decision maker. In S. Bredekamp & C. Copple (Eds.), Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs. Washington, DC: NAEYC.

Bredekamp, Sue, and Copple, Carol. (Eds.). (1997) Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs. - Revised edition. NAEYC: Washington, D.C.

Chatfield, Mimi Brodsky. (1993) Teaching is the Key of Life. NAEYC: Washington, D.C.

City of Reggio Emilia (1985). The Hundred Languages of Children. Reggio Emilia, Italy: Author.

Curtis, D and Carter, M. (2003). Creative Activities for Young Children Eighth Edition. Albany, N.Y. Delmar Learning.

Dodge, Diane Trister and Colker, Laura. (2002) The Creative Curriculum for Preschool. Fourth Edition. Teaching Strategies Inc.: Washington, D.C.

Dodge, Diane Trister, Dombro, Koralek, Derry Gosselin, Pizzolongo, P. (2004) Caring for Preschool Children. Third Edition. Teaching Strategies Inc.: Washington, D.C.

Gardner, H. (1995). Frames of Mind: Multiple Intelligence. New York: Basic Books.

Jones, Elizabeth, and Nimmo, John. (1994) Emergent Curriculum. NAEYC: Washington, D.C.

Herr, Judy. (2005) Working with Young Children. The Goodheart-Wilcox Company, Inc.: Illinois.

Landy, S. Pathways To Competence: Promoting Healthy Social And Emotional Development In Young Children. Paul H. Brooks, 2002.

Levin, Diane. Teaching Young Children In Violent Times, 2nd Edition. NAEYC,2003

Mitchell, Anne, and David, Judy (Editors). (1992) Explorations with Young Children: A Curriculum Guide from the Bank Street College of Education. Gryphon House: Maryland.

Websites

State of CT, Dept. of Health, Day care Licensing Regulations & Applications
http://www.dph.state.ct.us/BRS/Day_Care/day_care.htm

State of CT, Department of Ed. CT Benchmarks
http://www.state.ct.us/sde/deps/Early/Preschool_Assessment_Framework.pdf

National Association for the Education Of Young Children http://www.naeyc.org

www.CTearlychildhoodcareerdev.info Wonderful Website will help you with career ideas in education.

http://www.ctreap.net/ website that list all teaching jobs in CT

CT Charts A course – scholarships, career ladder and training for ECE http://www.ctcharts-a-course.org/

http://www.cdacouncil.org/
Obtain Information on the CDA:

CT State Dept of Education
http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/site/default.asp

Public School Choice in CT
http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/equity/choice/public_school_choice_2011.pdf

Three Rivers Community College
ECE K101 Introduction to Early Childhood Education
Observation Assignment

Objectives:
Demonstrate familiarity with a broad spectrum of roles, responsibilities and expectations of the early childhood professional.
Understand the core principles of child development, home - school - community partnerships and strategies that guide quality early childhood education programming.

Outcomes:
Candidates will apply the historical foundations and critical perspectives of early childhood education, and recognize how different program philosophies developed. (NAEYC Standard 1.a., 1.b., 6.b. and 6.c.)
Candidates will be able to analyze the role and responsibilities of the teacher in an early childhood program, and the differences in philosophies based on the type of program. (NAEYC Standard 4.a., 4.b. and 5.a.)

NAEYC Standards and Supportive Skills are noted on the grading sheet to help focus you throughout the assignment on these goals. Refer to the NAEYC Standards and Supportive Skills sheet that was supplied and discussed at the beginning of the semester.

You will need to **observe / research two different classroom settings**. One must be a *'pure model'* setting (Montessori, Reggio, Waldorf, High Scope, etc.) while the other age group is up to you. As the time allotment is difficult for some of you, or if you do not have the availability of observing a *'pure model'* setting, you may use **one of the following videos, or other online resources** as one of your 'pure setting observations'.

The point is to be able to collect enough information to answer the questions based on the specific philosophy. Here are examples of *'pure model'* resources available to get you started:

Montessori: www.youtube.com/watch?v=sPgtI5f54xU
www.youtube.com/watch?v=RTpAILazPnM&feature=related
Reggio Emilia: www.teachers.tv/video/213
Waldorf: www.youtube.com/watch?v=wwosNRTadaM&feature=related
High Scope: www.youtube.com/watch?v=JG2vCyyVnbs

YOU ARE ENCOURAGE TO SEEK ADDITONAL PROFESSIONAL VIDEOS and RESOURCES IF THESE VIDEOS DO NOT COMPLETE THE WHOLE PICTURE!!!!!

With prior approval from your instructor you may possibly use your place of employment as one of your observations, as long as you are in an observing role (**you cannot use your own classroom**) and it is in an early childhood classroom setting and meets the requirements for the assignment. This is to ensure you are getting exposed to other ideas, situations and early childhood environments.

For your on-site observation(s) I recommend you **observe during an activity time**, when the teacher has planned activities that follow a specific curriculum. Be prepared to spend approximately 1-2 hours observing, this varies based on your prior experiences and knowledge of early childhood settings. If possible, ask the director / teacher at the setting for brochures, program information and handouts to support your observation (see question one below). In some cases teachers may have time to meet with

you; in other visits the teacher may not be able to meet at all. *Be courteous and appreciative about the opportunity offered to you by the center staff. Remember confidentiality!*

The sections that must be included are as follows:

Introduction:
1. Introduction of the programs you visited and / or the research you conducted. Details about the program, environment, staff, children, etc. must be included to give the overall feeling of the observation. Include the center name, location, mission and / or philosophy, and any additional information you gathered from the program brochure(s), conversation with staff, etc.
For online resources please identify the links and sources used, providing answers based on the variety of information you have found based on your on-line research. Again be specific to the program model / philosophy that you researched.
Reminder: one of these settings must be a pure model.

Observation of the Environment:
2. Describe your initial reactions as you entered the environment. When reflecting on the 'pure model' how is theory applied in reality? Did this change during your observation? *Be specific to each center and find the smallest details. Remember confidentiality!*

3. List the learning centers that you observed in the environment. What materials were available for children? How did these resources support the child's development and learning?

4. Describe how teachers support children in their need for physical movement, sensory stimulation, fresh air, rest and nourishment. *Support your answer with details.*

5. Use your own words to describe what it would feel like to be a child in this environment. *Include details about environment and interactions.*

Observation of the Relationships:
6. Teaching staff develop individual relationships with children by providing care that is responsive, attentive, consistent, comforting, supportive and culturally sensitive. *Explain how you saw these components addressed in the classrooms.*

7. What evidence did you observe that showed how the program values and / or involve families in the learning environment? Be specific to materials available and any interactions with families that you have observed as well.

Observation of the Curriculum:
8. Demonstrate your understanding of how the teacher uses curriculum and activities to foster physical, language and cognitive development. *Be specific.*

Summary:
These are to be answered after you have gone to both sites.

9. Compare and contrast the two models you observed. How are they the same? How are they different?

10. Which one is a better match to your beliefs and why? How do you plan to use the information you have collected in your future endeavors as an early childhood educator? *Be sure to explain your opinion with details and examples as appropriate.*

Other helpful notes:
This assignment is a requirement for graduation and per NAEYC Accreditation so please keep your graded assignment to put in your final portfolio.

The format of the paper requires you to complete all questions for both observations. As this is about the *process* not the product, set up of the final document is up to you. But as a guideline please note the following:

> You may want to put the question before the answer
> You may want to answer Questions 1 – 7 separately for each observation
> In Question 8 and 9 you will be referencing both observations. You will need to
>> be sure you are clear about which center you are giving specific details about, please include the name of the setting as the point of reference (Not Setting A vs. Setting B)

You will need to support your answers with extra details as the more specific you are with your answer the more you will be able to show understanding.

You also should **review the grading rubric** as it will give you further details about each of the questions and the specific criteria required. This will be reviewed in class to show the connection between the assignment and instructor expectations.

You may also have the option of reviewing a sample from a previous candidate so check with your instructor. This is for reference only, so only a partial assignment may be available to you.

You may also have the availability of submitting a rough draft / outline of your assignment so check with your instructor. This will be accepted no later than two weeks prior to the assignment due date. The purpose will be to review your progress and make suggestions for you to apply for your final submission.

These are some of the **possible sites for classroom observations**. You may use any programs you are familiar with as long as they are group settings that meet the identified target population. You can also contact the Child Care InfoLine 211 for other programs that may be closer to the area you live in. When you call to set up an appointment you should be polite and explain who you are and that as a student at *Three Rivers Community College* in the early childhood field you would like to be able to observe a group of children. This is for informational purposes only and does not require direct interaction with children. You should also ask if there would be time available for you to sit with someone (either / or the Director or classroom teacher) to ask some questions if necessary. Reiterate that the observation may take over an hour to two hours and thank them.

Pooh Corner on TRCC Campus	892.5708	Preschool Ages
Connecticut College Lab School	572.1283	Infancy - Preschool (Special Needs)
Head Start TVCCA	*Main Number* 889.1365	Infancy and Preschool
U.S. Coast Guard Child Care Center New London Director: Pat McIllveen	443.8329	Infancy and Preschool
Norwich Integrated Day Charter School 68 Thermos Rd. Norwich	892.1900	Preschool - Grade 3
Bozrah Elementary School Bozrah	887.2561	Preschool - Grade 3
Stoneview Children's University Director: Cindy Fish	859.0407	Preschool - Grade 2 (Montessori)
Plainfield Early Childhood Center Principal: Bill Nagle	563.6400	Preschool - Grade 3 (Special Needs)
Norwich Public Schools Readiness Sites	823.4286	Preschool - Grade 3
Regional Multicultural Magnet School New London Director: Laureen Pierandi	437.7775	K - Grade 3
Friendship School Waterford	447.4049	Preschool (Special Needs)
Mitchell College Lab School New London	860.701.5150	Preschool
Montessori Discovery School 218 Dudley St Norwich, CT	889.0340	Preschool
Meadowbrook **Waldorf School** 300 Kingstown Road West Kingston, RI	(401) 491-9570	info@meadowbrookschool.com
Housatonic Valley **Waldorf School** 40 Dodgingtown Rd, Newtown, CT -	(203) 364-1113	
Thames River Family Program MONTESSORI – Melissa Canova	860.822.6038	Infant and toddler; preschool

ECE K101 Introduction to Early Childhood Education
Observation Assignment – Grading Expectations

	Exceeds Expectations (5)	Meets Expectations (3)	Needs Improvement (1)
Assignment requirements NAEYC Skill 3	**Written and verbal skills.** Well organized, submitted on time and was well written without any grammatical errors. Neatly typed, interesting presentation.	**Written and verbal skills.** Assignment was turned in on time, had some minor grammatical errors and was presented in a readable style.	**Written and verbal skills.** Assignment was missing some pieces, had some grammatical errors. Included little to no relevant details of the philosophy(ies).
NAEYC Skill 4	**Making connections between prior knowledge/experience and new learning.** Included reflection that supports understanding pure models and other philosophies and the role they play as a professional in the field.	**Making connections between prior knowledge/experience and new learning.** Included some reflection about pure models and other philosophies.	**Making connections between prior knowledge/experience and new learning.** Limited to no reflection about pure models and the impact program models have on education.
Introduction NAEYC Standard 6.b.	**Knowing about and upholding ethical standards and other professional guidelines.** Descriptions of settings, children and experiences are communicated in a manner that ensures confidentiality. Opinions are supported through the use of details and concepts as covered in class.	**Knowing about and upholding ethical standards and other professional guidelines.** Descriptions of observations are detailed and do not disclose any personal information. Opinions about the setting and experience are supported through the use of details and additional information.	**Knowing about and upholding ethical standards and other professional guidelines.** Confidentiality is not modeled in the assignment. Opinions are unsupported, important details are missing.
NAEYC Standard 6.c.	**Engaging in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice.** Observations provide details of the program's unique features including location, staffing, and class demographics. Description of "pure" program model includes key historical influences accurately.	**Engaging in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice.** Descriptions include details that identify the program including location, staffing, and class demographics. Description of pure models and other philosophies include historical influences.	**Engaging in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice.** Some details are provided about the programs but not enough to distinguish one from another. Description pure model and other philosophies does not include important details.

Environment NAEYC Standard 1.a	**Knowing and understanding young children's characteristics and needs.** Applied and provided a detailed description of how the environment supports child development within the unique philosophy of the setting. Identified differences and similarities of the environment and the impact this has on development.	**Knowing and understanding young children's characteristics and needs.** Applied the philosophy in a meaningful way, identifying the importance the environment has on children's development and learning. Identified some similarities and differences of experiences children were engaging in.	**Knowing and understanding young children's characteristics and needs.** Introduced some of the ways the environment needs to be modified to the philosophy but not the impact this has on learning. Information wasn't clearly connected to development.
NAEYC Standard 1.b.	**Knowing and understanding the multiple influences on children's development and learning.** Learner identifies environmental characteristics that may be common with other programs but also identifies characteristics unique to the program models visited. The impact environment has on children's learning and development is identified in details provided.	**Knowing and understanding the multiple influences on children's development and learning.** Learner identifies environmental characteristics of both programs but fails to make comparisons or contrasts clearly. Environmental characteristics must include classroom materials, physical movement, sensory stimulation, fresh air, rest and nourishment.	**Knowing and understanding the multiple influences on children's development and learning.** Learner identifies limited environmental characteristics of each program or only highlights one program's elements.
Relationships NAEYC Standard 4.a	**Understanding positive relationships and supportive interactions as the foundation of their work with young children.** Candidates demonstrated the impact pure models and other philosophies have on interactions through details that include references to nurturing interactions, communication, and children's individual and cultural characteristics.	**Understanding positive relationships and supportive interactions as the foundation of their work with young children.** Candidates identified some of the ways that pure models and other philosophies have on interactions. Included details about nurturing interactions and communication.	**Understanding positive relationships and supportive interactions as the foundation of their work with young children.** Candidate focused on the individual candidate and / or teacher rather than the relationship. Did not included any reflection about the difference pure models and other philosophies have on interactions.
NAEYC Standard 4.b.	**Knowing, understanding effective strategies and tools for early education.** Descriptions of the pure models and other programs included relevant details of how teachers build relationships with children and families within each program. Relationship building activities or other observations are included as evidence that demonstrates the teachers provided care that is responsive, attentive, consistent, comforting, supportive and culturally and sensitive.	**Knowing, understanding effective strategies and tools for early education.** Descriptions of the pure models and other philosophies included details of how teachers build relationships in each program. Observation notes are not clearly used as evidence that demonstrates the teachers provided care that is responsive and culturally and sensitive.	**Knowing, understanding effective strategies and tools for early education.** Descriptions of the program include information as to how teachers build relationships in each program. This description is not supported by details or evidence for the activities or other observations.

Curriculum NAEYC Standard 1.a	**Knowing and understanding young children's characteristics and needs.** Applied and provided a detailed description of how the pure models and other philosophies support children, including information across all the different developmental domains. Included relevant details about activities, environment, interactions and how the philosophy promotes meeting children's needs.	**Knowing and understanding young children's characteristics and needs.** Identified how the pure models and other philosophies impact curriculum, identifying how the program focuses on what they want children to learn. Included details about activities and how they are connected to the philosophy, as well as some of the materials and supports needed.	**Knowing and understanding young children's characteristics and needs.** Did not identify the impact the philosophy has on learning opportunities. Information wasn't clearly connected to development.
NAEYC Standard 5.a.	**Understanding content knowledge and resources in academic disciplines.** Descriptions of the programs identify specific ways in which the program utilizes curriculum and activities to foster all areas of development. The descriptions clearly and accurately outline at least one way in which each learning domain was addressed during the visit.	**Understanding content knowledge and resources in academic disciplines.** Descriptions of the programs identify specific ways in which the program utilizes curriculum and activities to foster physical, language, social /emotional and cognitive development.	**Understanding content knowledge and resources in academic disciplines.** Descriptions of the programs identify ways in which the program utilizes activities to foster multiple learning domains. Learner fails to support how the activity relates to the specific learning domains.

Comments:

Grading: This assignment includes a possible maximum of 25 points. To factor your total grade you multiply your points by 4 so it equates to the 100 points as noted in the course syllabus.

___ x 4 = ___ (out of 100 pts.)

NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs
A position statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children

Introduction
NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs represents a sustained vision for the early childhood field and more specifically for the programs that prepare the professionals working in the field. This 2009 revision of the standards is responsive to new knowledge, research and conditions while holding true to core values and principles of the founders of the profession. It is designed for use in a variety of ways by different sectors of the field while also supporting specific and critical policy structures, including state and national early childhood teacher credentialing, national accreditation of professional early childhood preparation programs, state approval of early childhood teacher education programs, and articulation agreements between various levels and types of professional development programs.

History
NAEYC has a long-standing commitment to the development and support of strong early childhood degree programs in institutions of higher education. NAEYC standard setting for degree programs in institutions of higher education began more than 25 years ago. This document is the third revision to NAEYC's Early Childhood Teacher Education Guidelines for Four- and Five-Year Programs (1982) and Guidelines for Early Childhood Education Programs in Associate Degree Granting Institutions (1985).

Standards Summary
<u>Standard 1. Promoting Child Development and Learning</u>
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 the multiple interacting influences on children's development and learning to create environments that are healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging for each child.
Key elements of Standard 1
- **1a:** Knowing and understanding young children's characteristics and needs
- **1b:** Knowing and understanding the multiple influences on development and learning
- **1c:** Using developmental knowledge to create healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging learning environments

Supporting explanation
The early childhood field has historically been grounded in a child development knowledge base, and early childhood programs have aimed to support a broad range of positive developmental outcomes for all young children. Although the scope and emphasis of that knowledge base have changed over the years and while early childhood professionals recognize that other sources of knowledge are also important influences on curriculum and programs for young children, early childhood practice continues to be deeply linked with a "sympathetic understanding of the young child" (Elkind 1994).

Well-prepared early childhood degree candidates base their practice on sound **knowledge and**

understanding of young children's characteristics and needs. This foundation encompasses multiple, interrelated areas of children's development and learning—including physical, cognitive, social, emotional, language, and aesthetic domains; play, activity, and learning processes; and motivation to learn—and is supported by coherent theoretical perspectives and by current research.

Candidates also understand and apply their understanding of the **multiple influences on young children's development and learning** and of how those influences may interact to affect development in both positive and negative ways. Those influences include the cultural and linguistic contexts for development, children's close relationships with adults and peers, economic conditions of children and families, children's health status and disabilities individual developmental variations and learning styles, opportunities to play and learn, technology and the media, and family and community characteristics. Candidates also understand the potential influence of early childhood programs, including early intervention, on short- and long-term outcomes for children.

Candidates' competence is demonstrated in their ability to **use developmental knowledge to create healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging learning environments** for all young children (including curriculum, interactions, teaching practices, and learning materials).

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.

Key elements of Standard 2

- **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 their children's development and learning

Supporting explanation

Because young children's lives are so embedded in their families and communities and research indicates that successful early childhood education depends upon partnerships with families and communities, early childhood professionals need to thoroughly understand and apply their knowledge in this area.

First, well-prepared candidates possess **knowledge and understanding of diverse family and community characteristics** and of the many influences on families and communities. Family theory and research provide a knowledge base. Socioeconomic conditions; family structures, relationships, stresses, and supports (including the impact of having a child with special needs); home language; cultural values; ethnicity; community resources, cohesiveness, and organization—knowledge of these and other factors creates a deeper understanding of young children's lives. This knowledge is critical to the candidates' ability to help children learn and develop well.

Second, candidates possess the knowledge and skills needed to **support and engage diverse**

families through respectful, reciprocal relationships. Candidates understand how to build positive relationships, taking families' preferences and goals into account and incorporating knowledge of families' languages and cultures. Candidates demonstrate respect for variations across cultures in family strengths, expectations, values, and childrearing practices. Candidates consider family members to be resources for insight into their children, as well as resources for curriculum and program development. Candidates know about and demonstrate a variety of communication skills to foster such relationships, emphasizing informal conversations while also including appropriate uses of conferencing and technology to share children's work and to communicate with families.

Finally, well-prepared candidates possess essential skills to **involve families and communities in many aspects of children's development and learning.** They understand and value the role of parents and other important family members as children's primary teachers. Candidates understand how to go beyond parent conferences to engage families in curriculum planning, assessing children's learning, and planning for children's transitions to new programs. When their approaches to family involvement are not effective, candidates evaluate and modify those approaches rather than assuming that families "are just not interested."

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.

Key elements of Standard 3

- **3a:** Understanding the goals, benefits, and uses of assessment
- **3b:** Knowing about and using observation, documentation, and other appropriate assessment tools and approaches
- **3c:** Understanding and practicing responsible assessment to promote positive outcomes for each child
- **3d:** Knowing about assessment partnerships with families and with professional colleagues

Supporting explanation

Although definitions vary, in these standards the term *assessment* includes all methods through which early childhood professionals gain understanding of children's development and learning. Ongoing, systematic observations and other informal and formal assessments are essential for candidates to appreciate children's unique qualities, to develop appropriate goals, and to plan, implement, and evaluate effective curriculum. Although assessment may take many forms, early childhood candidates demonstrate its central role by embedding assessment-related activities in curriculum and daily routines so that assessment becomes a habitual part of professional life.

Well-prepared early childhood candidates can explain the central **goals, benefits, and uses of assessment.** In considering the goals of assessment, candidates articulate and apply the concept of *alignment*—good assessment is consistent with and connected to appropriate goals,

curriculum, and teaching strategies for young children. The candidates know how to use assessment as a positive tool that supports children's development and learning and improves outcomes for young children and families. Candidates are able to explain positive uses of assessment and exemplify these in their own work, while also showing an awareness of the potentially negative uses of assessment in early childhood programs and policies.

Many aspects of effective assessment require collaboration with families and with other professionals. Through **partnerships with families and with professional colleagues**, candidates use positive assessment to identify the strengths of families and children. Through appropriate screening and referral, assessment may also result in identifying children who may benefit from special services. Both family members and, as appropriate, members of inter-professional teams may be involved in assessing children's development, strengths, and needs. As new practitioners, candidates may have had limited opportunities to experience such partnerships, but they demonstrate essential knowledge and core skills in team building and in communicating with families and colleagues from other disciplines.

Early childhood assessment includes **observation and documentation and other appropriate assessment strategies.** Effective teaching of young children begins with thoughtful, appreciative, systematic observation and documentation of each child's unique qualities, strengths, and needs. Observation gives insight into how young children develop and how they respond to opportunities and obstacles in their lives. Observing young children in classrooms, homes, and communities helps candidates develop a broad sense of who children are- as individuals, as group members, as family members, as members of cultural and linguistic communities. Candidates demonstrate skills in conducting systematic observations, interpreting those observations, and reflecting on their significance. Because spontaneous *play* is such a powerful window on all aspects of children's development, well-prepared candidates create opportunities to observe children in playful situations as well as in more formal learning contexts.

Although assessment can be a positive tool for early childhood professionals, it has also been used in inappropriate and harmful ways. Well-prepared candidates understand and practice **responsible assessment.** Candidates understand that responsible assessment is ethically grounded and guided by sound professional standards. It is collaborative and open. Responsible assessment supports children, rather than being used to exclude them or deny them services. Candidates demonstrate understanding of appropriate, responsible assessment practices for culturally and linguistically diverse children and for children with developmental delays, disabilities, or other special characteristics. Finally, candidates demonstrate knowledge of legal and ethical issues, current educational concerns and controversies, and appropriate practices in the assessment of diverse young children.

Standard 4. Using Developmentally Effective Approaches to Connect with Children and Families

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.

Key elements of Standard 4

- **4a:** Understanding positive relationships and supportive interactions as the foundation of their work with children
- **4b:** Knowing and understanding effective strategies and tools for early education
- **4c:** Using a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate teaching/learning approaches
- **4d**: Reflecting on their own practice to promote positive outcomes for each child

Supporting explanation

Early childhood candidates demonstrate that they understand the theories and research that support **the importance of relationships and high-quality interactions in early education**. In their practice, they display warm, nurturing interactions with each child, communicating genuine liking for and interest in young children's activities and characteristics. Throughout the years that children spend in early childhood settings, their successful learning is dependent not just on instruction but also on personal connections with important adults. Through these connections children develop not only academic skills but also positive learning dispositions and confidence in themselves as learners. Responsive teaching creates the conditions within which very young children can explore and learn about their world. The close attachments children develop with their teachers/caregivers, the expectations and beliefs that adults have about young children's capacities, and the warmth and responsiveness of adult-child interactions are powerful influences on positive developmental and educational outcomes. How children expect to be treated and how they treat others are significantly shaped in the early childhood setting. Candidates in early childhood programs develop the capacity to build a caring community of learners in the early childhood setting.

Early childhood professionals need **a broad repertoire of effective strategies and tools** to help young children learn and develop well. Candidates must ground their curriculum in a set of core approaches to teaching that are supported by research and are closely linked to the processes of early development and learning. In a sense, those approaches *are* the curriculum for infants and toddlers, although academic content can certainly be embedded in each of them. Well-prepared early childhood professionals make purposeful use of various learning formats based on their understanding of children as individuals and as part of a group, and on alignment with important educational and developmental goals. A flexible, research-based **repertoire of teaching/learning approaches to promote young children's development** includes: 1)Fostering oral language and communication, 2) Drawing from a continuum of teaching strategies, 3) Making the most of the environment, schedule, and routines, 4) Setting up all aspects of the indoor and outdoor environment, 5) Focusing on children's individual characteristics, needs, and interests, 6) Linking children's language and culture to the early childhood program, 7) Teaching through social interactions, 8) Creating support for play, 9) Addressing children's challenging behaviors, 10) Supporting learning through technology, and 11) Using integrative approaches to curriculum. All of these teaching approaches are effective across the early childhood age span.

Early childhood professionals make decisions about their practice based on expertise. They make professional judgments through each day based on knowledge of child development and

learning, individual children, and the social and cultural contexts in which children live. From this knowledge base, effective teachers design activities, routines, interactions and curriculum for specific children and groups of children. They consider both what to teach and how to teach, developing the habit of **reflective, responsive and intentional practice** to promote positive outcomes for each child.

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 an 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 curricula that promote comprehensive developmental and learning outcomes for every young child.

Key elements of Standard 5

- **5a:** Understanding content knowledge and resources in academic disciplines
- **5b:** Knowing and using the central concepts, inquiry tools, and structures of content areas or academic disciplines
- **5c:** Using their own knowledge, appropriate early learning standards, and other resources to design, implement, and evaluate meaningful, challenging curricula for each child.

Supporting explanation

Strong, effective early childhood curricula do not come out of a box or a teacher-proof manual. Early childhood professionals have an especially challenging task in developing effective curricula. As suggested in Standard 1, well-prepared candidates ground their practice in a thorough, research-based understanding of young children's development and learning processes. In developing curriculum, they recognize that every child constructs knowledge in personally and culturally familiar ways. In addition, in order to make curriculum powerful and accessible to all, well-prepared candidates develop curriculum that is free of biases related to ethnicity, religion, gender, or ability status—and, in fact, the curriculum actively counters such biases.

The teacher of children from birth through age 8 must be well versed in **the essential content knowledge and resources in many academic disciplines**. Because children are encountering those content areas for the first time, early childhood professionals set the foundations for later understanding and success. Going beyond conveying isolated facts, well-prepared early childhood candidates possess the kind of content knowledge that focuses on the "big ideas," methods of investigation and expression, and organization of the major academic disciplines. Thus, the early childhood professional knows not only *what* is important in each content area but also *why* it is important—how it links with earlier and later understandings both within and across areas.

Teachers of young children demonstrate the understanding of **central concepts, inquiry tools, and structure of content areas** needed to provide appropriate environments that support

learning in each content area for all children, beginning in infancy (through foundational developmental experiences) and extending through the primary grades. Candidates demonstrate basic knowledge of the research base underlying each content area and of the core concepts and standards of professional organizations in each content area. They rely on sound resources for that knowledge. Finally, candidates demonstrate that they can analyze and critique early childhood curriculum experiences in terms of the relationship of the experiences to the research base and to professional standards.

Well-prepared candidates choose their approaches to the task depending on the ages and developmental levels of the children they teach. They use their own **knowledge, appropriate early learning standards, and other resources to design, implement, and evaluate meaningful, challenging curriculum for each child.** With the youngest children, early childhood candidates emphasize the key experiences that will support later academic skills and understandings—with reliance on the core approaches and strategies described in sub-standard 4b and with emphasis on oral language and the development of children's background knowledge. Working with somewhat older or more skilled children, candidates also identify those aspects of each subject area that are critical to children's later academic competence. With all children, early childhood professionals support later success by modeling engagement in challenging subject matter and by building children's faith in themselves as young learners—young mathematicians, scientists, artists, readers, writers, historians, economists, and geographers (although children may not think of themselves in such categories). Designing, implementing, and evaluating meaningful, challenging curriculum requires alignment with appropriate early learning standards and knowledgeable use of the discipline's resources to focus on key experiences for each age group and each individual child.

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.

Key elements of Standard 6

- **6a:** Identifying and involving oneself with the early childhood field
- **6b:** Knowing about and upholding ethical standards and other professional guidelines
- **6c:** Engaging in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice
- **6d:** Integrating knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives on early education
- **6e:** Engaging in informed advocacy for children and the profession

The early childhood field has a distinctive history, values, knowledge base, and mission. Early childhood professionals, including beginning teachers, have a strong **identification and involvement with the early childhood field** to better serve young children and their families. Well-prepared candidates understand the nature of a profession. They know about the many connections between the early childhood field and other related disciplines and professions

with which they may collaborate while serving diverse young children and families. Candidates are also aware of the broader contexts and challenges within which early childhood professionals work. They consider current issues and trends that might affect their work in the future.

Because young children are at such a critical point in their development and learning, and because they are vulnerable and cannot articulate their own rights and needs, early childhood professionals have compelling responsibilities to **know about and uphold ethical guidelines and other professionals.** Well prepared candidates are very familiar with the NAEYC's Code of Ethical Conduct and are guided by its ideals and principles. This means honoring their responsibilities to uphold high standards of confidentiality, sensitivity, and respect for children, families, and colleagues. Candidates know how to use the Code to analyze and resolve professional ethical dilemmas and are able to give defensible justifications for their resolutions of those dilemmas. Well-prepared candidates also know and obey relevant laws, such as those pertaining to child abuse, the rights of children with disabilities, and school attendance. Finally, candidates are familiar with relevant professional guidelines, such as national, state, or local standards for content and child outcomes; position statements about, for example, early learning standards, linguistic and cultural diversity, early childhood mathematics, technology in early childhood, prevention of child abuse, child care licensing requirements, and other profes-sional standards affecting early childhood practice.

Continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice is a hallmark of a professional in any field. An attitude of inquiry is evident in well-prepared candidates' writing, discussion, and actions. Whether engaging in classroom-based research, investigating ways to improve their own practices, participating in conferences, or finding resources in libraries and on Internet sites, candidates demonstrate self-motivated, purposeful learning that directly influences the quality of their work with young children. Candidates—and professional preparation programs—view graduation or licensure not as the final demonstration of competence but as one milestone among many, including professional development experiences before and beyond successful degree completion.

Well-prepared candidates' practice is influenced by **knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives.** As professionals, early childhood candidates' decisions and advocacy efforts are grounded in multiple sources of knowledge and multiple perspectives. Even routine decisions about what materials to use for an activity, whether to intervene in a dispute between two children, how to organize nap time, what to say about curriculum in a newsletter, or what to tell families about new video games are informed by a professional context, research-based knowledge, and values. In their work with young children, candidates show that they make and justify decisions on the basis of their *knowledge* of the central issues, professional values and standards, and research findings in their field. They also show evidence of *reflective approaches* to their work, analyzing their own practices in a broader context, and using reflections to modify and improve their work with young children. Finally, well-prepared candidates display a *critical stance*, examining their own work, sources of professional knowledge, and the early childhood field with a questioning attitude. Their work demonstrates that they do not just accept a simplistic source of truth; instead, they recognize that while early childhood educators share the same core professional values, they do not agree on all of the field's central questions.

Finally, early childhood candidates demonstrate that they can engage in **informed advocacy for children and families and the profession.** They know about the central policy issues in the field, including professional compensation, financing of the early education system, and standards setting and assessment. They are aware of and engaged in examining ethical issues and societal concerns about program quality and provision of early childhood services and the implications of those issues for advocacy and policy change. Candidates have a basic understanding of how public policies are developed, and they demonstrate essential advocacy skills, including verbal and written communication and collaboration with others around common issues.

1) SELF-ASSESSMENT AND SELF-ADVOCACY

Associate degree candidates are often at a key decision point in their professional lives, entering or reentering higher education after extended work experiences or making decisions about further education beyond the associate degree. Therefore, skills in assessing one's own goals, strengths, and needs are critical, as is learning how to advocate for one's own professional needs.

Evidence of growth: Candidates' growth in these skills may be seen in assessments of changes over time and in the actual professional decisions made by candidates as they move through the program and beyond.

Indicators of strength:
- Candidates assess their own goals, strengths, and needs.
- Candidates know how to advocate for their own professional needs.

2) MASTERING AND APPLYING FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS FROM GENERAL EDUCATION

General education has value for its own sake—as part of the background of an educated person—and for the value added to practitioners' ability to implement a conceptually rich curriculum. Both in immediate employment as an early childhood professional and in preparing for further baccalaureate study, associate degree graduates are enriched by understanding foundational concepts from areas including science, mathematics, literature, and the behavioral and social sciences.

Evidence of growth: Candidates' acquisition of these skills may be seen, for example, in their successful mastery of general education objectives, in their written and oral rationales for activities, and in ratings of the conceptual accuracy and richness of their curriculum plans.

Indicators of strength:
- Candidates understand foundational concepts from areas such as science, mathematics, literature, and the behavioral and social sciences.
- Candidates can apply these concepts in their work as early childhood professionals.

3) WRITTEN AND VERBAL COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS

Well-prepared associate degree graduates have strong skills in written and verbal communication. These skills allow them to provide positive language and literacy experiences for children, and they also support professional communications with families and colleagues. Candidates going on to baccalaureate study need skills sufficient to ensure success in upper-division academic work. In addition, technological literacy is an essential component of this set of skills.

Evidence of growth: Candidates' mastery of these skills may be seen, for example, in successful completion of relevant courses, performance on communication and technological aspects of assignments, and competent use of communication skills in field experiences.

Indicators of strength:
- Candidates have effective skills in written and verbal communication.
- Candidates are technologically literate.

4) MAKING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PRIOR KNOWLEDGE/EXPERIENCE AND NEW LEARNING

All professionals need these skills, but they are especially important in supporting the learning of associate degree candidates who have worked for years in early care and education. Well prepared associate degree graduates are able to respect and draw upon their past or current work experience and also reflect critically upon it, enriching and altering prior knowledge with new insights. These skills will, over time, enable graduates to respond to the evolving mandates and priorities of the early childhood field.

Evidence of growth: Progress in making productive connections may be seen in candidates' growing ability to articulate relevant theory and research that either affirms or calls into question their experience—often seen in journals and portfolios, but also in interviews and presentations.

Indicators of strength:
- Candidates respect and draw upon their past or current work experience.
- Candidates are able to reflect critically upon their experience.

5) IDENTIFYING AND USING PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES

Even the best associate program cannot provide in-depth knowledge and skills in all areas. Therefore, well-prepared graduates should know how to identify and use credible professional resources from multiple sources, allowing them to better serve children and families with a wide range of cultures, languages, needs, and abilities.

Evidence of growth: Candidates' growth in this area may be evidenced, for example, by portfolio artifacts, resources used in lesson plans or other field assignments, or in class presentations.

Indicators of strength:

- Candidates know how to identify and use credible professional resources from multiple sources.
- Candidates use these resources to better serve children and families with a wide range of cultures, languages, needs, and abilities.