

Early Childhood Education (MA)

This program is offered by the School of Education, and is only available at the St. Louis home campus.

Program Description

Candidates pursuing the MA in early childhood education engage in observation and documentation to research children's learning processes and analyze them in light of developmental theory, current research, best practices, and historical and social contexts. This kind of action research informs curriculum decisions and program improvement.

International perspectives on young children and early childhood education are explored, with in-depth study of the internationally acclaimed early childhood education programs and philosophy of Reggio Emilia, Italy. Central to this philosophy are a strong image of the capabilities of young children; support for integrative, inquiry based and collaborative learning; participation of families and community; the use of observation and documentation to inform curriculum planning and reflective learning with children; and quality learning environments.

Learning Outcomes

The goals of the MA in early childhood education are to cultivate graduates who:

1. Develop and refine the skills and concepts of collaborative action research in the process of assessing and making learning visible.
2. Develop understanding of cross-cultural and international perspectives on early learning and education to inform responsive teaching and learning.
3. Explore and formulate general criteria and contexts for quality learning environments and materials for young children.
4. Analyze the relationship between social constructivist principles and practices and standards-based curriculum and assessment.
5. Integrate content learning through inquiry based curriculum and collaborative learning experiences.

Requirements

The 33 credit hours for the MA in early childhood education must include the following courses:

Core Course Requirements (24 hours)

- ECED 5470 Observation, Documentation and Analysis in Early Childhood Education (3 hours)
- ECED 5510 Understanding and Supporting Children's Thinking (3 hours)
- ECED 5670 Social Intelligence and Relationships: The Foundations for Learning (3 hours)
- ECED 5750 Negotiated Learning: The Reggio Approach to Early Education (3 hours)
- ECED 5820 Creating Learning Environments (3 hours)
- ECED 5860 Cross-Cultural Perspectives in Early Childhood (3 hours)
- ECED 5870 Valuing the Expressive Languages in Education (3 hours)
- ECED 5800 Applied Research (3 hours)

Electives (9 hours)

Students may choose from the list below or select other appropriate course options, with advisor approval:

- COMM 5830 Emergent Literacy (3 hours)
- COMM 5910 Investigations in Reading: Primary (3 hours)
- ECED 5480 Math Methods for the Young Child (3 hours)

- ECED 5740 Inquiry Learning in Early Childhood (3 hours)
- ECED 5830 Topics in Early Learning (3 hours)
- ECED 5840 Issues in Parenting (3 hours)
- ECED 5830 Topics in Early Learning: The Young Child as Naturalist (3 hours)
- ECED 5760 Fundamentals of the Reggio Approach Study Tour (3 hours)

Total: 33 hours

Optional Emphasis Area

Students who wish to pursue a special emphasis area in inclusive education, in addition to their degree program, may pursue the following program. This is an option available to those who have a special interest in inclusive education.

Emphasis in Inclusive Education

The emphasis in inclusive education is designed to provide classroom teachers and regular and special educators at the pre-primary, elementary and secondary levels with the knowledge base, practical applications and strategies necessary for implementing a successful inclusive education program appropriate to the diverse needs of students in today's regular classroom.

This emphasis will enable practicing teachers to investigate issues and examine strategies that relate to the education of all students, regardless of ability, in their local school. In addition to the 24 required early childhood credit hours, students must complete at least 9 credit hours of appropriate coursework related to inclusive education.

The following two courses are required for the area of emphasis in inclusive education:

- EDUC 5080 Planning for the Inclusive Classroom (3 hours)
- SPED 5381 Methods for Teaching Students with Mild/Moderate Disabilities (3 hours)

In addition, students select one course from the following courses:

- SPED 5250 Behavior Management for Children with Special Needs (3 hours)
- SPED 5260 Career Preparation for Students with Special Needs (3 hours)
- SPED 5270 Advocating for Persons with Disabilities (3 hours)
- SPED 5290 Collaborative Practices for the 21st Century Classroom (3 hours)
- SPED 5300 Communicating with Families and Disabled Persons (3 hours)
- SPED 5330 Legal Issues in Special Education (3 hours)
- ECED 5830 Topics in Early Learning: Assessment for Intervention of Infants and Young Children (3 hours)
- ECED 5830 Topics in Early Learning: Early Childhood Special Education Curriculum (3 hours)

Admission

Students who are interested in applying to this degree program should also see the Admission Section of this catalog for general requirements.

Admission Requirements

- Receipt of official transcripts from an accredited baccalaureate-granting institution.
- A baccalaureate degree in early childhood education or a related field, or early childhood education certification.

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Individuals who do not meet these criteria may be interested in our MAT in early childhood education.

- Cumulative undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or higher.
- Essay: What motivated you to become an early childhood educator? Based on the School of Education's mission statement, the early childhood education program description and candidate learning outcomes, how do you think your participation in this program will help you to accomplish your personal and professional goals?

Send all admissions materials to:

Office of Admission
Webster University
470 East Lockwood Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63119

Completed application files will be reviewed by the Graduate Department of Education.

Advancement to Candidacy

Automatic advancement to candidacy based on 12 credit hours of 3.0 GPA graduate level ECED courses.