STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY
CANTON, NEW YORK

MASTER SYLLABUS

ECHD 301: Fostering Relationships in Early Childhood Programs

CIP Code: 13.1210

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Business and Liberal Arts
Social Sciences Department
Spring 2026

A. **TITLE**: Fostering Relationships in Early Childhood Programs

B. **COURSE NUMBER:** ECHD 301

C. **CREDIT HOURS:** 3 lecture hours per week for 15 weeks

D. **WRITING INTENSIVE COURSE**: No

E. **GER CATEGORY:** None

F. **SEMESTER(S) OFFERED:** Spring

G. **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course examines the importance of establishing partnerships between early childhood educators and families. Students will explore strategies to foster connections with families and promote inclusive practices. Topics include classroom community building, family engagement, communication, and the importance of creating and maintaining reciprocal and respectful relationships with families. Students will examine the educator's role in supporting families understanding of child development, play-based curriculum, and practices that promote a collaborative and supportive environment for all involved in the care and education of young children.

H. **PRE-REQUISITES/CO-REQUISITES:**

a. Pre-requisite(s): ECHD 101, Early Childhood Major (1327), Early Childhood Management Major (2699), Early Childhood Studies Minor, or permission of instructor

b. Co-requisite(s): None

I. **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

PLO 2: Understand the sequence of typical milestones of development for children from infancy - 5 years in all developmental domains: cognitive, physical, language/communication, social/emotional, and self-help.		
Course Student Learning Outcomes [SLO]	**PLO**	**ISLO**
a. Examine the significance of strong family-school partnerships in early care and education settings, and their impact on parents, teachers, and young children.	2	4 IK
b. Identify and apply effective communication strategies and tools for establishing and maintaining collaborative, inclusive, and supportive relationships between educators and families within early childhood settings.	2	4 IK
c. Support families in understanding child development, play-based learning, and developmentally appropriate expectations to strengthen home-school connections and foster a shared commitment to children's growth.	2	4 IK
d. Examine the diverse structures, values, and needs of families and apply family-centered, inclusive practices that foster respectful, reciprocal relationships and support meaningful family engagement.	2	4 IK
ISLO 4: The category of social responsibility requires students to demonstrate an understanding of cultural relations and global concerns. Students should demonstrate cultural sensitivity and global concerns with an emphasis on ethical standards. IK Students demonstrate knowledge that supports effective and appropriate sensitivity to and interaction in a variety of cultural contexts.		

J. **APPLIED LEARNING COMPONENT:** Yes: Classroom/Lab

K. **TEXT:** To be determined by instructor

L. **REFERENCES:**

Gestwicki, C. (2019). *Home, school, and community relations* (9th ed.). Cengage Learning.

Laff, R., & Ruiz, A. (2020). *Child, family, and community*. LibreTexts. https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Early_Childhood_Education/Child_Family_and_Community_(Laff_and_Ruiz)

Gonzalez-Mena, J. (2013). *Child, Family, and Community: Family-Centered Early Care and Education* (6th ed.). Pearson.

Howell, J. and Reinhard, K. (2015). *Rituals and traditions: Fostering a sense of community in preschool.* Washington, DC: NAEYC

Stonehouse, A. (2003). *How does it feel? Childcare from a parent's perspective*. Redmond, WA: Child Care Information Exchange

M. **EQUIPMENT:** University-supplied equipment / Learning Management System

N. **GRADING METHOD:** A-F

O. **SUGGESTED MEASUREMENT CRITERIA/METHODS**

- Assignments
- Discussions
- Assessments
- Final

P. **DETAILED COURSE OUTLINE:**

I. Introduction to Family Partnerships in Early Childhood Education
   a. The importance of teacher-family collaboration

II. Building a Classroom Community
   a. Creating welcoming environment
   b. Establishing trust and respect

III. Understanding Family Diversity
   a. Family structures, cultures, and values
   b. Bias, equity, and inclusion

IV. Effective Communication Strategies
   a. Active listening
   b. Verbal and non-verbal communication
   c. Culturally responsive communication

V. Family Engagement vs. Involvement
   a. Defining and differentiating
   b. Benefits and examples

VI. Creating Reciprocal Relationships
   a. Two-way communication
   b. Shared decision-making

VII. Supporting Families in Understanding Child Development
   a. Milestones
   b. Developmental domains

VIII. Play-Based Curriculum & Family Understanding
   a. Explaining play-based learning to families
   b. Involving families in play

IX. Setting Appropriate Expectations
   a. Guiding behavior
   b. Developmentally appropriate practices

X. Home-School Connections
   a. Newsletters, home visits, parent-teacher conferences

XI. Collaborating with Families During Transitions
   a. School readiness
   b. Supporting change and continuity

XII. Community Resources and Family Support
   a. Connecting families with services
   b. Advocacy

XIII. Challenges in Family Engagement
   a. Addressing conflict
   b. Time, access, and communication barriers

XIV. Planning Family Involvement Activities
   a. Events, workshops, and classroom participation