

ECHD 201 Early Childhood Field Experience



ECHD 201 is a 4-credit, off-campus field experience. Students' placement options for such experiences include state licensed group childcare programs [home-based or large center], Head Start, pre-k, or kindergarten classrooms, or industry-specific settings [children's museum, library, play-based enrichment program, etc.]

Students are required to complete an 80-hour field experience working directly with children ages birth –5 years. Under the direct supervision of an assigned mentor, students will apply knowledge and skills acquired through coursework with a focus on child observation, development, and implementation of age-appropriate curriculum plans and activities.

To ensure the Early Childhood Field Experiences are objective and the placement relationship does not promote a conflict of interest, the following is prohibited:

- Placement in a student's family-owned business or organization.
- Direct supervision by a relative or close friend.
- Placement with an organization/business/individual in which a previous or current relationship exists beyond acquaintance. (Examples of such relationships include a current or former employer; or prior practicum placement).
- Any placement that does not fit any of the categories above but is deemed by the Field Experience Coordinator, Department Chair, and Dean to be subjective (there exists too close of a relationship for the student to derive a meaningful and new learning experience).

We recognize that many students work full or part-time in the field of early care and education and cannot leave their place of employment to fulfill the requirements of *ECHD 201 Early Childhood Field Experience*. We are committed to working individually with students to determine the best alternative option which includes, but is not limited to:

1. **Prior Learning Credit Request** [requires submission of application and \$40 per credit charge]
2. **Course Substitution** [ECHD designated program elective]
3. **General Elective** Course [mutually agreed upon by academic advisor and student, must apply toward degree / major]

If a student has no prior experience in the field of Early Care and Education completion of the 4-credit *ECHD 201 Early Childhood Field Experience* course is required. When seeking employment in the field, it is critical a graduate have direct experiences in the field of early care and education to obtain gainful employment.

Alternative options as outlined above, will be discussed in detail in the required 1-credit course, *ECHD 105 Orientation Early Childhood Field Experience* and confirmed by the student and Field Experience Coordinator. Alternative options must be formally requested, in writing, with a rationale for seeking the alternative option, a letter of support from a direct supervisor, and evidence of employment in a licensed childcare center or state Department of Education Early Childhood Program. Minimum 20-hours direct classroom experience required.