

# Elmhurst College

## Masters (M.Ed.) in Early Childhood Special Education

### OVERVIEW

#### PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY:

The Early Childhood Special Education M.Ed. Program's design is centered around three core principles:

- Quality learning occurs best within the context of caring relationships.
- Self-reflection and self-knowledge are important professional competencies needed to successfully work with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with disabilities and their families.
- Forming collaborative partnerships with families is central to working with young children with special needs.

The philosophy of family-centered care is at the heart of our graduate program. Because young children with special needs (like all children) develop within families, understanding and supporting their families is as important as understanding and supporting the children themselves. The program has several unique features that grow directly out of this program philosophy.

#### UNIQUE PROGRAM FEATURES

##### **The Family Involvement Specialist**

To ensure the participation of a family voice in program development, our faculty includes a family involvement specialist- the parent of a child with a disability. This specialist plans courses, co-teaches classes with faculty and supervises students in their work with families in our Family Mentor Program.

##### **The Family Mentor Program**

This program creates a dynamic learning partnership between families and graduate students. Each student is linked with two family mentors who engage them in a set of specific learning tasks that correspond with graduate course work. Linking students directly with families as partners to learning encourages students to integrate a family-centered philosophy into their work.

## PROGRAM GOALS

The Early Childhood Special Education M.Ed. program is interdisciplinary in nature and designed to prepare students to work with young children with disabilities and their families in a variety of settings. The program integrates course work and field experiences and is informed by the College's commitment to provide relationship-based learning experiences to graduate students. There are five specific program goals. Upon completion of the Early Childhood Special Education Masters Degree students will be able to:

1. Apply knowledge, skills and attitudes that reflect best practice in early intervention and early childhood special education settings;
2. Acquire and use new information through review and synthesis of current research, methodology, technology and materials;
3. Deliver early intervention services to infants and toddlers with special needs and their families within an environment that facilitates both the child's and families development to the maximum extent possible;
4. Provide an early childhood special education classroom environment, a developmentally and individually appropriate curriculum, and a teaching methodology that is based on the knowledge of individual children, the family and the community;
5. Use effective communication and interpersonal skills, cooperate and collaborate with families, professionals, public schools, and other agencies and groups in order to provide appropriate educational programs and services for each child.

## PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The Masters in Early Childhood Special Education requires a total of 37 semester hours. This is a part-time program with classes meeting two evenings a week. The program requires a minimum two year commitment to graduate study and involves daytime commitments for observations, field experiences, internships and student teaching. A flexible schedule will be necessary to meet the curricular demands. In addition to course work, all students will be responsible for completing the following:

1. Hands-on field experiences (160 total) working in early intervention programs, early childhood special education classrooms, and with families;
2. An 8 week full time internship in an early intervention B-3 program working directly with infants, toddlers with disabilities and their families;
3. An 8 week full time student teaching experience in an early childhood special education classroom;

4. An Action Research Project which is developed in collaboration with cooperating professionals in the field during the B-3 EI Internship or the ECSE student teaching experience;

5. A Professional / Program Portfolio that is a collection of a student's personal and professional artifacts /work samples that link back to the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards in Early Childhood Special Education.

#### **Optional Type 04 Certification Requirements:**

Students who do not already have Type 04 teaching certification can elect to obtain an initial Illinois Type 04 early childhood teaching certification with early childhood special education approval through this graduate program. This certification enables you to teach in the public schools in the following levels: pre-kindergarten "at risk" programs, early childhood special education programs for preschoolers 3-5 years of age, and kindergarten-through grade 3. The certification option requires additional course work that is not included in the ECSE Masters Program and also requires an additional 8 weeks of student teaching in a typical primary K-2 classroom. Three state certification tests will need to be taken and passed to obtain an Illinois teaching certification: The Basic Skills Test, (#300), the Content Area Exams in Early Childhood (# 107) and the Early Childhood APT Test (#101).

#### **PROGRAM DIRECTOR:**

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College website: <http://www.elmhurst.edu>

## Elmhurst College's Early Childhood Special Education Graduate Program Curriculum

### **Fall Term Year I**

- MEC 500 *History and Theory of Early Childhood Education, Early Intervention, and Early Childhood Special Education* (3 hrs)
- MEC 502 *Early Childhood Speech and Language Development* (3 hrs)
- MEC 525 *Field Experience in Early Intervention* (1 hr)

### **January Term Year I**

- MEC 505 *Typical and Atypical Development of Infants and Toddlers* (2 hrs)
- MEC 511 *Working with Families of Infants and Toddlers with Special Needs* (1 hrs)

### **Spring Term Year I**

- MEC 515 *Observation and Assessment of infants and Toddlers* (3 hrs)
- MEC 520 *Early intervention Methods and Team Practices* (3 hrs)
- MEC 525 *Field Experience in Early Intervention (8 session Seminar)* (1 hr)

**(ECE 301 is taken here for those seeking 04 certification and triple dipping) (4 hrs)**

### **Summer Year I**

- MEC 550 *Typical and Atypical Development of Preschoolers and Primary Children* (2 hrs)
- MEC 555 *Child, Family, and Community Relationships* (2 hrs)

**(EED 314 is taken here for those seeking 04 certification and triple dipping) (4 hrs)**  
**(Early Intervention Internship begins part time 2 days weekly for students seeking Type 04 certification and who are triple dipping)**

### **Fall Term Year II**

- MEC 560 *Observation and Assessment of Young Children with Special Needs* (3 hrs)
- MEC 565 *Early Childhood Special Education Methods and Team Practices* (3 hrs)
- MEC 526 *Field Experience in Early Childhood Special Education (8 session Seminar)* (1 hr)

**(ECE 308 is taken here for those seeking 04 certification and triple dipping) (4 hrs)**  
**(Early Intervention Internship continues part time 2 days weekly for students seeking Type 04 certification and who are triple dipping)**

### **January Term Year II**

- MEC 590 *Research Methods for Early Childhood Educators* (2 hrs)
- MEC 595 *Statistics* (1 hr)

**Spring Term II**

- MEC 540 *Practicum and Seminar in Early Intervention (8 weeks of clinical practicum at an Early Intervention Program) (1 hr)*
- MEC 570 *Practicum and Seminar in Early Childhood Special Education (8 wks) (6 hrs)*
- MEC 570 *Practicum and seminar in K-2 occurs here for students triple dipping (8 wks) (6 hrs)*
- An 8 session clinical on campus seminar is held along with the clinical practicum semester.
- An Action Research Project is completed during the Spring Term Year II