

Early Childhood Education

Program

Early Childhood Education

Degree Type

Associate in Science

Upon successful completion of this degree, graduates receive an Associate in Science in Early Childhood Education (ECE).

As a field of study, ECE is growing and changing rapidly. At WMCC, the ECE program is responding to the educational and programmatic needs of New Hampshire's youngest citizens. With an increasing demand for family childcare providers, associate and lead teachers in preschools, educational assistants in classrooms, and early intervention specialists and directors of childcare centers, the need for well-qualified early childhood professionals has never been greater.

WMCC's ECE program prides itself on the most effective and innovative methods for teaching and learning. Within the ECE curriculum, students interact with teaching mentors, engage in peer teaching, and work directly with children and families. They observe, document, and assess their own learning, while doing likewise for the children with whom they work. They become adept at both traditional and non-traditional teaching methods, confident and willing to take initiative.

This associate degree provides many avenues for growth. Students are challenged in ways that foster a joy for learning. The curriculum is performance based: students build a teaching and learning e-portfolio in compliance with the standards set by both the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the New Hampshire ECE Professional Development System.

Additionally, this ECE degree meets the training and education requirements for the State of New Hampshire Early Childhood Teacher Credential Level 5. (Refer to the Early Childhood Professional Development System Guide for other criteria related to this level.) Upon graduation, students are prepared for immediate entry into the field as ECE teachers in New Hampshire licensed childcare centers, Head Start programs, nursery schools, family childcare programs, and elementary schools as paraeducators. Graduates may also decide to further their education at four-year colleges or universities.

Early Childhood Education Scholarship Program

The Community College System of New Hampshire partners with the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services to offer tuition assistance to childcare providers who are currently employed in the field of Early Childhood Care and Education. See <https://www.ccsnh.edu/paying-for-college/early-childhood-education-tuition-assistance/>.

Health Considerations

During their learning experiences, ECE students must not jeopardize the safety or health of children or their families. ECE students in internship, externship, practicums, service learning, and clinical experiences must demonstrate sufficient emotional stability to withstand the stresses, uncertainties, and changing circumstances that accompany these responsibilities. Furthermore, ECE students are expected to have the emotional stability to exercise sound judgment and to accept directions and guidance from supervisors or faculty members. They must also be capable of establishing a professional rapport and maintaining sensitive interpersonal relationships and confidentiality with employees, children, and their families.

To participate in WMCC's practicum, students must first submit to background checks and fingerprinting. Prospective students with special needs that may affect their practicum placement and/or potential employment prospects should discuss specific career goals with the Department Chair or Program Coordinator during the admissions process.

Character Expectations

The health and safety of young children are of paramount concern to the ECE program. Prior to employment, applicants for positions in childcare, preschools, and other early childhood programs in New Hampshire must undergo background checks through the New Hampshire Department of Safety. Fingerprinting and criminal records checks are also required. Applicants with a criminal record, depending on the nature of this record, may not be eligible for field experience or employment. Applicants should discuss such matters during an admission interview to avoid confusion.

Technical Standards

Technical standards provide guidance to students about the skills and abilities they need to function successfully in the program and ultimately in the ECE profession. Applicants who suspect they may be unable to meet one or more of the technical standards should contact program faculty members to discuss their concerns. ECE faculty consider all academically qualified candidates, provided that the technical standards can be met with reasonable accommodations. Students in the ECE program must have:

- Sufficient strength, stamina, and motor coordination.
- Sufficient hearing and visual acuity to ensure a safe environment, along with an ability to respond quickly to emergencies.
- Sufficient verbal ability to express and exchange information and ideas, as well as to interpret important instructions to children, colleagues, and parents.
- Sufficient writing skills to record students' daily progress and milestones, and to compose a variety of reports.
- An ability to work with frequent interruptions, to respond appropriately to unexpected situations, and to cope with extreme variations in workload and stress.

Students must submit a health record (including immunizations), provide proof of liability insurance (available to matriculated students through WMCC), and be CPR and First Aid certified.

Additional Information

The cost of the background check and fingerprinting are the responsibility of the student. Both background check and fingerprinting must come back as clear or non-disqualifying. The health form must indicate the student is in good physical health and has no mental or emotional disturbances to ensure the proper care of children. Otherwise, the student will be dismissed from the program.

Failure to complete the required paperwork in a timely manner may result in unexcused absences in the corresponding early childhood classes and could result in course failure or suspension from the ECE program.

ECE courses are offered day and evening, online, as hybrids, and in person.

First Year, Fall Semester

Course Number	Title	Lecture	Lab	Credits
ECE111W	Foundations of Early Childhood Education	3	0	3
ECE112W	Child Growth and Development	3	0	3
ECE114W	Health, Safety, and Nutrition for the Young Child	3	0	3
ENGL120W	College Composition	4	0	4
	Social Science	3	0	3
	Sub-Total Credits	16	0	16

First Year, Spring Semester

Course Number	Title	Lecture	Lab	Credits
ECE115W	Positive Guidance Techniques	3	0	3
ECE118W	Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Curriculum	3	0	3
ECE120W	Introduction to Early Intervention	3	0	3
	Liberal Arts	3	0	3
	Mathematics	4	0	4
Sub-Total Credits		16	0	16

Second Year, Fall Semester

Course Number	Title	Lecture	Lab	Credits
ECE119W	Promoting Language and Literacy	3	0	3
ECE211W	Organization and Management of Early Childhood Programs	3	0	3
ECE218W	Promoting Cognitive and Executive Functioning Skills	3	0	3
	English	3	0	3-4
	Liberal Arts	3	0	3
Sub-Total Credits		15-16	0	15-16

Second Year, Spring Semester

Course Number	Title	Lecture	Lab	Credits
ECE213W	Sociology of Children and Families	3	0	3
ECE216W	Understanding Young Children with Special Needs	3	0	3
ECE219W	Early Childhood Education Practicum	2	6	4
HUMA212W	Legal and Ethical Issues	3	0	3
	Science	3	0	3-4
Sub-Total Credits		14-15	6-8	16-17
Total Credits				63-65