TRACK 2: EXPLORATIONS COURSES

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM MISSION AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The goal of the Early Childhood Program is to prepare high quality early childhood education professionals who exhibit best practices in the care and education of young children and their families.

**Mission Statement**
Rasmussen College’s Early Childhood Education Program prepares early childhood educators to serve young children, their families, and their communities.

- We foster and advocate developmentally and culturally appropriate practices among early childhood professionals.
- We value diversity, professionalism, collaboration, and research-based practice.
- We strive to provide young children with meaningful experiences that provide a foundation for a productive life.

**Conceptual Framework**
The Early Childhood Education program at Rasmussen College prepares skilled teachers with a strong theoretical foundation and an understanding of the relationship between theory, teaching, learning, and professionalism. Students receive rich opportunities for practical application in teacher preparation experiences. Rasmussen College is committed to teaching and using positive interpersonal communication skills in a diverse environment.

**TRACK DESCRIPTION**
Students enroll in an interactive online course consisting of weekly assignments, discussions and a course project preparing them for working with and teaching young children in groups in the early childhood education field. *Each course provides the students opportunities to tie their educational experiences to their future work with children through case studies, scenarios, videos, online resources and authentic assessments in the form of course projects.* If a student is working in the field already, then the student will be encouraged to apply their educational experiences directly to their current work with children.

**TRACK DETAILS**
- Consists of three required courses-Explorations I, Explorations II and Explorations III.
- Each Reflections course consists of:
  - 4 credits
  - Online Course: Assignments, Discussions and Course Projects
  - Extensive use of videos, scenarios, and case studies
  - Live Virtual Classroom sessions- synchronous weekly sessions with their instructor and peers

**Note:** Track 2- Explorations does not require students to participate in an early childhood group setting. If not already employed in the early childhood education field, students in the Explorations Track are encouraged to seek volunteer work or employment to build their experience. Students will be guided to the Career Services team, Job Connect and Optimal Resume for support and guidance in locating job opportunities.

**Note:** Students enrolled from states *outside* of FL, KS, IL, MN, ND and WI must take Track 2: Explorations as their teacher preparation course sequence.
## CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

### EEC1970 ECE Explorations I: Knowledge

#### Week 1: Policies, Procedures, Guidelines, and Standards for the Early Childhood Educator

**Week 1 Objectives:**
- Locate early childhood licensing rules and regulations associated with your state.
- Explain how national and state standards affect program quality.
- Discuss Virtual Exploration expectations and procedures.
- Describe Early Childhood Education.

**Week 1 Assignment:**
- Handbook Acknowledgement

#### Week 2: Developmentally Appropriate Practices and Learning

**Week 2 Objectives:**
- Distinguish between developmentally appropriate and inappropriate techniques and learning strategies.
- Describe how educators use their knowledge and understanding about how children learn and grow to impact children’s healthy development and self-esteem.
- Reflect on the developmentally appropriate environment and your role as an ECE professional.

**Week 2 Assignments:**
- Discussion
- Written Assignment
- Exploration Assignment- videos with reflection questions
- Reflection Journal- one page reflection-turned in with Module 5
- Live Classroom

#### Week 3: Play within Our Everyday Routines and Activities

**Week 3 Objectives:**
- Identify different play theories.
- Explain how play promotes child development and learning.
- Plan activities that foster learning in all the developmental domains.
- Reflect on the individual appropriateness of daily routines and activities and your role as an ECE professional.

**Week 3 Assignments:**
- Discussion
- Written Assignment
- Exploration Assignment- videos with reflection questions
- Reflection Journal- one page reflection- turned in with Module 5

#### Week 4: Nurturing Positive Relationships, Interactions, and Environments

**Week 4 Objectives:**
- Discuss how educators impact healthy development through positive guidance.
- Identify characteristics of positive relationships and supportive interactions.
- Practice using developmentally appropriate guidance in early childhood education.
- Reflect on how educators impact positive self-esteem and your role as an ECE professional.

**Week 4 Assignments:**
- Discussion
- Written Assignment
- Exploration Assignment- videos with reflection questions
- Reflection Journal- one page reflection – turned in with Module 5
- Live Classroom
### CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

#### Week 5: Engaging in Positive, Professional Communication

**Week 5 Objectives:**
- Identify different forms of positive communication appropriate for diverse audiences.
- Engage in positive relationships and supportive interactions with co-workers, children, families, and the community.
- Summarize early childhood education settings, professional roles, educator degrees and credentials, and professional development opportunities.
- Reflect on the importance of professional communications and your role as an ECE professional.

**Week 5 Assignments:**
- Discussion
- Written Assignment- create a newsletter or flyer
- Exploration Assignment- videos with reflection questions
- Submit Final Reflection Journal Assignment- written through previous modules- but all submitted here
- Live Classroom

#### Week 6: Diversity and Cultural Appropriateness in Early Childhood Education

**Week 6 Objectives:**
- Identify components of developmentally and culturally appropriate environments.
- Evaluate observed early childhood environments for cultural appropriateness.
- Reflect on how you can apply what you learned in course in a future ECE professional role.

**Week 6 Assignment:**
- Exploration Assignment- videos with reflection questions
## CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

### EEC1971 ECE Explorations I: Knowledge

#### Week 1: The Planning Cycle

**Week 1 Objectives:**
- Describe how each element of the planning cycle affects the others.
- Locate and review the licensing guidelines for your state and setting.
- Review early learning standards in your state

**Week 1 Assignments:**
- Discussion
- Written Assignment
- Course Project Introduction

#### Week 2: Observation and Assessment Drives Planning

**Week 2 Objectives:**
- Describe the importance of observation and assessment to intentional and effective planning.
- Write learning objectives to support the growth and development of a child through one lesson.
- Plan an observation for a lesson reflective of a core competency in your state.
- Communicate a plan to further support development and learning following assessment.

**Week 2 Assignments:**
- Discussion
- Written Assignment- Observation of a Child (by video)
- Exploration Assignment- videos with reflection questions
- Course Project- Lesson plan – part 1
- Live Classroom

#### Week 3: Intentional Teaching and Planning

**Week 3 Objectives:**
- Identify ways planning impacts the support of children’s unique needs.
- Give examples of intentional teaching strategies.
- Select strategies to organize planning.
- Demonstrate ability to intentionally plan lessons reflective of the planning cycle.
- Describe the importance of observation and assessment to intentional and effective planning.

**Week 3 Assignments:**
- Discussion
- Course Project- Lesson Plan- part 2
- Explorations Assignment- videos with reflection questions
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 4: DAP: Instruction and Guidance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 4 Objectives:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Define differentiated planning and implementation to meet the needs of diverse learners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Describe strategies teachers can use to promote children’s learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Demonstrate different learning mechanisms within the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Define positive behavior guidance that is developmentally appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Implement strategies and techniques that positively support positive behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 4 Assignments:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Written Assignment- Behavior Guidance policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Exploration Assignment- videos with reflection questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Course Project- Lesson plan part 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Live Classroom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 5: Planning for Success: Connecting Children, Families, and Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 5 Objectives:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Describe the importance of developing trusting partnerships with families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Give at least three examples of ways you can support reciprocal relationships with families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Describe the benefit of extending learning to home and community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Create a lesson element to extend learning in the home and community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Demonstrate ability to intentionally implement lessons reflective of the planning cycle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 6 Assignments:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Exploration Assignment- videos with reflection questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Course Project- Lesson Plan – part 4- final submission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Live Classroom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 6: Professional Growth and Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 6 Objectives:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Set goals for professional growth and development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Describe the importance of reflective practice in early childhood education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Use evidence-based practices to face challenges related to the role of the early childhood teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Identify different forms of communication appropriate for diverse audiences regarding learning outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 6 Assignments:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Exploration Assignment- videos with reflection questions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

### ECE1972  ECE Explorations III: Reflection

#### Week 1: DAP Standards as Guiding Principles

**Week 1 Objectives:**
- Review policies, guidelines, and licensing that may guide planning.
- Recognize how state standards can be used in guiding planning and development for children.
- Label what makes a practice developmentally appropriate for young children.

**Week 1 Assignments:**
- Discussion
- Course Project Overview

#### Week 2: DAP Child Centered Environments and Guidance

**Week 2 Objectives:**
- Discuss various developmentally appropriate curricula.
- Adapt an activity for various ages of young children.
- Identify positive relationships and supportive interactions in the early childhood environment.
- Describe appropriate guidance in the early childhood environment.

**Week 2 Assignments:**
- Discussion
- Written Assignment- Guidance Reflection paper
- Written Assignment- Choosing and Adapting an Activity
- Explorations Assignment - videos with reflection questions
- Live Classroom

#### Week 3: Diversity and Community

**Week 3 Objectives:**
- Discuss the importance of family involvement in children's learning.
- Discuss how community impacts children's learning.
- Describe how educating the "whole child" nurtures growth.
- Identify how to plan for the diverse and cultural needs of children.

**Week 3 Assignments:**
- Discussion
- Written Assignment- Celebration of Diversity essay
- Written Assignment- Letter to a Colleague
- Explorations Assignment - videos with reflection questions

#### Week 4: Emotionally Intelligent EC Educators

**Week 4 Objectives:**
- Describe the emotionally intelligent EC educator.
- Discuss the NAEYC code of ethical conduct in interactions with others.
- Suggest ways to collaborate with other professionals in the field.

**Week 4 Assignments:**
- Discussion
- Written Assignment- Emotional Intelligence Self-Evaluation and essay
- Written Assignment- ECE Resource Tool- Bibliography
- Explorations Assignment - videos with reflection questions
- Live Classroom
## CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

### Week 5: Intentional Teaching Is Professional Teaching

**Week 5 Objectives:**
- Identify personal beliefs related to teaching young children and the role they play as teachers.
- Describe the characteristics of a professional educator.
- Identify professional practice goals that outline continued growth.

**Week 5 Assignments:**
- Discussion
- Written Assignment - Intentional Teacher Reflection paper
- Project Assignment - Resume and mock interview
- Explorations Assignment - videos with reflection questions
- Live Classroom

### Week 6: Professional Ethical Commitment

**Week 6 Objectives:**
- Identify ways to advocate for children and high quality early care and education.
- Create professional practice goals that outline continued growth.
- Reflect on ethical commitment and its impact on your role as an ECE professional.

**Week 6 Assignments:**
- Discussion
- Written Assignment - Intentional Teacher Reflection paper
- Explorations Assignment – Goal Setting