

# Childhood Education and Family Studies

## Practicum (Field Experience) Manual

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Southwestern Oregon Community College is an Equal Opportunity Educator and Employer.

**Welcome to the NAEYC Accredited Childhood Education & Family Studies Program!**

The following Practicum manual assists teacher candidates in understanding the purpose, expectations, and requirements associated with field experience and practicum placements organized with Southwestern Oregon Community College.

It is our hope that by providing you this comprehensive resource, practicums at every level will go more smoothly and will result in the teacher candidate having more opportunities to develop his/her skill in working with young children. By presenting a comprehensive view of the many varied practicums a teacher candidate has, individuals working with candidates at a later stage in their practicums will better understand and build upon previous opportunities.

Field experiences for Southwestern Oregon Community College’s Childhood Education and Family Studies (CE&FS) certificate and degree programs consist of:

Preschool Practicum Courses for the AAS Degree:  ECE 163/163B – Practicum I ECE 209/209B – Practicum II ECE 102/102B – Practicum III ECE 261/261B – Practicum IV 21 Total Credits	Infant Toddler Practicum Courses for the AAS Degree:  ECE 263/263B – Practicum I ECE 161/161B – Practicum II ECE 162/162B – Practicum III ECE 262/262B – Practicum IV 21 Total Credits	CWE – Internships Required for CE FS AAS and AS Degrees and the AS in Elementary Education:  ED 180/280 HV (Home visiting) ED 180/280 P (Pre-K) ED 180/280 K (K-3) ED 180/280 I (3 – 8)
Preschool Practicum Courses for the AS Degree:  ECE 163/163B – Practicum I ECE 209/209B – Practicum II ECE 102/102B – Practicum III 15 Total Credits	Infant Toddler Practicum Courses for the AS Degree:  ECE 263/263B – Practicum I ECE 161/161B – Practicum II ECE 162/162B – Practicum III 15 Total Credits	Credits vary between 1 and 3 depending on student and program.  All must be set up through the internship coordinator (contact info below)

The Childhood Education and Family Studies faculty at Southwestern would like to welcome you to your upcoming field experience and wish you the best in the coming quarter.

Sincerely,

Childhood Education and Family Studies (CE FS) Faculty and Staff

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## **Faculty and Administration**

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### **NONDISCRIMINATORY STATEMENT**

Southwestern Oregon Community College seeks to develop degree credit programs, courses, community service offerings, provides open admission, counseling, placement services for all persons regardless of religion, sex, national origin, physical or mental disabilities, age, or veteran status.

### **AMERICAN DISABILITIES ACT STATEMENT**

If you need course adaptations or accommodation because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with your instructors, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with your instructor as soon as possible.

### **CODE OF ETHICS**

The Childhood Education and Family Studies Program follows and adheres to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct. These ethics may be accessed [here](#) or online at <http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/PSETH05.pdf>

## Introduction

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The field of Early Childhood Education is concerned with the development and learning of children from birth through age eight. This program focuses on early children's education through a theoretical orientation, which places early childhood education within broader social, historical, political, and cultural contexts. Coursework at Southwestern provides a context in which teacher candidates critically examine early education and childcare as well as a practical opportunity for teacher candidates to experience this learning in a real school setting. Infused throughout the coursework are themes of inclusion, bilingual and multicultural education and care, critical thinking, and reflective teaching. Early Childhood Education is an exciting and dynamic field in which standards for teachers and career opportunities are constantly developing and growing.

The Southwestern CE FS programs offer a range of coursework encompassing infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and primary-aged schoolchildren. Through field placements at Early Head Start, Family Center Laboratory School, local elementary schools, community placements and teacher candidate teaching, candidates develop competence in the use of culturally relevant and developmentally appropriate practices.

All students enrolled in the Infant/Toddler or Preschool Degree Programs are required to meet NAEYC Standard #7. Depending on practicum placement, each student will complete additional internships in order to meet the standard (below).

Students enrolled in the AS Elementary Education Degree Program will take one internship in a Preschool environment, and one in an early elementary or middle school, depending on interest. All internships will be coordinated with Trish Price (contact information listed above) and practicums will be coordinated with CE FS program faculty.

### **Field Experiences (Practicums and Internships) - Aligned with NAEYC Standard #7:**

Students engage in field experiences and clinical practice to develop the knowledge, skills and professional dispositions necessary to promote the development and learning of young children in a variety of early childhood settings and with multiple age groups.

#### Key elements of Outcome 7

7a. Observe and practice in at least two of the three early childhood age groups (birth – age 3, 3-5, 5-8).

7b. Observe and practice in at least two of the three main types of early education settings (primary school grades, childcare centers and homes, ECEAP/Head Start programs).

## Overview & Goals of Practicums and Internships

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Your field experiences are integrated into courses to provide an introduction to various aspects of early childhood education. They familiarize you, the teacher candidate, with a.) how young children think, act and feel, b.) the roles and responsibilities of teachers who work with young children and c.) Roles and responsibilities of professionals who work in the field. The goal of any field experience is to develop familiarity with children, teaching, and the field so that teacher candidates can draw on those experiences as they construct pedagogical and content knowledge. Depending on the course associated with the field experience, teacher candidates may be asked to:

- Observe young children and teachers in the classroom and then analyze those observations and make connections to coursework
- Interview professionals in the field
- Begin interacting with children, teachers and other professionals

Specific Practicum placements are built into courses and require an intensive Practicum component. In ECE 161, 162, 163, 263, 102, & 209 teacher candidates spend 66 hours in the field directly interacting with young children, families and early childhood professionals in addition to the other course requirements. ECE 261 and 262 require 99 hours in the field. These experiences move beyond developing familiarity with young children, their families and the field, and expect teacher candidates to be interacting with young children, families and teachers. These interactions are intended to contribute to the teacher candidate's: a.) understanding of young children and how they develop, b.) ability to plan and implement early childhood learning experiences, c.) pedagogical skill and ability to engage children in meaningful learning experiences, d.) reflective practices as a means to developing as a teacher. The expectations these Practicums may include:

- Observing young children
- Developing lesson plans for early learning centers and experiences
- Assessing the outcomes of planned lessons
- Providing positive guidance to young children
- Examining existing educational components/systems
- Reflecting on Practicums through journal responses, etc.
- Portfolio assessment of a young child

## Teacher Candidate Responsibilities

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The responsibilities of the Teacher Candidate are as follows:

1. Observe and practice ideas and skills in working with young children.
2. Develop skills to function as a team member of a professional staff.
3. Develop skills in working with families of children.
4. Develop an understanding of daily operation and evaluation.
5. Continue to develop areas of strength and to self-assess areas in which more learning, practice, and/or experience is needed.
6. Expand awareness and knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of professional team members.
7. Complete required hours and assignments.
8. Participate in regular feedback meetings with the course instructor.
9. Complete related assignments maintaining professional tone and confidentiality. Skipping or waiving assignments in any Childhood Education and Family Studies course is never an option. If you do not complete one or more assignments, the Instructor has the right to lower the final course grade.
10. Complete and submit to course instructor documentation of all hours spent in each classroom.

## Practicum Site Placement Policy

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### Preschool Placements

Preschool Practicum placements may be completed at Head Start programs, licensed early childhood programs operated by faith-based organizations, licensed family home childcare programs, and licensed non-profit or for-profit early childhood programs.

All sites to be approved by the course instructor. After approval and forms are submitted, a preliminary visit may be required. **At a minimum, the Practicum site must be licensed by the state of Oregon.**

Preferred qualifications include:

- QRIS/SPARK Rated
- Serve children both with and without disabilities.
- Are willing to help foster skills of teachers who are training to be professionals in the field of early childhood education.
- Serve children with diverse backgrounds.
- Follow early childhood best practices within their program.
- NAEYC Accredited programs
- Head Start Programs

### Infant Toddler Placements

Practicums may be completed at Early Head Start programs, licensed early childhood programs operated by faith-based organizations, licensed family home childcare programs, and licensed non-profit or for-profit early childhood programs.

All sites are to be approved by the course instructor. After approval and forms are submitted, a preliminary visit may be required. **At a minimum, the Practicum site must be licensed by the state of Oregon.**

Preferred qualifications include:

- QRIS/SPARK Rated
- Serve children both with and without disabilities.
- Are willing to help foster skills of teachers who are training to be professionals in the field of early childhood education.
- Serve children with diverse backgrounds.
- Follow early childhood best practices within their program.
- NAEYC Accredited programs
- Head Start Programs

### **Completing Practicum or Field Experience at Current Worksite**

The CE FS program believes that the teaching profession is developmental. **All** teachers are in development - regardless of how long they have been teaching and caring for children. Further, teachers require opportunities to observe and work in a ***variety of settings***, (ideally without splitting their attention between learning and job performance) in order to develop the breadth of knowledge required for sustained, joyful, and effective work in the field.

Students who are considering completing practicums in their place of employment should consider placement options carefully. Not all classrooms are ready to host students, further, students may benefit from completing some experiences in other settings. If you are unsure if your current job placement is a good fit in which to learn, contact Dr. Rosengarden, and discuss your options.

Students may complete practicum courses at their place of employment if the policy above is followed and the following conditions are met:

- The place of employment is willing to cooperate with the course instructor.
- All required forms are provided.



### **Forms Required Prior to Practicum Placement**

Students may participate in practicum when the forms found in the forms packet have been completed and returned to the practicum instructor.

### **For Placement with South Coast Head Start in Oregon:**

Student must provide copies of the following documents:

- Current Central Background Registry standing letter
- Food handlers card
- Immunization Record (must include DTaP for infant/toddler placement)
- Emergency contact information

There will be an orientation that goes over the following topics: (usually takes 1.5-2 hours)

- Policies & procedures for South Cost Head Start (manual to be given to student for reference)
- Blood-borne pathogens/universal precautions
- Confidentiality
- Emergency procedures
- Building Orientation

During orientation, we will conduct a Placement Interview to determine needs & best fit for student, discussing the following items:

- Students Schedule
- What they would like to learn / accomplish in their time with us
- Develop a Monthly Work Plan to assist with their goals, to be revisited monthly with supervising staff member to assess progress & make any necessary adjustments
- Fill out any necessary program paperwork for placement

## **Information for all Students - Professional Expectations**

### **Background Check**

Each Practicum teacher candidate is expected to show proof of a background check coordinated through the Oregon Childcare Division. Your instructor will provide you with information on this process.

### **Ethics - Familiarize yourself with the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct**

All early childhood professionals are expected to demonstrate ethical practice consistent with this code. If you have questions regarding the Code of Ethical Conduct, your course instructor may be able to provide assistance. The Code of Ethical Conduct can be downloaded from <http://208.118.177.216/about/positions/pdf/PSETH05.pdf> It is also available [here as a hyperlink](#).

### **Core values of the Code of Ethical Conduct**

Standards of ethical behavior in early childhood care and education are based on commitment to the following core values that are deeply rooted in the history of the field of early childhood care and education. We have made a commitment to:

- Appreciate childhood as a unique and valuable stage of the human life cycle
- Base our work on knowledge of how children develop and learn
- Appreciate and support the bond between the child and family
- Recognize that children are best understood and supported in the context of family, culture,\* community, and society
- Respect the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual (child, family member, and colleague)
- Respect diversity in children, families, and colleagues
- Recognize that children and adults achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on trust and respect

National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2005). Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment: A position statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Retrieved from: <http://208.118.177.216/about/positions/pdf/PSETH05.pdf>

## **Arrival and Self-Presentation**

**Before you arrive** - Understand your instructor's Practicum expectations and write your 'Dear Teacher Letter.' This letter should be written to the classroom you are being placed in and can be addressed to the individual teachers or classroom (i.e. Dear Ms. Puckett, or, Dear Bobcat Teachers). The letter should introduce yourself briefly, provide your personal contact information and explain any course assignments that you will be working towards while in their classroom. You should have this letter written before your first day of Practicum and delivered to the teachers on the day of your orientation. If you do not attend an orientation, you should deliver the letter at least one day in advance of starting your Practicum. A sample letter is available in the packet of forms.

**Dress & Personal Items** - As an early childhood professional, your dress is expected to reflect the same professional standard that your work does. Depending on the setting you will be working in, different expectations may exist. Please consider these expectations and discuss with your mentor teacher the most appropriate way to reflect them in your dress.

- All Southwestern Practicum teacher candidates are expected to wear a nametag.
- Teaching is an active profession. Your shoes, clothes, and jewelry must not inhibit you from moving and interacting with the children or expose views that may be deemed inappropriate by the children/families you serve. Please wear sturdy, close-toed shoes that will allow you to move quickly should the need arise. Sandals, flip-flops, and bare feet are prohibited. Teaching is a profession; you are expected to dress as a professional in the field.
- Teaching requires close contact between adults and/or children. Arriving to your field placement emitting a strong/distinct smell is unprofessional and can be uncomfortable/unhealthy for children/adults with respiratory sensitivities. Be sure you, your clothes, and your belongings do not give off strong/ distinct smells (i.e. smoke, body odor, perfume). Be respectful of any scent allergies children or workers at your placement site may have.
- *Technology* - Technology should be integrated into your teaching to enhance it but it should not distract you from your teaching responsibilities. Please silence your cell phone/any other communication device and refrain from text messaging. Cell phones/communication devices should only be used for taking pictures in the practicum environment.
- *Illness* – If you are unable to attend your regularly scheduled practicum hours, it is your responsibility to telephone and email your supervising teacher immediately. If you are ill, do **NOT** come to work! Stay home and get healthy.
- If you are unable to adhere to any of the guidelines in this manual, have a conversation with your supervising teacher immediately. Student teachers will be reminded if they are not adhering to these guidelines.

**Attitude** - Each person you meet will be left with a lasting impression of you as a professional. Be sure the impression you leave is a positive one in which you are seen as a dedicated, responsible and caring early childhood professional. Keep in mind, field placements often last the entire quarter. Just because you have a passing evaluation at mid-term, does not mean you can become lax in professional preparation, delivery, and initiative.

**Attendance & Documentation** - Show your professional commitment to teaching by being punctual for each day in your field experience. You are expected to arrive before the start of your assigned experience and stay through the duration of the placement. Taking breaks during field placement are coordinated with your mentor or coach. Any breaks of longer than 15 minutes must be recorded on your time log and approved with a signature. If you are going to be late to your scheduled field experience, contact the school/program prior to the scheduled arrival time and advise them of your late arrival. If you are ill and need to be absent for a scheduled

visit, contact the school/program/classroom and advise them of this. It is your responsibility to contact your supervisor or cooperating / mentor teacher and ensure he/she is also aware of your absence/tardiness. Please remember, your absence is your responsibility and should not cause inconvenience or hardship for the mentor teacher or course instructor. Please be patient and flexible in arranging to make-up missed hours.

It is your responsibility to obtain any required documentation of your attendance using the course form for this purpose, at the field experience when you are there. If your instructor requires a signature by the cooperating/mentor teacher, when he or she is not busy, ask for their signature. If you forget, it is both unprofessional and inconvenient for the teacher to go back later to obtain that documentation. The classroom sign-in sheet provides the program documentation of visitors, and it is not intended to be used as documentation of your attendance. Do not remove your time log from your practicum site – if it gets lost, it cannot be re-written.

**Parking** - Each field placement will have specific parking needs and policies. Please learn about those policies before you arrive at your placement.

**Arrival** - Upon arrival at the classroom, please enter the classroom, carefully looking for children or adults who may be behind the door. If the door is locked, knock. Introduce yourself and ask where to sign-in. If you have not already done so, provide your 'Dear Teacher Letter' and, briefly share with the teacher/staff member what you will be doing that day. Wash your hands thoroughly before beginning your duties. Join in the flow of the classroom, developing your relationship with the children, and begin your assigned work.

### **Interactions with Children, Families and Colleagues**

While in the classroom, please remember you are there to enhance the experience of the children and learn while doing it. Should a teacher make a request of you, you are expected to comply with their request. It is the teacher's responsibility to ensure the safety of all children enrolled in the program, as well as maintain compliance with program/school requirements. What may appear an 'odd' request may have an understandable/appropriate rationale behind it. If you have any questions or concerns about a request that you do not understand or deem unreasonable, please discuss it privately with that teacher after the session ends or at a scheduled meeting. It is never appropriate to engage in a tension-filled discussion when children are present. Doing so may result in immediate and ongoing removal from field experiences. Also, if the teacher communicates to you that it is not possible for you to complete the tasks assigned by your instructor, please contact your course instructor. It is important that if you have questions about your field experience, you have the opportunity to discuss them with the classroom staff. Please hold any questions for the teacher until s/he is free. If you are unable to ask while you are there, consider e-mailing the teacher or leaving a note.

**Confidentiality** - In completing assignments for your field placement, ensure the confidentiality of all children, families, teachers and individuals with which you interact. All documentation and reporting of events should maintain anonymity (i.e. Child X walked from the block area to the dramatic play area. Child X said 'can I play' to child Y. Child Y said "no." Teacher 2 said, "Remember our rule..."). Discussion of children, families, teachers, etc. should only occur with the staff of the program, or in your college classroom, nowhere else. If your course requires that you obtain artifacts (pictures, video, work samples, access to the child's enrollment file) from the classroom, be sure you have written permission from the individuals involved to do so. It is your responsibility to work with your mentor teacher and obtain that permission; failure to respect confidentiality policies creates irreversible consequences for SWOCC, the program, your placement in the program, and the individuals involved. As such, the consequences are significant and may include removal from the CE FS program.

The only exception to this policy occurs when there is a reason to believe that a child has disclosed child abuse or neglect. Any incident that leads you to believe that a child is being abused or neglected should be shared with the supervising teacher as soon as possible. If a report needs to be made to Child Protective Services it

must be done within 24 hours to ensure safety for the child. All requirements for reporting Child Abuse and Neglect are covered in the CE FS required class ECE 170.

**Food Experiences** - During your field experience, food and drinks may be served. Please look to the cooperating/mentor/classroom teacher for guidance on how you should participate. In some classrooms, you will be encouraged to sit and visit with the children as they eat. In others, you will be invited to, also, enjoy some of the snack foods. Please do not eat or drink the snack foods unless you are invited to do so by the teachers. Each program has specific rules and availability regarding food. When in doubt, ask! Also, please do not bring food from home unless you have permission from the teacher to do so. Some children may have food allergies and outside food may compromise their safety.

If you see something that is concerning or unsafe, gain a staff member's attention immediately. If, time does not allow for that, directly intervene and protect the children's safety until a staff member can arrive. **If you observe an adult inappropriately interacting with children, immediately inform your mentor teacher or another staff member.**

**Responsibilities** - Field experience teacher candidates are never to be left alone (out of sight of a staff member) with children. This includes taking children back and forth from the playground into a classroom where no teacher is present; taking children to the bathroom; etc. If a teacher asks you to be in a situation where you would be alone with a child, inform her/him that you are not permitted to be alone with children. This rule exists for your safety. Student Teaching is the only field experience when you are permitted to be the sole supervisor of children.

**Leaving your field experience** - When it is time for you to leave your field experience, be sure you have cleaned up any areas you worked in. If appropriate, say good-bye to the children; however, always be sure the teacher is aware you are leaving. Sign-out and ensure that after you leave the exit door is securely closed. Please close all outdoor gates as you exit. Remember to complete your sign out log.

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**Mentor Teacher/Coach/Supervisor - Program Responsibilities – see handbook for more information**

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The responsibilities of the MENTOR TEACHER or PROGRAM are as follows:

1. Orient the teacher candidate to the philosophies and policies of the program.
2. Provide guidance to the teacher candidate as he/she completes course requirements and, when appropriate, gradually assumes increasing responsibility by:
  - a. Acquainting and guiding the teacher candidate to the availability and use of resources that may aid in understanding the program and the children and families it serves.
  - b. Acquainting the teacher candidate with individual and group goals for children
  - c. Communicate to the teacher candidate your experiences in working directly with children and their families, as appropriate.
3. Providing the teacher candidate with experience in working with a team of professionals, when possible.
4. Observing the teacher candidate in varied situations, provide same-day feedback regarding his /her areas of strength, and need for improvement, as appropriate.
5. Assisting the teacher candidate as he/she makes observations, develops, implements, and evaluates activities in the classroom:
  - a. Suggest pertinent events/areas/activities for observation
  - b. When teacher candidates inquire, discuss the context, purpose or teacher's understanding of events without performing the teacher candidate's analytical work.
6. Review and approve activity plans before the teacher candidate implements activities in the classroom. Allow teacher candidates to complete course requirements – ex. – implement lesson plan, facilitate circle time.
7. Video tape student teacher for 5-10 minute segments once or twice weekly depending on course requirements.

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**Role of the Practicum Course Instructor**

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The CE FS Practicum course instructor will monitor each teacher candidate and teach course content. Weekly video submissions made for review will occur between the teacher candidate and course instructor. Lesson plans are to be viewed by course instructors before activities are done.

Depending on the course requirements, each practicum will have different observation requirements. The format and outcome of those observations will vary. Please discuss these requirements with your course instructor. One consistent element of all practicum observations is the confidential nature of the observations. Unless you have written permission from the family/teacher/etc. and consent from the child, you must maintain confidentiality of the child, teacher, program, etc.

## **Corrective Action Policy for Field Experiences**

Course requirements (syllabus) determine the minimum number of practicum hours, but if at midterm there are indications that the student may be having difficulty, the course instructor may determine that the student needs more time in a particular placement, or needs to be moved to a different site. For instance, if it is apparent that the student does not yet exhibit the kind of professional behavior expected of a teacher, or that he or she consistently uses ineffective teaching methods or is not participating in the role of teacher in the classroom, such a situation may require an extension of classroom time or even a formal intervention plan. (Extremely Concerning Behaviors Can Result in Termination of Practicum.) The Childhood Education Director must approve extensions and intervention plans, and a conference call will be set up involving the student, instructor, and mentor teacher to go over and finalize the plans. A conference call is also mandatory if a student requests an incomplete for Practicum, because practicum courses are designed to be completed within the term to help the student see a typical classroom over a period of eleven weeks.

### **Removal from a Field Experience Site**

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Students who are asked to leave a field experience site by a site coordinator will be given a “warning”. The teacher candidate will be withdrawn from the field experience site (sites) for a minimum of one week. A CE&FS department meeting will be held to determine if the teacher candidate will be placed at another site. The teacher candidate also might be given an “incomplete” and allowed to complete the course during the following quarter. SWOCC CE&FS Faculty will communicate clearly with teacher candidates if any such action is taken.

#### ***Field Experience Termination***

1. Reasons for discharge from field experience include the following:
  - Breaking confidentiality.
  - Displaying inappropriate or unprofessional behavior.
  - Use of illegal chemical substances or alcohol.
  - Not meeting the site's policies and procedures.
  - Violations of professional code of ethics.
  - Unsatisfactory performance/evaluations as determined by the mentor teacher or course instructor
  - Excessive absences at the field experience site and/or field experience classroom sessions (seminars)
  - Violation of the site, agency/organization's policies and procedures
  - Violation of standards of practice consistent with the profession including:
    - Maintaining accurate records and reports
    - Appropriate and professional clothing
    - Using appropriate language and behavior
    - Adherence to code of ethics, relevant laws, and agency policy
    - Use of alcohol or other mood altering, non-prescription drugs prior to or at a class or field experience site.

Termination from field experience is not limited to the listed factors.

**Substance Abuse** - If it is determined that a field experience teacher candidate has inappropriately used alcohol or other non-prescription drugs in such a way as to adversely affect the field experience, he/she will automatically be suspended from his/her field experience class and may receive a grade of "F" for the course. The teacher candidate will be referred to the faculty student affairs committee if circumstances appear to warrant further disciplinary action and/or referred to Dean of Students' office for appropriate action.

**Alcohol and Drug Use** - Any indication of drug and/or alcohol use will result in removal from the school. Please be aware that strong indications of cigarette, cigar or pipe use, cologne, after-shave or perfumes may be offensive to colleagues and teacher candidates in schools.



### **Problem Solving Plan - A problem is a challenge to be addressed!**

Classrooms are busy places where adults work together closely in flexible and sometimes chaotic environments. This requires a good deal of communication and understanding - You may notice something that does not seem quite right to you, you do not quite understand the reason for, or simply does not work for you. **When you have a concern, it is important that you address it for your own understanding, and for the benefit of the teachers, you are working with.** Your instructor will help you implement this plan if you are not sure what to do.

*Consider who is involved in the area of concern that you will first address the issue with. Who is responsible for planning for the area or situation? Who is causing you to be concerned?*

**1. Decide when and where would be a good time and place to address the issue.**

Consider a time and place where the person you choose to talk with is not involved with children, surrounded by parents and other staff members, involved in an activity requiring their full attention, etc.

**2. Let the person know that you would like to talk with them. Suggest your idea for time and place. Decide if meet time will work for both parties.**

Ex. "I'd like to speak with you about snack. Can we talk about it after rest today?"

**3. When you meet – Use "I" statements to present your view, or concerns.**

I am having a problem with snack in the morning. I feel that we really need to have a teacher sitting with the children during snack so I can take care of refilling pitchers, etc.

**4. Draw in anyone else needed to thoroughly address the issue - Lead Teacher, Assistant Teachers....**

**5. Develop a "next step" plan together - Let's try this ... tomorrow...**

**6. Implement your plan, including passing on any information needed to other staff people. *If the plan affects the center or the program operations within the center, please include the director in the process.***

**7. Evaluate your plan after implementation.**

How did it work? Did the plan address the issue? Is the concern taken care of? Is the new system working well?

## **What does a Practicum Course require of me in an early childhood classroom?**

Merriam Webster Dictionary Definition: prac-ti-cum *noun* \ˈprak-ti-kəm\

: A course of study for teachers, doctors, nurses, etc., that involves actually working in the area of study and using the knowledge and skills that have been learned in a school

You are to work in an early childhood classroom during practicum. Most students do this on a volunteer basis, but if you are already working in an accredited site or Head Start, you may be able to use your workplace as your practicum site. The course instructor decides this on a case-by-case basis. If you live in the Coos Bay Area, you will use Family Center, the on-campus program. For Infant / toddler practicum courses, if you live in the Coos Bay Area, you will use Early Head Start as your practicum site.

### **What kind of work will I do?**

Although you are never to be solely in charge of students, you are to do what you see the other teachers in the classroom doing. Please do not be shy to ask what they would like you to do.

If all you are being asked to do is clean up tasks like cleaning tables, please contact your instructor.... This is not what practicum is meant for.

### **Some Tasks I Should Be Doing**

- You will play with children, facilitating their play to scaffold learning... Apply principles and philosophy of course work regarding child development, theory and developmentally appropriate practice.
- Problem-solve when children have conflicts... Using Classroom Management coursework, begin to employ a wide array of management and communication strategies to positively influence children's learning and development.
- Supervise children (but never alone)
- Take the initiative to help and attend to any need the teacher or students may have. Ask the teacher for guidance in what is expected in this area
- Read to students; Talk with students... encouraging literacy skills.
- Observe, listen, and effectively use feedback from mentor teacher and university supervisor
- Respect confidentiality at all times
- Starting with ECE 102, you will begin to design, implement, and evaluate lesson plans that promote positive learning and development for all children. Align curriculum activities to appropriate Head Start Outcomes.
- In an organized and timely manner, meet all requirements and assignment deadlines of the practicum syllabus
- Demonstrate responsibility and initiative for communicating practicum requirements to the mentor teacher.

### **Early in the first week, we request that the student and mentor teacher find an opportunity to:**

- Orient the student to the policies and regulations of the program/building.
- Introduce the student to the children and other staff members.
- Discuss general ideas for practicum assignments listed in syllabus. (Bring your syllabus and copies of your assignment instructions to the meeting)
- Get to know each other.
- Mentors are encouraged to offer the practicum student classroom responsibilities that will help him/her establish him/her as one of the classroom teachers.

***Reminder: There must be another teacher (or staff member) in the classroom with the student at all times.***

## GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR FIELD EXPERIENCE/LAB EXPERIENCES

(Adapted from “Student Teaching: Early Childhood Practicum Guide”)

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The following suggestions are offered to help you maximize your personal growth during field experiences. Taking the time to read the following information and acting on the suggestions will help you develop your knowledge and skill in working with young children, as well as, promote positive working relationships with the classroom teachers.

1. Examine your attitude and decide you are going to expend every effort to learn new skills. Risk trying new ways and making mistakes. Communicate your desire to be given added, and more challenging, responsibilities. Welcome and encourage feedback from those supervising your experience.
2. When in doubt, ask questions. Select the time and place most convenient for your course instructor or mentor teacher or write questions down for them if conferencing is immediately impossible. Be willing to come early or stay late.
3. Being professional involves a timely arrival and telephone calls when you need to be late or absent. Inform your course instructor of field trips, testing, or special events when his or her observation of your work would not be possible. Your dress, personal appearance and manner represent your professional image.
4. Make decisions using your best judgment. Seek clarification if you are uncertain of rules or expectations.
5. Realize the mentor teacher’s first priority is the needs, safety and welfare of children. You are an added responsibility. Be aware there are times when the mentor teacher cannot focus on your concerns.
6. See what needs to be done and do it without waiting for directions. Observe and study the children, program, and environment. Familiarize yourself with all aspects of the situation. Know where equipment and materials are stored. Be alert to daily schedules and routines.
7. See yourself as a needed assistant being increasingly responsible and alert to where you are most necessary.
8. Be friendly, learn names, and fit into classroom life quickly by being helpful and sensitive to school staff members.
9. Watch teacher’s skills, techniques, and behaviors with children and parents. Try to identify the goals of instruction behind works and actions.
10. Avoid socializing with other adults during work periods, and, instead, be watchful observant, and ready to learn from children and classroom situations. Scan the area, and develop “eyes in the back of your head”. When sitting, choose positions that allow the best classroom views.
11. Remain nonjudgmental if site politics are present Try to inwardly evaluate staff conflicts. Discuss with your course instructor your position as a “fence sitter” who avoids taking sides if a difficult situation or power struggle between adults arises.
12. When viewing new techniques or methods, remain open-minded and reflective. If ethics are involved, ask for a course instructor consultation quickly.
13. Receive input from supervisors with the belief that both compliments and suggestions for growth will enable you to become a more skilled and valuable early childhood educator.

Metropolitan Community College. (2009). Early Childhood Education Practicum Manual. Obtained 8/15/2009 from: <http://www.mccneb.edu/ecp/manual.asp?Theme=2>