

Academic Program Review

Early Childhood Education Program

Spring 2016

What is Early Childhood Education?

The Associate Degree and Certificate in Early Childhood Education provide the theoretical studies and practical experiences that prepare the graduate to care for and teach children from infancy through age eight in a variety of early childhood education and care settings. Graduates may be qualified for employment opportunities in child development and child care programs, preschools, nurseries, head start, after school programs, and private kindergartens. Degree graduates may also be eligible for employment as a paraprofessional in the public school setting in kindergarten through third grade. For students looking to pursue an education beyond the associate degree, the degree program is designed to provide transferability to bachelor degree programs in Early Childhood Education. Students work closely with their academic advisor for proper course selection and sequencing to prepare for transferability

Please watch the following Video clip

[Assembly of a Child](#)

Program Goals

What are the program's goals and how do they relate to the College's mission? How do the program goals relate to the current and future needs of the community and the region?

Early Childhood Program Mission Statement

The mission of the Early Childhood Education program is to inspire students with the passion and understanding of how to support children and their families by connecting theories into practice, and to demonstrate their ability to follow academic and professional standards from the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Students will strive through education, integration of research, and action to share an understanding of developmentally appropriate practice. Students are encouraged to follow ethical and professional guidelines and to become life-long learners

Nashua Community College Mission Statement

Nashua Community College provides quality, rigorous, higher-education programs focused on the diverse needs of students and the community.

What We Do:

- *“We develop secure, consistent, responsive attachments with the children in our care.*
- *We help children build cognitive, social, and emotional skills necessary for healthy growth and development.*
- *We provide a safe, healthy, and stimulating world by creating high quality physical environments for children to grow and develop.*
- *We respect cultural and ethnic diversity.*
- *We encourage strong parent engagement by communicating, supporting, educating, and partnering with parents to create a community.*
- *We practice research-based strategies, beginning prenatally.*
- *We teach the foundations of numeracy, problem-solving, and literacy.*

- *We expect high staff qualifications for high-quality programs.*
- *We structure our environments so every child learns cooperation and civic responsibility.*

As a Result:

- *Children are ready for school.*
- *We lessen the effects of poor family environments, decrease the number of families likely to become involved with the welfare system, and as a result, increase family stability.*
- *We develop workforce skills such as motivation, persistence, and self-control that will help to increase adult employment and wages.*
- *We decrease the chance of criminal records and teen pregnancies.*
- *We improve outcomes for vulnerable children by providing parents access and education to prenatal and nutrition systems.*
- *We create the possibility for dramatic increases in language and literacy skills, math skills, social-emotional skills, and fine motor skills that are critical building blocks to later success.*
- *We increase high school graduation rates.*
- *We increase college attendance.*
- *We work to ensure that children who participate in our programs are less likely to need special education services.*
- *We work to ensure that the children we serve cost society and government less and contribute more to our country and the global community.”*

<http://www.communityplaythings.com/resources/articles/2010/what-we-know-to-be-true-about-early-childhood-education>

Early Years Are Learning Years

“The demand for early childhood care and education programs continues to increase not only in response to the growing demand for out-of-home child care but also in recognition of the critical importance of educational experiences during the early years. Several decades of research clearly demonstrate that high-quality; developmentally appropriate early childhood programs produce short- and long-term positive effects on children's cognitive and social development.

That high quality early experiences make a difference in children’s lifelong academic and social success

Several decades of research clearly demonstrate that high-quality; developmentally appropriate early childhood programs produce short- and long-term positive effects on children's cognitive and social development. Specifically, children who experience high-quality, stable child care engage in more complex play, demonstrate more secure attachments to adults and other children, and score higher on measures of thinking ability and language development. High-quality child care can predict academic success, adjustment to school, and reduced behavioral problems for children in first grade. Studies demonstrate that children's success or failure during the first years of school often predicts the course of later schooling. A growing body of research indicates that more developmentally appropriate teaching in preschool and kindergarten predicts greater success in the early grades.

That early childhood professionals must have excellent preparation, ongoing professional development, and compensation commensurate with their qualifications and experience

A key component of quality programs is the quality of teacher. Recruitment and retention of child care staff is extremely difficult. The average child care teaching assistant earns roughly \$10,500 a year and the highest paid child care teachers are paid roughly \$18,000 a year. Turnover of staff averages 31 percent. In public schools, although salaries are much higher than for child

care teachers, there is difficulty retaining talented teachers and recruiting more experienced teachers to troubled schools. Scholarships, financial aid, and loan forgiveness are insufficient to help many early childhood educators obtain excellent preparation and ongoing professional development.”

<https://www.naeyc.org/policy/excellence>

“Expanding access to high quality early childhood education is among the smartest investments that we can make. Research has shown that the early years in a child’s life—when the human brain is forming—represent a critically important window of opportunity to develop a child’s full potential and shape key academic, social, and cognitive skills that determine a child’s success in school and in life.”

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/education/early-childhood>

Long-Term Benefits

The following are two most-often cited studies thought to prove the long-term benefits of early childhood education.

The HighScope Perry Preschool Study through Age 40 (2005)

This study examines the lives of 123 children born in poverty and at high risk of failing in school. From 1962–1967, at ages 3 and 4, the subjects were randomly divided into a program group that received a high-quality preschool program based on HighScope’s participatory learning approach and a comparison group who received no preschool program. In the study’s most recent phase, 97% of the study participants still living were interviewed at age 40. Additional data were gathered from the subjects’ school, social services, and arrest records. The study found that adults at age 40 who had the preschool program had higher earnings, were more likely to hold a job, had committed fewer crimes, and were more likely to have graduated from high school than adults who did not have preschool [High/Scope Perry Preschool Study](#)

“Frank Porter Graham’s (FPG) Abecedarian Project, began 42 years ago. It was a full-day, year-round program near Chapel Hill, N.C. Children from low-income families were randomly selected to attend Abecedarian or control group. The Abecedarian Project has become synonymous with positive, long-term effects of high-quality early care and education, particularly with regard to the power of early intervention to surmount some of the disadvantages of poverty. Through age 15, I.Q. scores for the children who received the birth-to-age-5 Abecedarian intervention were higher than those of the randomly assigned control group. The Abecedarian children also scored higher on achievement tests in math and reading during their elementary and secondary school years. In addition, they had lower levels of grade retention and fewer placements in special education classes. At age 21, the treated group had maintained statistically significant advantages both in intellectual test performance and in scores on academic tests of reading and mathematics, and the treated group also had attained more years of education. In addition, recipients of the Abecedarian curriculum were more likely to attend a 4-year college or university, more likely either to be in school or to have a skilled job, or both. They also were less likely to be teen parents, less likely to smoke marijuana, and less likely to report depressive symptoms, when compared to individuals in the control group. At age 30, the treated group was more likely to hold a bachelor’s degree, hold a job, and delay parenthood, among other positive differences from their peers. Age 35 brought blockbuster findings about health “It is of particular significance that

an early educational intervention produced long-term health effects,” said FPG senior scientist emeritus Joseph Sparling the project’s new study in Science reports that children who received high-quality early care and education from birth until age 5 enjoy better physical health in their mid-30s than peers who did not attend the childcare-based program. The new study determined that people who received early care with the Abecedarian program have lower rates of prehypertension in their mid-30s than those in the control group. They also have a significantly lower risk of experiencing total coronary heart disease (CHD)—defined as both stable and unstable angina, myocardial infarction, or CHD death—within the next 10 years. The economic benefit was clear. For every dollar spent on the program, taxpayers saved \$2.50 as a result of higher incomes, less need for educational and government services, and reduced health care costs. In short, the project has demonstrated that high-quality, enriched early education environments can help children surmount some of the disadvantages of poverty. Not only can the effects be far-reaching as children progress through adulthood, but the long term savings to society also can be considerable”.

<http://abc.fpg.unc.edu/>

Program Relevancy and Competitiveness

Has the program’s related industries or markets changed in the past five years and, if so, how does it impact on the relevancy and attractiveness of the program? Have you made changes to the program to accommodate changes in the market and, if so, what have you changed? What skills taught by the program are important to keep its graduates competitive in the program’s related industries?

To support the Early Childhood Community and to make sure I am aware of the issues and needs within the community. I have been an active member of the Nashua High School Early Childhood Advisory board. I served on the board of the Spark Higher Education Review. (See link below) I am a Member of NHAEYC, and supported the Agency to host the Spring Conference here at NCC, which brings in Early Childhood Professionals from all over the state of NH. This year we have begun to host the Monthly Directors Meetings here on campus again to connect with the community. I have recently joined the NH Listens; Great Nashua Early Childhood Commission, with United Way

[Spark Higher Education Review](#)

In connection with the NCC Educator Preparation Program’s Teacher Advisory Committee impute we began a new certificate program for Paraeducator II certification under the NH Department of Education. This program has been developed to address the needs of individuals working full-time in educational settings, often certified as Paraeducator I or working in other school support positions wishing to increase their ability to earn more money or work more closely with individual students. This program has two options: Early Childhood Para II Certificate or School Age Para II Certificate and was officially offered to students in Fall of 2015

The Early Childhood Communities biggest challenge currently is the lack of qualified teachers. The state has increases the Educational requirements which have increased the challenge for centers to find candidates who have necessary educational qualifications. The decrease in our program has further challenged the greater Nashua Early Childhood Community

The field of Early Childhood is known for high turnover rates due to low compensation. The problem is that the industry is challenged; in that unlike other industries where you just increase the price of your service. Childcare programs only have tuition as an income; if they raise tuition families will not be able to afford the care...

“It is well documented that the turnover rate for the early childhood workforce is very high in the United States. The average annual turnover rate is more than 30% for all teaching staff (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2004). This rate is pretty much consistent with a recent report by the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (NACCRRA), showing a turnover rate of between 25 and 40 percent (NACCRRA). This high rate is alarming considering its' apparent impact on the well-being of young children.

Reasons for Turnover

1. Low compensation and lack of benefits

There has been extensive research conducted to uncover the reasons for this high turnover rate for child care teachers in the United States. The wages of child care staff, which is often described poverty level, appears to be the most salient factor of their decision to leave work. Early childhood educators are among the most poorly paid professionals in the United States. According to U.S. Department of Labor (2011), the median wages for child care workers and preschool teachers are between \$7.90 and \$9.53 per hour. This salary is lower than for parking lot attendants, cooks or cashiers, and much lower than kindergarten or elementary school teachers (Barnett, 2003; U.S. Department of Labor, 2011). Cassidy et al. (2011) reported that child care teachers earn slightly more than one-third of the salary of a public school kindergarten teacher, although they often share similar educational backgrounds.”

<http://www.childresearch.net/projects/ecec/201204.html>

Early Childhood Advisory Committee

Name	Agency	Title
Shayna Burgher:	Nashua Community College	Special Needs Teacher and Early Childhood Education Faculty
Tracy Pond :	SNHS Nashua Child Care Resource and Referral	Resource and Referral Manager
Nancy Gagnon:	Sunrise Children’s Center	Director/ Special Needs Coordinator
Jane Marquis:	Adult Learning Center	Director of Early Childhood Program
Heidi Barbere:	The Goddard School	Director of Early Childhood Program
Martine Cloutier	Nashua High School South	Early Childhood Program Coordinator
Jill Jackson:	Knowledge Learning Corporation	Regional Manager
Marion Ober	Head Start	Early Head Start Education & Disabilities Manager
Jessica Witkowski	Small World Learning Center	Director of Early Childhood Program
Pam Meaney	Tollhouse Preschool	Director of Early Childhood Program
Suzanne Regan	Nashua Community College	Early Childhood Education Faculty Early Childhood Program Coordinator

Program Performance

Based on the performance statistics on enrollment, persistence, completion, transfer, gainful employment and licensure passage rates (where relevant), how successful do you believe the program has been? Please explain your reasoning. Note: Most of the data will be supplied by the Office of Institutional Research but should be supplemented with information supplied by the program personnel.

Year	# Grads	# Transfers	# to 4yr Colleges	# to 2yr Colleges			
2010-11	12	7	6	1			
2011-12	8	4	3	1			
2012-13	9	4	3	1			
2013-14	14	7	7	0			
2014-15	17	2	2	0			
Total	60	24	21	3			
	% of Grads	40%					
		% of Transfers	87.5%	12.5%			
4-Yr College	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Total	% of 4 Yr
Granite State	1	0	1	5	0	7	33.3%
Southern NH Univ.	2	1	0	1	1	5	23.8%
Rivier Univ.	1	1	1	0	1	4	19.0%
Fitchburg State Univ.	1					1	4.8%
Grand Canyon Univ.			1			1	4.8%
Liberty Univ.		1				1	4.8%
UNH Durham	1					1	4.8%
Univ. South Florida				1		1	4.8%
	6	3	3	7	2	21	
2-Yr College	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Total	% of 2 Yr
Nashua CC	0	1	1	0	0	2	66.7%
Manchester CC	1	0	0	0	0	1	33.3%
	1	1	1	0	0	3	

In the past five years ECE has had 60 students graduate with Associates degrees, and 12 graduate with ECE Certificates. Of the degree graduates 34 or 40% continued their education; 21 to 4 year programs, 3 12.5% to second degrees at 2 year programs. Granite state is the most common 4 year transfer school with 7 students, next is SNHU with 5 students and Rivier College with 4 transfers, 1 student transferred to UNH, and 4 students transferred to other various out of State colleges. Many ECE students have the goal of teaching in a Public school setting, to meet this goal we encouraged them to complete their Associates Degree in ECE then continue on for their Bachelor degree in Elementary Education or Special Education to give them the best opportunity for employment in a Public School setting.

I have created a NCC Graduates Group on Facebook to connect with the former students and gather data. To my knowledge all but three students are currently working in the Early Childhood field. Most students have acquired employment before completing their degrees. I know of one student who is continuing on for her Master's degree, and one who has opened and is currently Director of her own program in Merrimack.

Program Staffing

Describe the program's current staffing composition (including adjunct faculty and the Advisory Council). How well does the current staff meet the needs of the program and, if deficient, what additional skills or personnel are needed to improve success of the program?

Due to our the ECE Scholarship all of the ECE Adjuncts have to hold NH Child Development Bureau Master Professional Credential which requires a Master's degree. I also look for teachers that have at least 5 years' experience in the field of Early Childhood as well. We are very fortunate to have an incredible team

Suzanne Regan <i>ECE Program Coordinator</i>	B.S. Elementary Education Bridgewater State College; M. Ed. Early Childhood Southern New Hampshire University	Center Director 15 years; Resource and Referral Specialist 5 years; Developmental Specialist EI 1 year	Fall 2008
Adjunct Team			
Shayna Burgher	B. S. Early Childhood Eastern Nazarene College; M.A. Special Education Rivier College	Preschool Teacher 1 year; First Grade Teacher 3 years; Special Education Teacher 2 years; Center Director 1 year	2001
Stephanie Therrien	B.S. Keene State College M. Ed Child Development Southern New Hampshire University	Kindergarten Teacher 6 years Title 1 Teacher 2 years Director Girls Inc. 2 years Behavior Specialist 2 years	2008
Kathleen Cox	B.A. Fine Arts Mass College of Art; M.Ed. Early Childhood Southern New Hampshire University	YMCA Program Coordinator 7 years; Preschool Teacher 5 years; Director YMCA 3 years; First Grade Readiness Teacher 3 years	2011
Ruth Bruneau	B.A. Humanities Manchester Metropolitan University M. Ed Early Childhood Miner in Emerging Literacy University of London	Au Pair 2 years E.S.O.L. Teachers 2 years Preschool Teacher 4 years Workshop Presenter 2 years	2011
Sarah Miner	B.A. Family Studies UNH M. Ed Early Childhood and Elementary Ed	Co-Director 8 years, Assistant Director 3 years, Preschool Teacher 10 years	2012
Nancy Pynchon	B.S. Human Services/Early Childhood Education Elmira College M.Ed. Early Childhood Southern New Hampshire University	Preschool Teacher 4 years Director 18 years Childcare Resource and Referral 9 years Bureau of Childcare Licensing 1 yr.	2012
Diane Manning	B.S. Family Studies UNH M. Ed Early Childhood Education UMass Amherst	Preschool Lead Teacher 2 yrs. Director 3 yrs. Teaching Associate 2 years	2013
Elizabeth Brunette	B.S. Family Studies UNH M. S. Care and Education in ECE Wheelock College	School-age teacher 3 years ECE Teacher 4 years Director 16 years	2013

Resources Usage of Program

Describe the inventory of program-specific equipment and lab space. How well does it meet the needs of the program and, if deficient, what additional equipment is needed to improve support of the program? How well do the College's support services (e.g., Registrar, Student Services, Advising, Learning Commons, IT Support, Marketing, Library resources, etc.) assist the program in accomplishing its goals? What changes would you make to improve support of the program?

The ECE Program has a designated classroom in room 223. This allows us to have materials, and supplies for the students and teachers to use to create and explore curriculum and teaching methods. It also allows us to post share projects and ideas.

The College support services have been wonderful in supporting the needs of the ECE students However now that we are now an evening only program some of the student have voiced a concern that many of the support services are not available after 6 PM The CTE Student Success Mentor Marisa Donati has been a strong support to many students as she is someone they can connect to in the evening.

Program Strengths, Weaknesses and Needs

Overall, what do you believe are the major strengths and weaknesses of the program? What actions are needed for the program to maintain or improve its strengths and resolve its weaknesses? What additional support can the College provide to assure success of the program in the future?

The strengths of the program are the quality of our Adjunct team and the network of Centers that we have established in the community. Our students are well respected and accepted into Early Childhood programs and Public schools around the Greater Nashua community.

The current weakness is the lack of opportunities for day classes, without the opportunity to take ECE classes during the day, our enrollment has gone down, new students are not enrolling, which leads to less students to fill the needs of the ECE community teaching positions. It also pushes some of our students into positions they are not ready for; I had one student tell me as classes were moved to evenings only she felt obligated to take a teaching position, she then confessed "*I was not ready, I do OK, but do not feel that I have all the skills needed*"

Current enrollment

	Spring 2016	Summer 2016	Fall 2016
ECED-AS	56	17	21
ECEC-CERT	12	4	0

Past Enrollment:

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
ECED-AS	63	72	79	83	70
ECEC-CERT	20	22	16	24	12

Future Program Goals

What are the program's goals for the next five years? Please elaborate if needed.

Regain status as both day and evening program to ensure continued availability of qualified teachers for the Greater Nashua Early Childhood community

Early Childhood is the Profession the Supports all other Professions

YouTube Video clip about the impact of Childcare: Please watch

[A Day Without Child Care](#)