



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

PROGRAM HANDBOOK

2024 – 2025

**** Subject to change ****

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION INFORMATION

MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

The Early Childhood Education Program shares in the mission of River Valley Community College to prepare individuals to enter into the workforce, to advance in their chosen career as early childhood professionals and educators, and to prepare for continued study, including academic transfer. This program is also committed to preparing students to value the importance of and to participate professionally in quality early childhood settings and their communities.

We recognize and respect that students in the Early Childhood Education Program have varied career goals, both short-term and long-range. We work to meet these varied student needs.

We believe that the overall design of the early childhood curriculum should reflect current interdisciplinary knowledge about the preparation of early childhood professionals. We strive to provide a strong foundation for our students by utilizing the standards for early childhood professional preparation at the associate degree level as outlined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). We believe in and support the Code of Ethics as established by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

A career working with young children offers the opportunity to influence young lives as they grow and develop. Students are prepared to be competent early childhood professionals who can provide a nurturing environment with a strong understanding of the ways in which young children grow and learn. Students learn to provide care and education that is developmentally appropriate. The Early Childhood Education Program focuses on young children, birth through age 8 years, and their families.

The Early Childhood Education Program combines theory and practical experience. The curriculum follows standards for professional preparation as outlined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). (Additional information about these standards is available at www.naeyc.org, NAEYC's web site. Programmatic learning objectives are available on the Early Childhood Education program pages on the College's web site and in the program's student handbook.) Graduates are prepared for immediate entry into the field. Alumni of the program are employed in a variety of settings, including, but not limited to, the following: child care centers, Head Start programs, laboratory schools, parent cooperatives, and after-school programs. In addition, graduates of the program are prepared for continued study beyond the associate degree. More information on transfer options and articulation agreements is available through the program director.

The applicant for the Early Childhood Education Program should meet the general requirements for admission to the College. In addition, the applicant should possess strong interpersonal communication skills. This program may take longer than 2 years to complete. Courses may be taken at the Keene Academic Center. The Early Childhood Education Level I and Level II Certificates may be combined with other programs at the College for a dual degree option.

Applicants seeking admission to the Early Childhood Education Program who believe they may have difficulty with a state registry and criminal records check are advised to contact the New Hampshire Bureau of Child Care Licensing (1-800-852-3345) prior to matriculation.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS

These Technical Standards have been established to inform prospective students as to the minimum skills and abilities required to participate in and successfully complete the program and to ultimately enter and progress within the profession. Applicants who feel they may not be able to meet one or more of these standards should contact the Program Director and/or, for students seeking consideration of reasonable accommodation to meet requisite standard(s), the Accessibility Services Coordinator.

Physical/Motor

- Possess sufficient visual and hearing acuity to provide quality supervision of young children by both sight and sound;
- Successfully complete CPR and first aid training and be able to implement an early childhood center's emergency response plan in a prompt and calm manner;
- Complete light housekeeping duties (e.g., sweeping, washing toys);
- Actively participate in and support all aspects of an early childhood classroom's daily routine (i.e., standing, sitting on the floor or at child-sized tables, kneeling, participating in and facilitating gross motor activities); and
- Complete tasks that involve lifting and bending (e.g., diapering and feeding children).

Psychosocial

- Exchange pertinent information, verbally and in writing, in order to support collaborative professional relationships with children's families and with colleagues;
- Utilize a positive approach to guidance (e.g., implement classroom rules/expectations in a consistent and calm manner, be a positive role model for children);
- Respond positively to changes in daily routine, stress levels, workload, and specific work assignments; and
- Work in a professional and respectful manner with a diverse range of young children and their families.

Cognitive

- Complete record keeping tasks, develop curriculum, and document children's growth, development, and learning; and
- Implement and adhere to an early childhood center's operating procedures, state child care licensing rules, and the National Association for the Education of Young Children's Code of Ethical Conduct.

Professional Conduct

- A criminal background records check and written record of health screening are required by the NH Bureau of Child Care Licensing and are the student's responsibility.

PROGRAMMATIC LEARNING OBJECTIVES

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: ASSOCIATE DEGREE PROGRAM

The Early Childhood Education Program utilizes the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals, Position Statement adopted by the NAEYC Governing Board, November 2019.

Graduates of the program will know and be able to do the following:

Standard 1. Child Development and Learning in Context

Early childhood educators (a) are grounded in an understanding of the developmental period of early childhood from birth through age 8 across developmental domains. They (b) understand each child as an individual with unique developmental variations. Early childhood educators (c) understand that children learn and develop within relationships and within multiple contexts, including families, cultures, languages, communities, and society. They (d) use this multidimensional knowledge to make evidence-based decisions about how to carry out their responsibilities.

Standard 2. Family-Teacher Partnerships and Community Connections

Early childhood educators understand that successful early childhood education depends upon educators' partnerships with the families of the young children they serve. They (a) know about, understand, and value the diversity in family characteristics. Early childhood educators (b) use this understanding to create respectful, responsive, reciprocal relationships with families and to engage with them as partners in their young children's development and learning. They (c) use community resources to support young children's learning and development and to support children's families, and they build connections between early learning settings, schools, and community organizations and agencies.

Standard 3. Child Observation, Documentation, and Assessment

Early childhood educators (a) understand that the primary purpose of assessment is to inform instruction and planning in early learning settings. They (b) know how to use observation, documentation, and other appropriate assessment approaches and tools. Early childhood educators (c) use screening and assessment tools in ways that are ethically grounded and developmentally, culturally, ability, and linguistically appropriate to document developmental progress and promote positive outcomes for each child. Early childhood educators (d) build assessment partnerships with families and professional colleagues.

Standard 4. Developmentally, Culturally, and Linguistically Appropriate Teaching Practices

Early childhood educators understand that teaching and learning with young children is a complex enterprise, and its details vary depending on children's ages and characteristics and on the settings in which teaching and learning occur. They (a) understand and demonstrate positive, caring, supportive relationships and interactions as the foundation for their work with young children. They (b) understand and use teaching skills that are responsive to the learning trajectories of young children and to the needs of each child. Early childhood educators (c) use a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate and culturally and linguistically relevant, anti-bias, and evidence-based teaching approaches that reflect the principles of universal design for learning.

Standard 5. Knowledge, Application, and Integration of Academic Content in the Early Childhood Curriculum

Early childhood educators have knowledge of the content of the academic disciplines (e.g., language and literacy, the arts, mathematics, social studies, science, technology and engineering, physical education) and of the pedagogical methods for teaching each discipline. They (a) understand the central concepts, methods and tools of inquiry, and structures in each academic discipline. Educators (b) understand pedagogy, including how young children learn and process information in each discipline, the learning trajectories for each discipline, and how teachers use this knowledge to inform their practice. They (c) apply this knowledge using early learning standards and other resources to make decisions about spontaneous and planned learning experiences and about curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation to ensure that learning will be stimulating, challenging, and meaningful to each child.

Standard 6. Professionalism as an Early Childhood Educator

Early childhood educators (a) identify and participate as members of the early childhood profession. They serve as informed advocates for young children, for the families of the children in their care, and for the early childhood profession. They (b) know and use ethical guidelines and other early childhood professional guidelines. They (c) have professional communication skills that effectively support their relationships and work young children, families, and colleagues. Early childhood educators (d) are continuous, collaborative learners who (e) develop and sustain the habit of reflective and intentional practice in their daily work with young children and as members of the early childhood profession.

COLLEGE INFORMATION

STUDENT HANDBOOK

All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the River Valley Community College Student Handbook. This handbook contains important policies and procedures related, but not limited, to the following: academic affairs, student services, general policies and services, and student activities and organizations.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Visit the Student Life section on the RVCC website:

[Student Life](#)

In addition, students may refer to the Student Handbook to learn more about student life and student organizations and activities.

RESOURCES

River Valley Community College offers a wide range of supports and services to assist students in reaching their academic, professional, and personal goals. These resources include, but are not limited to, the following: tutoring, food pantry, counseling, and transportation. For details, please visit:

[Student Support](#)

Classroom Accommodations:

Students with a documented disability are eligible for reasonable accommodations. Please contact the Accessibility Services Coordinator to set up an appointment as soon as possible to ensure that accommodations are implemented to meet your needs for the semester. Visit <https://www.rivervalley.edu/student-support/on-campus-resources/accessibility-disability-services/> for contact details and more information.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

ETHICS

Students are expected to uphold all College policies related to academic honesty. These policies are published in the College Student Handbook. In addition, students shall familiarize themselves with guidelines regarding professional ethics and confidentiality and conduct themselves appropriately at all times. Students are expected to maintain confidentiality of any personal disclosures shared during class discussions. When students visit community early childhood programs, they are expected to act professionally. Written permission must be obtained from a child's parent/guardian before a case study can be initiated. The National Association for the Education of Young Children's Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment guides our work and is integrated into RVCC ECE courses.

ACADEMIC ADVISING

As the Early Childhood Education Program Director, I advise all matriculated program students and students taking ECE courses for ongoing professional development. My contact information is:

kmorris@ccsnh.edu
6030542-7744, extension 5411

During the week, I strive to respond to emails and voice mail messages within 24 hours. I do check email periodically on weekends but cannot specify a response time. I will, though, make every effort to respond to emails that come in over the weekend by Monday at Noon.

During each semester, I will hold special advising meeting times. I encourage each student to connect with me a minimum of three times per semester; ideally, one of these contacts will be an in-person conference or Zoom meeting. I am more than happy to meet with students more frequently on an as needed basis.

As a college student, it is your responsibility to:

- keep in contact with me as your program director/advisor,
- prepare for and keep advising appointments,
- meet course and program requirements,
- track your academic progress within the ECE curriculum,
- know and follow College and ECE Program policies and procedures (College Catalog, RVCC Student Handbook, and ECE Program Handbook),
- ask questions and seek resources,

- share any concerns in a professional manner, and
- Connect with me before making a change in your course schedule.

As your program director/advisor, it is my responsibility to:

- be available for support and assistance,
- explain College policies and refer you to appropriate departments/offices for additional information,
- clarify ECE Program policies and procedures,
- help you to develop an academic plan and to track your progress,
- assist you with course registration, and
- support your development of short-term and long-range academic, professional, and personal goals.

IMPORTANT PAPERWORK

Students are reminded that their **matriculation date** determines their program of study. If you have changed to a new or revised program of study, be sure to include this in your own notes. You may track your academic progress in the Student Information System (SIS), using RVCC Degree Works.

Keep copies of course syllabi for each college course taken at River Valley Community College. These documents are invaluable resources and can assist you with matters such as preparing a portfolio, securing transfer credits, and documenting professional development.

OTHER COURSEWORK

If you have completed coursework at another institution (e.g., courses at a college/university, Running Start courses, or ECE secondary program eligible for credits through articulation agreement), then you will need to read the related College transfer of credit policy in the College catalog.

TRANSFER

More information on transfer options and articulation agreements is available through the program director. If you are planning to transfer immediately after completing your associate degree, then it is very important that we plan accordingly. You will need to refer to the catalog and other pertinent transfer information from the college or university to which you are planning to transfer. These materials will assist us during course registration periods.

OBSERVATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Almost all ECE courses will include some type of observational experience. These will be varied and may include one or more of the following: child case study, program observation, informational interview, lesson plans. In each course syllabus, the specific requirements for the observational experience will be detailed. If you are currently working in the field, you will be able to make arrangements to utilize your work site for most assignments. If you are not working in the field, then faculty will assist you in securing a location at which you may complete these observational experiences. The goal is to assist you throughout your program of study to connect theory with practice.

ECE TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Students employed in a New Hampshire licensed early childhood program may be eligible for program-specific assistance. These are listed at:

[Scholarships](#)

DEGREE PORTFOLIO

Students matriculated in the Early Childhood Education Associate Degree Program will create a degree portfolio. This document, completed during Practicum Seminar, will involve synthesizing work accomplished in the early childhood education associate degree program of study and demonstrating mastery of programmatic learning objectives. Specific requirements and expectations will be shared at the beginning of the capstone experience.

Students are strongly encouraged to save and organize their best work from each course. Be sure to save graded assignments/projects with instructor feedback. Also, keep course syllabi from all RVCC courses.

COURSE INFORMATION

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Attendance is critical in Early Childhood Education courses. Being there consistently is an important aspect of working with young children. Students are expected to follow the attendance policy detailed in each course syllabus.

Coming to class on time, showing mutual respect for other students, and demonstrating thoughtful and consistent participation are required in this

program. During the program of study, students develop their professionalism, including practicing and refining their interpersonal skills.

Lateness of assignments in early childhood courses is discouraged and considered unacceptable. Students are expected to follow specific policies outlined in each course syllabus. In general, any material more than TWO WEEKS LATE will NOT be accepted, unless circumstances are extenuating, and prior arrangements have been made with the instructor.

GRADING

Specific course requirements are detailed in each course syllabus. The grading scale for the Early Childhood Education Program is:

A	93 – 100
A-	90 – 92
B+	87 – 89
B	83 – 86
B-	80 – 82
C+	77 – 79
C	73 – 76
C-	70 – 72
D+	67 – 69
D	63 – 66
D-	60 – 62
Failure	Below 60

FORMAT FOR REFERENCES

Check with each instructor to determine whether you should use the APA (American Psychological Association) or MLA (Modern Language Association) system. The APA system will be utilized for most Early Childhood Education courses. For additional information and assistance, students are advised to visit the Library.

PRACTICUM

Practicum courses are direct, experiential learning experiences. They provide students with the opportunity to link theory with experience and to apply their knowledge and skills to on-site work with young children and their families. It is very important that these experiences occur in a setting that will give each individual student the best model of a high-quality, developmentally appropriate early childhood program. Therefore, the Early Childhood Education Program strives to have students complete practicum experiences at sites accredited by

the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or sites engaged in other quality initiatives.

The practicum placement will be based upon a student's academic and interpersonal interests. Work-based practicum experiences may be arranged. These will be approved by the program director.

Students must be able to provide their own transportation to and from the practicum site. Also, students are required to have professional liability and health insurance during each practicum. Most practicum sites will require written records of criminal background check and physical examination. The student is responsible for providing the practicum site with appropriate documentation and for any related fees. In addition, the student is responsible for completing any required orientation meetings and activities prior to the beginning of their practicum hours.

An information sheet detailing all practicum course competencies will be provided by the program director and reviewed with the student at the beginning of the semester. During the practicum experience, the student will be expected to uphold all College policies, NAEYC's Code of Ethical Conduct, applicable licensing regulations, and policies of the practicum site.

Students should be aware that placement sites for practicum experiences are not necessarily required to recognize accommodations contained within an Individual Reasonable Accommodation Plan (IRAP) issued by River Valley Community College designed for use in classroom setting pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act. Please be aware that placement sites may need to adapt any accommodation request you make in a manner that does not create an undue hardship for them and does not require them to alter the essential functions of the practicum expectations. You are encouraged to discuss the accommodation process with RVCC Accessibility Services, your practicum instructor, and your site supervisor.

Absence related to surgery or injury

Students with absences resulting from surgical or physical injury must submit documentation from their healthcare provider clearing them to safely attend clinical. Any injury that prevents a student from attending clinical will result in an absence. Students who think they may miss more than one clinical day should consult with Accessibility Services.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

THE FINAL DECISIONS FOR PRACTICUM PLACEMENTS ARE MADE BY THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR.

STUDENTS MUST COMPLETE PRACTICUM I WITH A MINIMUM GRADE OF C IN ORDER TO BE ELIGIBLE TO REGISTER FOR PRACTICUM II.