

Early Childhood Education Program Mission Statement

The Early Childhood Education program at Southwestern Illinois College enables students to acquire the theoretical knowledge and competencies required to enter a career or to continue professional growth in the field of early childhood education. The program prepares educators who are able to maximize the development and learning of children with diverse needs in a variety of settings. Assessment of student learning is incorporated throughout the curriculum to ensure students acquire the knowledge and skills that all well-prepared early childhood educators should possess. The program provides a curriculum that meets or exceeds the minimum standards outlined in the National Association for the Education of Young Children Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation and the Early Childhood Education Content Area Standards.

Educational Goals

Students who pursue the study of Early Childhood Education will:

- I. Promote child development and learning.
 - A. Demonstrate an understanding of young children's characteristics and needs.
 - B. Describe multiple influences on development and learning.
 - C. Use developmental knowledge to create healthy, respectful, supportive and challenging learning environments.

- II. Explain the role of family and community relationships.
 - A. Discuss family and community characteristics.
 - B. Support and empower families and communities through respectful, reciprocal relationships.
 - C. Involve families and communities in their children's development and learning.

- III. Interpret observation, documentation, and assessment to support young children and families.
 - A. Identify the goals, benefits, and uses of assessment.
 - B. Use observation, documentation, and other appropriate assessment tools and approaches.
 - C. Practice responsible assessment in partnership with families and other professionals.

- IV. Explain the relationship between teaching and learning.
 - A. Know, understand, and use positive relationships and supportive interactions as the foundation of work with young children.
 - B. Know, understand and use developmentally effective approaches, strategies and tools to facilitate young children's learning.

- C. Reinforce the importance of each content area (language and literacy, arts, mathematics, physical activity, science, etc.) in young children's learning, including the essential concepts, tools and structures within each, and can identify resources to deepen their understanding.
 - D. Design, implement and evaluate meaningful, challenging curriculum that promotes comprehensive developmental and learning outcomes for young children.
- V. Become a professional.
- A. Identify and involve oneself with the early childhood field.
 - B. Know about and upholding ethical standards and other guidelines.
 - C. Integrate knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives on early childhood education.
 - D. Engage in informed advocacy for children and the profession.

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Division: Allied Health

Status: