

Early Childhood Course Description

Outcomes of the Early Childhood Teacher Education Course

1. The adult learner will be able to demonstrate knowledge of Montessori philosophy, theory, and methodology with a focus on the early childhood years.
2. The adult learner will be able to demonstrate theoretical knowledge and application of pertinent research findings in the fields of child development and early childhood education with an emphasis on 2 ½ through 6 years of age.
3. The adult learner will be able to demonstrate practical ability in implementing the Montessori philosophy and methods.
4. The adult learner will have the insights and skills needed to work with the individual needs of children and plan for the continuity of learning experiences for children ages 2 ½-6.
5. The adult learner will become part of a "team" in a school and will learn how to work well with co-workers and with the administration of the school.
6. The adult learner will demonstrate love and respect for children and for the Montessori Method.
7. The adult learner will be able to implement child development and early education concepts and discuss them with other staff, parents and the community.

Admission

The candidate applying for admission to MCTESD for an Early Childhood Credential course should hold a Bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited United States college or university (or its equivalent). However, if the applicant does not have a Bachelor's degree from an accredited U.S. institution but holds a minimum of a secondary level state-approved/recognized high school diploma or GED or the international equivalent, they may be accepted into the program. Upon successful completion of all requirements the adult learner will receive an Associate Early Childhood Credential. Those with an Associate Early Childhood Credential should only represent themselves as holding an Associate Early Childhood Credential. Holders of an Associate Early Childhood Credential are strongly encouraged to obtain their Bachelor's within seven years of credentialing. Applicants for the Early Childhood course who do not have a U.S. Bachelor's degree or its equivalent are required to sign a statement verifying that they understand that some locations or schools may not accept an Associate Early Childhood credential as the qualification for full teaching responsibility.

Enrollment Process:

1. Completed application form
2. Interview
3. Signed enrollment agreement

Course Components

The Early Childhood Teacher Training course consists of core subjects of Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, Mathematics, Physical and Life Science, Social Studies, and Classroom Leadership. In addition, the course includes Montessori Philosophy and Theory, Observation, Child Development, Art, Music, Movement, and Parent Involvement/Education.

Practical Life/Everyday Living

1. Philosophy and rationale
2. Ground rules to grace and courtesy
3. Control of movement
4. Care of the person
5. Care of the environment
6. Food and nutrition

Sensorial

1. Philosophy and rationale
2. Materials aiding the education and refinement of the senses (cylinder blocks, pink tower, brown stair, red rods, knobless cylinders, color tablets, geometric cabinet, constructive triangles, geometric solids and bases, binomial and trinomial cube, sound cylinders, bells, rough and smooth boards, fabric matching, mystery bag, etc.)

Language

1. Philosophy and rationale
2. Receptive and expressive language experiences
3. Visual and auditory perceptual experiences
4. Vocabulary development and enrichment
5. Materials that aid the development of skills/concepts (metal insets, sandpaper letters, movable alphabets, object boxes, puzzle words, action commands, model farm or other miniature environment, grammar symbols, etc.):

- a. Reading
 - b. Penmanship
 - c. Writing
 - d. Function of words
6. Children's literature
 7. Drama

Mathematics

1. Philosophy and rationale
2. Materials that aid development of these concepts/skills:
 - a. Introduction to numeration (number rods, sandpaper numerals, spindle boxes, cards and counters, short bead stair)
 - b. The decimal system (golden beads, decimal numeral cards)
 - c. Functions of the decimal system (golden beads, stamp game, small bead frame)
 - d. Linear counting (teen boards, tens boards, hundred board, short chains, long chains)
 - e. Memorization of basic arithmetic facts (snake games, strip boards, bead boards, finger charts)
 - f. Fractions (fraction inset circles)
3. Math applications

Physical and Life Science Curriculum

1. Philosophy and rationale
2. Botany (includes 3-part card sets)
3. Zoology (includes 3-part card sets)
4. Earth science
5. Physical science

Social Studies Curriculum

1. Philosophy and rationale
2. Geography (Land and Water forms, Globes, Puzzle Maps, Flags, etc.)
3. History: time, calendar, seasons, personal history

Classroom Leadership

1. Preparation of the environment
2. Scheduling for the staff as well as the schedule for the child's day
3. Evaluation of children
4. Techniques for discipline, communication, and problem-solving
5. Human needs and requirements (children, families and staff) specific to a full day or extended day program
6. Multi-culture and diversity in all forms
7. Understanding issues relating to school administration, professional relationships, and best practices

Montessori Philosophy/Theory

1. Historical perspective
2. Philosophy specific to the method (i.e., including the absorbent mind, sensitive periods, logical-mathematical mind, spiritual and moral development of the child, cosmic wonder and exploration, etc.)
3. How the above relate to the child from birth through 6 in relation to Montessori philosophy, materials, teacher, and environment
4. Peace education

Observation

This includes lecture and documented observation, some of which can be done during the practicum phase. A minimum of 8 hours of academic content and 20 hours of documented observations is required.

It is suggested that academic content precede the documented observations.

A maximum of 20 hours of documented observations may be considered toward the required 300-hours total for in-residence academic content. Documented observation over 20 hours may not be included towards hours for in-residence content, but may be included in hours in excess of the 300 hours total required.

Child Development/Psychology

The program may elect to have adult learners receive the child development/psychology component from outside sources, such as local community colleges or universities. If the course is a required prerequisite or taught outside the program, up to a maximum of 30 contact hours may be counted in the total contact hours for the course.

1. Theories of development

2. Stages of development
3. Areas of development: physical, cognitive, emotional, social
4. Current research

Art, Music, Movement Curriculum

1. Art: philosophy and rationale, basic skills, two-dimensional work (easel or table), three-dimensional work, art appreciation and history
2. Music: philosophy and rationale, rhythmic skills, singing skills, instrumental skills, music appreciation and history
3. Movement: philosophy and rationale, body awareness, basic skills (loco-motor, stationary, games), line activities

Parent Involvement/Education (Parent-Educator Partnership)

1. Raising the level of awareness
2. Developing the knowledge base
3. Providing options for collaboration
4. Creating strategies for collaboration
5. Application-implementation of strategies

Early Childhood Practicum Teaching — Minimum 540 hours of instructional class time

Early Childhood Practicum Seminars

A minimum of 16 academic contact hours is required during the practicum phase, if the academic phase is held primarily in the summer.

Early Childhood Year-long Project

In class Year-long Project work can comprise no more than 16 academic contact hours. It is a required practicum year assignment that involves independent research and development by the adult learner. Examples of project topics include action research, curriculum design, reflective practice, literature review, application of knowledge, case study, preparation of the environment, assessment, transformation of the adult, etc.

Topics are subject to approval by the TEP.

Practicum Requirements

Practicum Models and Time Periods — Early Childhood Course

The Early Childhood practicum is defined as lasting a minimum of a full academic year, with

the adult learner working at the practicum site in the classroom of an approved supervising teacher for three hours a day, five days a week for nine consecutive months.

Alternative scheduling is possible. When an alternate schedule for the practicum experience is utilized, the director must explain the alternative model in the program's next annual report.

Over the course of the practicum, the adult learner is required to follow the development of the children in the assigned class and establish relationships with the children. The adult learner must present materials and participate in the various aspects of planning, record keeping, classroom management, and parent communication.

Age Range of Children

The class may contain children in the 2 ½ through 6 age span, but must contain at least the 3 through 6 age span to allow the adult learner to follow the developmental stages of children in an environment which is prepared to meet their social, emotional, intellectual, physical, and spiritual needs, and one which is equipped with the full complement of Montessori materials. AMS recognizes that in some situations there may be environments that do not have the 2½ through 6 age range. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the program director to outline a plan in the adult learners file and to document how the adult learner receives experience in the full 2½ through 6 age range.

Early Childhood Classroom Materials

The practicum classroom must be equipped with the full complement of Montessori materials and activities appropriate to the ages and needs of the children at the Early Childhood age level.

Model 1: Supervised Practicum

1. The supervised practicum requires that the adult learner participate in the Montessori Early Childhood classroom of a qualified supervising teacher at an approved school site.
2. The adult learner may not be asked to assume total responsibility for a class without the presence of a qualified supervising teacher or other qualified staff person.
3. A minimum of three on-site consultation/evaluation visits by a qualified field consultant is required. To best support the growth of the adult learner, the consultations/evaluation visits must be spread throughout the practicum phase.

Model 2: Self-Directed Practicum

1. All requirements for the supervised practicum also apply to the self-directed practicum, with the exception that the adult learner has full responsibility for the Montessori class without the daily guidance of a qualified supervising teacher in the classroom.
2. Adult learners may qualify for the self-directed practicum with one or more of the following prerequisites, along with written approval of the teacher education program director:
 - a. Prior experience as an assistant in a Montessori environment
 - b. Two or more years of previous teaching experience at the Early Childhood level
 - c. A bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited U.S. college or university, or its equivalent
3. A minimum of three on-site consultation/evaluation visits by a qualified field consultant plus additional support that is documented on the *AMS Credential Recommendation Form* is required. Additional support must include one or more of the following: extra visits, a local mentor teacher, monthly phone or e-mail contact, or other support designed by the director. To best support the growth of the adult learner, the consultations/evaluation visits must be spread throughout the practicum phase.

Entry into the Early Childhood Practicum

No part of the practicum may precede the beginning of the academic phase of the course.

Since the purpose of the practicum is to offer the adult learner the opportunity for practice with the information and insights acquired during the academic phase, **at least 90% of the academic contact hours for the level (not including assessment) must be completed prior to the end of the practicum experience.** In the case of a year-long academic phase, adult learners may begin the practicum phase during the first year of coursework, allowing the practicum phase to span a two-year academic cycle, so that **90% of the core curriculum instruction is completed prior to the end of the practicum.**