Recommendations

B.A. Early Childhood

To learn more about making the most of your educational experiences within and beyond the classroom contact:

Angie Baum, Assistant Professor, bauma@mailbox.sc.edu
PARTICIPATE

Community Service

Related course  EDEC 201: Inquiry in Early Childhood Education
Sites/experiences  Childcare programs, tutoring, after-school programs, and a variety of community organizations serving young children and their families.
Why this is important  Involvement with families and communities not only provides a service for others but also helps to broaden educators’ perspectives about and appreciation of the diverse world in which we live.

Global Learning

Related courses  • EDEC 336: Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in the Early Childhood Classrooms  
• EDTE 344: Supporting Linguistic Pluralism Across the Content Areas  
• EDUC 360: Global and Multicultural Perspectives on Education in International Settings (course satisfies the Global Citizenship and Multicultural Understanding: Social Sciences Core Competency), overseas in Maymester. Please check with the Department of Instruction and Teacher Education for availability of this course.  
• EDRD 445: Teaching Writing in Early Childhood – This course includes a requirement to spend time in homes and communities that represent cultural and linguistic worlds unfamiliar to the EC students.
Opportunities  • The early childhood faculty highly recommends that students attend and participate in the Latino Children’s Literature Conference that is organized by ITE faculty member, Dr. Julia López-Robertson. It is often held during Fall Semester. Please check with the ITE department for details.  
• Engage with children and families to learn about and value cultural and linguistic resources in all homes and communities.  
• Be a Conversation Partner
Why this is important  Every day, we live in and interact in brilliantly diverse societies both locally and globally. At the same time, the early childhood faculty recognizes that misperceptions and misinformation continue to exist that lead to damaging stereotypes and biases that prevent equitable learning opportunities for every child. To address this, our program invites students to learn in ways that contradict such biases by deepening familiarity with and appreciation for diverse ways of being, learning about innovative programs and practices that broaden their abilities to interact with and learn from others locally and globally, and identifying and changing unjust practices.
Peer Leadership

Student Organization(s)  Kappa Delta Pi, Teaching Fellows, Honors College, Future Educators Association, Palmetto State Teachers Association

Opportunities  Students have opportunities to serve on College of Education committees with faculty. In some courses, they participate in planning conferences and other presentations of their learning.

Other Recommendations  Students gain valuable leadership experience by getting involved with the Office of Community Service Programs, residence hall governance, being a peer leader for U101, or engaging in one of the many other leadership opportunities on campus. These experiences help students build skills that will serve them well in teaching and other professional roles in schools. Pre-service teachers also have the opportunity to present at professional conferences such as The Professional Development Schools National Conference, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, South Carolina Early Childhood Association.

Why this is important  Early Childhood students are prepared to be “collaborative educational leaders”. Students demonstrate leadership with children, in the classroom, and with their peers. Students learn about varied leadership opportunities in education, including serving as an advocate for children and families.

Internships

Related Courses  • EDEC 340P (The Young Child: Birth-3, Practicum);
• EDEC 342P (The Young Child: 3-8, Practicum);
• EDEC 443 (Internship in Integrated Curriculum);
• EDEC 492 (Internship in Curriculum, Assessment, Teaching, and Professional Roles)
• MATH 221 and 222

Recommended sites/work experiences  An important part of the Early Childhood program is for students to have internship experiences with programs serving children from birth- 8 years and with all age ranges (birth- 3 years), preschoolers (3-5 years), and primary age children (5-8 year olds). Students participate in many different types of schools/centers with children from diverse cultures and backgrounds. Experiences in diverse settings with diverse populations prepare students to be successful teachers. Students are also encouraged to seek diverse experiences by working in summer, recreation, and after school programs. Math pen pals with enrolled in local early childhood programs.

Professional Organizations  Students are encouraged to join state and national professional organizations and to use knowledge from those associations to support their ongoing learning and the learning of peers and colleagues. Some organizations include: National Association for the Education of Young Children, South Carolina Alliance of Black Educators, National Black Child Development Institute, National Council of Teachers of English, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, National Science Teachers Association, National Council on Social Studies, Council for Exceptional Children Division for Early Childhood.
Other Early Childhood students have first-hand experiences in a variety of schools/centers as a component of many other courses besides those specifically labeled as practica or internships. In addition, most early childhood methods courses are taught on-site in schools to provide supervised, guided teaching practice and experience.

Why this is important Internships are at the core of the Early Childhood program. Students participate in school and child care settings throughout the program.

Research

Related courses
- EDEC 340 and 342 (The Young Child: Development, Care, and Education): A case study of one child in each course (infant/toddler and 3-8 year old) including data collection and analysis.
- EDEC 591 (Seminar in Teaching Young Children): Inquiry projects completed during final internship.

Sample research projects or topics
First-Graders’ Oral Problem Solving Strategies in Mathematics, Analysis of Teacher Behaviors’ Impact on One Child’s Pro-social Behavior, Differences in Boys’ and Girls’ Block Play, Strategies for Supporting Students in Multilingual Classrooms, The Effects of Privileging on Student Learning, Contradicting Stereotype in Teaching Students With Special Needs, The Impact of Intergenerational Relationships in Early Childhood Literacy Education

Other recommendations
Students are encouraged to explore opportunities for grant support to engage in an inquiry project through the Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR). Students may choose to expand on the work of their inquiry project in EDEC 591 or to work collaboratively with a member of the faculty to conduct other investigations through Office of Undergraduate Research support.

Why this is important Teachers are researchers every day as they observe children, learn about children’s families and communities, and use their learning to inform teaching practice. But they are also consumers of research. They teach brilliantly because they draw on the latest and best work in the field, building the knowledge necessary to address the needs of all children. In early childhood education, we feel strongly that teaching is far more than a repertoire of strategies or practices; teachers understand the impact of practices because they know their field and they engage in ongoing professional learning that constantly pushes them to learn and teach in thoughtful, innovative, just, research-based ways.

INTEGRATE

How to Integrate
All courses require early childhood education majors to create effective learning opportunities for children and for themselves by integrating empirical and experiential knowledge across courses and other experiences. The early childhood faculty works together to help students develop deep understandings of complex issues, ideas, policies, and practices by building intentionally and conceptually across courses. Courses are not isolated experiences but integrated into a comprehensive degree program designed with a research-based foundation in specific convictions about what matters in the education of young children.
Early childhood majors use their integrated learning experiences to create innovative learning opportunities for young children as they engage in new contexts every semester. They are challenged to apply their learning to get to know children, families and communities in ways that allow them to draw on the rich resources of homes and communities to build practice that supports all children in inclusive and validating ways. They apply their learning to teaching effectively, learning from the wisdom of experienced teachers as well as raising questions and working toward change that continues to move the field forward.

Teachers of the 21st century have the ability to understand and appropriately apply theory and research in decision-making in all aspects of teaching—whether how to interact with a child, design a lesson, collaborate with families, work effectively with peers, or design a new program with other professionals. Our goal is for early childhood graduates to be “collaborative, educational leaders” who are well informed in such areas as content, child development, and cultural understanding, and who have strategies to advocate for and lead on behalf of young children.

**LEAD**

**Initial career opportunities**

Early childhood majors can look forward to a range of career possibilities as they leave the university and enter the field. Some of those initial career opportunities include:

- PreK-3rd grade teacher
- Child Care Center Teacher
- Agency Leader (e.g., Infant/Toddler Specialist, Resource/Referral Coordinator, Child Care License Coordinator)

**Related graduate programs**

As early childhood majors consider graduate work to further their learning, they enroll in one of a range of Masters (and eventually Doctoral level) programs. A few of them are listed below:

- MEd in Teaching and Learning with an emphasis in a range of areas: Early Childhood, Language and Literacy, English Language Learners.
- MEd in Language and Literacy
- MEd in Special Education
- MEd in Administration
- Post MEd: Ph.D. in Early Childhood Education, Curriculum and Instruction, Language and Literacy, Special Education, Educational Administration, Educational Research, Foundations of Education
Future career opportunities

With a few years of teaching experience (and in most cases, further degrees), early childhood majors can aspire to positions such as:

• School Administrator
• Child Care Center Director
• Reading Specialist
• Speech Pathologist
• School District Administrator/Coordinator
• Teacher educator/Professor
• Consultant
• Agency Head/State Leader in the provision/development of early childhood programs

Impact on students’ future

USC Early Childhood graduates are empowered to make a difference for children, families, and communities through the combination of their extensive knowledge and experience. The early childhood program has particularly been cited for its outstanding preparation related to working in diverse settings, in-depth understanding of young children (birth-age 8), and effective strategies in working with families. These skills assist graduates, not only as outstanding teachers, but as informed community leaders who are prepared to serve as advocates for children, families, and quality early care and education in a variety of settings.