

Early Childhood Education

Nashville State Community College

Mission Statement and Goals

The mission of the Early Childhood Education Program (ECED) at Nashville State Community College (NSCC) is to develop knowledgeable, responsive, and innovative professionals who accomplish positive change in the lives of diverse children, families, and communities we serve.

We believe graduates of our program should have a knowledge of child development, use developmentally appropriate practices, be able to build and maintain strong family and community partnerships, rely on assessment data when making decisions, use evidence-based early childhood education tools and strategies, and grow as early childhood professionals.

The program goals are:

1. To produce graduates with a Technical Certificate or Associate of Applied Science Degree in Early Childhood Education who are prepared to work as teachers, assistant teachers, caregivers, and administrators serving diverse populations and ages of children and families in a variety of diverse settings and programs including center-base, family child care, public school, Head Start, and school-age care settings
2. To produce graduates with an Associate of Science or Associate of Arts Degree who are prepared for transfer to 4-year universities to receive a bachelor's degree in a) Early Childhood Education, PK – 3rd Grade or PK-K with a teacher license or b) Child Development and Family Relationships
3. Provide training requirements for the Child Development Credential (CDA), Tennessee Early Childhood Program Administrator Credential, and other state credentials
4. Provide professional development for early childhood professionals.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for the Early Childhood Education program (ECED) at Nashville State Community College is a statement of philosophy and core values related to five major components: community, students, curriculum, instruction, and program assessment. This statement is a result of collaborative input from students, faculty, administrators, and community stakeholders and is a living, dynamic document that will be revisited and revised in response to inevitable change in these core components.

FOCUS ON Community Connection and Support

The ECED program is committed to meeting the needs of the early education community. In addition, the program of studies supports organizations and individuals whose goal is providing quality care and education services to children and families. NSCC supports the initiatives and programs developed by community partners and state agencies with quality enhancement as a primary goal. These programs and organizations include:

- Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance (TECTA)
- Council for Professional Recognition (CDA)
- Early Head Start/Head Start
- Tennessee Department of Human Services Quality Rating System
- Tennessee Department of Education
- Area Affiliates of the National Association for the Education of Young Children
- Tennessee Family Child Care Alliance/TOPSTAR
- Center for Social-Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL-Team Tennessee)
- Child Care Resource and Referral Network
- Local Public and Private Schools
- Alignment Nashville Pre-K Committee
- Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology

FOCUS ON Student Learning and Success

The ECED program is committed to providing access to early childhood education coursework to a diverse population of students (diverse in age, culture, educational background, work experience, and goals.) The program establishes policies and practices designed to facilitate rather than hinder access to and success in higher education. The program strives to provide a seamless movement through levels of professional development--from high school Early Childhood Education Careers programs to the CDA Credential to the Technical Certificate to the Associate to the Baccalaureate degree. The primary focus is on student success through achieving student learning outcomes. In addition, emphasis is placed on connecting students to supportive services at the college and in the community, and advising students about career options and further educational opportunities beyond the associate degree.

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FOCUS ON Meaningful Curriculum

The program's curriculum is aligned with the standards and supportive skills identified by the National Association for the Education of Young Children for associate degree programs. The ECED program is designed to guide early childhood education students in acquiring the knowledge and skills to be effective teachers of all young children birth through age eight in a variety of settings. The program embraces the belief that both care and education are integral parts of any high quality program and that the core knowledge and skills in early care and education are consistent regardless of provider, sponsorship, or funding. Field experiences in diverse settings and with varying age groups are integrated throughout the curriculum to support students in connecting classroom concepts and theory to application in early childhood programs.

The ECED Curriculum reflects the following core beliefs:

- NAEYC Initial Standards for ECE Professional Preparation (2010) and Supportive Skills are the basis of the overall curriculum.
- Positive teacher-child relationships, supportive interactions, and a well-prepared indoor and outdoor learning environment are the foundation of quality early education.
- Effective teachers develop reciprocal relationships and partnerships with families of the children they serve.
- Teachers need to uphold the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct.
- A professional teacher engages in ongoing professional development, collaboration with colleagues, advocacy and lifelong learning.
- Research on child development and best practices with young children is to be respected, valued, and evaluated for real-world application.
- Children's play scaffolded through teacher interactions in a well-prepared environment with learning centers supports development of the whole child in an integrated curriculum.
- Effective teachers are purposeful and intentional in their planning and implementation of curriculum.
- The role of the teacher is to use a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate teaching and learning approaches to support each child in achieving learning outcomes.
- Teacher reflection and critical thinking are essential teaching skills.
- Observation and documentation provide data to be used in making decisions for appropriate curriculum.
- Teachers need special skills and support to work effectively with linguistically and culturally diverse children and families.
- Developmentally appropriate classroom curriculum is key to meeting the needs of each child.
- Teachers need to understand content knowledge and resources in academic disciplines.
- Teachers need skills in using technology with young children, with peers, and as a professional resource.
- Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standards provide a guide to teachers.
- Use of high quality children's literature is central to supporting children's learning.
- Teachers need ongoing support in promoting social and emotional competence in children and in using positive guidance and discipline approaches. Infusion of the Pyramid Model content and materials in the ECED curriculum strengthens this key concept.

FOCUS ON Caring, Supportive, Effective Instruction

The focus for the faculty is on teaching to support student learning. Faculty members create strong communities of learners through caring, supportive interactions and relationships with students. Faculty use a variety of approaches and strategies to support varied learning styles of students, establish clear expectations of performance, and employ varying assessment methods with an emphasis on authentic assessment. The faculty qualifications include real-life, practical experience in working with families and children in early childhood settings, in addition to academic preparation in the discipline. Through ongoing professional development, faculty strive to stay current in the field of early care and education.

FOCUS ON On-going Program Assessment and Improvement

Adjustments and improvements to the program are a continuing process as the college seeks to provide a quality early childhood education program. The program undergoes on-going assessment and evaluation using both formal and informal approaches and methods. Faculty, administrators, students, and community partners all participate in assessing program effectiveness and help establish goals for improvement. The AAS Degree program seeks to maintain NAEYC Early Childhood Associate Degree Accreditation.