

Master of Arts in Teaching in Early Childhood Education

Program Overview

Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) in Early Childhood Education (Graduate Degree with Teaching Licensure)

The Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) in Early Childhood Education is designed for students who are seeking a graduate degree and initial licensure to teach young children from birth to 2nd grade. The program also offers the opportunity to earn initial licensure without a graduate degree by enrolling in the Non-Degree Teacher Licensure program (NDTLP). The program provides a solid academic course of study as well as diverse, dynamic, and enriching learning experiences aimed at preparing high quality teachers who will provide young children with a strong 21st-century foundation for learning and development. Graduates of the program will acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for working effectively with typically and atypically developing children in diverse learning environments. The Masters degree with initial licensure program is composed of 36 credit hours designed to be completed in as few as five semesters, including one summer, while the Non-Degree Teacher Licensure only program (NDTLP) is composed of 33 credit hours.

Goals of the Program

Graduates of the program will:

1. Acquire deep understanding of the process of human development and learning from birth to age 8 and become familiar with the field of Early Childhood Education through historical, philosophical, theoretical and practical perspectives as well as legislation impacting early childhood education and the critical role of families in the education of young children.
2. Develop enriched awareness of research in educating young children and understanding of how such research informs practice to make learning effective while also expanding the theoretical base of the field of early childhood education.
3. Build solid academic content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and professional competencies appropriate for 21st century demands of effective teaching, assessment, ethics, and professionalism in the field of Early Childhood Education.
4. Experience working with young children and their families from diverse backgrounds and develop rapport with schools, communities and professional organizations such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).
5. Develop a comprehensive set of skills in interpersonal, technological, pedagogical, and assessment domains in order to work effectively with young children at different developmental and ability levels in school settings and beyond.

Master of Arts in Early Childhood Education (Non Licensure Concentration)

This concentration is designed as a non-licensure track for students who wish to complete the Master of Arts degree in Early Childhood Education.

This concentration does not include a license and it prepares students to graduate with knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to work with children from birth to 2nd Grade in a variety of settings which do not require a teaching license. Such settings include museums, child care programs, non-profit organizations, private schools/businesses, international settings, and other places which provide appropriate environments for young children to engage in active learning as they develop.

Students will complete a total of 30 credit hours sequenced in 4 Blocks. This includes 27 credit hours of courses and a capstone paper (3 credit hours). Graduates of the program who are eligible for licensure and later decide to study for a teaching license must do so within five years of graduation. They will be required to complete all the clinical experiences, other courses required to obtain a license in the State of Illinois, student teaching and fulfill other licensure requirements in place at the time.

Requirements for Admission

1. Admission to the College of Graduate Studies and Research (CGSR)
2. A Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university
3. A cumulative undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or higher on a 4-point scale
4. Two professional letters of recommendation from references who are conversant with the applicant's scholarship and potential as a teacher.
5. A one-page statement indicating reasons for applying to the program.

NOTE:

1. Provisional admission to the program may be granted to an applicant whose cumulative undergraduate GPA falls slightly below the 3.0 requirement but who is otherwise highly qualified. Consideration will be made on an individual basis after an interview with the applicant.
2. The MAT ECED program admits students in the Fall semester only. It can be completed in 5 consecutive semesters, including one summer.
3. Candidates with experience in teaching young children in a group setting may qualify to have some of their clinical hours waived with documented evidence and as determined by the program.

Transfer Credits

A maximum of 9 credit hours of graduate level coursework may be accepted into the program upon evaluation of the coursework and determination of equivalence in scope and content.

Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) in Early Childhood Education (Graduate Degree with Teaching Licensure Concentration)

Requirements for Retention

In order to proceed through the program without interruption, candidates are expected to:

1. Maintain a GPA of 3.0 or above throughout the program
2. Earn a grade of "B" or higher in each of the clinical experiences (ECED 527A & 527B) prior to student teaching, as required by ISBE
3. Earn acceptable ratings in the review of candidate dispositions and professional behavior
4. Progress satisfactorily toward program completion
5. Take the Illinois State Content Exam prior to student teaching
6. Adhere to the university's graduate policies as documented in the CGSR's section of the catalog, and the Graduate Student Handbook

Clinical Experience

The MAT (ECED) program has two clinical experiences that must be successfully completed prior to student teaching - ECED 527A and ECED 527B.

Candidates complete 80 hours at two levels in the first clinical ECED 527A. There will be a 30-hour placement with infants and toddlers and 50 hours with preschoolers. This clinical provides the opportunity to observe the rapid development of children in all domains, and to plan and implement engaging activities that are appropriate for each level. In the second clinical, ECED 527B, candidates are placed in a school setting for a 80 hour clinical. This provides the opportunity to plan and implement lessons in a Kindergarten, 1st or 2nd grade classroom, all under the guidance of a Cooperating Teacher in the field and a university supervisor.

NOTE:

Candidates with experience in teaching young children in a group setting may qualify to have some of their clinical hours waived with documented evidence and as determined by the program.

Student Teaching

Student teaching is completed over 16 weeks of full time, full day teaching experience. Placements for the Clinical Experiences and student teaching are made by the Clinical Experiences and Student Teaching (CEST) office. Candidates are required to complete a criminal background check prior to placement for clinical and student teaching.

Requirements for Degree Completion

1. Successful completion of all coursework with a minimum GPA of 3.0.
2. Successful completion of clinical experiences and student teaching with a grade of "B" or higher

Requirements for Degree Completion and Entitlement

- Successful completion of all degree requirements and passing score in the Illinois Content Test.
- Requirements for the MAT in Early Childhood Education (ECED)
- The Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) is a 36-credit hour program, and the Non-Degree Teacher Licensure Program (NDTLP) is a 33-credit hour program. Course requirements are listed below.

Note: All courses are required for Both MAT and NDTLP except for ECED 507, which is required for the MAT only. For the Master of Arts Degree in Early Childhood Education (Non Licensure Concentration), student will complete a capstone and will not complete any of the clinical experiences. Students will complete the program in four semesters instead of five.

Early Childhood Education Concentration (non-licensure concentration)

BLOCK 1:

- Meet with ECED Graduate program Advisor
- Register for ECED 502 and ECED 503
- Maintain a 2.75 GPA in courses

BLOCK 2:

- Complete ECED 504, ECED 505 and LTCY 501
- Maintain a 2.75 cumulative GPA

BLOCK 3 (Summer):

- Complete BLBC 440 and SPED 404
- Maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.75.

BLOCK 4:

- Complete ECED 506, 507 and 575
- Meet with the program Advisor (<https://www.neiu.edu/academics/colleges-departments/education/advisors/>) for an academic record review and obtain information on how to be authorized for the capstone.
- Maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.75

EXIT REQUIREMENTS FOR DEGREE COMPLETION

- Successful completion of all courses
- Must maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.5
- Must earn a B or better in the capstone

Code	Title	Hours
Fall 1		
Block 1		
ECED-502	Theories, Philosophies And Technologies Informing Early Childhood Education And Assessment	3
ECED-503	Early Childhood Curriculum And Assessment	3
Spring 1		
Block 2		
ECED-504	Early Language Acquisition, Assessment, And School-Family Intervention Strategies	3
ECED-505	Technology Integrated Practice In ECED: Methods Of Teaching/Assessing Language Arts, Music, And Art	3
LTCY-501	Literacy Instruction In Primary And Elementary Grades	3
Summer		
Block 3		
BLBC-440	Methods For Teaching English Learners In Diverse Classrooms	3
SPED-404	Survey Of The Field Of Special Education	3
ECED-527A	Clinical Experiences In Early Childhood Education - Infant To Preschool	1.5
Fall 2		
Block 4		
ECED-506	Methods Of Teaching STEAM And Assessing Learning In Early Childhood	3
ECED-507	Research Seminar In Early Childhood Education	3
ECED-527B	Clinical Experiences In Early Childhood Education - Kindergarten To 2nd Grade	1.5
Spring 2		
Block 5		
ECED-529	Internship - Student Teaching In Early Childhood Education	6
Total Hours		36

This sample curricular map is provided to guide you in the planning of your progression for this major. This guide should not replace regular consultations with your program advisor. For specific recommendations of courses not identified, please consult your program advisor.

