Early Childhood Education
Master of Science

The focus of the M.S. program in Early Childhood Education is on the advanced preparation of teachers and leaders in the field of Early Childhood Education. The program addresses the education of children age 3 through grade 3 by concentrating on the study of children ages 3-8 and the implications such study holds for educational practice. This degree does not lead to initial teacher licensure. Those pursuing this program will be prepared as professional teachers/leaders in a variety of early childhood settings, including public and private schools (Pre-K-grade 3), Head Start programs, child development and childcare centers, and college and University settings.

The mission of the Early Childhood Education program is to teach and empower educators and leaders in the field of Early Childhood Education. The focus in this program is on educating teachers to be careful and open-minded observers who develop early learning curriculum and programs with the child in mind; thus, the child is at the center of the program, and the source of study.

The program is committed to establishing a theoretical foundation based on research in the field of early childhood education that is combined with practical experiences to prepare professionals who will:

1. Encourage the child’s natural curiosity and exploration of the environment;
2. Develop an understanding of human diversity and recognize its value in a community of learners;
3. Become reflective in their approach to teaching and leadership;
4. Develop supportive and productive learning environments for children, teachers, parents, and support staff;
5. Integrate knowledge of children with special needs into curriculum and program development.

Admission Requirements

The applicant must meet the School of Graduate Studies’ current minimum general admission requirements as published in the graduate catalog.

1. An undergraduate degree in early childhood education, child development, elementary education, or a related field.
2. A cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of at least 2.75 for all undergraduate work or a GPA of at least 3.0 for the junior and senior years of undergraduate work (based on A = 4.00).
3. Satisfy the School of Graduate Studies’ English Language Proficiency requirements as published in the graduate catalog.
4. Transcripts, recommendations for admission, and a personal statement, i.e., a response to three essay prompts, are part of the School of Graduate Studies and Early Childhood Education application procedure. The personal statement essay should be 2-3 pages in length and the prompts are:
   a. What have you already done professionally or personally of which you are proud? Please include a chronological history of all professional teaching and administration experience, as well as academic honors or achievements you earned.
   b. What are the characteristics, attitudes, values, and/or skills that you think will make you a good candidate for your professional role?

Describe several personal and professional goals you would like to achieve in the next five years. Include in your description reasons why these goals are important to you.

Degree Requirements

The M.S. degree in Early Childhood Education is available in two options: non-thesis option and the thesis option. The program of study is developed together with the student’s advisor (non-thesis option, 32 credits) or with a student’s thesis committee (thesis option, 30 credits).

Non-Thesis Option:

1. Thirty-two credits including credits required for the major.
3. A maximum of one-fourth of the credit hours required for the degree may be transferred from another institution.
4. At least one-half of the credits must be above the 500 level.

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5. The program may include just the major, the major and the minor, or the major and a cognate area. The major must include 20 credits from the major department and the minor or cognate must include nine credits.

6. Completion of a two-credit practicum (60 hours) in an early childhood setting.

7. Preparation of a written independent study approved by the faculty advisor.

**Thesis Option:**

1. A minimum of 30 semester credits in a major field, including the credits granted for the thesis and the research leading to a 4-6-credit T&L 998 Thesis.

2. A maximum of one-fourth of the credit hours required for the degree may be transferred from another institution.

3. At least one-half of the credits must be above the 500 level.

4. The program may include just the major, the major and a minor, or the major and a cognate area. The major must include 20 credits from the major department and a minor or cognate must include nine credits.

5. Preparation and successful defense of a thesis.

This program of graduate study can be completed in 18 months going full-time or 24 months going part-time (two courses per semester). Courses are offered on campus, online and a combination of the two.

**Required Courses:**

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<tr>
<th>Major</th>
<th>T&amp;L 526 Play in Development and Early Childhood Education</th>
<th>3</th>
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<tr>
<td>T&amp;L 527 Curricular Foundations in Early Childhood Education</td>
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<td>T&amp;L 529 Language Development &amp; Cognition in Children</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>T&amp;L 530 Foundations of Reading Instruction</td>
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<td>T&amp;L 553 Collaborative Relationships: Home, School and Community</td>
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<td>T&amp;L 580 Practicum in Schools</td>
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<td>T&amp;L 997 Independent Study</td>
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<tr>
<th>Scholarly Tools</th>
<th>EFR 509 Introduction to Educational Research</th>
<th>3</th>
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<td>T&amp;L 569 Action Research</td>
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<tr>
<th>Electives</th>
<th>The student will choose electives in consultation with his/her adviser.</th>
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<td>Total Credits</td>
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Students are required to take T&L 580 Practicum in Schools. This practicum requires 60 hours in an early childhood setting, which could be the candidate’s work setting if it meets required accreditation standards.

**Faculty and Areas of Expertise**

- **Joni Burris, Ph.D. Candidate**: Teacher recruitment and retention, assessment, identification, and service provision in the field of special education, collaboration, neurology and child development, and the relationship between nutrition and behavior.

- **Michael Gallo, Ph. D.**: Early language and literacy development; learning disabilities: ADHD; play and development: fostering and promoting it in b-3rd grade classrooms; puppetry as a curriculum & learning tool.

- **Grace Onchwari, Ph.D.**: Mentor-coaching and teacher professional development, immigrant children and school readiness, technology and cultural diversity

- **Kristen Votava, Ph.D., CCC-SLP**: Early language and cognitive development, collaboration with families, self-reflection, state accountability systems, early intervention service delivery, and implementation science in early childhood.

- **Jo-Anne Yearwood, M.S.**: professional development for child care personnel, staff evaluations, early childhood administrator preparation and technology use in early childhood classrooms.

**Contact Information**

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http://education.und.edu/teaching-and-learning/grad-early-childhood.cfm

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The MS in Early Childhood Education is also available online.

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