

ECFS 200, 303A, 303D, and 304A: Service-Learning and Research

Winter 2017 • University of Washington

Instructors: Mary Clevenger-Bright, Debi Talukdar, Lynn Dietrich

Overview

ECFS 303:

Course Overview

This is the orientation seminar to service-learning requirements in the major in community-based settings in the field of Early Childhood & Family Studies. Through this course along with hours in service learning during the quarter, students will integrate their service-learning experience, and academic research, demonstrating how research informs evidence-based decision-making in programs and services for young children and families. Students will broaden their awareness of the early learning profession while considering their "place"™ in the work.

This course is focused on Standard 6: Becoming a professional from the NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Preparation (http://www.naeyc.org/ncate/files/ncate/Initial_2pager.pdf) :

“Candidates prepared in early childhood degree programs identify and conduct themselves as members of the early childhood profession. They are continuous, collaborative learners who demonstrate knowledgeable, reflective and critical perspectives on their work, making informed decisions that integrate knowledge from a variety of sources.”

Course sessions, assignments, and service learning placements are designed to address the following aspects of Standard 6:

6a: Identifying and involving oneself with the early childhood field

6c: Engaging in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice

Course Objectives: At the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe a variety of career domains in the field of early learning, and reflect upon and identify a personal program of study and career direction.
2. Observe and analyze the ways in which theoretical ideas and current issues in the field of early learning are evident in service learning settings and experiences.
3. Develop an asset-based relationship with a community-based organization focused on children and families; clarify expectations and goals for service-learning experience.

Role of Service-Learning in the Course

Service Learning plays a vital role in this course. Students' experiences in early learning settings and community based and advocacy organizations provides them with the opportunity to see the ideas from the course 'come alive'. Additionally, they learn 'wisdom from practice' and knowledge based in the field regarding children and families. Finally, they have a chance to imagine the role they may play in their upcoming career goals and begin to network and form relationships with those working in the field.

Assignments Related to Service-Learning

1) Career Exploration Assignment, interview & further research on a career of interest in the field of early learning.

2) Cultural Autobiography, an exploration of the aspects of culture (in the broad sense) that have shaped their experience, identity, values, and beliefs; and to consider how this 'lens' leads to interpretations of what they experience in their service learning. Checking assumptions and myths about others is an important outcome of this assignment.

3) Professional Philosophy Paper, students will generate 3 assertions to make about the importance of the field of early learning, providing supporting evidence and information from readings and course resources.

4) Community Asset Assignment; using the Asset Based Community Development Framework, students will conduct research (also interviewing someone at their service learning site) to find 12 assets that support the children and families at their service learning site 'community'. Sharing these assets in both chart and map formats, they will present to others in class, while also applying what they have found to a child/family case study provided in class.