

# ECFS 200: Introduction to Early Childhood and Family Studies

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## Overview

This is a survey course that explores current practices, programs, and research in the field of early childhood and family studies from a bio-ecological perspective. The focus of the course is on understanding the biological child within family, community, cultural, political, and economic contexts, recognizing that development doesn't occur in isolation. This, in turn, informs the creation and ongoing evaluation of programs, policy, and advocacy in such areas as parenting and family support, mental and physical health, early learning and care, poverty, and other risk factors. This introductory course is suited to students wishing to integrate early childhood and family studies into their academic and professional careers. Each week students explore a different area of early childhood study including, child development, relationships and attachments, risk and resilience, mental and physical health, policy and advocacy, global diversity, quality teaching and learning, and early childhood education environments.

## Role of Service-Learning in the Course

Students in this course are asked to engage the material, not only intellectually and analytically, but practically and personally. Through service learning, students will reflect on how, in their work with community partners, they see people's lives affected by the interplay between their own actions and the social contexts in which they act. Working in organizations that offer work with young children will give students to apply first-hand all the learnings from the course. They will understand how external circumstances affect the internal worlds of young children. Students who work with partners that serve people from a variety of backgrounds and cultures will gain perspectives on diversity and cultural-responsiveness, an important take-away in an increasingly multicultural world.

## Assignments Related to Service-Learning

Throughout the quarter, students will write four service learning related assignments. They will approach each part of this four-part series from the lens of their experiences and learning from their placement. In the first one they will introduce their placement and talk about what aspect is personally interesting and what further questions they have regarding the work or setting they are in. In the second one they will be expected to do a literature review on this chosen aspect in order to answer the questions they asked in part one. In the third part they students will write a personal reflection of their experiences and learning from their placement and how it has impacted the way they view early childhood experiences, and possibly themselves. In the final part they will conclude by tying in course material and readings to gain a deeper understanding of their service learning opportunity. In the last week of the quarter, students will present a summary of their work to a small group in their cohort so they can exchange notes and gain an understanding of other people's journeys over the quarter.

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