

# EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: SPECIAL NEEDS (M.ED.)

<https://cola.unh.edu/education/program/med/early-childhood-education-special-needs>

## Description

The Education Department offers the master of education degree in early childhood education with an option in special needs. When completed in conjunction with a degree, certification is available as an early childhood special education teacher (birth through eight years). Certification requirements are additional to the master's degree but may be completed as electives for the degree.

This program is an advanced course of study designed for teachers, administrators, and other early childhood practitioners who wish to improve their professional competence and broaden their career opportunities. The program emphasizes the acquisition of knowledge and competencies in child development (birth through eight years), learning environments, developmentally appropriate curriculum, developmental and cultural diversity, and professional leadership. The coursework culminates in extensive field-based experience.

## Admission Requirements

All admitted students are expected to have had at least one course in child development at the upper division level and at least 200 hours of supervised classroom experience with children from birth through eight years of age, or the equivalent.

In addition to the early childhood core requirements described above, students choosing this option will concentrate on young children who are at risk for, or have, developmental difficulties and special needs. Coursework emphasizes an understanding of the role of the family, community, and social policy in early development and intervention. The program is non categorical in its approach to assessment and educational planning.

## Admission Criteria

In determining admission of students to teacher education graduate programs, several criteria are used:

1. The undergraduate record. The undergraduate overall minimum grade point average for admission is 3.0. The undergraduate grade point average of students admitted to the graduate programs in teacher education is approximately 3.55 (based on 2020 admissions). For UNH students pursuing the Accelerated Masters, a minimum GPA of 3.2 is required.
2. Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators (Core) exam scores are required. Applicants must obtain, at a minimum, a qualifying score (as set by the state of New Hampshire at the time of testing) on all three (Reading, Writing, and Mathematics) Core exams in order to be considered for admission. Current NH qualifying scores may be found at the [ETS Praxis Website](#) under the "Tests required for all licensure areas" page.

3. Clearance on a criminal history records check through the NH Department of Safety.
4. Additional required application materials can be found at the [Graduate School website](#) under programs.

## Requirements

The M.Ed. degree requires a minimum of **36** graduate-level credits. The exact number of credit hours will depend on the student's background, competencies, and professional goals, and will be determined by the adviser.

| Code   | Title   | Credits |
|--|---|---------|
| <b>Core Requirements</b>                     |   |         |
| EDUC 861                                     | Designing Curriculum for Inclusive, Equitable Settings for Young Children (birth-8) | 4       |
| EDUC #942                                    | Socio-cultural Perspectives on Teaching and Learning                                | 4       |
| EDUC #948                                    | Leadership and Advocacy in Early Childhood Education                                | 4       |
| <b>Additional Special Needs Requirements</b> |   |         |
| EDUC 860                                     | Introduction to Young Children with Special Needs                                   | 4       |
| EDUC 862                                     | Curriculum for Young Children with Special Needs: Evaluation and Program Design     | 4       |
| EDUC 856                                     | Advocating for Diverse and Inclusive Family-School-Community Partnerships           | 4       |
| <b>Internship Requirements</b>               |   |         |
| EDUC 900B                                    | Internship and Seminar in Early Childhood Education <sup>1</sup>                    | 3 or 4  |
| EDUC 901B                                    | Internship and Seminar in Early Childhood Education <sup>1, 2</sup>                 | 3 or 4  |
| <b>Electives <sup>2</sup></b>                |   |         |
| EDUC 803F                                    | Teaching Elementary School Science  | 4       |
| EDUC 803M                                    | Teaching Elementary Social Studies  | 4       |
| EDUC 806                                     | Teaching & Learning Literacy in the Elementary Classroom                            | 4       |
| EDUC 845                                     | Math with Technology in Early Education   | 2       |
| <b>Concluding Experience <sup>3</sup></b>    |   |         |

Note: All coursework listed above must be completed, therefore some students may exceed the minimum credit requirement while completing the required coursework.

<sup>1</sup> Students seeking Dual Certification in ECE and ECSE need to register for 4-credits

<sup>2</sup> Select in consultation with the program advisor based on interest and certification requirements. Teacher Certification option (for those seeking Teacher Certification).

<sup>3</sup> **Concluding Experiences:** Teacher Candidate Assessment of Performance (TCAP) and Graduate Portfolio  
**TCAP:** In 2013, all New Hampshire institutions of higher education (IHEs) that prepare educators voted unanimously to adapt, pilot and validate a common assessment of teacher interns. All IHE's were committed to adapting a common assessment tool that would evaluate teacher candidates' preparedness for the classroom, and simultaneously serve as a tool for candidate and programmatic learning. To that end, the IHE Network adapted the California PACT for New Hampshire classrooms. A central goal of the NHTCAP is to act as an assessment of learning as well as an assessment for learning.  
**Graduate Portfolio:** By the end of the graduate program in Early Childhood with Special Needs Option, students should be able to provide evidence of their professional development in a variety of ways. Through the presentation of a graduate portfolio, students will demonstrate professional knowledge and competencies.

## Accelerated Master's

This graduate program is approved to be taken on an accelerated basis in articulation with certain undergraduate degree programs.

General Accelerated Master's policy, note that some programs have additional requirements (e.g. higher grade expectations) compared to the policy.

Please see the [Graduate School website](#) and contact the department directly for more information.

## Student Learning Outcomes

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of theories of learning and development and theories of instruction, as they apply to children from birth through age eight.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to translate those theories into developmentally appropriate practices for all children, including those who are culturally and/or developmentally diverse.