

SACS REPORT
Early Childhood Education Studies Certificate
March 15, 2008

I. Program Mission

The field of early childhood studies has received significant attention in recent years primarily as a result of the widely held belief that what happens during the early years of a child's life (birth to kindergarten) has an enormous impact on the level of success that child will achieve, not only in school, but in life. More and more states are creating publicly funded education programs for pre-school children. With this in mind, the Duke University Early Childhood Education Studies Certificate Program provides undergraduate opportunities to explore the complex social, psychological, economic, political, and cultural issues that impact the education of children ages birth to five.

The mission of the Early Childhood Education Studies Program is to allow students to enhance their qualifications for a graduate program in education or a field related to family or childhood. The Certificate also prepares students: to provide intelligent assessments of childcare centers and preschools; to teach in early childhood centers; to evaluate opportunities in the human service areas and be better able to make informed decisions about policies related to early childhood. The Early Childhood Education Studies Certificate Program provides an understanding of early human development and helps to develop a perspective on society's responses to its children.

The Early Childhood Education Studies Program builds on the liberal arts major of Trinity College and shares several common goals including the development of:

- Intellectual skills
- Cross-cultural Competency
- Civic Responsibility
- Ethical Reasoning
- Empathy and perspective taking

II. Learning Objectives for Undergraduates who Complete the Early Childhood Education Studies Program

1. Connect in meaningful ways academic work in the liberal arts to the social, psychological, economic, political, and cultural issues that impact early childhood education.
2. Be able to understand and apply knowledge of childhood development to early childhood education settings
3. Have awareness of various models and approaches to teaching diverse young children and to organizing learning environments for pre-school children
4. Work collaboratively with early childhood professionals in addressing the needs of young children
5. Reorganize the role that the community plays in the education of the whole child and understand the civic responsibility citizens have to early childhood education

III. Assessment of Learning Objectives

The assessment of undergraduates who complete coursework leading to a certificate in Early Childhood Education Studies involves a variety of mechanisms and instruments. Data are collected at multiple points from application to the program through graduation.

Data collected on undergraduates who seek to complete the Early Childhood Education Studies Certificate include, but are not limited to:

- Written application
- Formal interview by faculty members
- Review of transcript and GPA
- Review of Trinity College Advisement Checklist
- Written evaluations and letters of recommendation
- Student work samples from the cornerstone course Education 121
- Student work samples from the capstone internship course Education 160
- Observational evaluations by supervisors of the internship
- Reflection journals and portfolios
- Trinity College course evaluations

Faculty members who work with the Early Childhood Education Studies Program have decided that data on participating undergraduates should be collected at various time intervals during the course of study. The table below outlines the points in time that faculty members collect and examine data on undergraduates in the Early Childhood Education Studies Program. Data are both qualitative and quantitative.

Table 1: Assessment Schedule

<u>Data Collection Point</u>	<u>Assessment</u>
Pre-Admission	Written application Formal interview Transcript and GPA Written evaluations and recommendations
Introductory Cornerstone Course Education 121	Student work samples Formative assessment faculty interview Final project in Education 121
Capstone Course Education 160	Student work samples Observational evaluations by internship supervisors Reflection journals/portfolio Final project in Education 160
Graduation	Transcript Trinity course evaluation Final exit interview with faculty

At each collection point, undergraduates are rated on their mastery of certain knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are closely linked to the established goals and learning objectives. Rating scores indicate a student's progress toward mastery and are based on the quantitative and qualitative data listed in Table 1. Faculty members, internship supervisors, and/or mentor teachers or administrators use, when appropriate, a four-point rubric (Table 2). All ratings are

recorded, reviewed, and discussed with students in the program. Data are analyzed and utilized to guide decisions about the future direction of the program.

Table 2. The Four-Point Assessment Rubric

<u>Mastery Level</u>	<u>Description</u>
4 - Very effective/very aware/very true	Behavior and practices are demonstrated at a high level. Student seeks to expand scope of competencies and undertakes additional, appropriate responsibilities. Student is fully aware of educational/developmental principles and incorporates those principles into practice.
3 - Effective/aware/ true	Performance within this function area is consistently adequate or acceptable. Behavior and practices fully meet all performance expectations at an acceptable level. Student maintains an adequate scope of competencies and performs additional responsibilities as assigned. Student is aware of educational/developmental principles and consistently attempts to incorporate those principles into practice.
2 – Sometimes effective/aware/true	Performance within this function area is sometimes inadequate or unacceptable and needs improvement. Student requires supervision and assistance to maintain an adequate scope of competencies and sometimes fails to perform additional responsibilities as assigned. Student is sometimes aware of educational/developmental issues but is unable to consistently incorporate them into practice.
1 – Ineffective/unsatisfactory/untrue	Performance within this function area is consistently inadequate or unacceptable and most practices require considerable improvement to meet minimum performance expectations. Student requires close and frequent supervision in the performance of all responsibilities. Student is unaware of educational principles and is unable to incorporate them into practice.

IV. Use of Data for Improvement of the Early Childhood Education Certificate Program

Data are collected, then analyzed, then used as a basis for program improvement. The Director of the Early Childhood Education Studies Certificate meets with the Advisory Committee to review data and to consider ways to strengthen the program.

Table 3 lists examples of recent program improvements made as a result of reviews of assessment data.

Table 3: Recent Program Improvements

<u>Change to program</u>	<u>Targeted Learning Outcome (see section II)</u>
Modified Education 121 course to include more emphasis of NAEYC guidelines for best practice	3 (Models of teaching)
Increased number of possible sites for fieldwork and internship experiences; including diverse settings	4 (Work with professionals)
Included in exit interview, questions related to long-term commitment to welfare of young children	5 (Civic responsibility)

Summative Review of Early Childhood Education Studies Certificate Program

The Early Childhood Education Studies Certificate Program is one of several interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences undergraduate certificate programs offered by Trinity College. Relative to other Trinity College certificate programs, the Early Childhood Education Studies Program is small in terms of the number of undergraduate participants. Table 4 presents enrollment data.

Table 4: Enrollment

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of ECES Graduates</u>	<u>Number of undergraduates completing other 24 certificate programs</u>
2001-02	5	244
2002-03	9	252
2003-04	5	253
2004-05	2	244
2005-06	4	286
2006-07	2	268

One of the most significant challenges facing the Early Childhood Education Certificate Program is recruitment of students. With the proliferation of majors, minors, and certificates at Duke, the “competition” in terms of recruiting students is high. Another issue facing the program is developing strategies for addressing the need to educate Duke students about the growing number of Spanish speaking children living in North Carolina and the United States. Most of the field experience and internship placements occur at sites where a large number of Spanish speaking children attend. In fact, over 50% of the children born in 2007 in Durham County were of parents who spoke Spanish in the home. To address these and other challenges the Director of the Program in Education has asked the Advisory Committee of the Early Childhood Education

Studies Certificate Program to develop a strategic plan which will outline ways to strengthen the program and to perhaps integrate it more effectively with other Education programs.