EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER PREPARATION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT.

FEBRUARY, 2014

JoAnn Robinson, PhD.

Professor, Director of Early Childhood Education and Early Intervention
1. Which professional standards do you use to design your programs? How is the program aligned with UCONN’s Educator Preparation Program Conceptual Framework? See attached.

The Early Childhood Development and Education concentration in the Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS) major has been aligned with the competencies of the National Association for the Education of Young Children’s initial standards for professional preparation (2010). These standards are comprised of six core competency standards and one professional practice standard. In July 2012, President Susan Herbst of the University of Connecticut received notice of approval for our program to award the State of Connecticut’s Early Childhood Teacher Credential.

The core principles of the training offered through this early childhood teacher preparation program emphasize Reflection, Observation, and Individualization. Similar to UCONN’s Educator Preparation Program Conceptual Framework (EPPCF) emphasizing teachers as reflective, analytical professionals, our mission is to expose our students to the role of reflection throughout their coursework (via class discussions, discussion forums, and research papers) and through their consideration of critical incidents during their practicum experiences. Observation and Individualization of experiences for children form the core of our approach to diversity training, through an emphasis on the diversity of children’s approaches to learning and need for supports to learning.

The Learning elements of the EPPCF (Professional Knowledge Base and Evidence-Based Professional Practice) are found in the breadth of Knowledge students are expected to acquire:

- advanced study of the systems of influences on and timing of child development,
- the diversity of educational philosophical traditions that influence curricula development,
- the central importance of child assessment and individualization of instruction,
- parents in partnership with early childhood teachers for the education of their children from birth to age five.

Knowledge about Evidence-Based Professional Practice is promoted for the current assessments emphasized by the CT State Department of Education (i.e., the former Preschool Assessment Framework and the recently released Early Learning and Development Standards). Ethics and professional development are continually challenged through student reflections shared with collaborating and supervising faculty about critical incidents during their practica experiences at the UCONN Child Labs and in community placements with Head Start/Early Head Start programs.

The Leading/Leadership elements in our program can be found in the high level of competence promoted by the program, offering students in community placements the opportunity to share knowledge with sensitivity and care as they learn about the unique learning culture of the Head Start or home-based systems of care and education. Students are trained in inquiry about the effectiveness of practices, assessing process and outcome of experiences offered to infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Finally, all of our students are encouraged to Light the Way in early childhood education and its allied professions (Speech and Language Therapy, Child Life, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Special Education) by becoming the leaders of the field in the future. Graduate study is encouraged for all students, especially after practicing as a qualified lead teacher for several years in community or university lab school settings. NAEYC’s seventh practice standard stipulates that “field experiences and clinical practice are planned and sequenced so that candidates develop the knowledge, skills and professional dispositions necessary to promote the development and learning of young children across the entire developmental period of early childhood – in at least two of the three early childhood age groups (birth – age 3, 3 through 5, 5 through 8 years) and in the variety of settings that offer early education (early school grades, child care centers and homes, Head Start programs)” (NAEYC, 2010). This practice standard ensures that student teachers have experiences in settings that include cultural, linguistic, racial and ethnic diversity in families and communities, an essential element of their professional training.

2. What are the candidate learning outcomes in the areas of content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions?
There are six standards of knowledge and disposition stipulated by NAEYC that students are expected to become proficient in throughout their experiences in the program:

- Promoting Child Development and Learning
- Building Family and Community Relationships
- Observing, Documenting, and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families
- Using Developmentally Effective Approaches
- Using Content Knowledge to Build Effective Curricula
- Becoming a Professional.

The learning outcomes of these standards are aligned across 26 NAEYC competencies (see Appendix A).

3. What key assessments do you use to gauge the above mentioned learning outcomes?

Five Key Assessments are aligned with the 26 competences across the six NAEYC standards (see Appendix B for the specific assignments and rubrics for evaluating students):

1. Individuality and Sources of Influence (assessed in two advanced child development courses, HDFS 3101 Infant and Toddler Development and HDFS 3102 Early and Middle Childhood Development) inclusive of five competences
2. Curriculum Experience Plans (assessed in two curriculum development courses, HDFDS 3122 Integrated Curriculum Methods and Materials for Infants and Toddlers, and HDFS 3123 Integrated Curriculum Methods and Materials for Preschool and Kindergarten
3. Fieldwork Competences (assessed in HDFS 3183 Fieldwork Practicum)
4. Teaching From Your Strengths (assessed in HDFS 4181W Student Teaching Practicum)

4. How are data collected, analyzed, and reported for the purpose of program improvements?

Data that informs program improvements include student performance on each of the 26 competences aligned within each of the key assessments, program completion data, and community partnership data. Since only two cohorts of students have completed the program since its approval, the first major review of program processes for the purposes of program improvement is now underway. Faculty are making revisions to key assessments to improve their understandability for students, addressing student needs for supportive and supplemental experiences to ensure their smooth completion of expectations in the program. Qualitative student evaluations of courses (see Appendix for examples) provide feedback about their experiences and are currently being updated to address the key assessment processes. Further, our program changes are responsive to the changes in Dept. of Education guidelines, such as the transition from the Preschool Assessment Frameworks to the newly issued Early Learning and Development Standards. We anticipate that systematic surveys of students will be designed to capture their response to their training experiences. Many unsolicited comments have reinforced the value of the program's emphasis on reflection, observation, and analysis in their transformation of students as they progress through the program. One student wrote about the capstone course, "The most important thing I learned about myself in this class is the power of reflection. Even though we used reflection in many other classes, I think that the meta-reflections have helped me gather my thoughts and positions..."


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### 1: Program Development

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Key Assessment Average: 4.54

### 2: Curriculum Planning

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Key Assessment Average: 3.92

### 4: Teaching from Strengths

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Key Assessment Average: 4.42

### 5: Becoming a Professional

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Key Assessment Average: 5.00

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6. Program enrollment numbers, and completion numbers.

Our program has always met the needs of students seeking preparation for allied disciplines as well as early childhood teacher preparation. Hence, the total number of students enrolled in the program always exceeds the number expected to complete the ECTC.
7. Describe any clinical and field experiences required for the program, and how are they designed in partner with schools and practitioners?

Students are expected to complete 640 hours of practice experiences in the following progressive, cumulative manner:

**LEVEL A or Preliminary**

1st semester: 24 hours practice and observation with reflection; faculty supervised

24 hours observation with reflection; faculty supervised

2nd Semester: 152 hours Field Placement/training sessions/seminar; faculty and cooperating teacher supervised

Interim: 80 hours Community Placement in Head Start/Early Head Start/Birth-to-Three home-based (externally supervised)

**280 total Level A or Preliminary hours**

**LEVEL B or Culminating**

3rd Semester: 360 hours Student Teaching Placement/training sessions/seminar; faculty and cooperating teacher supervised

**640 total hours**

**Relationship Between College Instructor, Classroom Teacher and Student in Fieldwork/Student Teaching** (authored by Anne Bladen and Kim Larrabee, faculty supervisors for the Fieldwork and Student Teaching courses)

We intentionally design the Fieldwork and Student Teaching placement so that our students have a supervised experience that utilizes the full resources of the Early Childhood Faculty and the Child Development Labs. HDFS 3183 (4-credit Fieldwork practicum) and HDFS 4181W (9-credit Student Teaching experience) are unique classes both for students and the instructor in that they are based on experiential learning rather than a traditional lecture model. Following the models of Juch (1983) and Kolb (1984), these two classes require that students are engaged in the following cycle of learning, with the instructor acting as mediator between theory (seminar) and practice (classroom experience):
Unlike traditionally taught classes that rely primarily on lectures for contact hours with instructors, much of the contact time in HDFS 3183 and HDFS 4181W occurs in the real-life, hands-on, classroom setting. Weekly seminar in both classes is heavily geared towards building the needed structures that connect theory to application, and reinforces for students the need for continued reflection. Feedback from classroom teachers to students occurs informally on a daily basis, through weekly training sessions and at formal evaluation meetings that occur three times/semester for Fieldwork, and 7/semester for Student Teaching. The dyad of instructor and classroom teacher forms the core supervising team for fieldwork students and student teachers. The instructor meets regularly with the classroom teachers and students; these meetings range from informal weekly check-ins, to lengthy classroom observations, to attendance of formal meetings with the classroom teacher and student in order to discuss the learning process of the individual student. In order to further support HDFS 4181W students, the instructor may attend the weekly planning meetings, individual meetings between classroom teachers and student teachers, and provides feedback on teaching/coaching/modeling strategies to both students and classroom teachers. Additionally, the instructor of HDFS 4181W works with classroom teachers to develop reflective assignments that integrate theory and practice. The nature of deliberate practice, guided instruction, and consistent feedback requires the instructor to be intimately involved in the practicum experience working directly with the student and teaching staff in order to develop the critical thinking skills necessary for today’s early childhood teaching professional.

In accordance with the requirement of the ECTC, every student has one of their semester long experiences with Infants/Toddlers, and the other experience in one of two Preschool classrooms. The time they spend in the classroom is consistent week to week, but their daily blocks of time vary. This provides them the essential opportunity to be present when either the children arrive at school with their parent’s or caregivers, or the end of the day when they are leaving school. It is at these times when there is the most opportunity for the student to interact with parents or caregivers, or to watch/model the supervising teacher engage with parents. This deliberate placement also insures that they will be part of the daily routines that take place at different times of the day such as snack time, lunch, group time, morning experiences (area play- dramatic play, block area, writing area etc), and outdoor play. Faculty recently increased the required number of hours upward from 300 to 360 hours subsequent to ECTC program approval. It reflects our commitment to maximizing students’ exposure in the classroom during their student teaching practicum. The classroom/cooperating teacher provides feedback to the students and faculty on at least a weekly basis. Student Teachers have individual 30 minute meetings with supervising teachers four times throughout the semester (three times throughout the semester for Fieldwork students) about specific teaching behaviors including Oral Competencies in their communication with children, as specified by the ECTC Guidelines.
In accordance with the ECTC requirement for experiences in diverse settings, students are required to complete a minimum of 80 hours of their practicum experience in a Head Start/Early Head Start classroom or a home-based experience coordinated with Birth to Three. This is a non-credit related experience and is often met during summer or in-between semesters.

8. How do clinical and field experience ensure candidates to interact with diverse faculty and pupils?

While the Child Development Labs is the primary training site for early childhood students, the center serves the diverse community of faculty and staff families at the University of Connecticut and members of the greater Mansfield community. The Child Development Laboratories are also a School Readiness site as outlined by the Office of Early Childhood, providing enrollment to families who might not otherwise be able to afford a high quality preschool program. Special attention to diversity of families and children, including ethnicity, socioeconomic status and special needs of children are a cornerstone of enrollment at the Child Development Laboratories. Typically at least 10% of the children attending the Child Development Laboratories have an identified special need or are referred for a suspected special need while enrolled. Disabilities include: speech and language delay, sensory integration, autism and behavioral concerns. UConn Students have ongoing opportunities to work with specialists from Birth-3 as well as physical therapists from UConn’s Kinesiology Department, clinicians from UConn’s Speech and Language program, and other departments and agencies as needed. In addition, most students complete a minimum of 80 hours of practice in Head Start/Early Head Start classrooms, which serve low-income, often low education, minority parents and children. It is expectable that 10% or more of children in Head Start/Early Head Start programs have or develop a disability (often speech and language), and the cooperating teachers who lead their classroom experience are often members of US minorities.

9. What are the qualifications and scholarship of the program faculty? Faculty table (full-time, tenure-track, non-tenure, etc).

Three full-time faculty and three part-time faculty comprise the early childhood faculty serving students on the UCONN Storrs campus. [Note: We have begun to offer the pathway to students on the UCONN Stamford campus and anticipate program approval later this year.] The program is led by Professor JoAnn Robinson who holds the title, Director of Early Childhood Education and Early Intervention. She was hired by the University of Connecticut in 2004 to provide leadership to HDFS early childhood faculty and promote the development of a state-recognized early childhood teacher training program. She specializes in research on early interventions for families and children. She holds a PhD in Human Development and Family Studies from Cornell University, has published more than 60 articles about early childhood development, including the promotion of early development through early interventions. She is a member of the national research consortium for the Early Head Start Research and Demonstration Project and specializes in young children’s emotional development and parent-child relationships.

The program is supported by four non-tenure track faculty specialists in teacher training:

- **Mary Ellen Galante-DeAngelis, Lecturer.** Ms. Galante-DeAngelis has taught in the ECDE concentration since 1990. She holds Masters of Arts degrees in Education, Guidance Counseling and Personnel (Rehabilitation) from the Neag School of Education (1979) and in Human Development and Family Studies, with a concentration in Early Childhood Education, Teacher-Training and Curriculum Development (1996). She has been a Board Member of the Council of Child Development Laboratory Administrators (CCDLA) since 1994 and Co-President since 2006. She is Editor of the CCDLA Bulletin since 2000. Her teaching experience spanned 13 years, in infant/toddler/preschool classrooms, within Head Start and community settings, as well as serving as Master Teacher at the UCONN Child Development Labs.

- **Anne Bladen, Lecturer and Executive Director of the UCONN Child Development Labs; M.Ed. Educational Psychology, University of Connecticut, 1994.** Ms. Bladen holds Certification in Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten as well Comprehensive Special Education for Grades Pre-K to 12. She has taught as a special education preschool teacher and resource room teacher for grades K-4 and taught many years in inclusive preschool and kindergarten classrooms. She has a strong commitment to inclusive practices and professional development for teachers. She is a Training Wheels Coach through the CT Dept. of Education and serves on the Mansfield School Readiness Council.
Kim Larrabee, Lecturer; Ms. Larrabee is the Student Coordinator of the ECDE concentration. She earned Master of Science degrees in both Elementary and Special Education from C.W. Post University in 1988, and holds Permanent NY State Teacher Certifications in Nursery, Kindergarten & Grades K-6, and Special Education Grades K-12. She joined the University in 2007 and brings a strong history in teacher training with an emphasis on an intentional/reflective teaching training model. During her 15-year tenure in the classroom, she was a co-facilitator of the district-wide implementation of the Responsive Classroom educational model, and the co-developer of the Responsive Classroom Teacher Mentor Program.

Mary Tabb, Lecturer; M.A. St. Joseph’s University. Ms Tabb joined the HDFS faculty in the ECDE concentration in 2012. She holds a Connecticut Integrated Early Childhood/Special Ed., Birth - K teaching certificate. Ms. Tabb has built her practical teaching experience in diverse early childhood settings in the state of Connecticut. Additionally, her work in the field of early childhood care and education includes early intervention within CT Birth to Three and consultation with the Early Childhood Consultation Partnership.

Additional support is offered by Associate Professor Emeritus Jane Goldman. She holds a Ph.D. in Child Development and Family Studies from the University of Wisconsin – Madison. At UConn she has been active in teaching and program development in the early childhood program. Working from an ecological framework her research areas include social/personality development of children and the relationship between food/environmental sensitivities and child behavior. She has been active in numerous State and local committees such as the committee that developed the Connecticut Directors Credential for directors of early care and education centers and various committees involved in development of the Connecticut Early Childhood Teacher Credential.

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<td>JoAnn Robinson</td>
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<td>Kim Larrabee</td>
<td>Storrs</td>
<td>Lecturer, Full-time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anne Bladen</td>
<td>Storrs</td>
<td>Lecturer, Exec. Director of Child Development Laboratories, Part-time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mary Ellen Galante-DeAngelis</td>
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<td>Lecturer, Part-time</td>
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<td>Jane Goldman</td>
<td>Storrs</td>
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<td>Mary Tabb</td>
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