

MEd in Special Education - Early Childhood Unified

The Master of Education in special education - early childhood unified emphasis at Wichita State University prepares teachers certified in K-6 general education for teaching all students ages Birth–3rd grade. The program is designed to develop reflective practitioners who possess both a theoretical understanding and practical skills related to (a) the field of early childhood education, (b) the field of special education for students with both high and low incidence needs Birth–3rd grade, (c) effective communication and collaboration with families and other professionals, and (d) research-validated practices.

Program Overview

The Early Childhood Unified (ECU) program is designed to prepare teachers of young children (birth through grade 3). The ECU program develops reflective practitioners who possess theoretical and practical developmental, educational, communicative, collaborative and family- and child-centered skills. The ECU program's advisory committee provides continual guidance to the program to assure that all candidates graduate with the belief that:

- All young children, birth through grade 3 (i.e., children with and without exceptionalities, at every socioeconomic level, from all cultures) are competent, creative and curious learners;
- Working with, understanding and respecting families is a critical component of working with young children;
- Development and education are focused for each individual child in terms of the child's relation with the family, other children, teachers, the school community and society at large;
- Children must learn through both constructing their own knowledge and by direct instruction;
- The unique needs of all young children must be met; and
- Programs and services provided are based on law, and scientifically- and evidence-based practices.

The degree program begins with a prerequisite foundational course and proceeds through methods/assessment courses in three different age levels. These courses are accompanied by three different practicum experiences. The remainder of the program consists of courses on family collaboration, research and finally a culminating capstone or thesis project.

Endorsement Only Option

- Candidates may elect to complete only the **first 24-credit-hours** in the program as preparation to support them in attaining an endorsement in Early Childhood Unified. These candidates are considered nondegree seeking graduate students.
- Apply for provisional endorsement after completion of only 9 credit hours of coursework and the first practicum experience.

Admission

The special education degree with an emphasis in early childhood unified is available for individuals who are certified to teach young children (birth to age 8). Admission requirements include:

1. Prospective students should meet minimum GPA requirements for graduate admission. Those applicants who do not meet minimum GPA requirements may be required to submit one of the following to be considered for admission:
 - a. A GRE score of at least 150 in verbal and 148 in quantitative, and 3.5 in analytical writing; or
 - b. Miller Analogies Test (MAT) with a score of 400 or above.

2. Current Kansas teaching certificate/license in elementary (eligible for a KS certificate/license in elementary).

Applications are evaluated when received for the MEd in special education. Only a limited number of students are accepted into this program each year.

Program Requirements

The Master of Education in special education — early childhood unified track may be earned under a nonthesis option. The program requires 30 credit hours of coursework, including a research component, practical experience and the culminating project.

Background Check

Upon admission and prior to their first semester, all applicants admitted to this program must clear a criminal background check. There are two reasons for this requirement. First, it is part of the university's due diligence before placing students in field settings. Second, the check may alert applicants or students to issues that may subsequently affect their ability to work in their chosen field. In instances when a person's criminal history raises reasonable concerns that should be cleared to engage in the field experiences and/or subsequently obtain licensure/endorsement, WSU may take a range of actions, including rescission of admission or dismissal from the program, depending on the nature of the concern.

For information regarding this requirement, visit: Advanced Programs (<https://wichita.edu/clesadvancedprograms/>)¹.

Curriculum

Course	Title	Hours
Required Courses		
SPED 603	Foundations of Early Childhood Unified	2
SPED 614	ECU Assessment and Methods: Infants, Toddlers and Families	3
SPED 617	ECU Assessment and Methods: Preschool	3
SPED 796	Family and Professional Collaboration	2
SPED 703	ECU Assessment and Methods: K-3	3
or SPED 815	Intensive Academic Intervention	
or SPED 820	Adv Teaching Strategies for Students with Low Incidence Disabilities	
or SPED 818	Positive Behavior Supports for Students with Exceptionalities	
or CLES 721	Fundamental Elements in Behavior Change and Specific Behavior Change Procedures	
Practicum		10
<i>Select 10 credit hours from the following</i>		
SPED 847IT	Internship/Practicum in ECU: Infant/Toddler	
SPED 847KG	Internship/Practicum in ECU: K-3	
SPED 847P	Internship/Practicum in ECU: Preschool	
Research Component		
CESP 704	Introduction to Educational Statistics ²	3
or CLES 801	Introduction to Educational Research	
or CLES 723	Single Subject Design	
Culminating Experience - Capstone Proposal and Presentation		

SPED 862	Capstone Research Project: Project Development ³	2
SPED 863	Capstone Research Project: Project Completion ⁴	2
Total Credit Hours		30

Note: After successful completion of the first 9 credit hours, the candidate is eligible to apply to KSDE for a two-year provisional endorsement. A second two-year provisional may be applied for if the candidate has continued to make adequate progress in the program. Please contact the Licensure Office in College of Applied Studies Advising, 316-978-3300, for information on the licensure application to submit.

Candidates may elect to complete only the first 23 credit hours in the program as preparation to support them in attaining an endorsement in Early Childhood Unified. These candidates are considered nondegree-seeking graduate students.

¹ Link opens new window.

² CLES 721 and CLES 723 are only options for students who are also completing the ABA Graduate Certificate program.

³ Requires the completion of all core ECU courses and one of the following: CLES 801, CESP 704 or CLES 723.

⁴ Requires the completion of SPED 862

Applied Learning

Students in the MEd in special education - early childhood unified track are required to complete an applied learning or research experience to graduate from the program. The requirement can be met by completing a capstone research project in which the emphasis is on applying professional practices to research and is directly linked to applied learning. In addition, students who graduate from the graduate program in special education must experience at least 135 hours of field experience/internship in special education classrooms.