

# MEd in Special Education - Early Childhood Unified

The Master of Education in Special Education - Early Childhood Unified emphasis at Wichita State University is a 31-credit-hour program that 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 to receive 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. GPA of 3.000 or higher; or GPA of at least 2.750 and official GRE scores of at least 152 in Verbal and 153 in Quantitative.
2. Full admission to WSU Graduate School.

3. Current teaching certificate/license (or eligible for a certificate/license).

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 thesis or nonthesis option. The program requires 31 credit hours of coursework, including a research component, practical experience, and the culminating activity (i.e., thesis or nonthesis).

## 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>).

## Curriculum

Course	Title	Hours
<b>Required Courses</b>		
CI 603	Foundations of Early Childhood Unified	2
CI 614	ECU Assessment and Methods: Infants, Toddlers and Families	3
CI 617	ECU Assessment and Methods: Preschool	3
CI 703	Assessments and Methods: K-3	3
CI 796	Family and Professional Collaboration	3
<b>Practicum</b>		
Select 10 credit hours from the following		10
CI 847KG	Practicum/Field Experience in ECU: K-3	
CI 847IT	Practicum/Field Experience in ECU: Infant/Toddler	
CI 847P	Practicum/Field Experience in ECU: Preschool	
<b>Research Component</b>		
CESP 704	Introduction to Educational Statistics	3
or CI 717	Qualitative Inquiry in Education	
or CLES 801	Introduction to Educational Research	
Culminating experience - select one of the following combinations		4
CI 862 & CI 863	Evidence-Based Inquiry: Capstone Project Proposal and Evidence-Based Inquiry: Capstone Project	
CI 875 & CI 876	Master's Thesis and Master's Thesis	

Total Credit Hours

31

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**Applied Learning**

Students are required to complete an applied learning or research experience to graduate from programs in curriculum and instruction. The requirements can be met by completing either a master's thesis or 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 credit hours of field experience/internship in special education classrooms.