Early Childhood Education

Designed to add endorsement in early childhood to a teaching certificate, this master's program consists of 33 hours of graduate study—12 hours in the education core and 18 hours in early childhood courses, concluding in the Master's Seminar. The program may be completed in approximately two years including summer study. Courses in the concentration focus on the behavior of young children and curriculum and teaching methods appropriate for various ages from infants through early primary years. Particular attention is given to meeting the special needs of young children with diverse abilities.

Faculty

Lorraine DeJong, Ph.D.
Early Childhood Education coordinator and main professor

Judy Stuart, Ph.D.
contributing faculty

Master of Arts Concentration: Early Childhood Education
(Concentration is for teachers who have met South Carolina Department of Education requirements for certification in elementary education.)

Program of Study (33 hours)

Core (12 hours of required study)
- EDFD 602 Learning Theory (3)
- EDFD 604 Statistics and Measurement in Education (3)
- EDFD 606 Research in Education (3)
- EDFD 608 The Culture of Schooling in America (3)

Concentration (18 hours of required study) recommended sequence
- EDEC 640 Caregiving and Learning: The Infant and Toddler Years (3)
  Prerequisite: Human Growth and Development or equivalent. Recommended: EDEC 642
- EDEC 641 Teaching and Learning: The Preschool Years (3)
- EDEC 642 Teaching and Learning: The Early Primary Years (3)
  Prerequisite: Human Growth and Development or equivalent.
- EDEC 746 Methods and Materials for Educating Young Children with Diverse Abilities (3)
  Prerequisite: Human Growth and Development or equivalent.

Elective
To be approved by graduate advisor (3)
- EDEC 960 Practicum in Teaching the Young Child (3)
  Prerequisites: EDEC 640, 641, 642, 746
  Must be the last course in the Early Childhood sequence.
  May take concurrently only with EDFD 879.

Exit Requirement (3 hours)
- EDFD 879 Master's Seminar in Education (3)
  Must be the last course in the degree program.
  May take concurrently only with EDEC 960.
How did you learn about Furman’s Early Childhood Education program, and what factors influenced your decision to enter the program?

Gail: Furman’s reputation for high standards is well recognized in undergraduate university programs, as well as in the community at large. Both student colleagues and education advisors encouraged me in that direction.

Describe your interactions with the Graduate Studies faculty and staff.

Gail: Every instructor brought rich, varied, and unique professional experiences to his/her class instruction. Their real life stories and situations brought to life the educational theories in the classroom, and gave me insight into what lay ahead for me.

How are you using principles you learned in the Early Childhood Education program in your career?

Gail: I have been empowered through my research to be an advocate for young children. As a grandmother, I want every child to learn, to grow, and to be special in his/her own way. Now, backed by my education from Furman, I have the confidence to speak up when necessary to protect their rights and needs.

“The best teachers not only teach, but they also know why they teach what they do. When anyone comes in my classroom, they comment that it looks just like what’s in the books...the research. I am always on the cutting edge and searching for better ways to reach and teach my students. That is what Furman helped me to realize.”

—Beth Willey
Monaview Elementary, 3rd grade
Greenville, S.C.

“During field study placements, I had numerous opportunities to observe varied early childhood development settings. Those observations gave me insight into what comprises a quality child development program, and in some instances I saw what to avoid. This information, linked with principles learned in my Early Childhood classes, greatly enlarged my understanding of Early Childhood topics.”

—Gail Johnson
Westcliffe Elementary School
Greenville, S.C.

The faculty and staff were knowledgeable and friendly and addressed us individually as colleagues rather than speaking at us as a class. It is not unusual for me to “talk shop” with these same professors today.

And RESEARCH—you read so many books while in school, but it never really clicks until you start doing it in your own classroom. I continuously go back to the work of the founding educational theorists to see how to improve my work. I credit much of this to what I learned at Furman—not so much “what” they gave us in classes, but the “how and whys” that stick with me today—the drive to utilize research-based practices to support kids in learning and teachers in teaching.

—Beth Willey
Monaview Elementary, 3rd grade
Greenville, S.C.

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