Early Childhood: Family-Centered Services

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Introduction

Welcome to *Early Childhood: Family-Centered Services,* a course that seeks to promote the development of thoughtful, knowledgeable, effective educators for a diverse society. The course provides conceptual frameworks for working with families of children from a variety of backgrounds. Course content places an emphasis on family-centered practices designed to help early childhood professionals involve and support families in the care and education of children.

This computer-based instruction course is a self-supporting program that provides instruction, structured practice, and evaluation all on your home or school computer. Technical support information can be found in the Help section of your course.

Course Materials (Online)

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Facilitator:	Aumony Dahl, M.Ed.

Academic Integrity Statement

The structure and format of most distance-learning courses presume a high level of personal and academic integrity in completion and submission of coursework. Individuals enrolled in a distance-learning course are expected to adhere to the following standards of academic conduct.

Academic Work

Academic work submitted by the individual (such as papers, assignments, reports, tests) shall be the student's own work or appropriately attributed, in part or in whole, to its correct source. Submission of commercially prepared (or group prepared) materials as if they are one's own work is unacceptable.

Students are required to view/read each screen in each exercise of each chapter. Screens, exercises and chapter content may not be skipped. Students are also required to access and read all content in each course handout. A participant who fails to complete the entire course in the manner intended and as outlined, may have their grade reduced or fail the course. It is the student's responsibility to contact the facilitator, instructor-of-record, or VESi registrar if there is any question as to the manner in which this course is to be completed.

Aiding Honesty in Others

The individual will encourage honesty in others by refraining from providing materials or information to another person with knowledge that these materials or information will be used improperly.

Violations of these academic standards will result in the assignment of a failing grade and subsequent loss of credit for the course.

Level of Application

This course is designed as one of a five-part series on early childhood education. Upon completion of the five-course series you will have covered most competencies found in a Child Development Associates (CDA) program, however, completion of all five courses does not earn participants a CDA unless they are formally enrolled in a program that recognizes these courses within that program. This course specifically covers competencies 1–9, 12, and 13 **(it is recommended you check on individual state competencies),** which all relate to the establishment of well-run, purposeful programs for young children that are responsive to individual needs and advance the development of the whole child. This course also incorporates the applicable Division for Early Childhood (DEC) *Recommended Practices in Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education*, in addition to the newest *National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation Standards* (2018), and the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA),* which was signed into law on December 10, 2015. ESSA both sustains and expands the nation's investment in increasing access to high-quality early childhood education for all children. This course is designed for anyone planning programs for young children: childcare providers, early childhood educators, and healthcare or social services providers, to name a few.

Expected Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of this course students will:

- Have a working knowledge of the major frameworks for understanding family systems, transitions, and diversity.
- Be competent in communicating about the role of families in promoting optimal growth, development, and learning from pre-birth to age five.
- Have the ability to seek out appropriate local, regional and national resources when working with families facing special challenges.
- Demonstrate understanding of appropriate professional practices related to enhancing and assessing positive staff-parent communication and involvement.

Course Description

Family-Centered Services is a continuum of services that employ the family-centered practice approach to promote the primary goals of child welfare: safety, permanency, and well-being. A family-centered practice approach is a way of organizing and delivering assistance and support to families based on interconnected beliefs and attitudes that shape the program philosophy and behavior of personnel as they organize and deliver services to children and families.

Family-centered service is an approach to service delivery that grew out of family preservation attempts in the mid-seventies to prevent out-of-home placements of minors. Since then, family-centered services has expanded from a particular type of service to an overall philosophy for the delivery of services to families. FCS currently includes a wide range of programs from *family support* prevention services to *family preservation,* for families who are dealing with extremely difficult situations. Family support is largely a preventative service that focuses on promoting healthy family relationships and child development. A family support model may include programs such as peer support groups, Head Start, parent training, and home visitation. Family preservation, on the other hand, is more concerned with preventing family breakdown when serious problems arise by providing more intensive services that help families resolve specific issues.

While there are several similar, yet differing, definitions of family-centered services that exist in fields such as social services, child welfare, mental health, and early childhood special education, there is consensus on the principles and values that characterize family-centered services. Descriptors such as "strengths-based, consumer driven, family systems, partnerships, empowerment, enhancement, interdependence, proactive, and collaborative relationships" are all found in many of these definitions (Pletcher & McBride, 2003).

For the purpose of this class, we will use the terms *Family-Centered Services* and *Family-Centered Practice* interchangeably, to refer to a way of working with families across service systems to enhance their capacity to care for and protect their children, and strengthen their ability to manage their own lives. Family-centered services focus on the needs and welfare of children within the context of their families and communities. These services are accessible and individualized, and are available to families that may not initially seek services.

Family-centered service providers reach out to families, conveying the message that all families can benefit from support, and that families can learn from one another.

Family-centered practice recognizes the strengths of family relationships and builds on these strengths to achieve optimal outcomes. *Family* is defined broadly to include birth, blended, kinship, and foster and adoptive families. Family-centered practice includes a range of strategies, including advocating for improved conditions for families, supporting them, stabilizing those in crisis, reunifying those who are separated, building new families, and connecting families to the resources that will sustain them in the future.

Student Expectations

As a student you will be expected to:

- Students are required to view/read each screen in each exercise of each chapter. Screens, exercises and chapter content may not be skipped. Students are also required to access and read all content in each course handout.
- Complete all four section examinations, showing a competent understanding of the material presented. **You must obtain an overall score of 70% or higher, with no individual exam score below 50%, and successfully complete ALL writing assignments to pass this course**. ***Please note: Minimum exam score requirements may vary by college or university; therefore, you should refer to your course addendum to determine what your minimum exam score requirements are.**
- Complete a review of any section on which your examination score was below 50%.
- Retake any examination, after completing an information review, to increase that examination score to a minimum of 50%, making sure to also be achieving an overall exam score of a minimum 70% **(maximum of three attempts). *Please note: Minimum exam score requirements may vary by college or university; therefore, you should refer to your course addendum to determine what your minimum exam score requirements are.**
- Complete all course journal article and essay writing assignments with the minimum word count shown for each writing assignment.
- Complete a course evaluation form at the end of the course.

Course Overview

Chapter 1: Introduction to Family-Centered Services

Chapter One defines what is meant by Family-Centered Services (FCS) and examines the important role it plays in Early Childhood Education (ECE). We consider the philosophy, core values, and essential elements of best practice in FCS. In addition, we identify several key principles that guide the delivery of Family-Centered Services and provide practical examples of how to implement each principle for those providing services to families.

Chapter 2: Understanding Families

Chapter Two takes a more in-depth look at how we can work together to connect the ECE profession's standards of quality to the urgent needs of families. This chapter discusses the complexity of family dynamics by examining several factors that contribute to family diversity, such as ethnicity, race, culture, economic differences, gender role identity, religiosity, and geographic region. We discuss the practical implications of such factors and look at family strengths, functions, and structures.

Chapter 3: Working Together: A Shared Responsibility

Chapter Three takes a closer look at several stress factors, such as family violence, substance abuse, homelessness, disability, serious illness, and immigration, that many families in crisis may face. We discuss the impact of such stressors on both family and child, and identify various ways in which early childhood educators can support and encourage them in their time of need.

Chapter 4: Building Communities of Care

Chapter Four focuses on the need for Early Childhood Educators and care providers to provide parents with child-rearing information and support. In order to do this, we examine the critical processes for child development, discuss how to develop and implement needs assessments for families with young children, and describe the dimensions of high-quality parent education programs. This chapter also identifies critical components of parenting and discusses methods of parent education.

Examinations

At the end of each course chapter, you will be expected to complete an examination designed to assess your knowledge. You may take these exams a total of three times. Your last score will save, not the highest score. After your third attempt, each examination will lock and not allow further access. The average from your exam scores will be printed on your certificate. However, this is not your final grade since your required writing assignments have not been reviewed. Exceptionally written or poorly written required writing assignments, or violation of the academic integrity policy in the course syllabus, will affect your grade. As this is a self-paced computerized instruction program, you may review course information as often as necessary. You will not be able to exit any examinations until you have answered all questions. If you try to exit the exam before you complete all questions, your information will be lost. You are expected to complete the entire exam in one sitting.

Writing Assignments

All assignments are reviewed and may impact your final grade. Exceptionally or poorly written assignments, or violation of the Academic Integrity Policy (see course syllabus for policy), will affect your grade. Fifty percent of your grade is determined by your writing assignments, and your overall exam score determines the other fifty percent. ***Refer to the Essay Grading Guidelines, which were sent as an attachment with your original course link. You should also refer to the Course Syllabus Addendum, which was sent as an attachment with your original course link, to determine if you have any writing assignments in addition to the Critical Thinking Questions***

(CTQ) and Journal Article Summations (JAS). If you do, the Essay Grading Guidelines will also apply.

Your writing assignments must meet the minimum word count and are not to include the question or your final citations as part of your word count. In other words, the question and citations are not to be used as a means to meet the minimum word count.

Critical Thinking Questions

There are four CTQs that you are required to complete. You will need to write a minimum of 500 words (maximum 1,000) per essay. You should explain how the information that you gained from the course will be applied and clearly convey a strong understanding of the course content as it relates to each CTQ. To view the questions, click on REQUIRED ESSAY and choose the CTQ that you are ready to complete; this will bring up a screen where you may enter your essay. Prior to course submission, you may go back at any point to edit your essay, but you must be certain to click SAVE once you are done with your edits.

You must click SAVE before you write another essay or move on to another part of the course.

Journal Article Summations

You are required to write, in your own words, a summary on a total of three peer-reviewed or scholarly journal articles (one article per JAS), written by an author with a Ph.D., Ed.D., or similar, on the topic outlined within each JAS section in the "Required Essays" portion of the course (blogs, abstracts, news articles, or similar are not acceptable). Your article choice must relate specifically to the discussion topic listed in each individual JAS. You will choose a total of three relevant articles (one article per JAS) and write a thorough summary of the information presented in each article (you must write a minimum of 200 words with a 400 word maximum per JAS). Be sure to provide the URL or the journal name, volume, date, and any other critical information to allow the facilitator to access and review each article.

To write your summary, click on REQUIRED ESSAYS and choose the JAS that you would like to complete. A writing program will automatically launch where you can write your summary. When you are ready to stop, click **SAVE**. Prior to course submission you may go back at any point to edit your summaries but you must be certain to click SAVE once you are done with your edits. For more information on the features of this assignment, please consult the HELP menu.

You must click SAVE before you write another summary or move on to another part of the course.

Facilitator Description

Early Childhood: Family-Centered Services has been developed by Aumony Dahl, MS/ED, the instructor of record. Aumony received her master's degree in Exceptional Children from Western Washington University. She is certified to teach in K–12 Special Education with an additional endorsement in P–3 Early Childhood Special Education. Aumony began her career working as an elementary special education teacher for several years. She then served as a senior instructor in the Special Education Department at Western Washington University for over 22 years, teaching a

variety of classes on topics related to early childhood special education, students with complex special needs, assessment and evaluation, and program planning. While at WWU, Aumony also enjoyed her role as a field supervisor for practicum students training to become teachers. Recently, Aumony decided to get back into the classroom and is now serving as a special education preschool teacher in an Inclusive Early Learning Center, where there is never a dull moment! In addition to this course, Aumony has authored two others in this Early Childhood series: Early Childhood: Infant & Toddler Mental Health and Early Childhood: Program Planning.

Instructor Description

Dr. Marrea Winnega is a licensed clinical psychologist with 20 years of experience in the field of Autism Spectrum Disorders. Currently, she is an assistant professor of Clinical Psychology in the University of Illinois at Chicago Department of Psychiatry. She consults for schools and agencies serving individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders, including Asperger's Disorder. She has also conducted numerous workshops, in-services, and trainings throughout the United States. Please contact Professor Dahl if you have course content or examination questions.

Contacting the Facilitator

You may contact the facilitator by emailing Professor Dahl at aumony_dahl@virtualeduc.com or calling her at 509-891-7219, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. PST. Phone messages will be answered within 24 hours. Phone conferences will be limited to ten minutes per student, per day, given that this is a self-paced instructional program. Please do not contact the instructor about technical problems, course glitches, or other issues that involve the operation of the course. Please contact Professor Dahl if you have course content or examination questions.

Technical Questions

If you have questions or problems related to the operation of this course, please try everything twice. If the problem persists please check our support pages for FAQs and known issues at www.virtualeduc.com and also the Help section of your course.

If you need personal assistance then email support@virtualeduc.com or call (509) 891-7219. When contacting technical support, please know your course version number (it is located at the bottom left side of the Welcome Screen) and your operating system, and be seated in front of the computer at the time of your call.

Minimum Computer Requirements

Please refer to VESi's website: www.virtualeduc.com or contact VESi if you have further questions about the compatibility of your operating system.

Refer to the addendum regarding Grading Criteria, Course Completion Information, Items to be Submitted, and how to submit your completed information. The addendum will also note any additional course assignments that you may be required to complete that are not listed in this syllabus.

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American Academy of Pediatrics: http://www.aap.org

American Institute for Research: https://www.air.org/

Bridgeport School District McKinney-Vento/Homeless: https://www.bridgeport.wednet.edu/page/mckinney-vento-homeless

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: https://www.cdc.gov/

Center for Parent Information and Resources: http://www.parentcenterhub.org/

Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University: https://developingchild.harvard.edu/

Child Welfare Information Gateway: https://www.childwelfare.gov/

Council for Exceptional Children: http://www.cec.sped.org

Early Learning Challenge Technical Assistance (ELCTA) Program: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ecd/early-learning/race-top

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): https://www.ed.gov/laws-and-policy/laws-preschool-grade-12-education/every-student-succeeds-act-essa

Global Family Research Project: https://globalfrp.org/

High/Scope Educational Research Foundation: http://www.highscope.org

National Association for the Education of Young Children: http://naeyc.org

National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations: https://challengingbehavior.org/

National Association of Counsel for Children: http://www.naccchildlaw.org/

National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance: https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/center/national-center-early-childhood-quality-assurance

National Child Traumatic Stress Network: http://www.nctsn.org/

Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS): https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/rt/

U.S. Department of Education-Early Learning: https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/earlylearning/index.html

Vort Corporation: http://www.vort.com

Zero to Three Organization: http://www.zerotothree.org

Course content is updated every three years. Due to this update timeline, some URL links may no longer be active or may have changed. Please type the title of the organization into the command line of any Internet browser search window and you will be able to find whether the URL link is still active or any new link to the corresponding organization's web home page.

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COURSE SYLLABUS ADDENDUM

It is each student's responsibility to read all course materials, including course syllabus and addendum, and to know and understand the course requirements, exam score minimum requirements, and deadlines. Students enrolled in VESi courses are required to check their email for any communications regarding the course until their final grade is posted with the college or university. Once your course materials are received by VESi and have been reviewed, the GRADE IS FINAL.

Grading Criteria:

You must obtain an overall score of 70% or higher, with no individual exam score below 50%, and successfully complete ALL writing assignments to pass this course. This course requires a minimum overall passing grade of "C-" to receive credit. The average from your exam scores will be printed on your certificate. However, this is not your final grade since your required writing assignments have not been reviewed. Exceptionally written or poorly written required writing assignments, or violation of the academic integrity policy in the course syllabus, will affect your grade. Fifty percent of your grade is determined by your writing assignments, and your overall exam score determines the other fifty percent.

No grade will be submitted for partial completion of course assignments, regardless of partial score. An F will be reported if course is not completed by the end of the term enrolled. Exceptions only apply to those that request an extension (must have extenuating circumstances) prior to course deadline.

Letters will be assigned as follows:

90% to 100%   A
80% to 89%   B
70% to 79%   C
69% - lower   F

Course Completion Information:

Grading will take approximately two weeks from the time your materials are received by the instructor, after which we will submit grades to the college/university weekly. If you have a timeline to meet certain school or state requirements, please keep this time period in mind when planning your course completion dates.

Course Completion Instructions:

- Once you have completed all of the course requirements, follow the instructions from the Complete Course toolbar to submit your materials to VESi's office for processing. You can only submit the course ONE TIME. Be sure that you have completed all requirements and exams.
- Course Evaluation: Please take a moment to fill out the course evaluation which is also found under the Complete Course toolbar.
- Print Certificate: You can print a copy of your course certificate for your records. Print Certificate: You can print a copy of your course certificate for your records.

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After the grade for your course(s) is posted, approximately two weeks after the course submission, you can access your NDSU transcript for documentation of course completion and performance. Instructions are found at this link: Transcript Instructions | Continued Learning | NDSU

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