



SACRAMENTO  
STATE

**DIRECTED FIELD  
EXPERIENCES/INTERNSHIP  
HANDBOOK  
(EDS 474, 475)**

**Early Childhood Special Education Specialist  
Preliminary Credential  
and ECSE Certificate Programs**



**CSUS, College of Education  
Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation,  
School Psychology, & Deaf Studies**

**May 2011**

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# Introduction to Directed Field Experiences/Internship

## Purpose of Directed Field Experiences/Internships

A competent early interventionist/early childhood special educator must have both a strong foundation in the philosophy of developmentally appropriate best practices endorsed by NAEYC, and specific knowledge of the characteristics and learning needs of children with a range of disabilities, including low incidence disabilities and children with severe and multiple disabilities. The CSUS ECSE credential and certificate programs are strongly committed to providing candidates supervised experience with children with a wide range of disabilities. Additionally, educators must be able to successfully work in a range of learning environments. Thus, candidates must demonstrate experience in multiple settings, including home-based service delivery.

As the culminating experience of your participation in the CSUS ECSE credential program, you are expected to demonstrate competency in at least six areas:

- Assessment and Evaluation
- Planning
- Intervention/Instructional Strategies
- Managing the Teaching and Learning Environment
- Professional and Interpersonal Skills
- Cultural Competence.

You will be assigned to an infant program for EDS 474 and a preschool program for EDS 475. Each of these fieldwork experiences will require you to participate for at least 150 clock hours.

You will be assigned a field mentor and a university supervisor to assist you in developing and demonstrating skills in each of the areas listed above (see the Competency Checklist for the specific skills identified in each area). In addition, you may be required to demonstrate competencies specific to the program in which you are participating (i.e. home-based infant program).

At the beginning of each field experience you will complete a self-assessment, using the competency checklist. You will meet with your university supervisor and field mentor to share your self assessment and to develop a plan for participating in, and taking responsibility for, various program activities including assessment, planning, implementing and evaluating interventions and/or instructional activities for individuals and small groups of children and their families as appropriate to your assigned setting.

The two directed field experiences are seen as cumulative; you should be able to demonstrate competence in all areas by the end of the second experience. How much you achieve in each experience will be determined jointly by you, your field

mentor and university supervisor. Your university supervisor cannot observe you full time so all competencies may not be able to be observed directly. It is anticipated that through the lab sections of your ECSE courses you have begun a portfolio that will allow you to demonstrate certain competencies based on these experiences. You may be asked to review this portfolio with your supervisor at the beginning of each field experience, to assist in developing a plan for participation in the particular field setting.

### Possible Field Placement Sites

You may be assigned to a district or county office of education program that serves infants/toddlers and/or preschoolers with disabilities. Your primary placement will be with the special education program, but it is anticipated that you will have opportunities to collaborate with other agencies and programs that serve young children and their families. For example, you may be assigned to a special education preschool program which is co-located with a Head Start or State Preschool program, and in which children are co-enrolled. You would collaborate with early childhood special education staff as well as Head Start staff. You will have a diversity of experiences in each of your field settings working with individual children and groups of children and their families. While you may participate in a variety of center-based and community settings, it is also required that you arrange to have some opportunity to participate in a home-based program.

### Directed Field Experience/Internship Activities

Upon meeting with your field mentor, you will jointly determine the nature of your assignment. For example, in an infant program you may be assigned as a member of a team. You would attend all team meetings, participate in home visits, provide consultation to child care personnel, carry out assessments, and attend IFSP meetings.

You may be under the direct supervision of someone (or several persons) other than your field mentor; but the field mentor must approve all activities.

You will determine a schedule for assuming specific responsibilities, for example, you may attend home visits with a particular family for several weeks as an observer, and then by the 6th or 7th week you would become the primary interventionist. Or you might participate in a Head Start or State Preschool program in which several children with disabilities are included, and after several weeks assume the role of co-teacher, where you have primary responsibility for developing curricular adaptations for particular children, which will be jointly implemented by special education and early childhood education staff.

Your field mentor, university supervisor, and you will determine specific requirements for completion of your field experience. For example, you may be required to keep a journal of your home visit notes, including a description of the plan for each visit, and an evaluation of what actually happened. This may be in a narrative form, or you may use a checklist. For a preschool setting, you may be

required to develop instructional plans for components of the schedule (e.g., centers, circle time, snack). These plans might include specifying the activity, materials, intervention/instructional strategies, adaptations needed or how activity will be embedded in typical daily routine, how activity addresses IEP goals, and how you will evaluate progress.

### Responsibilities of University Supervisor

Your university supervisor will observe you and meet with you several times (in person or through videotape exchanges). In the case of home-based field placements, the supervisor will meet with you in person, by phone, or through electronic communication, and coordinate more closely with the field mentor. This arrangement is necessary in order to not overwhelm an infant/toddler and his/her family with many strangers in the home. The university supervisor will give you feedback regarding successful interactions and give suggestions to improve skills where needed. Specific assignments may be designed to enhance skills in particular areas. You and your university supervisor will typically not be able to meet face-to-face immediately following an observation. Your supervisor will arrange to provide you feedback regarding the observation. For internship candidates, supervision is primarily by a university faculty member, although supervision is coordinated with the site or program administrator

### Responsibilities of Field Mentor

Directed field experiences/internships are a joint responsibility of the university and the early childhood special education program where you are placed. The field mentor provides the day-to-day supervision or other person assigned at the field site (except in the case of the intern). The field mentor (or other direct supervisor) will complete the Competency Checklist during the course of your participation in the field setting and will provide you with ongoing feedback to encourage the optimal development and demonstration of skills in each of the competency areas.

### Directed Field Experiences/Internship Seminar

For each field experience (i.e., EDS 474, EDS 475,) you will enroll in EDS 234--the directed field experiences seminar. This seminar course will provide you opportunities to reflect on how your field experiences match expectations based on academic coursework. In addition, this seminar provides you with opportunities to share issues and concerns regarding your current placement with fellow candidates; and to brainstorm solutions to assessment, collaboration, curriculum/intervention, and management needs you may have identified in your particular field setting. You will develop and/or refine your portfolio for each field experience (i.e., EDS 474/475) as part of your participation in the seminar. At the conclusion of both directed field experiences you will submit your preliminary Performance Portfolio for evaluation by the ECSE faculty at CSUS.

## Your Professional Responsibilities

You are expected to participate in each directed field experience as a professional in the field of early childhood special education. There are many characteristics of professional behavior, and you will be evaluated on these through the Competency Checklist. Being on time, being organized, maintaining your appearance and your health are all very important. You must also demonstrate the highest degree of ethics (e.g., confidentiality, knowledge of legal requirements and issues) and cultural competence in your interactions with children, families, staff, and other professionals.

You may at times feel frustrated in your placement, but you need to seek out your field mentor and/or university supervisor to assist you in developing strategies for addressing your frustrations; you cannot jeopardize relationships with children, families and/or program staff by acting precipitously. If you feel you are not getting the support you need from either your field mentor or university supervisor, arrange a conference with this person and discuss your concerns. If this is not successful, you need to contact the CSUS ECSE coordinator to arrange a meeting to address the issues.

## Evaluation of Directed Field Experiences/Internships

As stated earlier, during the course of each directed field experience, your university supervisor and your field mentor will observe you. Formal evaluations/reviews of the Competency Checklist will be carried out by the university supervisor and field mentor midway through and towards the completion of the field experience. Your supervisor will conference with you at each of these points. The midterm evaluation will serve as a progress benchmark for planning the rest of the field experience. The final evaluation will occur at the end of the field experience and provide you with an overall assessment of attainment of the competencies for that experience.

The grade for your field experience will be either a “credit” or “no credit”. The university supervisor, as an official representative of the College of Education at CSUS is solely responsible for determining final grades and submitting them to the university. You must meet all competencies agreed upon for the particular field experience with a rating of “*competency met*” in order to receive a “credit” grade. At the completion of both field experiences you must have a rating of “*competency met*” in ALL competencies in order to receive credit for the final field experience.

## **EDS 474/475 Competency Checklist**

Field experience performance is rated as 1=needs improvement or 2=competency met.

Supervisor will indicate whether rating is based on O (observation), I (interview), or P (portfolio)

### **A. Assessment and Evaluation**

1. Identifies evaluation and assessment questions based on the family's priorities and concerns, and previously identified issues.
2. Selects and uses formal and informal assessment instruments and procedures, which are appropriate and non-biased.
3. Adapts evaluation and assessment materials for children with disabilities/risk conditions or cultural and linguistic differences.
4. Conducts assessments across all developmental domains (e.g., communication, cognition).
5. Uses multiple sources of assessment and evaluation data.
6. Incorporates family into assessment process.
7. Prepares comprehensive written and/or oral reports, which accurately and clearly (i.e. jargon free) interprets evaluation and assessment results (with emphasis on useful information that addresses family concerns).
8. Participates in ongoing evaluation and assessment process to monitor child's progress.

### **B. Planning**

1. Participates as a member of a team in the design and implementation of an IFSP/IEP.
2. Involves family in selecting outcomes, goals and objectives, and intervention strategies.
3. Relates outcomes/goals and objectives to assessment results.
4. Writes outcomes/goals across domains that are clear and relevant to priority child and family needs.
5. Participates in planning transitions to the child's next program in a comprehensive and timely manner.

### **C. Intervention/Instructional Strategies** (Specific competency lists may be used as supplement for #4 and #6)

1. Implements basic health, nutrition, and safety management practices.
2. Selects curriculum and activities that are developmentally appropriate and functional for children with a wide range of disabilities.
3. Provides opportunities and support for successful interaction with typically developing peers in natural environments in the community.
4. Uses specific interactions, intervention strategies and materials with children which effectively facilitate development of:

- a) communication
  - b) cognition
  - c) social skills
  - d) emotional resiliency
  - e) behavioral regulation
  - f) motor skills
  - g) independence/adaptive behaviors  
(see specific competency list, if appropriate))
5. Demonstrates appropriate generic instructional strategies:
    - a) creates environments and selects materials which encourage exploration and creativity, and which maximizes children's pleasure and enjoyment of learning
    - b) uses scaffolding (e.g., encouraging, prompting, and guiding young children to participate a higher level than they can on their own)
    - c) provides motivation (e.g., identifies high preference objects, people and events)
    - d) uses play as both context and method
    - e) uses repetition and routines
    - f) uses behavioral analysis and techniques (including use of positive reinforcement, task analysis, use of cues and prompts, shaping, fading, chaining, and stimulus generalization)
    - g) facilitates appropriate adult-child and child-child interaction.
    - h) recognizes the need for increased response time for some children.
  6. Demonstrates use of instructional strategies, environmental adaptations, and technologies appropriate to specific low incidence disabilities, including appropriate specialists and other team members (see specific competency list, if appropriate)
  7. Demonstrates ability to carefully plan and evaluate materials, activities, and technologies.
  8. Adapts instructional strategies in response to observation of progress.

**D. Managing the Teaching and Learning Environment**

1. Designs and implements a daily schedule that is clear, consistent, and appropriate.
2. Executes carefully planned transitions between activities.
3. Utilizes the natural contexts of daily routines and teaching opportunities.
4. Arranges motivating play activities as contexts for teaching.
5. Manages groups of children effectively
6. Effectively and safely arranges the physical environment to support optimal learning and development.
7. Appropriately prevents and manages challenging or inappropriate behaviors, including use of positive behavioral support techniques.

**E. Professional and Interpersonal Skills**

1. Demonstrates skills of effective teaming and collaboration with families and other professionals including agencies.
2. Maintains professional ethics, including scope-of-practice parameters of ECSE discipline, confidentiality of child and family information, appropriate boundaries in interaction with families, and awareness of legal responsibilities.
3. Demonstrates professionalism in personal appearance and presentation.
4. Demonstrates dependability and a positive attitude (e.g., punctuality, attendance, deadlines, and follow-through with professional responsibilities)
5. Demonstrates leadership qualities such as flexibility, and initiative.
6. Guides and facilitates the work of instructional assistants and volunteers.
7. Demonstrates organizational skill, including efficient time management and maintaining appropriate records.
8. Demonstrates a high level of competence, integrity, professional judgment, and enthusiasm for early intervention/early childhood special education.
9. Accepts and utilizes feedback and constructive criticism for personal growth.

**F. Cultural Competence**

1. Demonstrates awareness of own cultural identity and values.
2. Demonstrates knowledge of and sensitivity to cultural/linguistic backgrounds and practices of children, families, and staff.
3. Demonstrates use of instructional strategies and materials that are free from gender and cultural bias.
4. Demonstrates interactions and interventions appropriate to family/child's cultural/linguistic background

**G. Competencies Specific to Birth-Three Home-Based Intervention Programs**

1. Communicates effectively with parents in the home setting.
2. Demonstrates service coordination skills.
3. Demonstrates strategies that are ecologically valid within the natural environment of the home.
4. Demonstrates ability to assist families in accessing resources such as individual/group support, agencies, handouts, books, tapes, and specialists.
5. Demonstrates knowledge of safety issues and strategies within the home.

**H. Additional Competencies Specific to this Placement: (will be determined with university supervisor)**