



NCC ECE Program Mission Statement

The NCC Early Childhood Education program aims to inspire students with a passion for supporting children and their families. The program focuses on connecting theories with practice and demonstrating the ability to meet academic and professional standards set by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Through education, research integration, and practical application, students will gain an understanding of developmentally appropriate practice. Ethical and professional guidelines are emphasized, and students are encouraged to become lifelong learners.

Conceptual Framework

The Early Childhood Education program at NCC is built on a comprehensive conceptual framework that aligns closely with our mission and the NAEYC Professional Standards and Competencies. This framework acts as the foundation for all parts of candidate preparation, guiding curriculum development, teaching methods, and field experiences. It demonstrates our strong commitment to equity, inclusion, and the development of intentional, knowledgeable, and responsive educators who are prepared to address the developmental, cultural, and linguistic needs of every child. By clearly articulating this framework, the program ensures that candidates are ready to become ethical professionals, advocates for children and families, and collaborative members of the broader early childhood education community.

Early Childhood Educator Intentionality

At the heart of our conceptual framework is the intentionality of the early childhood educator. Candidates are prepared to establish responsive and nurturing relationships with young children that support emotional security and positive development. They learn to thoughtfully design both the physical and temporal environments to meet the diverse needs of all learners, creating inclusive and engaging spaces. Educators are also taught to craft intentional invitations for learning experiences that cultivate curiosity, wonder, and a sense of exploration. These practices reflect a comprehensive approach to classroom excellence, rooted in evidence-based strategies and reflective decision-making.

Children

Our program emphasizes a deep respect for and understanding of children as unique individuals with distinct personalities and approaches to learning. Educators are trained to recognize how each child's temperament, culture, and language influence their learning and relationships. Through this lens, candidates learn to support children

across individual developmental continuums and tailor their teaching to honor each child's growth. The use of data and assessment is also a key element; students learn to observe, interpret, and track developmental progress using a range of tools to inform instruction and support positive outcomes.

Developmentally Appropriate Practices

Grounded in established educational theory, our framework incorporates the principles of cognitive, constructivist, and behaviorist theorists. Candidates explore and apply knowledge of developmental continuums across the cognitive, physical, language, social, and emotional domains. Play is emphasized as a central and essential component of young children's learning and development. Through hands-on experiences and reflective practice, students learn how to implement developmentally appropriate strategies that support holistic growth and foster a lifelong love of learning.

Family Partnerships

We believe strong partnerships with families are essential to high-quality early childhood education. Candidates are prepared to initiate and sustain respectful, ongoing relationships with families, recognizing the diverse dynamics that shape each family's experience. They are taught to honor and incorporate families' cultures and language preferences into the learning environment. Multiple forms of communication, both formal and informal, are explored, including newsletters, family teacher conference, digital communication, and planned meetings, ensuring that educators can engage families in meaningful and accessible ways.

NAEYC Standards/Professionalism

Our conceptual framework is aligned with the NAEYC Professional Standards and Code of Ethics. Candidates learn to apply these ethical principles in their daily practice, along with relevant standards such as the NH Early Learning Standards, Head Start frameworks, and local public-school expectations. The program instills a strong sense of professional responsibility, encouraging students to advocate for the rights, needs, and well-being of young children and their families. Educators graduate with a deep understanding of their role within the profession and a commitment to continuous growth and ethical practice.

Community

Community collaboration is a vital component of our framework. Students are introduced to a variety of community resources and learn how to build partnerships with child care centers, Head Start programs, and other early childhood organizations. These experiences prepare educators to connect families with the support systems they need and to become active contributors to the larger early childhood ecosystem. Through these partnerships, candidates gain real-world experience and develop a deeper understanding of how strong community ties can enhance the quality and reach of early childhood education.