

**FAMILY AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES IN ECE
ECE 4123
SPRING 2008**

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Office Hours: Fridays 10-11 and by appointment

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

(3-0) 3 hours credit.

Study of approaches to family, community, societal, cultural, and ideological support systems in children's growth, learning and development. Emphasis on how these factors are related to permissive-restrictive dimensions of childrearing and socialization in broad perspectives. Included are children "at risk" and with disabilities. **Field-based experiences required.**

REQUIRED TEXTS

Fuller, M. L., Olsen, G. (2008). Home-school relations: Working successfully with parents and families.

COURSE GOALS

The student will be given the opportunity to:

1. understand the interrelatedness and influences of diverse support systems in children's growth, learning and development.
2. comprehend the importance of family, school and community collaboration in young children's growth, learning and development.
3. gain knowledge of the diverse needs of families as they rear their children in today's society, including families of children "at risk" and with disabilities.
4. recognize differences between effective and ineffective means to encourage family involvement in children's growth and development.
5. become familiar with models of school-based and home-based programs that include families.

6. acquire knowledge about specific local resources that serve the needs of children and their families.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The student will be given the opportunity to:

1. examine and discuss theoretical underpinnings and research that support school-family-community partnerships in education.
2. analyze the changing nature of parenting and investigate strategies used in effective and ineffective childrearing practices.
3. plan strategies and techniques to facilitate family involvement in schools.
4. identify and describe resources available to children and their families in the community.
5. evaluate means for effective communication with families.
6. use experts within the community as resources to increase ability to promote school-family-community collaborations.
7. assess a school's potential to encourage or increase family involvement.
8. create home-learning activities for families and children to use together.

ExCET COMPETENCIES

Course content and assignments cover subject-matter and professional knowledge that entry-level educators will need to pass the Early Childhood ExCET (Examination for the Certification of Educators in Texas). The Early Childhood Handbook available for purchase at the bookstores) contains other important information for students preparing for this test. This course will address the following ExCET Competencies in depth:

Competency 004	Promoting an understanding of diversity
Competency 019	Child development as an integrated process
Competency 020	Factors affecting development
Competency 024	School-home relationships

STUDENT EVALUATION

Various means will be used to evaluate the student's mastery of course objectives. Using a criterion referenced point system, individual project and final grades will be calculated as follows:

Assignments	Possible Points
Exams (4)	100 (25 points each)
Field-based Experience #1	25
Field-based Experience #2	25
Field-based Experience #3	30
Field-based Experience #4	25
Home-learning Activities	45
Total Points	250

Grade Distribution

A = 225 - 250
 B = 200 - 224
 C = 175 - 199
 D = 150 - 174
 F = 149 - below

REQUIREMENTS**Reading Assignments**

Students are expected to prepare for classroom discussions and activities by completing assigned readings prior to coming to class. This will help them to participate in class discussions and obtain a better understanding of the content matter.

Exams

Four multiple-choice exams will cover assigned readings and in-class activities. Exams will be given solely at the time indicated on the course calendar. Students must bring to class a scantron sheet on each scheduled testing day for recording answers.

Field based Experiences

Students will spend approximately 10 hours in field sites. Field-based assignments are required for the successful completion of this course. These field-based experiences are designed to be accomplished in different settings. Students will complete four field-based experiences that will consist of:

1. interviews of diverse groups of parents to ascertain their uses and needs for specific support systems in child rearing,
2. the collection and presentation of information about various community resources (presentations will correspond as much as possible to discussion topics),
3. an assessment of a particular school's potential to encourage or increase family involvement, and
4. attendance at and report on a parent-teacher conference or parent meeting.

Home-Learning Activities

Students will prepare and present home-learning activities designed to support and encourage family involvement. Each student will prepare materials and guidelines for activities that children and parents can complete together. These activities will be presented in class on the date indicated on the course calendar.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance of scheduled classes is mandatory for the completion of this course. In-class activities cannot be replicated outside of class sessions. If an absence is unavoidable, please notify the instructor prior to class by leaving a message or sending an email. ***You will be counted as present if you attend the entire class session. In order for students to be considered present for the class, the student must arrive on time and remain for the entire class period.*** After the third absence of a student, the student will be dropped from the course by the instructor. If the instructor drop period has expired, the student will receive a reduction in the final grade by one letter grade. Each additional absence will result in a subsequent reduction of the final grade by an additional letter grade. Emergency situations will be evaluated at the discretion of the instructor.

EXPECTATIONS

Quality of work

A standard of written English appropriate for elementary teachers will be expected. All written work submitted must be of professional quality, neatly presented, grammatically correct, and free of spelling and punctuation errors. All written assignments must be prepared on a computer with appropriate word processing software. Facilities are available on campus for this purpose. **Title pages**, including your name, course/section number and date are required for all written assignments. To improve readability of papers, standard print styles should be used (e.g. Times, Geneva, New York). Font size must be 10 or 12 point. All papers should be double-spaced. Pages should be stapled

together (please do not use folders or binders). Full credit cannot be earned for work that does not meet these standards.

Submission of Assignments

Assignments must be submitted on or before the specified due date. Assignments are due at the beginning of class. Only emergency situations will be evaluated at the discretion of the instructor. (Problems with the printer do not apply.) If you are absent on the day an assignment is due, you should make arrangements to submit the assignment on time to avoid the loss of points for late submission. Assignments must be complete upon submission. No incomplete assignments will be accepted. No resubmissions will be allowed unless requested by the instructor.

Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty

Students are expected to demonstrate professional conduct during class sessions. In order to minimize distractions, students should not leave the room during class unless an emergency arises. Students should also refrain from engaging in individual conversations during lectures or class discussions. **PLEASE TURN-OFF PHONES as a courtesy to the class.**

Students are expected to be above reproach in scholastic activities. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and dismissal from the University. Since scholastic dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, any incidence of student dishonesty will be managed as outlined in the UTSA Student Guide.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities must be registered with the Office of Disability Services (MS 2.03.18, telephone 458-4157(voice), 458-4981 (TTY), UTSA Downtown BV 1.302 458-2945) in order to receive support services. If you need accommodation for a disability, please contact me at your earliest convenience.

FIELD-BASED EXPERIENCE #1 *Community Resources*

Description

This assignment consists of collecting and presenting information about one community resource with a partner. In-class presentation dates will correspond as much as possible to discussion topics.

Procedure

1. Sign up in class to investigate a community resource an agency that provides special services for families. The agencies should focus on medial and mental health, nutrition, literacy, legal, and educational services (such as after school and summer programs or tutoring).
2. Contact your agency, organization, or individual. Collect information about the services that are provided for children and their families. Use whatever means is most appropriate for learning as much as you can about this organization. It will be necessary to visit the sites, observe what happens, talk to personnel and collect literature.
3. Write a concise one-page report on the organization. (If necessary, this one may be double-sided.) Include address, telephone number, and individual contacts if appropriate. Describe the mission of the agency/organization, the clients who are served, the number of clients, eligibility requirements if any, the services or programs that are offered, sources of funding, costs to families if applicable, average duration of services to clients. Your report should also contain any other information pertaining specifically to this organization. It should be concise, well written, well organized and suitable as a reference for the public. If you quote agency/organization literature, use quotation marks and cite source(s).
4. Report your findings writing a one-page narrative paper about the agency. You will also have 10 minutes to present your agency to the class. Because of limited class time, your presentation will be timed; please ensure that you can complete your report within 10 minutes. The inclusion of examples of children or families served is appropriate. Visual aids (e.g., role-playing, PowerPoint presentation, posters, slides, etc.) should be considered when planning your presentation. Submit one copy of your report to the instructor.
5. Both you and your partner should contribute equally to the completion of this assignment. You both are responsible for collecting information, writing the report, and giving half of the presentation. Each of you will receive the same number of points.

Grading Criteria: Thoroughness, quality of presentation and of written report.

FIELD-BASED EXPERIENCE #2 *Interviews of Diverse Groups of Parents*

Description

This assignment consists of interviewing 3 diverse groups of parents using the interview questions provided. The assignment will help students to gather information about parental involvement in the schools.

Procedure

From the following choose 3 different parents (or couples) to interview:

1. Parent(s) of preschool children (3- to 4-year-olds)
2. Parent(s) of school age children (5- to 18-year-olds)
3. Teenage parent(s)
4. Single parent
5. Parent(s) of a child with a disability or health concern
6. Parent(s) in a blended family
7. Immigrant parents
8. Migrant parents

In your selection choose parents with children of different ages and ones who are likely to hold different perspectives because of background, circumstances, etc. Choose parents whose backgrounds or experiences are different from your own and perhaps that you don't know.

Ask each parent or couple open-ended questions covering these topics:

1. Greatest joys and biggest challenges in being a parent.
2. Goals for their child(ren).
3. Ways they are trying to meet their children's development needs (i.e., physical, social/emotional, and cognitive needs).
4. Values, beliefs, traditions.
5. Resources/support systems they have used or intend to use to help them care for and nurture their child(ren) - that is, help outside their immediate family.
6. Resources/support systems they need or want in caring for their child(ren) but which are unavailable, inaccessible or of which they are not aware.
7. Opinion of parenting education (i.e. information on how to parent). If they're not in favor of it, cite their reasons. If they are in favor of it, find out what they think it should consist of and whom they think should provide it.

In a two-page narrative, describe each of the parents and their particular situation. Do not use their real names; refer to parents by pseudonym. Discuss their responses to your questions. Summarize your narrative by comparing and contrasting their uses of and needs for support systems in caring for their children.

Grading Criteria

Objectivity, thoroughness, clarity of descriptions, quality of report.

FIELD-BASED EXPERIENCE #3
Assessment of a School's Parental Involvement Programs

Description

This assignment consists of (1) visiting a school of your choosing to investigate existing practices and programs to involve families, and (2) assessing the school's potential to encourage or increase family involvement both through formal and informal means.

Procedure

1. Interview staff/personnel to ascertain ways families are currently involved at (a) the school-wide level and (b) in individual classrooms. Tour the school. Find out, what attempts are made to encourage family involvement? Are any school-based programs in existence for this purpose? Does the school provide additional services for families? Are the physical setting and climate welcoming to families? What do school personnel feel are their biggest challenges in increasing family participation? What successes have they had?
2. In a two-page narrative report on your findings.
 - a. Include background information about the particular school (name, address, district, profile of children in attendance). Cite your sources of information (e.g., principal, director, secretary, classroom teacher, etc.). Report the challenges that school personnel mentioned in involving families.
 - b. Summarize what you learned from your visit. Describe physical and atmospheric components. Describe positive steps the school and individual teachers have taken to encourage family participation.
 - c. Suggest additional means through which this particular school might increase family involvement at all levels and at both the institutional and classroom levels. Relate your suggestions to challenges mentioned by school personnel and to the needs of the community in the area of the school. Be specific. (This is the most important part of your report and gives you the opportunity to apply readings and class discussion.)

Grading Criteria: Thoroughness, clarity and quality of report, evidence of comprehensive application of course material in assessing particular site.

FIELD-BASED EXPERIENCE #4
Parent-Teacher Conference or Parent Meeting

Choose either Option A or Option B to complete this assignment.

Option A

This option consists of attending, observing, and reporting on a parent-teacher conference at a preprimary or elementary school.

Procedure

1. Contact a school or teacher to arrange to attend a parent-teacher conference.
2. On the day of the conference, check in at office. Introduce yourself to school personnel and state the reason for your visit. It is very important that your dress and demeanor are professional.
3. Introduce yourself to the teacher and parent, stating that observation of a conference is a course requirement. If you plan to be a teacher, say so.
4. Observe the conference making **mental** notes about: (1) tone of conference, (2) teacher's body language and non-verbal messages, (3) topics discussed, (4) how teacher began and ended conference, (5) teacher responses to parent comments and questions, (6) discussion of future plans (e.g., whether to meet again, what each would do in the meantime, etc.), (7) extent to which you felt that communication occurred, and (8) other information pertinent to the manner in which the conference was conducted. **NOTE:** Do not take any written notes during the actual conference.
5. Immediately after the conference record your observations and thoughts. Remember: anything you witness or hear is to remain strictly confidential.
6. Write a concise (2 page) narrative on the conference. Include the following:
 - a. Background information - name of school, time and location where conference was held, duration, sex and grade level of child, purpose of conference, etc. Do not use the teacher's, parent's or child's real name. Refer to them by "teacher," "parent," and "child".
 - b. A summary of conference proceedings. This should be an objective account of what happened, without any value judgments.
 - c. A description of the positive aspects of the conference with an emphasis on what the teacher did to ensure the conference was productive and successful.
 - d. Suggestions of additional and/or different means that might be used in the future to conduct a conference similar to the one you observed. This is an important part of your paper.

NOTE: Be sure to include information about each item in #4 somewhere in your narrative.

Option B

This option consists of attending, observing, and reporting on a parent education meeting in the community.

Procedure

1. Arrange to attend a parent education meeting. This may be a meeting or workshop sponsored by a school on a particular topic, a parent advisory council meeting or a site-based management meeting, or, as a last resort, a PTO/PTA meeting that includes an educational component.
2. If the meeting you attend is not open to all school patrons or to the general public, introduce yourself and state that you are an interested observer and/or are in attendance as part of a course assignment. It is important that you dress and demeanor are professional.
3. Observe the proceedings of the meeting. Note the manner in which the meeting is conducted, the involvement of parents, and the feelings of both those conducting the meeting and those in attendance. If possible, talk with the director/leader about the goals and objectives of the group and talk with a parent or parents concerning their desires for the group.
4. Write a concise (2-page) narrative on the meeting. Do not use any real names; refer to individuals by the role they take (organizer, principal, teacher, parent, etc.). Include a paragraph about each of the following:
 - a. Background information - name of group, time, duration and location of meeting, purpose of meeting, etc.
 - b. A summary of meeting proceedings. This should be an objective account of what happened without any value judgments.
 - c. A description of leadership characteristics exhibited by individuals in charge of the meeting. Comment upon leader's preparation, organization, skill in handling discussions, facilitation of meeting, responsiveness to those in attendance, etc.
 - d. A description of the dynamics within the group.
 - e. In your opinion, was parent involvement effective? Justify your opinion using examples.
 - f. Were the social/emotional aspects and the content of the meeting such that you felt parents would continue to participate in the group or attend future meetings? Justify your opinion using examples.
 - g. Suggestions of additional and/or different means that might be used in the future to conduct a meeting similar to the one you observed. This is an important part of your report.

Grading Criteria for either option: Thoroughness, solid evidence of application of course material, clarity and quality.

HOME-LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Home-Learning Bags

Home-learning bags are collections of actual activities and materials that children and parents can complete together. Activities should encourage the child's development, especially in the areas of language and literacy.

Containers for the collections may include (but are not limited to) cloth-bags, small “suitcases,” or tote bags. When choosing containers, keep in mind that these will be sent home to parents. Containers should be attractive, durable, easily transported, and able to be completely closed. They should be labeled on the outside. A luggage-type tag with your name, date and section number should also be attached.

Choose to make one for pre-primary (PK or K) and one bag for primary grade children (grades 1 and 2). You will need 2 bags.

Each pack should include:

1. An introductory letter to parents outlining in detail the purpose of the bag and its contents. This letter should be brief, easy to understand, and of professional quality. It should provide background information and set a positive, motivational tone by using such statements as, “Have fun with this bag, “ or “You and your child will enjoy doing these activities together.” Simple, clear instructions for use of the pack should be included in the letter. You may also include words to songs/fingerplays, and suggestions for additional activities that parents and children can do together that extend the theme of the bag. This letter should be laminated. (Contact paper is an acceptable alternative.)
2. One or two (but no more than three) pieces of high quality children’s literature suitable for the grade level you’ve chosen. If you include more than one book, they should share a unifying theme. Consider both fiction and nonfiction selections. You do not need to purchase the books, you can check them out from your local library. The bags will be returned on the day of the final exam.
3. Materials to complete 2 activities that extend the theme of the books. The activities should encourage parent-child interaction, literacy, creativity and provisions for choice. These may include such things as games, art projects, dramatic play ideas, manipulative or literacy ideas (e.g., what if...? cards, geometric shapes). All games and manipulatives should be teacher made and easy to replace in case they are damaged. The activities should also convey a sensitivity to ethnic, cultural and language differences.
4. Materials to be used in the activities should be sturdy, durable, appealing and attractive. They should also be homemade, inexpensive, and easy to replicate. With the exception of art materials, they should be non-consumable. Everything needed to complete activities should be included in pack. Possible exceptions might be messy or bulky materials readily found in the home (e.g., water, an egg). Carefully consider the time and expense required to replenish consumable materials in your planning.
WORKSHEETS ARE NOT ACCEPTED.

5. Separate open-ended response forms with spaces for the parent and for the child to record information and comments about the activities that were completed, and to evaluate those activities. These forms should be brief and non-intimidating.
 6. A list of contents included in the bag, either on the “luggage tag”.
- NOTE: Your bags should weigh no more than 3 1/2 pounds and be a manageable size for a young child to carry easily.

Grading Criteria: A rubric will be used to assess quality in these areas:

- introductory letter 5 points
- clarity of activity directions/procedures 5 points
- quality/appropriateness of selections of children’s literature 5 points
- developmental appropriateness of activities 5 points
- materials for activities 5 points
- usefulness of activities to encourage family interactions 5 points
- response forms 5 points
- professionalism and presentation 4 points
- attractiveness of container and materials 3 points
- sturdiness and durability. 3 points

Home Learning Bags Rubric

Criteria	Points					
Introductory letter	5	4	3	2	1	0
Clarity of activity directions/procedures	5	4	3	2	1	0

Quality/appropriateness of selections of children’s literature	5	4	3	2	1	0
Developmental appropriateness of activities	5	4	3	2	1	0
Materials for activities	5	4	3	2	1	0
Usefulness of activities to encourage family interactions	5	4	3	2	1	0
Response forms	5	4	3	2	1	0
Professionalism and presentation		4	3	2	1	0
Attractiveness of container and materials			3	2	1	0
Sturdiness and durability			3	2	1	0

FIELD-BASED EXPERIENCE #1
 DOCUMENTATION OF EXPERIENCE FORM
 (This Form Must Be Included with Your Assignment)

Student’s Name: _____

Filed _____ Experience _____ Site: _____

Site Address: _____

Site Phone Number: _____

Name of the person/s observed and their title(s): _____

Complete the following by recording the time you arrived at the site, the time you departed and a brief description of what you observed.

Date	Arrival Time	Departure Time	Observation/Activity Description

THE FOLLOWING IS TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PERSON(S) OBSERVED

I certify that the information depicted above is correct and accurate.

Name: _____ Title: _____
 (Please print)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Principal's or Director's Name: _____

**FIELD-BASED #2
 DOCUMENTATION OF EXPERIENCE FORM
 (This Form Must Be Included with Your Assignment)**

Student's Name: _____

Filed _____ Experience _____ Site: _____

Site Address: _____

Site Phone Number: _____

Name of the person/s observed and their title(s): _____

Complete the following by recording the time you arrived at the site, the time you departed and a brief description of what you observed.

Date	Arrival Time	Departure Time	Observation/Activity Description

THE FOLLOWING IS TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PERSON(S) OBSERVED

I certify that the information depicted above is correct and accurate.

Name: _____ Title: _____
 (Please print)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Principal's or Director's Name: _____

**FIELD-BASED #3
 DOCUMENTATION OF EXPERIENCE FORM
 (This Form Must Be Included with Your Assignment)**

Student's Name: _____

Filed _____ Experience _____ Site: _____

Site Address: _____

Site Phone Number: _____

Name of the person/s observed and their title(s): _____

Complete the following by recording the time you arrived at the site, the time you departed and a brief description of what you observed.

Date	Arrival Time	Departure Time	Observation/Activity Description

THE FOLLOWING IS TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PERSON(S) OBSERVED

I certify that the information depicted above is correct and accurate.

Name: _____ Title: _____
(Please print)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Principal's or Director's Name: _____

**FIELD-BASED EXPERIENCE #4
DOCUMENTATION OF EXPERIENCE FORM
(This Form Must Be Included with Your Assignment)**

Student's Name: _____

Filed _____ Experience _____ Site: _____

Site Address: _____

 Site Phone Number: _____

Name of the person/s observed and their title(s): _____

Complete the following by recording the time you arrived at the site, the time you departed and a brief description of what you observed.

Date	Arrival Time	Departure Time	Observation/Activity Description

THE FOLLOWING IS TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PERSON(S) OBSERVED

I certify that the information depicted above is correct and accurate.

Name: _____ Title: _____
 (Please print)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Principal's or Director's Name: _____