



Castleton University

Early Childhood Educators Institute Summer 2021 Course Syllabus

The course objectives, expected outcomes, assignments, and readings for this course were aligned with Vermont child care program licensing qualifications criteria and relevant certificates and credentials issued by Northern Lights at CCV and the endorsement standards for early childhood overseen by the Vermont Agency of Education. Specifically, this course was framed using the Vermont Core Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals, the Vermont Early Learning Standards, the Vermont Guiding Principles for the Full Participation of Each and Every Child, and/or the Vermont Core Teaching Standards. This syllabus was vetted for licensure and credential alignment by both the Agency of Education's Early Education Programs Manager and the Director of Northern Lights at CCV. Detailed information regarding that alignment is available upon request from the Castleton Center for Schools.

Course Title: Therapeutic Work with Young Children in Classroom Settings

Number of Credits: 3 graduate or undergraduate credits

Level: Graduate & Undergraduate

Students may elect to take this course at the undergraduate level. If so, some assignments and expectations for scholarly writing (paper page length, APA expectations) will be minimized to the level of complexity for what would be expected of an undergraduate student. Any adjustments to course expectations for this purpose should be determined collaboratively by the instructor and the student(s).

Course Code: EDU 5515 C08 (graduate) & EDU 4710 CFS9 (undergraduate)

Dates: July 20 – November 1, 2021.

This course is part of the 2021 Early Childhood Educators Institute and requires attendance all 4 days of the online institute July 20, 22, 27 & 29. The course continues in an online environment until November 1, 2021 at the latest.

Times: July 20, 22, 27, 29 from 9:00 am - 4:05 pm.

Format: Online asynchronously and synchronously using Zoom videoconferencing.

Location: Online

Instructor(s):

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Course Cost to Student: \$375 for this 3-credit course. The institute fee is \$200. Total: \$575

Course Description:

This course will focus on providing therapeutic learning and/or healing experiences in a classroom setting for young children who, for either internal or environmental reasons, struggle in their relationships with the people in their world. An overview of normal social/emotional developmental milestones B-5 will be shared and discussed. We will examine the personality traits and knowledge base that are critical for teachers to possess in order to succeed in this challenging and highly rewarding work. We will also explore how curriculum, physical environment, and program supports can either hinder or advance this work. We will look at issues such as attachment, parent support and education, strategies for working with children who are acting out, and effective reflection time and supervision, to name a few. The course will entail a mix of didactic presentation, small group and one-on-one modalities. Participants are encouraged to bring in case examples of children and family situations that have presented challenges in their work or their programs.

Audience: Birth to Pre-K

Course Goal:

Students will gain an understanding of the principles and practice of providing therapeutic interventions and environments for young children in a classroom setting.

Course Objectives:

- Understand normal social emotional developmental milestones of young children birth to age five
- Understand what is meant by therapeutic early care and education
- Familiarity with Addison County Parent/Child Center therapeutic childcare assessment
- Understand Teacher/Caregiver Attributes and Training essential in therapeutic work with young children
- Understand Social/Emotional Curriculum implications of working in a therapeutic classroom
- Understand Physical Environments that support therapeutic work.
- Understand Program Supports needed to establish and maintain a therapeutic classroom.
- Familiarity with reflective supervision practices in therapeutic work with children and families
- Effectively giving and receiving peer feedback
- Understand common goals in working with children with challenging behaviors, strategies for achieving these goals, and anticipated outcomes
- Develop and articulate a personal understanding of how change happens for young children struggling with SEB challenges
- Understand strategies for working with families of children with SEB challenges
- Familiarity with the frequent role of sensory integration issues in children's social/emotional struggles

Required Readings/Texts: (required texts not included in the course tuition)

Russell, Bouffard, Wallace, Harding. Addison County Parent/Child Center: *I'm Home! A Manual for Providing Therapeutic Childcare.*

Leslie Koplow, Editor: *Unsmiling Faces, How Preschools Can Heal*, Teachers College Press, 1996 (revised edition 2007)

Additional readings will be distributed before and/or during class.

Other Suggested Readings/Texts:

The following suggestions are for those who are interested in what has informed our work over the decades at the Parent/Child Center.

Kadina Johnston and Charles Brinamen: *Mental Health Consultation in Childcare, Transforming Relationships Among Directors, Staff, and Families.* Zero to Three Press, Washington DC, 2006. Introduction. Chapter 2, Initiating Consultation. Chapter 6, Beginning Case Consultation: Gaining Entry and Setting the Tone.

Joan J. Shirilla and Deborah J. Weatherston: *Case Studies in Infant Mental Health, Risk, Resiliency, and Relationships.* Zero to Three, 2002.

Assignments:

All participants taking the class for credit will be required to write the following:

- 1) Before class starts, to be submitted by Monday, July 12th: A short (no more than 2 pages) description of a child/family you are (or have been) “worried” about, frustrated with, at your wit’s end about. Include in this description:**

- Age/“Name” (disguised) of child
- Short family description
- What/when did you first notice something concerning?
- What are the challenges?
- What interventions have you tried? Include successes and failures.
- Anything else we should know?

We will have a chance to “share” these children with each other, and will keep them in mind as we go through the course materials.

- 2) Personal Reflection Paper:** We ask that student think critically about ideas and strategies they’ve used in the past, to effect positive change in challenging behaviors in children and families. Compare these to any insights/information/ideas/strategies student might use now that they’ve taken the class. This paper should be around five pages long, exploring and articulating experiences student has had with children/families where desired change has and has not happened; theoretical frameworks that have had an impact on the student’s understanding of why these changes did or didn’t happen; and how this class has (or has not) influenced student’s understanding of change for children/ families. This assignment will be due from all students by Monday August 9th.

In addition to the above, Graduate students will be required to complete **three** of the following assignments, **undergraduate students** will be required to complete **two**:

- 1) **Individual Case Presentation:** Write-up a case presentation regarding a child or family that is experiencing significant social/emotional/behavioral challenges. Gather information through observation, teacher interviews, and parent interviews. Expected format for this will be provided at the time of the class.
- 2) **Classroom Evaluation:** Evaluate a childcare classroom using the therapeutic assessment tools from the manual, "I'm Home!! A Manual for Providing Therapeutic Childcare". Write-up will include comprehensive assessment of a childcare program, areas of overall strength, areas needing improvement and a suggested prioritization of the latter.
- 3) **Peer Feedback Assessment:** Using the Peer Feedback Form from the above mentioned manual, complete an assessment of two current or former colleagues, one who's work you find inspiring, and one who's work you have concerns about. Explore ways to present these findings to those teachers, particularly concerns. The emphasis in this assignment is in the COMMENTS under each section of the evaluation form. Actually presenting findings to the teacher is up to the student.
- 4) **Classroom Project:** For early care and education teachers, assess their classroom environment using the knowledge and perspectives learned in this class and plan and implement five classroom changes related to the physical environment. If student has co-teachers, comment about conversations with co-teachers concerning reasons for changes, and reflect on how these conversations went. Classroom changes should be articulated and shared through writing and photographic documentation.
- 5) **Self- Assessment:** Using the Peer Feedback form from p. 72-76 of the I'm Home manual as a self-assessment tool, do an in-depth self-assessment, noting areas of strength and areas needing improvement. The student will also seek out two peers who are familiar with their work to fill out the Peer Feedback forms. We are interested, as above, in the COMMENTS by both student and peers, and in student reflection on those comments. Using both the self assessment and the peer feedback, the student will develop a plan for addressing any areas needing strengthening.

All assignments will be completed and turned in by the end of the follow up session on Saturday October 10th.

Projects: (see above)

Evaluation:

This course is designed to teach about the possibilities for therapeutic, reparative work with very young children, birth to five, in childcare and preschool settings. All participants in the course will be expected to attend the summer session and one follow-up day session on Saturday, October 10th (probably at the Addison County Parent/Child Center in Middlebury). Participants will complete assignments as described above.

Grading:

Grading will be based on three criteria: 1) attendance at all four days of on-line classes as well as at the scheduled meeting in October (on-line or in-person yet to be determined); 2) active participation in all classes; 3) successful completion of all required assignments.

Grading Policy:

Grades are indicated by letters with a designated "quality point" value assigned to each as follows:

A	4.0
A-	3.7
B+	3.3
B	3.0

B-	2.7
C+	2.3

Additional grading information can be found in the Castleton University Graduate Catalog, under Academic Policies, accessible online at: <http://catalog.castleton.edu/index.php>

Academic Honesty Policy:

Castleton University is a learning institution committed to the highest standards of scholarly conduct. The students, faculty, and administration make up a scholarly community whose integrity and success necessarily stem from a mutually agreed upon code of academic standards and principles that promote trust and honesty and prohibit the attempt to gain unfair academic advantage. Membership in the Castleton community means sharing responsibility for upholding and safeguarding these academic standards and principles.

Any violation of academic honesty will be considered cheating and will be dealt with accordingly by the appropriate authorities.

For more information click the link below to access the Castleton University Graduate Catalog Academic Policy section:

http://catalog.castleton.edu/content.php?catoid=16&navoid=1204#Academic_Honesty

Use and Ownership of Copyrighted Materials:

For information and guidance, faculty and students are referred to the Vermont State College Manual of Policy and Procedures as it relates to the use and ownership of copyrighted materials. Guidelines are set out in Policy 416, accessible online at the following address:

<http://www.castleton.edu/library/information-literacy-graduation-standard/information-literacy-tutorial/information-ethics-citing-sources-and-fair-use/>

Accommodations:

Castleton is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to qualified students with disabilities so that no such student shall, by reason of a disability, be excluded from participating in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs or activities of Castleton University. For more information, please contact the Coordinator of Disability Services, at (802) 468-1428.

Course Drop Policy:

Castleton University offers courses to educators with the expectation that participants will complete the course. However, the University realizes circumstances arise in one's personal life that may cause disruptions. **The policy for dropping a course is that a participant will notify the instructor in writing of the intent to withdraw from the course. The withdrawal notice should be made within the first week of the course and should include the reason for withdrawing.** After week one, changes in class status will be considered for health, bereavement, and personal or emergency situations only. Those who withdraw without adhering to this policy may receive a failing grade on their transcript and/or be liable for associated course costs. For more Academic Policy information, check the link below to access the Castleton University Graduate Catalog:

<http://catalog.castleton.edu/content.php?catoid=23&navoid=2159>

Transcript Request:

