



The Center To Inform *Personnel Preparation Policy And Practice* In Early Intervention & Preschool Education



At a Glance...

Volume 8, No.1 December 2008

Study VIII Alignment of Early Childhood Special Education Higher Education Curriculum with National Personnel Standards and State Certification Policies

This study was conducted to determine the extent to which institutions of higher education (IHE) Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) curricula align with DEC, CEC, and NAEYC (as appropriate) personnel standards. A previous Center study (The Center to Inform Policy and Practice in Personnel Preparation for Early Intervention and Preschool Education, 2008) identified the following certification models in ECSE: (1) ECSE, (2) Special Education, (3) Blended Early Childhood Education (ECE/ECSE), (4) ECSE endorsement on ECE or special education certification, (5) ECE endorsement on special education certification and completed an item-by-item content analysis comparing state certification standards. Three states were randomly selected per model. As a follow-up to that analysis, IHEs in those states with degree programs approved to result in the respective state certification/endorsement were identified. Program syllabi, descriptions, and handbooks were analyzed to determine the extent to which IHE curricula in ECSE are based on national personnel standards. The percentage of standards in IHE curricula and state certification policies were also compared.

Comparison of IHE Curricula with National Standards

To determine the extent to which IHE's ECSE curricula align with national standards, Center faculty completed a content analysis of all syllabi and other relevant program documents. All components of the documents were reviewed (e.g., course objectives, course outline, assignments, topics and related readings). The national standards used in the comparison were: the CEC/DEC early childhood special education knowledge and skills, the CEC Common Core knowledge and skills (CEC, 2003), and the NAEYC early childhood personnel standards, if relevant (Hyson, 2003). NAEYC standards were used for the states with ECE and ECSE blended certification, states that added ECSE endorsement on ECE certification, and those states that added ECE endorsement onto ECSE. One senior investigator completed the content analysis. Percentages of standards represented in the IHE documents that matched the national standards were computed by certification model, in comparison to the standards represented by the respective state's certification model, in comparison to the degree of inclusion in undergraduate and graduate programs, and in comparison across programs that focus on preparation for different age ranges. See the data report for the latter two comparisons.

Characteristics of IHEs/Programs

- Results for 15 IHE programs - three IHE programs per each of the five certification models.
- Geographically representative of the United States.
- 8 master's programs; 3 baccalaureate programs; 4 combination master's and baccalaureate analyzed.
- Size based on student enrollment ranging from 1,683 to 46,174.
- Number of program syllabi ranging from 6 to 24.

IHE Curricula Alignment with National Personnel Standards

- Program documents for the 15 universities/colleges reported in this report were analyzed in comparison to the personnel standards of CEC, CEC/DEC, and NAEYC.
- common core 33% to 93%
- ECSE 21% to 98%,
- NAEYC 84% to 100%.

Total Number and Percentage of Personnel Standards Addressed by IHE Programs

IHE	Model	% CC & ECSE (n=167)	% CC, ECSE, & NAEYC (n=186)	% CC (n=125)	% ECSE (n=42)	% NAEYC (n=19)
1	ECSE	80	NA	78	86	NA
2	ECSE	56	NA	56	57	NA
3	ECSE	71	NA	68	81	NA
4	ECSE on SPE	78	NA	74	93	NA
5	ECSE on SPE K-12	69	NA	70	67	NA
6	ECSE on SPE K-12	77	NA	73	88	NA
7	Blended	66	70	66	69	100
8	Blended	56	59	58	48	84
9	Blended	74	76	69	88	95
10	ECSE on ECE	94	94	93	98	95
11	ECSE on ECE	70	73	69	74	95
12	ECSE on ECE	60	64	54	76	100
13	Special Education	57	NA	62	43	
14	Special Education	43	NA	50	21	
15	Special Education	34	NA	33	38	

CC = CEC Common Core, ECSE = CEC/DEC ECSE standards, NAEYC = NAEYC standards



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Comparison of National Personnel Standards in IHE Curricula and State Certification Requirements

- A greater percentage of the standards are addressed in nine of the IHE curricula than in their respective state policies.
- A greater percentage of standards are addressed in five of the state's policies than in the IHE curricula.

Comparison of National Personnel Standards in IHE Curricula and State Certification Policies

IHE	Model	% CC & ECSE Standards in IHE Curricula	% CC & ECSE Standards in State Certification Policy
1	ECSE	80	38
2	ECSE	56	56
3	ECSE	71	100
4	ECSE on SPE	78	0
5	ECSE on SPE K-12	69	41
6	ECSE on SPE K-12	77	10
7	Blended	66	14
8	Blended	56	21
9	Blended	74	13
10	ECSE on ECE	94	100
11	ECSE on ECE	70	98
12	ECSE on ECE	60	98
13	Special Education	57	19
14	Special Education	43	0
15	Special Education	34	39

CC = CEC Common Core, ECSE = CEC/DEC ECSE standards

Comparison of the CEC Common Core, ECSE, and NAEYC Personnel Standards Across IHE Curricula and State Policies

- Each of the three sets of national standards is incorporated at a higher percentage in IHE curricula than in state policy.

Comparison of the Percentage of CEC Common Core, ECSE, and NAEYC Standards across IHE Curricula and State Policies

IHE	Model	CC in IHE Curricula	CC in State Policy	ECSE in IHE Curricula	ECSE in State Policy	NAEYC in IHE Curricula	NAEYC in State Policy
1	ECSE	78	32	86	50	NA	
2	ECSE	56	52	57	68	NA	
3	ECSE	68	100	81	100	NA	
4	ECSE on SPE	74	0	93	0	NA	
5	ECSE on SPE K-12	70	41	67	48	NA	
6	ECSE on SPE K-12	73	12	88	7	NA	
7	Blended	66	12	69	27	100	50
8	Blended	58	10	48	59	84	88
9	Blended	69	10	88	27	95	60
10	ECSE on ECE	93	100	98	100	95	92
11	ECSE on ECE	69	98	74	98	95	98
12	ECSE on ECE	54	98	76	98	100	98
13	Special Education	62	24	43	7	NA	
14	Special Education	50	0	21	0	NA	
15	Special Education	33	38	38	42	NA	

CC = CEC Common Core, ECSE = CEC/DEC ECSE standards, NAEYC = NAEYC standards

For a copy of the full report go to: www.uconnucdd.org

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