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**Sample Syllabus**

**Standard 2: Partnering with Families**

**ECiPC-Equity Sample Syllabus**

**Integrating EI/ECSE Standards and Equity in Early Childhood Intervention:**

**Every infant and young child with a delay in development or disability and their family, will have access to and participate in early childhood intervention, that is individually designed to be racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically responsive to ensure equitable, appropriate, and optimal child and family outcomes.**

This sample syllabus provides resources, activities, readings, and assignments aligned with the Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards for Early Interventionists/Early Childhood Special Educators (EI/ECSE Standards, 2020), DEC Recommended Practices (2014), and the ECiPC-Equity definition of Early Childhood (<https://health.uconn.edu/ecipc-equity/>).

Consider state and university policies and add as appropriate. This is not a complete syllabus; nor is it intended to suggest that the standard would be addressed in only one course in the curriculum. This syllabus is intended to act as a sample that can be adapted for your classroom and students. Suggested assignments and resources can be used to support students at the knowledge development stage as well as “advanced” students with more experience (i.e., those in upper-level undergraduate courses and/or graduate courses) who are ready to "dig deeper".

**Standard 2: Partnering with Families**

**Course Description**

This course is designed to help students gain knowledge of family-centered practices and family systems theory to develop and maintain reciprocal partnerships with families. Students learn to apply family capacity-building practices to their interactions with families. Students learn to make culturally, linguistically, racially, and ethnically informed decisions and to use these skills in partnering and advocating with and for families to make informed decisions for young children. Students will engage families in opportunities that build on their existing strengths, reflect current goals, and support family competence and confidence to support their children’s development and learning.

**Required Text**

The text below is an example for Standard 2. When developing or revising your syllabus, you may also choose supplemental readings. (See References in the Resources section of the [ECPC Curriculum Modules: Professional Standards](https://ecpcta.org/curriculum-module/) for related literature and resources.)

Turnbull, A., Turnbull, H. R., Francis, G. L., Burke, M., Kyzar, K., Haines, S., Gershwin, K. S., Holdren, N., & Singer, G. H. S. (2022). *Families, professionals, and exceptionality: Trusting partnerships in general and special education* (*8*th ed.). Pearson.

Harry, B., Ocasio-Stoutenburg, L., (2020). *Meeting families where they are: Building equity through advocacy with diverse schools and communities*. Teachers College Press.

Trivette, C., Keilty, B., (2017) *DEC recommended practices monograph Series No. 3: Family: Knowing families, tailoring practices, building capacity.* DEC.

**Standard 2 Components - Student Learning Outcomes**

Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) faculty may develop additional student learning objectives by breaking down the components into sub-objectives and describing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions students are expected to learn upon successful completion of this course. Two sample student learning objectives are listed for each of the numbered components below. These are examples only and are not intended to be a complete set of objectives for the respective component.

As a result of active participation and successful completion of course requirements, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate application of their knowledge of family-centered practices, family systems theory, and the changing needs and priorities in families’ lives to develop trusting, respectful, culturally responsive, and affirming partnerships with all families that allow for the mutual exchange of knowledge and information.

* Describe the elements of family systems theory.
* Describe family-centered practices that foster trusting, respectful, affirming, and culturally responsive partnerships with families.

1. Observe and practice communication of clear, comprehensive, objective information about resources and supports that help families make informed decisions and advocate for access, participation, and equity in natural and inclusive environments.

* Describe clear, comprehensive, and objective information sharing strategies to use with families, including those from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
* Describe clear, comprehensive, and objective information sharing strategies to inform families about resources and supports available to them.

1. Identify and practice strategies to engage families in identifying their strengths, priorities, and concerns, support families to achieve the goals they have for their family and their young child’s development and learning, and promote families’ competence and confidence during assessment, individualized planning, intervention, instruction, and transition processes.

* Describe strategies to design and support families in identifying their strengths, priorities, and concerns.
* Describe strategies to support families to achieve the goals they have for their family and their child’s development and learning.

**Topical Course Outline**

The topical courseoutline is organized by course sessions and aligns course topics with EI/ECSE standards and components. In addition, reading(s) and learning activities are identified for each topic.

| **Week** | **Standard 2 Components** | **Topic and Readings** | **Activities** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | 2.1 | -Family systems theory  -Family centered practice  -Changing needs and priorities in family’s lives  Turnbull et al., Ch. 3 and 4  Kansas Early Years  Module 1  1.3 Taking Another’s Perspective  [Kansas Early Years Modules](https://kskits.org/kansas-early-years-modules) | Meet the family identified through the university as your partner family. This will extend beyond the semester. See assignment 1.  Complete session 1.3 Taking Another’s Perspective. Write a summary on how “knowing yourself” supports taking another’s perspective. What implications does this have for interactions with families? |
| 2 | 2.1 | -Developing trusting, respectful, culturally responsive and affirming partnerships  -Exchanging knowledge and information with families  Turnbull et al., Ch. 1 and 7  Watch an example of a ecomap activity with a family:  [EcoMap with Robin McWilliam, Jason and Sarah | by Making Access Happen | MAH Authentic Assessment Support | Medium](https://medium.com/mah-authentic-assessment-support/ecomap-with-robin-mcwilliam-jason-and-sarah-e27dd2eb5e55)  Love, Hailey. (2020). Strategic decision making: Reframing parent involvement for families of color. 10.3102/1587808.  Review these family interview questions: [Early Childhood Student and Family Interview/Questionnaire Prompts (2021 - 2022)](https://somervilleearlyed.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Student-and-Family-Interview_Questionnaire-Prompt-2021.pdf)  Hancock, C.L., Beneke, M.R., Cheatham, G.A., Discourse during IEP decision-making: Saying, doing, and being with families from diverse backgrounds - DEC Recommended Practices Monograph Series No. 3 | Complete an ecomap with your partner family. |
| 3 | 2.1 | -Contemporary family issues  -Supporting families in vulnerable circumstances  -Interviewing families using a culturally, linguistically, racially, and ethnically responsive lens is critical  Review these resources ahead of your interview:  [The Power of Empathy Interviews in Family Engagement](https://ascd.org/el/articles/the-power-of-empathy-interviews-in-family-engagement)  [Liberatory Consciousness in Action:](https://wearelee.org/blog/liberatory-consciousness-in-action-engaging-community-through-empathy-interviews/)  [Engaging Community through Empathy Interviews | LEE](https://wearelee.org/blog/liberatory-consciousness-in-action-engaging-community-through-empathy-interviews/)  [How to Use Empathy Interviews to Build Family Engagement](https://www.panoramaed.com/blog/family-empathy-interviews) | Conduct a family interview with your partner family. |
| 4 | 2.1 | -Role of families as partners  -Diversity in families  Turnbull et al., Ch. 1 and 3 | Interview a current Part C provider about the role of families as partners and support of family diversity. |
| 5 | 2.2 | -Historical and legal foundations for family advocacy  Turnbull et al., Ch. 2  Harry & Ocasio-Stoutenburg,  Ch.2 p. 13-18  Harry & Ocasio-Stoutenburg,  Ch.6 | Investigate and describe activities of Partners in Policymaking.  Learn about the activities of local/state parent resource centers https://www.parentcenterhub.org/find-your-center/ |
| 6 | 2.2 | -Communication with families  Turnbull et al., Ch. 8  Kansas Early Years  Module 1: Empathetic Communication  [Kansas Early Years Modules](https://kskits.org/kansas-early-years-modules) | Learn more about effective communication by completing [CONNECT Module 3](https://connectmodules.dec-sped.org/connect-modules/learners/module-3/).  Complete Module 1 and reflect on how to handle feelings for yourself and families when they feel awkward or intense. |
| 7 | 2.2 | -Sharing objective information about resources and supports  Turnbull et al., Ch. 6  Invite a diverse group of family members to share with the class what it would ideally “look like” to receive support in making an informed decision about a practice, strategy, resource, or goal. What information and resources would they want/have they received in this situation or would have liked but did not receive? | Think through a scenario in which you might support your partner family to make an informed decision about a practice, strategy, resource, or goal. What would this conversation “look like.” |
| 8 | 2.2 | -Helping families make informed decisions.  [Supporting Family Member Informed Decision Making](https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/decrp/PG_Fam_SupportingFamilyMembInformedDecisionMaking_prac_print_2017.pdf) | Identify a topic that your partner family would like more information on. Focus on family strengths, priorities, and/or concerns. An example might be sleep. Develop a conversation guide for parents with information about choices. |
| 9 | 2.3 | -Helping families advocate for access, participation, and equity in natural and inclusive environments  Turnbull et al., Ch. 9  Harry & Ocasio-Stoutenburg. Ch. 7  [Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ecd/policy-guidance/policy-statement-inclusion-children-disability-early-childhood-programs#:~:text=This%20policy%20statement%2C%20released%20jointly,they%20can%20fully%20participate%20alongside)  Shaffer, L., Vinh, M., Shapland, D., & O’Grady, C. (2023). Practicing anti-racism as inclusion: Start in early childhood! TEACHING Exceptional Children, 55(5), 350-358. | Relying on information from the readings, additional resources, plus professional and personal experience, you will join a team to debate for or against inclusion.  Develop a one-page elevator sheet for families on inclusion. |
| 10 | 2.3 | -Family rights and responsibilities under federal and state policies  Turnbull et al. Ch. 2 | Find your local district’s or Part C program’s family rights brochure and video tape yourself introducing the notion of parent’s rights to your partner family in the way you think would most enable this family to understand their parental rights. |
| 11 | 2.3 | -Engage families in identifying their strengths, priorities, and concerns  [DEC Recommended Practices Help Guide Your Early Intervention Services](https://eiclearinghouse.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/recommended-practices-eng.pdf)  It’s the Professional's Job to Inform, the Parent’s Job to Decide - DEC Recommended Practices Monograph Series No. 3 | Ask your partner family to identify their strengths, priorities, and concerns. |
| 12 | 2.3 | -Support families to achieve the goals they have for their family and young child’s development and learning | Discuss with partner family what works best for achieving goals they have set. |
| 13 | 2.3 | -Promote families’ competence and confidence during assessment  [Breadth of the Three Child Outcomes](https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/eco/three-child-outcomes-breadth.pdf)  Feedback to Enhance Families’ Competence and Confidence. DEC Recommended Practices Monograph Series No. 3 | Observe a video of an assessment and note the number of times the parent(s) spoke and the type of communication.  [Authentic Assessment in Early Intervention](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CjE3tSxhDDg)  Discuss how information on the three child outcomes might support families in the assessment process. |
| 14 | 2.3 | -Promote families’ competence and confidence during individualized planning, intervention, and instruction  [Family Capacity-Building in Early Childhood Intervention: Do Context and Setting Matter?](https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1032240.pdf) | Discuss with your partner family the actions professionals have taken, or they wish they had taken that helped them to feel more confident and competent. |
| 15 | 2.3 | -Promote families’ competence and confidence during transition processes  [Building Better Bridges: Perceptions of Transition from Early Intervention Programs to Preschool from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Parents, Early Interventionists, and Preschool Special Educators](https://journals.lww.com/iycjournal/abstract/2023/04000/building_better_bridges__perceptions_of_transition.6.aspx)  Chang, Ya-Chih; Hunt, Nancy; Dodds, Robin *Infants & Young Children.* 36(2):164-174, April/June 2023. | Observe a video of a transition conference and discuss how the family’s displayed competence and confidence and what might have led to this.  [Child Find | Transition Planning Conference Video Series](https://www.childfind-idea-il.us/TransitionVideo.aspx) |

**Resources**

Resources to supplement the ECiPC-Equity Sample Syllabus Standard 2:

* [CEC Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards for EI/ECSE (2020)](https://www.dec-sped.org/ei-ecse-standards)
  + Link to the standards and supporting resources.
* [Center for Parent Information and Resources](https://www.parentcenterhub.org/)
  + Link to family-friendly materials and resources.
* [CONNECT Modules (Module 3)](https://connectmodules.dec-sped.org/connect-modules/learners/module-3/)
  + A module about effective communication practices to support collaboration.
* [CONNECT Modules (Module 4)](https://connectmodules.dec-sped.org/connect-modules/learners/module-4/)
  + A module to learn about building family-professional partnership practices.
* [Early Childhood Recommended Practices Modules](https://rpm.fpg.unc.edu/module-5-family) (Module 5)
  + A module to learn about effective family-professional partnership practices.
* [ECPC Adult Learning Planning Tool](https://ecpcta.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2810/2020/10/ECPC_Adult-Learning-Planning-Tool_with-examples.pdf)
* A tool for use by higher education faculty and professional development providers when planning and implementing a topic/content/practice.
* [ECPC Cross-Disciplinary Competencies](https://ecpcta.org/cross-disciplinary-competencies/)
  + Core cross-disciplinary competence areas for use by ECI professionals.
* [ECPC Curriculum Modules: Professional Standards](https://ecpcta.org/curriculum-module/)
* A module for each of the seven EI/ECSE Standards with a variety of resources (e.g., multimedia illustrations, websites, references).
* [Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators](https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/position-statements/professional_standards_and_competencies_for_early_childhood_educators.pdf)
  + Link to the standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

**Journals in EI/ECSE**

Below are examples of journals that publish topics about EI/ECSE. Faculty may want to explain how to use articles to support practice and to examine current research. Clarify the difference between practitioner-based journals and research-based journals.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * *Exceptional Parent Magazine* * *Infants and Young Children* * *International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education* * *Intervention in School and Clinic* * *Journal of Early Hearing Detection and Intervention* * *Journal of Early Intervention* | * *Journal of Special Education Technology* * *Rural Special Education Quarterly* * *Teaching Exceptional Children* * *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education* * *Young Children* * *Young Exceptional Children* |

**Assignments**

**1. Family Interview (Components 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3)**

The family interview is an assessment technique used collaboratively with the family to identify the resources, priorities, and concerns of the family. The relationship between the educator and the family should be one of teamwork and collaboration. The preferred approach by many is to engage the family in conversation rather than conducting a formal interview. Before beginning the process, it is important that you have an established rapport with the family and communicate your respect for their time and effort. At the start of the interview, clearly state its purpose and give them background information about yourself and the program. Use both open-ended and closed-ended questions to gather information and be sensitive when probing for further information. Use a “funnel approach” by starting with broad concerns and getting more specific. Using open-ended questions pertaining to the family’s daily activities is a highly effective strategy for identifying the family’s resources, concerns, and priorities.

The interviewer should keep the following precautions in mind the following:

* The identification of family needs and strengths is not a mandatory component of the IFSP/IEP – it is voluntary. No child can be refused services because of the family’s refusal to be assessed.
* The identification of family resources and concerns should be planned individually with each family.
* The identification of family resources and concerns should be conducted in a non-intrusive manner.
* Conduct the interview in ways that respect the family’s home language, values, and culture.
* Respect the family’s right to only share what they wish to share.

Information obtained from the interview should be used to directly assist the family. The educator should explain why the information is needed and how it will be used *before* the interview begins.

Possible interview techniques:

* Offer to conduct the interview virtually, if this is more convenient for the family
* Use semi-structured questions to provide a sharing avenue, but not a defined stopping point like closed-ended questions.
* Use closed-ended questions for specific information (e.g., birth weight of child).
* Encourage family stories and expertise (e.g., experience stories).
* Consider using a recorder (which requires signed consent) to help capture every detail of the interview.

Following the family interview:

* Carry out approximately 10 hours of collaboration with the family to address the priority goals identified during the interview process.
* Create a collaboration log to identify the hours and activities you engaged in with the family.
* Create a resource guide to address the family’s concerns and to help them attain their goals. The resource guide should include materials related to accessing services outside of special education such as Social Security benefits, health insurance, transportation, higher education, case management, social services, and informal family supports. The guide must be organized in a way that facilitates the family’s learning of how to access resources outside special education.

**Alternate Assignment: Family Collaborative Resource Packet**

For this assignment, you will identify or be assigned to a family of a child with a disability. You will spend time getting to know the family, including interviewing a guardian, the individual, siblings, etc. You will develop an understanding of the family's cultural values, beliefs, and community. These questions must be approved by the instructor before conducting your interview. You will summarize information gathered from your family interview in a 2-page double spaced synopsis. You will then develop a digital Family Resource Packet of at least 8 resources, (local, online, other) to provide support to the family.

**2. Presentation/Training (Component 2.1)**

Develop a presentation and/or training materials on a critical issue related to early childhood intervention and family-centered practice. Create one of the following:

* A 15-20 slide PowerPoint presentation that you might present in the future, or
* training materials (e.g., pamphlet, insert to IFSP/IEP manual, handouts, portfolio materials).
* Include resources or website links where individuals can obtain more information and be sure to include references for information you obtain from websites or articles.
* Write a two-page reflection on why you chose the topic and how you will use the presentation/materials you created.

**3. Book Review and Book Talk (Component 2.3)**

This assignment involves reading two books authored by a family/parent. As our perspective expands, our new thinking may help us develop a broader and deeper understanding about families who have children with disabilities and how to authentically engage families as co-experts and partners. Select two books from the supplemental list provided in class.

For the first book, you will write a three-to-five-page paper reflecting on the book’s impact on you as an educator, as a parent, or as a member of a family.

Include your reflections on the questions listed below:

* What is the experience of the parents? How is it presented?
* How is this a universal experience?
* How does the child’s disability impact the child’s experience within the education system?
* What is the parents’ experience with the educational system? What is the child’s experience?
* How do the experiences of the child or the parent impact you as an educator?
* Other thoughts?

For the second book, you will lead a book talk in class. Through the activities you plan, it should be evident that you are applying what you have learned in this course, and that you understand the perspectives presented in the book including the impact of disability on the family system. Additionally, provide the class with two to three excerpts from the book prior to your talk to assist with the discussion and activities.

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