

MEd in Instructional Leadership: Early Childhood Education



The Instructional Leadership MEd program in early childhood education blends regular early childhood education with early childhood special education to prepare participants for the realities of teaching young children in urban settings, such as working with children and families from diverse backgrounds; addressing children’s individual abilities; working in partnership with children’s families, communities, and other professionals; articulating why they teach as they do; and having a deep understanding of child development, child learning, and instructional contexts.

PROGRAM PRINCIPLES

1. Learning about teaching is embedded in scholarly understandings and activities.
2. Central to learning about teaching is an understanding of the interactive influences of culture, language, gender, and ability.
3. Learning occurs best in context, where decisions of curriculum, methodology, technology use, and environmental arrangement are integrated to create a holistic learning experience.
4. Learning to teach requires active learning—the construction of meaningful understandings, not only about the educational needs of students and how to advance students’ learning, but also about the moral and ethical dilemmas that often confront teachers of young children.
5. Learning to teach requires analysis, examination, a reflective stance, and a commitment to life-long learning and educational reform.

PROGRAM FACULTY

Faculty affiliated with the programs in early childhood education are distinguished for clinical expertise and relevant scholarship, including early intervention, community and cultural contexts, children’s play, cognition, and early literacy, among other fields. The faculty design and teach a curriculum with in-depth study in multiple domains and collaborate with other units in UIC and throughout the Chicago region.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The MEd program in early childhood education offers two strands of study. Strand 1 requires a minimum of 32 credit hours of course work for the degree plus 15 credit hours for certification. In Strand 1, participants are prepared to work with children with and without disabilities through a blended, standards-based curriculum of early childhood education and early childhood special education. Intensive and extensive fieldwork is also required. Strand 2, which does not result in certification, requires a minimum of 32 credit hours that include an early childhood core of courses and a self-design component.

CERTIFICATIONS

Graduates of Strand 1 are entitled to an Illinois Type 04 (early childhood) teaching certificate with an endorsement in early childhood special education, qualifying them to teach in Illinois public schools that serve young children with and without disabilities ages birth through eight in general education, inclusive, and self-contained classrooms. Program completion also prepares graduates to apply for Illinois’s Early Intervention Developmental Therapist credential.

SPECIAL PROGRAM FEATURES

The UIC MEd program was the first in Illinois to offer a blended program in early childhood education and early childhood special education. The program offers site-based instruction in Chicago schools, community agencies, and other organizations that serve young children and their families. The program’s many partnerships with other university units and organizations around Chicago provide students with extensive opportunities for learning.

RESULTS

Graduates of our MEd programs work in a variety of teaching and leadership positions, such as teaching young children with and without disabilities in public and private schools, community agencies, and home-based programs; directing and administrating early childhood programs; developing policy and programs for young children; teaching early childhood and related courses in community colleges and universities; and working as early intervention developmental specialists, curriculum coordinators, and parent trainers.

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