

Early Childhood Experiential Learning: *A program for assessing early childhood professionals*

The Metropolitan State University Early Childhood Assessment Program, in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Human Services and community agencies, provides assessments and educational pathways to enhance Minnesota's early childhood industry. The program offers accelerated access and placement in higher education so that early childhood professionals can earn credentials needed for career advancement in less time.

What we do

- Assess the experiential learning of early childhood professionals for college credit.
- Collaborate with early childhood agencies to assess noncredit training in the community for college credit.
- Conduct workshops on the experiential learning assessment process and provide information on the value of higher education and career ladder opportunities in the field of early childhood.

What is experiential learning?

Experiential learning is learning that occurs as a result of life experience that may include paid and volunteer work, noncredit courses and workshops, work study, service learning, and so forth. Experiential Learning Assessment is a systematic process to identify the learning an individual has gained through life experiences and assess it for college credit. Early childhood professionals often gain college-level learning by participating in training offered by community agencies. Through the Early Childhood Assessment Program, Metropolitan State University faculty review community trainings and assess them for college credit. Early childhood professionals who participate (or have participated) in the assessed trainings may earn experiential learning credit. A list of the approved training is available on our Web site.

How much does it cost?

Through this program, you pay \$25 per credit. This program is supported by a grant from the Minnesota Department of Human Services in partnership with Metropolitan State University to promote professional development among the Minnesota early childhood professionals.

What are the advantages of participating in the program?

- Your learning is acknowledged and valued at the college level.

- You gain deepened understanding about the value and applicability of your learning.
- Credits are upper-division psychology credits that can be used toward the fulfillment of the general education or elective requirements at two- or four-year colleges
- College credit opens doors to additional educational and employment opportunities.
- Credits can be used to meet early childhood teacher qualifications.
- Cost effective—participation reduces the cost of education (tuition, books and transportation).

Who can participate?

Child care teachers, assistant teachers, aides, center directors, paraprofessionals, family child care providers, early childhood administrators and anyone who works with children and their families. Any early childhood professional in Minnesota can apply for college credit. However, college credits need to be relevant to an individual's academic goals. Students not admitted into an associate or bachelor's degree program can apply for up to four credits but must complete the Minnesota Center for Professional Development (MNCPPD) Professional Development Plan and show how the credits fit in their academic goals. Students admitted in a degree program are eligible for as many credits as their academic program allows (check with your academic advisor). Students do not need to be Metropolitan State University students to be eligible for the ECAP program.

Where can I learn more about the program?

Attend a "Getting Credit for What You Know in Early Childhood" workshop. These workshops are offered on the Metropolitan State University campus and in the community. At the workshop, participants learn the process and obtain the tools needed to identify and document the learning they acquired through life experiences that may include noncredit courses, workshops in the community and work activities. To assess the learning, participants are asked to write a paper, put together a project, or be observed in their early childhood classroom. Participants are eligible to apply for one to four psychology credits in PSYC 3651. For more information about the "Getting Credit for What You Know in Early Childhood" workshop, visit www.metrostate.edu and look for PSYC 020 in the *Class Schedule*. For more information

ADMISSIONS OFFICE

SAINT PAUL CAMPUS
700 EAST SEVENTH STREET
SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA
55106-5000
TEL: 651.793.1302

MIDWAY CENTER
1450 ENERGY PARK DRIVE
SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA
55108-5218

MINNEAPOLIS CAMPUS
1501 HENNEPIN AVENUE
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA
55403-1897
TEL: 651.793.1302

This information is available
in alternative formats to individuals
with disabilities by calling:

TTY: 651.772.7687

WEB SITE
www.metrostate.edu

about the Early Childhood Experiential Learning Assessment Program, visit the Web at www.metrostate.edu/ecap.

Where can I use these credits?

Experiential learning credit may meet the Minnesota educational requirements for an assistant teacher or teacher participating in licensed child care programs, the continuing education requirements of licensed teachers, or toward the degree requirements of two- or four-year colleges. At Metropolitan State University, they can be used toward:

1. General Education and Liberal Studies (GELS) requirements including Goal V: History and the Social and Behavioral Sciences.
2. Major requirements, if your major is related to early childhood (check with your academic advisor).
3. Elective credits—most majors have room for about 20 elective credits.

What is the timeline?

Metropolitan State University operates on a semester system. All paperwork must be received by the semester registration deadline in order for your grade/transcript to be available the end of that semester. Use the following timeline as a guideline for when to turn in documents and when to expect your grade:

- Fall semester deadline to submit all your documents to ECAP is Oct. 1. Fall semester grades are available the end of December.
- Spring semester deadline to submit all your documents to ECAP is Feb. 15. Spring semester grades are available mid-May.
- Summer semester deadline to submit all your documents to ECAP is June 1. Summer semester grades are available mid-August.

If your documents are not submitted by the deadline date, your course will still be processed but will be rolled over to the next semester. Please plan accordingly.

How do I obtain my grade or transcript?

Metropolitan State University does not automatically mail grades or transcripts to students. Once the grade has been submitted (usually at the end of the semester), it is the student's responsibility to request a transcript. If you need a copy of your grades

or transcript, you may request it directly from Metropolitan State University Records and Registrations Office. For more information and contact information regarding transcripts, visit the Web site <http://www.metrostate.edu/mswseb/pathway/registration/transcripts.html>.

Where do I get more information?

For more information about the Early Childhood Experiential Learning Assessment Program, contact Charlotte Nitardy, program coordinator (charlotte.nitardy@metrostate.edu), or visit the Web at www.metrostate.edu/ecap.

How to apply for experiential learning credits

The steps to receive Metropolitan State University credits are simple, but each step is important and necessary to complete. Here are the steps you need to follow.

- Attend an ECAP workshop **OR** attend and complete a training in the community that has been assessed for college credit (see the list at www.metrostate.edu/ecap).
- Submit one of the following
 - Degree-seeking students: a degree plan indicating where the ECAP credits will be used.
 - Nondegree-seeking participants: A completed MNCPD Professional Development Plan (available at www.mncpd.org). Note that you will need to sign up to the Minnesota Registry to be able to complete all the requirements of the Professional Development Plan.
- Quick Start Registration form (available at www.metrostate.edu/ecap).
- Individual Experiential Learning Assessment Proposal form (Form A). The form is available at www.metrostate.edu/ecap.
- Copies of your training certificate (only applies to those seeking college credit for training in the community).
- \$25 per credit nonrefundable fee (checks made payable to Metropolitan State University).

Where to send experiential learning documentation

Submit documents to:
Early Childhood Assessment
Program Coordinator
Metropolitan State University
Midway Center
1450 Energy Park Drive
Suite 147
Saint Paul, MN 55108-5218

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