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FACT SHEET FOR COOPERATING TEACHERS

FALL and SPRING

The college instructor has the sole responsibility for reading and evaluating all student papers and reports. Copies of the student’s activity plans will be submitted to the site program teacher each week.

1. Cooperating practicum teachers are urged to contact the student’s college instructor (see booklet cover) if any questions arise concerning the placement, school policy, problems, etc. The instructor’s time is arranged so that a visit for a conference can be scheduled on short notice. Please do not hesitate to contact the student’s instructor at any time during the semester.

2. Darlene Hochman, the Early Childhood Program Coordinator for all campuses, can be reached at 451-4299. Please feel free to call should you have any questions or concerns regarding placement, instructors, students or the program in general.

3. Each student will provide you with a copy of the course outline (EDU211 in the Fall / EDU221 in the Spring), an evaluation form and postage-paid return envelope. The outline details the students’ roles, responsibilities and course assignments. Again, should you have any questions, you may contact the students’ instructor or Professor Hochman at any time.

4. Students will report to practicum placements during the first two weeks of September. Prior to their first week, cooperating teachers, after conferring with the student, will select the day that the student is to report.

5. Students are to work the normal school hours. Three (3) hours are required each week during the Fall semester and six (6) hours per week are required during the Spring semester.

6. Students who miss teaching days should make arrangements with the cooperating teacher to make them up during the semester. A student must work a minimum of 14 half days in the first semester and 14 full days in the second semester.

7. Students will begin the 2nd semester practicum placement during the last week of January. The spring semester ends the third week of May.

EXPLANATION OF THE STUDENT EVALUATION FORM
We are very glad to have you as a participant in the Suffolk County Community College - Early Childhood Program Student Practicum. Your participation makes it possible for our students to have a more complete teacher-training experience.

Among the essential responsibilities of a cooperating teacher are the observations and evaluations of student teachers. You will receive a copy of our program’s evaluation form. The form consists of five areas of performance critical to teaching, each containing several criteria. For clarification, we are including in this handbook a small glossary explaining some terms found in the criteria (see page 6).

The rating scale ranges from Excellent to Unsatisfactory. The column on the far right (Shows Improvement) may be used in conjunction with another rating level to further detail the student’s performance.

Please use the comment section for any further descriptions, illustrations, or clarifications. Feel free to extend your comments to another page if necessary.

Once again, we greatly appreciate the time, energy and professional knowledge you provide as a cooperating teacher with SCCC’s Early Childhood Program Student Practicum.

Thank you.

Early Childhood Faculty

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM
STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Understanding and appreciation of early childhood stems from the study of writings and research of educational philosophers and psychologists. This background is the basis for the development of methods of teaching young children. These methods utilize and modify instructional approaches by stressing the importance of the stages of development in early childhood.

Study of the development of a child’s physical, cognitive, social and emotional growth emphasizes the step-by-step progression through which a child acquires knowledge of self and environment. It demonstrates the individual and unique process that learning is. A child’s experiences and perception of them are the basis for the formation of concepts of self and of the environment. Such concepts are constantly being re-evaluated, re-organized and manipulated as the child is exposed to new experiences. New concepts need to be perceived through all senses to be successfully integrated into a child’s system of thinking. They need to be related to prior knowledge so that familiar concepts can be assimilated or discarded and replaced with new information.

The quality of the experiences an educator provides for the child is paramount. Experiences must be meaningful. They need to involve the child and be age-appropriate, well sequenced and organized. The learning process must be process-oriented, not product-oriented. Process-oriented teaching allows the child to explore media and material without being bound by a pre-determined product whose characteristics have been defined and determined by the teacher. It allows the development of the creative potential inherent in each child. The learning process is highly individualized and unique to each child. Learning styles vary with the strengths and weaknesses of the individual; the accumulation of knowledge is a delicate process. Many teaching behaviors can easily discourage the sensitive child while lack of success can affect self-image. Early childhood curriculum should satisfy the needs of the individual while permitting the child to experience success.

The Suffolk County Community College Early Childhood Program supports this philosophy. Our students learn the importance of allowing a child the opportunity to assume appropriate responsibility for learning, regardless of subject area. The Program is supportive of the child’s expression of ideas through appropriate media under the sensitive guidance of the teacher.

COOPERATING TEACHER ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES
1. Please help the student become an integral part of the program by introducing the student to the staff, informing the student of rules and schedules and providing a general orientation to your school.

2. Daily discussions with students to consider experiences undertaken are helpful both at the beginning and the end of each session. Students can discuss plans, evaluate their work, question and ask for suggestions.

3. Please discuss the next session’s plans so that the student may prepare an appropriate experience.

4. Students may observe during their initial visit only. Thereafter, they are expected to be involved in all aspects of the program. This includes setting up, cleaning up and working with children during all activities.

5. Please invite students to attend a parent-teacher group meeting if held during the course of the year.

6. The student is to participate and lead a variety of learning experiences with approval of the cooperating teacher. These are to include activities in music, art, literature, food, and cooking, science, math and social studies. Activities must support the teacher’s plans, goals, and needs of the children. The cooperating teacher will receive a copy of each plan.

7. The cooperating teacher will evaluate the student twice each semester. Copies of the evaluation form and self-addressed envelopes are provided. Evaluations are due on the 7th and 13th week for the fall and the spring semesters.

8. The student is required to plan and facilitate at least 12 (fall semester) and 14 (spring semester) original experiences other than those designed by the classroom teacher. After discussion and your approval, the student is facilitate plans as developed and evaluate them, consulting with the teacher. Please do not interrupt the student. The philosophy is for the student to prepare experiences that are child centered and developmentally appropriate.

Ongoing communication is an effective method of encouraging the student’s development of teaching techniques. Please offer recommendations, suggestions or options when appropriate. Your ideas are a valuable component to the practicum experience.

GUIDE FOR EVALUATING PRACTICUM STUDENTS
I. Does the student accept the policies and procedures established by the school and work within its structure, i.e.: maintain school schedules and accept established personnel policies and practices?

II. How does the student carry out assigned responsibilities within the school?
   a. Theoretical knowledge - In discussion, has the student, shown knowledge and understanding of sound thinking of child development and human behavior? In what way?
   b. In practice - How has the student carried out responsibilities in relation to the program and children? Evaluate the student’s growth and performance in the following areas:
      1. Relationship with children
      2. Handling children’s conflicts and problems
      3. Recognition of individual problems of children
      4. Providing smooth transitions for children from one activity to another
      5. Facilitating a range of developmentally appropriate activities allowing children to make choices
      6. Providing appropriate equipment and sufficient materials for the children

III. Discuss the student’s record of attendance and punctuality and assumption of responsibility in these areas.

IV. Use of supervision:
   a. Appropriately seeks information, guidance and direction
   b. Willingness to accept suggestions and ability to apply new knowledge in similar situations.
   c. Attempts to improve overall performance and the handling of specific situations.

V. SUMMARY
   a. State recommendations and goals for the coming period.
   b. Assess student’s progress, development and professional performance since the last evaluation.

Glossary for Student Evaluation Form
This glossary is intended to explain what is meant, in the context of our program philosophy, by terms in the student evaluation.

1. **Child Centered**
   A classroom or curriculum is child-centered if it is built around the needs, interests, experiences and initiatives of the children. Materials and equipment are appropriate and displays are at children’s eye level. Children can actively explore, create and play. The curriculum grows from observations of the children’s developmental needs, readiness, ideas and interests.

2. **Developmentally Appropriate**
   Developmental appropriateness combines the concepts of age and stage. Experiences must be assessed and adapted to each child’s current real level of development, which can vary greatly from chronological age.

3. **Open Ended**
   Open ended, or divergent, refers to having many ways or outcomes. Open-ended material or an activity is one in which there is not one way of doing it or one expected result, but varied possibilities. The child has the opportunity to explore, think, and express him/herself. An open-ended question is one in which there is not a single correct answer (right answers as such being generally unimportant in early childhood), but many possible responses. Thus the child is stimulated rather than tested.

4. **Concrete**
   As opposed to “abstract,” something that is concrete is real and tangible. For example, young children cannot conceptualize numbers, which are abstractions, but they can visualize and manipulate blocks, rods or other concrete objects. Children need a concrete foundation first. According to Jean Piaget, children generally cannot think in abstract terms until they are seven or eight, requiring concrete materials and experiences at least until then.

5. **Whole Child**
   This incorporates all the child’s spheres of development: cognitive, affective, social and physical. When planning activities/experiences, opportunities should provide for each area of development. The child is a whole person, whose spheres of development are deeply connected, and physical, social and emotional well-being may or can impact on cognitive success.

6. **Individualized**
   An individualized program is one which accepts and affirms individuality. It
provides attention, tolerance and appreciation of the uniqueness of every child.

7. **Process-Oriented**
   A process-oriented activity or approach is not product or performance-oriented. Learning is viewed as a process that takes time. Every step in the process, not just the last, is important, providing opportunities for exploring, thinking, feeling, expressing, succeeding and growing.

   The process-oriented teacher does not stop the child when the painting is “beautiful,” but lets the child go on if she/he wishes because it is the child’s painting. Producing and performing do not promote learning; it is in the process, the direction, the opportunity, that real learning and growth occur.

8. **Integrated Curriculum**
   An integrated curriculum is one in which the various curriculum areas, art, language, science, math, social studies, music and movement, etc., work together. Curriculum areas are a means toward the development of skills, concepts and values. They are all interrelated, as are the spheres of development.

9. **Multicultural**
   A multicultural curriculum, classroom or perspective affirms diversity, that people are all different and all the same and we should understand and appreciate all of our differences and similarities. There is no one right way of being, looking, living or believing. Everything in a classroom should reflect diversity of our community(ies). Inclusion is another component of multiculturalism. Every child should feel included, fit in and be respected. Children should have access to various cultural expressions and perspectives. The other piece of multiculturalism is anti-bias. Pictures, books, language, activities and expectations should be free of stereotypes and ignorance. Multiculturalism includes race, culture, nationality and ethnicity, gender, class, religion, ability, age and appearance.

10. **Facilitator**
    A facilitator sees knowledge as constructed by the child, with the teacher without controlling the process. A facilitator is catalyst, questioner, resource and nurturer who makes learning interesting, accessible, appropriate, safe and successful. A facilitator senses when to move in or to back off, when a question could be useful or be intrusive.