

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL SPECIALTIES
Bachelor of Science in Birth to Kindergarten Education

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The School of Education at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke offers an undergraduate program that prepares teacher candidates to fill positions in a variety of settings that require a baccalaureate degree and professional licensure (Birth to Kindergarten). This program of study is interdisciplinary and inclusive; teacher candidates are prepared to teach children with and without disabilities. Studies in the program consist of four curricular components: general education, specialty area, professional studies, and content pedagogy (methods and internship). The Birth-Kindergarten Program is housed in the Education Center, with health courses offered in the Health and Physical Education Complex and sociology courses offered in the Sampson Building.

Undergraduates receive a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree with a major in Birth-Kindergarten education, leading to a Professional Standard I teaching license. Post-baccalaureate students have opportunity to complete a program of study leading to an add-on license in Pre-Kindergarten (PK) education. A Pre-Kindergarten add-on license is available to teachers holding a clear license in Special Education, Elementary Education or Child and Family Development. Individuals with four-year degrees in disciplines other than education may pursue a licensure in Birth-Kindergarten based on an individual plan of study created through the Office of University School Programs.

There is a strong emphasis in the Birth-Kindergarten program on developing teacher candidates who have an in-depth understanding of child development, who are able to effectively teach children who are diverse in language, ethnicity and abilities, and who have skills in collaboration with families and other professionals who serve the child. The Birth-Kindergarten Specialty Area Standards, the UNC-Pembroke School of Education Standards, the Core Standards for teachers in North Carolina, as well as the Technology and Diversity Standards guide the program. These standards and our program emphasize the importance of teachers with professional competence in reflective practice, commitment to professional attitudes and behaviors, and involvement in professional activities and advocacy.

Program of Study

Program Goals and Objectives

Upon completion of the Birth-Kindergarten program, teacher candidates will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of various stages of growth and development in young children, the unique patterns with which children progress through these

stages, and the factors that distinguish the wide range of typical from atypical development;

- Discuss and apply major philosophies, theories, historical and legal characteristics of the field of early childhood education;
- Demonstrate knowledge of and skills in the design/adaptation and implementation of developmentally appropriate learning environments for young children;
- Demonstrate an understanding of developmentally appropriate curricula and methods for children from birth through kindergarten, including knowledge of and skill in utilizing a variety of curriculum models;
- Demonstrate skills in sensitivity and respect in working collaboratively with culturally diverse families;
- Demonstrate positive attitudes toward children and families, and a strong commitment to continuous life-long study of young children and their learning;
- Demonstrate skill in assessment of children's development, including data collection, screening and assessment procedures, critical reflection, and designing appropriate instruction;
- Demonstrate skills in the interdisciplinary approach working with young children, and in collaborating with agencies serving young children and their families;
- Demonstrate skill in applying current instructional principles, research, and appropriate assessment practices to the use of computers and related technologies.
- Demonstrate knowledge of and skill in fostering critical thinking, self-control, problem-solving and independence in young children.

Birth-Kindergarten Standards and Indicators

Standard 1: Birth-Kindergarten professionals promote child development and learning for ALL young children with and without disabilities, including those at-risk.

Birth-Kindergarten professionals:

- Know theories and principles of human development, growth and learning, including the findings of relevant research.
- Know the philosophical, historical, and legal issues in the fields of child development, early childhood education, early childhood special education, and early intervention.
- Understand health and safety issues as they relate to group care settings.
- Know the etiology, identifying characteristics, range and complexity of different disabilities (e.g. mild, moderate, severe, profound) and risk factors and their influences on development.
- Understand how the interaction between biological and environmental factors influences children's development and learning.
- Understand that learning approaches are integrated and that interconnectedness among cognitive, social, emotional, linguistic, and physical development influence growth, development and learning for ALL children.

- Know the health, medical, and physical requirements of ALL young children and the influence on development.
- Know the social and emotional needs, especially the importance of consistent, positive relationships, for the healthy development of ALL young children.
- Know the range of appropriate technological applications available to children and families.
- Understand the relationship between differing environmental or situational contexts and children's actions.

Standard 2: Birth-Kindergarten professionals understand assessment processes including their goals, benefits and uses.

Birth-Kindergarten professionals:

- Are aware of a variety of appropriate assessment tools and procedures and their purposes, including on-going observation, data collection and analysis.
- Are knowledgeable of informal and formal assessment procedures and the need for collaboration with families and other professionals.
- Are knowledgeable of health appraisal procedures and referral processes.
- Understand that appropriate assessment is an embedded (rather than pull-out) process that supports children's development and learning.

Standard 3: Birth-Kindergarten professionals build family and community partnerships.

Birth-Kindergarten professionals:

- Understand that families are the first and most important teachers and key decision makers for their children.
- Understand the characteristics of each child's family and community while developing programs in partnership that support development and learning.
- Understand family systems theory, family structures, functioning styles, and stages of family and adult development. Understand the role of family as a partner in promoting the child's development, sharing information, making decisions, and implementing and evaluating program plans for their child.
- Are aware of resources, range of services, and program options available to families and procedures for guiding families in choice making or decision-making.
- Understand the characteristics of effective team functioning and various team models such as multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and trans-disciplinary, especially as they impact interagency relationships and service coordination.

Standard 4: Birth-Kindergarten professionals prepare for teaching and learning by connecting with ALL young children with and without disabilities including those at-risk and their families.

Birth-Kindergarten professionals:

- Use positive, consistent relationships and supportive interactions as the foundation for their work with families and ALL young children.
- Guide and foster interactions (child-child, child-adult, adult-adult) that facilitate inquiry and discovery.
- Establish principles for guiding ALL young children's behavior, problem solving with children and fostering independence.
- Display warm, nurturing, respectful, and reciprocal interactions with families and ALL young children.
- Use responsive techniques to enhance social interaction among adults and ALL young children to create a caring community of learners.

Standard 5: Birth-Kindergarten professionals prepare for teaching and learning by conducting appropriate, on-going formal and informal assessments.

Birth-Kindergarten professionals:

- Collect and synthesize relevant assessment information that informs practice.
- Share assessment information results with appropriate family members and professionals.
- Link assessment information to practice, including appropriate implementation of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs).
- Use assessment information, including observation, to plan, implement, and evaluate program(s).

Standard 6: Birth-Kindergarten professionals prepare for teaching and learning by creating an integrated curriculum and responsive environment.

Birth-Kindergarten professionals:

- Use play/active learning processes as a foundation for ALL young children's learning.
- Plan a suitable balance between child-initiated and adult-initiated activities.
- Create and adapt integrated, meaningful, challenging, and engaging developmentally supportive learning experiences.
- Implement and adapt developmental and functional curricula across all domains (including cognitive, physical, social, emotional, and language) in response to ALL young children's strengths, interests, needs and differing ability levels.
- Integrate content from disciplines that set the stage for subsequent academic development to include emergent reading, writing, mathematics the arts (visual art, music, movement, drama, dance), science, and social studies.
- Create and adapt developmentally supportive environments with attention to curriculum, interactions, teaching practices, and learning materials.

- Create, manage, and adapt environments with developmentally appropriate interpersonal, spatial, and temporal organization.

Standard 7: Birth-Kindergarten professionals support the learning of ALL young children with and without disabilities, including those at-risk.

Birth-Kindergarten professionals:

- Accommodate individual learning styles, needs, and interests of ALL young children. Use strategies and tools that encourage ALL young children's problem solving, thinking skills, and developmental and social competence.
- Use appropriate technology, including software, multimedia, and assistive technology, to support and enhance the learning of ALL young children.
- Use a variety of naturally occurring routines and activities, and responsive and incidental teaching techniques to promote emergent skill development.
- Develop, implement and evaluate IFSPs and IEPs in partnership with families and other professionals.
- Facilitate effective transitions throughout the day.
- Use strengths-based practices as a focus for teaching and learning.

Standard 8: Birth-Kindergarten professionals recognize and respect individual differences in program planning and implementation.

Birth-Kindergarten professionals:

- Create an environment that is reflective of the children in the classroom setting that honors diversity.
- Integrate cultural diversity and an anti-bias perspective throughout all instructional activities.
- Are sensitive to and meet the individual needs of children and families with differing backgrounds, i.e. linguistic, culture, geographic, ethnic, and socioeconomic.
- Are sensitive to, and meet the needs of children with different ability levels including those with disabilities and their families.
- Integrate IEP or IFSP goals throughout the daily routines and activities in a developmentally appropriate way.

Standard 9: Birth-Kindergarten professionals demonstrate respectful, reciprocal relationships with families and communities.

Birth-Kindergarten professionals:

- Support families as the primary developmental context for their children's learning and development.
- Respect cultural preferences and socioeconomic influences when identifying family resources, concerns, and priorities.

- Respect diverse cultural values and family structures.
- Communicate effectively with families from diverse backgrounds.

Standard 10: Birth-Kindergarten professionals function professionally.

Birth-Kindergarten professionals:

- Identify with and actively involve themselves in birth-kindergarten professional organizations.
- Respect confidentiality and informed consent.
- Articulate the philosophies of the professional organizations that provide the guiding framework for birth-kindergarten practice (e.g., National Association for the Education of Young Children, Division of Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children).
- Know and follow legal and ethical mandates, policies, and procedures related to services for young children and families.
- Serve in the roles as advocate, consultant, collaborator, and team member.
- Integrate knowledge and strategies from other professionals in designing and implementing learning activities.
- Facilitate effective transitions between programs and services for children and their families.
- Use strategies such as reflective teaching, cooperative planning, problem solving, and collaboration with others, including therapists, assistant teachers, volunteers, and families, in order to advocate for recommended practices.
- Use a consultative model of service delivery and integrated therapies when appropriate.
- Function in a variety of settings such as natural learning environments, public school classrooms, child care centers, community agencies, homes, hospitals, crisis nurseries, and shelters.