

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (MA)

The Master of Arts in Early Childhood Education (MA-ECE) program coursework aligns with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) standards, positioning it as one of the top graduate degree programs in the country. The MA-ECE program prepares candidates for a variety of leadership roles in early childhood education and is relevant for early childhood teachers, administrators, public policy and advocacy specialists, and scholars. This program is designed to provide candidates with a strong background in child and language development, family and community relationships, assessment, research, theory and practice, of birth through age 8 programs within a variety of educational settings: public and private centers and schools, adult and community-based educational settings, and other for- and non-profit organizations.

The MA-ECE program does not lead to licensure, but is intended for early childhood educators who have had at least two years of experience with young children. Upon completion of the program, candidates who have an Illinois Educator's teaching license may choose to study further and take additional coursework to obtain endorsements in Special Education and/or English as a Second Language (ESL). After receiving their degrees, our graduates will be ideal educators in the design and implementation of early childhood curriculum and programs in centers, home child care, schools and districts, and other settings, and contribute their leadership to various early childhood organizations.

Concordia University Chicago is an entitled institution with Gateways to Opportunity, an Illinois Professional Development System of the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (INCCRRA). With the entitlement, candidates can receive scholarships that will pay for a percentage of tuition and fees, depending upon availability of funding. The Gateways to Opportunity Scholarship Program is an individual-based scholarship opportunity for eligible practitioners working in Early Care and Education (ECE) or school-age care programs.

The program aligns to the NAEYC Professional Standards and Competencies.

The program will enable candidates to:

- Strengthen theoretical understandings of early childhood education and increase knowledge of child development, with emphasis on the young child from birth through age 8.
- Increase awareness of partnerships with children's families and communities.
- Understand child observation, documentation, and other forms of assessment are central to the practice of all early childhood education.
- Strengthen understanding and use of a wide array of developmentally appropriate approaches, instructional strategies, and tools to connect with children and families and positively influence each child's development and learning.
- Increase knowledge of academic disciplines to design, implement and evaluate experiences that promote positive development and learning for each and every young child.
- Develop skills in administration and organization of early childhood education programs as they engage in and advocate for children and the profession.

- Participate in a variety of field experiences to develop knowledge, skills and professional dispositions necessary to promote the development and learning of young children across the entire developmental period of early childhood education.

General Graduate Admission Requirements

All applicants must meet the general admission requirements for Concordia University Chicago graduate programs as published in the Concordia University Chicago academic catalog (<https://catalog.cuchicago.edu/graduate/graduate-admission-student-services/>).

New students are accepted into most graduate degree-seeking, certificate, endorsement and/or post-graduate programs for online and on-campus study for in the fall, spring, or summer semesters. Students seeking to change programs may do so by submitting a Change-of-Program quick app (<https://capp.cuchicago.edu/graduate/change-of-program/>). Applicants must be in good academic standing according to Concordia University Chicago's satisfactory academic progress standards and meet published program admission requirements at the time of requesting a program change. Program changes will be processed and recorded for the subsequent semester.

Program Specific Admission Requirements:

Two years of teaching, child-care or related experience acquired prior to completion of the graduate program. Employer documentation of this experience must be included on the application for Graduate Admission.

Degree Requirements

Code	Title	Hours
Content Courses		
ECE-6100	Early Childhood Curriculum and Content, Ages 3-5	3
ECE-6105	Observation and Assessment	3
ECE-6110	School Age Curriculum, Ages 6-8	3
ECE-6115	Infant and Toddler Curriculum	3
ECE-6120	Developmentally Effective Instruction for Diverse Learners	3
ECE-6160	Child, Family and Multicultural Community	3
ECE-6170	Professional Leadership and Advocacy in Early Childhood Education	3
ECE-6180	Trends and Methods in ECE in Literacy	3
ECE-6320	Child Development and Ethics in Early Childhood Education	3
Practicum		
ECE-6190	Practicum and Research in Early Childhood Education	3
Total Hours		30

Capstone Experience

The capstone experience for early childhood education is embedded in ECE-6190 Practicum and Research in Early Childhood Education. As the capstone course, candidates will demonstrate proficiency on all NAEYC advanced standards by designing a culminating project. This culminating project allows candidates to demonstrate their proficiency, knowledge and skills in child development, family and community relationships, assessment, developmentally appropriate practices, leadership, and

advocacy as they experience teaching and learning with young children birth through age 8 in various early childhood settings.

Graduation Requirements

- Have on file an application for this master's degree program.
- Have on file one official transcript from EACH college/university attended of all previous coursework taken.
- Complete, for the degree being sought:
 - the credit hours and levels as designated,
 - within the specified time limit,
 - with grades of C- or higher (grades of C or higher required for MAT programs),
 - with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0.
 - Students completing multiple advanced programs or degrees at CUC must have a 3.0 GPA in each academic program in addition to a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0.
- Have on file approved "Graduate Transfer Credit Approval" form(s), "Course Substitution" form(s), or evaluation(s), if applicable.
- Have on file the Intent to Graduate/Complete form with the Office of the Registrar by the published deadline.
- Have on file, if applicable, necessary copies of a project, portfolio, thesis or dissertation.
- Approval of the faculty.
- All administrative obligations to CUC must be cleared in order to prompt the release of CUC transcripts and diploma(s).

Every attempt has been made to include information to aid the student with information about his/her program, degree and graduation/completion requirements. It is, however, the student's responsibility to complete all steps and meet all deadlines relevant to graduation requirements.