

MILLS
C O L L E G E

**Northeastern
University**

CREDENTIAL HANDBOOK

EDUCATION SPECIALIST, EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION



Glossary of Terms

Applicant: An individual who submits an application to an educator preparation program. The applicant may or may not be accepted to the program and may or may not enroll in the program.

Candidate: The individual enrolled in the educator preparation program leading to a license, credential, or authorization.

Cooperating Teacher: The experienced teacher in whose classroom the preliminary candidate is placed for clinical practice and independent student teaching and who models teaching practices for the candidate as well as helps and guides the candidate in learning to teach.

Program Supervisor: The educator employed and assigned by the Mills College at Northeastern University educator preparation program to supervise the candidate as they complete clinical practice.

Site Supervisor: The district-employed experienced teacher or administrator who provides support and supervision for candidates who are not placed in another educator's classroom to complete clinical practice, such as an intern teacher or administrator candidate.

About the Credential

The Education Specialist Instruction Credential: Early Childhood Special Education authorizes the holder to provide services to children ages birth to kindergarten with mild to extensive support needs in the areas of:

specific learning disabilities; autism; emotional disturbance; intellectual disability; multiple disabilities; deafblindness; traumatic brain injury; orthopedic impairment; and/or other health impairment.

The Education Specialist Instruction Credential: Early Childhood Special Education program includes content for teaching English learners that authorizes credential holders to provide instruction for English language development and specially designed academic instruction in English within the subject area and grade level authorization of the Education Specialist Instruction Teaching Credential.

The Mills College at Northeastern Master's in Early Childhood Education aligns with the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) standards for a Preliminary Education Specialist:

Early Childhood Special Education credential. The Commission on Teacher Credentialing possesses the final authority to grant a credential.

Requirements for the Credential

The Preliminary Education Specialist, Early Childhood Special Education Credential is valid for five years from the date of issuance, which takes place at the end of the program and once the candidate has fulfilled all program and credential requirements.

Candidates must satisfy all of the following requirements to receive a recommendation for the Preliminary Education Specialist, Early Childhood Special Education credential:

1. Obtain a ***baccalaureate or higher degree*** from a regionally-accredited college or university.
2. Satisfy the [Basic Skills Requirement](#).
3. Obtain a ***Certificate of Clearance*** before beginning student teaching or practicum/field-based experience.
4. Complete a course (two semester units or three quarter units) or pass an examination given by a regionally-accredited college or university in the provisions and principles of the ***US Constitution***.
5. Complete training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation that covers ***infant, child, and adult CPR*** skills; submit a copy of the CPR card with the date the training was completed (front and back, as applicable) that is valid at the time of the credential recommendation.
6. Complete a ***Commission-approved Education Specialist Credential program*** in an education specialist specialty area resulting in a formal recommendation by the Commission-approved program sponsor through which requirements are completed.

Once an individual has obtained the Preliminary Education Specialist, Early Childhood Special Education Credential, they must complete a Commission-approved Teacher Induction program to earn the Clear Education Specialist, Early Childhood Special Education Credential. See [here](#) for more information.

Additional Requirements for Student Teaching

Before Admission

Baccalaureate or higher degree:

All applicants to Mills College at Northeastern University graduate programs must obtain an undergraduate or higher degree from a regionally-accredited college or university before program admittance. Applicants mail a copy of their final official transcript to Graduate Admissions; send an official electronic transcript from their undergraduate institution of higher education to Graduate Admissions; or upload an unofficial undergraduate transcript along with a diploma or certificate that clearly affirms that their degree has been awarded. Applicants must include mark sheets showing courses, grades, GPA, and grading scale with all transcript submission(s) to verify completion of this requirement.

Before a credential recommendation through Mills College at Northeastern, the credential candidate must provide an official undergraduate transcript to the credential analyst, which will be submitted to the Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

The candidate is responsible for ensuring that the credential analyst has received their official undergraduate transcript. The transcript must be an official paper or electronic transcript issued directly from the institution to the credential analyst (it cannot be the transcript issued to Graduate Admissions or directly from the candidate).

Before Student Teaching

Basic Skills Requirement:

All Mills College at Northeastern University credential program candidates must satisfy the Basic Skills Requirement before beginning their student teaching placement. The candidate uploads proof of meeting the Basic Skills to Canvas for the credential analyst to review and approve.

Certificate of Clearance:

California law requires all individuals completing fieldwork to undergo a background check to work in a classroom with children. The Commission on Teacher Credentialing issues the Certificate of Clearance document to individuals who have completed their fingerprinting process. The Certificate of Clearance is not the same as a credential. It does not authorize the holder to provide instruction or services in schools; its sole purpose is to verify that the holder has completed a professional fitness review through the CTC. A Certificate of Clearance is required even if an individual has previous background checks to work with children in other

settings, like childcare centers, school districts, and summer camps. A Certificate of Clearance is not required for individuals who have previously completed the Commission on Teacher Credentialing fingerprint process and have a currently valid document from the CTC, like a Certificate of Clearance, [Emergency 30-Day Substitute Teaching Permit](#), or [Child Development Permit](#).

The credential candidate must submit a screenshot from their CTC profile showing their active Certificate of Clearance or other active CTC document to Canvas before beginning student teaching or practicum/field-based experience.

Recent proof of negative TB:

California law requires that school staff working with children and community college students be free of infectious tuberculosis (TB). Many school districts have specific policies regarding TB test recency that require that individuals completing fieldwork provide a test administered within 3-6 months of their start date in the placement.

Coursework

The following required courses of the MA in Early Childhood Education meet the requirements for an Early Childhood Special Education preliminary teaching credential.

Candidates must complete a [degree audit](#) and meet the [Graduation Requirements](#) for their program.

	Course #	Course Title	Credits
Year 1, Semester 1: Fall			
1	EDUT 6200	Cultivating Critical Consciousness in Practice	3
2	EDUT 6201	Legal Aspects and Program Design of Special Education	3
3	EDUT 6202	Children with Special Needs: Infants and Young Children	3
4	EDUT 6203	Theory & Practice of ECE: Curriculum & Instruction for Infants & Preschoolers with Special Needs	3
Year 1, Semester 2: Spring			

5	EDUT 6205	Family Systems & Cultural Diversity: Connections with Schools, Communities, and Hospital Settings	3
6	EDUT 6213	Language Development: Literacy, Communication, & Multilingualism	3
7	EDUT 6207	Positive Behavior Supports & Intervention	3
8	EDUT 6204	Theory & Practice of ECE: Curriculum & Instruction for Infants & Preschoolers with Special Needs	3
Year 2, Semester 3: Fall			
9	EDUT 6208	Field Experience in Early Childhood Special Education & Infant Mental Health	3
10	EDUT 6210	Graduate Seminar: Research in Education: ECE	3
11	EDUT 6212	Leadership & Administration in Early Childhood Programs	3
Year 2, Semester 4: Spring			
12	EDUT 6209	Field Experience in Early Childhood Special Education & Infant Mental Health	3
13	EDUT 6211	Graduate Seminar: Research in Education: ECE	3
14	EDUT 6206	Assessment & Intervention for Children with Special Needs	3
Total Credit Requirements			42

Student Teaching

Roles Defined:

The Definition of the Cooperating Teacher: The experienced teacher in whose classroom the preliminary candidate is placed for clinical practice and independent student teaching and who models teaching practices for the candidate as well as helps and guides the candidate in learning to teach.

The Role of the Cooperating Teacher: The cooperating teacher/student teacher relationship sets the tone for the learning in the placement. The cooperating teacher models the professional

attitude, knowledge, and skills that constitute thoughtful, effective, and caring teaching. Cooperating teachers provide academic and professional guidance consistent with best practices, assist in planning intervention strategies, and observe and debrief their work constructively through ongoing oral feedback and periodic written feedback via evaluation forms. Cooperating teachers share their expertise in other positive ways, such as helping students develop curriculum materials, assessing students' and families' needs, building relationships with parents, and establishing a classroom climate that facilitates learning. Cooperating teachers must also be willing to engage student teachers in reflective conversations about practice and provide access to student records and IFSP/IEP goals and objectives.

The Definition of the Supervisor: The individual assigned to provide supervision and support and/or to assess candidates during field experiences and clinical practice.

The Role of the Supervisor: Supervisors promote the thoughtful planning, execution, and evaluation of the teaching/learning process by the student teacher in a positive, supportive climate. Supervisors facilitate the connection between fieldwork and program coursework. Supervisors remind and encourage student teachers to apply what they are learning in their courses to what they see and do in the field and vice versa. Supervisors:

- Observe each student teacher several times during the semester (generally between 5-7 times per semester). The student teacher and supervisor review and/or formulate a pre-observation plan, followed by a post-observation conference to debrief the lesson as soon after the lesson as possible.
- Coordinate an initial and concluding three-way meeting between the cooperating teacher, student teacher, and supervisor.
- Write up and file a summary of each observation with a copy to the student teacher and a copy to the teaching seminar instructor.
- Read student journals and provide feedback weekly.
- Determine and record final grades for the field assignment after consultation with the cooperating teacher and seminar faculty member.
- Act as a liaison with the teaching placement and the College and orient cooperating teachers to the student teaching expectations.
- ~~Write letters of recommendation for the students supervised.~~

Coursework and Placement Alignment:

Program coursework aligns with student teaching placements. Some assignments require student teachers to try specific lessons in their student teaching placement and to engage in other activities that necessitate their cooperating teachers' assistance. The coursework encourages a

reflective, inquiry orientation toward the profession. Cooperating teachers and field supervisors help Mills College at Northeastern School of Education faculty to promote that reflective stance.

Student Teaching Sequence:

Student teaching is designed to provide credential candidates with a broad spectrum of experiences with diverse populations of children and families with various special needs. The student teaching sequence begins with two semesters in the Mills College Children's School. These placements fulfill the requirement for teaching experience in a general education setting with infants and toddlers and with preschool children.

During the second year, student teachers will fulfill the special education teaching placement assignments through:

1. One semester of early intervention (EI) services for infants and toddlers with special needs, and
2. One semester working with preschool children with disabilities in a special education or inclusive program.

Student Teaching Placement Process and Policies:

The Mills College at Northeastern School of Education places student teachers with qualified cooperating teachers. Program faculty and staff who work with school district and organization representatives to identify suitable placements that align with Commission on Teacher Credentialing policies and program policies. Program faculty and staff evaluate the following factors when selecting placements:

- A. The competency of the cooperating teacher, including Special Education training, years of teaching experience, and a Clear Education Specialist, Early Childhood Special Education credential;
- B. The experiences available to the candidate in the placement; and
- C. The placement's compliance with local, state, and federal equal access and opportunity laws for those the site serves and employs.
- D. Diversity of population at the site.

Individuals who hold jobs in special education settings may be able to fulfill one semester of student teaching in their place of employment if appropriate to the ECSE credential authorization. For that to occur, a credentialed teacher on site must be willing to serve as the cooperating teacher. The credentialed teacher must meet all the qualifications that the Mills College at Northeastern University program and the Commission on Teacher Credentialing

mandate. Mills College at Northeastern University must also have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the site before program faculty and staff may consider it for a potential placement location.

Student teachers should comply with all professional standards at the placements and adhere to their policies, such as appropriate dress codes and observation of the holidays of the student teaching placements, rather than those of the Mills College at Northeastern University academic calendars. In the fall, student teaching placements typically begin the first week of school and continue until after the final examinations. In select instances, student teachers might start their fall placements before the beginning of the Mills College at Northeastern University term. Spring placements usually begin in the first week of school and continue until approximately mid-June.

At the beginning of each student teaching placement, the cooperating teacher, student teacher, and supervisor meet for a three-way conference. This first meeting is to make acquaintances, share thoughts about the structure of the student teaching placement, discuss goals for the student teaching experience, and discuss student teaching responsibilities and assignments. A three-way concluding conference will also occur within two weeks of the end of each placement to evaluate the student teaching assignment. The cooperating teacher, supervisor, and student teacher will complete a written evaluation before this meeting, **which is at the end of this handbook.**

Student teachers must be in their student teaching placements between *15 hours per week* (a minimum of 200 hours per semester), as determined at the start of their placement, in order to meet the required number of student teaching hours. A recommended schedule is for student teachers to utilize most weekday mornings at their student teaching placements, as most classes at Mills College at Northeastern University take place in the afternoons and evenings. Student teachers should try to arrange their schedules to attend staff meetings at their placement sites. Student teachers in early intervention placements should work with their cooperating teacher to determine schedules that maximize home visiting opportunities.

Student Teaching in the Early Intervention Setting:

Student teachers in early intervention placements are expected to participate in many different teaching experiences, including:

- Planning and implementing appropriate curricula that facilitate development, learning, and independence in infants and toddlers with special needs.
- Demonstrating appropriate individualized and family-oriented intervention strategies across developmental domains.
- Participating in the IFSP process and implementing IFSP goals that facilitate the development of infants and toddlers, and that consider the family's structure, culture, and values.

- Participating in the assessment of infants and toddlers and summarizing results in writing.
- Helping to establish an environment and a behavior management system to facilitate development, learning, and independence in infants and toddlers with special needs.
- Learning how to interact and build a relationship with the parents and other family members.
- Participating as a member of an interdisciplinary team, coordinating services through other educational programs and community agencies that serve families of children with special needs, and participating in transition planning.
- Providing early intervention services in natural and home environments.

Student Teaching in the Preschool Setting:

Student teachers working with preschool children with disabilities are expected to participate in teaching experiences such as:

- Planning for instruction and implementation of the lesson plans.
- Demonstrating appropriate individual, small group, and large group intervention strategies across developmental domains.
- Selecting and evaluating curriculum and achievement outcomes for young children with disabilities.
- Helping establish a classroom climate conducive to learning and behavior management.
- Participating in administering informal and formal assessments of young children and summarizing the results in writing.
- Participating in the IEP process and implementing IEP goals that facilitate the development of the child and that consider the family's culture.
- Helping to create a behavior management system to facilitate learning, development, and independence in young children.
- Learning to coordinate the delivery of services by other educational professionals that serve the children and their families.
- Collaborating with staff members and assistants in a team approach within the school environment.

Student teachers in both early intervention and preschool special education placements are expected to participate in as many professional experiences as possible. Student teachers should learn how to use effective communication with families and attend parent conferences, staff meetings, in-service training, IEP/IFSP meetings, and the Mills College at Northeastern University student teaching seminar in early childhood special education (EDUT 6208 and EDUT 6209). Student teachers should plan to spend 3-5 mornings and at least one afternoon in the preschool placement, and at least 3 mornings and one afternoon at the early intervention placement. This schedule may vary depending on the needs of the site.

Student Teaching Seminar

Student teachers will develop a portfolio to document the various activities in which they participate during each student teaching experience. The portfolio is a vehicle for assisting the student teaching experience and it facilitates self-evaluation and appraisal of professional development. It serves to structure the student teaching experience for the student teacher, cooperating teacher, and supervisor. During the first session of the student teaching seminar, student teaching portfolio information and material will be presented and discussed. At the beginning of the placement, student teachers will establish at least two goals to work toward during the student teaching experience. These goals will be shared at the seminar and with the supervisor and monitored when a student teaching placement observation takes place. The Mills College at Northeastern University faculty member and supervisor will evaluate the portfolio during the student teaching seminar, discuss the student teacher's professional development as portrayed in the portfolio, and assist the student teacher in reflecting on and enhancing education specialist performance.

Portfolio:

- Personal Goal Monitoring
- Reflective Journal
- Documentation and Communication
- Case Study
- Lesson Plans
- Curricular Areas/ Environmental setup
- Assessment
- IFSPs/IEPs and Transition Plans
- Behavior Management
- Resources & Observations
- Placement Project

Administration Project:

For one semester, student teachers are required to conduct an administration project on policies and practices in the field of special education. The theoretical construct of leadership and administration in early childhood will be covered in EDUT 6212.

Student Teaching Progression:

During the student teaching placement, student teachers are gradually introduced to more responsibilities as they demonstrate the ability to do so. Student teachers begin the program with a wide variety of experience and expertise. Thus, the nature of the field placement for each student will be individualized. A guideline of a possible sequence of student teaching responsibilities is presented to help guide the cooperating teacher and supervisor in planning activities for each student teacher. Just as the goal of the program is to prepare teachers who are sensitive to the individual needs of the children and their families, so, too, the guideline is to be treated as flexible and sensitive to each student's development as a teacher.

The guideline offers the following general format. In the first week or two, the student teacher observes lessons and works with individual children and parents (as in an EI setting). As the placement progresses, the student teacher gradually assumes more responsibility for planning and implementing individualized and small-group intervention activities. By the end of each placement, the student teacher should have experienced all aspects of the program, including but not limited to participation in the assessment and IFSP /IEP meeting; the creation of learning environments and behavior management systems; evaluation of student outcomes; coordination of services with other educational programs and community agencies that serve the children with special needs; home visiting; and transition planning.

Solo Teaching Experience:

During the last month of student teaching placement, student teachers are expected to experience solo teaching—taking full responsibility for the classroom for at least one week to the extent that is possible. The cooperating teacher and student teacher will work together to determine how best to prepare for the various aspects of solo teaching, including but not limited to planning and implementation of lessons, set up of centers and daily activities, and teaching team coordination for carrying out the day-to-day routine.

Observations:

Observations are at the heart of the student teaching experience. Mills supervisors will visit student teaching placements, observe the student teachers, and provide constructive feedback concerning their performance. One important consideration when arranging the sequential observations is to schedule them at different times of the day so that observation can be made of the different areas and contexts within each placement. Being observed in a variety of situations can greatly enhance the feedback student teachers will receive concerning their performance.

During the visits, the Mills supervisor will record their observations of the student teacher's

performance. The supervisor's feedback should be specific and constructive, providing detailed information and examples. It is important to point out areas that need improvement, as well as areas of excellence so that desirable practice can be continued. The information gathered from observations often serves as a springboard for discussion during the debriefing sessions. Video tape recording and later viewing are encouraged where teaching placement sites permit this feedback method.

Linked with feedback is the need to monitor student teachers' individual development goals. The goals may stem from the debriefing sessions and should be linked to the goals that the student teacher has self-selected at the beginning of the semester. Goals are to be written at the bottom of the observation form and should also be listed and monitored in the Personal Goal Monitoring section found in the portfolio. The Mills supervisor will continue to review the goals during site visits and the student teaching seminar.

The observation documentation should contain two sections: one for supervisor comments and one for student comments. Following the observation, debriefing, and goal setting, the student teacher will receive a copy of the observation documentation. The student teacher is to record reflections of the observed lesson and make one copy for the portfolio.

Student teachers need to be exposed to many different teaching styles, classroom structures, settings, and environments where services are being provided for infants, toddlers, and preschool children with special needs. Toward this end, student teachers are expected to make three observations in other special education or early intervention programs per semester. Scheduling these observation times should be negotiated between the student teacher and the cooperating teacher.

Evaluation and Grading:

The evaluation of a student teacher's growth in the student teaching assignment is an ongoing process. Formative evaluation should occur regularly during cooperating teacher/student teacher meetings and supervisor/student teacher conferences. At the end of each placement, a summative evaluation will occur. The main purpose is to provide the student teacher with feedback to facilitate your life-long development as an education specialist in early childhood. Within two weeks of the end of the student teaching placement, a three-way meeting needs to be held between the cooperating teacher, the student teacher, and the Mills supervisor. Each participant should bring to that meeting a completed copy of the "Mills College Evaluation of Student Teaching Fieldwork" form. The responses of all should be shared and discussed. The Mills supervisor will use the information from the conference to formulate a final grade for the field placement. The student teacher is responsible for preparing two copies of this set of evaluation forms (from cooperating teacher, Mills supervisor, and you). One set of evaluations becomes a part of the Portfolio; the other set should be given to the teaching seminar's faculty member to be

placed in the student's academic file.

Periodic evaluation of the students' teaching represents one of the ways our students' development as teachers is assessed throughout the program. Other assessments include:

- Analysis of the student teachers' evolving perspective on teaching as it is reflected in the journal writing about their student teaching experiences;
- College supervisor observation reports and progress evaluation, through periodic visits to the student teaching placements and consultations with the cooperating teachers;
- Evaluation of college coursework taken in conjunction with the field experience;
- The completion of all portfolio requirements.