

# Excellence in Teaching

*Excellence in Teaching* (EIT) courses address young children's learning by giving early childhood teachers and their supervisors the skills and knowledge needed to advance their classroom teaching practices. These research-based courses address critical current content in areas such as: assessment, data, and planning; children's challenging behavior; children with language differences; cognitively-challenging curriculum; early literacy; inclusion; science learning; supervision; and coaching. A comprehensive, credit-bearing professional development program developed by Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), EIT courses also engage supervisors in supporting their staffs to transform teaching practices. The courses application-based assignments help ensure class learning results in advancements in teachers' practices with children.

For nearly two decades, thousands of early childhood teachers and their supervisors have completed EIT courses for college credit and non-credit. Participants report that EIT has a profound impact on their teaching and supervisory practices. In the words of an EIT graduate, *"It is by far the most effective training our program has ever experienced."*

EIT participants gain:

- Confidence in and mastery of the content teachers teach
- Fresh ideas of how to keep young children engaged in active learning to promote sustained positive learning outcomes
- An effective repertoire of teaching and supervisory skills rooted in current research and best practice
- Richer, fuller insights into children's development and the learning process
- Knowledge of the ways federal and/or state standards are actualize through instructional practices with children
- Approaches to creating learning environments that fully engage all children in learning and advance outcomes
- Enhanced listening, observation, assessment, planning, and communication skills

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## ***Excellence in Teaching Courses***

In credit-bearing courses, participants meet in three, two-day sessions over a five-month period, or six full-day sessions; complete application-based assignments; and read substantive texts that extend concepts presented. All participants complete a pre-class assignment, giving instructors vital data about levels of practice. Some courses are also offered online.

EIT instructors tailor course assignments to fit each group's unique needs and to link concepts to standards and research. To foster peer sharing, participants often work in affinity groups in which teachers discuss their classroom practices, while supervisors explore ways to support teacher effectiveness. Instructors often use video of practice to engage teachers and/or supervisors in analysis and reflection of their own practices and to offer targeted consultation, while providing effective, content-focused feedback.

### **EDC'S CURRENT COURSES**

#### ***Children's Challenging Behavior and the Ecology of the Classroom*** (3 credits)

Participants develop an understanding of three key factors that affect children's behavior: teacher-child and child-child relationships, the environment, and curriculum. By exploring how expectations and culture, physical environment, and classroom climate influence children's responses and behavior, participants then identify strategies to promote productive classroom interaction. Participants then apply these strategies to their instructional practices, helping *all* children to be successful learners.

#### ***Constructing Cognitively Challenging Curriculum*** (3 credits)

Using a conceptual framework designed to provide children with rich, cognitive challenges, participants learn to facilitate classroom activities that results in in-depth investigations about the world. In their own classroom settings, participants try out approaches that challenge children to problem-solve, imagine, hypothesize, represent their thinking, and gain new knowledge and vocabulary.

#### ***Literacy Environment Enrichment Program (LEEP)*** (3 credits)

Participants gain the information and support to apply current research to promote children's language and literacy development, comprising early writing, book reading, and oral language including phonological awareness. As they become competent observers and assessors of children's language and literacy development, participants also learn to evaluate and refine their own language and literacy-related practices.

#### ***LEEP Online*** (3 credits)

LEEP is also offered as an online course. Readings, application activities, online discussion, and performance-based assignments build participants' understanding of children's language and literacy development and classroom instructional strategies. With a focus on early writing, literacy-rich environments, oral language, phonological awareness, book reading, and literacy rich curriculum, participants also learn to assess children's learning to tailor instruction.

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### ***Responsive Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Their Families* (3 credits)**

This course is designed to improve the quality of infant/toddler care and education in center-based settings. Together, teachers and supervisors deepen their knowledge of early development and infant/toddler curriculum through interactive learning. Supervisors also learn how to support teachers' application of new classroom strategies.

### ***Science Explorations: Facilitating Science Inquiry with Young Children* (3 credits)**

Through hands-on explorations, examination of other classrooms' work, and application activities, participants learn how young children learn science and the teacher's role as a guide in the process. Participants develop fluency with the science concepts essential to conducting content-rich scientific investigations with young children.

### ***Foundations of Supervision in Early Childhood Programs* (3 credits)**

Participants engage in learning about a developmental approach to supervision and explore the ways targeted, reflective supervision strategies can improve teachers' classroom practices. Participants then apply these strategies in their work with teachers, and document results. Supervisors also learn to collect and use data for decision-making and targeting their efforts.

### ***Supporting Preschoolers with Language Differences* (3 credits)**

Participants build their skills in identifying the developmental milestones of English language learners and the signs of language delay in all children. They also learn to use classroom-based strategies that provide optimal support for both groups of children to promote their language development. Participants will gain an understanding of the social/emotional implication for these children and will apply specific strategies to fully involve them in the learning community.

### ***Using Assessment and Data to Promote Children's Reading Success* (3 credits)**

This course focuses on aspects essential for young children's later reading success in comprehension through the development of background knowledge, oral language, and vocabulary. Participants gain an ability to use formative, authentic assessment techniques used in the context of cognitively challenging curriculum, thereby strengthening the connection between curriculum and assessment. They gain skills in translating formative assessment into on-going documentation of and planning for children's learning.

### ***Early Literacy Instructional Coaching* (3 credits)**

Using an instructional coaching model that promotes collaboration with teachers, course participants learn effective coaching strategies that support the implementation of high-quality early language/literacy practices. The course focuses on the use of videotaped classroom observations, joint analysis of practice, and conferencing with teachers. Participants increase their knowledge of effective literacy practices and gain skills to help teachers identify strengths, set observable goals, and adopt evidence-based instructional practices.