Frequently Asked Questions about the Early Childhood Education Program at MSTC

Q: I want to become certified as a child care provider. What courses do I need to take?

You should check with your certifier to verify what coursework you need to take to become certified. Child Care Resource and Referral of Central Wisconsin at (715) 423-4114 is the certifier for much of the MSTC district. For those in South Wood County, contact Jodie Knuteson at the Department of Human Services at (715) 421-8600 or jknuteson@co.wood.wi.us. For those in North Wood County, contact Jan Wolf at (715) 387-6374 or jwolf@co.wood.wi.us. MSTC offers the courses Introduction to the Child Care Profession-Certified and Fundamentals of Family Child Care to meet these requirements in an independent study format through the MSTC Marshfield campus on an ongoing basis. Contact Amy Schultz, office assistant, at (715) 389-7048 or amy.schultz@mstc.edu for further information about these offerings.

Q: I want to become licensed as a child care provider. What courses do I need to take?

You should check with your child care licenser to verify what coursework you need to take to become licensed. You can obtain information about getting started at the following link: http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/licensed/starting.htm

MSTC offers entry-level continuing education courses for assistant teacher (Introduction to the Child care Profession) and lead teacher (Skills and Strategies for the Child Care Teacher) in an independent study format through the MSTC Marshfield campus on an ongoing basis. Also offered in this format through the Marshfield campus are Fundamentals of Family Child Care and Fundamentals of Infant and Toddler Care.

Currently, both courses are available in an online format (please see Appendix A). The benefits to online / independent study format include:

- Independent study format allows students to work at their own pace
- Online format allows access from any place student can access the internet
- Students have 18 weeks from the time of enrollment to complete the course
- Students may enroll anytime throughout the year
- Register at any MSTC campus or by registering and paying online

Please contact Amy Schultz, office assistant, at (715) 389-7048 or amy.schultz@mstc.edu for further information about these offerings.

MSTC also offers credit-based courses as a part of the ECE associate degree that will enable you to meet licensing requirements.
Q: I have been told that the Early Childhood Education program is accelerated. What does that mean?

The Early Childhood Education (ECE) program is a 69-credit associate degree program. Most associate degree programs allow for completion in two years as a full-time student. Effective Fall 2014, the ECE program is no longer offered in an accelerated format.

NOTE: MSTC offers the Early Childhood Program in an evening format; offered in the traditional 17-week semester format.

Q: Do I have to complete the program in the two-year time frame?

You can take as long as you want to complete the ECE program—there are no time limits. Canned schedules exist for completing the program in one, two or three years, but flexible options apart from those schedules are available to meet your needs.

Q: I have been told that there is a progression requirement for the ECE program. What does that mean if I am a Daytime or Evening Student?

Daytime Students: You will be able to enroll in core program courses after you have been accepted to the program for the fall semester unless the course has a prerequisite (see the catalog descriptions at http://www.mstc.edu/sites/default/files/files/Programs/Early ChildhoodEducation.pdf to determine which courses have prerequisites). In order to progress to the four practicums, additional requirements must be met. You can view these progression requirements in the catalog course description for Practicum 1.

Evening Students: At the present time, students who enroll in evening Early Childhood Education courses are not required to apply to the program initially. However, acceptance into all Practicum coursework does require program admittance.

Q: What are the practicums for this program?

There are four practicums required in the program, each building on the foundation learned in the previous one. Practicum assignments typically include a group child care center, Head Start and public school four or five-year-old kindergarten or early childhood exceptional needs classrooms. They can also include family child care. The lead instructor makes every effort to place you in a practicum site near to where you live to minimize your travel.

Q: Are there any special requirements for me to participate in practicum?

There are some important requirements to consider in preparation for practicum training. The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families as the regulatory agency for group and family child care requires that you submit a health form documenting a negative Tuberculosis (TB) skin test and certification by a health professional that you are free of symptoms of illness or
communicable disease that may be transmitted through normal contact prior to your attending practicum. Depending on the practicum site and length of time you are in the program, you might need to submit this documentation more than once prior to completing all four practicums. You also need to maintain certification in CPR (adult, infant and child with AED) and pediatric first aid while you are participating in practicum courses. Finally, at the time of admission you were required to complete a criminal background check. This is valid for one year. In the event you take practicum classes over a span of one year, a new Criminal Background Check will be required for every year that you participate in practicums. These background checks require additional fees ($15 per background check) beyond standard tuition that you are responsible to pay.

Q: I have a criminal conviction on my record. Can I participate in the ECE program?

It depends on what the conviction is and possibly when it occurred. If you are unable to complete all four practicums, you will not be able to graduate from the program with an associate degree. Click on the following link to locate an updated list of criminal convictions that would prevent you from working with children in a practicum site:


Note that even though your particular offense might not appear on this list, employers could deem that it is substantially related to the care of children and refuse to allow you to participate at that site for practicum. If you have specific questions about your criminal background, please contact Barb Jascor at (715) 422-5512 or barb.jascor@mstc.edu

Q: I have been accepted to the ECE program for the spring semester. Can I take core ECE courses in the spring?

Students accepted for the spring semester have missed the core foundational courses offered in the fall semester and are typically only able to register for general education and elective courses in the spring. These students will be able to take core ECE courses in the ensuing fall. Certain exceptions can be made for spring start students to take spring core ECE courses, but that is only with the permission of the lead instructor and/or program coordinator.

Q: Do I have a program advisor?

When you are initially accepted to the program, your program advisor will be the program coordinator, Barb Jascor, who can be reached at (715) 422-5512 or barb.jascor@mstc.edu. Once you have registered for core ECE courses, your main advisor will be the lead instructor, April Hartjes, who can be reached at (715) 295-1281 or april.hartjes@mstc.edu. The program coordinator will continue to assist you with advisement as needed until you graduate from the program. Please note: April’s office is located on the Stevens Point campus.

Q: Is there a waiting list for this program?
The answer to this question varies based upon the current level of interest in the program. Please contact Barb Jascor at 715.422.5512 for the most up to date answer to this question.

Q: Can I take the program at any MSTC campus?

Effective Fall 2014, the daytime program will be offered at the MSTC Stevens Point campus. Evening classes are offered on a rotating basis at the three campus locations.

You may take general education and elective coursework at any MSTC campus. The off-site component of practicum courses can be scheduled near to where you live to minimize your travel.

Q: Is the program offered online or in the evening as I work during the day?

There are a number of Early Childhood Education courses available in the evening. For a current list of courses available in the evening you are encouraged to contact either Barb Jascor (715.422.5512).

Q: I have a lot of experience and training in Early Childhood. What steps do I need to go through to be evaluated for credit for prior learning?

The topic of Credit for Prior Learning is rather complicated. You are encouraged to contact Barb Jascor, Program Director for further information and to answer any specific questions you may have regarding this topic.

Briefly, students may be eligible to receive credit for other early childhood courses based on their work experience and/or training. In order to receive this type of credit, a student must:

1. Complete the Credit for Prior Learning Booklet (including Portfolio) for each course for which the student is seeking Credit for Prior Learning **.
2. Submission of portfolio requirements meeting course competencies and assessment standards as documented by a signed Evaluation of Credit for Prior Experience Form.

**Students may choose to either complete the Credit for Prior Learning (3-credit course) or complete the Booklet/Portfolio independently. Credit for prior learning will only be awarded upon demonstration of course competencies.

Students may not receive credit for prior work experience for Practicum 4 as many of the program’s Technical Skills Attainment (TSA) assessments are contained within this course.

Transfer Credit & Credit for Prior Learning fees:
Students who have completed credit child care courses or other credentials may be eligible for credit for prior learning for certain courses. The policies to determine the credit for prior
learning are listed according to the course or credential. A college transcript, a copy of the credential, or the stated documents is required before credit for prior learning is granted.

Students must pay tuition fees of $30 per credit for each course granted credit for prior learning and/or work experience. Wisconsin Technical College System rules require students to take at least 25% of core 307 credits (minimum of 12 credits) and at least 25% of total program credits (at least 18 credits) at Mid-State Technical College to graduate with an associate degree.

**Q: Can I use financial aid for this program?**

You must have applied for financial aid in order to be eligible to receive financial aid to assist in paying for the ECE program. As the program is accelerated, the Financial Aid Office has a special breakdown for distribution of financial aid for ECE students. It is important that ECE students identify themselves as such to the Financial Aid Office in order to ensure a proper disbursement of payments.

**Q: What types of jobs will I be able to get with an associate degree in ECE?**

You will be able to work as a lead teacher in a group child care center, operate your own family child care center, act as a paraprofessional in a public school setting, function as a nanny or be an assistant teacher at Head Start.

**Q: Can I be a kindergarten teacher in the public schools with an associate degree in ECE?**

No—not with an associate degree. MSTC has a variety of collegiate credit transfer agreements with four-year colleges/universities, so many of the credits you earn while obtaining your associate degree will count toward your bachelor’s degree with teacher licensure.

**Q: Should I take noncredit or credit courses to meet entry-level early childhood teacher requirements?**

If you just want to meet the minimum requirements and do not ever expect to pursue additional education (such as an associate or bachelor’s degree), then you may choose to take noncredit entry-level courses as these courses do not transfer into these advanced degrees. If you think that you will want to obtain an associate or bachelor’s degree at some point in the future, you should strongly consider taking credit-based courses as these will count toward an associate degree and might also transfer into a baccalaureate degree program.

**Q: How do I apply to the ECE program?**

To apply to the ECE program, please click this link and complete the steps listed on the page:

[http://www.mstc.edu/programs/admission-requirements#Early](http://www.mstc.edu/programs/admission-requirements#Early)
Q: Do I need to attend a program orientation? Do I need to attend Smart Start?

Yes, you need to attend a program orientation as well as a college orientation. The college orientation is called Smart Start. The Smart Start sessions include important student information relative to student services, financial aid, course registration, etc. The orientation process is as follows:

1. You will receive written communication from the MSTC admissions office with a list of several available Smart Start sessions. Register for a SmartStart session.
2. A program orientation session will occur prior to the start of the fall semester. Approximately 2-3 weeks before the scheduled program orientation, a letter will be sent to you both confirming your enrollment and inviting you to program orientation. Students are expected to attend both SmartStart and Program Orientation.

Q: What is the general pay scale for early childhood educators?

The pay scale varies greatly depending on what type of setting you work in. Pay is typically less in family and group centers and more at Head Start. The pay range is typically anywhere from $8.00 per hour to $11.00+ per hour.

Q: If I get my associate degree and want to go on to get my bachelor’s degree; will my associate degree credits transfer to the university?

MSTC has many articulation (credit transfer) agreements with the UW System and also with private colleges. Each agreement is unique, but most allow you to receive credit for at least half of your associate degree coursework at the university. Private colleges will usually accept most if not all of your associate degree credits, but tuition costs are higher than UW System universities.
Appendix A
MSTC Independent Study Child Care Certification Courses

What classes do I need to take if I want to be a...

1. County Certified (in-home) family daycare provider -
   Intro to Child Care Certified and Fundamentals of Family Child Care
   * contact county certifying agency to determine total number of related/unrelated children allowed

2. State Licensed (in-home) family day care provider** -
   Intro to the Child Care Profession and Fundamentals of Family Child Care
   *contact state licensing agency to determine total number of related/unrelated children allowed

3. State Licensed Assistant** in a group day care center
   Intro to the Child Care Profession

4. State Licensed Teacher** in a group day care center
   Intro to the Child Care Profession and Skills/Strategies for Teachers

NOTE: **If caring for children birth to 2 years, Fundamentals of Infant & Toddler course is required for licensing.

For more information regarding child care courses, contact Barb Jascor, Associate Dean, Services/Health Division – Wisconsin Rapids Campus at 715-422-5512

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<td>Intro to Child Care Certified</td>
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<td>Intro to the Child Care Profession</td>
<td>47-307-430</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fundamentals of Family Child Care</td>
<td>47-307-434</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skills/Strategies for Teachers</td>
<td>47-307-431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundamentals of Infant &amp; Toddler Care</td>
<td>47-307-433</td>
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* Please note: class numbers may change each semester. At the time of registration, please contact Amy Schultz or Barb Jascor for the most up to date class number.