

This sample syllabus provides resources, activities, readings, and assignments, aligned with the Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards for Early Interventionists/Early Childhood Special Educators (2020) and DEC Recommended Practices (2014). Consider state and university policies and add as appropriate. This is not a complete syllabus; nor is it intended to suggest that the standard would be addressed in only one course in the curriculum.

ECPC Sample Syllabus Standard 2: Partnering with Families

Course Description

This example is Standard 2.

This course is designed to help students gain knowledge of family-centered practices and family systems theory to develop and maintain reciprocal partnerships with families. Students apply family capacity-building practices as they support families to make informed decisions and advocate for their young children. Students will engage families in opportunities that build on their existing strengths, reflect current goals and foster family competence and confidence to support their children's development and learning.

Required Text

The text below is an example for Standard 2. When developing or revising your syllabus, you may also choose supplemental readings. (See References in the Resources section of the [ECPC Curriculum Modules: Professional Standards](#) for related literature and resources.)

Turnbull, A., Turnbull, H. R., Francis, G. L., Burke, M., Kyzar, K., Haines, S., Gershwin, K. S., Holdren, N., & Singer, G. H. S. (2022). *Families, professionals, and exceptionality: Trusting partnerships in general and special education* (8th ed.). Pearson.

Standard 2 Components - Student Learning Outcomes

IHE faculty may develop additional student learning objectives by breaking down the components into sub-objectives and describing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions students are expected to learn upon successful completion of this course. Two sample student learning objectives are listed for each of the numbered components below. These are examples only and are not intended to be a complete set of objectives for the respective component.

As a result of active participation and successful completion of course requirements, students will be able to:

- 2.1 Demonstrate application of their knowledge of family-centered practices, family systems theory, and the changing needs and priorities in family's lives to develop trusting, respectful, culturally responsive, and affirming partnerships with all families that allow for the mutual exchange of knowledge and information.
 - Describe the elements of family systems theory.

- Describe family-centered practices that foster trusting, respectful, affirming, and culturally responsive partnerships with families.
- 2.2 Observe and practice communication of clear, comprehensive, objective information about resources and supports that help families to make informed decisions and advocate for access, participation, and equity in natural and inclusive environments.
- Describe clear, comprehensive, and objective information sharing strategies to use with families, including those from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
 - Describe clear, comprehensive, and objective information sharing strategies to inform families about resources and supports available to them.
- 2.3 Identify and practice strategies to engage families in identifying their strengths, priorities and concerns, support families to achieve the goals they have for their family and their young child’s development and learning, and promote families’ competence and confidence during assessment, individualized planning, intervention, instruction, and transition processes.
- Describe strategies to engage families in identifying their strengths, priorities, and concerns.
 - Describe strategies to support families to achieve the goals they have for their family and their child’s development and learning.

Topical Course Outline

The topical course outline is organized by course sessions and aligns course topics with EI/ECSE Standards and components. In addition, reading(s) and learning activities are identified for each topic.

Week	Standard 2 Components	Topic and Readings	Activities
1	2.1	Family systems theory Family centered practice Changing needs and priorities in family’s lives Turnbull et al., Ch. 3 and 4	Begin a relationship/ partnership with a family. This will extend beyond the semester. See assignment 1.
2	2.1	Developing trusting, respectful, culturally responsive and affirming partnerships Exchanging knowledge and information with families Turnbull et al., Ch. 1 and 7	Complete an ecomap with your partner family.
3	2.1	Contemporary family issues Supporting families in vulnerable circumstances	Conduct a family interview with your partner family.
4	2.1	Role of families as partners Diversity in families Turnbull et al., Ch. 1 and 3	Interview a current Part C provider about the role of families as partners and support of family diversity.

Week	Standard 2 Components	Topic and Readings	Activities
5	2.2	Historical and legal foundations for family advocacy Turnbull et al., Ch. 2	Investigate and describe activities of Partners in Policymaking.
6	2.2	Communication with families Turnbull et al., Ch. 8	Learn more about effective communication by completing CONNECT Module 3 .
7	2.2	Sharing objective information about resources and supports Turnbull et al., Ch. 6	Ask your partner family to share their best and worst experiences when receiving information about their child.
8	2.2	Helping families make informed decisions	Research a topic such as sleeping and develop a conversation guide for parents with information about choices.
9	2.3	Helping families advocate for access, participation, and equity in natural and inclusive environments Turnbull et al., Ch. 9	Develop a one-page elevator sheet for families on inclusion.
10	2.3	Family rights and responsibilities under federal and state policies Turnbull et al. Ch. 2	Find your local district's or Part C program's family rights brochure and video tape yourself introducing the notion of parent's rights to families.
11	2.3	Engage families in identifying their strengths, priorities, and concerns	Ask your partner family to identify their strengths, priorities, and concerns.
12	2.3	Support families to achieve the goals they have for their family and young child's development and learning	Discuss with partner family what works best for achieving goals they have set.
13	2.3	Promote families' competence and confidence during assessment	Observe a video of an assessment and note number of times parent spoke and type of communication.
14	2.3	Promote families' competence and confidence during individualized planning, intervention, and instruction	Discuss with your partner family the actions professionals have taken that helped them to feel more confident and competent.
15	2.3	Promote families' competence and confidence during transition processes	Observe a video of a transition conference and discuss how the families displayed competence

Week	Standard 2 Components	Topic and Readings	Activities
			and confidence and what might have led to this.

Resources

Resources to supplement the ECPC Sample Syllabus Standard 2:

- [Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards for EI/ECSE \(2020\)](#)
 - Link to the standards and supporting resources.
- [Center for Parent Information and Resources](#)
 - Link to family-friendly materials and resources.
- [CONNECT Modules \(Module 3\)](#)
 - A module about effective communication practices to support collaboration.
- [CONNECT Modules \(Module 4\)](#)
 - A module to learn about building family-professional partnership practices.
- [Early Childhood Recommended Practices Modules \(Module 5\)](#)
 - A module to learn about effective family-professional partnership practices.
- [ECPC Cross-Disciplinary Competencies](#)
 - Core cross-disciplinary competence areas for use by ECI professionals.
- [Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators](#)
 - Link to the standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Journals in EI/ECSE

Below are examples of journals that publish topics about EI/ECSE. Faculty may want to explain how to use articles to support practice and to examine current research. Clarify the difference between practitioner-based journals and research-based journals.

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| ● <i>Exceptional Parent Magazine</i> | ● <i>Journal of Special Education Technology</i> |
| ● <i>Infants and Young Children</i> | ● <i>Rural Special Education Quarterly</i> |
| ● <i>International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education</i> | ● <i>Teaching Exceptional Children</i> |
| ● <i>Intervention in School and Clinic</i> | ● <i>Topics in Early Childhood Special Education</i> |
| ● <i>Journal of Early Hearing Detection and Intervention</i> | ● <i>Young Children</i> |
| ● <i>Journal of Early Intervention</i> | ● <i>Young Exceptional Children</i> |

Assignments

1. Family Interview (Components 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3)

The family interview is an assessment technique used collaboratively with the family to identify resources, priorities, and concerns of the family. The relationship between the educator and the family should be one of teamwork and collaboration. The preferred approach by many is to engage the family in conversation rather than conducting a formal interview. Before beginning the process, it is important that you have an established rapport with the family and communicate your respect for their

time and effort. At the start of the interview, clearly state its purpose and give them background information about yourself and the program. Use both open-ended and closed-ended questions to gather information and be sensitive when probing for further information. Use a “funnel approach” by starting with broad concerns and getting more specific. Using open-ended questions pertaining to the family’s daily activities is a very effective strategy for identifying the family’s resources, concerns, and priorities.

The interviewer should keep the following precautions in mind the following:

- The identification of family needs and strengths is not a mandatory component of the IFSP/IEP – it is voluntary. No child can be refused services because of the family’s refusal to be assessed.
- The identification of family resources and concerns should be planned individually with each family.
- The identification of family resources and concerns should be conducted in a non-intrusive manner.
- Conduct the interview in ways to respect the family’s home language, values, and culture.
- Respect the family’s right to only share what they wish to share.

Information obtained from the interview should be used to directly assist the family. The educator should explain why the information is needed and how it will be used *before* the interview begins.

Possible interview techniques:

- Use semi-structured questions to provide a sharing avenue, but not a defined stopping point like closed-ended questions.
- Use closed-ended questions for specific information (e.g., birth weight of child).
- Use family stories (e.g., experience stories).
- Consider using a recorder (which requires signed consent) can help capture every detail of the interview.

Following the family interview, carry out approximately 10 hours of collaboration with the family to address the priority goals identified during the interview process. Create a collaboration log to identify the hours and activities you engaged in with the family. Create a resource guide to address the family’s concerns and to help them attain their goals. The resource guide should include materials related to accessing services outside of special education such as Social Security benefits, health insurance, transportation, higher education, case management, social services, and informal family supports. The guide must be organized in a way that facilitates the family’s learning of how to access resources outside special education.

2. Presentation/Training (Component 2.1)

Develop a presentation and/or training materials on a critical issue related to early childhood intervention and family-centered practice. Create one of the following: (1)

A 15-20 slide PowerPoint presentation that you might present in the future, or (2) training materials (e.g., pamphlet, insert to IFSP/IEP manual, handouts, portfolio materials). Include resources or website links where individuals can obtain more information and be sure to include references for information you obtain from websites or articles. Write a two-page reflection on why you chose the topic and how you will use the presentation/materials you created.

3. Book Review and Book Talk (Component 2.3)

This assignment involves reading two books authored by a family/parent. As our perspective expands, our new thinking may help us develop a broader and deeper understanding about families who have children with disabilities. Select two books from the supplemental list provided in class.

For the first book, you will write a three-to-five-page paper reflecting on the book's impact on you as an educator, as a parent, or as a member of a family.

Include your reflections on the questions listed below:

- What is the experience of the parents? How is it presented?
- How is this a universal experience?
- How does the child's disability impact the child's experience within the education system?
- What is the parents' experience with the educational system? What is the child's experience?
- How do the experiences of the child or the parent impact you as an educator?
- Other thoughts?

For the second book, you will lead a book talk in class. Through the activities you plan, it should be evident that you are applying what you have learned in this course, and that you understand the perspectives presented in the book including the impact of disability on the family system. Additionally, provide the class with two to three excerpts from the book prior to your talk to assist with the discussion and activities.