



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Education

Fakulteit Opvoedkunde
Lefapha la Thuto

Department of
Early Childhood Education

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

(Early Childhood Development &
Foundation Phase: 0 – 9 years)

Focus Areas:

- Home Language
- First Additional Language
- Mathematic
- Life Skills

Specialization:

- Learning Support
- Early Childhood Development Studies

Department of
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

<https://www.up.ac.za/faculty-of-education>

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



The foundation of our nation

What is early childhood education (ECE)? Early childhood education is concerned with the education of young children from birth to the age of nine years, ie those that attend early childhood centres and the foundation phase classes at primary schools.

The early childhood phase (0–9 years) is often referred to as the most critical, most impressionable period of human development. The education of young children is concerned with the development of cognitive skills, social competence, physical, emotional and spiritual well-being, and sound health. Rich, stimulating learning experiences and quality relationships in the early years provide a strong foundation for success in later life.



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Why study ECE?

Training in the teaching profession, particularly foundation phase teacher training, has become a priority focus in an attempt to assure the future sustainability of our country. We now know that a country's prosperity and security begins with the well-being of its children. Research has shown that investment in quality early childhood education programmes leads to better outcomes in education, health, sociability and economic productivity, and reduces crime. Investment in quality early education is therefore a strong, long-term investment with lifelong positive outcomes.

The Department of Early Childhood Education (ECE) believes that the contribution made by early childhood and foundation phase teachers to society cannot be rivalled by any other profession. The education offered by these teachers lays the foundation for success in education and in life, which makes them the most influential members of society. By choosing to become an early childhood or foundation phase teacher, you will be making a highly rewarding professional career choice that will enable you to have a positive and meaningful impact on society.

Why study at UP?

UP is the place to BE! The Department of ECE offers you an opportunity to be academically and professionally trained in a high-priority skills area. Programmes are of a high academic standard, but also offer you opportunities to use your innovative and creative side and to enhance your personal development in an academic environment.

Staff

The academic staff of the Department of ECE consists of a group of passionate, dedicated and experienced educationists. They participate in numerous research activities, have strong international links and are also involved in local community outreach projects. Staff members work closely with students to develop and strengthen their knowledge of early childhood education through a combination of theoretical teaching and practical training.

Innovation at ECE

The Department of Early Childhood Education (ECE) has innovative ideas and projects that our students from first to fourth years are engaged in. ECE students get the opportunity to discover, experiment, create and explore in an interesting way. In the Literacy Practices (JGL) modules, students create their own Google sites with a blog and YouTube video





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about the content. Students publish their Google sites and share their link address with the entire class, their friends and family. Specialists are sometimes invited to the department to show students how mathematics can be integrated into various areas of learning in the foundation phase. In JGS, students learn through play, using six LEGO bricks. Playing with LEGO was an eye-opener in terms of what can be done with only six LEGO bricks and how learners can learn through play. There is no substitute for active, hands-on participation when it comes to understanding new content and obtaining the skills and abilities necessary to become an effective teacher. Early Childhood Development (JVK 400) elective students are introduced to a variety of resources at different stations in the model class. The students use their critical, creative and problem-solving skills to investigate, develop and discuss various innovative ways for teachers and learners to use these resources in different capacities. Principals of preschools and Grade R centres, as well as teaching union representatives, are invited as guest speakers to share their first-hand experiences and advice with the prospective teachers and to respond to questions. The community engagement project conducted with JMD 351 students in the third year is aimed at allowing in- and post-service teachers to share teaching skills and research-based teaching strategies.

Career opportunities

A degree in early childhood and foundation phase teaching will assure you of excellent job opportunities. You will be an in-demand professional and can look forward to employment in an early childhood development centre or primary school (private or state-sponsored), in community service organisations, state departments or various other private-sector institutions. You could also work as an au pair or start your own school!

If you are interested in and enthusiastic about children's development and learning, and committed to making a significant difference in society, you should apply.





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What does the University of Pretoria (UP) offer?

To be entrusted with the education of young children is a great privilege, but also an enormous responsibility. UP's comprehensive and highly respected teacher education programmes prepare students to take on this responsibility with confidence and to enjoy the excitement, creativity and challenges of working with young children.

The following degree programmes are offered:

- BEd (Early Childhood Development and Foundation Phase)
- BEdHons (Learning Support)
- MEd and Phd (Specialisation in Early Childhood and Foundation Phase)

The programmes offered by the Department of ECE will empower you to become a competent, knowledgeable and reflective early childhood teacher who is committed to young children and their development and learning. You will gain a thorough grounding in theories on teaching and learning, whole-child development, the planning and implementation of a balanced curriculum and working with children and their families. You will also gain the skills needed to help young children acquire the foundation competencies in all academic subjects and to identify difficulties and provide support for learners with diverse needs.

What should I do next if I am interested in studying early childhood education?

For admission requirements, programme details and application forms, please contact the ECE departmental administrator at 012 420 5568, or visit the UP website: <http://web.up.ac.za> (follow the link to Academic Departments and click on Early Childhood Education).

