

IECE 421 Practicum

September 5, 2011

Dear Cooperating Teacher,

We want to take this opportunity at the start of the semester to say, “Thank you!” We are well aware of the fact that one reason our JMU teacher candidates are so well prepared is because of the numerous field experiences they receive. And that would not happen without you! We are also aware of the time and effort it takes to nurture these novices. Thank you for giving back to the profession with that time and effort. We sincerely appreciate your willingness to guide these young teacher candidates.

You will be working with students in the Inclusive Early Childhood Education program which is a new program that models the collaborative teaching model that is more and more common in PreK-3 classrooms. The students you will be working with will be dually endorsed in early childhood regular education and early childhood special education.

The students you are accepting into your class are seniors and have already had practicum experiences with preschoolers and infant/toddlers. This is their first experience in a public school placement and a pair of students will be assigned to you for two hours, once day per week. While they are with you, they are taking a course on Child Development and Assessment and one of their requirements is to collect data on a child. We are asking them to complete four observation records, observing a child as they engage in their regular activities. We are also asking them to practice two more formal assessments such as the *Vineland Teaching Rating Form* and the *ASQ – Ages and Stages Questionnaire*. They should spend no more than 30 minutes taking notes, but the two students should not be doing this at the same time. The rest of the time they are in your classroom, they should be helping you and the children.

In an effort to “go green,” the College of Education has decided to use electronic sources for sharing information about each practicum. The documents that describe the components of each practicum, necessary forms, and evaluative tools can now be found on the College’s web site. To find the documents listed below, please refer to

<http://www.jmu.edu/coe/eere/PracticumInformation.shtml>

- A description of each practicum in the program
- The evaluation form which is used for both mid-term and final evaluation of your practicum student
- Policy and procedure information in regards to attendance, absences, notification of teacher and supervisor

- The JMU lesson plan template (these students will not be planning a formal lesson, but you may ask them to lead transitions, read a story, or supervise an activity, etc.)

The JMU practicum students will be starting practicum the week of September 12, 2011 and will continue through the week of December 7th. Your practicum student can give you the specific dates. In addition, the practicum students will follow the JMU's calendar for attendance. This means that they will not be in practicum on days that the university is closed (Thanksgiving week). We told the students to share any dates JMU is not in session so you can plan accordingly. Other policies about attendance such as make-up days, tardiness, etc. can be found on the web page listed above.

The JMU practicum students are expected to bring you additional information. On the first day, the practicum student will have a sign-in calendar to post in your room. Each week, she or he will sign in noting the time. The JMU supervisor may look for this sheet. Also, on the first day, you will receive a completed student profile sheet. This one page document will have a photograph of the practicum student and information about experiences she or he has had to date. Within two weeks they should select a child to observe during the semester. Feel free to make suggestions about which child and if you would find it helpful, your practicum students can give you a copy of their observations at the end of the semester. They will also have a permission letter for parents/guardians.

The practicum does not require formal supervision but Laura Desportes and Martha Ross are the instructors for their course. We will each visit once to check in with you and become familiar with the children and classroom. If at any time, you have questions, concerns and/or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact either of us.

Again, many thanks for all you do to help our teacher candidates grow as professionals. We look forward to a successful semester.

Sincerely,

Martha Ross
Head, Department of Early, Elementary and Reading Education
rossmk@jmu.edu
540 568-3473

Laura Desportes
Head, Exceptional Education
desporlx@jmu.edu
540 568-4527