

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AT TC

HANDBOOK FOR MASTERS PROGRAMS

"When we love children, we acknowledge by our every action that they are not property, that they have rights—that we respect and uphold their rights."

BELL HOOKS





CONTACT INFORMATION

Dr. Haeny S. Yoon, Program Director
Department of Curriculum and Teaching
Teachers College, Columbia University
302 Zankel or Box 31
525 West 120th Street
New York, New York 10027

Contact Person

Kara Sheridan, Program Manager

Phone: (212) 678-3860

Email: Sheridan@tc.edu

[Click to visit our website.](#)



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Staff & Faculty



Amanda Reeves Fellner, Ed.D.

Lecturer

Interim Director at the Rita Gold Center

Email: acr2128@tc.columbia.edu

Office: 303C Zankel



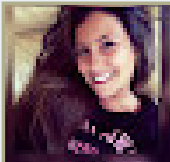
Lara Steensland Mullarkey, Ed.D.

Lecturer

Field-Based Supervisor

Email: lcs21@tc.columbia.edu

Office: 302C Zankel



Amanda Ribeiro

Academic Secretary

Email: amr2349@tc.columbia.edu

Office: 302 Zankel



Kara Sheridan, M.S.

Program Manager

Email: ks3158@tc.columbia.edu

Office: 302B Zankel

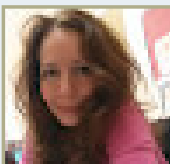


Mariana Souto-Manning, Ph.D.*

Professor

Email: mariana.souto-manning@tc.columbia.edu

*On leave to serve as President of the Erikson Institute



Patricia Tapia

Academic Secretary

Email: pt2251@c.columbia.edu

Office: 302 Zankel



Tran N. Templeton, Ed.D.

Assistant Professor

Faculty Co-Director, Rita Gold Center

Email: ttn2114@tc.columbia.edu

Office: 302E Zankel



Haeny S. Yoon, Ph.D.

Associate Professor

Director of Early Childhood Programs

Faculty Co-Director, Rita Gold Center

Email: hy2424@tc.columbia.edu

Office: 308 Zankel

Important Contacts



Early Childhood Education Program

212-678-3860
302 Zankel



Admissions Office

tc.columbia.edu/admission
212-678-3710
admission@tc.columbia.edu



Bookstore

columbia.bncollege.com
212-854-4131
2922 Broadway, NYC, NY 10027



Bursar (Student Accounts)

tc.columbia.edu/bursar
212-678-3056
bursar@tc.edu; 133 Thompson



Cafeteria

tc.columbia.edu/dining
212-678-3168
Grace Dodge Hall Basement



Financial Aid Office

tc.columbia.edu/admission/financial-aid
212-678-3710
financialaid@tc.columbia.edu



Fitness (at Columbia)

perec.columbia.edu
212-854-7149
Dodge Fitness Center at 3030 Broadway



Health & Immunizations

tc.columbia.edu/insurance-immunization-records
212-678-3000; health-immunization@tc.edu



Health & Well-Being at CU

health.columbia.edu/
health@columbia.edu
212-854-2284



Information Technology (TCIT)

tc.columbia.edu/tcit
212-678-3300
servicedesk@tc.columbia.edu



Office of Accessibility & Services for Individuals with Disabilities (OASID)

tc.columbia.edu/oasid
oasid@tc.edu; 212-678-3689



Office of Diversity & Community Affairs (ODCA)

tc.columbia.edu/diversity
212-678-3391; 128 Zankel



Office of Graduate Student Life & Development (GSLD)

tc.columbia.edu/gslld
212-678-3690; 528 Bldg, Ste 155



Office of International Students & Scholars

tc.columbia.edu/international
212-678-3939; L5 Whittier Hall



Registrar

tc.columbia.edu/registrar
212-678-4050
registrar@tc.columbia.edu



Residential Services

tc.columbia.edu/housing
212-678-3235
housing@tc.columbia.edu

A Land Acknowledgement is a formal statement to respect, honor, and recognize Indigenous Peoples as former, present, and future stewards of this land. As part of our commitment to education and equity, Teachers College acknowledges the injustices that Indigenous peoples have faced and continue to face in the United States. Teachers College acknowledges that we live and learn on the ancestral and traditional homelands of the Lenape people, who were displaced when Dutch settlers stole the Native American land of Manahatta, now known as Manhattan. We honor and pay respect to all indigenous peoples, by recognizing their relationship with this land.

Thinking critically about early childhood education involves the recognition that the United States exists in the form of a longstanding colonial project that has decimated Native peoples and lands. Because we are participating every day in this struggle, it's important that we mind our place on this land to labor for Indigenous futurities. Not only have the conditions we've created done harm to Native peoples but our actions have devastating ecological impacts. We commit to a curriculum that attends to children's communities in both the social and ecological sense.



IMAGE: MICHAEL PEWNY

Land Acknowledgement

FIRST SECTION BORROWED FROM TC'S FORMAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

APPLICATION INFORMATION



IMAGE: MONIKA KOZUB (UNSPASH)

“DO WORK THAT MATTERS.
VALE LA PENA.”

- Gloria Anzaldúa

APPLYING TO OUR PROGRAM



✓ CHECK THE ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS WEBPAGE

[Click here to visit the Teachers College admissions page and find out what is required to apply to either of the M.A. tracks.](#)

✓ APPLICATION DEADLINE

Complete the Teachers College Application by January 15th, which is the priority deadline for those seeking scholarships. The final application deadline is April 15th.

✓ PROGRAM START DATES

Our programs admit students only in the summer and fall.

✓ PROGRAM CODES

Please note one of the following program codes on the application:

- ECED-INITIAL (Early Childhood Initial Cert [Birth to 2nd grade])
- ECSE-INEX (Early Childhood Initial Cert with Bilingual Extension)
- ECSE-DUAL (Early Childhood Dual Cert [Birth to 2nd grade])
- ECSE-DUEX (Early Childhood Dual Cert with Bilingual Extension)

Early Childhood Education at TC

APPLICATION CHECKLIST



BE SURE TO CHECK THE TC ADMISSIONS WEBSITE FOR SPECIFIC INFORMATION.

✓ A BACCALAUREATE DEGREE IS REQUIRED FOR CONSIDERATION

Teachers College is a graduate institution. All applicants must have a conferred baccalaureate degree before matriculating at Teachers College. In order to be considered for admission to a degree program:

- Applicants from the U.S. are required to hold, or be in the process of obtaining, a 120-credit baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution as recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.
- International applicants must hold, or be in the process of obtaining, the equivalent of a 120-credit U.S. baccalaureate degree.

✓ RÉSUMÉ

✓ STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

✓ TWO LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

✓ TRANSCRIPT(S) FROM PREVIOUS HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

✓ GRE IS OPTIONAL

PROGRAM INFORMATION



IMAGE: MIKE VON (UNSPLASH)

“WHAT THE EDUCATOR DOES IN TEACHING IS TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR THE STUDENTS TO BECOME THEMSELVES.”

Paulo Freire

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Guided by Teachers College's longstanding commitment to inquiry and social justice, our program prepares educators to teach and support young children across diverse contexts of preschools, elementary schools, homes, and community centers. Situated in the urban context of New York City, we are committed to equity and inclusion at the intersections of race, gender, class, disability, citizenship, and language. We prepare future teachers, policymakers, and educational leaders to actively lead in matters of justice related to curriculum-making, pedagogy, and institutional change. Offering early childhood certification from Birth-Grade 2, we center children's innate capacities to interact with materials, each other, the world, and adults in creative and imaginative ways. Foundational to this idea is understanding childhood from the youngest to the oldest as integral to teaching, learning, and development.



IMAGE: TC WEBSITE

Guiding Philosophy



IMAGE: TC WEBSITE

The importance of the early years in a child’s life has been well documented across disciplines, sectors, and social policies. Over several decades, research has reported the benefits of quality early childhood education and care for the social, emotional, and intellectual well-being of children.

However, we live in a world where access to quality early childhood education is inequitably distributed due to larger sociopolitical factors that impact present and future opportunities. Like social theorist bell hooks, we believe in children’s rights to an education that is safe, caring, culturally sustaining, and intellectually and socially rich. We also believe that it is a teacher’s role to uphold these values, while advocating for settings where play, creativity, joy, and imagination are central to children’s development.

Our emphasis is on curriculum, teaching, and learning for inclusive education. That is, the intersection of multiple identities (e.g. race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability) are addressed throughout the course content in both tracks. Our goal is to foster a community of reflective and engaged early childhood educators, leaders, and advocates who create the conditions for children’s learning. Designed around the belief that early childhood educators are public intellectuals, our program develops early childhood educators into reflective practitioners and activists.

Program Components

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS AT TC ARE DEVELOPED UNDER THE FOLLOWING CORE EXPERIENCES:



IMAGES: UNSPLASH

- 1 Extensive field work that includes infant/toddler, preschool/ kindergarten, kindergarten to grade 2, and special education/inclusive settings for all degree programs.
- 2 Sustained placement (in addition to the above) within a school classroom community for one full semester of student teaching that meets New York State (NYS) certificate requirements.
- 3 Course content that views development as a continuum and childhood as integrated across time, space, and sociopolitical contexts. Therefore, our program uniquely engages all students in infant/toddler and preschool settings as critical to their understanding of childhoods.
- 4 A focus on diverse identities throughout courses around curriculum, development, language, and literacy.
- 5 Collaborative partnerships with schools, families, and communities.

M.A. TRACKS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

We have two main tracks for the Masters in Early Childhood Programs, both leading to birth-grade 2 certification. Both tracks also have an option for bilingual extensions in Mandarin, French, Spanish, and Korean (an additional 3 credits):

- M.A. in Early Childhood Education – Initial Certification (36 credits; 39 credits with bilingual extension)
- M.A. in Early Childhood Education/Teaching Students with Disabilities – Dual Certification (42 credits; 45 credits with bilingual extension)

See the following pages for specifications on each, with and without bilingual extensions.



M.A. in Early Childhood Education - *Initial* *Certification*

36 CREDITS / 39 CREDITS WITH BILINGUAL EXTENSION

Our program is designed as a full-time program. However, please note (in accordance with NYS guidelines), all students will be required to engage in one semester of full-time student teaching. Designed as a cohort model, anticipated duration for full-time students range from 1 ½ years (3 semesters + 2 summers) or 2 years (without summers).

FOUNDATIONS & METHODS COURSES (REQ 18 CREDITS)

All courses in this area are 3 credits each:

- C&T 4080: Child Development & Intersectional Identities: Childhood in Sociocultural Contexts
- C&T 4131: Play, Language, & EC Curriculum
- C&T 4112: Integrated Curriculum in ECE: Curricular Inquiry & Design
- C&T 4114: Integrated Curriculum in ECE: Diversity, Equity, and Technologies
- C&T 4083: Home/School/Community Partnerships: Working with Families in Diverse Contexts
- C&T 4003: Differentiation & Inclusion in EC

PRACTICUM COURSES (REQ 10 CREDITS)

- C&T 5118: Infant and Toddler Development (3 credits)
- C&T 4308: Intro to Diverse EC Classrooms (3 credits)
- C&T 4708 Student Teaching: Preschool to 2nd Grade (4 credits)

ART & AESTHETICS (CHOOSE ONE COURSE)

- A&HM 4022: Artistic Lives (2 credits)
- A&HM 4021: Designing Musical Experiences for Young Children (2-3 credits)
- A&H 4003: Inclusion & Participation in the Arts for Children with Disabilities (2-3 credits)
- C&T 4835: Improving Reading Instruction (2 credits)

LITERACY FOR K-2 (CHOOSE ONE COURSE)

- C&T 4140: Literature for Young Children (3 credits)
- A&HB 4029: Latino Children's Literature and Literacies (3 credits)
- C&T 4138: Teaching Literacy in the Early Years (3 credits)
- C&T 4132 Language & Teaching in the Primary Reading/Writing Classroom (3 credits)

GENERAL ELECTIVE

One 3 credit course will be chosen with advisor.

BILINGUAL EXTENSION (3 ADDITIONAL CREDITS)

A&HB 4021: Foundations of Bilingual/Bicultural Education (3 credits)
Additionally, the placement for C&T 4708 will take place in a bilingual classroom.

As part of the requirements, students will complete an integrative teaching portfolio.

M.A. in Early Childhood Education - *Dual* *Certification*

42 CREDITS / 45 CREDITS WITH BILINGUAL EXTENSION

Our program is designed as a full-time program. However, please note (in accordance with NYS guidelines), all students will be required to engage in one semester of full-time student teaching. Designed as a cohort model, anticipated duration for full-time students range from 1 ½ years (3 semesters + 2 summers) or 2 years (without summers).

DUAL CERTIFICATION INCLUDES THE REQUIREMENTS FOR INITIAL CERTIFICATION (SEE PREVIOUS PAGE) AND 6 ADDITIONAL CREDITS (SEE BELOW).

REQUIRED COURSE IN SPECIAL EDUCATION (3 CREDITS):

C&T 4302: Supervised practicum in the educational assessment of young children with exceptionalities or HBSE4082: Assessment & evaluation of infants, children and youth with exceptionalities

ELECTIVE COURSE IN SPECIAL EDUCATION (CHOOSE ONE COURSE):

All courses in this area are 3 credits each:

- C&T 4001: Disability, Exclusion, and Schooling
 - C&T 4301 :Special Education Assessments and Writing IEPs
 - A&HB 4020: Foundations of Bilingual Special Education
 - A&HB 5020: Curriculum and Instruction: Inclusive Education & Issues of (Dis)Abilities
 - HBSE 4001 : Teaching Children with Disabilities in the General Education Classroom
 - HBSE 4005: Computer Applications in Special Education
 - HBSE 4010: Nature and Needs of Persons with Intellectual Disability/Autism
-

BILINGUAL EXTENSION (3 ADDITIONAL CREDITS)

A&HB 4021: Foundations of Bilingual/Bicultural Education (3 credits)

NOTE ON C&T 4708 PRACTICUM COURSE

The placement for C&T 4708 will take place in a bilingual PK-2nd grade setting that includes children with disabilities (4 credits).

As part of the requirements, students will complete an integrative teaching portfolio.

FIELD EXPERIENCES



IMAGE: CDC (UNSPLASH)



IMAGE: MARIO HELLER (UNSPLASH)

FIELD EXPERIENCES AND OBSERVATIONS OF CHILDREN/CLASSROOMS

The Early Childhood Education program at TC emphasizes praxis: a deliberate connection between theory and practice. This means that the program engages students in direct and indirect observations of children in classrooms, in playgrounds, and in the world. Several courses in the program ask that students observe and/or engage with young children/young people outside of class hours to complete assignments.

In addition, student teaching (C&T 4708; see following page) and field experiences are built into the coursework. In C&T 4308 and C&T 5118, students have sustained engagement with children or within classrooms over the course of an entire semester.

Before and during these experiences, students should remember to read and respond (as needed) to all correspondences that are related to the field experiences. Be sure to refer to the course instructor and the [Office of Teacher Education for pertinent and up-to-date information](#) related to field experiences.

C&T 4308: INTRODUCTION TO DIVERSE EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS

In C&T 4308, students will have experiences within preschool and kindergarten classrooms, as well as within 1st and 2nd grade classrooms (including special education & inclusive classrooms). Students should expect to spend two days a week during the semester at a site. In this course, students are exposed to a range of approaches and programs that expands their understanding of early childhood curriculum.

C&T 5118: INFANT AND TODDLER DEVELOPMENT

C&T 5118 allows students to learn from infants and toddlers. In this course, students spend 2 days a week (for a full semester) in a classroom in one of New York City's birth to age 3 settings. Unlike most other ECE graduate programs, this is a unique feature of our Master's program that enriches the knowledge base of our graduates.



IMAGE: KYLE GLENN (UNSPLASH)



IMAGE: ERIKA FLETCHER (UNSPLASH)

PLACEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

After completing initial field experiences (C&T 4308 and C&T 5118), students will take C&T 4708: Student Teaching. In this course, students will be placed in a NYC classroom (PK to 2nd grade) for 4 days a week during one semester. Depending on the student's certification, the placement may also be bilingual (for bilingual certification) and/or within an integrated co-teaching setting (for dual certification).

A placement questionnaire will be circulated during the middle of each semester before the student teaching term. Students should consult with their advisor first as advisors can provide more information and support students in making decisions.

The ECE program manager (Kara Sheridan) will send out student teaching information in late June/early July for the fall semester and in December for the spring semester.

Students should thoroughly review the [Guidelines, Student Teaching Handbook and Student Teaching Packet posted on the Office of Teacher Education website.](#)

STUDENT TEACHING SEMESTERS

Our certification programs require that all students have supervised practicum experiences with different age groups and at different sites. While C&T 4308 and C&T 5118 provide students with a starting point for thinking about very young children and a range of early childhood approaches, C&T 4708 is designed to be a more immersive experience. In C&T 4708, students spend 4 full days a week in a classroom for the full semester (sites range from preschool to 2nd grade and include special education, inclusive, and/or bilingual classrooms).

For C&T 4708, students must submit necessary student teaching paperwork to the Office of Teacher Education (OTE). Make sure to read through the [Student Teaching Handbook and the Student Teaching Packet which can be found on the Office of Teacher Education website.](#) Be aware that in the months preceding (and during) student teaching semesters, there will be correspondences from OTE and the EC program manager (Kara Sheridan) with vital information to make note of, or in some circumstances, to respond to. These correspondences are key to ensuring timely certification and a smooth finish to the program!

STUDENT TEACHING ↑

New York State Certification



The Initial Certification Programs meet New York State initial certification requirements in all three areas of early childhood education (Birth-Age 8): Dual Education certification, General Ed certification and Special Education certification.

Near the end of their program, candidates may apply for their initial certification through the Office of Teacher Education (OTE) at Teachers College, located in 411 Zankel . OTE recommends candidates for initial certification to the State Education Department of New York. In order to recommend a student for certification, the student must meet certification requirements (see the following page).

Important information about certification may be found on the Office of Teacher Education website: www.tc.columbia.edu/office-of-teacher-education/students/certification-exams/

Students can also reach the Office of Teacher Education at TC by emailing them at ote@tc.edu.

If to seek certification in a state other than New York, please visit that state's Department of Education website for any information regarding certification requirements. In addition, the Office of Teacher Education (OTE) at Teachers College is a good source of information regarding certification tests and requirements.

More on Certification

IMPORTANT INFORMATION!

Be sure to familiarize yourself with the TC Office of Teacher Education (OTE) website, in particular the sections created for students:

<https://www.tc.columbia.edu/office-of-teacher-education/students/>

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) requires Teachers College to determine that students have knowledge and skills in the following areas prior to recommendation for teacher certification: *artistic expression; communication; information retrieval; concepts in history and social sciences; humanities; a language other than English; scientific and mathematical processes; and written analysis and expression.* We allow students to demonstrate knowledge and skills in each area through previous coursework or comparable relevant experience prior to their arrival at TC.

Upon application submission, prospective students applying to programs leading to NYSED teacher certification will receive an email from The Office of Admissions prompting the completion of a form detailing their knowledge and skills in each area listed above. The Office of Teacher Education (OTE) will review the forms and reach out to Academic Faculty as needed. Once the review is complete, OTE will send a letter to each student stating what requirements are met, unmet, or request additional information. OTE will also provide recommendations for meeting any unmet requirements.

For more information, please feel free to contact OTE at ote@tc.columbia.edu.

In addition to the program's integrative teaching portfolio, two certification exams are currently required for all initial teacher certification candidates: Educating All Students (EAS) and Content Specialty Tests (CSTs). Teacher candidates who are seeking multiple certification titles may be required to take and pass multiple CSTs. In addition, students in some programs are required to take additional certification exams such as the Bilingual Education Assessment (BEA).

The TC Office of Teacher Education provides details about these assessments on their website: <https://www.tc.columbia.edu/office-of-teacher-education/students/certification-exams/>

Find out the specifics of these exams on the New York State website: <https://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/certexam.html>



IMAGE: DOMO (UNSPLASH)

Ongoing Assessment

EACH STUDENT'S PROGRESS IN THE PROGRAM IS REVIEWED BY THE EARLY CHILDHOOD FACULTY, ONCE A SEMESTER. TO MEET SATISFACTORY PROGRESS, STUDENTS MUST DEMONSTRATE THE FOLLOWING:

- 1** Consult with the assigned advisor once per semester. Make sure to track your progress using the [TC Degree Audit tool](#).
- 2** Develop desirable professional behaviors and attitudes. For example, be punctual for practicum placements and classes; maintain appropriate and clear communication with TC instructors and supervisors, as well as cooperating teachers; and take responsibility for their behavior and actions.
- 3** Achieve and maintain a "B" average to be allowed to begin or continue in student teaching.
- 4** Pass all practicum courses (C&T 5118, 4308, & 4708) with a B- minimum grade.



Students who earn a grade lower than a B- in any required classes will not be eligible for state certification. Further, students with a grade of "Incomplete" for any course will not be allowed to register for a Practicum Course (C&T 5118, 4308, 4708) until the Incomplete is satisfactorily fulfilled.

CULMINATING PORTFOLIO

NYS requires a culminating project of all candidates for a Master's Degree. At the end the program, students will submit a portfolio of their work to meet these requirements. Details of the culminating project will be provided during the final semester

GRADUATING FROM TEACHERS COLLEGE

In the semester of final course(s), students must submit an application for graduation. It's important to note that there is a graduation application deadline. Please pay attention to emails regarding graduation in order to apply on time; otherwise, there is a risk of a late fee ... and of *not graduating on schedule*.

For information on graduation and the application to graduate, [visit Columbia's commencement website](#). In addition, students must file for a Masters degree the semester that they plan to graduate. Visit [this site to file for your degree](#).

It is very important that students notify the Early Childhood Program Manager of any change in contact information in order to receive all program correspondence. It is the student's responsibility to respond to all official program communication.



commencement.columbia.edu

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



IMAGE: IVAN KARPOV (UNSPLASH)

“WHEN A CHILD WALKS INTO A ROOM, YOUR CHILD OR ANYONE ELSE’S CHILD, DO YOUR EYES LIGHT UP? THAT’S WHAT THEY ARE LOOKING FOR.”

Toni Morrison

Frequently Asked Questions



I did not major in education or take any education courses as part of my undergraduate degree. Does that disqualify me as a candidate for this program?

We understand that many candidates may have limited courses in education or related fields as part of their previous degrees. (Many of us did as well!) What is important is that candidates demonstrate an authentic interest and commitment to equity and diversity in education through other experiences and/or work.

I am thinking about applying to the Early Childhood Programs and I have heard that my chances of acceptance are better if I take some courses as a non-degree student and do well in them. Is this true?

No. Coursework prior to application is not an automatic route to admission. However, prospective students sometimes take a course or two, non-degree, to help them decide if Teachers College is where they would like to study. These credits will transfer over to your program if you are admitted. Be sure to [check the catalogue for guidelines](#).

I have been working in a completely different field since graduating from college, but I am now interested in teaching and education. Is this the right program for a “career changer”?

While previous coursework and classroom experience can certainly support student learning, as a preservice program, we provide a robust set of experiences that prepare all students thoroughly, including those with limited background in teaching. We count a number of “career changers” among our recent graduates, including those who worked in fields as varied as interior design, publishing, the military, and law.

Right now I think I want to be a teacher/caregiver, but I am also interested in other aspects of education and advocacy work. Is this the right program for me?

Absolutely! We believe that teachers should be recognized as public intellectuals and provide a foundation of experiences accordingly. Being an educator may mean classroom teaching, but our coursework highlights childhoods across social, cultural, and political landscapes, preparing students to be advocates and leaders within and beyond schools.

FAQ Continued



I currently work as a teacher/assistant teacher/paraprofessional/care giver at a New York City site. Can I maintain my position while I complete this degree?

Many students work while completing their program with us. However, students should be aware that working full-time is not possible during the semester they are completing the initial field-based courses (C&T 4308 & C&T 5118) and/or student teaching (C&T 4708). These generally occur in the fall and spring of the first year of study. Aligned with New York State certification, our program requires students to have experiences in a variety of placements (infant/toddler, PreK/K, 1-2 grade, public, inclusive, etc...). An existing position may meet one category, but students would still need to fulfill others for graduation and certification.

If I attend the program full-time for the first year, is it possible for me to work full-time during the second year?

YES! Though students cannot apply for state certification until graduation, the program is designed to support students working during their second year, if they choose, as long as the field-based courses and student teaching course were completed in the first year. Positions may be available for assistant, universal PreK, charter and/or independent school teachers, as well as long-term substitute and intern positions - most of which do not require full certification.

Are any of the courses offered remotely or will I need to live in New York for the duration of the program?

Most courses are offered in-person, with the exception of some summer courses. We believe that important education occurs beyond the classroom. One of our distinguishing features is our strong sense of cohort and the network of committed early childhood educators that supports students both during and after the program. Furthermore, all of our field placements and related supervision take place at New York City sites.

What if I change my mind about the age/level of students I plan to teach either during or after I complete the program? Will I have the certification and knowledge to make those kind of career changes?

No problem! One of the benefits of having several field experiences is that many students discover and pursue new interests as they go through the program. With our well-rounded course load, students are prepared and eligible to be certified to teach children from birth-8 age upon graduation.

FAQ Continued



What are the primary differences between the MA in Initial Certification and the MA in Dual Certification?

Students in both programs intermingle and overlap for most courses, and the content in all of our classes stress inclusive practices. This means even those pursuing the M.A. in Initial Certification are prepared to meet the needs of a range of learners.

Those pursuing the M.A. in Initial Certification (36 credits) are recommended for certification for teaching children birth-8 age. Students pursuing the M.A. in Dual Certification (42 credits) are recommended for certification in teaching both children birth-8 age and children with disabilities birth-8 age. This additional recommendation requires students complete their student teaching in a site serving children with identified disabilities. It also requires the completion of two additional courses specifically in special education. These additional courses generally add one semester to the program trajectory. (Please see the [MA Tracks & Coursework](#) section of this handbook for more complete details.)

If I apply and am accepted for one degree path (MA in Initial Certification or MA in Dual Certification), can I switch to the other?

There are opportunities to switch between programs. However, those changes need to be approved by faculty by the end of the first semester. This is to ensure the field placements meet all of the NYS requirements for specific certifications. Also note that inclusion and equity are central tenets of both programs, meaning even those not specifically in the Dual Certification track should expect significant content on working with children with a range of needs and backgrounds.

Can I add a Bilingual Extension after I start the program?

Similar to switching between tracks, adding a Bilingual Extension must be approved by faculty by the end of the first semester. To receive a recommendation to be certified in bilingual education, students must complete a student teaching placement in a bilingual setting as well as an additional 3-credit course (A&HB 4021 - Foundations of Bilingual/Bicultural Education).

I have heard about alternative pathways to getting certified that are faster and less rigorous. What are the advantages of investing so much time and money into getting a degree?

We believe that teaching is serious intellectual work and approach it as such. More than training teachers to perpetuate the current system, we equip educators with the professional skills and knowledge to critically analyze, disrupt, and re-envision a more equitable future for all children. That is an investment we think is worth making.

FAQ Continued



What is the typical course load each semester?

Most students take 9-11 credits per semester, which is generally 3-4 courses. This includes field experiences which often require work in classrooms. If following the typical trajectory of courses, students should expect to spend 4 mornings/days per week in a placement during their first year, with courses meeting on the off day and in the evenings. Courses in the second year are offered in the evening.

As I move through the program, how will I know what courses to take, what an appropriate course load is, where I might complete my field experiences, etc...?

One of the advantages of a small program like ours is the strong faculty to student relationship. When admitted, students are assigned a fulltime faculty member as their advisor. Students can (and should) reach out to their advisors whenever they have questions, and should anticipate meeting at least once a semester with their advisor to review progress and plan next steps. Throughout the program, advisors are available to answer questions and guide students both in and out of the classroom.

Can I attend part-time or take fewer courses each semester?

Students are allowed to attend part time, but should be aware that the requirements around field experiences can make scheduling challenging. Once field experiences are completed (generally in the first year), there is more flexibility. Students have up to five years to graduate from the program.

So many courses look interesting to me. Can I take MORE than the identified number of credits in the program?

Yes! Students are welcome to take more than the minimum number of credits required for graduation.

I completed a student teaching term as an undergraduate. Can this count as one of the placements required by NYS and the program?

That term met the requirements of your undergraduate degree but not our graduate degrees. We cannot accept student teaching experiences that we have not supervised. However, your prior experience will certainly support the student teaching you will complete within this program.

FAQ Continued



I know I want to work with infants. Can all of my field placements be in infant settings, or at the same site?

We love infants too, but unfortunately, no. Please remember the completion of our program makes students eligible for certification to teach children from birth to age 8. Whether or not students plan to do so, we must prepare everyone accordingly. We would not feel as though we had done our job if we recommended students for certification for ages and settings in which they were not prepared.

When I finish the program am I automatically certified to teach?

No. Certification is granted by a state not an educational institution. Our program provides many of the New York State requirements, but there are several additional tests and workshops that students must complete independently and submit. We recommend exploring related information on the New York State Department of Education website: <https://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/>

The Office of Teacher Education (OTE) at Teachers College is here to assist students in the process.

What if I end up wanting to teach in a state other than New York after graduation?

Requirements for teacher certification vary from state to state. If students plan to seek certification in a state other than New York, visiting that state's Department of Education website for certification information is recommended. In addition, the Office of Teacher Education (OTE) at Teachers College is here to help students navigate that process. Specific questions can be directed to ote@tc.edu.

IMPORTANT RESOURCES



IMAGE: ZAC ONG (UNSPLASH)

"START WHERE YOU ARE.
USE WHAT YOU HAVE.
DO WHAT YOU CAN."

Arthur Ashe

Important Resources

Access to Learning & Thriving at TC

Everyone has challenges with accessing materials and opportunities for learning. Even as your instructors, many of us have worked for years on things such as time and material management, the organization of ideas and writing, keeping track of various deadlines, completing our jobs with time to spare (i.e. not procrastinating), and understanding concepts and texts that are part of our jobs and everyday lives. And even as we've worked on these "issues" for years, we still don't feel as we have it right and are often looking for external and internal resources to support our success. This is normal, especially in a world that is increasingly time- and material-oriented. In the spirit of this, we want to encourage you to examine and articulate any needs you might have that might be an obstacle to your learning and thriving in your graduate-level courses.

If you have any kind of disability—whether visible or invisible—and whether related to your emotional, physical, or cognitive capacities—it's important to seek out the avenues for support with them. If you need accommodations or alternatives to lectures, assignments, grading structures, or exams, please contact your instructor to discuss reasonable accommodations for your access needs. These accommodations may actually be beneficial to the whole group in that it could actually enhance the learning environment as a whole.

Please come to instructors with your requests for accommodations often and early, but it is never too late to ask as our lives are always in flux, and we may require a set of conditions in one moment that may not be required in another. Your instructors will not ask you to disclose personal medical information, but you may do so at your discretion. In the case that the instructor may be unable to provide accommodations, they may ask that you be in touch with TC's Office of Access and Services for Individuals with Disabilities (OASID) who may then guide you through a process of seeking the formal status that may be necessary for official disability services.

OASID works with all academic departments, faculty members, and administrative offices in an attempt to ensure that individuals with disabilities can participate fully and equally in the Teachers College community. You can learn more about their services at www.tc.columbia.edu/oasid/

OASID's primary areas of concern include:

- providing reasonable accommodations
- removing physical and attitudinal barriers
- facilitating participation in college activities
- advocating for the rights of individuals with disabilities



Important Resources

Division of Student Affairs



You'll want to familiarize yourself with the Division of Student Affairs, which supports students with their graduate student life experiences, including career education, student health and wellness, international student services and more. The site has a list of resources, as well as an events calendar for Student Life events that may be of interest: www.tc.columbia.edu/student-affairs/

Dr. Tom Rock is the Vice Provost for Student Affairs, and you can submit questions for him/the office to respond to at the link above (scroll to the bottom of the page).

Title IX: Sexual & Gender Discrimination/ Harassment & Sexual Assault



Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in education. It reads:

"No person in the United States shall on the basis of sex be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

Unfortunately, like other institutions, universities are not places free of sexual/gender discrimination, as well as sexual harassment and assault. The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are civil rights violations. Please refer to Teachers College's Title IX Compliance page to understand more about the nuances and implications of this law: www.tc.columbia.edu/titleix/

Office of Public Safety & Victim Services

TC's Office of Public Safety is charged with providing a safe environment for the TC community. Of course you'll see public safety officers at stations throughout campus, but more than that, the office provides public safety information, workshops and classes, shuttle services for late night travel from TC to local areas, walking escort services, and services for victims. To get a sense of the breadth of services the office provides, see www.tc.columbia.edu/publicsafety/

Importantly, if you have been a victim of a crime or know of a potential victimization (e.g. missing student), please see the section on victim services: www.tc.columbia.edu/publicsafety/victim-services/



Important Resources

Nearly 1 billion people around the world have difficulty accessing enough food/nourishment for their daily functioning. This number includes people living in New York City and students who may attend Teachers College and Columbia University. It may be important to know that Columbia University currently has two Food Pantry locations available.

Visit the following website for information on the pantries:
thefoodpantry.studentgroups.columbia.edu/

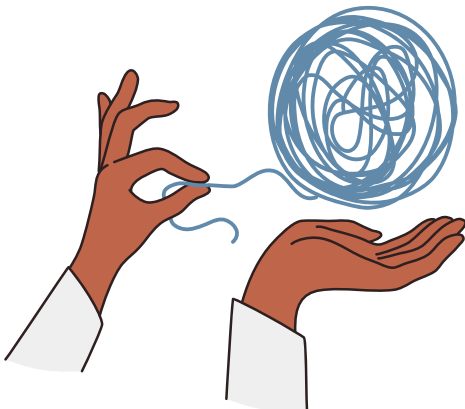
As well as the pantries available at the university-level, there are numerous community-based organizations throughout New York City. To learn more about these, see the following:
thefoodpantry.studentgroups.columbia.edu/content/community-based-organizations-within-one-mile-campus-and-more Another resource is collegestudentpantry.org/

If you need more support around questions of food insecurity, be in touch with your advisor.

Food Insecurity



Mental Health & Well-Being



If you need support with an acute mental health concern or if you want to work through a particular social/emotional “problem”, please see the resources provided by the Columbia Health Counseling and Psychological Services (CHCPS) center:

www.health.columbia.edu/content/counseling-and-psychological-services You will want to check whether you have access to these services, depending on the fees that you have paid to the university.

CHCPS also offers in-person and virtual support spaces to TC & Columbia students. Please see this website for a comprehensive list of support groups: www.health.columbia.edu/content/support-groups

Groups are available to support those who are coping with trauma, trying to work on time and anxiety management, prioritizing wellness, struggling with sleep, etc. There are also groups for queer academics, autistic individuals, etc. These services are available to students who have paid the Columbia Health and Related Services Fee.

If you don't have access to these services, know that we are fortunate to live in a city with resources for mental health and well-being as one in five New Yorkers contends with a mental health concern at any given time. See also Teachers College's Dean Hope Center: www.tc.columbia.edu/deanhope/ as well as NYC Well for information about comprehensive resources within the city: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/nyc-well.page>

Again, should you need support with understanding access to these resources, feel free to contact your advisor. While we do not have knowledge/expertise in counseling, we may be able to find a person at the university who can assist you.



IMAGE: YOGESH RAHAMATKAR (UNSPLASH)

“IF YOU ARE A DREAMER, COME IN,
IF YOU ARE A DREAMER, A WISHER, A LIAR,
A HOPE-ER, A PRAY-ER, A MAGIC BEAN BUYER...
IF YOU’RE A PRETENDER, COME SIT BY MY FIRE
FOR WE HAVE SOME FLAX-GOLDEN TALES TO SPIN.
COME IN!
COME IN!”

Shel Silverstein

**Early
Childhood
at TC**

525 W. 120TH STREET
ZANKEL SUITE 302
NEW YORK, NY 10027
212-678-3860
VISIT US AT TC.COLUMBIA.EDU