The Early Childhood Education Associate in Science degree program provides the educational background and supervised training for students interested in working with young children. It emphasizes developmentally appropriate practice and has a child-centered focus. Students learn and apply theory with hands-on experience in a required practicum, after completing 24 program credits. The practicum must be in early care and education programs for children.

EXPLORE YOUR OPTIONS WITH ACADEMIC ADVISING

Throughout each semester, meet with your advisor so that he/she can guide you through a self-exploration process that will help you identify your academic and career interests.

Beginning of Semester:
- ___ Schedule an appointment to meet with your academic advisor during the first few weeks to discuss future plans and how an Early Childhood Education Associate in Science can help you achieve your goals.
- ___ Explore your personal interests by completing Focus2, an online career assessment tool: https://www.middlesex.mass.edu/careerservices/focus2.aspx

Mid-Semester:
- ___ Schedule an appointment with academic advisor review your academic progress, Focus2 results and create an academic plan in DegreeWorks.

Before Semester Ends:
- ___ Schedule an appointment to discuss and register for the classes you will take the following semester. (Early November for spring, Early April for fall and summer)
- ___ Visit the Academic Career & Transfer Center or call 1-800-818-3434 to schedule an appointment.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION ASSOCIATE IN SCIENCE PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Graduates of the Early Childhood Education Associate in Science degree program are prepared to:
- Describe the needs and characteristics of young children;
- Explain the influences on development and learning;
- Analyze observation and assessment-tool information to assist children to develop and reach their potential;
- Understand the social, economic and cultural issues facing schools and families;
- Demonstrate knowledge to create healthy, respectful, supportive and challenging learning environments;
- Demonstrate in-depth critical knowledge of the theory and research relevant to the professional role(s) and focus area(s) emphasized in the program.
IS THE EARLY CHILDHOOD MAJOR THE RIGHT FIT FOR ME?
To decide if the Early Childhood Education program is right for you, answer the following questions.

I. Do you enjoy working with younger children and children to age 8?  
   __Yes  __No  
   Early Childhood Teachers can work with children from as young as 8 weeks to 8 years of age.

II. Do you want to teach in a preschool, Kindergarten to grade 2?  
    __Yes  __No  
    Early Childhood majors like to teach with this age group. The Elementary Education major covers grade 1 to 6. If a student wants to teach grades K, 1, or 2, you can choose either Early Childhood or Early Childhood Transfer.

III. Do you like working holidays like Columbus Day or President’s Day   
     __Yes  __No  
     Some childcare centers close only on the ten major holidays, while public schools are closed.

IV. Do you like to plan and research different lesson ideas?  
     __Yes  __No  
     Teachers are required to plan their own lessons in the different content areas by using the Massachusetts Core Competencies and Preschool Learning Experiences.

V. Do you like to work with children with special needs?  
    __Yes  __No  
    Many elementary education classrooms have children with diagnosed and undiagnosed special needs.

VI. Do you want to teach in your own preschool classroom?  
     __Yes  __No  
     Early childhood teachers are certified by the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). Students need four courses plus classroom experience to be lead teacher certified and are then able to teach in their own preschool classroom.

VII. Are you responsible, dependable and rarely call in sick?  
     __Yes  __No  
     Children’s lives are built on routines and they depend on early childhood teachers to be reliable, dedicated, and committed to their job.

VIII. Do you like to take trainings and courses to further your education  
      __Yes  __No  
      Teachers are required to take courses and attain professional development points each year to maintain certification in the field.

IX. Do you have patience, understanding, compassion, and a desire to make a difference in someone’s life?  
    __Yes  __No

If you answered yes to all the above questions, then you should enter the Early Childhood Education Associate in Science degree program!
Graduates meet the academic requirements for Lead Teacher as currently specified by the Massachusetts Office of Children’s Services. Many graduates continue their studies toward a bachelor’s degree. Students should check the requirements for transfer with their academic advisor.

THE CAREER PATH

There are many and varied options to consider within the Early Childhood Degree. Here are some of the common career pathways:

- Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) licensed Preschool Teacher or Lead Teacher
- Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) licensed Infant and Toddler Teacher or Lead Teacher
- Home Visitor
- Child Development Associate (CDA)
- Family Child Care Provider
- Paraprofessional in Public School
- Head Start Teacher
- Nanny

Career Planning Activities:

- Work with career advisor to create resume, cover letter and help improve your interview skills
- Identify internship and volunteer opportunities in your desired field
- Attend career workshops and job fairs

THE TRANSFER PATH

Transfer Planning Activities:

- Work with an advisor to discuss MassTransfer, Articulations and transfer agreements.
- Visit your selected campuses in person. Every college looks good online or in a glossy photo, but you can get a better feel when you visit.
- Meet with a transfer counselor to identify transfer scholarships.
- Research admissions requirements and deadlines at four-year colleges and universities.

CRIMINAL OFFENDER RECORD INFORMATION (CORI) CHECKS:

In order for a student to be eligible to participate in an academic, community or clinical program that involves potential unsupervised contact with children, the disabled, or the elderly, the student may be required to undergo a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check. Students found to have certain criminal convictions or pending criminal actions will be presumed ineligible to participate in such activities.

MCC ADVISING RESOURCES

Career Services: https://www.middlesex.mass.edu/careerservices
Transfer Services: https://www.middlesex.mass.edu/transfer
MassTransfer: www.mass.edu/masstransfer/
Financial Aid: https://www.middlesex.mass.edu/financialaid
Foundation Scholarships: https://www.middlesex.mass.edu/foundation/scholarships/
College Board Match Maker: http://collegesearch.collegeboard.com/search/adv_typeofschool.jsp

Below are the schools that are linked to the Early Childhood major through Education Transfer Articulation Compact:
Salem State University  Fitchburg State University

Below are the schools that are linked to the Early Childhood major through MassTransfer*:
Bridgewater State University  Framingham State University  Mass College of Liberal Arts  Worcester State University

Private Schools you can transfer to:
Wheelock College  Lesley University  Merrimack College

*You must have a 2.75 GPA and pass Communication and Literacy MTEL for admission.