

Early Childhood Education Program
Technical Diploma and Associate Degree
Western Technical College

Supplemental Information

- **Course Sequence and Delivery.** The Associate Degree program can be completed in 2 years (Fall, Spring, Fall, Spring), with a very full workload of 15 credits in all 4 trimesters. Most students spread this out to include some summer general studies courses to lighten the load. The Technical Diploma can be completed in 1 year (Fall, Spring), with a full workload of 12 credits in both trimesters.
- **Reliable Transportation.** You will need reliable transportation to complete the requirements of practicum. The program utilizes sites in the La Crosse and surrounding areas within our region. While we try to place you close to home, we do have sites within a 50-mile radius of La Crosse. Students are responsible for their own expenses for transportation related to the site assignment.
- **Practicum.** Our program utilizes many field experiences. Field or practicum settings are hands on learning opportunities in a real world work place. You will spend a great deal of time each term in the YWCA Child Center located on campus. Every term of the program also has a practicum course. You will start out slowly with about 50 hours in the field your first term and work up to over 120 hours in the field your last term. During this last term you will take over the lead teaching responsibilities in a child care setting for two-weeks, ensuring that you feel confident in your profession.
- **Criminal Background Check.** A criminal background check with fingerprinting at a cost to the student of \$39.00 (cost may vary) is required for all individuals who work with children. This is a Department of Children and Families requirement. You will receive instructions at the time of admission on how to complete the background check and fingerprinting process with Field Print. Each year DCF will automatically complete a name-based background check at a cost of \$10 to the student. Western will bill you for this fee. Western does not accept background checks conducted by third parties (i.e., your employer), unless the results appear on the DCF portal.

DCF staff will review the results of your fingerprint or name-based background check, and will issue a preliminary eligibility determination, usually within 7 days of submission. The student can begin practicum placements with this determination. DCF will conduct the other required checks and will issue a final determination within 45 days. It is possible upon final determination, if a serious conviction is found, that a student could not continue the practicum placement based on DCF findings. Western Technical College is not responsible for tuition costs should you have a DCF finding that prevents you from finishing the course/program. Faculty would contact you if this is the case. Western Technical College must abide by DCF's ruling of the background findings.

New charges or arrests after the background check has been completed must be reported to Joan Miksis, the Associate Dean of the Early Childhood Education Program (608.785.9275), within five (5) working days. Failure to do so may result in dismissal from the program.

- **Health Report.** You will be required to complete a DCF Health Record upon entrance to the program and annually. This form must be copied and kept with you as your Practicum sites will need a copy of this completed form.
- **Child Care Licensure.** After graduation you will need to apply for your Registry certificate to document your professional level. This will cost around \$50. As you enter into the workforce, you will be prepared to direct a small center (under 50 children), teach in a center, own your own in-home center, or work as an assistant in a public school. Wisconsin Department of Children and Family Child Care licensing regulations will apply to most workplace settings.
- **Expenses in Addition to Textbooks.** Many of our courses include assignments which require you to own some basic supplies. These items do cost you extra money. Items that you would need to purchase include: Adult scissors, small scissors, box of water-based colored markers, black permanent markers, large roll of clear contact paper, portfolio binder, page protectors, eraser, ruler, box of crayons and/or colored pencils, double stick tape, glue stick and storage container for previous materials. You will also need a Western logo polo shirt, nametag and lanyard with ID holder for practicum placements. There is an additional cost to complete an annual background check submission and TB test. There are other common expenses of printing, photo copying, lamination, and other supplies needed as you progress through the program.
- **Body Art and Piercings.** In the Health & Public Safety Division, a student may display no body art or piercing that might be considered offensive. Most employment settings have policies that are generally broad; however, they do reserve the right to deny employment and student clinical/practicum/fieldwork placement if body art or piercings are found to be offensive to those in that setting.
 - If you have significant visible body art and/or piercings, we are unable to guarantee that you will be able to be placed for the multiple practicum experiences that our programs require. You may be asked to cover the body art with clothing or dressings or remove the piercings in order to complete your experience. If your placement has a more restrictive policy on body art or piercings, it will be enforced. It is your decision whether or not to enter the program based on the uncertainty of being accepted at those sites.
- **Program Faculty.** If you have specific questions about the program or your particular situation, please contact the ECE program faculty directly.

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