



Early Childhood Professions

Career-Technical Education Program News from the Six District Educational Compact



Emily Rotunda (Tallmadge) enjoying teaching at Absorbent Minds Montessori School



Emily utilizing the Math Mat Learning Activity as she teaches children counting concepts



Alexis Starnes (Stow) playing with a toddler during her summer volunteer experience

Summer Volunteer Experiences

Students in the Early Childhood Professions program need 480 hours of experience working with young children to earn their Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential. This summer, students had the opportunity to earn some of these hours in valuable experiences in our community. ChildScape Learn and Grow and Small Steps, Big Strides are area childcare centers that collaborated with the program to allow students to volunteer throughout the summer. The students also attended field trips to places like the Akron Zoo and Dairy Queen and were an extra set of helping hands during these trips and around the centers.

Alexis Starnes (Stow) volunteered at Small Steps, Big Strides and said, "Volunteering during the summer gave me the chance to find the age group I am the most excited to teach every day. It also gave me invaluable experience with guiding children and working with other professionals." As a result of these opportunities, seven students were asked to intern in paid internships at these centers.

Montessori Experience

Working in a Montessori program has been a very rewarding experience for **Emily Rotunda**, (Tallmadge) who is currently completing an internship experience at Absorbent Minds Montessori School in Cuyahoga Falls. Montessori's main objective is to build the child's skills and knowledge through self-exploration and purposeful "work" in an environment that allows for intellectual freedom and exploration. Emily really enjoys the pacing of the Montessori program and their problem-based learning approach. She particularly appreciates the opportunity to work one-on-one with each child and help them advance their skills.

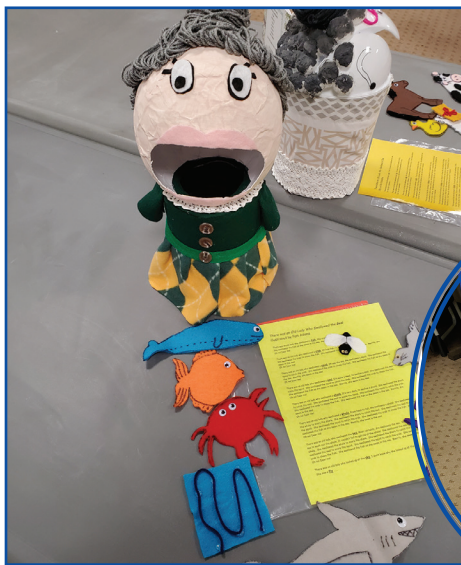
"I like the self-exploration and independent experience that Montessori offers the children. Watching children rapidly develop social skills as they work with others aids them in developing problem-solving abilities. Montessori creates an environment of curiosity in learning at a self-paced rate. This internship experience has really transformed my philosophy of teaching," says Emily.



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Mary Jane Stanchina, Executive Director
33 Milford Road, Suite 1, Hudson, Ohio 44236
Phone: 330-655-2247 • www.sixdistrict.com



Students develop a variety of projects for their toolkit to support teaching experiences.



Taylor Cervellino, '21 Tallmadge graduate, teaching in the preschool lab.

Students create a toolkit of resources to use at internships and future job opportunities

Over the course of this two-year program, students make a variety of different teaching materials and resources, many of which can be used at their internships and in future careers related to working with young children. They create various types of games, graphs, flannel board stories, concept books, etc., to use with the children. All of these materials express the students' personal creativity and allow for a great deal of individuality.

Level II student **Mackenzie Wells** (Cuyahoga Falls) states, "The children I work with love the activities I have made over the last two years. They get so excited when I bring out my teaching materials because they see them as a fun game and activity to play. At the completion of the program, we get to keep all of the materials, activities, and lesson plans we have created to set us up for success in our future careers."

Level I Student Experiences

In collaboration with the Head Start preschool located at the David Bacon building in Tallmadge, students have the opportunity to work with preschool teachers and students in the preschool lab classrooms.

Level I students begin their experience in the preschool lab by observing the daily classroom routines. Gradually, they begin to take over circle time experiences, including handling the arrival routine, the "hello" song, the question of the day, graphing activities, classroom jobs, and storytime. During storytime, students perform a storytelling-related activity lesson plan that each student creates. Students learn about the development of children and engaging teaching techniques.

Additionally, field trips to various child care centers and Tallmadge City School District's kindergarten classrooms provide interactions with teaching professionals while the students observe teaching techniques, relationships with children, the technology used in the classroom, classroom management techniques, and pertinent classroom safety rules/policies. These field trip experiences validate the theory and practices taught in the Early Childhood Professions Program.

Success Story



Danielle Lee (Tallmadge '16) currently teaches first grade at Mt. Healthy North Elementary in Cincinnati, Ohio

Danielle Lee, '16 Tallmadge graduate and Early Childhood Professions completer, currently teaches first grade at Mt. Healthy North Elementary in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Danielle shares, "I recommend Early Childhood Professions for many reasons. The first is that the program definitely prepared me for college with the way we learned to develop lesson plans focused on standards, and centered our lessons around specific objectives and assessments. The second reason is that we actually learned about the theory that is relevant and applicable to our children's age/developmental levels. Lastly, I will forever be thankful for the field experiences and observations as they prepared us for college-level practicums."

Danielle received her BA in Early Childhood Education from Mount St. Joseph University and received her PK-3 grade teaching license through the Ohio Department of Education. "I loved the Early Childhood Professions Program because I made lifelong friends and gained valuable experience. It really affirmed why I want to be a teacher, based upon the experiences we had," Danielle says.