

Early Childhood Higher Education Faculty Directory

2026 - 2027

KANSAS EARLY CHILDHOOD Career Pathway

KCCTO Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities

AD ASTRA PER ASPERA Kansas Office of Early Childhood

November 13, 2026

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the Kansas Early Childhood Higher Education Faculty Directory, a comprehensive resource designed to connect students, professionals, and researchers with higher education faculty members specializing in early childhood education (ages birth through age 8) across Kansas. Participating faculty represent programs in our technical colleges, community colleges, and universities, both public and private. Faculty and institutions partner with state agencies and state and national professional organizations to provide educational opportunities and credentials for our workforce, a critical resource for Kansas children and families.

The mission of the Kansas Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Career Pathway is to support the professional growth and advancement of the ECCE workforce through access to resources, collaboration, and opportunities for excellence. In support of this mission, the Kansas Early Childhood Higher Education Faculty Directory showcases faculty expertise across the state and fosters connections among higher education institutions, ECCE professionals, and early childhood partners. The directory will be updated annually each August to ensure information remains current and relevant. Through this directory, we aim to:

- Enhance Visibility: By featuring faculty members at higher education institutions across Kansas, the directory increases visibility for educators and researchers in the ECCE field.
- Foster Collaboration: The directory provides opportunities for faculty members to connect, collaborate, and share resources, ultimately strengthening the early childhood community in Kansas.
- Support Professional Development: ECCE professionals, students, researchers, and leaders can access the directory to identify experts in specific areas of early childhood education and inclusion for children with delays and disabilities, facilitating opportunities for mentorship, research partnerships, and professional development.
- Promote Excellence: By showcasing the expertise and accomplishments of faculty members, the directory promotes excellence and highlights the significant contributions being made in our field, serving as a resource for students, leaders, and decisionmakers for expertise on child development and early childhood care and education.

We invite you to explore the Kansas Early Childhood Higher Education Faculty Directory and take advantage of the wealth of knowledge and expertise it offers. Whether you are student seeking guidance, a professional looking to collaborate, or a researcher seeking expertise, we are confident that you will find this directory to be a valuable resource.

Sincerely,
Sherron Field, B.S., Career Pathway Coordinator
Patty Peschel, M.S., Director, KCCTO
Stephanie Parks, Ph.D., Associate Director, KCCTO
Bronwyn Fees, Ph.D., Professor Emerita, KCCTO Board Member

Kansas Institutes of Higher Education Early Childhood Degrees Awarded	
Allen County Community College*	Associate Degree - AA; AAS; SAPP - Certificates
Barton County Community College*	Associate Degree - AAS; AS; Certificate
Butler County Community College*	Associate Degree - AAS; CDA; Certificates
Cloud County Community College	Associate Degree - AA; AGS; Certificate
Colby County Community College	Associate Degree - AA
Cowley Community College	Associate Degree - AA; AAS; Certificates
Dodge City Community College	Associate Degree - AAS; Certificate
Emporia State University*	Master of Science - MS Early Childhood Unified [Initial B - K; Advanced B - Grade 3]
Flint Hills Technical College*	Associate Degree - AAS; Certificate
Fort Hays State University*	Bachelor of Science in Education - BS Early Childhood Unified [Initial B - Grade 3]
Garden City Community College*	Certificate
Highland Community College*	Certificate
Hutchinson Community College	Associate Degree - AGS
Independence Community College*	Associate Degree - AAS
Johnson County Community College	Associate Degree - AS
Kansas City Kansas Community College	Associate Degree – AAS, AS
Kansas State University*	Bachelor's Degree - BS; Master's - MS Early Childhood Unified [Initial B - K]
Labette Community College*	Associate Degree - AS
Newman University*	Bachelor's Degree - BS Early Childhood Unified [Initial B - Grade 3]
Northwest Kansas Technical College	Associate Degree - AAS
Pittsburg State University	Bachelor's Degree - BSE Early Childhood Unified [Initial B - K]

***Online options available**

Kansas Institutes of Higher Education Early Childhood Degrees Awarded	
Salina Area Technical College	Associate Degree - AAS; Certificates
University of Kansas	Bachelor's Degree – BSE ECU [Initial B - Grade 3] Master's Degree - MS ECU [Initial B - K] Doctoral Degree - ECU, Special Education Certificate - Interdisciplinary Early Intervention
Washburn University Institute of Technology	Associate Degree - AA
Wichita State University*	Bachelor's Degree - BA Early Childhood Unified [Initial B - Grade 3] Master's Degree - MAT [Initial B - Grade 3] and M.Ed. Early Childhood Unified [Advanced, B- Grade 3]

***Online options available**

Allen Community College

Beth Toland
Director of Early Childhood Education
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Iola, KS 66749

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toland@allencc.edu

Beth Toland has been with Allen since the fall of 2009. She has built a robust, fully online ECE program geared towards individuals already in the workforce. At Allen, she has participated in many initiatives including rebuilding an apprenticeship program and working as a key partner in the Child Care Zone serving Allen, Crawford, Labette, and Neosho counties. Beth holds both her degrees from the University of Kansas and previously taught in the Alexandria City Public School system.

Teaching Interests:

- DAP
- Literacy
- Responsive care

Barton Community College

KellyAnn Bonnell
Instructor/Coordinator Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education
Barton Community College - Great Bend Campus
245 NE 30 Rd.

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bonnellk@bartonccc.edu

KellyAnn joined Barton Community College in July 2024. She has a MA in Early Childhood and a BS in Psychology from Northern Arizona University. KellyAnn has over 30 years experience in early childhood and elementary education in Arizona prior to relocating to Kansas. She is a Child Care Health Consultant and a teaching artist.

Teaching Interests:

- Early Childhood Foundations
- Arts Education
- STEAM Integration

Research Interests:

- Adult playful learning
- How young children impact parental learning

Butler County Community College



Cathy Gray
Department Chair, Early Childhood Education
Butler of Andover
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Andover, KS 67002

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After living in Kansas for 24 years, I'm proud to say that I am a homegrown early childhood professional thanks to the education, training, and mentoring I've received. My experiences have fueled my work, and I am passionate about inspiring and preparing Kansas's early childhood workforce because young children need skilled care and early learning experiences. Over the past 26 years, I've had several roles: as a family child care provider, taught preschool and Kindergarten, and worked at the state level on grant-funded projects. I began working in higher education in 2007 as an adjunct and have served as full-time faculty and the department chair since 2023. It's a privilege to do this important work alongside all of you.

Teaching Interests:

- Learning environments
- Natural outdoor play environments
- Reggio Emilia approach, play, and creativity

Other Affiliations:

- NAEYC Secretary and Board Member: Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities (KCCTO)
- Member of the Early Childhood Recommendations Panel (2024-current)
- ACCESS

Cloud County Community College



Tonja Bisnette
Instructor in Early Childhood Education
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Concordia, KS 66901

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Tonja Bisnette is the Early Childhood Education Instructor at Cloud County Community College in Concordia, Kansas. Tonja earned a BS in Early Childhood Unified and Master's in Educational Administration from Fort Hays State University. Tonja has gained over 30 years of experience in both public and private education settings, including 7 years as a kindergarten teacher and 4 years as a home visitor and educator with Parents As Teachers. Tonja serves as an In-Person trainer for KCCTO and a private-practice Literacy Intervention Specialist. Profession preparation and ongoing professional development are key objectives for Tonja as she shifts her career focus to coaching, mentoring and inspiring students, caretakers and other ECE professionals to ensure positive outcomes for children.

Teaching Interests:
Human Ecology, Early Childhood focus, Education preparation and foundational early childhood structures as well as Literacy and Language development practices for oral and written language learning.

Research Interests:
Brain development, literacy learning models, dyslexia, and adverse childhood experiences' effect on positive outcomes for children.

Other Affiliations:

- NAEYC Member
- KEEP (Kansas Education Enrichment Program) Approved Provider
- Kansas CTE Instructor (Career and Technical Education)
- Licensed teacher, State of Kansas Birth-3rd Grade, Early Childhood Unified and Pre-k-12 Special Education

Cowley County Community College



Janet Clasen
Director of Early Childhood Education
Cowley College
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Arkansas City, KS 67005

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Janet Clasen, Director of Early Childhood Education. Growing up in a small town with the dream of becoming a teacher was her plan. Little did she know that 40 years later she would be living that dream, plus some. She started her career as a 2nd Grade Educator in Winfield Kansas before transitioning into Higher Education. Janet has now been the Director of Early Childhood Education for 15 years at Cowley College. This past year, she started a new adventure, training with Frogstreet Curriculum. When she is not teaching, enrolling, building partnerships, mentoring or training, you will find her with her family and dog traveling or at Grand Lake enjoying the sun!

Teaching Interests:

- Early Childhood Education
- Human Growth and Development
- Developmental Psychology

Research Interests:

- Childcare Studies
- Brain Development
- Developmental Patterns
- Twin Development
- Childhood Studies (Boundaries, Behavior, Developmental Delays)

Dodge City Community College

Lorna Ford
Early Childhood Education Coordinator
Dodge City Community College
2501 N. 14th Ave.
Dodge City, KS 67801

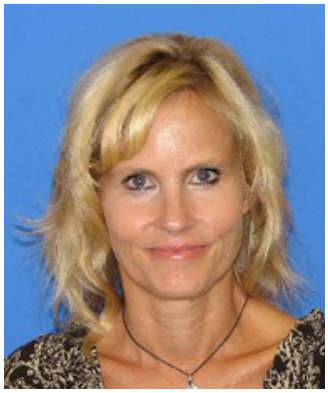
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I am the Early Childhood Education Coordinator at Dodge City Community College. I have been at DC3 for 25 years. I have also served as the Early Childhood Education Professor and as an Infant-Toddler Specialist with DC3 Child Care Resource and Referral Agency. Prior to DC3, I was the KSU Child Development Center Director for 5 years and the Fort Riley Child Development Center Director/Assistant Director for 4 years. I earned my Masters and Bachelor Degrees in Early Childhood Education at Kansas State University. I earned my AAS in Early Childhood from Cloud County Community College.

Other Affiliations:

- NAEYC Member
- KSAEYC Member

Emporia State University



Sandra Bequette
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Emporia State University
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Sandra Bequette is an assistant professor at Emporia State University. She is the program lead for the M.S. in Early Childhood Unified program. While having served in Higher Education for 10 years, she also brings a wealth of experience having taught in both regular education and special education early childhood classrooms, most recently as a Unified Prekindergarten teacher. Her research interests include early literacy, diversity/multicultural education, and mathematical discourse. Her driving passion is to ensure that young children, with and without exceptionalities are provided access to high-quality inclusive learning environments.

Teaching Interests:
Dr. Bequette has an extensive background in teaching early childhood and elementary methods courses, including Infant/Toddler, Preschool/PreK, and K-3rd Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, PreK-2 Literacy, Characteristics of Inclusive Early Childhood, and Integrating Creative Arts into Inclusive Early Childhood. Additionally, Dr. Bequette is theory driven, having taught Educational Psychology for a number of years. Key strands in her courses include inclusion and anti-bias curriculum.

Research Interests:
Research interests are in the fields of Constructivism, inclusion, diversity/anti-bias education, mathematics, and early literacy instruction. Her dissertation research was a qualitative, teacher research project in which she examined mathematical discourse in her kindergarten students. It won the NAECTE Merrill Pearson Outstanding Dissertation Award.

Flint Hills Technical College



Nancy Robinson
Early Childhood Education Instuctor
Flint Hills Technical College
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Emporia, KS 66801

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Nancy Robinson has worked in early childhood and elementary education for over 30 years, including special education. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary and Early Childhood Education, a Master's Degree in Early Childhood Special Education, and a Master's in the Science of Library and Information Management.

Teaching Interests:
It is my firm belief that education should strive to be creative and interesting to all children- no matter their background or abilities.

Research Interests:
Brain development and creating literacy-based activities that feature all developmental domains.

Fort Hays State University



Laney Roths
Instuctor
Fort Hays State University

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ldroths@fhsu.edu

Laney Roths is an Instructor in the Department of Teacher Education and program coordinator for the Early Childhood Education program at Fort Hays State University. Before transitioning to Fort Hays State University, Laney worked as an ECSE teacher in both private and public schools. She earned her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Early Childhood Education from Kansas State University and is working to complete her Doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction.

Teaching Interests:

- Child development
- Early Childhood Education
- Foundations of Education
- Clinical supervision of pre-service teachers

Research Interests:

- Teacher identity
- Play-based learning
- Pre-service preparation

Fort Hays State University



Sara Stroup
Instuctor/Lecturer
Teacher Education Department
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I earned a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education and a Master of Science in Early Childhood Special Education from Fort Hays State University. My professional experiences include teaching in the public school system before joining the Department of Teacher Education at Fort Hays State University as an instructor in 2009.

My professional interests and areas of expertise include human growth and development, early childhood education, early childhood special education, and mental health across the lifespan. I currently teach Teacher Education courses online and also serve as the director of FHSU Tiger Tots Preschool Center, an on-campus preschool serving children of Fort Hays State University students, faculty, and staff. Through my work, I am particularly interested in creating developmentally appropriate, inclusive learning environments that support the whole child and foster meaningful relationships among children, families, educators, and the community.

Outside of my professional life, I enjoy being a grandmother and spending time with my family. We enjoy camping, traveling, and riding motorcycles together.

Teaching Interests:

- Early Childhood Unified
- Intergenerational Learning

Research Interests:

- The reciprocal social, emotional, and cognitive benefits of intergenerational interactions between young children and older adults who share meaningful interactions, learning, and community spaces.

Fort Hays Technical College Northwest



Tara Neitzel-Simmonds
Child Care Specialist Instructor
Fort Hays Tech Northwest
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Tara Neitzel-Simmonds is an Early Childhood Education instructor and leads the Child Care Specialist program at Fort Hays Tech Northwest. She brings more than 12 years of experience working in licensed childcare facilities across Kansas, along with more than 10 years of experience as a childcare licensing specialist. Tara is passionate about using her real-world experience to prepare future early childhood professionals through hands-on learning, practicum experiences, and strong community partnerships. She is committed to strengthening the early childhood workforce and supporting quality early childhood education throughout Northwest Kansas.

Teaching Interests:

- **E**arly Childhood Education
- Child Development
- Hands On
- Early Literacy
- Curriculum and Learning Environments
- Health and Safety
- Childcare Licensing and Regulations
- Professional Workforce Preparation

I am especially interested in helping students connect classroom learning to real-world experiences so they are prepared to become confident and knowledgeable early childhood professionals.

Garden City Community College

Layla Martinez
Associate Professor of Education
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Highland Community College



Tammy Biswell
ECH Instructor
HCC Wamego Center
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Instructor, Mrs. Tammy Biswell is a two-time national board-certified CTE teacher of Early Childhood through young adult education. She and her husband Dennis live in the Wamego Community and enjoy the outdoors. Mrs. Biswell's favorite pass times include gardening, growing flowers, and baking. Her prior employment at HCC included teaching FCS at Wamego High School for the past 18 years and owning her own private preschool and childcare home.

Teaching Interests:
Early Childhood Development

Other Affiliations:
Member of KCTE and Kansas FCCLA

Hutchinson Community College



Jennifer Forker
Early Childhood Education Instructor
Hutchinson Community College
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I have spent my career doing what I love most: working with children and helping future educators discover the joy and importance of teaching. I earned my bachelor's degree from Bethel College and began my teaching career in the kindergarten classroom. For 15 years, I had the privilege of watching young children learn, grow, and develop, and those years had a tremendous influence on the educator I am today.

After teaching kindergarten, I earned my master's degree in Education Leadership from Wichita State University. I then joined Hutchinson Community College, where I served as the Early Childhood Education Program Coordinator for 10 years. During that time, I also had the opportunity to serve as the administrator of the campus child care center. These experiences helped me grow as a leader while deepening my understanding of what it takes to create meaningful learning experiences for young children and support the educators who work with them. I have served on various child focused boards and committees in the community, actively promoting the field of child care and child development.

Today, I am a tenured professor at HutchCC, where I teach child development courses and advise preservice teachers. One of the most rewarding parts of my work is helping students discover their passion for teaching and guiding them as they work toward entering a university teacher licensure program.

At the heart of my teaching philosophy is a strong belief in play-based learning. I believe children learn best when they are actively involved, curious, exploring, creating, and having fun. I am passionate about helping future teachers understand that play is not simply something children do—it is one of the most powerful ways children learn.

Teaching Interests:

- Early Language and Literature
- Creative Activities

Research Interests:

- Play in the Educational Setting

Other Affiliations:

- NAEYC member
- Kaleidoscope of Kids Care Professional Development Board Member
- Early Childhood Council member
- Reno County ARPA grant recipient

Kansas City Kansas Community College



Annette Farrell
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Development Coordinator
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I am the Early Childhood Education and Development Program Coordinator at Kansas City Kansas Community College. I oversee the program, teach, and advise students. I enjoy the challenge of administering a program. I earned an M.Ed. In Early Childhood Administration from Champlain College and a Bachelor of Business Administration from Texas Christian University.

I have spent thirty years in early childhood education, as a special needs infant teacher, center director, NAEYC accreditation specialist, adjunct faculty, and technical assistance coach at Metropolitan Community College-Penn Valley (MCC). Later, I worked as a Head Start Curriculum and Training Manager.

My role was to support early educators in their business and be an agent of change in their practice. As a bilingual trainer and consultant for various micro-enterprises and community organizations, I traveled and delivered workshops and curriculums nationally and internationally. I enjoy volunteering as a Conscious Discipline Institute helper when possible.

My vision is to support educators to become intentional, reflective thinkers to develop themselves and children to their fullest potential.

Teaching Interests:
I enjoy teaching observation and assessment because it is the foundation of all we do in early childhood education. It is a lifelong skill that must be practiced creating meaningful experiences for individuals and groups of children.

Research Interests:
Adult education, social-emotional development, and trauma.

Other Affiliations:

- Raising WYCO ECED Workforce Group, Kansas City, Kansas
- Kansas City Kansas Community College Learning Spaces Taskforce Group
- Kansas City Kansas Community College Program Review Committee, Secretary
- National Association for the Education of Young Children and Affiliate
- National Association for Family Child Care

Kansas State University



Bronwyn Fees
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Kansas State University
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College of Health and Human Sciences
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Bronwyn is a professor and associate dean (2013-2026) emerita in the School of Human Sciences, College of Health and Human Sciences, at Kansas State University, where she taught graduate and UG courses in early childhood development and education. Her research examined the relationship between children's physical activity in child care settings and well-being. She served as director of the implementation of the initial Kansas Career Pathway for ECCE, as the PI for Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities (KCCTO) (2016-2026), and is a member of the Board. Fees holds a Ph.D in Human Development and Family Studies from Iowa State University.

Teaching Interests:

- Theories of Human Development
- Child Development

Research Interests:

- International approaches to early childhood Care and Education
- Physical growth and development
- The relationship between physical activity and health/well-being in children

Other Affiliations:

As an administrator, Bronwyn served on the IDEA Human Sciences Board and as liaison to the Early Childhood Care and Education unit; Chair of the Council of Administrators to Family and Consumer Sciences; AAFCS Chair, Assembly of Higher Education, as an elected director of the Board on Health and Human Sciences within APLU; and as KBOR representative to the Kansas SICC. She also served as membership chair for OMEP-USA and served on the governing board. Fees is also a member of the Kansas Paraguay Partners board and has led multiple international trips focused on children, families, and education.

Kansas State University



Jennifer Francois
Professor of Practice
Kansas State University
College of Health and Human Sciences
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Manhattan, KS 66506

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jfrancois@ksu.edu

Dr. Jennifer Francois is a Professor of Practice in the Department of Applied Human Sciences and program chair of the Early Childhood Education program at Kansas State University. For the last 2 years, she worked closely with the Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities (KCCTO) organization helping to support two new initiatives (i.e., developmental inclusion and early childhood mental health) under the KCCTO-KITS Infant Toddler Specialist Network (ITSN) umbrella. Prior to joining the K-State faculty, Dr. Francois spent 9 ½ years working for Rainbows United in Wichita, KS. During her time at Rainbows United, she was their Early Childhood Coordinator and supervised the Community-based Education and Training Services (CBETS). She is currently the state of Kansas Recommended Practices Ambassador for the Division of Early Childhood, Secretary for the Division of Early Childhood executive board, and she is actively involved in local and state level organizations, including the Riley County Inter-Agency Coordinating Council and the Kansas Division for Early Childhood. Her research focuses on pre-service preparation and professional development in early intervention and early childhood special education and language acquisition in children.

Teaching Interests:

- Language development
- Emergent literacy
- Early intervention
- Family professional partnerships

Research Interests:

- Language acquisition
- Pre-service preparation and professional development of early childhood professionals
- Early intervention/special education

Other Affiliations:

- Memberships: Kansas Division for Early Childhood, Division for Early Childhood, International Congress of Infant Studies
- Leadership Roles: Secretary, Division for Early Childhood executive board, Partnership Liaison, Kansas Division for Early Childhood, Co-chair ECU Standards Revisions Team, DEC Recommended Practices Ambassador
- Funded grants: 2023-2024 United Methodist Health Ministry Fund, "Child Care Provider Perception of Child Care Subsidy in Kansas"

Kansas State University



Barbara Hammerli
Instructor
Kansas State University
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I have worked in the field of Early Childhood for 44 years specializing in infant-toddler development and programs as a lead teacher and laboratory instructor. Currently, my role is to model, mentor, and evaluate field experiences in preschool and infant-toddler classrooms. I also teach courses in Developmental Curriculum, Reflective Practice-Infants and Toddlers, and Early Childhood Practicum 1: Infants and Toddlers.

Teaching Interests:

- Infant-Toddler (0-3) Programs & Curriculum

Affiliations:

- **K**ansas Professional Teaching License Early Childhood Education Birth-Kindergarten Unified
- Kansas Association for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

Kansas State University



Misti Johnson-Olthoff
Teaching Assistant Professor & Academic Advisor
Kansas State University
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Misti has experienced a variety of educational settings: Graduate Teacher Assistant in a toddler classroom (KSU), pre-kindergarten at a non-profit Child Development Center (Addison, TX), pre-kindergarten at a private for-profit Early Childhood Center (Plano, TX), and as a kindergarten teacher in a public charter (Dallas, TX), and a Lead Teacher/Supervising Instructor at the Stone House Early Childhood Education Center (toddlers), and is currently an Academic Advisor and Instructor for the College of Health and Human Sciences in the Department of Applied Human Science.

Teaching Interests:
My teaching and research areas include pre-service professionals' educational experiences around normative and atypical child development within comprehensive sexuality education, communication, and socialization throughout early childhood.

Research Interests:

- Early childhood sexual development
- Early childhood sexual: communication, literacy, and citizenship
- Pre-service teacher normative early childhood sexual development

Kansas State University



Beka Meitler
Instructor
Kansas State University
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Beka Meitler, M.S., is an Instructor for the College of Health and Human Sciences in the School of Human Sciences at Kansas State University. She has worked in a variety of settings within the field of Early Childhood Education, including university teaching, public schools, infant-toddler services, and community programs. She has developed educational programming for families and young children, mentored pre-service educators, and collaborated with multidisciplinary teams to support children's learning and development. Beka has presented at state and national conferences on family partnerships and play-based learning and has held leadership roles with professional early childhood organizations. She is passionate about creating supportive learning environments for young children and preparing the next generation of educators.

Teaching Interests:

- Developmental Curriculum in Early Childhood
- Social-Emotional Development
- Interaction Techniques
- Early Childhood Special Education
- Family Partnerships

Other Affiliations:

- KS Teaching License Early Childhood Unified (2030)
- Kansas Early Childhood Recommendations Panel

Newman University



Mallory Arellano
Associate Professor, ECU/ TIP Coordinator
Newman University
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I am originally from a small town north of Kansas City, MO. I moved to Garden City, KS to begin my first year of teaching in 2010. I worked for USD 457, Garden City Public Schools, for 8 years. I have been working for the Newman Outreach Education program since July 2018. I am currently working on my PhD in Early Childhood Special Education through Walden University.

Teaching Interests:

- Early Childhood Special Education
- Special Education
- Autism
- Classroom Behavior Management

Research Interests:

- Autism Technology in the classroom
- Teacher Leadership
- STEM/ STEAM
- Special Education/ Early Childhood Education
- Trauma-informed

Other Affiliations:

- NAEYC member/Division for Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)
- KDEC member

Pittsburg State University



Amber Tankersley
Professor & Preschool Lab Director
Pittsburg State University
1701 S. Broadway
Pittsburg, KS 66762

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atankersley@pittstate.edu

I am Amber Tankersley. I have taught early childhood development courses at Pittsburg State University since the fall of 2008. I am also the director of the NAEYC-accredited Little Gorillas Preschool program in the Family & Consumer Sciences building. I have a bachelor's degree in elementary/early childhood education (Missouri Southern State University), a master's degree in elementary education with an emphasis in early childhood (Missouri State University), and a Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction with a focus in human environmental science (University of Arkansas). Before coming to Pitt State, I was first a teacher in a preschool (3-5-year-olds) age classroom, then director of the Child Development Center, and finally an adjunct EC instructor, all at Missouri Southern State University. I have worked with young children, families, and college-age students for 30+ years. I also do several presentations and webinars each year related to early childhood curriculum and the importance of play. I am an active NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) member.

Teaching Interests:

- Early childhood curriculum
- Play

Research Interests:

- Supporting beginning teachers

Salina Area Technical School



Callie Robinson
Early Childhood Education Instructor
Salina Technical School
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Salina, KS 67401

P: 785-309-3198
callie.robinson@salinatech.edu

Callie earned her Associate of Applied Science degree in Early Childhood Education from Cloud County Community College.

Mrs. Robinson has 13 years of experience in early childhood education settings. She has worked in the preschool classroom setting as a teacher's assistant for 6 years and then became a lead preschool teacher at Heartland Early Education for 7 years. She joined the Salina Tech Early Childhood Education program as the instructor in 2021.

Teaching Interests:

- Family engagement

University of Kansas



Maria Hugh
Assistant Professor
University of Kansas
KU Department of Special Education
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Lawrence, KS 66045

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Dr. Maria Hugh is an Assistant Professor of Special Education at the University of Kansas and Affiliated faculty at the University of Kansas Center for Developmental Disabilities and School Mental Health Assessment Research and Training Center at the University of Washington. An early childhood special educator and board-certified behavior analyst by training, Dr. Hugh focuses on improving outcomes for young children with developmental disabilities by partnering with pre- and in-service educators to teach and learn about feasible and effective practices to use for young children with autism and developmental disabilities in inclusive early learning contexts. Her research aims to 1) identify usable practices that improve learning opportunities, 2) explore individual and organizational implementation mechanisms, and 3) test pre-service and in-service professional development supports that facilitate intervention decision-making and implementation. In pursuit of these aims, Dr. Hugh partners with schools and communities using implementation science and mixed methods approaches.

Teaching Interests:

- Individualized Intervention/Instruction and Supports Methods for Young Children with Developmental Disabilities and Autism
- Implementation Science in Schools
- Mixed Methods Research

Research Interests:

- Pre-Service Preparation
- Tailoring Implementation and Professional
- Development Supports
- Facilitating Educators' Instructional Decision-Making for Students with Developmental Disabilities

Other Affiliations:
See faculty webpage: https://specialedu.ku.edu/people/maria-hugh

Current Grant Funding:
Office of Special Education, 325K, Project MounTaiN: Meeting The Need to Prepare Early Interventionists and Special Educators in Data-Based Instruction for Young Children with High- Intensity Support Needs

Office of Special Education Programs, CFDA 84.325D, Preparing Early Childhood Special Education Leaders for Diverse Settings (Project EARLY).

University of Kansas



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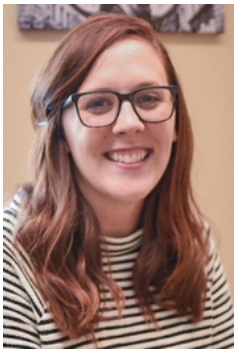
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Elementary Education B.S. and Early Childhood Special Education M.S. Andrea is currently a TA Specialist for the State Infant Toddler Services system. She worked as an early childhood special educator for 20 years, serving as a classroom teacher, itinerant teacher, and infant-toddler service provider. Provided training and technical assistance in Early Intervention in the state of Nebraska for 15 years. Worked for two years in the Early Childhood Unified program at KU as a program manager and fieldwork coordinator.

Teaching Interests:
Andrea is passionate about supporting the adults who support young children and their families. Throughout her career, she has sought opportunities to build expertise in adult learning, instructional coaching, and professional development. She serves as a state trainer and coach in Nebraska for the Routines-Based Interview (RBI) and Getting Ready Home Visiting Model and recently became the Coordinator for the Coaching in Early Intervention Project. In this role, she has helped develop and support a statewide system of internal coaches who provide ongoing reflective coaching and implementation support within local early intervention programs.

Research Interests:
Her professional interests center on coaching, adult learning, systems improvement, and building professional capacity within early intervention. Andrea is particularly interested in the role that reflective coaching plays in strengthening relationships between families and providers, colleagues and teams, and technical assistance specialists and the programs they support. She recognizes that many professionals enter the field with strong skills for working with children and families but have had limited opportunities to learn how to coach and build capacity in other adults. She is excited by the growing research and innovation in coaching practices and their potential to strengthen early intervention systems and outcomes for young children and families.

University of Kansas



Kathleen N. Tuck
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Kathleen N. Tuck, Ph.D., BCBA-D is an associate professor of special education at The University of Kansas. Prior to joining KU, Katie was an educator in the metro Washington, D.C. area supporting young children with language and behavioral support needs in inclusive home, community childcare, and school-based settings. Katie trained as a general and special education teacher at The College of William & Mary and received her Ph.D. in early childhood special education from Vanderbilt University. Educator partnerships drive Katie's research and teaching focus. Specifically, Katie's research explores preventative and feasible strategies educators can employ in inclusive classrooms to support the engagement of young children with language and behavioral support needs in preschool through early elementary grade classrooms. These research endeavors include partnering with educators to (1) compare popular, yet untested interventions with known effective practices, (2) adapt evidence-based practices to support the diverse array of young children in ECSE classrooms, (3) promote children's autonomy through environmental support strategies, and (4) empower educator implementation of effective and feasible instructional strategies to support young children with language and behavioral support needs. Katie also works as a methodologist with expertise in the measurement and synthesis of single case research designs. Finally, Katie leads the Early Childhood Institute at the Kansas University Center for Developmental Disabilities where she engages in community partnerships to support childcare centers and school districts in building educator expertise in designing inclusive, supportive, and equitable classrooms.

Teaching Interests:

- engagement strategies and supports
- environmental arrangement
- evidence-based instructional practices
- Pyramid Model practices

University of Kansas



Alana Schnitz, Ph.D. BCBA
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Dr. Schnitz is an assistant research professor at Juniper Gardens Children's Project and assistant professor in Early Childhoos Special Education. She completed her PhD. in Early Childhood Special Education from Vanderbilt University and was a Head Start Research Scholar for two years. Her dissertation evaluated the efficacy of the Positive Solutions for Families Intervention. Alana was formerly the research coordinator for the IES Goal 2 Teaching Pyramid Research Project. She also has participated in research around the Pyramid model, including coaching teachers to implement practices associated with the model. She has worked with Head Start teachers and families providing teacher and parent training, technical assistance to teachers, and providing behavioral support to families. Alana has 14 years of experience working with children who exhibit challenging behaviors as a coach; behavior specialist; and residential, family, and crisis counselor. She is also a Board Certified Behavior Analysts.

Teaching Interests:

- **E**arly Childhood
- Social Emotional Development and Classroom Management Courses
- Pyramid Model practices
- Low incident disabilities courses.

Research Interests:

Supporting Early childhood teachers to use data to determine what evidence-based practices to use and what skills the children need. Supporting children with low incidence and their teachers/SLPS to use AAC for literacy and writing. Supporting teachers to use Pyramid Model Practices.

Washburn University Institute of Technology



Tammy Schrickel
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I hold a Bachelors degree in Elementary/Special Education and a Masters in Special Education. I taught for 7 years before running my own family childcare home while my 6 children were little. I have been the instructor for the Early Childhood Education program at Washburn Tech and the director of Little Learners at Washburn Tech, our on-campus childcare center, since 2010.

Teaching Interests:
My favorite courses to teach are our beginning in-service courses to prepare students to initially begin working with children, and of course, our course on Children with Special Needs.

Washburn University



Chloe Morris
Assistant Professor
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Dr. Chloe Morris is an Assistant Professor in the Education Department at Washburn University. Chloe earned a Doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction with a focus in Language, Diversity, and Literacy Studies from Texas Tech University. Chloe's research, instruction, and outreach focus on preparing early childhood and elementary teachers and teacher candidates to partner effectively with families.

Teaching Interests:

- Family, School, & Community Partnerships
- Relations & Routines
- Reflective Practice

Research Interests:

- Teacher Preparation for Family-Teacher Partnerships

Wichita State University

Shelli Elliott
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Other Affiliations:
TAP leadership team, instructor, and success coach/mentor.

Wichita State University



Jennifer Kulp
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My name is Jennifer Kulp. I am the Literacy Coordinator for the Teacher Apprentice Program (TAP) at Wichita State University. I support TAP students as a success coach and an instructor. Our students are pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree in Early Child Unified and/or Elementary Education. Teaching is a passion of mine. I was a public school teacher for 24 years before my position with the Teacher Apprentice Program. It is a joy to assist students in pursuing a degree in a career I love.

Teaching Interests:

- Teacher Education Programs
- Literacy
- Classroom Management

Research Interests:

- Literacy
- Neurofeedback

Other Affiliations:

- Teacher Apprentice Program Leadership Team
- Lead Instructor for TAP Literacy Courses

Wichita State University

Aaryn Ludens
TAP Success Coach Coordinator
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Other Affiliations:

- TAP Leadership Team
- Instructor
- TAP Success Coach Mentor

Wichita State University



Chloe Morris Assistant Educator
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Ray is the Early Childhood and Special Education Coordinator for the Teacher Apprentice Program at Wichita State University. She teaches online courses that prepare paraeducators and preservice teachers to work in inclusive preschool and elementary classrooms. Her work emphasizes aligning program content with licensure standards, Praxis exam requirements, and best practices in early childhood education. Ali's teaching focuses on clarity, accessibility, and engagement. She integrates applied assignments and reflective discussions to help students connect theory to practice while balancing work, school, and family. In addition to teaching, she is involved in curriculum development and program alignment. She is committed to preparing educators who are reflective, adaptable, and well equipped to meet the diverse needs of children and families..

Teaching Interests:

- Early childhood unified education (Birth–PreK)
- Inclusive practices and differentiated instruction Online teaching and adult learning strategies
- Preparing paraeducators for teacher licensure

Research Interests

- Alignment of licensure standards and Praxis exams in teacher preparation
- Effective instructional design for asynchronous online programs
- Adult learning theory in higher education

Wichita State University



Julie Thiele
Assistant Professor
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Julie Thiele, PhD, is an Assistant Professor and Instructional Coordinator in Wichita State University's Teacher Apprentice Program (TAP). She teaches a variety of ECU and Elementary Education courses in the areas of math, assessment, internships, mentoring, and classroom management.

Teaching Interests:
Math, Math for Exceptionalities, Early Childhood, Elementary Education, Assessment, Classroom Management, Mentoring, and Research in Education.

Research Interests:
Supporting Alternative Certification Pathway pre-service and in-service teachers, online education best practices, mathematics education birth-12, mentoring practices, and applied learning experiences.

Wichita State University



Kimberly Wilson
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Dr. Kimberly Wilson, CCC-SLP is a full professor and department head in the Teacher Apprentice Literacy and Special education (TALS) department at Wichita State University. She is program chair for the Master of Arts in Teaching ECU, Master of Education in special education-ECU, and the Reading Specialist programs at WSU. Dr. Wilson specializes in early childhood, literacy, mentoring, and self-efficacy. She has over $14 million in external funding and has published numerous articles and book chapters. Dr. Wilson has over three decades of experience working in education as an early childhood classroom teacher, faculty member, administrator, mentor, consultant, speech language pathologist, and classroom teacher. In her spare time, Dr. Wilson volunteers with the Wichita Public Schools, local private schools, and serves on numerous local, state, and national committees.

Teaching Interests:

- Early literacy
- Executive function
- Research methodology (quantitative)
- Reacher self-efficacy

Research Interests:

Psychosocial factors that impact youth outcomes, mentoring, emotional reactivity/regulation

Wichita State University



Jill Wood
Coordinator, Teacher Apprentice Program
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I am currently the coordinator of the Teacher Apprentice Program at Wichita State University. I taught all levels of K-12 education for 19 years before transitioning to higher education. For the past 9 years, I taught social studies methods courses and served as an administrator for alternate certification programs in Kansas.

Teaching Interests:

- Social Studies

Research Interests:

- My research interests include effective distance supervision strategies and creating effective courses for first-generation college students in online programs.