



## SPED 524I Practicum: Stay ‘N Play Playgroup

Teaching Team	Office	Email	Work	Cell
Instructor: Dr. Hughes Supervisors:				

### Rationale and Purpose of the Course:

The playgroup experience is referred to as a practicum to convey that this is a period of practice and learning for each student. The purpose of this practicum experience is to provide students an opportunity to interact with infants/toddlers and their families. Students will receive individualized and team-focused clinical supervision. Through this practicum, students will develop skills and knowledge related to dyadic and triadic interaction strategies, family/professional partnerships, and working together as a team.

### Course Objectives:

As active participants in the playgroup experience students will develop:

1. an understanding of the logistics of planning, implementing, and evaluating a playgroup, taking into account the specific issues related to the families, community and the setting.
2. an understanding of developmental observation topics (DOTs) and environmental arrangement when planning playgroups.
3. an understanding of working as a team, including the provision of support and feedback using effective communication skills.
4. an understanding of dyadic and triadic strategies.
5. skills in working with families using a family-centered philosophy.
6. the ability to plan appropriate individualized activities for children with and without disabilities.
7. sensitivity to the issues related to an inclusive playgroup for children and families.
8. greater understanding of young children and families from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

**Accommodations:** To obtain disability-related academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aides, students with disabilities must contact the course instructor and the Disability Resources and Educational Services office (DRES) as soon as possible. To contact DRES, you may visit 1207 S. Oak St., Champaign or call 333-4603 (V/TDD) or email a message to [disability@uiuc.edu](mailto:disability@uiuc.edu).

## **Class Times & Locations:**

Practicum Seminar: Mondays, 7-9 pm, ECDL, See Course Calendar for specific dates.

Playgroup PIWI Orientation: 8:30 am – noon, Saturday, January 26, ECDL

Playgroup Sessions: Saturdays, 8:00 am to 1:30 pm, ECDL, See Course Calendar for specific dates.

**Seminar Attendance and Participation:** Attendance at each playgroup seminar and playgroup is required. If you must miss class because of personal illness or an emergency, please contact your supervisor prior to the class session or playgroup session.

**Confidentiality:** All professionals working with young children and their families must adhere to certain ethical standards. As a student learning about professional behavior you are required to maintain confidentiality regarding the information that families share with you about themselves and their children. The law requires you to do this. Please refrain from discussion of this personal information with others.

## **Required Readings:**

❖ All students will be required to read several articles pertaining to the playgroup model, home visits, and other related topics. These SpEd 524 readings are on e-reserve at the Undergraduate Library.

**NOTE:** In addition to the required readings, there are many other readings on e-reserve that may be helpful.

- ❖ Additional readings may be added throughout the semester at the discretion of the instructor and supervisors.
- ❖ Students should become familiar with activity books and resource materials (especially those in the ECDL toy library) that are related to their playgroup plans.
- ❖ Recommended Resource: An excellent resource to add to your professional library is the book by Janet Gonzalez-Mena entitled *Diversity in Early Care and Education. Honoring Differences.*

**Grading:** The grading for this course is Satisfactory (S) or Unsatisfactory (U). Each student will receive midterm feedback from the instructor and supervisors, and weekly feedback from the supervisors. In order to attain a grade of “S” the student must fulfill all assignments and responsibilities. Final 3-way meetings (course instructor, supervisor, student) will be scheduled for finals week.

**Course Calendar:** Due to the fluid nature of the playgroups and the course material, the course calendar is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Revisions to assignments, topics, guest speakers, due dates, etc. will be announced ahead of time.

## **Course Assignments and Responsibilities**

### 1. Communication Plan

If there is a reason to cancel a Saturday playgroup session (e.g., inclement weather), or to reach students or families quickly, we will use the following plan:

- ✓ Course instructor calls each supervisor
- ✓ Each supervisor calls each member of her team
- ✓ Each team member calls their assigned families

1. Playgroup

- ❖ Students will plan, implement, and evaluate eight playgroup sessions for infants/toddlers and their parents.
- ❖ Students will maintain and document phone, e-mail, and/or written contact with their assigned families.
- ❖ All playgroups will be supervised by the course instructor and the students' supervisors.

2. Playgroup Preparation & Clean Up

Students are responsible for

- ❖ setting up the playgroup environment (e.g. wall hangings, snacks, toys/materials selection, cleaning, and placement) before each playgroup session
- ❖ cleaning up the room and washing toys after each playgroup session; students will follow ECDL hygiene protocols

3. Playgroup Binder

- ❖ Each student will organize a playgroup binder (size: ~1 ½ to 2 inches) containing records of their experiences in the practicum.
- ❖ A list of materials to be kept in the binder will be provided. Supervisors will review these binders (see course calendar)

4. Playgroup Forms

❖ **Planning:**

- Planning form
- DOT plan
- Floor plan
- Role distribution form
- Parent handout (jargon-free; topic should be related to the DOT for each playgroup session)

NOTE: Different team members are responsible for the planning forms. This is rotated across the 8 playgroup sessions so that each team member has several opportunities to take responsibility for each form.

(Note: Revisions can be made at the discretion of the team supervisor.)

Planning form	1 team member
DOT plan	1 team member
Floor plan, role distribution form & parent handout	1 team member

❖ **Evaluation:**

- Team evaluation (debriefing) form
- Individual supervision meeting (self-reflection) form

All of these forms will be discussed in class, along with information about the process for circulating them and getting them approved by the team supervisor.

5. Home Visits

Guidelines will be provided and discussed in seminar. Students are required to visit their assigned families **two times** during the semester: before the first playgroup and around midterm. These visits should be conducted in the family's home unless the family would prefer that the visit occurs elsewhere. For supervision & mentoring purposes, the student's supervisor will attend Home Visit #2 with the student.

6. Ongoing Family Contact

Students will maintain weekly communication (email and/or phone) with their assigned families. At the end of the semester students will write a "thank you" letter to each of their assigned families, and submit it to their supervisor for approval. This letter will be part of the developmental scrapbook assignment. (See Course Calendar)

7. Developmental Scrapbook

Each student is responsible for creating a developmental scrapbook for each of their assigned families. This product documents the playgroup experience for the parent and child, and provides the student with an opportunity to synthesize and integrate information about development and play.

8. Reflection Papers

Students will reflect on different topics related to working with young children and their families. The papers typically include things such as: a) a reflection of your playgroup experience, (b) an understanding of the readings and (c) evaluative comments about your role on the team. These papers should not exceed 3-4 pages in length and must be typed and double-spaced. On the due date, the student will submit a print copy to the course instructor, and she will disseminate it to the student's supervisor for additional review & feedback.

9. Playgroup Time Log

Each student will keep a record of their activities using the Playgroup Activity Log. This log will be submitted to the course instructor at the end of the semester.

10. ECSE Practicum Time Report Form

Students enrolled for credit will receive an ECSE Practicum Time Report Form in Practicum Seminar, and students will submit a completed form to the course instructor at the end of the semester.