Field work is an integral part of the education experience. It provides the opportunity to observe principles discussed in the classroom as well as allows students a safe place to practice skills discussed in class. While the assignments for each class differs in the type of observation (child/classroom/teacher) and the amount of observation hours required, field work is a required component in all early childhood education classes. This handbook sets forth the procedures, requirements, and expectations for students who participate in field work experience.

**Field Work Placement**

The Pellissippi Early Childhood Education (ECEd) program partners with a variety of early childhood programs to provide quality field experiences with children from birth to age 8. These programs have been chosen for a variety of reasons, including program quality, type of program, location, and accessibility. Some assignments will allow students to use their current or former workplace as a site to complete ECEd assignments.

The PSCC ECEd program is nationally accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). To meet these accreditation standards, students must have experiences across the birth to 8 spectrum as well as across program types. Therefore, some assignments will require students to complete field work experiences in programs specified by ECEd faculty. For these assignments, no exceptions can be made.

**Students are only allowed to use programs that have been approved by ECEd faculty.** At no time is a student enrolled in an ECEd course allowed to contact a program on their own to see if they can use the program as a site for field work. If a student would like to use a program that has not been provided to them by the faculty (i.e., approved places to observe) or is not their workplace, they must ask permission from their ECEd instructor **before** contacting the program. It is at the discretion of the ECEd faculty as to whether or not to grant permission to use the program.

Program staff have agreed to allow PSCC students the opportunity to complete many of their ECEd assignments. As such, faculty have had many conversations with program staff to discuss the expectations of field work experiences and to provide some understanding of assignment requirements. Some programs have selected only a few assignments in which students are allowed to complete field work hours. Therefore, a student should only contact a program on the approved list for that assignment.

PSCC strives to maintain good relationships within the early childhood education community. Any violation of this policy can hinder that relationship and may result in severe consequences. If a student has questions about whether or not they can contact a program, they should ask their ECEd instructor.
Pre-requisites to Fieldwork

Background checks

All students, even those who are taking the course as an elective, must complete a background check prior to starting fieldwork experience. The background check must be completed through our partner, Truescreen. Unfortunately, we are not able to accept background checks that come from other agencies or from your workplace. The background check is good for two years and one background check covers all ECEd courses. For example, a background check completed in Fall 2018 will be good for all semesters until Summer 2020. Background checks must be completed in conjunction with an early childhood education or teacher education course. If you have questions as to whether you have a current background check file, please contact the ECEd program coordinator.

The ECEd program follows the Tennessee Department of Human Services licensing requirements as it relates to the employment requirements regarding criminal offenses. The following is an abbreviated list of some of the offenses that would exclude a student from participating in field work experiences:

- Arson
- Assault
- Carjacking
- Child abuse, child neglect, or endangerment
- Cruelty to animals
- Custodial interference
- Domestic abuse in violation of an order of protection or in violation of a restraining order
- Domestic assault
- Drug offenses (felony or misdemeanor, possession, manufacturing, sale, distribution, etc.)
- Especially aggravated burglary
- Exploitation of a minor by electronic means
- Indecent exposure
- Reckless endangerment
- Stalking
- Vehicular assault
- Weapons offenses (unlawful possession, carrying, use, etc.)
- Inclusion on a sexual offender registry

For a full list of offenses, please see 1240-04-01-.07 Criminal Background Check and State Registry/Records Review Procedures of the Tennessee DHS Child Care Licensing Regulations.

Revised January 2019
Students who do not pass a background check will not be allowed to participate in any field work experience. Assignments in which field work is required will be a zero; no substitute assignments will be given. This will adversely impact your overall grade and can result in failure of the course. Students in initial and final practicum courses will receive an F for the course as the assignments are structured around their field work experience.

In the event of a failed background check, students will not be required to withdraw from their current ECEd courses. However, it is recommended that students consider dropping or withdrawing from the course(s) due to the negative impact on their overall grade. In addition, students will not be allowed to take future courses in the program.

**Professionalism Module**

All students must complete a professionalism module before completing any fieldwork hours. The professionalism module will include reading faculty selected articles and watching any assigned videos/presentations. To receive credit for completing a professionalism module, the student must take an accompanying quiz and score a 100%. Students will be allowed to complete as many attempts as needed to obtain a 100%. All of the professionalism modules can be found in the online learning management system (Brightspace/d2L).

The professionalism module must be completed for each class, even when students are taking multiple ECEd classes within a semester. Faculty will assign deadlines for completion at the beginning of each semester.

**Hold Harmless**

Since field work experience will be completed off campus, students must read and sign a hold harmless form from PSCC. The form will be provided to the student in Brightspace/d2L. The form can also be found at: [https://www.pstcc.edu/studentlife/files/pdf/Hold%20Harmless%20Form.pdf](https://www.pstcc.edu/studentlife/files/pdf/Hold%20Harmless%20Form.pdf).

**Liability Insurance**

Students enrolled in practicum courses are required to obtain liability insurance before beginning any practicum hours. This is required of all students, even those who are completing practicum hours in their place of employment. Liability insurance is provided through memberships in the Student Teacher Education Association (STEA). Membership is good from September to August of the following year. Membership dues are the responsibility of the student. The course instructor will provide the information needed for signing up for STEA.
Signed acknowledgment and agreement of field work handbook

Students should read the field work handbook carefully as they are required to follow and uphold the policies set forth in the handbook. After reading the handbook, students should complete and sign the acknowledgement statement at the end of the handbook. This must be on file before beginning field work experience.

Field work hours completed before the pre-requisites are met will not be accepted and are considered a violation of policy.

Please note: Students who are auditing an ECEd course, but wish to participate in field work experiences must also meet and adhere to the requirements set forth above.

Contacting Providers

Once you have completed all pre-requisites, you are now allowed to contact the program(s) to set up your field work experience. Remember, you may only contact programs that are PSCC approved, assigned by a faculty member, and/or a place of employment. You are never to contact a program on your own that is not on the approved programs list.

You must contact the program in ample time before you hope to observe. Do not contact them the day before and request a next-day observation. You must plan ahead when scheduling your observations. You are their guest. Our great partners try to accommodate your needs and requests, but there are under no obligation to do so.

When contacting the program, make sure to follow the steps outlined below:

- You must identify your name and that you are a Pellissippi student.
- You must also identify what assignment you are hoping to complete in their program. Our partners may be familiar with your assignment, but they do not know the ins and outs of the assignment. It is up to you to convey to them what you need.
- Ask the director for a date and time that works best for them. Although you may have a date and time you would like to observe (see guidelines below), it is up to the program to decide a date and time that works best for them.
- When you have an agreed upon time and date, make sure to thank them for allowing you to visit.

Contact may come in the form of a phone conversation or through email. In either form, make sure that you are courteous and professional. If you are emailing, make sure to follow the proper format of an email, including addressing them by their proper name and including your name in the email.

When to Observe

Each program may have their own requirements regarding observations; however, there are some general guidelines as to when a student may complete field work experience. Students may only complete field work hours on a “typical” day. This means coming on a
day when there are no special events/arrangements happening (i.e., picture day, field trip days, teachers out).

In addition, students must observe only when children are awake and participating in their daily routines. This means that you cannot observe during the hours of noon and 2:00 p.m. as this is typically nap time. Late afternoons/evenings are often not a good time to observe as children are leaving for the day and programs begin their end of the day routines.

It is ultimately up to the program to decide an appropriate time for the student to observe. The earlier arrangements are made, the more flexibility a program may have.

**What to Wear**

Working in an early childhood education program can, at times, be a messy business. However, it is still important to convey a sense of professionalism to staff, parents, and children. Students are therefore required to wear appropriate clothing while completing field work experience. This includes jeans that are not torn or shredded, nice shirts, and/or PSCC t-shirts (including PSCC teacher education shirts). Athletic wear including yoga pants, leggings, tank tops, bralettes, etc., are not acceptable to wear to a program. Students should also wear appropriate footwear. Sandals are acceptable, but flip-flops are not. Individual programs may have additional requirements and should be adhered to while completing fieldwork hours.

Finally, students must display their PSCC student ID in a lanyard at all times during their observation. Students may use a lanyard of their choosing or may purchase one from the ECED program coordinator.

**Classroom Behavior**

Most of us are in early childhood education because we love working with and playing with children. However, unless specifically required by the assignment, you are not in that role when you are observing. You should always acknowledge a child and be friendly. However, you should not engage children in play. You cannot read books or do art or play dress up while you are observing. Your role is to observe and record and not to interfere with what’s happening in the classroom as much as possible. If a teacher asks you to participate in the activities, kindly remind them that you are there to observe.

This means not engaging with the teacher other than to introduce yourself and ask where you should observe. If you have to ask a teacher a question, make sure to do so when the impact is minimal. You do not ask questions during group time, transitions, or other times when a teacher is actively engaged in classroom activities.

You should not have your cell phone with you during the observation. However, if you must have it for emergency purposes only, do not use it in the classroom. This includes no texts, calls, or emails. Students who have smart watches should refrain from using them in the
classroom. If you have an emergency situation, excuse yourself from the classroom and respond to the matter as quickly as possible.

Your observation time should be strictly for the assignment in which you are observing. Do not complete other assignments during this time, and never, ever ask to use a computer, printer, copier, etc. of the program.

Finally, be mindful of your environment. The classroom is an active place and children and teachers are constantly moving. You may have secured a safe place to observe at the beginning of the observation, but you may need to move several times throughout to keep out of the way of the children and teachers’ activities.

Confidentiality of Observations

During your fieldwork experience, you may observe a variety of experiences and obtain knowledge - directly or indirectly – about children and teachers. This information is to be kept confidential at all times. You may not discuss what was observed to anyone outside of classroom activities (written and verbal assignments, class discussions). This means you may not discuss observations with family and friends. You may not also discuss observations with classmates outside of the academic setting. At all times, teacher and children’s names should not be used. Any breach of confidentiality is considered a serious violation of fieldwork policies.

Documenting Fieldwork

Each assignment will have its own requirements for documenting field work. This can also include obtaining permission forms from parents of children and/or teachers. Students should refer to the individual assignment for specific documentation requirements.

For assignments requiring documentation of field work hours, signatures should be obtained after the hours have been completed. The director, assistant director, or lead classroom teacher may sign off on confirmation of hours’ forms and/or timecards.

All hours of field work required by the assignment must be completed and documented. For example, if the assignment requires 3 hours of observation all 3 hours must be accounted for. If a student does not complete and/or document all hours, it is at the instructor’s discretion as to whether or not they will accept the assignment. If the instructor accepts the assignments, points will be deducted from the overall assignment grade since the requirements were not met.

Faculty may also confirm with the program’s staff that the hours were completed by a student. Any falsification of or alterations to required documentation forms will be considered academic misconduct. Per the Pellissippi Student Code of Conduct, upon discovery of a student’s participation in academic misconduct, the student is immediately responsible to the instructor of the class. The instructor will gather evidence of the misconduct, discuss it with his or her department dean, and meet with the offending student.
(or students), presenting evidence of the misconduct and describing the actions imposed. Based on their professional judgment, instructors have the authority to impose a range of academic disciplinary sanctions, which may include the following: (a) requiring the student to repeat the assignment for full or partial credit; (b) assigning a zero, an F, or any other grade appropriate for the assignment or examination; (c) assigning an F for the course. In addition, disciplinary sanctions may be imposed through the regular institutional procedures. See http://www.pstcc.edu/ppm/pdf/04-02-00.pdf, Part 3.

Practicum Expectations

Practicums are designed to be intensive experiences in which students can gain hands-on practice in a classroom setting. As such, course activities have been designed to optimize the hours and experience within each setting.

Initial Practicum requires a student to complete 45 hours of field work experience. During the practicum, students will spend time both observing and participating in the classroom. Final Practicum requires a student to complete 90 hours of field work experience. In this practicum experience, students will be an active participant in the classroom and will be responsible for duties in the classroom, including, but not limited to, completing planned activities with the children.

Students will coordinate a schedule with their placement site to ensure all hours are completed. It is expected that students will spread their hours across the semester. For initial practicum, this means a student should be completing no more than 5-6 hours a week in their practicum site. For final practicum students, they should complete no more than 10 hours a week. If a student feels that an exception to this guideline is needed, approval must be granted by the faculty teaching the course.

Specific expectations for each practicum experience will be outlined by the faculty teaching the course.

Negative Evaluations

Students are expected to adhere to high level of personal and academic conduct when observing and interacting in early childhood programs. If a program reports that a student is not behaving in said manner or a student receives a negative evaluation from their practicum placement, the student must meet with the ECEd Program Coordinator and/or ECEd faculty to discuss the evaluation before being allowed to continue fieldwork in that and other ECEd courses.

Permission to Share Information

To meet the requirements set forth by the Department of Human Services and our community partners, information about an individual student may need to be shared. This would include, but not limited to, confirming that the student is enrolled in a specific course, a student has completed and passed a background check and other ECEd fieldwork
requirements, and the assignments the student are responsible for. Information about academic progress will not be shared at any time with our, unless outlined in a practicum course or permission was explicitly given by the student.

**Violation of Policies**

College disciplinary measures shall be imposed, through appropriate due process procedures, for conduct that adversely affects Pellissippi State’s pursuit of its educational objectives, that violates or shows a disregard for the rights of other members of the academic community, or that endangers property or persons on college or college controlled property.

Individual or organizational misconduct that is subject to disciplinary sanction shall include but not be limited to violations of conduct requirements described in handbooks for specific programs of study.

Disciplinary action may be taken against a student for violations of the previous regulations which occur at or in association with enrollment at Pellissippi State for any academic period.

A full description of the policy and due process procedures can be found in the Student Code of Conduct, [http://www.pstcc.edu/ppm/pdf/04-02-00.pdf](http://www.pstcc.edu/ppm/pdf/04-02-00.pdf).
Acknowledgement of Field Work Handbook

I, ____________________________________________________________, acknowledge that I have received and read the Field Work Handbook for the PSCC Early Childhood Education program. I agree to adhere to all of the policies outlined in the handbook and understand that failure to do so will result in further action by ECEd program faculty. This may include failure of course assignments, failure of the course, and/or prohibition from taking any other ECEd courses.

I give permission for ECEd faculty to share with a program the information set forth in this handbook.

Student Name: ____________________________________________________________________________________

Student P-Number: _______________________________________________________________________________

Student Signature:                                                                                     
                                                                                                          ____________________________

Date:                                                                                                    ____________________________

For ECEd Program Use Only

Faculty Signature: ________________________________________________________________________________

Date Received: ____________________________________________________________________________________