Practicum Handbook
ECDE Practicum Experiences

The Practicum experience is an integral part of the Early Childhood Development and Education Program. Students will complete three supervised practicum experiences as partial degree requirements. While enrolled in a practicum experience, students will spend time in an early childhood classroom directly involved with children, supported by a Mentor Teacher, to develop professional skills for working in the field of Early Care and Education.

Each of the three practicum experiences provides students with opportunities to:
- Interact with young children in an early childhood setting
- Observe children and teachers
- Work with a Mentor Teacher to plan and implement activities in the classroom
- Practice skills of evaluation that integrate knowledge, skills and dispositions

The three seminar / practicum experiences are:
1. ECDE 2910 Seminar / Practicum 1-Infants & Toddlers
2. ECDE 2920 Seminar / Practicum 2-Preschool
3. ECDE 2930 Seminar / Practicum 3-Preschool

~ OR ~

ECDE 2932 Seminar / Practicum 3-Administration
This Practicum 3 choice requires an application to be submitted by the student and acceptance/approval by ECDE faculty to participate.

~ OR ~

ECDE 2933 Seminar / Practicum 3-Community Settings
This Practicum 3 choice requires an application to be submitted by the student and acceptance/approval by ECDE faculty to participate.
### Prerequisites/Requirements for Practicum Placement

To be eligible for a Practicum placement, students must:

- Students must have an overall grade point average of 2.0 or higher, a non-technical GPA of 2.0 or higher, and a technical GPA of 2.0 or higher.
- Complete ECDE 1101, 1105, 1108, 1109, 2010 and PSY 1100 and 2261 with a grade of C or better.
- Attend a Practicum 1 Orientation meeting
- Submit to the Practicum Coordinator:
  - a completed BCI fingerprint/background check results report (students with a criminal history should be aware that a criminal record may jeopardize the securing of a practicum placement)
  - a completed FBI fingerprint/background check results report
  - a current Medical Form (Students must be physically and mentally able to work with children to be placed for a practicum experience. This includes, but is not limited to, being able to lift at least 25 pounds, being able to stay fully awake and engaged in the classroom, and being able to safely monitor the activities of children.)
  - a current, signed Nonconviction Statement Form
  - a Practicum Placement Request Form.

Please note: Students who have a history of past criminal convictions are not automatically excluded from working in early childcare, however some restrictions apply depending on the specifics of the crime. Students must be off of probation/parole for a minimum of one year. If the offense was a misdemeanor, a minimum of 3 years (post disposition) must have passed. If the offense was a felony, a minimum of 10 years (post disposition) must have elapsed. Students are required to report all new criminal charges to the ECDE Practicum Coordinator. The ECDE Department cannot guarantee practicum placement experiences for students with prior criminal convictions, therefore, continuation in this program, graduation or post degree licensure cannot be guaranteed. If you have questions regarding this, please see the ECDE Practicum Coordinator. A list of Prohibited Offenses can be found in the Appendix of this handbook. **This information is subject to change according to state licensing requirements.**

*All required forms are located on the [ECDE webpage](http://example.com) and on Blackboard in the ECDE Student Community. Click on the Seminar / Practicum tab, then click on the folder labeled “Forms for Practicum”. *
Practicum Hours

Students will complete 105 hours of practicum work for each practicum experience as follows:

- During Autumn and Spring semesters practicum students will need to be at their practicum sites 7 hours per week through the 15th week of the semester (10.5 hours per week through the 10th week during Summer semester). The exact schedule must be approved by the Practicum Coordinator and Mentor Teacher. Best practice guidelines will include attending practicums:
  - During peak times when children are in attendance and awake.
  - When their Mentor Teacher is typically in the classroom.
  - At least two times per week to allow for building and sustaining relationships with children, families, and staff.
  - Primarily with the same group of children for all of their practicum hours.
  - When parental interactions take place.

The Practicum Experience Team and the Responsibilities of Each Team Member

A. The ECDE Practicum Coordinator
- Provides Practicum Orientation and reviews practicum materials with students
- Makes the initial contact with the director of a given early childhood program to arrange placement opportunities for students
- Assigns practicum students to a practicum site and notifies students of their assignment
- Assigns ECDE Faculty Coaches to visit students at their practicum sites

B. The Practicum Student
- After placement in a practicum site by the Practicum Coordinator, the student contacts the director of the center to set up an appointment for a practicum site orientation visit and schedule their days/hours at the center
- Provides copy of BCI, FBI, Medical Form, and Nonconviction Statement to site director
- Is dependable and punctual during agreed upon practicum hours
• In case of absences, calls before scheduled starting time (repeated absences without calling the practicum site may result in dismissal from the practicum experience)
• Makes up absences to complete hour requirements and assignments
• Begins each new practicum placement with a period of observation to identify the philosophy of the program, learns the names of the children and adults, become accustomed to the daily schedule, observes classroom events to aid in planning activities, etc.
• Plans and implements approved activities and Take Over Days with assistance from the Mentor Teacher
• Takes increasing responsibility for a group of children while under the guidance of a Mentor Teacher
• Participates in midterm and final evaluations of their practicum work, as well as participating in daily reflections of their time in the classroom, with the Mentor Teacher
• Returns completed Practicum Midterm/Final Evaluation forms to the seminar instructor by the scheduled due dates
• Submits at the end of the semester, a signed (by the student and Mentor Teacher) original Practicum Attendance Record form documenting the hours at the practicum site

C. The CSCC ECDE Seminar/Practicum Instructor
• Supports students in their practicum experience by guiding discussions about developmentally appropriate practices
• Leads and assists students with reflections on what they have discovered about the needs and interests of the children in the classroom that should be used to plan activities that acknowledge and support these needs and interests
• Guides students to determine and consider the teaching strategies and philosophy observed in the classroom to evaluate what they would implement in their own classrooms, what they would change, and why
• Brainstorms ideas for activity implementation and/or problem solving scenarios that may arise within the classroom setting

D. The CSCC ECDE Faculty Coach
• Evaluates and approves all Activity Plans and Take Over Day Plans
• Works with the student and the Mentor Teacher to coordinate approved activities and evaluate growth and potential of the student based on practicum observation visits, seminars and course work
• Schedules and arranges three visits with the student
• Observes and evaluates the student during placement at the practicum site
• Meets with the student immediately following an observation for a follow-up conference
• Provides student with typed feedback within one week of the visit
• Reviews practicum evaluations, the Practicum Notebook and the student’s attendance form during the visit
• Works with the student and the Mentor Teacher to help ensure a successful practicum experience
E. The Practicum Site Director
- Arranges and conducts the practicum site orientation visit
- Explains the program’s philosophy, goals and expectations
- Offers encouragement to the work of the student, finding ways to assist and support the relationship between the student and the Mentor Teacher for a successful practicum experience

F. The Mentor Teacher
- Guides/supervises the student at the practicum placement site
- Provides opportunities for students to practice implementing appropriate child development and child care theories
- Gives the student increased responsibility as the student is ready but does not use the student as a staff substitute
- Discusses and approves Activity Plans, and offers written feedback on the student’s implementation of the plans
- Completes the Practicum Midterm/Final Evaluation Form with the student
- Monitors attendance and completion of Activity Plans

Expectations of the Practicum Experience

1. Orientations:
Students participate in three separate orientations:
- **Practicum 1 Orientation with the ECDE Practicum Coordinator**
  This orientation is required. The Practicum Coordinator conducts this Practicum 1 orientation before students participate in their first practicum placement. Students submit completed copies of the required practicum forms to the Practicum Coordinator at the Practicum 1 Orientation:
  - a BCI fingerprint/background check results report
  - an FBI fingerprint/background check results report
  - a current medical form
  - a signed Nonconviction Statement form
  - a Practicum Placement Request form

- An overview of the practicum experience, requirements, procedures and responsibilities will be reviewed. Students may not begin their practicum experience until they have attended this practicum orientation and submitted completed forms.

- **Practicum Site Orientation Visit**
  It is the student’s responsibility to arrange the practicum site orientation visit after placement in a practicum site by the Practicum Coordinator. This orientation is designed to acquaint the student with the practicum site and should include:
  - Introductions
  - Practicum site tour
  - Program philosophy
  - Oral/written guidelines
Policies and procedures, including dress code
- Official forms/paperwork
- Hours and days of operation (including any days that the center may be closed during the semester), special events, holidays, weather policy, etc.

Students will take a Letter of Agreement form to the practicum site director which will need to be filled out, indicating the days and hours the student will be at the practicum site, and signed by the practicum site director. Students must return the Letter of Agreement form to the ECDE Practicum Coordinator by the indicated due date. **If the Letter of Agreement form is not returned by the specified due date, the student is choosing to forfeit his/her participation in practicum for the upcoming semester.**

**Orientation with the Mentor Teacher**
It is the student’s responsibility to arrange a meeting with the Mentor Teacher. The meeting should include:
- The student sharing a syllabus and practicum assignment information and assignment due dates with the Mentor Teacher
- Classroom procedures
- Daily schedule/routine
- Oral/written guidelines
- Location/storage of materials and supplies
- Allergies, medical concerns of children
- Questions the student has about the practicum site

**2. Attendance:**
- Students must begin attending and participating at their assigned practicum placement site the first week of the semester.
- Practicum students will document their attendance at their practicum site on the Practicum Attendance Record form.
- Practicum Attendance Record forms are to be **posted at the practicum site** and initialed at the end of each week by the student’s Mentor Teacher. The student and the Mentor Teacher will sign the completed Attendance Record form before turning in the original copy at the end of the semester. The Practicum Attendance Record form must be submitted by the Friday before Finals week.
- **Students must remain current with their practicum hours. Any student who does not meet this requirement and falls more than a week behind on hours must have a written plan for how these hours will be made up. Students may be required to drop the practicum if they become two weeks behind in hours.**
- Students are expected to adhere to the scheduled hours at their practicum site. Any missed hours must be made up. Not showing up, not calling to report an absence, tardiness, leaving early, etc. may lead to dismissal from the practicum site.

**3. Participation:**
Student participation at the practicum placement site includes, but is not limited to:
- Getting to know the children and adults
- Observing children, teachers and classroom happenings
- Getting to know routines and procedures
• One-on-one interaction with a child or small group activity
• Planning and implementing activities that are based on and support the needs and interests of the children

Confidentiality

It is the responsibility of the student to respect the rights of families and the program. Confidentiality is especially important. Any breach of confidentiality may result in dismissal from the practicum site and/or the ECDE Program. Specifically, the student should not:
• Discuss a child or family member within his/her hearing or when other children or adults are present
• Give information to parents about their child unless the Mentor Teacher has granted permission
• Attempt to represent, evaluate or interpret the program within the community unless granted permission by the director of the program
• Discuss the children, families or the program staff outside of the early childhood classroom to which he/she is assigned
• Discuss anything spoken in confidence within the seminar class outside of that setting

Professionalism

Students are to exhibit professional attitudes and ethics while working in the early childhood setting. Any breach in professionalism may result in dismissal from the practicum site and/or the ECDE Program.

Specifically, students are to:
• Develop a professional, appropriate relationship with their Mentor Teacher, center staff, and the children and families at the center
• Communicate responsibly, appropriately and respectfully with all team members by telephone and electronic correspondence
• Consider children first when planning and implementing activities
• Do not diagnose and/or label children
• Dress appropriately at all times, adhering to the dress code established by the center
• Do not use cell phones while in the classroom with children
• Do not post pictures, commentary, or any other information about the children, families, practicum site, or practicum experience on social media.
• Odor Policy: Please be aware that many people have sensitivities to odors. Please do not wear perfume or strong smelling lotion to your practicum site. If you are a smoker, please refrain from smoking before you go to your practicum site and wear fresh clothing or plan to change your clothes and wash up when you get to your site. Also, please do not print your course work in a home where people smoke. Assignments from the home of a smoker tend to have a strong odor. It is
unprofessional to share these documents with mentor teachers and/or the families of children at your practicum sites. Also, please do not store ECDE Lab materials in a home with smoking.

**Emotional Stability**

Because both academic and interpersonal skills are needed to be successful in the practicum and in the profession of Early Childhood, you will be required to meet the standards and expectations that are determined necessary to effectively work with young children. Emotional stability is the capacity to maintain one’s emotional balance under stressful circumstances and to demonstrate appropriate expression of emotion. This is necessary so that you may support children in their own social-emotional development.

Students should:

- respond compassionately to challenging students and situations
- re-direct student behavior appropriately
- practice respectful communication and problem-solving
- do not discuss your own personal problems/difficulties in classroom, on discussion board postings, or at the practicum placement site
- recognize and manage your own emotions
- understand how your emotional responses impact others
- Seek professional help when problems are impeding performance.

Students who are experiencing difficult life circumstances must be able to remain professional when interacting with faculty, children and site staff. Students experiencing personal issues should seek appropriate professional help.

Please be aware that should there be concerns about your performance or behavior, the appropriate people will communicate with you. If at any time the faculty or the site staff has significant concerns about your performance or behaviors in the classroom, you may be removed from practicum.

**Liability**

Liability insurance is required and is paid for by lab fees through Columbus State Community College. For the protection of students and the practicum placement program, students should not attempt to administer first aid or move an injured child unless directed by the teacher in charge. Students should report all bumps, cuts, falls, bites, etc. to the Mentor Teacher immediately. The Mentor Teacher is responsible for the classroom and children at all times. Students are not to be left alone with children and cannot be counted in ratio.
Practicum Evaluations

1. Evaluations by the Mentor Teacher:
   Students must schedule two formal evaluation sessions with the Mentor Teacher during the semester, meeting together at midterm and at the end of the semester to discuss and complete the Practicum Midterm/Final Evaluation Form.

2. Evaluations by a CSCC ECDE Faculty Coach:
   Students are visited three times during the semester by an assigned ECDE Faculty Coach.

   Observations made by ECDE Faculty Coaches assess quality of teaching skills, degree of competence, depth of knowledge and theory and demonstrated evidence of attitude and values. Students are observed while working directly with children in early childhood settings. The criteria for the evaluations include:
   - Meeting objectives for each practicum experience
   - Child development theory
   - Professionalism
   - Interactions and rapport with children
   - Implementation of an activity
   - Follow-up conferences

3. Self-Evaluations:
   As evaluation in a continual process, students should reflect daily upon their time in the classroom and engage their Mentor Teacher in these reflections, seeking feedback concerning daily classroom events, interactions and communication between themselves and the children, and interactions and communication between themselves and their Mentor Teacher.

Scheduling Practicum Observations with an ECDE Faculty Coach

The ECDE Practicum Coordinator will assign an ECDE Faculty Coach to each practicum student. Faculty Coaches will contact students by phone or through email to arrange dates and times for observations. Students are to respond promptly to their Faculty Coach when contacted to schedule observation visits. Once the arrangements have been made, it is the student’s responsibility to:
   - Confirm the observation dates with the Mentor Teacher and practicum site director
   - Arrange for a three-way conference between the student, the Mentor Teacher and the Faculty Coach during at least one of the visits
   - Contact the Faculty Coach, if it is necessary, to reschedule for any reason
   - Supply a hard copy of the Activity Plan and/or Take Over Day Plan to the Faculty Coach on the observation day (plans must be approved with appropriate signatures of the Faculty Coach and the Mentor Teacher before implementation)
   - Present the Practicum Notebook and the Practicum Attendance Record form to the Faculty Coach for review
Each visit will last approximately 1 - 1.5 hours. During the second and third visits the student will implement planned activities and/or group times and Take Over Day responsibilities. The Faculty Coach will also observe the student’s interaction with children and adults in the room and the day to day routine. The Faculty Coach will complete the appropriate forms, will review them with the student, and send typed feedback to student (see the ECDE Student Community on Blackboard for a copy of the Practicum Observation Forms).

The following will result in a score/grade of ‘0’ for an observation:
- Failing to respond promptly to your Faculty Coach’s email or phone call when you are contacted to schedule your observation
- Failing to notify your Faculty Coach of an absence on the day of a scheduled observation
- Not having a curriculum plan to implement that has been approved by the Faculty Coach and Mentor Teacher on the day of the scheduled observation
- Failing to bring and/or have supplies ready for your Take Over Day and/or Activity Plan on the day of the scheduled observation

**Practicum Site Qualification**

The educational philosophy of the practicum site’s program should be primarily that of the constructivist model. This model emphasizes development of the whole child. There should be evidence that the child’s growth in language, motor skills, cognition and social-emotional skills are all considered in planning daily curriculum activities.

This curriculum should consist of, to a large extent, activities which are:
- Developmentally appropriate
- Indoors and outdoors
- Based on a child’s self-directed participation
- Enhanced by a strong parent involvement program
- Reflects best practices as suggested by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

Play should be valued as an important means through which the child integrates knowledge, skills and feelings.

The daily schedule should provide for long periods of uninterrupted play in which the child is free to choose or to change activities according to his or her needs. The schedule should also offer opportunities for group interactions and one-on-one interactions between children and teachers, enhancing learning experiences.

The teacher’s role is to design the interest centers, group times, individual learning experiences and routine activities in accordance with the overall philosophy of the child development model and in accordance with specific learning objectives for children’s growth in each area of development. For much of the time, the teacher should serve as
a resource and support person for the children’s spontaneous, self-initiated learning in the various interest centers.

**Mentor Teacher Qualifications**

The Mentor Teacher must have:
- a Bachelor’s degree (preferred) in Early Care and Education or Early Childhood Development and at least three years of teaching experience with children ages birth to five years old
  - **OR** -
- an Associate’s degree in Early Care and Education or Early Childhood Development and/or Education and at least three years of teaching experience with children ages birth to five years old

**Guidelines and Ideas for Involvement in the Classroom**

- Children need time to get to know you; give them the time and space they need.
- Approach those children who are ready to be friendly with you
- Show your interest by looking, listening and responding to children
- Use names quickly as you learn them
- Be friendly and smile
- Listen carefully to what children say
- Look for ways to scaffold children as needed or requested, encouraging and allowing them to attempt tasks themselves
- Read to children who are interested in a book, listen to a child read to you, and/or write down a child’s story to read to him/her
- Lead songs and finger plays
- Assist with materials and classroom set up for an activity
- Assist children on the playground
- Encourage care of equipment and materials
- Help maintain safety of children indoors and out
- Assist teachers with routines and transitions to help ensure less waiting times for children and for smoother transitions from one activity to another

**Policy on Repeating Seminar/Practicum**

- A student must pass the Seminar/Practicum with a “C” or higher (70% or higher) before taking the next Seminar/Practicum in the sequence.
- A student who is dismissed from a practicum will not receive an alternate placement within the same semester. A dismissal from a practicum may result in a student not being eligible for practicum placement in an upcoming semester and/or, depending on the severity of the reason for the dismissal, being terminated from the ECDE program.
• A student who withdraws from or fails a practicum must repeat the Seminar/Practicum before moving on to the next Seminar/Practicum. The student must also meet with their advisor to discuss ways to be successful in a subsequent practicum.

• In the event that you earn a D or an E in Seminar/Practicum, you become ineligible to take the next Seminar/Practicum in the sequence. Any formal challenges (i.e. grade grievance) of the D or E must begin immediately following the grade posting which means the grievance process must begin during finals week of the current semester. This is necessary so that the matter can be resolved within the first two weeks of the subsequent semester and, if the grade is overturned, you do not have to miss extensive hours in your next seminar and practicum. If the grade is upheld, the student will be moved to the appropriate Seminar/Practicum, if a site is available, so it can be repeated.
Frequently Asked Questions

- If I already have a background check, may I use that one?
  Yes, in some cases. If the original background check was processed for working in childcare and was completed within the last 12 months, you may request a copy of the background check be sent directly to the Practicum Coordinator. Please see the practicum coordinator for special instructions on how to do this.

- May I complete fewer than 105 (315 total) hours if I already work in a childcare center?
  No. All 315 hours are required, even if you already work in the field.

- May I complete my practicums at the same site?
  No. In order for you to get a wide range of experiences, we require that each practicum be completed at a different center.

- If I work in the field, may I complete my practicum at my place of employment?
  Yes, under certain circumstances and with Faculty approval. If you are currently working at a high-quality early childhood center, you may be able to complete 1 of your 3 practicum experiences at your place of employment. (This option is NOT available for Practicum 3 Administration placements)

  Some recommendations for qualifying might include:
  - 3-Star Step Up to Quality rated
  - NAECY accredited
  - Highly-qualified mentor teachers. (a minimum of an associate’s degree in early childhood development and 3 years of experience)

  You will need to make arrangements with your center director to allow for the following:
  - Practicum hours must be carried out in a classroom that is different from your own
  - You must be under the guidance of a qualified mentor teacher
  - You should not be paid for your practicum hours
  - You should not be counted in ratio while you are completing your practicum hours

*Please keep in mind, if your place of employment is not already a center we have a contract with, we need ample time to meet the center director, visit the center and sign the agreement. If there is not enough time to complete the formal process, the request may not be approved until the subsequent practicum.
In order to be considered for a placement at your place of employment, you will need to complete an Application to Complete Practicum at Place of Employment Form. ECDE Faculty will evaluate your application and notify you of the decision.

- **Can I be placed at a center that is not on the Practicum Site Contact Information List?**

  Maybe. If you would like us to consider a placement at a center we do not already have a contract with, please contact the Practicum Coordinator with details about the center. If requests are made in a timely manner and the center is approved by ECDE Faculty, this may be an option. Please keep in mind that all placements must go through the Practicum Coordinator and cannot be arranged by students or center directors without approval from the ECDE Faculty and Practicum Coordinator.
# Appendix A: Prohibited Offenses

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prohibitive Offenses found in division (A)(5) of section 109.572 of the Revised Code</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Homicide</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>R.C. 2903.01 - Aggravated murder</td>
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<td>R.C. 2903.02 - Murder</td>
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<td>R.C. 2903.03 - Voluntary manslaughter</td>
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<td>R.C. 2903.04 - Involuntary manslaughter</td>
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<td><strong>Assault</strong></td>
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<td>R.C. 2903.11 - Felonious assault</td>
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<tr>
<td>R.C. 2903.12 - Aggravated assault</td>
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<td>R.C. 2903.13 - Assault</td>
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<td>R.C. 2903.14 - Failing to provide for a functionally impaired person</td>
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<td><strong>Manslaughter</strong></td>
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<td>R.C. 2903.15 - Permitting child abuse</td>
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<td>R.C. 2903.21 - Aggravated menacing</td>
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<tr>
<td>R.C. 2903.31 - Maiming by stabbing</td>
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<tr>
<td>R.C. 2903.32 - Maiming</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Patient abuse and neglect</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>R.C. 2903.34 - Patient abuse, neglect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kidnapping and related offenses</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>R.C. 2903.01 - Kidnapping</td>
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<tr>
<td>R.C. 2903.02 - Abduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>R.C. 2903.04 - Child stealing (as this law existed prior to July 1, 1990)</td>
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<tr>
<td>R.C. 2903.01 - Criminal child enticement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.C. 2903.32 - Trafficking in persons</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sex offenses</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>R.C. 2907.02 - Rape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.C. 2907.03 - Sexual battery</td>
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<tr>
<td>R.C. 2907.04 - Corruption of minor</td>
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<tr>
<td>R.C. 2907.05 - Gross sexual imposition</td>
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<td>R.C. 2907.06 - Sexual imposition</td>
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<tr>
<td>R.C. 2907.07 - Impersonating</td>
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<tr>
<td>R.C. 2907.08 - Voyeurism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.C. 2907.09 - Public indecency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.C. 2907.12 - Felonious sexual penetration (as this former section of law existed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>R.C. 2907.13 - Commercial sexual exploitation of a minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.C. 2907.21 - Compelling prostitution</td>
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<tr>
<td>R.C. 2907.22 - Promoting prostitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.C. 2907.32 - Procuring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.C. 2907.24 - Soliciting - after positive HIV test driven license suspension</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Prostitution</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.C. 2907.31 - Child-prostitution matter harmful to juveniles</td>
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<tr>
<td>R.C. 2907.32 - Prostitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.C. 2907.33 - Passed solicitation involving a minor</td>
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<tr>
<td>R.C. 2907.32 - Prostitution involving a minor</td>
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<tr>
<td>R.C. 2907.33 - Illegal use of a minor in nudity-oriented material or performance</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Arson</strong></td>
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<td>R.C. 2905.02 - Aggravated arson</td>
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<tr>
<td>R.C. 2905.21 - Soliciting or providing support for act of terrorism</td>
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<tr>
<td>R.C. 2905.22 - Terrorism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.C. 2905.03 - Arson</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Robbery and burglary</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.C. 2901.01 - Aggravated robbery</td>
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<tr>
<td>R.C. 2901.02 - Robbery</td>
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<tr>
<td>R.C. 2901.11 - Aggravated burglary</td>
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<tr>
<td>R.C. 2901.12 - Burglary</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Theft and fraud</strong></td>
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<td>R.C. 2913.03 - Theft, aggravated theft</td>
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<td>R.C. 2913.08 - Unauthorized use of a vehicle</td>
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<tr>
<td>R.C. 2913.04 - Unauthorized use of property, computer, cable, or telecommunications property or service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.C. 2913.02 - Attraction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.C. 2913.04 - Possession or use of unauthorized cable television device</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.C. 2913.33 - Making or using fake identification cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.C. 2913.03 - Telecommunications fraud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.C. 2913.06 - Unlawful use of telecommunications</td>
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<tr>
<td>R.C. 2913.11 - Possessing bad checks</td>
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*Or an existing or former offense of any municipal corporation, this state or any other state, or the United States that is substantially equivalent to any of these offenses.*
Appendix B: Handbook Acknowledgement Form

Division of Health and Human Services
Early Childhood Development and Education

Practicum Handbook Acknowledgement Form

I, ____________________________, hereby agree that I have received and read a copy of the Early Childhood Development and Education Practicum Handbook.

I hereby attest that I understand the essentials for successful Practicum completion. I further attest that I am able to meet these standards and requirements, without difficulty or with reasonable accommodations, consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). I understand that my signature on this form does not guarantee progression in the program.

I understand that the evaluation process occurs in the classroom, at practicum sites, during conferences with faculty and mentor teachers and during interactions with peers. I am aware that should there be a concern about my suitability for Practicum, I will need to meet with the appropriate persons (advisor and/or chairperson) to discuss any issues arising from my behavior.

I am aware that a breach of these expectations or the student code of conduct, including, but not limited to, confidentiality in the field practice experience or seminar will result in disciplinary action which may include removal from Practicum.

As a student, I understand that I am expected to view, read and will be held to the expectations as revisions are made and posted on the ECDE Student Community in Blackboard.

Furthermore, it is understood that in signing this Acknowledgement Form, I agree to abide by the College policies and procedures, student handbook, course syllabi, and requirements in the College catalog.

____________________________________  __________________________________
(Student’s Printed Name)               (Student’s CID)

____________________________________  __________________________________
(Student’s Signature)                  (Date Signed)

____________________________________  __________________________________
(Signature of Practicum Coordinator)   (Date Signed)