The Certificate in Early Childhood—Transdisciplinary Education and Mental Health (EC-TEaMH) is an interdisciplinary graduate certificate program focusing on professional preparation and skills enhancement of early childhood educators who work with young children who demonstrate socio-emotional and behavioral problems and their parents.

The EC-TEaMH Certificate Program meets the needs of early childhood education professionals by providing appropriate field-based training for recognizing and responding to behavioral challenges in effective ways. The EC-TEaMH Certificate Program focuses on professional preparation and skills enhancement of early childhood educators who work with young children who demonstrate socio-emotional and behavioral problems. In accordance with Congressional recommendations, the training certificate will instruct and mentor early childhood educators to implement early intervention behavioral support services based on the Response to Intervention (RTI) and the Recognition and Response models to children and staff on their site. These skilled and well-trained early childhood professionals will reduce the level of risk, enhance developmental outcomes, and therefore reduce costs of future needed interventions for these children when they are attending school. The certificate program follows the training Guidelines and Personnel Competencies for Infant-Family and Early Childhood developed by Childhood Mental Health Training Guidelines Workgroup, 2009.

Justification for the Program:

Socio-emotional development in the early years is among the most critical foundations to school readiness (Walsh, 2004). The National Academy of Science study “From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development” listed intellectual skills, motivation to learn, health, and socio-emotional development as the key qualities needed for success in school. Greenspan (1999) emphasizes the role of social competence in intellectual functioning. Brain research indicates that the critical period for emotional control is from 9-months to two years. The critical period for peer relations is from 3-6 years of age. No doubt that the first years of life are critical, as about 90% of the brain has developed by age 3 (Perry, 2001). This certificate program will prepare early childhood educators to provide socio-emotional and behavioral support to children attending their programs and their families.

The numbers of young children who experience poor socio-emotional development has been on the rise, often resulting in challenging behaviors: “Approximately 10-15% of typically developing children have chronic mild to moderate levels of behavior problems” (Timm & Fox, 2006, p. 1). A study conducted by The Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center (2002) found similar results: “40% of preschoolers exhibit at least one antisocial behavior each day, 24% exhibit three or more per day and 10% exhibit six or more antisocial behaviors each day” (page 7). Warash, Curtis, Hursh, & Tucci (2008) stressed that: “With the growing numbers of children with disabilities and challenging behaviors in regular preschool classrooms, it is essential for early childhood teachers to have the skills to identify and help all learners. If children do not have competencies to listen, observe, participate, talk, and problem solve, then they cannot function in a developmentally appropriate classroom or go beyond their developmental potentials” (p. 441). The most needed area of support is problem behaviors in the classroom.

Because many teachers feel unprepared to address the needs of children with challenging behaviors, an alarming number of children are being expelled from preschool (Gilliam, 2005). According to a national survey, state-funded programs report a rate of 6.7 expulsions per 1,000 preschoolers enrolled (Gilliam, 2005, 2008). Rates were higher for older preschoolers and African Americans. Boys were more than 4 ½ times more likely to be expelled than girls. Pre Kindergarten administrators during Fall 2005 indicated that two-third of the state Pre Kindergarten (PK) systems either explicitly allowed expulsion or left the decision to local providers (Gilliam, 2008). In the private childcare sector, which is less regulated, expulsion rates are even higher, ranging from 10 expulsions per 1,000 enrolled preschoolers in Colorado (Hoover, 2006) to more than 27 per 1,000 in Massachusetts (Massachusetts, Department of Education, 2003) and in the Detroit area (Gilliam 2006).
Many teachers often feel unequipped to meet the needs of children who are emotionally delayed or who exhibit social emotional problems. Thus, the challenges of working with these children also negatively affect teachers’ job satisfaction and leads to stress and burnout (Hemmeter, Corso, & Cheatham, 2006; Kaufmann & Wischman, 1999). In a statewide random-controlled study, Gilliam (2007) found that childcare sites that receive mental health consultations had significant decreases in teacher-rated acting-out behavior problems when compared to sites that did not receive these services with the most significant effects in the areas of oppositional behaviors and hyperactivity. However, there are clearly not enough mental health professionals to meet these needs (Zero to Three, 2004).

The EC-TEaMH certificate program is aligned with the five core standards of the National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC):

1) Promoting child development and learning (understand development and what influences it; use this understanding to create great environments where all children can thrive)
2) Building family and community relationships (understand and value children’s families and communities; create respectful reciprocal relationships and involve families)
3) Observing, documenting, and assessing (understand assessments and its purpose; use effective assessment strategies to influence development)
4) Teaching and learning, (use developmentally effective teaching and learning strategies and content areas to give all children the experiences that promote comprehensive development and learning)
5) Becoming a professional (identify themselves with the early childhood profession). Use ethical and professional standards.

Clientele
This graduate certificate program is targeted to current and future professionals who are or intend to become early childhood socio-emotional and behavior regulation intervention specialists. The potential clients are from the fields of early childhood education, special education, counseling, school psychology, social work, marriage and family therapy, psychology, or related areas.

Curriculum Outline and Course Description
Twenty program units are required to earn a Certificate in Early Childhood Socio Emotional and Behavior Regulation Intervention Specialist Program (EC-TEaMH). Twelve units of seminar courses addressing core knowledge foundations and eight units of practicum/field experience/on-site coaching. Eighteen units of the certificate program may be applied to the master’s degree in Child Development, if applicable.

Course Requirements (15 units):
The EC-TEaMH Certificate is modeled following the Delivery of Infant-Family and Early Mental Health Services Revised Training Guidelines and Personnel Competencies proposed by the California’s Infant, Preschool & Family Mental Health Initiative (2009). It includes two main domains: Knowledge and Experience. The knowledge base is comprised of four foundation classes. Two practicum courses, that include clinical experience/supervision in early childhood settings and programs, are accompanied by Reflective Practice Facilitation (total of 120 hours of supervised practicum), as well as on-site coaching consultation. Courses will be offered in the evenings to meet the needs of working professionals.

Core courses KNOWLEDGE AREA (12 Units):
CFD 670: Seminar in Child Development Theories-Intervention and Prevention (3)

CFD 580: Observation and Assessment of Young Children’s Environments and Relationships (3)

CFD 671: Seminar in Human Development: Positive Behavior Support for Young Children with Challenging Behavior (3)

SPED 676 Advanced Applied Behavior Analysis (3)
Field Experience/Practicum-EXPERIENCE AREA (3 Units)

CFD 697A-Advanced Field Experience (1.5 units each semester; 120 hours of supervised practicum) includes ethics of scope of practice and cultural competency working with ethnically diverse group of children and families. Students will receive Reflective Practice Facilitation which includes individual and small group integrative experience that supports the exploration of how to apply relevant theories and knowledge bases to working with children, families, and their staff to provide behavior support and relationship-based interactions. Reflection on the experiences, thoughts, and feelings involved in doing this work; to understand the family’s culture and the parents’ and young childrens’ (0-5) interpersonal perspective; and to explore possible approaches to working effectively with them are to be utilized.

Students must complete the core courses with at least a 3.0 (B) grade point average to earn the EC-TEaMH Certificate.

Detailed Program:

Semester I

CFD 670: Seminar in Child Development Theories-Intervention and Prevention (3): The course addresses Theories and Approaches to Emotional Regulation in Childcare and Home Settings. It focuses on attachment and affect regulation theories as they relate to emotional regulation and child development; brain structure and development to gain an understanding of the primary regulatory sites in the brain associated with emotional regulation and the role of the early parent-child relationship in brain development; “Ghosts” in the nursery, understanding of typical versus atypical development found in infants, toddlers (DC-0-3), and preschoolers; comprehension of the experience dependent nature of the attachment strategies associated with emotional regulation and dysregulation; differentiation and identification of signs of healthy, secure emotional regulation from unhealthy, insecure emotional dysregulation as found on a childcare site; and, learning how to make and implement a “regulation” plan based upon observation and available information found on a childcare site or at home.

CFD 580 Observation and Assessment of Young Children’s Environments and Relationships (3) increases the capacity of EC professionals to recognize and assess risk factors and early signs of socio-emotional and behavior problems. The course provides students in EC-TEaMH certificate program with a fundamental understanding of ecobehavioral assessment techniques and procedures that are directly linked to school readiness and socio-behavioral interventions for children ages 0-5 in early childhood settings. Functional behavioral assessment methodologies, which are designed to identify the environmental conditions (antecedents & consequences) that control and maintain problem behavior, are the central focus of this class. Function-based assessment provides a systematic and analytic method to determine the function that a given behavior serves.

Semester II

CFD 671: Seminar in Human Development: Positive Behavior Support for Young Children with Challenging Behavior (3) is designed to prepare prospective and practicing early childhood professionals to implement developmental guidance practices and positive behavior support interventions for young children from birth through age 5 working with parents. This course emphasizes current best practices in providing appropriate environments and designing, implementing and evaluating individual interventions to promote emotional development, social skills, and appropriate behavior in the context of home- and center-based early care and education programs. This course provides the foundation for RTI (Response To Intervention) to
promote developmentally appropriate environment and relationship-based program for young children to reduce the probability for behavioral and emotional problems.

**SPED 676 Advanced Applied Behavior Analysis (3)** provides trainees with the capacity to respond appropriately to children identified with emotional and behavioral problems and their families. This course is designed to introduce Early Childhood Education students to scientifically validated applications of the principles and methods of behavior analysis for building a variety of skills in young children who exhibit behavioral and socio-emotional problems in their classrooms. Part of the trainee’s task is to apply the principles and methods with young children in classroom settings.

**Field Experience/Practicum-EXPERIENCE AREA (3 Units)** CFD 697A-Advanced Field Experience (1.5 units each semester; 120 hours of supervised practicum) includes ethics of scope of practice and cultural competency working with ethnically diverse group of children and families. Students will receive Reflective Practice Facilitation, which includes individual and small group integrative experience that supports the exploration of how to apply relevant theories and knowledge bases to working with children, families, and their staff to provide behavior support and relationship-based interactions. Reflection on the experiences, thoughts, and feelings involved in doing this work; to understand the family’s culture and the parents’ and young children’s (0-5) interpersonal perspective; and to explore possible approaches to working effectively with them are to be utilized.

In addition to weekly group supervision provided by the field experience course supervisor, each student receives individual reflective supervision sessions (bi-monthly). The practicum field experience courses (CFD 697A) are offered each semester. According to *The California Infant, Preschool & Family Mental Health Initiative: Revised Training Guidelines and Recommended Personnel Competencies* (2009), the reflective supervision and practice when working with very young children is essential as it “involves a focus on relationships, qualitative improvement, support and the investment of self in the intervention and treatment process” (p.12). This type of supervision can be provided in the context of an academic setting as coursework. “This need for reflective supervision is particularly evident as assessment, diagnostic, reporting and intervention skills are developing” (p. 13).