Key Licensure Assessment #6: Family Advocacy Project
Early Childhood Education: EDUC 591
Overview
Graduate Initial Teacher Preparation Program
Educator Preparation Unit
Muskingum University

1. Description of the Assessment and Its Use in the Program

Collaborating with families is introduced in EDUC 528 (Learning Differences and Exceptionalities) and is systematically reinforced in every education course thereafter, but especially so in EDUC 591 (Family-Centered Practices) wherein candidates complete a 20-hour practicum with an agency that works directly with families and children either from birth-3 years of age or from 3-5 years of age. Typically, candidates are placed with Help Me Grow service coordinators throughout a three to four county region surrounding the college, or another appropriate Pre-K setting with collaborative ties to families. It is during this field placement that candidates collaborate with a service provider/teacher/intervention specialist and a family to write an Individual Family Services Plan (IFSP) or an Individual Education Plan (IEP), depending on the agency and the age of the children with whom they work.

The Family Advocacy Project consists of a series of field-based observations, interviews, home visits, and collaborations with a service provider related to a selected child and family. The candidate gathers and summarizes child and family data, collaborates with a service provider to assess the growth and development of the child of the family with whom the candidate is working, writes reflection papers focusing on the work with the service provider and the families, and collaboratively develops an IFSP or IEP that could drive future service delivery.

To be admitted into clinical practice at Gateway 3, a candidate must complete Key Licensure Assessments #6 - #8 (Family Advocacy Project, Thematic Unit, and Child Study) with at least 80% of the key elements of the NAEYC standards across the three assessments rated at meets key element and no key element rated unacceptable.

2. Description of How the Assessment Specifically Aligns with the National Council for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Standards (2010)

The following key elements of the NAEYC standards are evaluated through this key licensure assessment.

| Key Element 2a: | Knows about and understands diverse family and community characteristics
| Key Element 2b: | Supports and engages families and communities through respectful, reciprocal relationships
| Key Element 2c: | Involves families and communities in young children’s development and learning
| Key Element 3b: | Knows about assessment partnerships with families and with professional colleagues to build effective learning environments
| Key Element 6a: | Identifies and involves oneself with the early childhood field
| Key Element 6b: | Knows about and upholds ethical standards and other early childhood professional guidelines
| Key Element 6c: | Engages in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice; using technology effectively with young children, with peers, and as a professional resource
| Key Element 6d: | Integrates knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives on early education
| Key Element 6e: | Engages in informed advocacy for young children and the early childhood profession
3. **Assessment Instrument**

**Family Advocacy Project Guidelines**

**Purpose of the Assignment:** This assignment is designed to document the candidate’s ability to 1) know about and understand family and community characteristics; support and empower families and communities through respectful, reciprocal, relationships; and involve families and communities in their children’s development and learning, and 2) know about and uphold ethical standards and other professional guidelines; engage in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice; and engage in informed advocacy for children and the profession.

**Description:** The IFSP/IEP Family Advocacy Project is a series of field-based observations and interviews related to a selected child and family and for which the candidate gathers and summarizes student and family data, writes reflection papers and collaboratively develops an IFSP or IEP that could drive future service delivery.

**Directions:**

1. Observe the procedures at the site.
   
   Do the families bring the child to the door?  
   What do the families say/do?  
   What does the teacher say/do?  
   What are the children doing?  
   What other professionals assist the child and/or the parents?  
   What are some of the things these other professionals say/do?  
   Write a 1-2 page reflection on your observations and keep for later use.

2. Interview the cooperating teacher, head/lead teacher, or director at the agency/school using these sample questions and others you believe are relevant.
   
   What services does the agency offer families?  
   What is the first contact made by the agency/families with the families/agency?  
   To what extent and in what ways are the families involved with the agency?  
   Are there special programs or facilities for the families?  
   Are there special programs or facilities for the children at this or another site?  
   Write a 1-2 page reflection on your interview and keep for later use.

3. Interview a parent/family member of a child being served by the agency about his/her experiences at the agency. Have the confidentiality form signed and ready for documentation.
   
   What is the relationship between home and the agency?  
   Does the family member believe his/her opinions are valued?  
   Does the child enjoy his/her time at the agency?  
   What are the things the family brings to the table – what strengths, resources and needs does the family have?  
   What are the hopes and dreams the family has for the child?  
   What are some specific goals the family and the agency have been working toward together?  
   What does the family believe will be the short- and long-term benefits of working with the agency for both the child and the family?  
   What other concerns does the family have about the child and/or the agency?  
   Write a 1-2 page reflection on your interview and keep for later use.
4. Attend either a home visit or a parent/teacher conference.

What is the nature of the visit/conference?
Is the visit routine or due to special circumstances?
What was discussed and/or done at the visit?
What was the outcome of the visit/conference?

Describe the relationship between the agency professional and the family.
Write a 1-2 page reflection on your experiences and keep for later use.

5. As a team member, assist in the development or modification of an IFSP/IEP.

The guidelines to be used in completing the Family Advocacy Project are articulated below:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Element</th>
<th>Guidelines for Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2a: knows about and understands diverse family and community characteristics</td>
<td>Candidate writes a reflection paper detailing how the IFSP will address the strengths, needs, and resources of the family/child using information from the sections listed above.</td>
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<td>2b: supports and engages families and communities through respectful, reciprocal relationships</td>
<td>Candidate writes a reflection paper detailing how the process that the Birth to Three organization engages with the family during and as part of the development of the IFSP and how the process empowers the family to be self-sufficient and/or self-child-advocates.</td>
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<td>2c: involves families and communities in young children’s development and learning</td>
<td>Candidate develops or modifies an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) by including the following sections providing details of the family/child: (1) vision, (2) present levels of development, (3) family concerns and priorities, and (4) services and supports.</td>
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<td>3b: knows about assessment partnerships with families and with professional colleagues to build effective learning environments</td>
<td>Candidate writes a reflection paper detailing the partnership that took place between the family and other professionals in assessing the strengths and needs of and the goals for the child and then evaluates the assessment partnership that took place, using a set of criteria from the research on best practices for partnerships, making judgments about the partnership that took place, and providing rationales for the judgments made.</td>
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<td>6a: identifies and involves oneself with the early childhood field</td>
<td>Candidate writes a reflection paper analyzing and synthesizing how s/he identified with and was involved with the Birth to Three Organization during the field experience.</td>
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<td>6b: knows about and upholds ethical standards and other early childhood professional guidelines</td>
<td>Candidate writes a reflection paper detailing the ethical standards and professional guidelines for maintaining the confidentiality of all parties involved with the work of the Birth to Three Organization, including a signed copy of the confidentiality form provided by the university.</td>
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<td>6c: engages in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice; using technology effectively with young children, with peers, and as a professional resource</td>
<td>Candidate writes a reflection paper analyzing and synthesizing how s/he engaged in collaborative learning in her/his work with the Birth to Three Organization during the field experience.</td>
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<td>Key Element 6d: <em>integrates knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives on early education</em></td>
<td>Candidate writes a reflection paper analyzing and synthesizing how s/he integrated her/his perspectives on early childhood education in her/his collaborative work with the Birth to Three Organization during the field experience.</td>
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<td>Key Element 6e: <em>engages in informed advocacy for young children and the early childhood profession</em></td>
<td>Candidate writes a reflection paper that details how s/he has become able to equip, encourage, and empower herself/himself <em>and</em> others to be engaged in informed advocacy for children and the profession.</td>
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