

**Advisory Committee – Early Childhood Education****Chairperson: Nicole Sheppard****MINUTES of the Meeting**

Friday, October 31, 2025

MEMBERS:

Nicole Sheppard, Amy Hoop, Cathy Crowe, Angel Whited,
Angel Mootispaw, Becky Storer, Ella Sheppard

TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION
1. Call to Order	The meeting was called to order by Nicole Sheppard (9:32 am)	
2. Introductions	Introductions were made – Nicole Sheppard (SSCC), Angel Whited (ABCAP), Amy Hoop (OVCTC), Cathy Crowe (CCCA), Ella Sheppard (Illuminate ABA), Ange Mootispaw (SSCC), Becky Storer	
3. Agenda	Review Approval of the Agenda	Motion by: Nicole S. 2 nd : Angel M. All In Favor Opposed
4. Minutes	Review Approval of the 2024 Minutes	Motion by: Nicole S. 2 nd : Angel M. All In Favor Opposed
5. Reports from Committee Members	Nicole Sheppard discussed that the program is doing well. There are currently 49 students enrolled in the program. 8 are projected to graduate in Spring, 2026. Angel Whited discussed the “Kids on Campus” Initiative. Becky Storer discussed a scholarship opportunity for EDUC students who transfer to a 4-year institution for education. Angel Mootispaw discussed that Fayette County Head Start is having difficulty with staffing.	
6. Review of the Program Curriculum	Curriculum was reviewed. Members expressed that the courses support what is happening in the field.	

7. Review Enrollment and Graduation Rates	Discussed enrollment and graduation. There are currently 49 students enrolled in the program. 8 are projected to graduate in Spring, 2026.	
8. Update of the Current Future Industry Trends & Employment Outlook	The committee is seeing the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of leadership skills • Faculty shortages • Funding issues • Difficulty retaining staff • Need of staff development and support. 	
9. Employer Recommendations for Improvement <i>(list at least 5 from employer's)</i>	1. Ethics 2. Teamwork 3. AI use - Integrity 4. Critical Thinking 5. Workforce Readiness	
10. Plan of Action <i>(for those listed in #9)</i>	Goal 1: Strengthen Ethical and Professional Behavior among Future Early Childhood Educators Issues Addressed: Lacking ethical behavior; responsible conduct in the workplace. Strategies:	

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integrate an Ethics Module into core ECE courses focused on professional responsibilities, confidentiality, boundaries, and decision-making aligned with NAEYC's Code of Ethical Conduct. 2. Use Case-Based Learning where students analyze real or simulated ethical dilemmas that early childhood professionals face. 3. Require Reflective Journals where students regularly reflect on ethical scenarios from coursework and practicum experiences. 4. Establish a Professional Expectations Contract signed by students during orientation to emphasize accountability, reliability, and integrity. 5. Invite Guest Speakers (Head Start directors, experienced teachers, licensing representatives) to discuss real-world ethical challenges and consequences of unethical behavior. <p>Goal 2: Build Strong Interpersonal and Teamwork Skills among Students Issues Addressed: Personality conflicts; inability to work collaboratively.</p> <p>Strategies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Embed Team-Based Assignments that require cooperation, conflict resolution, and shared responsibility. 2. Provide Direct Instruction on Professional Communication (active listening, empathy, feedback, and handling disagreement) within classroom management or guidance courses. 3. Offer Workshops or Micro-Credentials on "Workplace Soft Skills" and "Professionalism in the Classroom." 4. Include Peer Feedback Processes in group projects to build self-awareness and interpersonal accountability. 5. Incorporate Simulated Team Scenarios (for example, co-teaching exercises) where students must plan and problem-solve together. <p>Goal 3: Promote Ethical and Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence in Educational Contexts Issues Addressed: Unethical or uninformed use of AI tools.</p> <p>Strategies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a Mini-Module on Digital Ethics and AI Literacy emphasizing responsible use, data privacy, plagiarism, and AI bias awareness. 	
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Integrate AI Tool Demonstrations showing appropriate ways to use AI for lesson planning, documentation, and professional growth. 3. Create an AI Use Policy specific to the ECE program that outlines ethical boundaries and expectations. 4. Facilitate Reflective Discussions on how AI can support or hinder relationships and authenticity in early childhood settings. 5. Collaborate with Technology Faculty to co-teach sessions that merge technology competence with professional ethics. <p>Goal 4: Enhance Critical Thinking and Reflective Decision-Making Skills</p> <p>Issues Addressed: Lack of critical thinking skills.</p> <p>Strategies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement Problem-Based Learning (PBL) projects where students must research, analyze, and propose solutions to complex ECE issues (for example, classroom behavior, parent communication, curriculum design). 2. Use Observation and Reflection Assignments that require students to interpret child behavior and justify their instructional responses. 3. Incorporate Socratic Questioning Techniques in discussions to encourage deeper reasoning and evidence-based thinking. 4. Add a Capstone Portfolio Requirement where students analyze how their coursework demonstrates growth in decision-making and problem-solving. 5. Train Faculty in Embedding Critical Thinking Prompts and assessment rubrics aligned with Bloom's higher-order cognitive skills. <p>Goal 5: Strengthen Partnerships with Employers to Reinforce Workplace Readiness</p> <p>Issues Addressed: Disconnection between academic preparation and employer expectations.</p> <p>Strategies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Host Biannual Employer Advisory Meetings to continue identifying emerging needs and validating curriculum updates. 2. Collaborate with Employers to Develop Practicum Rubrics that explicitly assess ethics, teamwork, and critical thinking. 	
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	<p>3. Gather Employer Feedback Post-Graduation to evaluate the effectiveness of program changes.</p> <p>4. Offer Joint Professional Development Events for students and community partners on shared topics such as ethics, AI, and communication.</p>	
11. Survey	Complete the Individual Advisory Survey (<i>RETURN IN LOBBY FOR A GIFT</i>)	
12. Adjourn	<p>The meeting was adjourned at <u>10</u> : <u>30</u> am/pm</p> <p><i>There being no further business to be discussed, the meeting was adjourned.</i></p>	<p>Motion by: Nicole S. 2nd by: Angel M.</p>