Teaching children, adolescents and young adults with special needs is more than a job. It’s a calling, it’s a passion and it’s a reward. If it’s who you are, our M.S.Ed. in Special Education will enhance your preparation for a lifetime of nurturing and celebrating great accomplishments in your students. We offer three specializations: Advanced Special Education Practices, Early Childhood Special Education and Learning Behavior Specialist I. We also offer certificates of graduate study in Applied Behavior Analysis and for Directors of Special Education. Ninety percent of our graduates find employment within one year of completing our program, which is approved by the Illinois State Board of Education.

**Admission Requirements**

You’ll need to submit:
- Your application to the Graduate School.
- Your official transcripts (our faculty select those applicants who are most qualified, typically requiring a GPA of 3.0 or higher for the last two years of your undergraduate work) and test scores.
- Two letters of recommendation from your employers, supervisors or professors.
- Your personal statement of why you’re applying and your goals for a career in special education.

**Learning Outcomes**

During your program of study, you will:
- Write a personalized philosophy of special education based on historical, legal, civil rights and research in the special education field.
- Write and teach lesson and unit plans for students with mild, moderate and severe disabilities based on individual student needs and characteristics.
- Develop and implement a behavior intervention plan for a student with challenging behavior.
- Describe assistive technologies to use for students with disabilities based on their unique needs and characteristics.

**Course Delivery**

- Some classes in the Advanced Special Education Practices specialization are offered in a hybrid online/in-person format. Online class sessions are determined by each professor.
- Most classes in our Early Childhood Special Education and Learning Behavior Specialist I specializations are offered in person at the DeKalb, Naperville or Hoffman Estates campuses. Some might be offered in a hybrid online/in-person format.
Choose Your Specialization

**Advanced Special Education Practices.** Pursue advanced studies in areas such as Assistive Technology Specialist (Learning Behavior Specialist II), Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) and Director of Special Education. You also can design your own area of interest.

**Early Childhood Special Education.** You’ll learn best practices for working with young students with disabilities. You also can prepare to apply for an early intervention credential to work with infants and toddlers with special needs and their families.

**Learning Behavior Specialist I.** If you’re seeking initial licensure as a special education teacher of individuals with disabilities (other than visual disabilities and deafness), you’ll learn about teaching all students and including students into schools and communities. You’ll also learn to incorporate common core standards into everyday instruction, how to develop individual education plans and how to use assistive technology in your classroom.

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**Coursework**

**Advanced Special Education Practices**

- **SESE 592** Seminar in Special Education (3)
- **SESE 747** Advanced Seminar in Special Education (3)
- **SESE 595** Collaboration in Advanced Special Education Practices (3)
- Research course, such as SESE 792, or approved by advisor.
- Foundations course, such as EPFE 510, EPFE 520, EPFE 521, EPFE 530, EPS 501 or approved by advisor.
- Coursework in the major (12-15)
- Additional coursework approved by advisor (12-15)

**Early Childhood Special Education**

- **SESE 523** Observation and Assessment in Early Childhood Special Education (3)
- **SESE 524** Methods and Strategies for Promoting Development and Teaching Infants, Toddlers, and Young Children with Disabilities and Special Needs (3)
- **SESE 526** Working with and Supporting Families of Young Children with Disabilities and Special Needs (3)
- **SESE 527** Issues and Recommended Practices in Early Childhood Special Education (3)
- **SESE 540** Foundations of Special Education (3)
- **SESE 587N** Practicum in Early Childhood Special Education (1-10)
- Students take this course for 3 to 6 semester hours.
- One graduate-level course in research, such as SESE 792, or approved by advisor.
- Elective coursework with advisor’s approval (15-18)

**Learning Behavior Specialist I**

- **SESE 540** Foundations of Special Education (3)
- **SESE 559** Planning for the Transition from School to Employment, Career and Postsecondary Education for Students with Disabilities (3)
- **SESE 600** Introduction to Instructional Planning, Teacher Performance Assessment, and Assistive Technology (2)
- **SESE 601** Methods for Teaching Students with Mild Disabilities (4)
- **SESE 602** Methods for Teaching Middle and Secondary Students with Mild Disabilities (3)

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