

MSEI Newsletter

Program Updates

Welcome to the April/May issue of the MSEI newsletter! By now you are all nearing the end of your busy semesters. April always goes by so quickly, and before we know it, summer will be here!

In this edition's program updates, we'd like to remind students nearing the completion of the program that the deadline to apply for May 2024 graduation is fast approaching. All students intending to graduate in May 2024 must submit their graduation applications by April 19th.

Additionally, for those interested in joining the MSEI program, the application deadline for summer enrollment is May 15th. If you know of anyone who would benefit from our MSEI program, whether they are colleagues, friends, or acquaintances, spread the word and encourage them to apply before the deadline. Your support in promoting our program is greatly appreciated as we continue to grow and expand.



Canva AI Image Generator. (2024). Bulldog in spring
[Digital image created using generative AI].

Applicants
Wanted!

Do you know someone who may be interested in applying to the MSEI program? Encourage them to apply!
<https://www.online.mssstate.edu/msei>

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Research Corner

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A systematic review titled, *Early Childhood Special Education Teacher Candidates' Field Experiences: A Systematic Review* by Szocik et al. (2024) explored the landscape of ECSE field experiences, focusing on participant demographics, field experience parameters, activities, and outcomes. Findings indicated a predominance of White/Caucasian female teacher candidates (TCs) across the included studies, which mirrors the demographics of ECSE teachers in the United States. However, there was a notable lack of diversity in the sample, particularly in terms of male TCs and teachers of color. Additionally, limited demographic information was available for the students involved in ECSE field experiences, which limits our understanding of the breadth of student needs TCs are prepared to address. The study points to the need for continued research into ECSE field experiences, especially in graduate programs, to identify critical components for improving TC and student outcomes. If you'd like to read this article, you can access it here: <https://doi.org/10.1177/02711214231225898>.

Updates From the Field



The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Health and

Human Services, Administration for Children and Families and the U.S. Department of Education published a Dear Colleague Letter to provide guidance to states, territories, and tribes on implementing and expanding *mixed-delivery systems* in preschool. It emphasizes the importance of mixed-delivery systems, which encompass a variety of settings such as Head Start, child care centers, family child care homes, and public preschools, in offering diverse and high-quality ECE services. The letter outlines key principles and considerations for effectively integrating these diverse settings into a cohesive early childhood system. The letter also encourages states, territories, and tribes to leverage funding and resources to support the development and enhancement of mixed-delivery systems. This letter is inclusive of Part C and B 619, and provides guidance on expanding access to preschool for all. Read the letter [here](#).

Practicum Supervisor

Spotlight: Dr. Kasee Stratton-Gadke

Executive Director, Mississippi Institute on Disabilities
and Associate Professor, School Psychology

Dr. Stratton-Gadke is the executive director of the Mississippi Institute on Disabilities which houses the TK Martin Center for Technology and Disability and the Autism and Developmental Disabilities Clinic. Across the Institute, they serve individuals with disabilities or delays from birth through end of life in a variety of programs including early intervention, special needs preschool program, assistive technology evaluations and trainings, assistive technology lending library, adapted driving, to psychological and behavioral health.



What made you decide to mentor MSEI students during their practicum?

We have had a long history of interns in our preschool program that serves students who qualify for the state's early intervention program or special education services. The students are always engaged, bring a great deal of knowledge regarding early childhood and they soak up every experience in our center. I enjoy working with students who are thirsty to learn more to improve the overall outcome for children and families.

What do you enjoy most about mentoring MSEI graduate students?

I get the pleasure of working with a lot of undergraduate and graduate students through my various roles at the university, and what I like most is that students are always teaching me new ways to conceptualize the needs of our clients/students/families. They make supervision fun and exciting! But in honesty, I truly appreciate the relationships that develop with graduate students and seeing their growth and progress as a pre-professional. I love it even more when they stay in touch after graduating and I can see all the great work they do.

Please share a piece of advice that you would like MSEI students to know about a career in early intervention.

Gosh, just one. :) Given much of my work in early intervention has been with children who present with significant disabilities, genetic conditions, and medical challenges, my one piece of advice is to learn as much as you can about the condition, find parental resources that connect the family to other parents who also have a child with the same unique needs, and to build communication avenues for the child as quickly as possible. If I can push one path of development first, it's always communication! This builds all of our other skills-cognitive, adaptive, and even motor skills. When we can communicate our wants and needs, we can also reduce challenging behaviors that may develop from a lack of expressive communication, and we can connect with many positive reinforcers in our environment.

CAREER-BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES

SCHOLARSHIPS

Graduate Assistantships at Mississippi State

Graduate research, teaching, and service assistantships are available on an annual or nine-month basis. Assistantships typically cover all or a portion of a student's tuition.

- Hours: Part time (20 hrs./week max)
- Stipends vary by department
- To view available assistantships and complete a general application, click [here](#).

INTERNSHIPS/FELLOWSHIPS

AIR Research Associate Summer Intern

AIR is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to conducting behavioral and social science research.

- Location: Virtual
- Duration: 10-12 weeks
- Paid/Unpaid: Paid (\$25/hour)
- Click [here](#) to apply!

Louisiana Policy Institute for Children

The Louisiana Policy Institute for Children (LPIC) has internship opportunities available year-round.

- Location: Virtual or in-person
- Paid/Unpaid: Paid
- To Apply: Send your resumé and a cover letter to info@policyinsitutela.org.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The DEC CONNECT Modules cover a variety of topics, such as assistive technology and family-professional partnerships. Click [here](#) to access these free modules!

CONFERENCES

International Early Childhood Inclusion Institute

- Location: Virtual or in-person (Chapel Hill, NC)
- Dates: May 7th-9th, 2024
- Cost: \$245 for virtual attendees
- Click [here](#) to register!

2024 MS Early Childhood Education Conference

- Location: Natchez, MS
- Dates: June 17th-20th
- Cost: \$400
- Click [here](#) to register!

2024 Early Intervention and Preschool Conference

- Location: Mobile, AL
- Dates: Oct. 28th-30th
- Click [here](#) to register!