Early Childhood Education and Special Education (Composite), BS, BA

Emphases: Birth to Age 5 Special Education
Department: Special Education and Rehabilitation Department; School of Teacher Education and Leadership
College: Emma Eccles Jones College of Education & Human Services; Emma Eccles Jones College of Education & Human Services

Overview

About This Degree

This degree is a combination of courses required for the early childhood education major and the special education major. Students who complete this composite degree are eligible for two licenses, one for special education and one for early childhood education, teaching grades K-3. While there is no licensure requirement to teach preschool, students with this degree are better prepared to teach in those settings. Students gain content knowledge through the early childhood education program and learn strategies for teaching diverse learners through the special education program.

This degree expands students' career options by allowing them to work with children with special needs (from birth through 5 years) and students in kindergarten through third grade. Most public schools teachers will also have special needs students in their classrooms, and this degree makes them more qualified to meet the unique educational needs of these students. Some states even require special education teachers to have an early childhood, elementary, or secondary education background. Additionally, USU's special education program boasts 100% job placement for its students upon graduation.

USU's Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services is ranked 10th in the nation among colleges of education in external research dollars.

Students receive a **BS** by completing all required courses in the major. To receive a **BA**, students must also gain proficiency in one or more foreign languages.

Career Options

With a degree in early childhood education and special education composite, students may pursue careers in the following areas:

- Public schools
- Day care
- Head Start
- Home Start
- Hospitals
- Adoption agencies
- Church services
- Foster care
- Parent education programs
- Host of related state, local, and federal agencies serving families and their children
- Public or private school educator
- Adult service provider
- Recreation specialist
- Behavior specialist
- Developmental specialist
- Early intervention provider

Career Services provides counseling and information on hundreds of job and internship opportunities and even helps students apply and interview.

What it takes

Admissions Requirements

In addition to Utah State University's admissions requirements, the elementary education and special education

(composite) program has additional requirements:

- **Freshmen:** New freshmen admitted to USU in good standing qualify for admission as pre-majors.
- **Transfer students:** Transfer students from other institutions or from other USU majors will be admitted as pre-majors in good standing, with a GPA of at least 2.75.
- In order to become an early childhood education and special education (composite) major, students must be accepted into the teacher education program and the special education program, which includes the following:
    - Completion of at least 40 semester credits, including the ones you're currently taking, with a cumulative GPA of 2.75 or higher
    - Complete certain core courses (see department for more information)
    - Complete a speech and hearing test
    - Pass the Teacher Education Writing Exam
    - Pass a criminal background check (this should be done one semester before applying)
    - Pass the Praxis II elementary education content knowledge exam (this should be done at least one semester prior to applying)
    - Participate in a group interview
    - Passing score on the Special Education Math exam

International students have additional admissions requirements.

Major Requirements

Click here to see course requirements for the **Bachelor of Science**.

Click here to see course requirements for the **Bachelor of Arts**.

Contact

Advising

All new USU students participate in a New Student Orientation program, where they receive detailed information about major requirements, registering for classes, and other important advising information.

Advising Center
School of Teacher Education and Leadership
Office: EDUC 385
Phone: (435) 797-0385
Email: teal@usu.edu

Darcie Peterson
Advisor
Office: EDUC 371
Phone: (435) 797-3252
Email: darcie.peterson@usu.edu

Get Involved

Professional Organizations, Honor Societies, and Clubs

Council for Exceptional Children: The Council for Exceptional Children is the largest international professional organization dedicated to improving the educational success of individuals with disabilities and/or gifts and talents. CEC advocates for appropriate governmental policies, sets professional standards, provides professional development, advocates for individuals with exceptionalities, and helps professionals obtain conditions and resources necessary for effective professional practice.

Utah Association for the Education of the Young – USU: This association's main goal is to improve the quality of early childhood education for young children and their families through activities and experiences that improve professional practices in early childhood education, build public understanding and support, and build and maintain a strong, diverse, and inclusive organization.

Best Buddies: Best Buddies is a nonprofit organization dedicated to establishing a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for friendships and integrates employment and leadership development for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Club members can become a “buddy” with a local person with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

Special Olympics: Special Olympics is an international organization where athletes with intellectual disabilities celebrate and are celebrated for their accomplishments. It is often the first time that athletes have truly taken center stage and receive recognition as individuals. The organization has helped prepare and sponsor two athletes from Cache Valley to compete in the Special Olympics World Games.

Utah Association for the Education of Young Children: UAEYC is a national organization that improves the quality of early childhood education for young children and their families through activities and experiences. The organization helps improve professional practice in early childhood education, build public understanding and support, and build and maintain a strong, diverse, and inclusive national organization.

Phi Upsilon Omicron: Phi Upsilon Omicron is a national honor society. Its purposes are to recognize and encourage academic excellence, develop qualities of professional and personal leadership, provide opportunities for service to the profession, and encourage professional and personal commitment to the area of family and consumer sciences.

Labs, Centers, Research

With the second oldest undergraduate research program in the nation, USU offers students a wide range of opportunities to gain hands-on research experience. The Undergraduate Research and Creative Opportunities program allows students to apply for grants and receive funding. USU’s Honors Program prepares students for excellent graduate programs by helping them build relationships with professors, participate in research projects, take smaller, more intensive classes, and develop leadership skills.

Assistive Technology Laboratory: The lab is a facility for the Utah Assistive Technology Program, which serves individuals with disabilities of all ages in Utah and the intermountain region. It provides assistive technology (AT) devices and services and trains university students, parents, children with disabilities, and professional service providers about AT. The program coordinates its services with community organizations and others who provide independence-related support to individuals with disabilities.

Autism Support Services - Education, Research, and Training: ASSERT is a classroom at the Center for Persons with Disabilities that offers training opportunities for graduate and undergraduate students, while providing intensive, individualized instruction to preschool children with autism spectrum disorder. USU students can apply to work in the program and earn either university credit or compensation while learning how to effectively teach students with autism spectrum disorder.

Bear River Activity and Skills Center: This center is designed to support adults with disabilities by teaching them the skills necessary for independence. In addition, BRASC focuses on providing consumers with activities that encourage community inclusion.

Center for Persons with Disabilities: The CPD is a nationally recognized research center that joins the expertise of researchers and faculty with community partners to address the most difficult challenges facing persons with disabilities and their families. Research addresses issues that cross fields ranging from biomedicine to education. In clinical experiences, learners join teams of professionals, family members, and individuals with disabilities to deliver services and supports.

Center for the School of the Future: The CSF is a research center dedicated to improving the quality and effectiveness of education by identifying effective educational practices and supporting their dissemination and adoption in local circumstances.

Early Intervention Research Institute: The EIRI is an interdisciplinary organization committed to investigating and improving policies and practices that support the well-being of at-risk children as well as those with special needs and their families. The institute conducts research as well as provides training and technical assistance at community, state, national, and international levels.

Edith Bowen Laboratory School: EBLS is one of Utah’s charter schools, offering services to more than 300 students

grades K-5. The school, in cooperation with Utah State University, trains more than 200 pre-service teachers preparing to become professional educators, as well as supporting several other departments/colleges on campus, including special education, physical education, music, psychology, and business. Because the school is funded through state funds and donations, no tuition is charged to students.

Emma Eccles Jones Center for Early Childhood Education: This center provides educational experiences and resources for teachers and parents that reflect the development of children from birth through age eight.

Project PEER (Postsecondary Education, Employment, and Research): Project PEER is a program for young adults with developmental disabilities aged 18-21 who participate in special education services on the USU campus. Young adults participate in social, recreational, and employment opportunities with their college-age peers. The program emphasizes development of employment, functional, and social skills facilitated by participation with peers in the campus student community, establishment of job shadowing and job training leading to employment upon post-high school graduation, and education based on students' Individual Educational Plan.