



**EEC 4408**  
**Child, Family & Teacher Relations**  
**51589 001**  
**Summer 2026**

**Instructor Name**

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Ilene Berson

**University Course Description**

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Focuses on developing an understanding of traditional and non-traditional families, structural and life style variations and parenting in diverse cultures and at-risk families. Implications from these understandings will guide development of a parent involvement plan that includes effective ways to communicate with parents, conference with parents, and plan parent meetings and home visits.

**Course Prerequisites**

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**Prerequisite(s):**

(EDF 4124 Minimum Grade: C-)

**Corequisite(s):**

**Course Format**

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This course is delivered in a hybrid format that integrates synchronous online class meetings with applied field-based experiences at the USF Preschool for Creative Learning, our campus lab school. This design is

intentional to support connections between theory, observation, and practice in early childhood family engagement.

### **Weekly Online Class Sessions**

Class time will focus on:

- Interactive discussions based on readings
- Small group collaboration and case-based activities
- Practice with real-life scenarios, such as family conferences

### **Observation and Applied Learning (PCL)**

You will complete observation experiences at PCL, where you will:

- Observe children, families, and teachers in authentic settings
- Collect information to support your assignments
- Apply course concepts to real-world practice

### **Weekly Modules (Canvas)**

Each week, you will complete a module that may include:

- Readings (via Perusall)
- Videos and resources
- Reflection or discussion activities

You are expected to review these materials before class so you are ready to participate.

### **Assignments and Assessment**

Your learning will be assessed through:

- Participation and engagement
- Project 1: Family Data-Informed Communication Plan
- Project 2: Family Newsletter (Critical Task)

These assignments are designed to help you apply what you learn in meaningful, practical ways.

## **Student Learning Outcomes**

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By the end of the course, pre-service teachers will be able to:

- Identify and implement strategies for developing positive and supportive relationships with a variety of families of young children and contemplate the theoretical frameworks that inform these practices.
- Identify and investigate child and family-centered community programs and agencies and other community resources for children and families.
- Consider ways early childhood professionals can help create bridges between children, families and schools.
- Reflect on their own experiences and challenge their assumptions about parent/community/school partnerships.
- Demonstrate verbal and written capabilities to effectively communicate with families

## **Course Objectives**

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Throughout the course, pre-service teachers will be taught about:

1. An understanding of varying types of families (i.e. traditional, non-traditional, diverse cultures, high risk and families of exceptional children), their structural/ life-style variation, and parenting practices
2. The purposes, availability and effectiveness of different kinds of parent programs and community resources, including parent involvement, parent education, and parent advisory groups.
3. An understanding of the ways all early childhood programs are a part of a family support system.
4. The ability to explain the place of strong, positive and personal teacher-parent relationships in high quality early childhood programs.
5. Appropriate verbal and written skills in communicating effectively with families during parent meetings, parent conferences, and home visits.

## **Required Texts and/or Readings and Course Materials**

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We will be using Perusall for class readings. Perusall is a collaborative reading platform in which you annotate texts and interact with classmates as you complete the assigned readings. For more information, please see

their [Student Guide](#). All Perusall reading assignments are available in the Canvas modules.

Epstein, J. (2004). *Epstein's framework of six types of involvement*. Johns Hopkins University Center for the Social Organization of Schools. <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/epsteins-framework-six-types-involvement>

Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2023). *America's children: Key national indicators of well-being, 2023*. [https://www.childstats.gov/pdf/ac2023/ac\\_23.pdf](https://www.childstats.gov/pdf/ac2023/ac_23.pdf)

Florida Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services., & University of South Florida. Student Support Services Project. (2015). *Child Abuse Prevention Sourcebook for Florida School Personnel: A Tool for Reporting Abuse and Supporting the Child*. <https://sss.usf.edu/resources/format/pdf/chiabuse2015.pdf>

National PTA. (2020). *PTA's leading the way on transformative family engagement*. <https://www.pta.org/docs/default-source/files/membership/2021/nat-rep/ptas-leading-the-way-on-transformative-family-engagement.pdf>

National PTA. (2021). *National standards for family-school partnerships: An implementation guide*. National PTA. <https://www.pta.org/home/run-your-pta/National-Standards-for-Family-School-Partnerships>

Teaching Channel. (2023). *Family-teacher conferences script (downloadable)* [PDF]. <https://www.teachingchannel.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/K12-Family-Teacher-Conferences-Script-Downloadable.pdf>

Rawe, J. (n.d.). *Parent-teacher conference surveys*. Understood for All, Inc. <https://www.understood.org/en/articles/download-parent-teacher-conference-action-plan-and-surveys>

## Grading Scale

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Course Grading Scale and Corresponding  
Letter Grades

| Grading Scale | Grading Scale (%) |    |          |
|---------------|-------------------|----|----------|
|               | 94-100            | A  | 74-76 C  |
|               | 90-93             | A- | 70-73 C- |
|               | 87-89             | B+ | 67-69 D+ |
|               | 84-86             | B  | 64-66 D  |
|               | 80-83             | B- | 60-63 D- |
|               | 77-79             | C+ | 0 - 59 F |

## Grade Categories and Weights

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This table lists the major course assignments and the percentage each contributes to the final course grade, including participation, Project 1, and Project 2.

| Course Assignments and Percentage Breakdown                    |            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Course Assignments                                             | Percentage |
| Participation (Class Engagement, Reading Reflections, Modules) | 35         |
| Project 1: Family Data-Informed Communication Plan             | 30         |
| Project 2: Family Newsletter<br>( <b>CRITICAL TASK</b> )       | 35         |

## Course Schedule

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Course Schedule

| MOD<br>ULE | TOPIC | ASSIGNMENTS DUE |
|------------|-------|-----------------|
|------------|-------|-----------------|

| <b>MOD<br/>ULE</b>   | <b>TOPIC</b>                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>ASSIGNMENTS DUE</b>                                                                                |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Mod<br/>ule 1</b> | Introduction to course<br>Family Engagement and the Responsive Educator<br>Theories and Models for Family Engagement in Schools<br>Teacher as Family Communication Facilitator |                                                                                                       |
| <b>Mod<br/>ule 2</b> | Family Structures<br>Family Contexts and Lived Experiences<br>Families in Transition                                                                                           | Personal Views of Family<br>Reading Reflection 1                                                      |
| <b>Mod<br/>ule 3</b> | Families Overcoming Obstacles<br>Families in Abusive Situations                                                                                                                | Reading Reflection 2                                                                                  |
| <b>Mod<br/>ule 4</b> | Engaging Families in Children's Learning<br>Working with Families of Children with Exceptionalities<br>Teacher as Family Resource and Advocate                                 | AI for Tomorrow's Teachers course<br>Progress Monitoring for Early Childhood Teachers Training Module |
| <b>Mod<br/>ule 5</b> | Family Engagement Activities                                                                                                                                                   | Reading Reflection 3<br>Project 1: Family Data-Informed Communication Plan                            |
| <b>Mod<br/>ule 6</b> | Consultation                                                                                                                                                                   | Project 2: Family Newsletter (Critical Task)                                                          |

The instructor reserves the right to make modifications to this schedule, the assignments, and readings based on the needs of the class, as well as emerging research and trends from the field.

## **USF Core Syllabus Policies**

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USF has a set of central policies related to student recording class sessions, academic integrity and grievances, student accessibility services, academic disruption, religious observances, academic continuity, food insecurity, pregnancy and related conditions, and sexual harassment that **apply to all courses at USF**. Be sure to review these online:

<https://www.usf.edu/provost/faculty-success/resources-policies-forms/core-syllabus-policy-statements.aspx>

## Student Recordings

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### Florida Statute 1004.097 Free Expression on Campus

Students may, without prior notice, record video or audio of a class lecture for a class in which the student is enrolled for their own personal, educational use (USF Policy 10-048). A class lecture is defined as a formal or methodical oral presentation as part of a university course intended to present information or teach enrolled students about a particular subject. Recording class activities other than class lectures, including but not limited to lab sessions, student presentations (whether individually or part of a group), class discussion, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving student participation, test or examination administrations, field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty member is prohibited. Recordings may not be used as a substitute for class participation and class attendance and may not be published or shared without the written consent of the faculty member. Failure to adhere to these requirements may constitute a violation of the USF Student Conduct Code.

### Course Policies: Grades

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Assignments will be given a letter grade based on the University grading system and the scoring guidelines that accompany each assignment. Work is expected to be thoughtful, reflective and of high quality in terms of both content and presentation. All assignments should demonstrate professional writing abilities, including grammar and spelling. Points will be deducted for writing errors, and papers with repeated unprofessional writing may be returned for revision without being graded. Assistance with writing may be obtained from the Writing Center. **All assignments are expected to reflect a strong grasp of EEC 4408 readings and discussions.**

Unless otherwise noted, all assignments must be word-processed in Microsoft Word, double-spaced, 12 point font, standard margins. All Canvas submissions should be made using a .doc or .docx format to enable commenting.

**Late Work Policy:** All assignments are due on the date specified on the course calendar. Assignments will be considered turned in on time if they are submitted to Canvas on the due date by the specified time. Late assignments are accepted but with a late penalty. Papers received up to 48 hours late will be evaluated using the criteria in the syllabus, and the earned grade will be calculated as follows: Up to 5 hours late, 5 percent deducted; Between 5-24 hours late, 10 percent deducted; between 24-48 hours late, 20 percent deducted. Any student who does not turn in their work within 48 hours of the due date will earn a grade of F on the respective assignment. This means that the highest grade you can earn is 59% for the late submission. Under extenuating circumstances, the professor will review circumstances on a case-by-case basis and make decisions accordingly. If an emergency arises that prevents you from completing your work on time, please email the professor as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made for you to keep up in the class. The late penalty may be waived at the professor's discretion in case of an emergency. Emergencies are defined as anything which is serious and unexpected. Emergencies cannot be written on the calendar in advance. Examples of non-emergencies are family weddings, vacations, conferences, or any other event that can be planned around.

**Extra Credit Policy:** There are no extra credit assignments.

### **Grades of "Incomplete"**

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The current university policy concerning incomplete grades will be followed in this course.

For undergraduate courses: An "I" grade may be awarded to a student only when a small portion of the student's work is incomplete and only when the student is otherwise earning a passing grade. The time limit for removing the "I" is to be set by the instructor of the course. For undergraduate students, this time limit may not exceed two academic semesters, whether or not the student is in residence, and/or graduation, whichever comes first. For graduate students, this time limit may not exceed one academic semester. "I" grades not removed by the end of the time limit will be changed to "IF" or "IU," whichever is appropriate.

## **Campus Free Expression**

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It is fundamental to the University of South Florida's mission to support an environment where divergent ideas, theories, and philosophies can be openly exchanged and critically evaluated. Consistent with these principles, this course may involve discussion of ideas that you find uncomfortable, disagreeable, or even offensive.

In the instructional setting, ideas are intended to be presented in an objective manner and not as an endorsement of what you should personally believe. "Objective" means that the idea(s) presented can be tested by critical peer review and rigorous debate, and that the idea(s) is supported by credible research.

In this course you may be asked to engage with complex ideas and to demonstrate an understanding of the ideas. Understanding and engaging with an idea does not require you to believe it or to agree with it.

## **Course Policies: Technology and Media**

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Technology plays an important role in this course as a tool for communication, collaboration, and learning. Students are expected to use technology in ways that support engagement, professionalism, and respect for others.

### **Use of Devices During Class**

During synchronous class sessions, you are expected to use your device (laptop or tablet) to actively participate in course activities such as discussions, collaborative work, and accessing course materials. Use of phones or other devices for non-course-related purposes is discouraged, as it can disrupt your learning and the learning of others.

### **Online Participation and Professionalism**

For live online sessions, students are expected to:

- Join on time and remain present for the full session
- Use their name as listed in Canvas for identification
- Participate actively in discussions and breakout groups
- Maintain a professional and respectful tone in all interactions

When possible, cameras should be on to support community building and engagement. If this is not possible, please communicate with the instructor.

### **Canvas and Course Communication**

Canvas will be the primary platform for course materials, announcements, and assignment submissions. Students are responsible for:

- Checking Canvas regularly for updates
- Monitoring their USF email for course communication
- Submitting assignments in the required format

### **Use of Digital Tools and Media**

This course may include the use of digital tools (e.g., Perusall, collaborative platforms, AI-supported tools) to support learning. Students are expected to use these tools responsibly and in alignment with course expectations and academic integrity policies.

### **Recording and Sharing Course Content**

Students may not record, share, or distribute class sessions, course materials, or peer contributions without explicit permission from the instructor. This includes posting content to external sites or sharing recordings with individuals outside the course.

### **Respectful and Ethical Use**

All technology and media use in this course should reflect professionalism, respect for privacy, and ethical conduct. This includes maintaining confidentiality when discussing classroom observations or field experiences.

## **Course Policies: Student Expectations**

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### **Health and Wellness**

Your health is a priority at the University of South Florida. We encourage members of our community to look out for each other and to reach out for help if someone is in need. If you or someone you know is in distress, please make a referral at [www.usf.edu/sos](http://www.usf.edu/sos) so that the Student Outreach & Support can contact and provide

helpful resources to the student in distress. A 24-hour licensed mental healthcare professional, offered through the counseling center, is available by phone at 813-974-2831, option 3. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, please dial 9-1-1.

### **Title IX Policy**

USF is committed to fostering a safe and respectful learning environment, free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment, in accordance with Title IX and USF Policy 0-004. If a student shares an experience of sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, or relationship violence with a USF employee (including faculty), that employee will notify the Title IX Office. This allows the Title IX Office to send the student an email with information about support resources and options—if it is safe to do so. Students are not required to respond to this email. The Title IX Office is a private resource. Information is shared only on a need-to-know basis to provide students with support measures. To speak to a confidential resource, students may contact USF Center for Victim Advocacy at 813-974-5757. Confidential resources do not notify the Title IX Office unless the student requests it. For more information about Title IX, available resources, or to make a report, please visit [www.usf.edu/title-ix](http://www.usf.edu/title-ix).

### **Course Hero / Chegg Policy**

The USF Policy on Academic Integrity specifies that students may not use websites that enable cheating, such as by uploading or downloading material for this purpose. This does apply specifically to Chegg.com and CourseHero.com – almost any use of these websites (including uploading proprietary materials) constitutes a violation of the academic integrity policy.

### **Professionalism Policy**

Per university policy and classroom etiquette; mobile phones, iPods, etc. must be silenced during all classroom and lab lectures. Those not heeding this rule will be asked to leave the classroom/lab immediately so as to not disrupt the learning environment. Please arrive on time for all class meetings. Students who habitually disturb the class by talking, arriving late, etc., and have been warned may suffer a reduction in their final class grade.

### **Turnitin.com**

In this course, turnitin.com may be utilized. Turnitin is an automated system which instructors may use to quickly and easily compare each student's assignment with billions of web sites, as well as an enormous database of student papers that grows with each submission. Accordingly, you will be expected to submit all assignments in both hard copy and electronic format. After the assignment is processed, as instructor I receive a report from turnitin.com that states if and how another author's

work was used in the assignment. For a more detailed look at this process visit <http://www.turnitin.com>. Essays are due at turnitin.com the same day as in class.

### **Netiquette Guidelines**

1. Act professionally in the way you communicate. Treat your instructors and peers with respect, the same way you would do in a face-to-face environment. Respect other people's ideas and be constructive when explaining your views about points you may not agree with.
2. Be sensitive. Be respectful and sensitive when sharing your ideas and opinions. There will be people in your class with different linguistic backgrounds, political and religious beliefs or other general differences.
3. Proofread and check spelling. Doing this before sending an email or posting a thread on a discussion board will allow you to make sure your message is clear and thoughtful. Avoid the use of all capital letters, it can be perceived as if you are shouting, and it is more difficult to read.
4. Keep your communications focused and stay on topic. Complete your ideas before changing the subject. By keeping the message on focus you allow the readers to easily get your idea or answers they are looking for.
5. Be clear with your message. Avoid using humor or sarcasm. Since people can't see your expressions or hear your tone of voice, meaning can be misinterpreted.

### **Email and Discussion Board Guidelines**

1. Use the subject line effectively by using a meaningful line of what your email or discussion is about.
2. Keep your emails and postings related to the course content. You should not post anything personal on a discussion board unless it is requested by the instructor.
3. Any personal, course or confidential issues should be directly communicated to the instructor via email. The discussion boards are public spaces; therefore, any issues should not be posted there.

### **End of Semester Student Evaluations**

All classes at USF make use of an online system for students to provide feedback to the University regarding the course. These surveys will be made available at the end of the semester, and the University will notify you by email when the response window opens. Your participation is highly encouraged and valued.

### **Food and Drink Policy (for in-campus sessions only).**

Please adhere to the firm policy of no beverages (other than bottled/capped water), food, tobacco products, or like items in the classroom. Your understanding of the

necessity for this policy and cooperation will be greatly appreciated. This policy will be strictly enforced.

## **Learning Support and Campus Offices**

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### **Academic Accommodations**

Students with disabilities are responsible for registering with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) in order to receive academic accommodations. For additional information about academic accommodations and resources, you can visit the SAS website.

[SAS website for the Tampa and Sarasota-Manatee campuses.](#)

[SAS website for the St. Pete campus.](#)

### **Academic Support Services**

The USF Office of Student Success coordinates and promotes university-wide efforts to enhance undergraduate and graduate student success. For a comprehensive list of academic support services available to all USF students, please visit the [Office of Student Success website.](#)

### **Canvas Technical Support**

If you have technical difficulties in Canvas, you can find access to the Canvas guides and video resources in the “Canvas Help” page on the homepage of your Canvas course. You can also contact the help desk by calling 813-974-1222 in Tampa or emailing [help@usf.edu](mailto:help@usf.edu).

[USF IT Service Support Tampa Campus](#)

[USF IT Support St. Pete Campus](#)

[USF IT Support Sarasota-Manatee Campus](#)

### **Center for Victim Advocacy**

The [Center for Victim Advocacy](#) empowers survivors of crime, violence, or abuse by promoting the restoration of decision making, by advocating for their rights, and by offering support and resources. Contact information is available online.

### **Counseling Center**

The Counseling Center promotes the wellbeing of the campus community by providing culturally sensitive counseling, consultation, prevention, and training that enhances student academic and personal success. Contact information is available online.

[Counseling Center website for the Tampa campus.](#)

[Counseling Center website for the St. Pete campus.](#)

[Counseling Center website for the Sarasota-Manatee campus.](#)

## **Tutoring**

The Tutoring Hub offers free tutoring in several subjects to USF undergraduates. Appointments are recommended, but not required. For more information, email

[asctampa@usf.edu.](mailto:asctampa@usf.edu)

[Tutoring website for the Tampa campus.](#)

[Tutoring website for the St. Pete campus.](#)

[Tutoring website for the Sarasota-Manatee campus.](#)

## **Writing Studio**

The Writing Studio is a free resource for USF undergraduate and graduate students. At the Writing Studio, a trained writing consultant will work individually with you, at any point in the writing process from brainstorming to editing. Appointments are recommended, but not required. For more information or to make an appointment, email:

[writingstudio@usf.edu.](mailto:writingstudio@usf.edu)

[Writing studio website for the Tampa campus.](#)

[Writing studio website for the St. Pete campus.](#)

[Writing studio website for the Sarasota-Manatee campus.](#)

## **Student Ombuds Office**

Florida Statute 1006.51 and Florida Board of Governors Regulation 6.011 require that all public institutions provide ombuds services to students. The Student Ombuds Office at USF is a confidential, impartial, informal, and independent resource for students experiencing challenges related to the university. Ombuds can help students safely explore options, clarify

processes, and consider next steps. [Learn more or make an appointment at usf.edu/student-ombuds.](https://usf.edu/student-ombuds)