

Northcentral Technical College

Early Childhood Education

Practicum Handbook



# Table of Contents

1. Practicum Information
2. Background check requirements
3. Placement criteria
4. Cooperating teacher criteria
5. Student expectations
6. Documents to share with Cooperating Teacher and Director
7. Acknowledgement of review

## Practicum Information

In our program, you will complete four practicums. Each practicum includes content in Canvas and experiences in the classroom. The first practicum is Introductory Practicum and gives you an opportunity to practice your observation skills in a variety of settings. You will also complete your Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards training in this course. The second practicum is Preschool Practicum. You will spend 108 hours in the classroom practicing your observation skills and begin developing lesson plans and carrying them out. In this class, the expectation is that you will teach four lessons. You will spend 108 hours in a preschool classroom (ages 2 ½ to 5). If you wish, you will have the opportunity to complete your Registry Preschool Credential (not required). The third practicum is Intermediate Practicum. You will have the opportunity to work up to leading the classroom for approximately 50% of the day. Your final practicum is Advanced Practicum. You will spend 108 hours in the classroom advancing your observation and teaching skills. You will work up to leading the classroom 100% of the day. You will also finish your Graduation Portfolio.

## Background check requirements

All students in practicum will need to complete background check requirements prior to starting any placement, including your observations for Intro Practicum. The process varies depending upon if you are completing your practicum in your place of employment.

If you are employed in childcare and wish to complete your practicum there, you will need to have a waiver signed by your director. Instructions for this process will be in your Canvas course.

Here are the steps to complete this process:

1. Fill out the background request form in Canvas
2. Turn in the completed form to your instructor via email
3. This will trigger a letter mailed to your address (please ensure it is correct) with instructions for next steps, which includes having to get your fingerprints run through a field print location. The letter will provide you with a list of places you can go to get this done.
4. Make an appointment with one of the approved locations as soon as you get the letter. There will be a code that is specific to you on the letter. You will need this when you make your fieldprint appointment. The appointment will be made online and instructions will come with your letter. You will need to pay the fee of \$37.75 when you make the appointment online.
5. When the finger printing is complete, the results are sent to the DCF.
6. You will receive a letter in the mail in approximately 7 days. This is your preliminary results letter. This means you can be in a center with supervision. You will **NOT** be able to start your practicum hours without this letter. This is the preliminary check, which only looks at barred offenses. You will submit this letter in Canvas.
7. You will receive a notice within the next 45 days which are your final background check results. You will submit this final results letter in Canvas. It is possible to be cleared at the preliminary level but then not pass the final check. We do not make this determination, the federal government does. If this is the case, you will not be able to continue your placement at your center, and while you can complete the course work for the program, you will not be able to work in child care.
8. You will take the following things to your practicum placement site:
  - a. Preliminary Eligibility Letter
  - b. Final Eligibility Letter
  - c. SIDS certificate
  - d. SBS/ABH certificate
  - e. CAN certificate
  - f. Physical results

## Placement criteria

Students may complete their practicum in the following settings:

1. Licensed group center
2. Licensed family provider
3. Certified family provider
4. A provider which is housed in a church, but not necessarily licensed
5. A school district
6. A home visiting program
7. Other special placement request based on individual circumstance

In order to be placed, the site must have a cooperating teacher willing to take a student meeting the qualifications set forth in this handbook (see section Cooperating Teacher Criteria).

Students may work at their placement; however will be encouraged to seek placement elsewhere for a varied experience.

Special circumstances regarding working in your placement:

1. Students must have their director or principal sign off on a waiver prior to starting their hours
2. Hours may be split between classrooms; however, it is the student's responsibility to discuss the schedule with all cooperating teachers, and a plan must be made with the person who is signing off on lesson plans and time sheets. This plan must be discussed and approved by your NTC instructor prior to starting your hours.
3. If you are the lead teacher, your cooperating teacher must meet the "Cooperating Teacher Criteria" listed on the next page.

Students may complete all practicums in the same setting; however will be encouraged to vary their experiences for maximum benefit and learning opportunities.

## Cooperating teacher criteria

In order for someone to be a cooperating teacher, he or she must meet the following criteria. This ensures students' learning experiences are maximized.

1. Cooperating teachers must meet one of the following:
  - a. Associates Degree in Early Childhood Education; OR
  - b. Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education; OR
  - c. A Registry level 7; OR
  - d. A CDA; OR
  - e. 4 years teaching experience
2. Cooperating teachers must be willing to provide written and verbal feedback to the student
  - a. Cooperating teachers will complete 2 written evaluations (see Documents to share)
  - b. Cooperating teachers will observe the student teaching 4 lesson plans AND review these plans prior to the student teaching them. The cooperating teacher will complete an evaluation on each plan taught (See Documents to share)
3. NTC students may not supervise other current NTC students

## Student expectations

- Adhere to the NTC Early Childhood Education Program Student Agreement
- Attend and document all scheduled hours, and report any absences to the site and the supervising teacher promptly.
- Work in the assigned program center or site for 108 consistent hours in the allotted semester time period.
- Help supervise children safely.
- Follow the host school's policies for regularly employed staff: be mindful of the arrival and departure times of your cooperating teacher, the parking restrictions for staff, use of the teacher's lounge, use of school-owned equipment and supplies, etc.
- Participate with your cooperating teacher in all aspects of their professional responsibilities including classroom, hall, bus, lunchroom, and playground duties. etc.
- Take initiative in planning learning activities, routines, and clean-up and in evaluating them.
- Submit lesson plans to your cooperating teachers well in advance of actual implementation.
- Keep confidential that information which is given to you in confidence by your supervisor.
- Maintain ethical conduct by refusing to speak in disparaging terms about another member of the staff, the students, school patrons, the administration, or another student's teacher.

NOTE: This is especially important in informal meetings in the teacher's lounge or on breaks.

- Teach only subject matter that is approved by your cooperating teacher and/or site.
- Always ask permission beforehand from those people whom you would like to list as references on job applications.
- Engage fully in the nurturing and learning aspects of child care.
- Positively support the social, emotional, and all areas of developmental needs of young children.
- Interact cordially with families with direction and approval of the cooperating teacher.
- Communicate with your cooperating teacher when in doubt.
- Submit unit plans and/or individual lesson plans to your cooperating teaching prior to class presentation/implementation.
- Ask your cooperating teacher to schedule a time to meet with you and to provide you with feedback about your performance
- Participate in the evaluation of the student teaching experience
- Represent NTC well in your student teaching placement.
- By a role model to fellow student teachers.
- Project a positive image of NTC's early Childhood Education program.

- Follow NTC's policies and standards.
- Maintain a professional demeanor at all times.
- Attend all scheduled hours, and report any absence quickly.
- Connect with your NTC Supervising teacher with any concerns.
- No cell phone use while doing your practicum experience.
- Complete all assignments and evaluations in a timely manner and submit by due dates.
- Be prepared for scheduled observations/visitations at your practicum site.
- Work in cooperation with teachers and other staff members to develop a good working unit within the program.
- Provide your practicum site with a copy of : Eligibility Letter, Physical and TB, and SIDS, SBS, Child Abuse and Neglect prevention certificate copies
- Review cooperating teacher evaluation prior to starting your hours so you are clear on the expectations of the percentage of your time you will be working as the "lead"
- Lastly, you represent yourself, your program, out technical college. You are a liaison between the college and the practicum site. Develop and maintain relationships for future students.

### **Expectations of the Cooperating Teacher**

- Review all NTC paperwork with student including the evaluation form
- Interview and conduct an orientation with the practicum candidate.
- Introduce them to children, families, and staff as an NTC ECE student teacher.
- Role model professional behavior.
- Explain expectations, and reinforce when needed.
- Guide the student in the patterns in your classroom.
- Offer to be available for questions.
- Complete all NTC cooperating teacher student evaluations.
- Review student lesson plans and give feedback.
- Sign off on student time sheet.
- Contact the NTC Supervising teacher with any questions or concerns, or documentation in a timely manner.
- Plan with the student for their involvement in your daily schedule.
- Give the student constructive tips for improvement.

## Documents to share with Cooperating Teacher and Director

All documents will be shared when placement is verified through an assignment in Canvas, called the Practicum Information Request. Here are the documents you will receive:

1. Student Teacher Responsibilities
2. NAEYC Ethical Code of Conduct
3. Student Evaluation (to be completed by cooperating teacher, 2x during the semester)
4. Attendance Record
5. Lesson Plan (Student will be teaching 4 lesson plans. The student does NOT need to teach a lesson when I come and visit, the student SHOULD work with the cooperating teacher to plan within their day)