

## Early Childhood Education

"How can we know with our adult minds what might be interesting to a child? If you follow this thought, you can discover something new." (J. Piaget)

The Department of Early Childhood Education and Care ties in with the established academic discipline and research field of early childhood education in German-speaking countries, with the central task of opening up discourse contexts in which empiricism and theory-building can take place (Schulz & Farrenberg, 2019). Essential points of orientation are the heterogeneous fields of practice in elementary education, which are conditioned by societal needs, and from which manifold strands of discourse can be derived in terms of professional theory, professional policy, and professionalization theory (Cloos et al. 2019).

At the center of the field is definitely the young person with his or her own (learning) needs and perspectives inherent in this developmental period (Holztrattner & Kobler, 2020). This is immediately followed by the quality imperative of pedagogical practice with the question of how best to accompany the young child's development and education into a world that is becoming increasingly volatile, complex, uncertain, and ambiguous (Rothmann & Verbruggen, 2014).

Based on the developmental-psychological significance of early childhood experiences for the entire further human lifespan as well as on the fact that elementary educational practice is in itself highly complex, non-standardizable, often unpredictable, and predominantly subject to multiple interpretations (Fröhlich-Gildhoff et al., 2014), we attempt to identify paradigm-spanning further professionalization needs and to realize corresponding offers in the training, further training, and continuing education of elementary educators.

Since the potential of early education can best unfold in the interplay between practice, science and politics, we maintain good cooperation with relevant institutions, such as the Center for Kindergarten Education of the Province of Salzburg, the Professional Group of Salzburg Elementary Educators, and many more.

In our training and continuing education programs, we offer a bachelor's degree in elementary education with a total of 180 ECTS (three years), a university course in inclusive elementary education with a total of 90 ECTS (two years), a university course in early language development (6 ECTS) and a university course in practical guidance (6 ECTS). In addition, some day programs (conferences and shorter training courses) are held jointly for elementary and primary teachers.

We are very keen on international exchange in research and qualification matters.

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