

Blended Early Education Specialists (BEES) Project

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Purpose: This project will prepare 40 candidates in early childhood education/special education licensure through distance education and summer coursework on campus, including candidates in rural areas of Oregon and Washington.

Method: Project activities include: (a) using innovative distance education technology to prepare early intervention/early childhood special education specialists to apply evidence-based practices in a variety of natural environments and typical early childhood settings to serve children with disabilities, birth to eight years old, and their families; (b) developing candidates competencies in evidence-based practices for family centered and culturally competent services; (c) collaboration and consultation to address children's needs in typical early childhood settings; (d) using effective instructional strategies for children with disabilities; (e) collaboration with Oregon and Washington state educational agencies, education service districts, and local school districts to provide student teaching experiences in diverse sites that apply evidence-based practices; and (f) applying evidence-based strategies for mentoring graduates during the first year of teaching to support successful and sustained employment to serve children with disabilities and their families.

Impact on community: This project uses distance education to prepare highly skilled Early Intervention Specialists for the rural counties of Oregon. When an infant or toddler has special needs, early intervention improves later school and life outcomes. In the long run, early intervention saves Oregon thousands of dollars in educational and social support costs that would have been needed in later years. This project prepares within the rural communities of Oregon Early Intervention Specialists who already live in that community, bringing much needed expertise to our rural communities.