Welcome to the ECSE Spring 2019 Newsletter!

This issue features information on a new funding opportunity called Project GROW for students in the Early Childhood Special Education M.A./Credential Program and Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences M.Sc. Program. In addition, Kimberly Deboe, a student currently teaching at Oakland Unified School District, shares some of her experiences during the seven day strike. This issue also includes an interview with Dr. Ting of the Vision Impairment program. Dr. Ting will also be the keynote speaker at this year’s ECSE annual conference.
Apply for Project GROW!

Eligibility

In order to be eligible for Project GROW, an individual needs to successfully be accepted at SFSU into either the M.Sc. in Communicative Disorders through the Department of Speech, Language, Hearing Sciences OR the Preliminary teaching credential and MA in Special Education within Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) through the Department of Special Education, beginning Fall 2019. Upon receiving acceptance, the student can then apply for Project GROW. We will be able to accept 4-5 students each fall, per program (8-10 students total each year).

Contact

Students accepted into the ECSE program, please contact Amber Friesen afriesen@sfsu.edu

Students accepted into the SLHS program, please contact Teresa Gray teresaq@sfsu.edu

Project GROW

What is Project GROW?

Project GROW (Guiding Responsive Communication Within inclusive early childhood settings) is a new, 5-year Federal grant from the Office of Special Education Programs Department of Education. The purpose of this grant is to support interdisciplinary training for Early Childhood Special Educators (ECSE) and Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs) to provide high-quality services to young children with disabilities within inclusive settings. Of specific focus is providing additional opportunities to collaborate together and gain expertise in using Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) with young children.
Why does Project GROW have this focus?

We know that there are many young children who receive special education services in the United States experience significant communication delays. Without effective communication supports, these children can have difficulty in contributing to social interactions, and are significantly at-risk for academic failure, social isolation and severe language delays. Providing access within inclusive settings to multiple forms of AAC is essential for supporting these young children so they can fully access, participate, and learn with their peers. In order to do this effectively, we know that ECSE and SLPs need to collaborate and have a shared knowledge of best practices in early childhood, inclusion, and AAC.

What happens if you are accepted into Project GROW?

Upon being accepted into Project GROW, we will be able to offer the student financial support that will cover tuition and bit more that can be used towards textbooks, transportation, childcare, etc. The student will not have to pay that money back as long as they commit to working in the field (for every one year funded, they need to commit to two years in the field).

During the course of their program, the ECSE and SLP students will have coordinated field experiences and coursework, participate in shared learning opportunities including three conferences, and have ongoing mentorship. In addition to earning a masters and credential, students becoming SLPs will receive the Inclusive EC Practices Graduate Certificate and the ECSE students will receive a Graduate Certificate in AAC.

Application and more information can be found at:

https://ecse.sfsu.edu/content/funding-opportunities
Project GROW
Guiding Responsive Communication Within Inclusive Early Childhood Settings

An interdisciplinary training program for early childhood special educators and speech language pathologists
U.S. Department of Education
Office of Special Education Programs
Grant # H325K180023
Funded 2019-2023

There is a critical need for more highly-qualified professionals of diverse sociocultural backgrounds to support the learning and development of ALL young children within inclusive settings. The Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) and Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences (SLHS) programs at San Francisco State University have been awarded a 5-year grant from the Department of Education called Project GROW to fill this need.

Project GROW will offer:
• Coordinated field experiences and coursework between ECSE and SLP scholars
• Shared learning opportunities including three conferences
• Ongoing faculty and peer mentorship

Eligibility
All scholars that have been accepted into either the ECSE Preliminary Teaching Credential program or the M.S. in SLHS. More information including the Project GROW application materials can be found at http://ecse.sfsu.edu/ http://slhs.sfsu.edu/

For more information, please contact:

Amber Friesen, Associate Professor
Early Childhood Special Education
afriesen@sfsu.edu
(415)338-7654

Teresa Gray, Assistant Professor
Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences
teresag@sfsu.edu
(415)405-3488
Student Interview: Kimberly Deboe

Kimberly is a student in the Early Childhood Special Education M.A./Credential Program. She is currently teaching in the Oakland Unified School District as a preschool special day class teacher. The District went through a seven day strike in February.

Can you tell me about yourself?

I am a teacher at Burbank Preschool Center in Oakland and I teach a classroom categorized as moderate-severe with Autism. This is my third school year at Burbank, but I’ve been teaching since 2007. I’m a single mom and I have a 3.5 year old daughter who is in preschool.

What are some of your hobbies?

I’m a big sports fan and love going to sporting events. I also like spending a lot of time with family and friends. Both of my parents grew up in Oakland and I also spent a lot of time with my grandparents in Oakland. My dad loves sports, he taught me the love of sports and brought me up to love Oakland sports! I also like to do arts and crafts projects, especially painting with acrylics. I also like listening to music a lot, mostly Bay Area rap because that was the kind of music I grew up listening to.

How did you get started in special education and what sparked your interest?

I was working in Pleasanton in general education preschool program for about three years and we started getting a lot of students that were having challenges in classroom with transitions. It was a wide problem throughout the school and we discussed this with administrators. At the time, I didn’t have a background in special education but through connecting with professionals and research, some of the characteristics we saw in the students were typical for Autism. The school chose not to do anything about it, so I started to look elsewhere. I came across a job opportunity at Burbank, interviewed, and began working in special education then. My first job working with kids was in Oakland, where I worked with Latino children in the Fruitvale District. Having the opportunity to come back, that’s really where my heart was.
You are currently working at Oakland Unified School District. Can you tell me about your role?

In my classroom, there’s myself and two aides. I have two half day classes, with 8 students in one and 6 students in the other; they are all boys. My role is to get all of the students to meet their goals and to reach their full potential. I have a lot of students who are nonverbal so all year, we have been working on different ways to help them communicate in a way that fits their needs and wants.

I know there was recently a teacher strike. What were your experiences like during that time?

It was very stressful because I was worried about providing financially for myself and my daughter, since I’m the sole provider. Being on strike meant not knowing if I would have enough money to pay my rent, buy groceries, and the rest of my bills. It was a hard time for me, as the strike went on for seven working days. But during the time of being on the strike, it was very empowering being on the picket line and shutting down E.14 St. (International Boulevard) one of the busiest streets in Oakland. We made the best of it with the staff we had; we were dancing and trying to keep ourselves motivated. We were out there for a cause. We were fighting for our kids, living wages, small class sizes, and support for them. It was a very powerful experience. I felt emotional at times, but I knew I was fighting for my kids, and my daughter and her future.
What was the process like in navigating the systems during the strike, specifically for new teachers?

I didn’t know anything and we were finding out day by day where we would go. We would strike in the morning, take a little break to head to the next location, and I felt a little lost. I had to rely on other people to tell me where to go. On the district end, they didn’t really tell us much and we never received updates personally. I was very unsure and I was also worried about my status as an intern teacher although our Union reassured me that there wouldn’t be a problem. I would never want to go through it again, but if we had to for our kids, I would be right out there with my teachers.

Do you have any advice or insights for teachers who may be experiencing something similar in their districts?

Stand strong and do not cross the picket line. I don’t know how many teachers are in the same position as I am as far as being the sole financial provider for the family, but this is definitely something that can be difficult to stand against. But stand strong and fight for your kids, and fight for what you need because as teachers, we are undervalued and people don’t understand how hard it is to be a teacher.

Any advice or suggestions for new professionals entering the ECSE field?

My advice to new teachers would be to find someone you can talk to in the field. I have a mentor here at my school at Burbank and we meet biweekly. I am able to go to her about concerns or things I am unfamiliar with. It’s important to find an outlet and somebody to talk to so you can feel supported. And don’t give up because things will get better.
Interview was conducted with Tina Tom, MS OTR/L, Early Start Bilingual Service Coordinator at Golden Gate Regional Center

What is Golden Gate Regional Center?

Golden Gate Regional Center (GGRC) is a state-funded nonprofit organization serving individuals with developmental disabilities in Marin, San Francisco and San Mateo counties. It is a part of a network of 21 Regional Centers throughout California. Founded in 1969, the Regional Center System was established and later expanded in 1974 through the Lanternman Developmental Disabilities Services Act to provide services for persons with cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism and other conditions found to be closely related to intellectual disability.

In 1993, the California Early Intervention Services Act expanded the regional centers once more, this time to include early intervention (Early Start) services for infants and toddlers (up to 36 months of age) who have a developmental delay or are at high risk of developing a delay.

What is Early Start and how would parents or providers access these services?

For the Early Start program, children who are eligible for services may receive a variety of services depending on the child’s needs and the family's capacity to meet those needs. Services are provided in the natural environment and may include: service coordination, developmental monitoring specialized instruction, speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy. GGRC provides evaluations and assessments at no cost. For other services, GGRC is the payor of last resort and families are encouraged to access recommended services through insurance or other generic resources. Parents can access an intake form to request an assessment to see if their child is eligible for Early Start services through our website www.ggrc.org or by calling our intake line at 1-888-339-3305.
Are there any current career opportunities for individuals looking to get into the field of EI or ECSE?

There are many opportunities for individuals who are interested in providing early intervention (we call it “specialized instruction”). Home based services are most common for the families that we serve but there are also opportunities to work in a center-based environment. Individuals who are interested in working with our families are encouraged to contact our vendorization unit for more information about becoming a service provider.

What are some of the roles and responsibilities of a service coordinator?

In addition to being a direct service provider, there are also opportunities at GGRC for being an Early Start service coordinator. The service coordinator helps determine whether a child is eligible for Early Start services and then works with the family and our clinical team to determine what services would be appropriate for the family.

What kinds of experiences or background might a prospective employee need?

For direct service providers (specialized instructors, speech therapists, physical therapists, and occupational therapists) we are looking for individuals that have at least one year of experience working with children. For service coordinators, we are looking for individuals with either a social work background (experience working with children or with families) or a clinical background (occupational, physical, or speech therapists, or other experience working with patients). We are always looking for individuals who are bilingual to serve our San Francisco State University
non-English speaking families either providing direct intervention or as a service coordinator.

**How did you get started in the field of early start services?**

Prior to working at GGRC, I had completed my education and obtained my license for occupational therapy but did not have too much experience working with children. I did have some previous experience working as a community organizer and outreach specialist. I wanted to become a service coordinator so that I could put my clinical background and my desire to help immigrant families (I speak Cantonese) to good use.

**What has been the most rewarding part in working as the liaison between families, children and providers?**

The most rewarding part of my job is seeing the progress that the children make because of our services. I also love seeing how parents change and become more confident as a result of working with our therapists.

**Do you have any advice for students who are interested in working or are currently working with families in this capacity?**

My advice would be to take good care of yourself. It can be stressful working with families of children with special needs for many different reasons. To make this work sustainable so that I can continue to make a difference in the lives of the families that I serve, I make time to care of myself.
5th ANNUAL EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Saturday / April 27th, 2019 / 9am-3pm
Seven Hills Conference Center @ San Francisco State University

Keynote Speaker:

Yue-Ting Siu, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Visual Impairments

AGENDA

• Keynote presentation by Dr. Yue-Ting Siu, Assistant Professor in the Visual Impairments Program
• Presentations and workshops by alumni and students, highlighting practical strategies to use in early childhood special education and early intervention settings
• Booths from alumni, students, and community partners to network, share job openings and other opportunities.
• Interactive activities including yoga and music, for participants to engage in and garner ideas for their work settings

We look forward to your attendance!
Faculty Highlight With

Dr. Yue-Ting Siu

Dr. Ting is a Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI) and Assistant Professor in the Program for Visual Impairments in the Department of Special Education at SFSU.

Can you just tell me a little bit about yourself?

I see myself as a practitioner. Despite my other work in training and research, at the beginning and end of the day, I see myself as a teacher of the visually impaired. That’s my professional identity. On a personal level, I am curious about many different things and I think that aligns with the role with being a teacher. It suits my personality really well in that way because it allows me to be creative and presents different challenges all the time. I’m constantly learning so it’s exciting!

Can you tell me a little bit about your role here at San Francisco State University and how you got involved?

I was a teacher of the visually impaired in New York City and I moved to California for the joint doc program, before jumping in the VI program. I had been teaching the class called special populations, that’s focused on how you work with students with visual impairments and multiple disabilities and it also covers early childhood development. I’ve been teaching that class since 2013. I graduated with my PhD in 2015 and did freelance consulting for a year and also teaching. In 2016, I was hired as the assistant professor and program coordinator of the VI program.

Can you share a little bit about the program for vision impairments?

Our program is actually quite unique compared to the other programs because we’re the only program with distance learning options. All of our methods classes are available on Zoom so we meet on Zoom every week for class and then once a semester we have what we call lab weekends. During lab weekend, students come and they meet face to face, and we do hands on work. We’re the only program that I know of that do this in the College of Education and it’s been a really good way for students to be able to to be part of the program. There’s only two programs to train teachers of the visually impaired in California. By bringing the program basically online with distance learning options, we're now able to train teachers from anywhere in the state or anybody who can travel to the bay once a semester. The entire
Do you mind sharing a little bit just about what your journey was like into special education?

It’s always fun to share because it was a complete accident. I had graduated college and dropped out of my physical therapy program in Boston. The Perkin’s School For The Blind was hiring and I applied for a paraprofessional job in the deaf blind program and ended up falling in love with the work.

You will be the keynote speaker for the early childhood special education conference. What are you looking forward to most?

I’m really looking forward to seeing where the crossovers are in conversations and issues of practice and opportunities in the field between the early interventionists work and what I see as a teacher, of the visually impaired.

And then last but not least, do you have any advice or insight for new teachers starting off either the field of special education or vision impairments?

My biggest advice is to find people to talk to and connect with. That means, yes, going to conferences every year, but it also means looking to connect with people locally and also on social media. Everybody has colleagues in their local vicinity and if you don't, then you need to find colleagues online that you can ask questions to and discuss challenges of practice with. Essentially, find your tribe. Every good teacher needs a tribe to back them up and to troubleshoot with and or get new ideas for teaching.
The Early Childhood Special Education program at SFSU is committed to preparing students to teach and lead in a variety of ECSE service delivery settings that serve children between the ages of birth – five. We offer a variety of program options:

• Masters of Arts in Special Education with an emphasis in ECSE
• Preliminary and Professional Educational Clearance for Teaching Credentials
• Specialist Credentials with an emphasis in ECSE
• Add on ECSE Authorization
• Doctorate in Special Education with a specialization in ECSE

For more information, please contact us:

Department of Special Education and Communicative Disorders
1600 Holloway Avenue
Burk Hall 156
San Francisco, CA 94132
ecse.sfsu.edu

Special Education Graduate Certificates

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

This certification is designed to prepare professionals to provide AAC services for children, youth, and adults with complex communication needs in school and community settings.

Inclusive Early Childhood Practice Certificate

This certificate is a collaborative effort between Early Childhood Special Education and Early Childhood Education for individuals who seek expertise in supporting all children in their learning and development.

Autism Graduate Certificate

The certificate offers a specialized program of study for professionals seeking to gain expertise in supporting the unique needs of learners on the autism spectrum in diverse settings.

This newsletter was created by Karina Du, an alumni of the Early Childhood Special Education Masters and Credential Program at San Francisco State University.