

Project 3IP: Interdisciplinary and Intensive Intervention Preparation for Professionals Serving Young Children with Significant Disabilities

Overview

Project 3IP, through Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU)'s Counseling and Special Education Department of School of Education, Physical Therapy Department of School of Allied Health Professions, and Pediatrics Department of School of Medicine, in collaboration with the Partnership for People with Disabilities, Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), and community partners, provides an interdisciplinary and intensive intervention preparation for **early intervention/early childhood special education (EI/ECSE)** and **physical therapy (PT)** personnel. Embedding the *Pyramid Early Intervention Model* (Fox et al., 2003; Hemmeter et al., 2006) within the *Learning to Teach in Community* (Hammerness et al., 2005) conceptual framework, *Project 3IP* intends to build and strengthen the path between high quality early intervention personnel and optimal outcomes of young children with significant disabilities and their families, particularly children from high-need communities. **EI/ECSE** and **PT** personnel will be prepared through two programs (Master of Education [M.Ed.] in ECSE and Doctor of Physical Therapy [DPT]) at VCU across three disciplines (education, physical therapy, and pediatrics).

Through interdisciplinary teamwork and cooperation with community partners, *Project 3IP* will collaboratively design and support focused instruction and intensive individualized interventions to address the high-intensity needs of children with significant disabilities. Specifically, *Project 3IP* will develop and implement a series of seminars to enhance targeted competencies for serving children with significant disabilities and their families. Also, coordinated clinical experiences across educational, developmental, and medical aspects will be developed and implemented through university and community partnerships, including families of young children with disabilities. *Project 3IP* will further identify and revise 4 shared courses (10 credit hours) across the M.Ed. in ECSE program and the DPT program related to intensive and individualized interventions for young children with significant disabilities. In addition to completing their relevant programs (ECSE or DPT), *Project 3IP* scholars will receive a certificate of intensive intervention training upon completing the 10-credit shared coursework. This certificate will be available to all related services providers. *Project 3IP* intends to **maintain and sustain** the shared coursework after the project is over because the shared coursework is built upon the existing programs of ECSE and DPT.

Project 3IP attempts to achieve **3 program goals**:

(1). Prepare 20 high-quality EI/ECSE personnel with intensive training in significant disabilities and interdisciplinary teamwork with related services providers and 10 high-quality physical therapists with specialized training in EI/ECSE; (2) **Establish, maintain, and sustain** strong interdisciplinary collaborations within the university as well as university-community partnerships for the preparation of high quality EI/ECSE and PT personnel in high-need communities; (3) Increase the knowledge, skills, and dispositions for intensive and individualized intervention for children with significant disabilities including multiple disabilities, significant cognitive disabilities, significant physical disabilities, significant sensory disabilities, significant autism, and significant social or emotional disabilities, in least restrictive environments.