Early Childhood Policy in Institutions of Higher Education

Early Childhood Policy in Institutions of Higher Education:

A Working Paper on the Current Status

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What Early Childhood Policy Already Exists in Institutions of Higher Ed?

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WHAT EARLY CHILDHOOD POLICY ALREADY EXISTS IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER ED?

Introduction

This report provides findings from a study examining the characteristics of higher education programs focused on Early Childhood Policy. Each higher education program provides a marketable credential indicating the student, through coursework and field experience, has obtained expertise in the area of Early Childhood Policy. The credential-granting programs were identified through a computer search using several search terms. The identified programs were analyzed to determine similarities and differences across the institutions and credentials, themes in course content, and student opportunities. Recommendations are advanced for further study and program development.

Context and Overarching Questions of the Current Study

This study examines early childhood policy-related courses, degrees, and centers within institutions of higher education. The aim of this study focused on the characteristics of credentials in Early Childhood Policy and the closely related Policy Research Centers and was conducted with the aim of answering four overarching questions.

1. What are the characteristics of the academic programs and Early Childhood Policy credentials in regard to areas of emphasis, credit hours, and course content?
2. What are the similarities and differences across the credentials?
3. What are the characteristics of Policy Research Centers that emphasize Early Childhood Policy?
4. What is the role of experiential education?

In regard to questions 1 and 2, some information can be meaningfully quantified such as the total number of undergraduate and graduate credentials or the total number of credit hours in a particular discipline. This informs our knowledge regarding the universe of credentials. We can also use these data for comparison purposes. For example, the data inform the discussion regarding how "prescriptive" a credential's requirements are by reviewing required vs. elective courses. The question that can be answered is: "To what extent can students tailor their class selections to match their unique interests and career goals?" The data also inform the comparison of programs related to instructional format (classroom instruction versus online programs) and type of institution (public versus private).

We can also look at questions 1 and 2 qualitatively by examining the required/recommended courses and course content of each credential. To aid this process the Ecological Model [1] was selected (Figure 1). This

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[1] Bronfenbrenner, U. (1994). Ecological models of human development. In International Encyclopedia of Education, Vol 3, 2nd Ed. Oxford: Elsevier. Reprinted in: Gauvain, M. &* Cole, M. (Eds.), Readings on the development of children, 2nd Ed. (1993, pp. 37-43). NY: Freeman.

systems model contextualizes the various influences on children's growth and development. Thus, it provides a framework to aid in identifying and categorizing the themes in course content and the overall areas of emphasis for each credential. The Ecological Model also aids in identifying the similarities and differences across the institutions, academic departments, credentials, and student opportunities.

Figure 1: *Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model*

Chronosystem - Changes over time.

Macrosystem - Laws and regulations, cultural values and beliefs.

Exosystem - Community (education setting, community agencies and resources).

Mesosystem - Interaction among the social network (family, caregivers, friends).

Microsystem - Individual and those in the immediate environment.
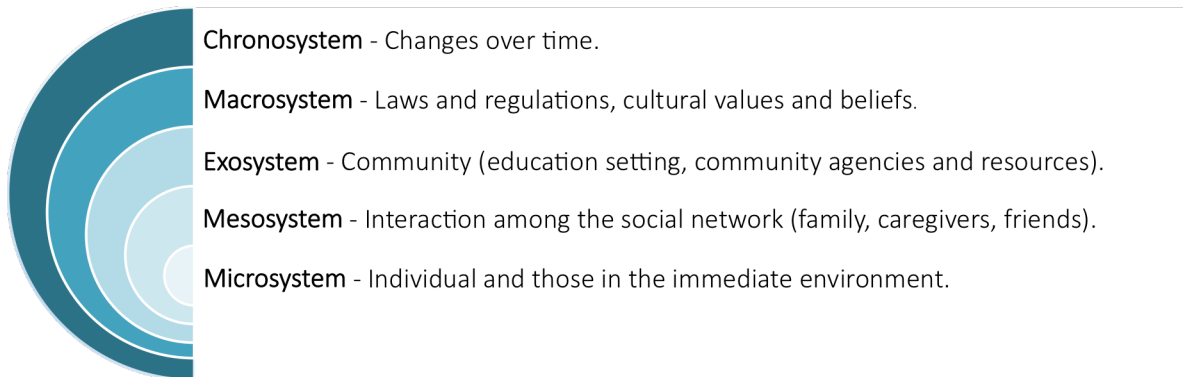
Question 3 addresses the role of Policy Research Centers (PRC). The PRC of interest to this project are those that emphasize work in the areas of policy and research associated with early childhood. Thus, the PRC could work in many different sectors (i.e., health care, education, social services and law) but the implications of policy and research in these areas would directly impact the well-being of young children. These PRC may also serve a broader population beyond early childhood (youth, the elderly) or a wider range of issues. However, substantial work and expertise lies in the area of young children. Question 3, examining characteristics of these PRC, focuses on opportunities for undergraduate and graduate student engagement.

Last, there is the question addressing experiential education. This broad term is used to encompass a wide range of student field experiences (i.e., internships, practicums, capstones, research projects, and trips) where classroom education meets the "real world." Several questions are addressed in this examination. These questions are:

1. What types of opportunities exist for students?
2. In what ways do the experiences vary across credential categories?
3. How do the experiences appear to enhance a student's knowledge and understanding of Early Childhood Policy?

Method

To identify credential-granting higher education programs in the area of Early Childhood Policy, a Google internet search was conducted using six search terms (Table 1). After entering each search term, the

findings were presented in the standard Google format. The total number of responses (individual websites) for each search term were endless.

Table 1. *Search Terms*
- Higher education degree early childhood policy Early Childhood Knowledge   - Academic degree early childhood policy studies   - Early childhood policy program higher education   - Child policy degree   - Early childhood policy degree   - Policy degree child studies

Only higher education institution websites were reviewed to identify academic programs relevant to the term "early childhood policy." This included reviewing the description of the academic department, the description of the credential program(s), and, when available, the required/recommended courses for each credential. This process, at times, lead to a "snowball" effect. That is, identifying one credential at a particular institution frequently lead to identify additional credentials. The term "credential" is used to refer to marketable documents which indicate the completion of required coursework and field experience. Credentials would include undergraduate degrees (major, minor) and certificates as well as graduate degrees and post-graduate certificates. Relevant programs were found across disciplines, including Human Development and Family Studies, Child Development, Psychology, Education, Social Work, Law, and Public Policy. In reviewing department websites, it was found that many departments use relevant terms (i.e., policy, public policy, social policy, child, child development, advocacy) to describe their work and expertise. However, there was frequently little evidence to substantiate the use of the terms in regard to specific academic credential programs. Frequently only one or two policy-related courses were listed. At times, the courses were electives. Significantly fewer departments use the term "policy" (or child, child development) and then provide information related to specific credential programs. Those programs meeting all four of the following criteria were selected for further review.

1. Opportunity to obtain a credential with an emphasis in Early Childhood Policy.
2. Coursework in child development.
3. Coursework in policy (public policy, social policy, advocacy).
4. Fieldwork opportunity (internship, practicum, volunteer work, center-based work opportunity).

Information on each credential was obtained from the academic department's website. The information included a description of the academic department, credential program, and required/recommended courses (titles and course description).[2]

Using a similar review process, Policy Research Centers located at institutions of higher education were reviewed. The list of centers was gleaned from two sources. First, as Early Childhood Policy credentials were identified, those same institution websites were searched to identify Policy Research Centers (N = 16). A second source was the University-Based Child and Family Policy Consortium (N = 28). These two sources created a list of websites to review. Each center website was searched to identify the degree to which the center's policy focused on early childhood and the degree to which the center functioned to support undergraduate and/or graduate students pursuing academic work in the field of Early Childhood Policy. Thus, even if the institution did not have a specific credential in Early Childhood Policy, a student could still obtain meaningful experience working at the Policy Research Center. From the two identified sources, a final list of centers was created (N = 12). Student experiences were categorized by internships, opportunities to work on research projects, policy and advocacy experiences, and opportunities to present and/or publish their work.

Analysis

To answer Questions 1 and 2, credentials were clustered by academic department, level of credential, and type of institution. Total credit hours and credit hours by course content were also assessed (see Appendix 1). Coursework was analyzed using an inductive approach similar to grounded theory analysis.[3] To begin this task, the required/recommended course listings, titles, and descriptions for each credential were reviewed several times to identify course themes and categories. These categories were coded across credentials using an iterative process. That is, by reviewing the courses (and course content) and refining the emerging categories a final set of eight course categories were identified. Further, several of the eight categories contain numerous themes. These themes relate to specific areas of coursework and student experiences. The final eight categories and sample courses (abbreviated) are outlined below.

1. Child Development: Courses focused on young children's growth and development.

- **Child Development (Northwestern University).** Research and policy aimed at the goal of improving children's lives require an in-depth understanding of how and why children develop the way they do. This course is designed to provide an intensive overview of the science of child development, with an emphasis on young children.

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[2] Due to the limitations of this study, it is quite possible that some higher education programs and/or Policy Research Centers were not identified. The list of programs and centers generated in this study should be viewed as a beginning point for learning about Early Childhood Policy.

[3] Thomas, D. R. (June, 2006). A general inductive approach for analyzing qualitative evaluation data. *American Journal of Evaluation,* 237-246.

- **Social and Emotional Development I: Infancy and Childhood (Erikson Institute).** This course focuses on the study of social and emotional development in children from birth through age eight. It primarily considers how children experience themselves and others; the role of relationships in development; and the interaction of biological, psychological, and social forces.

2. Child and Family Focus: Courses focused on young children and families.

- **Human Behavior in the Social Environment I (Loyola University).** This course studies the life cycle of the individual from in utero through old age and death from a bio-psycho-social-spiritual perspective, via multiple theoretical frameworks. Individual growth and development is studied in the context of culture, race, ethnicity, social class, gender, families and other social systems.

- **Child Abuse and Neglect (Montclair State University).** This course will take a comprehensive look at the social and psychological development of children caught in the child welfare system. It will compare normal and pathological models of child rearing. Special consideration will be given to the impact of family and social systems on the development and behavior of abused/neglected children.

3. Child and Community: Courses focused educational programs and community agencies serving young children and their families.

- **Ecological Systems of the Developing Child (Montclair State University).** This course will provide students with an understanding of major issues in normal development from infancy through adolescence, with a particular focus on areas that are most germane to current child advocacy efforts in child protection, education, juvenile justice, and custody determinations.

- **Neighborhood Context and Family Well-Being (Tufts University).** Neighborhoods figure centrally in the lives of children, youth, and families because they shape daily activities, social interactions, and access to opportunities and resources that support thriving. This course focuses on the variety of ways neighborhoods contribute to child and family well-being, for better or worse, such as, the extent of crime and violence and access to institutions such as high quality schools. The course also considers current and potential neighborhood-based policies meant to eliminate inequities based on neighborhood residence, inequities often rooted in larger social forces such as economic and racial segregation.

4. Child Policy: Policy courses (i.e., public policy, social policy, education policy) with a focus on young children and families.

- **Young Children and Social Policy: Issues and Problems (Columbia University).** Overview of social policy towards young children as it affects classroom

practice and professional goals. Situations such as child abuse, divorce and custody, student classification, and foster care are examined.

- **Science, Children, and Politics (Georgetown University).** This course is designed to engage students in a critical examination of the relation between knowledge and advocacy, and the influence of both on the development of child policy in the United States. Students will be introduced to the opportunities, dilemmas, and constraints that affect the relation between science and policy, particularly federal legislative policies for children and families.

5. Public Policy/Law: Courses exclusively focused on the study of issues associated with public policy and law.

- **LAW 665 Introduction to the Study of Law and Legal Systems (Loyola University).** This foundational course introduces students to the sources and functions of law in our society. The course begins with an explanation of the structure and traditions of the American court system. Students then learn to read and analyze cases and statutes and develop basic legal written and oral presentation skills. The course uses child and family law cases and problems and provides students with the background they will need for future children's law and policy studies.

- **Policy Analysis: Techniques and Application (Brandeis University).** Examines approaches to policy analysis and assesses strength and limitations of various methods. Exposes students to a range of methods and theoretical frameworks for exploring and understanding contemporary social problems and policy challenges.

6. Leadership: Required/recommended course beyond the immediate scope of early childhood, policy, and research.

- **LAW 668 - Leadership Development (Loyola University).** One of the distinguishing features of the Online M.J. in Children's Law and Policy is its focus on the development of leadership skills for child advocates across a range of disciplines and organizations. This required cornerstone course begins with an introduction to different types and styles of leadership before turning to a more practice-based preparation for leadership in such areas as operations, human resources, finance, and communications.

- **Diverse Leadership as an Imperative for Impact - Lessons from Education (Stanford University).** Our society implicitly prizes a particular approach to leadership - but today's cross-sectoral, impact-oriented leader cannot afford to be restricted to a single approach. If we aspire to address challenges across social, economic, and political arenas, with highly charged moral implications and multiple stakeholders, we have an imperative to use all available tools by discovering, celebrating, and advancing diversity in leadership. Education provides the perfect canvas on which to explore this imperative. In

this course, we will: (1) study a range of effective leadership approaches in the context of education; (2) develop broad, transportable skills and frameworks required to lead in any complex setting - business, public sector, nonprofit sector; (3) delve into leadership tradeoffs and tensions; (4) explore and understand our own values and tacit and explicit decision-making criteria; and (5) recognize barriers to diversity and tactics to address them. Guiding questions will include: How does the context shape the solution set? What does inspired and inspiring leadership look like? How do race/gender/other identities enter into the equation? How do I develop my own brand of leadership? We will examine contemporary leaders and controversies from education, draw upon timeless historical thinkers, enjoy the wisdom of guest speakers, and work intensively in small groups to highlight challenges, opportunities, and tradeoffs. By exploring a range of approaches and situations, we will strive for deeper understanding of ourselves and of the context to become a more capable, empathetic and effective leaders.

7. Research - Required/recommended courses in methods and statistics.

- **Quantitative Methods for the Social Sciences (Syracuse University).** Skills necessary to analyze data and evaluate research: research design, sampling design, descriptive and inferential statistics, data sources for social science, constructing data sets, reading and constructing tables and charts.

- **Statistical Methods for Policy Analysis (Georgetown University).** This is the first course in the three-course quantitative methods sequence…. This course introduces students to descriptive and inferential statistics often used in public policy research….. Topics covered include: measures of central tendency and dispersion, probability and probability distributions, random variables, hypothesis testing and confidence intervals, statistical power, correlation, simple regression, and an introduction to multivariate regression. Students use Stata (a statistical software application) to develop their data analysis skills.

8. Internship/Practicum Courses: As course lists were reviewed, this category grew to include all forms of field experiences and related learning opportunities.

- **Child Advocacy Internship (Harvard University).** In the second semester of the Child Advocacy Strand, students carry out internships in which they participate in the work of an advocacy organization. Students will put in eight hours each week to learn about the agency--its mission, its work, its culture--and to work on their designated project. Possibilities for the advocacy project are broad but must be manageable in scope for completion in a one-semester internship.

- **Practicum in Public Child Welfare (Montclair State University)** The course will provide students with a supervised field placement at a child advocacy agency. The seminar will provide classroom instruction on issues related to the students' experiences. Site supervisors will provide on-the-job guidance/supervision.

To address the question regarding how "prescriptive" the credential is ("To what extent can students tailor their class selections to match their unique interests and career goals?"), course requirements were examined. The total number of required courses were compared with the total number of student-select courses. The credentials were clustered into three groups: Highly Prescriptive (approximately 70% or more), Moderately Prescriptive (approximately 50% -70%), and Not Prescriptive (less than approximately 50%) based on the total number of required courses. These groupings are based on approximations of the presented information for comparison purposes.

Policy Research Centers

To address the question focused on Policy Research Centers, a table of relevant data was created (see Appendix 2).

Experiential Education

In regard to experiential education, the findings from the course content analysis were used to identify the various types of field experiences (i.e., internships, capstone, etc.). These various types were grouped into categories based on similarities in what students would be doing and expectations of the students (i.e., presentation, paper, etc.).

Findings

Looking across the data (Appendix 1), it is evident the credentials are highly dis-similar. They range from undergraduate minors and certificates to doctoral degrees and from 15 to 75 credit hours. It must be noted that each academic program, and each credential, is highly unique. This "uniqueness" had a bearing on the study and it needs to be noted as follows:

- Although some programs are highly prescriptive, others allow students significant leeway to select courses. The latter proved challenging when it came to categorizing course requirements. For this reason, the analysis of course requirements (Appendix 1) does not always sum to the total number of credit hours required. Further, two credentials are not analyzed based on course content (see findings regarding "prescriptiveness.").

- Another factor, at the graduate level, is the reality that credential requirements (total number of credit hours and course requirements) are, at times, uniquely dependent on a student's undergraduate degree. Due to this, whenever the degree requirements also listed "recommended courses", these were included in the course content analysis with the aim of gaining the widest possible view of the potential field of study.

- Some credentials provided a large number of "student choice" courses ("pick 2 from the list"). Although some programs listed these courses by area of study ("Pick two Research Methods Courses"), others simply provided a long list of courses. Thus, at times it simply became a judgement call as to how to handle the information.

Taking these factors into consideration, the aim of the analysis became examining the credentials from differing perspectives and erroring on providing more, rather than less, information (or casting the net a bit broader rather than narrow).

Description of the Programs and Credentials

A total of 31 credentials (representing 17 institutions) were identified (Table 2). Of these credentials, 7 were online credentials and 4 were dual degrees (located at private institutions). The online credentials were identified at the graduate level and at public, private, and for-profit institutions. The only online dual degree program is offered by Loyola University (Master of Jurisprudence) and Erikson Institute (MA in Child Development). It should be noted that Loyola's online program does have a residency requirement. Table 2 further delineates the credentials.

Table 2. *Credentials by Type of Institution and Level of Education*

Institutions	N=	Undergraduate Major / Minor / Certificate	Graduate (Dual Degree)	Post-Graduate Certificate	*Total*
Public	4	1 / 1 / 1	5 (0)	3	*11*
Private	12	1 / 2 / 1	10 (4)	-	*18*
For-Profit	1	-	1 (0)	1	*2*
Totals	*17*	*2 / 3 / 2*	*16(4)*	*4*	*31*

Table 3 indicates the credentials are spread across 10 departments with most credentials occurring in the fields of education and human development. Table 3 does not include the four dual degree programs. Each of the dual degree programs represent opportunities for students to gain significant knowledge and skills in two disciplines (earn two degrees) while at the same time reducing the total amount of time needed to earn the two degrees. These credentials link studies in public policy/law with studies in education, psychology, social work, and child development.

Table 3. *Distribution of Academic Programs by Department*

Public Undergraduate	Private Undergraduate	Department	Public Graduate	Private Graduate	For-Profit Graduate
		Education	1	4	2
		Education and Human Development			
	1	Education and Child Study	1		
0	1	Human Development and Family Studies			
		Human Development and Education	2		
		Human Development and		1	

		Psychology			
		Human Development and Social Policy		1	
		Law		1	
3		Social Work	4		
	2	Public Policy/Public Affairs	1	2	2
3	*4*	*Totals (N-27)*	*9*	*9*	*2*

Dual Degree Programs

1. Erikson Institute and Loyola University (MA in Child Development and Master of Jurisprudence)
2. Georgetown University (Master's degree in Public Policy and PhD)
3. Loyola University (Masters of Social Work and Master of Jurisprudence)
4. Stanford University (Master's degree in Education and Masters of Public Policy)

Approaches to Course Selection

As noted, when analyzing the credentials, a challenge was the varied approach to course selection. That is, the question, "To what extent can students tailor their class selections to match their unique interests and career goals?" While some credential programs are highly prescriptive, others allow students significant leeway to tailor course selection and field experiences. Table 4 provides findings regarding Highly Prescriptive and Moderately Prescriptive credentials.

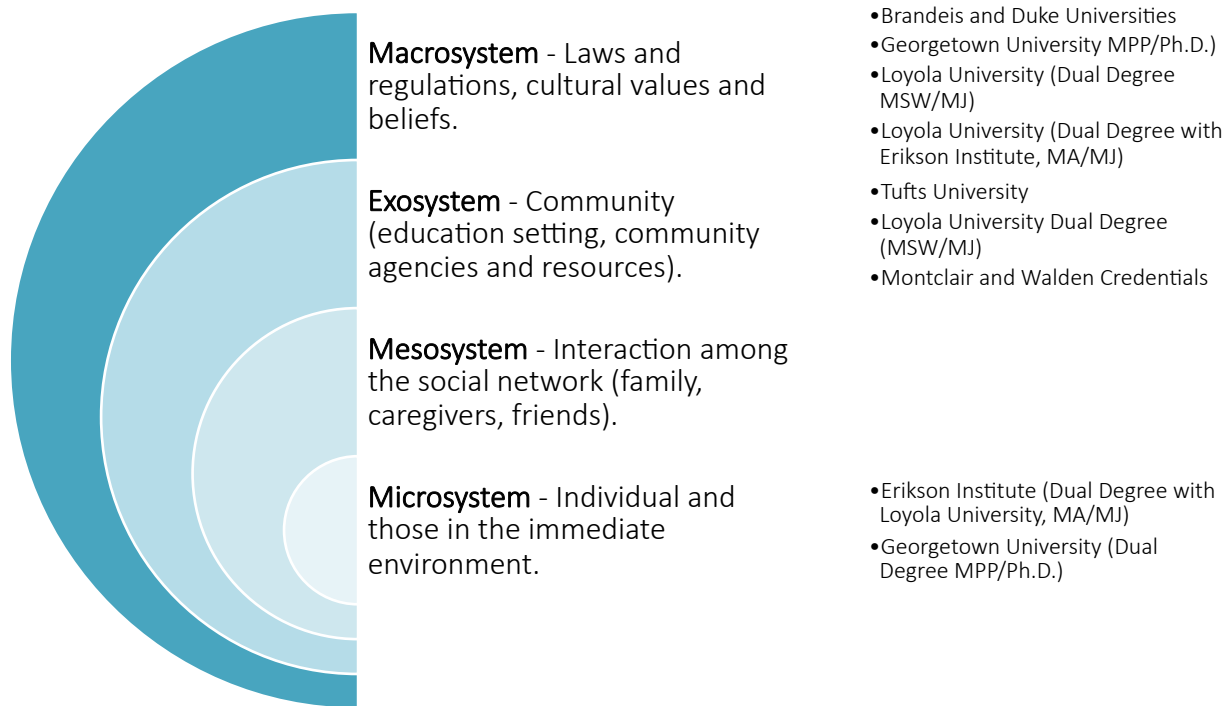**Table 4.** *Highly and Moderately Prescriptive Credentials**

Institution (N=9)	High Prescriptive		Moderately Prescriptive	
	Private and For Profit (n=7)	Public (n=2)	Private	Public
Syracuse University	Undergrad (Minor)			
Georgetown University	Dual Degree (MPP/Ph.D.)			
Duke University	Undergrad (Cert.)			
Northwestern University			Grad (Ph.D.)	
Univ. of Massachusetts - Boston				Grad (MA)
Univ. of Massachusetts - Boston				Grad (Cert.)
Tufts University	Undergrad (Major)			
Tufts University	Dual Degree (MPP/Ph.D.)			
University of North Carolina – Wilmington				Grad (MA)
Brandeis University	Grad (MPP)			

Walden University (*for-profit*)	Grad (MA)			
Walden University (*for-profit*)	Grad (Cert.)			

* Highly prescriptive (approximately 70% or more), moderately prescriptive (approximately 50%-70%)

Another way to look at this sub-set of credentials is through the lens of the Ecological Model. We can ask the question, "What is the policy perspective, or policy orientation, of the credential?" Figure 2 helps illustrate the area(s) of emphasis identified among some of the graduate credentials noted in Table 4. Credentials at the Macrosystem level tend to emphasize coursework addressing broad U.S. policy issues (public policy and social policy), historical to contemporary timeframes, the role of ethics and values in analyzing/evaluating policy and decisions associated with creating policy, national and international child and education issues, and the role of economics (economic theory and fiscal constraints). These programs are found at Brandis, Georgetown, and Duke Universities. The credentials from Walden University and Montclair State University tended to emphasize policy from the perspective of the individual, family, education, and community setting (Exosystem).

Figure 2: *Policy Perspectives of Highly and Moderately Prescriptive Credentials*

Macrosystem - Laws and regulations, cultural values and beliefs.

- Brandeis and Duke Universities
- Georgetown University MPP/Ph.D.)
- Loyola University (Dual Degree MSW/MJ)
- Loyola University (Dual Degree with Erikson Institute, MA/MJ)
- Tufts University
- Loyola University Dual Degree (MSW/MJ)
- Montclair and Walden Credentials

Exosystem - Community (education setting, community agencies and resources).

Mesosystem - Interaction among the social network (family, caregivers, friends).

Microsystem - Individual and those in the immediate environment.

- Erikson Institute (Dual Degree with Loyola University, MA/MJ)
- Georgetown University (Dual Degree MPP/Ph.D.)

Among dual degree programs, Loyola University stands out with their two credentials because the academic program provide students with expertise across the ecological systems. The Masters in Jurisprudence (MJ), which emphasizes the Macrosystem, is combined with Social Work (emphasizing the community and the multiple social systems which influence development (Exosystem)). Loyola's dual degree program with the Erikson Institute provides extensive coursework in the developing young child

(Microsystem). This is quite similar to Georgetown University's dual degree program (MPP/Ph.D. Psychology) which provides students with expertise in public policy and child development.

The *Not Prescriptive* credentials (those requiring approximately one-half or fewer courses) are found at the remaining institutions (i.e., Columbia University, Harvard University). These programs provide greater leeway to the students in course selection. Thus, students can tailor their academic programs to their career goals. The strongest example of a *Not Prescriptive* program is found at Stanford University[4]. Each quarter, students have the opportunity to select courses from three clusters and tailor their academic program to their interests (see full description in Appendix 3). This is summarized below:

> *Courses* -Every quarter students are required take the POLS Seminar (EDUC 209ABC).

> *Cluster Courses* - Students are required to take a minimum of two courses in each of the three thematic clusters of Knowledge, Theory, and Skills as they develop balanced perspectives on leadership.
> - **Knowledge** - Growing as a leader begins with an understanding of the purposes, policies, practices, and challenges of organizations focused on education.
> - **Theory** - Leaders need frameworks and perspectives that help them to understand the complex organizations they presume to lead.
> - **Skills** - Students apply their leadership knowledge and understanding of leadership theory in courses that focus on leadership skills.

Table 5 summarizes and compares the undergraduate and graduate credentials by type of institution. Looking across the table, similarities are found in total number of credit hours (approximate), expectations for experiential education, and child policy coursework (undergraduate credential). In regard to differences, there are several that are noteworthy. First, across most private institutions, students have the opportunity to engage with policy research work at the institution's center. As noted later in this paper, the nature of that work varies (i.e., for credit coursework, part-time or full-time paid positions, internships, etc.). This type of opportunity is at the undergraduate level (Case Western Reserve University and Duke University) where both policy research centers offer undergraduate coursework. At the graduate level, not all policy research centers offer courses but they do provide students with the opportunity to gain meaningful educational and work experiences. Another difference is the emphasis area of the credential: child/family/community-focused policy coursework or national/international policy and the elements that influence public/social policy. Last, at the graduate level, a difference is the amount of coursework focused on research and statistics. At the private institutions, there tends to be a stronger emphasis (more coursework required) in this area when compared to the public institutions.

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[4] While it was tempting to *not* include the Stanford University program, by examining two academic years of "cluster" coursework, it was determined that a student could take multiple courses in varied areas of child development and public policy.

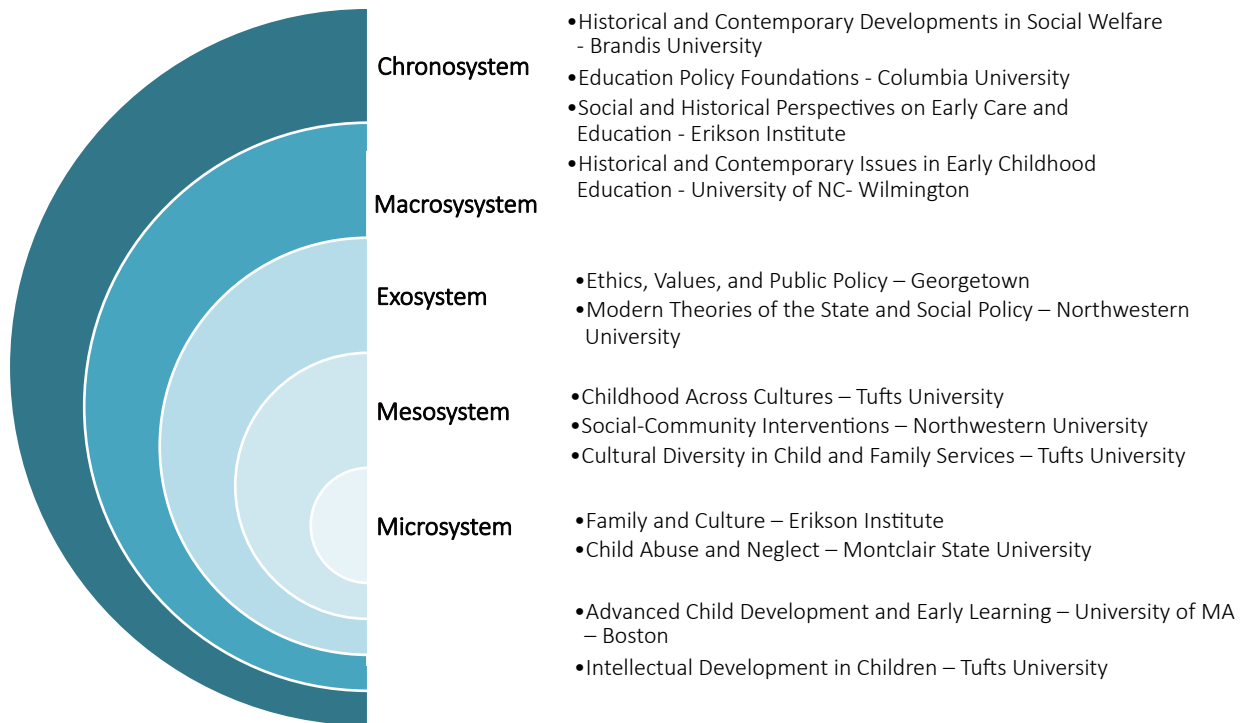**Table 5.** *Similarities and Differences across Credentials by Type of Institution*

Credential	Similarities		Differences	
	Private Institutions	*Public Institutions*	*Private Institutions*	*Public Institutions*
Undergraduate				
Certificate	18 credit hours	15 credit hours	Strong emphasis on studying and actively pursuing research and policy studies via policy research center	Strong child policy coursework
Minor	• 15 credit hours • Expectations for experiential education	• 18 credit hours • Expectations for experiential education	• Focuses on local, state, and national policy • Opportunity to engage at the policy research center	Strong child policy coursework
Major	• A total of 10 courses • Strong child policy coursework • Expectations for experiential education	• 39 credit hours • Strong child policy coursework • Expectations for experiential education		Course requirements in the categories of Child in Family and Child in Community
Graduate				
Masters	• Approx. 33 credit hours • Expectations for experiential education	• Approx. 33 credit hours • Expectations for experiential education	• Strong emphasis on studying policy (development, analysis, evaluation) in the broad contexts of society, U.S., and global perspectives. • Opportunity to pursue policy research at a policy research center. • Strong emphasis on research and statistics.	• Strong child policy coursework with an emphasis on child/family wellbeing and/or education setting. • Moderate emphasis on research and statistics.
Certificate	15 credit hours (for-profit)	12-15 credit hours		

Comparison of Courses and Course Content

Using the Ecological Model as a framework and also examining course content by the eight categories we see a very broad range of course topics (Figure 3, to read the course content, see Appendix 3). This range is illustrated across the ecological systems with courses ranging from the microsystem (i.e., courses in child development) to the chronosystem (i.e., examining the historical context of present-day public/social policy issues).

Figure 3: *Early Childhood Policy Coursework across Systems*

Chronosystem
- Historical and Contemporary Developments in Social Welfare - Brandis University
- Education Policy Foundations - Columbia University
- Social and Historical Perspectives on Early Care and Education - Erikson Institute
- Historical and Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood Education - University of NC- Wilmington

Macrosysystem

Exosystem
- Ethics, Values, and Public Policy – Georgetown
- Modern Theories of the State and Social Policy – Northwestern University

Mesosystem
- Childhood Across Cultures – Tufts University
- Social-Community Interventions – Northwestern University
- Cultural Diversity in Child and Family Services – Tufts University

Microsystem
- Family and Culture – Erikson Institute
- Child Abuse and Neglect – Montclair State University

- Advanced Child Development and Early Learning – University of MA – Boston
- Intellectual Development in Children – Tufts University

Using an iterative process similar to Grounded Theory, eight course content categories were identified as well as themes within some of the categories. This provides the opportunity to compare coursework content across credentials and across institutions.

1. Child Development. Only 10 out of the 31 credentials required one or more courses in child development (range 3 – 18 credit hours). Most of these credentials (eight), require one or two courses. The standouts are the Erikson Institute and Georgetown University. Both of these dual degree programs at private institutions require significant coursework in child development, as does Northwestern University. Many of the remaining credentials note that course requirements in this area are dependent on student's academic background and students can fulfill elective requirements by taking recommended courses in child development. Examining the list of recommended elective courses finds some, but not all, recommend one or more child development courses. Again, this is a critical/ point. Programs such as Columbia University and University of Massachusetts (Boston), which instruct students to "select one" or "select two" courses from a list of course options provide students with the option to take additional

courses in child development. The following three examples (coursework from Georgetown University, Erikson Institute, and Northwestern University) indicate differing approaches to the discipline.

- **PSYC-501 Seminar: Conceptual Foundations of Developmental Science (Georgetown University).** This graduate-level course entails a critical examination of the field of developmental science as a sub-discipline of psychology. Readings have been selected so as to facilitate a historically informed and philosophically penetrating discussion of the metaphysical and epistemological issues that arise in connection with three central questions: (1) What makes research carried out within this sub-discipline psychological? (2) What makes the work developmental? (3) What makes the work scientific?

- **Physical Growth and Development (Erikson Institute).** This course is an examination of physical growth and development beginning with prenatal development and extending through eight years of age. Areas of study will include the physical, neurological, motor, and sensory processes of maturation. Specifically, students will explore in depth the paths of typical development in these areas, and in addition will gain an entry level of understanding atypical patterns and events that lead to developmental disabilities and delays. General health, growth, nutrition, and wellness will be discussed as well the socio-¬cultural and socio-economic influences on these issues. Students will gain an appreciation for the importance of health status and individual sensory profiles in children's learning as well as the interrelationship of nutrition and physical movement in maintaining health and developmental progress. Strategies for observing neurobehavioral functioning in infants and children will be explored

- **Child Development (Northwest University).** Research and policy aimed at the goal of improving children's lives require an in-depth understanding of how and why children develop the way they do. This course is designed to provide an intensive overview of the science of child development, with an emphasis on young children. A broad range of theoretical perspectives from a variety of fields will be emphasized. Students will come away with an understanding of the key factors in healthy child development, defined to include socioemotional, cognitive, and physical well-being. In addition, we will apply the scientific knowledge of child development to several major policy and programmatic issues, such as early childhood education, antipoverty programs, marriage promotion, and health disparities. This course also highlights the role of context: family, peers, child care, school, employment, neighborhood, and policy environments. Ethical considerations as well as measurement (i.e., the tools of the science) will be stressed. In addition, a multidisciplinary perspective is a central theme

2. Child and Family Focus. This broad category sought to include courses addressing the well-being of children within the family unit. Credentials from the field of Social Work (Montclair State University, Loyola University) were most prominent in this category and also Child in Community. These two categories (Child and Family and Child in Community) also brought to the forefront issues related to cultural competence, cultural diversity, and policies associated with immigrant families. The following

three examples highlight the topic of culture from different perspectives. The example from Tufts University is one of the very few courses that mention health policy. The example from Loyola University is one of several that addresses the broader context of social justice issues.

Families and Cultural Diversity

- **ANTH 306. Anthropology of Childhood and the Family (Case Western Reserve University, recommended course).** Child-rearing patterns and the family as an institution, using evidence from Western and non-Western cultures. Human universals and cultural variation, the experience of childhood and recent changes in the American family.

- **HS 334a, Child and Family Policy: U.S. and Cross-Cultural Perspectives (Brandeis University).** Draws on a number of social science disciplines and women's studies to explore the construction of public policies that shape the lives of children and families. It will focus on material from the United States and will use examples from other countries for comparative purposes. The course will explore some of the key components of family policy as they have developed in the U.S. and provide a critical examination of the ways in which "the state" may alternately facilitate, control and constrain women's choices about whether and when to have children, and the conditions surrounding the employment and care of children and other family members. It will further consider the current economic and political context and how families strategize to combine jobs and family care.

- **CSHD164: Cultural Diversity in Child and Family Services (Tufts University).** Review of theoretical and applied approaches for providing services to young children and families from culturally diverse backgrounds, particularly families who have recently immigrated from non-Western countries. Topics include early intervention, comprehensive assessment, health care, and school integration. Students have the opportunity to visit programs and acquire focused experience with infants, young children, and parents.

- **SOWK 504: Social Work with Individuals and Families II (Loyola University).** An in-depth examination of social work practice goals and processes provides an arena in which the student can integrate foundation knowledge from other courses including information on conditions in the contemporary social environment, human development, social policy, and research methods…. The use of the social worker/client relationship is examined with focus on the use of self, self-disclosures and boundaries. A bio-psycho-social-spiritual framework is used to understand problems presented by clients at the micro, mezzo, and macro systems level….. This content also deepens students' knowledge of how clinical practice can advance social justice by

addressing problems such as racism, ethnocentrism, gender and class biases, heterosexism, ageism, and ableism. Students' are helped to deepen their understanding of social justice issues as they inform the social work practice process and the role of advocacy in social work practice.

3. Child in Community. Through the iterative process, Three themes immerged: Diverse Families and Social Welfare; Development in Context; and, Social Justice. Courses in this category tended to be identified in the fields of Social Work, Human Development, and Education.

Diverse Families and Social Welfare

- **Cultural Competencies in Child Welfare (Montclair State University):** This course will identify the three components of cultural competency that have been identified in the child welfare field: value base, knowledge, and skills. The course will focus on enabling students to examine the values that are necessary for a culturally competent understanding and response to child welfare, specifically accepting the existence of biases and developing a commitment to a strengths-based model that relies on respect and working toward empowerment as a goal for intervention. Culture is defined broadly, and the course will expose students to a range of belief systems common in different groups concerning child rearing and child maltreatment.

- **Cultural Diversity in Child and Family Services (Tufts University).** Review of theoretical and applied approaches for providing services to young children and families from culturally diverse backgrounds, particularly families who have recently immigrated from non-Western countries. Topics include early intervention, comprehensive assessment, health care, and school integration. Students have the opportunity to visit programs and acquire focused experience with infants, young children, and parents.

Development in Context

- **Seminar: Human Development in Context (Georgetown University).** This course is designed to introduce graduate students to the theories and research about the contextual influences on human development. The study of human development generally, and systems/contextual influences specifically, is by nature an interdisciplinary enterprise. As such, most of our readings will come from psychology but we will also draw from sociology, policy, legal scholarship, and related disciplines. The first part of the course will examine ecological, life course, and systems theories of development. Then, we consider many of the major developmental contexts highlighted by those theories, including those settings in which individuals have direct experience (e.g., neighborhoods, schools, child care settings) and macro-level influences that set the stage for daily life (e.g., culture, socioeconomic status, policy).

- **Childhood across Cultures (Tufts University).** Intermediate-level study of child development, with emphasis on cultural perspectives integrating psychological and

anthropological theory. Children's development examined across cultures and in the context of the various social institutions and settings within which they live.

- **Neighborhood Context and Family Well-Being (Tufts University).** Neighborhoods figure centrally in the lives of children, youth, and families because they shape daily activities, social interactions, and access to opportunities and resources that support thriving. This course focuses on the variety of ways neighborhoods contribute to child and family well-being, for better or worse, such as, the extent of crime and violence and access to institutions such as high quality schools. The course also considers current and potential neighborhood-based policies meant to eliminate inequities based on neighborhood residence, inequities often rooted in larger social forces such as economic and racial segregation.

Social Justice

- **Young Children and Social Policy: Issues and Problems (Columbia University).** Overview of social policy towards young children as it affects classroom practice and professional goals. Situations such as child abuse, divorce and custody, student classification, and foster care are examined.

- **Contemporary Issues in the Management of Child, Youth, and Family Services (Brandeis University).** Managing human service systems and programs to benefit children, youth, and families in America today means managing people in a time of fiscal constraint and dramatic social, economic, and political change, and, on the other hand, in a time of great organizational and civic innovation. Builds on the analytic tools students have begun to hone in the master's program and helps them learn how to apply these tools to effectively implement policies and programs in the not-for-profit sector.

- **Children and Justice (Montclair State University):** This course provides a multi-systemic view of child welfare issues. It reviews and discusses children's rights from a systems perspective. Societal issues of poverty, violence and isolation within a historical context are explored. The course explores and discusses advocacy protocols and practice

4. Child Policy. This category included all courses at the intersection of policy (i.e., social policy, law) and the lives of young children. As indicated in the chart (Appendix 1), almost all programs used this avenue as the means to provide coursework in policy. Four sets of themes are outlined below. A related construct emerged in the analysis: the construct of "being" an advocate for children. This construct was stated in terms of using tools and developing strategies to advocate for children. Last, within some of the course content descriptions (across all themes) is terminology associated with policy development, evaluation, and/or factors that influence the development and evaluation of public policy. Thus, we see in this category an element of "current events" (the examination of current policy) as well as the policy process.

Child Policy, broadly…

- **Proseminar in Human Development & Social Policy (Northwestern University).** This course aims to introduce graduate students to core theoretical and empirical work in human development and social policy. It is designed to offer … an in-depth overview of the intellectual foundations of the program… HDSP focuses on lifespan development and the life course from multiple perspectives, emphasizing the influence of historical periods, the timing of events, changing roles, and how individuals shape their own pathways in addition to being influenced by individuals around them, by social institutions, and by public policy.

- **Early Childhood Policy: Prologue to the Future (Columbia University).** Designed as a policy overview, this course examines these relationships using concrete examples; it will explicate the evolution and status of current policies, focusing on their impact on children and those who teach and care for them. Combining practical and theoretical orientations, the course is designed for those who wish to impact, or are impacted, by contemporary laws, mandates, and guidance—by policy. By gaining exposure to the challenges inherent in constructing and implementing contemporary policy, the primary institutions involved in these functions, and key influencers of policy, participants in this seminar will understand and be better positioned to construct sound early childhood policies and to more effectively contour their responses to them.

- **Seminar in Government and the Family (Tufts University).** Examines government's role in promoting family development and well-being. Analysis of policies with implications for children and families. Case material from the United States and other countries. Topics will vary but may include parental leave, child protection, child care, health care, family support, and immigration.

Child Policy, comparisons…

- **Child and Family Policy: U.S. and Cross-Cultural Perspectives (Brandeis University).** Draws on a number of social science disciplines and women's studies to explore the construction of public policies that shape the lives of children and families. It will focus on material from the United States and will use examples from other countries for comparative purposes.

- **International Perspectives on Early Childhood Policy (Columbia University).** This course looks at early childhood education policy through an international lens, addressing often neglected—but highly salient—policy questions, including: What have been the real effects of the Millennium Development Goals and the Education for All goals on education systems in general and on early childhood education in particular? … Based on readings and discussions of these issues, students will demonstrate their understanding of the role of policy in shaping early childhood education in a given country though the final paper, a situation analysis. Building on

sequenced assignments, this paper will provide the platform for students to use policy tools and make recommendations for concrete early childhood policy improvements

Child Policy, early childhood education
- **Issues and Trends in the Early Childhood Field (Walden University).** Leaders in the early childhood field must have in-depth understanding of the critical issues and trends affecting young children, their families, and the field. Education professionals in this course explore changing demographics; political and economic influence on programmatic funding streams; current debates related to school success, effective assessment and the achievement gap; and brain research influence on early development, care, and education from a historical and current perspective. Sharing perspectives and making connections with the professional world, educational professionals post blogs to establish contacts with early childhood professionals; reach out to international contacts in the field to gain an understanding of poverty issues in different regions, issues related to excellence at the forefront of professional discussions, and insights on further development opportunities; and share web resources, such as websites and e-newsletters.

- **Early Education and Care Policy (University of Massachusetts at Boston).** Participants will critically examine policies, programs, and practices in early care and education. Particular attention is focused on analyses of global, national, and state ECE policies and systems, including the implications of the current knowledge base for future research and policy development.

Related Construct - To be an "Advocate"
- **Introduction to Child Advocacy (Montclair State University).** This course provides students with an overview of the field of child advocacy. The role of the child advocate is explored in a myriad of professional settings. Ethical, legal and professional responsibilities are discussed.

- **Public Policy and Advocacy for Children and Families (University of North Carolina-Wilmington).** This course covers the process for developing and establishing policies on a national, state, and local basis that influence decisions that impact children and families. It will also address global policies on young children and families for comparison with the United States. Students will develop strategies for influencing public policy and regulation through advocacy and resources available to support change.

- **Tools for Policymakers and Advocates (Walden University).** Early childhood professionals must be skilled advocates to effect change positively. Education professionals are provided with the opportunity to gain the necessary tools, strategies, and insights to influence policy and advocate for young children, families, and the

profession. Education professionals explore grant writing as well as family and political advocacy and research practices integral to effective leadership roles.

- **Early Education and Care Policy and Practice (University of Massachusetts-Boston).** In this course, students will examine early care and education (ECE) policies, programs, and practices. Particular attention is focused on analyses of national and state ECE policies and systems, including the implications of the current knowledge base and research to policies and practices at the federal, state, and program levels.

    5. Public Policy/Law. As noted, 10 institutions provided policy coursework and this course tended to be identified in the fields of Law or Public Policy. This coursework targets the broad discipline of policy studies including themes of policy analysis, economics, management, and ethics. A key theme in this category was methods (or approaches) to developing, analyzing (or evaluating) policy and how policy is enacted. Two institutions (Columbia University and the University of North Carolina-Wilmington) provide this perspective via their Department of Education.

Policy Analysis

- **The Craft of Policy Analysis (Columbia University).** Intended for students interested in learning about the policy analysis process-- identifying a public problem, researching solutions to the problem, weighing costs and benefits of various alternatives, and developing policy recommendations aimed at addressing the public problem. The particular emphasis in this course is on how policy analysts think and what they do.

- **Public Policy Process (Georgetown University).** This course analyzes the politics, institutions, norms, and actors involved in the agenda-setting, legitimation, and decision-making of public policy in the US. Students learn how to use analytical frameworks that explain how the policymaking process works, relates to the substance of policy, and applies to real world issues.

- **Social Policy Analysis: Technique and Application.** Examines approaches to policy analysis and assesses strength and limitations of various methods. Exposes students to a range of methods and theoretical frameworks for exploring and understanding contemporary social problems and policy challenges. Begins with an overview of the stages of policy process, including policy formulation, rule making, and implementation. Policy analysis will be defined and a distinction made with policy research. The course also focuses on the criteria for evaluating policy options, including efficiency, equity, security, and liberty. Ethics and the role of values in shaping analysis will be explored. Actual policy analysis is evaluated in the areas of children and family policy, health, and welfare policy. Students have the opportunity to write and present a policy analysis critique.

Economics

- **Economic Theory and Social Policy (Brandeis University).** Applies economic analysis to problems of importance to social policy. The particular applications may vary from year to year and may include such topics as unemployment and inflation, Social Security, and the economics of race and gender.

- **Intermediate Microeconomics (Georgetown University).** This course provides an in-depth analysis of supply and demand, the theory of the consumer and theory of the firm. The course focuses on the determinants of consumer behavior by studying the role of utility maximization and constrained optimization. Firm behavior is studied by investigating the role of profit maximization when firms operate in perfectly competitive markets and when they are monopolies. Key concepts include efficiency, opportunity cost, the role of incentives and marginal analysis. Applications to public policy issues are emphasized.

- **Economics of Social Policy (Northwestern University).** This course introduces students to the fundamentals of economic analysis in the evaluation of education and social policy. Each week the class concentrates on a different important public policy question, and then uses economic reasoning to explain the economic rationales for policies as well as the potential consequences, expected and unexpected, of the policy. The policy questions considered depend on what issues are currently being publicly debated. Economic concepts covered include constrained choice, market forces and price theory, market failures (such as externalities/spillovers and public goods), and welfare analysis.

Management

- **Public Management (Georgetown University).** This course introduces students to public management: the art and science of planning and implementing public programs. Participants will examine the constraints public managers face in a democratic society; how the challenges of public management vary across different organizational and policy settings; and how public management and policy analysis frequently intersect.

- **Public Finance and Budgeting (Brandis University).** Utilizes facts and analytical tools to effectively make decisions about public finance and budgeting as a policymaker, policy advocate, policy analyst, scholar, reporter, and/ or citizen. Upon completion of this course, students will have a broad knowledge of why and how governments shape the economy; the extent of their intervention; and how and why government funds are currently allocated among competing uses.

Ethics

- **Ethics, Values, and Public Policy (Georgetown University).** This course provides an introduction to the following course themes: 1) Values (and not just interests) are fundamental to public policy, and so sophisticated policy analysts should

understand the roles that values can play in policy analysis and the policy process;…4) Differing forms of reasoning (e.g., utilitarianism, deontology, or casuistry) offer differing ways to reach conclusions regarding value choices, but that no method can be demonstrated to provide the answer to these choices;… 6) Policy analysts should be able to provide a reasoned explanation regarding the values embedded in the policy recommendations they make.

- **The Ethical Analyst (Stanford University, Recommended Course).** The ethical responsibility for consequences of professional analysts who use technical knowledge in support of any individual, organization, or government. The means to form ethical judgments; questioning the desirability of physical coercion and deception as a means to reach any end. Human action and relations in society in the light of previous thought, and research on the desired form of social interactions. Attitudes toward ethical dilemmas through an explicit personal code.

6. Leadership: Although the term "leadership" occurs quite frequently across all programs, required/recommended coursework was only identified at the graduate level. Across all coursework are the concepts of theory (theories of leadership, change), strategies of action, and professional growth. The leadership course at Brandeis University is one aspect of much larger initiative focused on Citizen Leadership (Segal Citizen Leadership Program) and this program is also part of a university's policy research center.[5]

- **Eli J. Segal Seminar in Citizen Leadership (Brandeis University):** Engages students in a rigorous examination of the concepts of Citizen Leadership and Citizen Service, as they have been used in the past, in an effort to support them in integrating these ideas into their career plans and personal development. Each session will involve readings on a specific aspect of Citizen Leadership or Service and an opportunity to discuss these aspects with guest speakers and resources, most of whom are Segal Program Founders, men and women who have exemplified them.

- **High-Performance Leadership (Stanford University).** This course asks the question: "What does it take to build high-performance?" The focus is on middle and upper-middle management in contemporary organizations that have complex tasks, exist in a rapidly

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[5] The Eli J. & Phyllis N. Segal Citizen Leadership Program was established at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University in 2007, to honor and extend the work of Eli Segal '64, who is best known for his leadership developing AmeriCorps and Welfare-to-Work initiatives in the Clinton Administration and for his talent for inspiring young people. Based at the Center for Youth and Communities at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management, the Program benefits from the research staff and faculty's expertise in leadership development, service learning, evaluation and capacity building. The Segal Program supports and encourages emerging leaders to engage in a lifetime of citizen service, and serves as a platform to promote citizen leadership.

changing environment, and have highly skilled subordinates. The premise of the course is that traditional methods of management may produce adequate levels of performance but prevent excellence from developing. New approaches to leadership will be presented that are more likely to lead to a truly high-performing system. Time will be spent discussing the components of effective leadership, what a manager can do to build a compelling vision, strong teams, and mutual influence sideways and upwards as well as with direct reports. Also, what members can do to support the leader who wants to initiate such changes. In addition to class, students will meet for 2 1/2 hours each week in a Skill Development Group to apply the course material to their own personal development.

- **Leadership and Change in Early Education and Care (University of Massachusetts-Boston).** This course explores multidisciplinary approaches to leadership, change, and leading for change applied to the early care and education context. We will examine the theory and practice of change to gain an understanding of what contributes to the carrying out of successful and lasting change. Participants will analyze the forces that drive change, examine impediments to change, and survey a range of approaches for making change more effective. In addition, the course focuses on leadership….

- **Leadership Theory and Behavior (University of North Carolina Wilmington):** This course examines leadership theories and styles for the development and use of effective strategies and skills in higher education. Specific application to units and programs found in higher education will be the focus.

7. Research and Statistics: There was considerable variation in this category at all credential levels. At the undergraduate level, three credentials required a course in research/statistics (Tufts University, Montclair State University, and Duke University). At the graduate level, the range in required credit hours is notable (0-18) as is the range in course content. At the higher end of the range are credentials such as Northwestern University (requiring six courses) and the University of Massachusetts – Boston which requires a total of 18 credit hours. The difference in academic rigor in this area is also significant. Some credentials provide a general overview or introduction to the subject. This is seen in the two examples from Erikson Institute and Montclair State University. Other credentials provide a sequence of courses in research methods and statistics (including microeconomics). Notice in the course descriptions from Montclair State University and Loyola University (both from the field of Social Work) a focus of the course is to "apply research to best practices in child welfare" and "to enable students to prepare for three roles…." Thus both aim at strengthening the work of practitioners to use research findings in their work with clients (broadly defined). Under the heading of Sequence of Courses, the examples focus on building knowledge and proficiency in research skills (research methods, statistics, and econometrics).

General Overview of Research and Statistics

- **Research Methods (Erikson Institute).** This course provides students with a basic understanding of the role of research in developmental and educational studies. Topics

covered include (1) an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of popular research designs used in education and in applied studies of child development; (2) the use of statistics in developmental and educational research; and (3) how to critically review research literature, including scientific journal articles.

- **Child Welfare Research and Evaluation (Montclair State University):** This course will provide students with an overview of research processes and methods, focusing on program evaluation within the child welfare system. Students will develop skills on how to appropriately interpret empirical research as well as how to apply research to best practices in child welfare.

Sequence of Courses (2 or more)

- **Methods of Social Work Research (Loyola University).** Social work practitioners need research skills in order to be accountable, and to evaluate their own practice, programs, and service delivery. Moreover, as service roles and tasks expand and as accountability demands progressively increase, the need of the social work profession for systematic development of empirically validated knowledge becomes more acute. To address these needs a two-course sequence is designed to enable students to prepare for three roles: 1) competent evaluators of their own practice whether clinical or organizational; 2) critical consumers of research in the social and behavioral sciences; and 3) active participants in knowledge generating inquiries that include designing and implementing research for the development of service and the clarification of clinical issues in social work practice.

- **Brandeis University – Three course sequence**
  - *Research Methods and Evaluation.* Prepares students to (1) thoroughly understand the rigorous conduct of research methods of public policy, with a particular emphasis on program evaluation…
  - *Applied Regression Analysis.* An applied course in multiple regression analysis.
  - *Applied Econometrics.* Focuses on applications of regression analysis and extensions to areas where the standard assumptions do not hold. Introduces applications of logit and its extensions, probit, corrections for censoring and sample selection bias, and simultaneous equations. Each student designs and carries out a research project.

- **Georgetown University- Three-course sequence (total of 5 required courses)**
  - *Statistical Methods for Policy Analysis.* This is the first course in the three-course quantitative methods sequence. The sequence is designed to increase understanding of empirical analyses — both as a consumer of empirical analyses and as a producer of such analyses.

- *Regression Methods for Policy Analysis.* In this course, students further study multivariate regression analysis with a main focus on ordinary least squares (OLS) regression and a modest focus on probit and logit regression
- *Advanced Regression & Program Evaluation Methods.* This course is an introduction to advanced methods of statistical analysis. Instruction will concentrate on how to determine the appropriate econometric approach in addressing various types of policy questions. Topics covered include: random assignment experiments, nonexperimental methods such as regression discontinuity designs, instrumental variables, difference-in-difference models, and propensity score matching. Also covered are maximum likelihood estimation, multinomial and ordered logit and probit, truncated/censored dependent variables (tobit models), panel data, and time-series analysis. The statistical package Stata is used.
- *Intermediate Microeconomics.* This course provides an in-depth analysis of supply and demand, the theory of the consumer and theory of the firm.
- *Microeconomic Theory II: Market Failure & Public Economics.* This course serves as a continuation of Intermediate Microeconomics. It explores the impact of a variety of factors that may result in market failures, including public goods, externalities, information asymmetries and uncertainty.

8. Internships/Practicum Courses. This category is discussed at length in the next section, Experiential Education.

Experiential Education. Most credentials included one or more experiential education experiences. The only credentials which did not were as follows: 3 graduate certificates (Walden University, University of MA-Boston, and Montclair State University) and 2 undergraduate credentials (Montclair State University's minor and certificate). The types of experiences did not vary by public or private institutions or level of credential. Listed below are the range of experiential education opportunities.

Trip to Washington, DC: Two credentials provide the opportunity for students to travel to Washington, D.C. to learn about the policy process and meet with legislators.

- **Federal Policy Institute – 3 credit hour (Columbia University).** The purpose of the Federal Policy Institute is to examine three themes: the enduring values of American education, contemporary issues in national school reform efforts, and the role of the federal government. During a week-long program in Washington, students will have the opportunity to identify a policy issue of personal interest and to explore that issue with the nation's senior policymakers.

- **Experiential Learning in Child Policy (Case Western Reserve University).** The course gives students an in-depth understanding of state and federal legislation impacting children, youth, and families, and includes an experiential learning component in which

students visit Washington, D.C. to meet with policymakers and see the legislative process in action.

Internship/Practicum: Many of the credentials require an internship/practicum experience. The expectations vary by: number of required courses; total number of hours students are expected to work at the selected site; the length of the experience (one or two semesters); engagement with other students and/or faculty; whether or not the practicum is part of a larger course experience (e.g., lectures, presentations) and the final product or outcome of the experience (i.e., paper, project, presentation, grant proposal).

- **Practicum in Public Child Welfare (Montclair State University):** The course will provide students with a supervised field placement at a child advocacy agency. The seminar will provide classroom instruction on issues related to the students' experiences. Site supervisors will provide on-the-job guidance/supervision.

- **Child Advocacy Internship (Harvard University).** In the second semester of the Child Advocacy Strand, students carry out internships in which they participate in the work of an advocacy organization. Students will put in eight hours each week to learn about the agency-- its mission, its work, its culture--and to work on their designated project. Possibilities for the advocacy project are broad but must be manageable in scope for completion in a one-semester internship.

- **Practicum in Research in Social Work (Loyola University).** The course builds on the foundation content offered in Methods of Social Work Research (SOWK 506) and in other areas of the curriculum, including field instruction courses. The course develops the students' integration of research and practice, builds on students' understanding of research paradigms, and adds to their skills in critically reviewing and analyzing research studies using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The basic thrust of the course is: (1) to view evaluation research as a continuum of methods that aim to provide purposeful feedback to a variety of audiences at micro, mezzo, or macro levels in order to inform decision-making; (2) to provide students with an initial or continuing experience of designing social work evaluation research; and (3) to involve students in proposing their research studies related to their chosen focus and interests in their advanced year internships (as available). The latter of these two aims to help students make their research proposals relevant to the practice world; in the best case scenario, student proposals developed in this course can provide community agencies with a significant step forward in obtaining their own funding.

- **Internship in Leadership, Policy, and Advocacy (3-6 credits, at least 3 required) University of North Carolina- Wilmington).** This course will provide students with an opportunity to apply what they have learned in their graduate studies to a community-based program or agency that supports families and young children. Students may take two sections of this course for a total of six credits toward the degree.

Capstone: Similar to the Internship/Practicum, many graduate level credentials listed a Capstone experience (required/recommended). This focused on identifying and solving "real world" problems. As indicated by the examples below, the capstone experiences varied by length (one or more semesters), number of students involved (could be completed by an individual student or a cohort), and how the problem is identified and addressed.

- **Policy Analysis: Client Capstone I (Georgetown University).** Students work in a small group to analyze a real world policy question for a client organization. In consultation with a faculty member, students examine the question in an analytically rigorous manner. By interacting with a client organization, students develop an understanding of the policy issue facing the organization. Students gain an understanding of the many steps and decisions that are needed to produce a policy analysis with real-world problems and organizations. (Abbreviated description)

- **HS 336a, Capstone Seminar (Brandis).** Students will demonstrate the ability to define and diagnose public policy situations, collect relevant information, perform logical analysis, develop alternative, and make compelling recommendations; and to organize and communicate information clearly to a variety of audiences through formats including verbal presentations, policy briefs, and statistical charts, graphs, and tables.

- **"POLS" Project (Stanford University).** The POLS Project articulates an organizational problem, its root causes, and an action plan to address the root causes. The POLS Talk is a public, video recorded presentation that is an appropriate condensation of the Project, explaining a clear theory of action for improvement of organizational performance. (Abbreviated description)

Immersion Experience: The only university to include this type of experience was Loyola University (online program).

- **Educational Immersion Weekends (Loyola University).** In addition to the required curriculum, students are required to travel to Loyola's Chicago campus at least once during their tenure in the program for an Education Immersion Weekend (EIW). During the weekend, students gather in person to workshop or present their thesis/capstone project, attend workshops, participate in graduation activities, and meet with faculty, students and alumni.

- **LAW 663 Children's Summer Institute (Loyola University).** This intensive, week-long seminar provides a wide-ranging interdisciplinary exploration of critical issues affecting children. A diverse team of faculty offers interdisciplinary perspectives on the meaning of "best interests of the child" particularly as it relates to balancing legislative mandates and "best interests." Experts from history, political science, psychology, social work, law, education, and medicine present information, participate in discussion with the attendees, and debate the issues from the perspectives of their own professions.

Working on a Research Project. Although these two examples are from undergraduate credentials, the category certainly applies to all thesis and dissertation projects.

- **Duke University.** At the undergraduate level, the Duke University "Child Policy Research Certificate" does not list an experiential education course but it is inferred that the student will be actively engaged in research work via the Center for Child and Family Policy.

- **Practicum in Public Policy (Syracuse University).** Students develop skills and gain knowledge about organizations that influence and implement public policy. Students are placed in community agencies for about 100 hours of work or work in applied research projects conducted by faculty.

Reflections, Questions, and Recommendations

This study examined Early Childhood Policy credentials from the perspectives of total credit hours, required/recommended courses and course content, and type of institution. This was summarized in Appendix 1. Course content was further reviewed using Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model and Grounded Theory. In the end, eight course content categories were identified and then further reviewed indicating a range of themes. These themes further indicated notable dissimilarities in course content across the various credentials.

The most significant difference, primary system of emphasis, is illustrated in Figure 4. Several credentials, based on course requirements, provide students with a high degree of expertise and skill within a particular system. We see this clearly with the institutions noted in Figure 4. This distinction is due, in part, to the sponsoring academic department. In Figure 4, the credentials are located within the disciplines of public policy, social work, or human development. We also see that these programs tend to be more highly prescriptive. Many other programs that are less prescriptive provide students with the opportunity to self-select their courses and thereby self-determine their system of emphasis. Of note are the programs at Stanford University, Columbia University, and Harvard University. Each of these are significantly less prescriptive and provide students with a very wide range of courses. Many question then arise as to the role of "prescriptiveness" and this is addressed later in this paper (see list of recommendations).

Although great attention was given to the topic of education policy, a significant difference among the credentials is the amount of attention given to children's health policy. Education policy was addressed from many perspectives (i.e., early childhood education, Pre-K-12, the role of teachers and other professionals, system development, and working with parents and other caregivers). In regard to health policy, this topic was only addressed by private institutions (Brandis, Tufts, Northwestern, Case Western Reserve University, and Loyola). When identified, physical health and/or mental health was noted in the course description. That is, health policy was a sub-topic within the course. At Loyola University, elective law courses are provided on Children's Health Law and Policy and Mental Health Law. The exception is Case Western Reserve University. Within their child studies program, there is one course focused on child health and a second course health policy as a sub-topic.

While health policy is noted here as an example of one type of policy which appears to be overlooked at some institutions, similar concerns could be noted regarding a wide range of policy topics that impact the well-being of children. A challenge to this field is to not simply identify the range of current policy issues but, rather to identify the emerging issues so newly developed coursework is timely, informative, and strategic.

Each Policy Research Center provides opportunities for undergraduate and/or graduate students. Several offer paid (part-time and full-time) positions to the students or credit-bearing work experiences. Only one center offers a credential: Duke University's Center for Child and Family Policy (the undergraduate, Child Policy Research Certificate). At Case Western Reserve University's Schubert Center for Child Studies (minor, Childhood Studies), the center sponsors policy coursework (as does Columbia University's National Center for Children & Families). The Schubert Center coursework includes the opportunity for students to travel to Washington, D.C. to meet with legislators and learn about the policy process (this is similar to the student opportunities at Yale University's Edward Zigler Center in Child Development and Social Policy). Approximately one-half of the centers support students in publishing or presenting their policy and research work. All of the policy research centers noted in Appendix 1 are located at private institutions and there appears to be a strong affiliation between university faculty/staff and the policy research initiatives located at the centers.

In seeking a deeper understanding of the field of

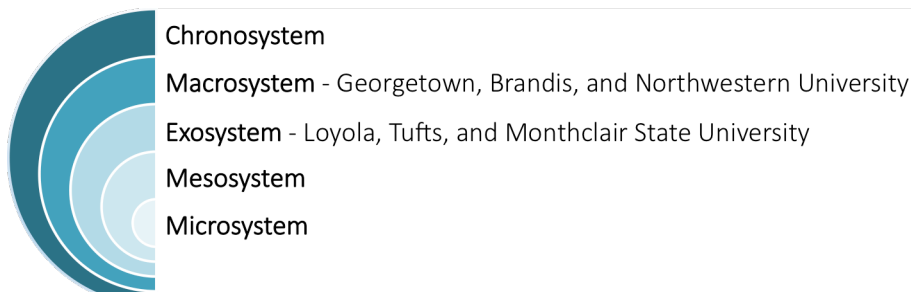**The Topic of Child Health Policy**
Case Western Reserve University

Child Policy. This course introduces students to issues in child policy. Local, state and federal child policy will be considered. Topics will include, for example, policies related to child, poverty, schooling, child welfare, and children's physical, and mental health. Students will learn how policy is developed and how research informs policy and vice versa.

Child Nutrition, Development and Health. The relationship between nutrition and physical/cognitive growth and development of the child from the prenatal period through adolescence, including individuality, maturation and biological needs. Nutritional influences (nutrient requirements, food choices, and nutritional/ feeding problems) and effects on health are emphasized.

Figure 4: *Primary System of Emphasis*

Chronosystem

Macrosystem - Georgetown, Brandis, and Northwestern University

Exosystem - Loyola, Tufts, and Monthclair State University

Mesosystem

Microsystem

early childhood policy, it might be tempting to review Appendix 1 and Appendix 3 with the goal of target coursework in Child Policy as though those courses held the key to unlock the broader field. That could be short sighted. As noted in the findings, a number of themes emerged within the Child Policy category. And, across the noted course descriptions two elements were identified: current policy issues and the

policy process. In regard to current policy issues, many courses addressed public policy/social policy issues (i.e., education, juvenile justice, or family violence). Some of these courses appeared to be "current issues" courses. As such, the course content is time-sensitive in an ever-changing policy landscape. Other courses appeared to address the "current policy issues" in combination with aspects of the policy process (that is, how information is used to develop, implement, and evaluate public/social policy as well as the influencers on this process). These courses appeared to provide instruction about the policy process in the context of current policy issues. This is a critical distinction among the courses. While the policy issues will change, the policy process is far more salient. It is this latter approach that illuminates the need for a careful examination of coursework across all course content categories (Appendix 1 and 3) in order to advance the field of Early Childhood Policy. It is also from this perspective that the following questions and recommendations have been made.

1. What knowledge and skills are needed to be proficient in the craft of Early Childhood Policy?
The title of one course is intriguing, The Craft of Policy Analysis (Columbia University). To use the term "craft" is to imply that there is a level of expertise that is informed by both a knowledge base and also an essential skill set. When combined, the knowledge and skills allows the practitioner to become proficient in the craft. To illustrate this, consider building a home. The knowledge of how to create a level foundation, straight walls, and strong roof is met with the skills sets needed to perform the various tasks (pouring well-mixed cement, cutting and nailing framing boards, and calculating the needed number of roof trusses). While the size and design of homes will vary, a true craftsmen can apply the needed knowledge and skill sets to those varied situations. The outcome? Consistently well-built homes. Likewise, in Early Childhood Policy, we could apply this same view of proficient craftsmen but we must first ask the question, "What is the needed knowledge base and skill sets?"

Consider the following questions:
- To what extent do students need a knowledge base in Child Development, Child in Family, and/or Child in Community in order to be effective in Early Childhood Policy? Not all credentials required coursework in these areas.

- If students benefit from studying "current policy issues" in public/social policy, what are the critical issues of today? More importantly, what are the emerging issues?

- What is essential and what is extraneous? If the illustration of a three-legged stool is used, the three legs of Early Childhood Policy could be: Public Policy Processes (and the influences on the process); Research and Evaluation; and, Child in Context (including aspects of child development, etc.). The top of the stool would be a field experience (experiential education) that utilizes the knowledge and skills in each of the three legs to address a "real world" issue. The question is, based on the current coursework (Appendix 3) what is the essential knowledge and skills for each of the three legs and what coursework (or topics, approaches) is extraneous?

Recommendation: A work group could review the existing list of required/recommended coursework to identify the essential body of knowledge and skill sets. Using an inter-rater reliability process, the courses could be reviewed to identify key themes, approaches, and topics.

2. To what extent do undergraduate and graduate students need to know and understand the discipline of research and statistics (including microeconomics)? This review of undergraduate and graduate credentials cast a very wide net and the range of required/recommended courses in research and statistics is equally wide. Inherent in public/social policy is the need to evaluate or analyze information, data, and policy. Thus, critical thinking skills honed in research and statistics is needed. But, to what extent?

Recommendation: A three step process is recommended. First, similar to the earlier recommendation, a work group could review the identified required/recommended course content. After summarizing the information, a survey could be developed and distributed to professionals who work in the area of early childhood policy. This would focus on the question, "To be effective in early childhood policy, what knowledge and skills from the discipline of research and statistics are needed?" Findings would inform the scope of knowledge and also how it is addressed.

3. To what extent, if any, should the required knowledge base and skill sets vary by academic discipline, undergraduate or graduate standing, or a student's intended career goals? As noted in the findings, there is currently considerable variation. As the essential knowledge and skills sets are further delineated, work in this area could include targeted materials based on a student's academic standing and/or career goals.

4. To what extent should students have the opportunity to tailor course selection to their unique career goals? This question addresses "prescriptiveness" or the degree to which a student can self-select their coursework. Inherent in this discussion is the fact that even the most "not prescriptive" programs limit the range of available course topics (i.e. lots of education courses but few, in any in health care, etc.) and the total number of elective credits. But, on the other hand, students need to be well-equipped to pursue policy work in their unique career goals.

Recommendation: At the center of Questions 3 and 4 is the issue of student opportunity and experience. At this time, the catalyst (or driver) of a student's experience in Early Childhood Policy is the sponsoring academic department and the department's requirements. Due to the very limited number of credential programs at this time, few students have the opportunity to study Early Childhood Policy.

IF it is the consensus of the work group that:
- an essential body of knowledge and skill sets does exist for the field of Early Childhood Policy;
- all students (undergraduate and graduate) should have the opportunity to pursue this area of study;

- tiered levels of study could provide the opportunity for all students to gain a higher levels of expertise in key topic areas; and,
- students should have the opportunity to self-select some coursework...

then, one recommendation is to create online courses and an online credential program.

The online courses and credential program could be sponsored by either an institution of higher education (IHE), a Policy Research Center, or a consortium of IHEs. While this could open the field to a wide range of students, it also could provide students with an equally wide range of study opportunities on a host of child policy topics.

The courses and credential program could be used in two ways. First, for those institutions which currently offer child policy-related coursework or a credential, the online coursework could supplement the current course offerings (hybrid format). Second, among institutions which do not offer this area of study and professionals who desire expertise in the area of Early Childhood Policy, the online credential program could provide high quality and tailored educational opportunity.

The courses could feature subject matter experts from a wide range of public/social policy issues and disciplines. Specific topic areas could be tiered at three levels indicating an introductory level of knowledge, midpoint, and advanced.

Appendix 1: Chart of Higher Education Programs

Looking across Appendix 1, we see the columns indicating the institution, credential, and the academic department. Also listed are the type of degree (i.e., dual degree, undergraduate/ graduate and certificate).

Since some institutions listed credit hours (or units) and others provided total number of courses, the information is listed in two columns. We see some consistency in total credit hours required at the various levels of credential: Undergrad Minor and Certificate (approximately 15 credits); Undergraduate Major (approximately 35 credit hours); Master's degree (approximately 33 credit hours); Ph.D. degree (approximately 75 credit hours), and Post-Graduate Certificate (approximately 15 credit hours). As noted in the paper, the credit hours noted across the Required Credit Hour columns will not always sum to the total.

It is in the next series of columns, the categories of course content, that there is notable variation in the distribution of credit hours. The first three categories focus on the developing child and the child within the family or community. Across credentials, 17 credentials require at least one course in one of the three categories. Three of the dual degree credentials (Georgetown University (MPP/Ph.D.), Loyola University (MSW/MJ), and Loyola University and the Erikson Institute (MA/MJ)) require the most credit hours across the three categories.

The next two columns emphasize policy coursework. Almost all credentials provide coursework in "Child Policy" (policy coursework emphasizing children and/or families). Only 10 institutions provide policy coursework with content strictly specific to the disciplines of law and public policy. Of the 10, most are either Law or Public Policy credentials. Two institutions (Columbia University, and the University of North Carolina-Wilmington) provide this perspective via their Department of Education.
Of the next five columns, two focus on a form of experiential education (i.e., thesis, capstone, internship). This is discussed at length later in the paper. Perhaps the most interesting column is Research and Statistics. While this coursework is found to be required for approximately one-half of the credentials, it is the variation in course content and rigor that sets this column part. This is also discussed later in the paper.

The remaining columns clarify whether the course is taught on campus or online. The last column indicates whether or not a Policy Research Center is associated with the academic department. These centers are further clarified in the section focused on Policy Research Centers and also in Appendix 2.