STUDENTS ASK THE QUESTIONS: Child Development ADT With Student Host Akemi Velasquez & Professors of Child Development Shireetha Gethers And Anthony Henry Episode 151

00:00:00 **Akemi**

Community College is a great place to be able to explore a new interest for a possible career. For me, I was able to learn more about education, because I'd never taken education classes during my undergrad. I had only done psychology, but now I'm here and I'm learning.

00:00:17 **Christina**

Hi, I'm Christina Barsi.

00:00:19 **Sun**

And I'm Sun Ezzell, and you're listening to the Magic Mountie Podcast.

00:00:23 **Christina**

Our mission is to find ways to keep your ear to the ground, so to speak - by bringing to you the activities and events you may not have time to attend, the resources on campus you might want to know more about, the interesting things your colleagues are creating, and the many ways we can continue to better help and guide our students.

00:00:40 **Sun**

We bring to you the voices of Mt. SAC, from the classroom to completion.

00:00:44 **Speaker 1**

And I know I'm going to achieve my goals and I know people here are going to help me to do it.

00:00:49 **Speaker 2**

She is a sociology major and she's transferring to Cal Poly, Pamona! Psychology major, English major ...

00:00:54 **Sun**

From transforming part-time into full-time-

00:00:57 **Speaker 1**

I really liked the time that we spent with Julie about how to write a CV and cover letter.

00:01:04 **Christina**

Or just finding time to soak in the campus.

00:01:07 **Speaker 1**

To think of the natural environment around us as a library.

00:01:10 **Christina**

We want to keep you informed and connected to all things Mt. SAC. But most importantly, we want to keep you connected with each other. I'm Christina Barsi, Mt. SAC alumni and producer of this podcast.

00:01:21 **Sun**

And I'm Sun Ezzell, Learning Assistance Faculty and Professional Learning Academy Coordinator.

00:01:26 **Christina**

And this is the Magic Mountie Podcast.

00:01:27 **Christina**

We all know that without a strong foundation, the structures we build upon it will have cracks. The same goes when it comes to nurturing the development of human beings. Dr. Hiam Ginnot, a school teacher, child psychologist, parent educator, and author said children are like wet cement: whatever falls on them makes an impression.

00:01:50 **Christina**

Our Mt. SAC student host, Akemi Velazquez, talks with her child development professors, Shireetha Gethers and Anthony Henry, about the importance of this field as well as the pathway to pursue it and beyond, enjoy!

00:02:07 **Akemi**

Hi, my name is Akemi Velazquez and I will be your host for today. A little bit about myself, actually - I'm currently studying child development with a specialization in the school-age child here at Mt. SAC. I started taking classes here during the pandemic. After I finished up my bachelor's degree, like all of my previous post-grad plans went up in smoke in 2020.

00:02:27 **Akemi**

And I decided that instead of pushing straight into a graduate school program, I wanted to take some time to learn more about the field of children's education and like the different possible career pathways that I could take. So, I started classes here in the summer of '21, and last fall, actually one of my professors recommended that I apply for a lab assistant position that opened up for the department.

00:02:51 **Akemi**

So, as of this year, I'm now working for Mt. SAC at the Child Development Observation Lab. And it's been a great opportunity to learn from and to speak with the staff here. I've learned a lot already about the different graduate programs I could possibly go into or the different paths that I could take to find the career that I want. I've also had the privilege of taking classes from both of our faculty guests today.

00:03:12 **Akemi**

So, here with us, our professors, Dr. Shireetha Gethers and Tony Henry. So, can I ask you to please introduce yourselves and tell us a little bit about what you do?

00:03:21 **Shireetha**

Sure. Thank you for that introduction. It was great to really hear about your journey getting here. My name is Dr. Shireetha Gethers. I'm the newest full-time faculty member to join the team here in the Child Development Department.

00:03:32 **Shireetha**

Prior to being here, as a full-time faculty member, I'm adjunct faculty member, maybe about four or five years teaching in the Child Development Department, teaching various courses around administration, child growth and development, supervision as well. Also, prior to being full-time here, I was administrator at a couple of different child development programs.

00:03:53 **Shireetha**

So, I've been in the role of Associate Director, Director as well as teacher, parent educator - all of those various experiences that I'm able to bring to this position. So, thank you for having me today.

00:04:06 **Tony**

Hi, I'm Tony Henry and I've been here at Mt. SAC for 14 years. And prior to that, I was at Citrus College for about eight years. So, I spent 20 years teaching in the community college field, but I'm going to back up way back to the beginning of my career, back in the eighties, if anyone can imagine that - I was a child development major in college.

00:04:28 **Tony**

And one of my first jobs working with children was with the children's center at Humboldt State University, which has recently achieved Humboldt Polytechnic, a new title. And I was a student working with children at the child development center.

00:04:47 **Tony**

And then I've worked in the field as a teacher working directly with young children where I got the grounds and my true love for child development as working directly with children. And it's been a long journey, but I would like to say that because I've spent my entire career in the child development field.

00:05:07 **Akemi**

Oh, thank you. I wanted to ask a little bit more about how you got to where you are - but inside of the professional side, more about your feelings personally. So, I'll start with Professor Gethers. I wanted to ask why did you choose to go into child development? So, can you tell us a little bit about like your personal journey and experiences in the field?

00:05:28 **Shireetha**

Sure. So, I am a first-generation college student. So, I was the first of, pretty much anyone in my family to pursue higher education. It was kind of talked about as a possibility, but not necessarily kind of pushed, but I decided to kind of go for it. But I started my undergraduate studies at Cal State Long Beach, and I didn't know what I wanted to do.

00:05:48 **Shireetha**

And my family was like, "Oh, go into business, you'll make all this money." So, I was like, "Oh, okay, sure." So, I started as a business major. Within the first semester, I actually got a job at the child development center on campus. And within a couple weeks, I was like, no, this is where I'm supposed to be, not business. So, after working there that semester, I was fortunate to really discover what my passion was early on.

00:06:11 **Shireetha**

So, for me, it really is that just passionate, working with children, learning how they develop and grow, interacting with them. It's just such a meaningful experience for me personally. And then also, just having this knowledge after completing my undergraduate degree and then going on to graduate school. Working in several child development programs and in different roles, that knowledge allowed me to be able to teach in the college setting and teach adults.

00:06:35 **Shireetha**

And one of the things I enjoy about the field is I know the field, but now, I can now go teach other adults the importance of it and what's interesting about it. So, that's one of the reasons that I decided to pursue a career in child development in general, as well as then now, going to teach other adults about child development: how to implement certain practices, curriculum, how the world and society play such a huge role in the development of children as well. So, that's a little bit about why I chose to go into this field.

00:07:07 **Akemi**

Oh, thank you for sharing that. The part where you mentioned that you weren't originally studying something else and then had an experience that brought you more interest into child development - that really resonated with me because when I started my undergraduate degree, I thought I was going to go into the medical field, and I thought I was going to medical school.

00:07:26 **Akemi**

But it took a while for me to realize that maybe that wasn't what I wanted. And after coming here and experiencing, I'm actually learning about child development, and now, getting this job where I can speak to faculty and to actually interact with students and other people who work in child development. It's also happening for me as well, where I'm learning that I think this is kind of the path where I want to take.

00:07:50 **Shireetha**

That's great to know. I always encourage people, students, to try to do what you love, it won't feel like work. I've been so fortunate to not feel like I've been working for pretty much all of my career. There's always those days where you're like, " I don't know if I want to go to work today," but in general it does not feel like work. I just get to come, talk about something that I love, get other people excited about it. So, I think that makes a huge difference in the career path that you take and then just in life in general.

00:08:18 **Akemi**

Oh, that's true. Thank you for sharing that. And now, Professor Henry, I want to ask you the same thing. I know you spoke a little bit about how you developed more of an interest, like as you kept working in this field. So, but I still want to ask you, how did you choose to initially get into child development? So, can you tell me a little bit about your personal journey and experiences?

00:08:37 **Tony**

Well, you're going to discover you're going to be affirmed yet another time because I was an engineering major my first year of college (it didn't go so well). Then I took a couple of GE classes, a couple of child development classes that met a GE requirement and I found it quite intriguing. So, I took a couple more, and then I just ended up pursuing, enjoying it so much, and identifying with it.

00:09:03 **Tony**

And so, that's very different than engineering. As I took more classes, it became more interesting. I guess one thing that really draws me to the field is that I learned that early childhood is preventative. That if you want to really make a difference in people's lives, you start in early childhood and with the family and providing stable, loving, nurturing environments early on, and then it prevents children from getting into trouble later on or hopefully, it prevents and that leads to healthy childhoods, great school, into healthy adulthoods.

00:09:41 **Tony**

And so, I'm still a very firm believer that if we want to kind of solve society's ills or problems, that we need to provide reaching, nurturing environments for children at home with parents and family, but also, at schools and the community as well. And that is what makes ... competent people often come from happy childhood home life. Not always, everyone has their struggles.

00:10:07 **Tony**

But that's what led me to it and that's what's kept me in it. In fact, I did a master's degree in clinical psychology. Now, I thought I was going to do a career change, a little shift. And at that time, I had to do counseling with grade-schoolers and adolescents, and then as adults too, in order to fulfill the hours.

00:10:29 **Tony**

When I was doing that, trying to help adults, even adolescents, it made me run back to early childhood. Not that it's too late for anyone, but I just thought you can do so much more early on to prevent problems from getting bigger and larger pretty early.

00:10:47 **Akemi**

Oh, thank you for sharing that. It's interesting to hear you also had a common experience of thinking you were going one way, but then finding out maybe something else interesting and then pursuing that. And I do think that community college is a great place to be able to explore a new interest for a possible career.

00:11:06 **Akemi**

And I'm so grateful that we have that like here, because I know some other countries don't have community college, but I'm grateful that we do. So, that like for me, I was able to learn more about education because I'd never taken education classes during my undergrad. I had only done psychology, and now I'm here and I'm learning.

00:11:25 **Akemi**

Speaking of classes though, I wanted to ask Professor Gethers, as just a student under the general child development education department umbrella, like just taking classes, what are some things I can expect to learn in these various classes?

00:11:40 **Shireetha**

So, there's a really large array of what you can learn. So, if you're just starting off or if you're taking a general education course, one of the first courses you may take is child growth and development or child and adolescent development. So, that course just gives you an overview, starting with conception - how children are growing and developing in the womb, and how they grow and develop over time.

00:12:04 **Shireetha**

So, it gives you just a really good foundation of where everything starts for all of us as humans: where it all starts, the exposure, the experiences - it'll start with that information. You can then go on to take a curriculum course. So, this course will give you some insight into what kind of curriculum you'll see in an early education classroom, a child development center, very specific to infant age children, toddler, preschool, maybe even early elementary school classrooms.

00:12:31 **Shireetha**

So, that curriculum course helps you to understand now that I know how children grow and develop, what kind of environment will I make for them or what kind of curriculum might I develop and present to them so that they can continue to learn and prepare them for the rest of their life, especially the educational aspect of their life.

00:12:47 **Shireetha**

We also have courses on administration. So, one of the career paths, which I know we'll probably talk about later, is if you want to be a director or if you want to be a site supervisor of a program, an administration course will give you some of those tools as to what to expect, what is staffing like, how do I schedule the day for the classroom, parent interactions, all those things that come with wearing the hat of an administrator. So, that course will give you some insight as to what to expect.

00:13:16 **Shireetha**

And we do have students who are already an administrator maybe, and are coming back to kind of help them with that role that they're already in. And we'll also have courses that talk about challenging behavior or behaviors that children exhibit helps us to understand, how do I approach a child who's struggling in this area?

00:13:31 **Shireetha**

And that course is really insightful because it helps you to understand that there's a reason for behavior. There's a way that we can respond, there's a way that we can support as opposed to just say, blaming the child for they did this wrong, or they did that wrong. Why is it happening? Are we not meeting a need?

00:13:46 **Shireetha**

And it's a course that helps you to be really reflective in how you interact with children. And this is a course that not only administrators or childcare providers or teachers could take, this is helpful for parents as well. And I think that's one of the advantages of our program.

00:13:59 **Shireetha**

It's not so much just dedicated to someone who wants to go off and be a teacher or an administrator, but a lot of students are just parents who want to learn more about their children or want to learn how to approach things differently or how to support them, or how to advocate for them. Because advocacy is a really important thing to us in this field and in this department. So, that's just kind of a few of the courses we have.

00:14:21 **Shireetha**

We also have courses that'll help us connect society and its influences on children, society and how it influences their parents, and the decisions that are being made. And the morals that are being given to children, the values that parents are teaching their children; how do the political changes and events in our world affect children, and their development, and their experience.

00:14:44 **Shireetha**

So, it just really gives you a very good overview of a child, how they develop, how to support them. And as Professor Henry mentioned, it is very preventative. So, if I know this already or if I know how to give either a parent or a teacher this knowledge, then I can help this child grow and develop in a way that they can be a contributing member to society. They'll be confident, they'll have a strong sense of self-concept.

00:15:09 **Shireetha**

So, these courses not only help prepare a future educator, but just help prepare our community, prepare our world, prepare people who are going to be parents who are already parents to better support children.

00:15:23 **Akemi**

What you said about these classes being able to support not only people who want to go into the field of child education like as a professional, but also just people who have kids or interact with children - that really stood out to me because I actually have seven nieces and nephews and two of them that I see the most often, they're actually around preschool and now kindergarten; one's four and one's five.

00:15:47 **Akemi**

And so, since I have started taking classes here, it has helped me reevaluate like how I spend time with them when they come to visit us, how I interact with them, and also like how I shop for their gifts when it comes to like birthdays and Christmas and things like that. So, it's actually been helping me because since I am like one of the adult figures that they will meet in their lives, I've been wanting to make a positive impact on them since I'm the youngest of my siblings, so I don't have any little brothers or sisters. My first round was with the nieces and nephews.

00:16:21 **Shireetha**

Yeah, I try to in my classrooms and I think several of the faculty in our department do the same - a lot of our lectures involve telling your own story, giving very practical examples. So, as opposed to just kind of giving you this information about theory, we're making sure that you can apply that information, that you can connect it to a recent experience, a past experience, potentially a future experience.

00:16:43 **Shireetha**

So, it really helps a lot of people who maybe don't have children yet, but have like you said, nieces or nephews or cousins, it helps them to reflect on the conversations that they have, how they interact, how they shop for toys. When Christmas times come, are we buying battery-operated toys? Are we buying things that will support their education, support literacy? So, absolutely, it's something that causes us to be really reflective and intentional about our interaction with children.

00:17:09 **Akemi**

Thank you.

00:17:10 **Tony**

I'm so glad to hear that because Akemi is currently enrolled in early childhood literacy class with me and I trust you're going to be buying some really wonderful picture books for those preschool and kindergarten age that they're going to love and you're going to have fun reading aloud.

00:17:29 **Shireetha**

Yeah, those are awesome.

00:17:31 **Akemi**

Yeah, I've already started thinking about it. Moving on to like the different types of jobs and career pathways that you could take, I wanted to ask about that first step towards that, which would be the degrees and certificates from the department. So, Professor Henry, what specific degrees and certificates are offered here at the Child Development and Education Department?

00:17:51 **Tony**

We have three degrees. One is an associate degree in child development, which is 28 units in child development. That's commonly many students do that. We also have a transfer degree in child development. It's a transfer degree in early childhood education, which the units automatically transfer to any CSU in several private programs seamlessly.

00:18:16 **Tony**

So, a student who did all those 24 units and then the GE required, they would be able to seamlessly transfer to Cal Poly Pomona, to Cal State Fullerton, to Cal State LA or even if they wanted to go out of Bay Area and they wanted to go to Humboldt State, they could seamlessly transfer to there.

00:18:33 **Tony**

And then we have a third degree in educational paraprofessional degree. And that paraprofessional degree is aimed at more at someone who wants to go into the K12 track and they wanted to go into elementary school, middle school or high school education.

00:18:51 **Tony**

I will say that the transfer degree means that you're going to transfer with the aim of completing a bachelors. And then we have a number of certificates. Our certificates start small as small as 12 units, but the beauty of our certificates within the program, someone might start with the 12 units. If you move to the second certificate or the third one, they just nest, they build.

00:19:15 **Tony**

So, you kind of can start small and then take a few more classes, it'll build into the next one, build into the next. And sometimes students might come with the intention of, I'm only going to take a couple classes or I'm going to just do these 12 units and that's enough. They might find later on "Oh, unless I do a few more classes ..." And then they find two years later they finished a degree or they're ready to transfer.

00:19:38 **Akemi**

Oh, thank you for the information. That was very clarifying for the different types of degrees because I know there are a lot being offered. So, then after we have our educational degrees and certificates that we want and we want to move on into applying for jobs and to trying to build ourselves a career. So, I want to ask like what for ... either one of you can answer this, but what types of jobs and career pathways then can we find for the child development or early education field?

00:20:08 **Shireetha**

If I can mention a few possibilities are relatively endless. Child development really gives you a strong foundation to build in several different directions. One of the common ones is to be a preschool or early education teacher. So, working at a child development center, being an infant teacher, toddler teacher many of our students go on to pursue that type of career, there are opportunities at school districts, there are opportunities at private child development centers or childcare centers.

00:20:35 **Shireetha**

Mt. SAC itself has a child development center. A lot of our students like yourself, for example, work in the lab or then go on to be a specialist or a teacher, lead teacher, assistant teacher. Also, you can go into the field of social work. So, if you plan to be a social worker, this degree program and our courses give you a foundation on again, understanding children and what you'll really need if you choose to go into a field where you're providing a social service to family, if you're working in an agency that comes in contact with children and their families on a regular basis.

00:21:05 **Shireetha**

In addition to social work, you're taking that literacy class. Maybe you want to then go and write children's books. So, now, I have an understanding of children and what their interests are and how they develop. And I now know I can make a picture book or I can make a book that has language that's appropriate for children depending on their age, depending on their interests.

00:21:26 **Shireetha**

Another option kind of going towards the medical field that you said you thought you might go into is a child life specialist. So, that's someone who works with children who may be in the hospital long-term, spends a lot of time there, and it allows them to interact with those children and support them and give them somewhat of a normal experience as far as their education and social interactions.

00:21:47 **Shireetha**

So, child life specialist is another career path that our students tend to take. Oftentimes, that is really, I think a part of - and Professor Henry can clarify this for me: a part of the transfer program. And then our four-year institutions will offer that child life specialist degree program, which I think also requires like some fieldwork experience or some hours that you need to do in order to achieve that degree and then go on to work for a place like St . Jude's or some hospital that has children there and they are looking for someone to come in and to provide a service to those families.

00:22:21 **Shireetha**

So, that's just a few that I have, and I know Professor Henry May have a few more that he can mention and add to that list.

00:22:28 **Tony**

A couple others could be like sometimes people like want to work with children, but they don't want to work like large groups of children and they don't see themselves. Another great one for that is becoming a speech and language therapist, and then speech and language therapist help with kids, either one-on-one or in small groups develop and improve their skills.

00:22:50 **Tony**

So, that's a great skill. You want to have that relationship and work with kids, and there's always a demand for those jobs. You'll see any school district, there's always a continual demand for that private or working for a district. Another one, if you are interested in becoming like a child advocate or working in the legal field, many children are caught in the court system and need strong advocates or becoming a paralegal or an attorney.

00:23:18 **Tony**

And a last one I would mention is the media. If someone's interested in going in media field from children's programming, television programming to online gaming, it could be a great field in many areas such as even a large corporation like Disney needs people who understand children and child development to know what's appropriate for them.

00:23:43 **Akemi**

Those jobs, they truly did span across like multiple fields. You were listing things that I'd never even thought about myself, so thank you for that information. But I wanted to ask on a related note - so when it comes to like looking for these various jobs, like what is the difference like between learning in child development and early childhood education?

00:24:04 **Tony**

There's really not necessarily a big difference. Generally, early childhood, when you hear early childhood, it's aimed at ages eight and under. So, it could be infancy, toddlerhood, preschool or kindergarten first grade. But we often use early childhood education and then child development interchangeably. Sometimes, child development, we look at that into school age, and also, into adolescence.

00:24:31 **Shireetha**

Just to add to that, I would say sometimes child development, depending on the campus and depending on the particular course, might look more at the actual physical development of the child while education looks at how we develop or create or educate those children.

00:24:46 **Shireetha**

So, again, like Professor Henry mentioned, it's pretty interchangeable. We use them pretty interchangeably. But you might see it called something slightly different or completely different at another campus or another college. And you also, may find it under another department.

00:25:02 **Shireetha**

So, you may find the Child Development Department under family and consumer sciences umbrella, but the focus is still the same. So, for example, my bachelor's degree program was under family and consumer sciences and it was a degree in child development, but then my master's degree was in the education department under early childhood education.

00:25:20 **Shireetha**

Still learned a lot of the same concepts, but oftentimes, they're just kind of placed in different areas. I think sometimes colleges are kind of trying to figure out where they should go, but for the most part, like we had explained, it's used pretty interchangeably.

00:25:36 **Akemi**

Oh, okay, thank you the clarification. I also wanted to ask, see if you guys could prove or debunk this rumor: so I've heard that jobs in the fields of like child development, early childhood education, that they don't often have high-paying salaries, specifically, if you want to become an educator for young children. So, is this true?

00:25:57 **Tony**

You could see lower salaries if someone starts off. And they're like a preschool teacher at a family childcare home or a local nonprofit preschool. So, that might be an okay place for someone to start or even to work like as a student. While you may not earn a sufficient salary staying in that level, there's always a lot of opportunities for growth within the field.

00:26:23 **Tony**

So, both Shireetha and I shared our own journeys. We both started out working directly with children and then we've moved into various other roles as they've come along and increased salaries. But also, our department, we like to encourage students to move into positions that will offer a lot of opportunity as they grow along. So, getting a position, if you wanted to work directly with children to get into a school district.

00:26:46 **Tony**

School districts often pay a little bit better or a head start or a program that receives government funding - they pay a little better or a lot better. They also have better benefits and then there's opportunities to grow. So, someone might start as an assistant, and then later, they become a lead teacher a year or two later, so they can move up that salary level.

00:27:06 **Tony**

And not uncommonly in that field, people may move on to - there's an opportunity to move into a site supervisor later on taking another role. That's how I did it. I started as a teacher, became an Assistant Director, reluctantly, and then became a Director. And then I moved onto other roles through the field.

00:27:25 **Tony**

And then there's also a lot of money coming down the pike from state of California. You're seeing a big expansion of expansion of TK (Transitional Kindergarten) for four-year-olds. And then we're seeing TK like three-year-olds and those are offered by school districts and those would require, or that they do require someone do a bachelor's degree. And then also, do a credential too, but they're going to be earning just as much as a fifth-grade teacher.

00:27:56 **Akemi**

Thank you for the clarification for that. The mobility that you discussed in your answer, that is something that's reassuring. Because I know in many different, like other non-related fields, people will have trouble moving from either upwards in a ladder or moving to different related positions. But the ability to move from even like just different levels of teachers to different types of programs, that will be very helpful knowledge for people who want to go into the field. So, thank you.

00:28:27 **Akemi**

We spoke about this a little bit earlier, but I wanted to ask Professor Gethers more specifically, are there any like skills or certifications either required at a state level, at a national level, or just recommended ones from like approved associations that are seen to be highly regarded in the fields? Like are there any of these that are needed or required to work in the early childhood education field?

00:28:54 **Shireetha**

Yes. So, the majority of programs will look for what is called a child development permit. So, this is similar to the K-12 credential that TK or pre-K to 12th-grade teachers will earn. So, typically, they will complete a bachelor's degree and then do about a year or so of a credential program, where they get some hands-on experience.

00:29:15 **Shireetha**

So, in our field, it's called a child development permit. It's designed pretty differently. There's several levels to it. So, starting from associate teacher all the way up to Program Director. There's going to be different requirements and the number of child development courses or units that you need in order to earn that permit, as well as the amount of experience that you need in addition to those units.

00:29:37 **Shireetha**

So, this is something that most programs will require. You may find some family childcare programs or some private programs that won't require it, but will strongly encourage it.

00:29:48 **Shireetha**

So, in our department, we strongly encourage it. We have someone who is a permit specialist who we do workshops, and we tell students about the permit process. We also tell them about like a stipend program that'll help them to pay for it. Also, they can earn units as they take courses towards earning that permit.

00:30:07 **Shireetha**

So, that's one of the credentials that you'll find more often is required in a child development setting. For sure required in like a public school - they'll require that type of credential for you to be a teacher or to work inside of that classroom.

00:30:22 **Shireetha**

Another certification that will be highly desired and usually required at programs will be first aid and CPR certification. So, we want to make sure that we are creating a safe space for our children, then having that certification, going through that. Usually, it's every two years that you go through this training to prepare you for instances where you may be needing to offer that kind of health support or care to those children in the classroom.

00:30:49 **Shireetha**

One of the things that we offer to also help students prepare is our practicum program. So, in addition to getting the permit, you'll need to have a certain number of hours. So, we offer a practicum course here where students actually get hands-on experience.

00:31:03 **Shireetha**

They're working directly with children, they're developing curriculum, they're observing and often engaging in problem-solving opportunities, so that when they leave our program, whether they choose to transfer or not, they're prepared to actually be in the classroom with children, knowing how to interact, knowing how to support.

00:31:19 **Shireetha**

So, the permit is the foundation to what is expected as far as becoming a teacher in the classroom, being able to lead your own classroom, all the way up until if you decide to be a Director, Associate Director, the site supervisor permit, or the Program Director permit is going to be required.

00:31:37 **Shireetha**

What I will also say is we are in the process as a field and kind of looking at that permit and what's going to be required and how to add expectations or add a certain level of quality to our field. Our permit process is very different than the K12. So, you can get a permit just by taking four classes. And that's a good starting point for individuals who want to go into the field, but then you continue to build with that education.

00:32:01 **Shireetha**

And I will also say that there are programs that will either require or strongly recommend a bachelor's degree. So, after you go through our program here at Mt. SAC, then you transfer or go to another college and continue that bachelor's degree, that'll also prepare you to be a teacher in the classroom, to be an administrator, to be an instructor, parent educator, things of that sort.

00:32:23 **Shireetha**

So, that's just a little bit about some of the credentials that are required. And also, with our certificates here, there are programs that will desire a certain certificate, whether it's focusing in administration or children with special needs. Those are also certificates that we offer here in our department.

00:32:40 **Akemi**

Oh, thank you, especially for the comparison and contrast with the K through 12 credentialing system. Because I know that is something that I'm a bit more just familiar with, but not so much information is common knowledge about the preschool system of credentialing. So, that was helpful. Thank you very much.

00:32:59 **Akemi**

And then lastly, I just wanted to ask both of you, what are some first steps that you would recommend either to me or to a student to prepare us for a career in early childhood education or related fields?

00:33:14 **Tony**

I would say when your opportunities come along, take advantage of them. Another tip I would give is like, as you're moving into your career path, like don't be afraid of like when you see an opportunity go for it. You can say, "Oh, I'm not quite qualified yet or quite this, or ..." Just go for it because you'll figure it out as you go.

00:33:36 **Tony**

And then the last thing I would say would be, which I think something you really hold Akemi, is that sometimes this field is overlooked or underappreciated or misunderstood, and that we are an academic field deeply rooted in the science of child development. I see that come out in your student side of you, that you believe that.

00:33:57 **Tony**

Hold on to that because in order for this field to continue to grow and continue to grow with respect and admiration and understanding of outsiders from the field, we need young people moving into the field and the future of our field to hold and deeply root into that. This is a serious field of serious study. It's fun too and it's interesting and enjoyable, but we are rooted in science and research.

00:34:24 **Shireetha**

If I can add to that, no, I completely agree with Professor Henry. I think making sure to understand how crucial our work is, how important this stage of life is for children. There's so much brain growth and development that occurs those first five years. And we literally are like, if you're thinking of building a building, this tall skyscraper, we're at that foundation.

00:34:46 **Shireetha**

And if you don't have a secure sturdy foundation, then the rest of the building can crumble. And child development is kind of like that. We're building that foundation. These children will then go to be our leaders. We want to make sure that they're emotionally secure, socially, cognitively - all those different areas of development, we're understanding the value and the importance of it.

00:35:08 **Shireetha**

Something I would also add is document your journey. So, some of the projects that you work on, the curriculum that you practice, save all of that because you may use it later. There's certain ideas that I did in my undergrad that I repeated when I became a teacher, I tried it out, and it worked out really well.

00:35:24 **Shireetha**

And then I would also say networking is a really good thing. The child development field is big, but then it's small. A lot of people know each other. I've worked at a few different colleges and there was always some connection. People who knew each other, if you're a part of the organization called NAEYC, which stands for National Association for the Education of Young Children; it's a nationwide organization that connects people from all over, workshops occur so it helps you to kind of prepare or to continue to learn as you're in the field.

00:35:54 **Shireetha**

And it allows you to connect with people who are either nearby or far away. But I think networking is also going to be a big part of what we do. It helps you to just grow professionally, but also connect socially and meet other people like us who understand this work and understand how impactful it is. And it makes you even more excited to continue to do this work.

00:36:15 **Akemi**

Oh, thank you so much. Thank you, both Professor Henry and Professor Gethers for taking the time to speak with us and to answer some of our questions about the child development and education department here at Mt. SAC.

00:36:27 **Tony**

You're welcome.

00:36:30 **Shireetha**

Very welcome, thank you.

00:36:34 **Christina**

Transferring from Mt. SAC to university to earn your bachelor's degree has countless benefits and opens the door to many opportunities. Learn how to do so with an associates of arts or associate of science transfer degree like we highlighted in this episode by using transfer resources such as the Counseling Department or the Transfer Center. Just go to mtsac.edu/counseling or mtsac.edu/transfer.

00:36:40 **Christina**

Thank you for listening to the Magic Mountie Podcast and don't forget to share your favorite episodes.