

# Erikson Institute

Graduate School in Child Development

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## 2024–25 Program Book

Master of Social Work

# Contents

Click on a section to navigate.

This program-specific MSW Program Book is an accompaniment to Erikson’s Student Handbook which outlines the policies, procedures, and resources applicable to all Erikson students.

- [MSW Program Mission](#) .....3
- [Admission Requirements](#) .....4
  - [Admission Review Process](#) .....4
  - [Policy on advanced standing \(online and hybrid programs\)](#) .....4
  - [Returning Student](#) .....5
  - [Returning Alumni Student](#) .....6
  - [Applicant self-disclosure statement](#) .....7
  - [Nondiscrimination policy](#) .....8
  - [Credit for life or work experience](#) .....8
- [Master’s Degree Programs: General Information](#) .....9
- [Professional Competencies](#) .....9
- [MSW Professional Competencies](#) .....11
  - [Generalist Competencies 2022 \(EPAs\)](#) .....11
  - [Specialized Practice Competencies](#) ..... 16
    - [Clinical Practice with Children, Adolescents, and Adults](#) .....16
    - [Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health \(IECMH\)](#) .....21
- [Assessment of Professional Competencies](#) .....27
  - [Culminating Requirements](#) .....27
  - [Knowledge Requirement](#) .....28
  - [Practice Requirement](#) .....28
    - [Practicums](#) .....28
  - [Reflection Requirement](#) .....31
- [Licensure Requirements for Social Workers](#) .....34
- [Degree Requirements](#) .....36
  - [General MSW Requirements](#) .....36
  - [Conferral of MSW Degree](#) .....36
  - [Specific MSW Requirements: Concentrations](#) ..... 37
- [Student Acknowledgement](#) .....42

# MSW Program Mission

Erikson Institute's ("Erikson") Master of Social Work ("MSW") program helps students integrate the science of child development with the practice and aspirations of social work. We emphasize an interdisciplinary perspective exploring the influence of experience over the life course. Graduates are equipped to assess the contextual factors that promote and hinder growth and collaborate with individuals, groups, and communities to achieve agreed upon goals. Through reflective practice and intentional supervision opportunities, graduates gain professional resilience, as well as interrogate historical, systemic, and cultural racism and oppression, and recognize and challenge their own biases. Graduates are further equipped to engage in ethical social work practice, and advocate for just policies that impact child and family well-being

## Goals of the MSW program

The Erikson MSW program's goals flow directly from its mission. They reflect the integration of Erikson's unique strengths with those of social work education. The result is a specialized program dedicated to promoting competencies in bridging theory and evidence-based practice. More specifically, the program systematically draws on developmental knowledge to inform strengths-based, person-in-environment perspectives, cultural competence, supportive practices, critical reflection, ethical decision-making, and social action. Erikson's mission and goals are fully in keeping with the knowledge, values, and skills reflected in the Council on Social Work Education's core competencies.

The MSW program will prepare graduates to:

1. Become advanced practitioners in one of the following areas of specialization: Clinical Practice with Children, Adolescents, and Adults and Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health.
2. Integrate social work knowledge, values, and skills with deep knowledge of child development to promote the well-being and empowerment of children, families, and communities.
3. Apply developmental theory, research, and knowledge of child development as a framework for identifying, addressing, and advocating for the complex needs and individual differences of children and families, so that they may have the opportunity to reach their full potential.
4. Promote human rights, social and economic justice, social change, and community well-being through critical reflection, ethical practice, research, and active engagement in communities.
5. Use self-knowledge, critical thinking, and reflective practice to engage in effective relationships with children, families, communities, and systems.

# Admission Requirements

Requirements for admission to Erikson's MSW Program include, but are not limited to, prior academic competency and demonstrated suitability for practicum education. This includes the display of integrity, sensitivity, flexibility, and adaptability; the ability to consider the impact of context and culture on human behavior and development; and the capacity to engage in reflective practice.

Requirements for admission consideration are:

- A bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education by the date of enrollment
- A minimum grade point average of 2.75/4.0 in the last 60 credit hours of the bachelor's degree OR a 3.0/4.0 from a completed master's degree
- Copy of official or unofficial transcripts from the bachelor's degree (earned or in-progress at the time of application) and for any courses taken beyond the bachelor's degree, including any earned master's degree or higher.

Additional application requirements include:

- Current resume
- Two (2) short essays in response to essay prompts
- Two (2) letters of recommendation

## Admission review process

All applicants are thoughtfully and wholistically reviewed by an MSW faculty member(s) before making an admission recommendation. The application period varies according to the program start offering. Please review the [www.erikson.edu](http://www.erikson.edu) website for specific application dates.

## Policy on advanced standing (online and hybrid programs)

Students who have successfully completed a bachelor's degree in social work from an accredited Council of Social Work Education (CSWE) program are eligible to receive advanced standing in a subsequent Master of Social Work program, meaning that certain MSW courses are waived because similar coursework has been completed at the undergraduate level.

MSW students are eligible for advanced standing in the hybrid as well as online program.

Eligible applicants must:

- Have been awarded a bachelor's degree in social work within the past 6 years from a program accredited by CSWE.
- Meet undergraduate GPA requirements of 3.0 or higher.

- Submit a letter of recommendation from an undergraduate practicum instructor or the school's practicum director. This will suffice as one of the 2 letters of recommendation requested when applying.
- Submit a practicum evaluation indicating that the applicant has met at least 75% proficiency on each of the generalist competencies, and fulfilled a minimum of 400 clock hours.
- In some cases, participate in an interview with an Erikson MSW program faculty or staff member.

### Sample advanced standing record review

*Based on CSWE competencies of typical BSW/generalist first-year coursework.*

BSW coursework*	Erikson coursework**	Credits
Practice/Methods I	Clinical Practice with Individuals, Families, and Groups I	3 credits
Practice/Methods II	Clinical Practice with Individuals, Families, and Groups II	3 credits
HBSE coursework	Social Emotional Development II	3 credits
Research I	Research Methods	3 credits
Policy/History I	Youth, Community, and Systems Change	3 credits
Cultural Diversity	Family and Culture	3 credits
Field Instruction/ Seminar	Generalist Reflective Seminar and Field I & II	6 credits
Total credits waived		24 credits

\*Applicant received a B or better in all courses considered for waiver

\*\*Not every applicant who applies will receive advanced standing status nor the maximum course waiver of 24 credits. It is determined on a case-by-case basis.

## Returning Student

**Definition:** Previously enrolled students who have not completed their degree/certificate and have not registered for classes for at least three consecutive semesters (1 year) or have exceeded their leave of absence are considered Returning Students. Returning students must complete a new application and are subject to all new degree/certificate requirements in effect at the time of readmission. If the degree/certificate is no longer being offered at Erikson, returning students may apply to a new degree/certificate from the current offerings.

Readmission is not guaranteed. Eligibility for readmission will be determined by the Dean of Students, in collaboration with the Director of Academic Advising, the Program Director and other designees, as appropriate; Registrar; and Student Bursar. Returning students may be required to comply with additional requirements as needed and as defined based review of their eligibility.

### Re-Admission application requirements:

- Updated resume
- New letters of recommendations (1 for certificate students, 2 for master's students). Although the same recommender(s) can be used, previously submitted letters of recommendation will not be accepted.
- Un/Official transcripts, if courses have been completed at another institution during the time of absence from Erikson
- Essays (Program and Leadership Scholarship)
- Additional essay explaining reason for leave, academic probation/dismissal:

If left in good standing:

*Describe the reasons for your absence from the program and the experiences you have had during your time away. How have these experiences influenced your academic and professional goals? Please explain why you are now prepared to return and successfully complete your graduate studies. Include specific strategies and resources you plan to utilize to ensure your academic success, and how you intend to contribute to the academic community upon your return. (250-500 words)*

If left on academic probation or academically dismissed:

*Reflect on the circumstances that led to your academic probation or dismissal and discuss the steps you have taken to address these challenges. How have you grown personally and academically during your time away from the program? Please outline your specific plans and strategies for ensuring your future success if readmitted, including any resources you intend to utilize or changes you plan to make to your approach to your studies. Be honest and thoughtful in your response, demonstrating your commitment to overcoming past difficulties and achieving your academic and professional goals. (250-500 words)*

Returning students being offered readmission will be admitted on a conditional basis for a specified period outlined in the readmit letter. During this time, the student must demonstrate satisfactory academic as part of-accepting the offer of readmission.

If readmission is denied, returning students can reapply for a future term provided new circumstances are presented in the new application.

## Returning Alumni Student

**Definition:** A former student with a conferred degree or certificate is considered an Alumni. There is no time limit on

when the previous certificate/degree must have been earned. However, alumni seeking to return to complete another master's or certificate program must complete a new (streamlined) application to ensure that all academic and professional requirements of the new program being sought are met. Alumni seeking to apply to the PhD program must complete a full application.

Admission is not guaranteed for returning alumni to a new degree or certificate program.

**Certificate/Master's Returning Student application requirements:**

- Updated resume
- Recommendations waived
- Essays (Program and Leadership Scholarship)
- Un/Official transcripts, if courses have been completed at another institution since completing a degree or program at Erikson

**PhD Returning Student admission requirements:**

- Full application:
  - Updated resume
  - 3 letters of recommendation
  - Essays (Program and Leadership Scholarship)
  - Un/Official transcripts, if courses have been completed at another institution since completing a degree or program at Erikson

If admission is granted, students will be notified through the Office of Admission and the matriculation fee will be waived upon acceptance of the offer of admission. An individualized program plan, inclusive of relevant transfer credit (see *Course Transfer Credit Policy*) (if applicable), will be discussed with Academic Advising during the enrollment process.

## Applicant self-disclosure statement

Erikson requires applicants to self-disclose information related to criminal convictions, revocation, suspension, or denial of professional licenses and involvement in child abuse and neglect investigations both to comply with state law regarding practicum placements and also to ensure a safe environment for all members of the Institute community. The existence of a conviction or past disciplinary problem in an applicant's record does not necessarily mean that he or she will be denied admission to Institute programs or dismissed from the programs. Each case is evaluated individually on its facts and not all convictions or disciplinary actions are considered disqualifying to the course of study at the Institute.

## Nondiscrimination policy

It is the policy of Erikson not to discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, age, disability, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state, or local law, in matters of admissions, employment, or services or in the educational programs or activities it operates, in accordance with civil rights legislation and institutional commitment. It is also the policy of Erikson not to retaliate against any person for making a complaint in good faith about alleged discrimination or for supporting any other Erikson student or representative in making such a complaint. Any alleged violations of this policy should be directed to the Vice President for Academic Affairs/Chief Academic Officer and the Associate Vice President for Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI), Organization Ombuds, and Title IX Coordinator.

## Credit for life or work experience

Erikson does not grant course credit for its degree or certificate programs based on life experience or previous work experience.



# Master's Degree Programs: General Information

Master's degree programs at Erikson are designed to prepare individuals for professional and leadership roles in the full range of disciplines that serve young children and their families, including social services, child welfare, education, early care, mental health, psychotherapy, policy, and health care. Erikson programs focus on understanding the developmental needs of children and families within the context of cultural, social, economic and political circumstances.

Erikson's master's degree programs offer a multidisciplinary approach to the study of human development across the life course. Courses cover relevant aspects of developmental psychology, anthropology, education, sociology, health, and social work with families and communities. Within each degree program, cohorts of students take similar courses, participate in small group seminars, and engage in intensive placements—always with close attention and support from a faculty adviser. While working independently, students are expected to interact with their instructors and peers to gain mastery of course material and to develop insight into the interrelationship of the various disciplines. Students typically complete their degree in two or three years.

## Professional Competencies

All Erikson graduates demonstrate competency in three areas, which represent Erikson's Institutional Learning Outcomes: (a) understanding of developmental and professional knowledge (Knowledge), (b) professional practice skills (Practice), and (c) critical reflection (Reflection). Each of Erikson Master's degree programs includes a set of Program Learning Outcomes that align with the Institutional Learning Outcomes and allow student to demonstrate mastery respective to their specific degree program in the areas of knowledge, practice, and reflections. Upon completion of an Erikson master's degree, all MSW students are expected to demonstrate a set of competencies for each of the Institutional Learning Outcomes: knowledge, practice, and reflection. During the 2023-24 academic year, MSW faculty reviewed and revised the program learning outcomes, which were subsequently approved by Erikson's Faculty council in June 2024. Students entering Erikson in the 2024-25 academic year are expected to demonstrate mastery in revised program learning outcomes.

Students entering Erikson prior to the 2024-25 academic year are expected to demonstrate competency in the following upon completion of their program:

### Knowledge

- Developmental knowledge

Students will have an in-depth knowledge of typical and atypical human growth from the prenatal period to age eight in the areas of intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and language development. They will understand the inter-relationships among these domains of development as well as the role of care-giving relationships in the developmental process.

- **Social/cultural influences**  
Students will have an understanding of how social, cultural, political, economic, and family contexts influence child development.
- **Understanding programs**  
Students will have knowledge of a range of schools, programs, services, and resources for children and families in different communities and settings. This includes knowledge of a range of effective approaches, curricula and inclusive practices for children of different ages, and the use of formal and informal assessment strategies to understand and meet children’s needs within these settings.
- **History and policy issues**  
Students will demonstrate an understanding of the historical, philosophical, and social foundations of current policies and practices in child and family services, and current social issues facing children, families, and those who work with them.

### Practice skills

- Students will be able to work effectively with and for children and families in their chosen concentration using current knowledge and best practices.
- Students will be able to work effectively with other professionals in the field of early childhood as supervisors and team members.
- Students will demonstrate leadership skills through their ability to articulate and implement ideas and knowledge regarding children and families through speaking, writing, and facilitating change in a range of professional settings.
- Students will understand how to use technology to more effectively deliver services to children and families, and how to use it to further their own professional development.

### Self-Knowledge and Reflection

- Students will be able to reflect on their professional practices in relation to theory and research.
- Students will understand how their own history, experience, and cultural background influence their work with children, families, and colleagues.
- Students will be able to articulate a philosophy and rationale for their decisions, and to reflect on and evaluate the effects of their choices and actions on others (young children, families, and other professionals) as a basis for program planning, modification, and continuing professional development.

Students entering Erikson during and after the 2024-25 academic year are expected to demonstrate competency in the following upon completion of their program:

Institutional Learning Outcome (ILO)	Program Learning Outcome (PLO)
	1. Students will integrate human development knowledge across the life span with social work theory.

<b>Demonstrate understanding of developmental and professional knowledge</b>	2. Students will critically analyze the complex issues around human rights and will engage in the advancement of social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.
	3. Students will engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice.
<b>Demonstrate competency of professional practice skills</b>	1. Students will demonstrate effective and culturally relevant engagement skills with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
	2. Students will demonstrate effective and ethical assessment skills with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
	3. Students will critically analyze and effectively choose intervention strategies with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
	4. Students will effectively and ethically evaluate practice individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
	5. Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze, formulate, implement, and evaluate policies aimed at addressing social issues.
<b>Engage in critical reflection</b>	1. Students will demonstrate ethical and professional behavior.
	2. Engage anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion (ADEI) in practice.

# Master of Social Work Professional Competencies

MSW students must also demonstrate a set of competencies specific to social workers. The Council of Social Work Education, Educational policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) has identified core competencies as essential to effective generalist social work preparation. Graduates of the Erikson MSW program will be required to demonstrate competence at both the generalist and specialized practice levels. Below are the use core competencies that graduates from the Erikson MSW program will be expected to demonstrate:

## Generalist Competencies 2022 (EPAs)

### Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant policies, laws, and regulations that may affect practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social

workers understand that ethics are informed by principles of human rights and apply them toward realizing social, racial, economic, and environmental justice in their practice. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision making and apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize and manage personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. Social workers understand how their evolving worldview, personal experiences, and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers take measures to care for themselves professionally and personally, understanding that self-care is paramount for competent and ethical social work practice. Social workers use rights-based, antiracist, and anti-oppressive lenses to understand and critique the profession's history, mission, roles, and responsibilities and recognize historical and current contexts of oppression in shaping institutions and social work. Social workers understand the role of other professionals when engaged in interprofessional practice. Social workers recognize the importance of lifelong learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure relevant and effective practice. Social workers understand digital technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice.

*Social workers:*

- make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics within the profession as appropriate to the context;
- demonstrate professional behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
- use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

**Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice**

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights. Social workers are knowledgeable about the global intersecting and ongoing injustices throughout history that result in oppression and racism, including social work's role and response. Social workers critically evaluate the distribution of power and privilege in society in order to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice by reducing inequities and ensuring dignity and respect for all. Social workers advocate for and engage in strategies to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social resources, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected.

*Social workers:*

- advocate for human rights at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community system levels; and
- engage in practices that advance human rights to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

**Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice**

Social workers understand how racism and oppression shape human experiences and how these two constructs influence practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community levels and in policy and research.

Social workers understand the pervasive impact of White supremacy and privilege and use their knowledge, awareness, and skills to engage in anti-racist practice. Social workers understand how diversity and intersectionality shape human experiences and identity development and affect equity and inclusion. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of factors including but not limited to age, caste, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, generational status, immigration status, legal status, marital status, political ideology, race, nationality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that this intersectionality means that a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege and power. Social workers understand the societal and historical roots of social and racial injustices and the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination. Social workers understand cultural humility and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, racial, technological, and cultural exclusions, may create privilege and power resulting in systemic oppression.

*Social workers:*

- demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, research, and policy levels; and
- demonstrate cultural humility by applying critical reflection, self-awareness, and self-regulation to manage the influence of bias, power, privilege, and values in working with clients and constituencies, acknowledging them as experts of their own lived experiences.

**Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice**

Social workers use ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive approaches in conducting research and building knowledge. Social workers use research to inform their practice decision making and articulate how their practice experience informs research and evaluation decisions. Social workers critically evaluate and critique current, empirically sound research to inform decisions pertaining to practice, policy, and programs. Social workers understand the inherent bias in research and evaluate design, analysis, and interpretation using an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective. Social workers know how to access, critique, and synthesize the current literature to develop appropriate research questions and hypotheses. Social workers demonstrate knowledge and skills regarding qualitative and quantitative research methods and analysis, and they interpret data derived from these methods. Social workers demonstrate knowledge about methods to assess reliability and validity in social work research. Social workers can articulate and share research findings in ways that are usable to a variety of clients and constituencies. Social workers understand the value of evidence derived from interprofessional and diverse research methods, approaches, and sources.

*Social workers:*

- apply research findings to inform and improve practice, policy, and programs; and
- identify ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive strategies that address inherent biases for use in quantitative and qualitative research methods to advance the purposes of social work.

### **Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice**

Social workers identify social policy at the local, state, federal, and global level that affects wellbeing, human rights and justice, service delivery, and access to social services. Social workers recognize the historical, social, racial, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. Social workers understand and critique the history and current structures of social policies and services and the role of policy in service delivery through rights-based, anti-oppressive, and anti-racist lenses. Social workers influence policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation within their practice settings with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers actively engage in and advocate for anti-racist and anti-oppressive policy practice to effect change in those settings.

*Social workers:*

- use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how social welfare policies affect the delivery of and access to social services; and
- apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

### **Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, and privilege as well as their personal values and personal experiences may affect their ability to engage effectively with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers use the principles of interprofessional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate.

*Social workers:*

- apply knowledge of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, to engage with clients and constituencies; and
- use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to engage in culturally responsive practice with clients and constituencies.

### **Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in culturally responsive

assessment with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Assessment involves a collaborative process of defining presenting challenges and identifying strengths with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities to develop a mutually agreed-upon plan. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and use interprofessional collaboration in this process. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, privilege, and their personal values and experiences may affect their assessment and decision making.

*Social workers:*

- apply theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as other culturally responsive and interprofessional conceptual frameworks, when assessing clients and constituencies; and
- demonstrate respect for client self-determination during the assessment process by collaborating with clients and constituencies in developing a mutually agreed-upon plan.

### **Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Social workers understand theories of human behavior, person-in-environment, and other interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in selecting culturally responsive interventions with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-informed interventions and participate in interprofessional collaboration to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers facilitate effective transitions and endings.

*Social workers:*

- engage with clients and constituencies to critically choose and implement culturally responsive, evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals; and
- incorporate culturally responsive methods to negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of clients and constituencies.

### **Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers evaluate processes and outcomes to increase practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers apply anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspectives in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers use qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness.

*Social workers:*

- select and use culturally responsive methods for evaluation of outcomes; and
- critically analyze outcomes and apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

### **Competency 10: Integrate a developmental perspective into social work practice**

Social workers possess a deep understanding of how children develop, and value the interplay of various biological, cognitive, psychological, cultural, historical, and social factors that influence each person, family, group, and community. Social workers recognize the centrality of relationships in development, and seek to contribute to significant improvement in the quality, effectiveness, and equity of education and social services for all children and families to help them develop to their fullest potential. Equipped with developmental knowledge, social workers are prepared to overcome differences and promote optimal development and learning.

*Social workers:*

- Utilize a developmental perspective in the engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation of services to children, youth, and families.

## Specialized Practice Competencies

### Clinical Practice with Children, Adolescents, and Adults Concentration Competencies

#### **Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior**

Children, Adolescent, and Adults (CAA) concentration social workers recognize the importance of ethical and professional behavior in a variety of important ways including but not limited to: understanding the ethical issues and ethical dilemmas unique to working with children and families in a variety of communities; adhering to the NASW code of ethics in making all ethical decisions; understanding the ethical use of technology to facilitate practice outcomes; using supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior; engaging in critical reflection to obtain knowledge of self and others; analyzing insights about one's own values, biases, privileges, and personal history and how that affects the formation of trusting and productive relationships; engaging in an anti-oppressive approach to practice while serving clients; and understanding the importance of lifelong learning.

*Specifically, CAA social workers:*

- Demonstrate effective communication skills with and on behalf of children and families through oral, written, and electronic formats;
- Demonstrate the ability to communicate how one makes ethical decisions in social work practice, including differentiating between personal and professional ethics, values, and behaviors;
- Demonstrate strong ethics, integrity, and leadership skills, and initiate effective working relationships with colleagues;
- Reflect on one's professional practice in relation to theory and research;



- Tolerate ambiguity and manage personal values when working with individuals, families, groups, and organizations;
- Engage in respectful and trustworthy practice while upholding high professional standards; and
- Identify and explore one's strengths and areas for growth by using reflective practice principles and pursuing ongoing professional development.

### **Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice**

Children, Adolescent, and Adults (CAA) concentration social workers recognize the importance of advancing human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice in a variety of ways including but not limited to: recognizing that every individual, regardless of position in society, has the fundamental right to freedom, safety, privacy, adequate health care, education, and standard of living; understanding the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations and their impact on children and families, governing policies, and subsequent services; analyzing methods to improve access to services and resources for the children, families, and constituents that they serve; and recognizing how personal experiences and affective reactions may impact their ability to advocate for human rights of children and families.

*Specifically, CAA social workers:*

- Use an advocacy lens when working with children, families, organizations, and communities;
- Advocate for the human and civil rights of oppressed and marginalized communities;
- Consider practice strategies that have been shown to significantly improve the quality, effectiveness, and equity of education and social services for children and families;
- Use collaborative strategies to encourage system change in order to reduce social and economic inequities;
- Recognize that all forms of oppression are interconnected and work to foster alliances across marginalized and oppressed groups;
- Negotiate differences with and on behalf of children and families to advance social, economic and environmental justice; and
- Consider how systems of oppression, discrimination, and historical trauma affect clients and client systems and how these effects can impact engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation.

### **Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice**

Children, Adolescent, and Adults (CAA) concentration social workers understand and recognize the importance of diversity and difference in practice in a variety of ways including but not limited to: recognizing the intersectionality of identity (e.g., age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, tribal sovereign status, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation) and how these multiple identities may play a role in the lives of children; understanding the ways in which cultural factors serve as protective factors and promote resilience of children and families; recognizing the need for cultural humility and self-reflection in addressing personal biases which may influence practice and research with a diverse array of clients, families, and communities; valuing children and families as experts of their own experiences;

analyzing how issues of diversity, oppression, and poverty may affect client vulnerability and help seeking behaviors; and recognizing how institutions and policies can perpetuate and uphold oppressive hierarchies.

*Specifically, CAA social workers:*

- Recognize how developmental level, socioeconomic status, culture, race, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexual orientation, and social environment affect the social and emotional functioning of children, adolescents, and adults;
- Engage and collaborate with individuals and communities in mutual decision-making that honors difference and diversity;
- Incorporate inclusive strategies that consider the context of and challenge assumptions about individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities;
- Use reflective practice and reflective supervision to foster and implement an anti-racist and anti-oppressive lens in one's practice, and to recognize how personal privilege and professional power may exacerbate or challenge existing systems of inequity; and
- Use a strengths-based approach that promotes resilience and empowerment with clients while engaging in assessment and intervention with clients.

#### **Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice**

Children, Adolescent, and Adults (CAA) concentration social workers recognize the importance of engaging in practice-informed research and research-informed practice in a variety of ways including but not limited to: being knowledgeable of the principles of logic and scientific inquiry that support the selection of valid and reliable assessment tools; valuing their role in advancing a science of social work and in evaluating their own practice with children and families; applying critical thinking skills and a culturally-informed lens to interpret assessments; recognizing how affective reactions and personal experiences may influence the interpretation and translation of research findings for children and families; translating research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery for children and families.

*Specifically, CAA social workers:*

- Evaluate mutually agreed upon and measurable goals with children and families;
- Select developmentally-informed intervention strategies based on the assessment, research and academic literature, and preferences of the client (while keeping in mind that clinical practice is a dynamic, ongoing process); and
- Use technology to maintain relevant data that will assist in planning, management and evaluation of effective social work practice with children and families.

#### **Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice**

Children, Adolescent, and Adults (CAA) concentration social workers recognize the importance of engaging in policy practice in a variety of ways including but not limited to: analyzing the processes of policy development and

implementation that affect children and families; understanding legislative, judicial, and administrative processes by which children and family policies are formed; valuing the need to engage in policy practice in order to advance social and economic well-being, and to deliver effective social work services to children and families; recognizing how affective reactions and personal experiences may influence policy development and decision making at multiple practice levels for children and families; and assessing how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services for children and families.

*Specifically, CAA social workers:*

- Identify social policies at the local, state, and federal level that impact well-being, service delivery, and access to social services for children and families;
- Participate in strategies that positively influence policy for children and families in a variety of communities;
- Engage in conversations with clients, colleagues, and stakeholders about how clients are impacted by federal, state, and local policies; and
- Identify laws, policies, and procedures that have unintended and/or potentially harmful impacts on individuals from vulnerable and/or historically oppressed communities and communicate these concerns to stakeholders and/or policy makers.

### **Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Children, Adolescent, and Adults (CAA) concentration social workers recognize the importance of engaging with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities in a variety of ways including but not limited to: understanding that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of children and families; understanding systems theories and ecological frameworks as they relate to children and families from a wide variety of communities; recognizing the right to self-determination and promote mutually agreed upon goals with diverse populations of children and families; valuing a relationally-based process of engaging children and families as partners in defining effective intervention goals that lead to expected outcomes; recognizing that their personal experiences may impact how they engage and interact with a diverse array of clients; and understanding their role in facilitating inter-professional collaboration to support the effectiveness of intervention goals, when appropriate.

*Specifically, CAA social workers:*

- Use empathy, reflection, cultural humility, and interpersonal skills to engage children and families in a variety of contexts;
- Attend to the developmental, cultural, contextual, and interpersonal dynamics of the client's background and identity; and
- Use an anti-oppressive approach to practice in order to develop and foster collaborative relationships with clients, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

### **Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Children, Adolescent, and Adults (CAA) concentration social workers recognize the importance of assessing individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities in a variety of ways including but not limited to: understanding that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, children, families, and constituents; understanding systems theories and ecological frameworks as they relate to children and families; analyzing how issues of difference, privilege, oppression, and environmental justice may also influence the assessment of and response to children and families; recognize the right to self-determination and promote mutually agreed upon goals with a diverse array of children and families; recognize the importance of reflective practice, and how their personal experiences and affective reactions may influence their assessment and decision-making; valuing the use of culturally-informed methods of assessment to advance practice effectiveness.

*Specifically, CAA social workers:*

- Evaluate and apply theories of child development, social emotional development, and human behavior and the social environment in order to conduct effective and culturally-attuned assessments;
- Use inter-professional collaboration to support clients throughout the assessment process;
- Use culturally-informed assessment tools that reflect the needs of a diverse array of children and families;
- Consider the impacts of systemic oppression during the assessment process and how this can affect the client's ability to adapt to and access resources;
- Use a strengths-based and trauma-informed lens when assessing clients; and
- Use evidence-informed assessment methods to identify and monitor complex client, family, and community systems.

### **Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Children, Adolescent, and Adults (CAA) concentration social workers recognize the importance of intervening with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities in a variety of ways including but not limited to: understanding that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, children and families; use theories of child development and human behavior to employ evidence-informed interventions with children and families; valuing the importance of inter-professional teamwork and communication in interventions; and recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary, inter-professional, and inter-organizational collaboration.

*Specifically, CAA social workers:*

- Demonstrate the use of evidence-based interventions for a range of presenting concerns identified in the assessment, including crisis interventions strategies as needed;
- Engage in reflective practice when choosing interventions to effectively address the client's identified concerns in a culturally-informed manner;
- Use self-regulatory techniques to manage the potential impact of personal experiences and affective reactions which can affect the ability to effectively intervene with children and families; and

- Engage in efforts to influence or change agency policies on behalf of clients' needs.

### **Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Children, Adolescent, and Adults (CAA) concentration social workers recognize the importance of evaluating their practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities in a variety of ways including but not limited to: understanding that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, children and families; understanding qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness; understanding how personal experiences and affective reactions may impact their ability to objectively evaluate program outcomes; recognizing the importance of evaluating processes and outcomes to advance social work practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness; and applying theories of human behavior and the social environment in the evaluation of children and family outcomes.

*Specifically, CAA social workers:*

- Select and use developmentally-informed methods for evaluating outcomes;
- Analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions, program processes, and program outcomes;
- Apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness for children and families; and
- Use reflective practice to evaluate evidence-based approaches to determine their effectiveness in addressing the unique concerns of clients.

### **Competency 10: Integrate a developmental perspective into social work practice**

Children, Adolescent, and Adults (CAA) concentration social workers recognize the importance of integrating a developmental perspective into their work with clients in a variety of ways including but not limited to: understanding how children develop biologically, cognitively, psychologically, culturally, and historically; understanding how social factors influence children, families, groups, organizations, and communities; recognizing the centrality of relationships in development; recognizing the importance of working to significantly improve the quality, effectiveness, and equity of education and social services for all children and families; and understanding the importance of overcoming differences and promoting optimal development and learning for all children.

*Specifically, CAA social workers:*

- Use a developmental perspective in the engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation of services for children and families; and
- Use diverse theories of child development and the social environment to assist with guiding clinical practice.

## **Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Concentration Competencies**

### **Competency 1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior**

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) social workers adhere to the NASW code of ethics in making all ethical decisions. IECMH social workers understand the ethical issues and ethical dilemmas unique to working with

infants, young children, and families in urban and suburban communities. When appropriate, IECMH social workers use technology ethically to facilitate practice outcomes. IECMH concentration social workers engage in critical reflection to obtain a knowledge of self and others. IECMH social workers analyze insights about their own values, biases, privileges, and personal histories, and how these affect the formation of trusting and productive relationships that promote development and learning.

*IECMH social workers:*

- Maintain professional boundaries in a variety of intervention/treatment settings;
- Utilize clinical supervision and team meetings effectively as settings to explore clinical situations, countertransference and transference issues, raise issues and concerns, and deepen clinical work through self-examination and reflection.
- Demonstrate effective communication skills with and for infants, young children and families through oral, written, and electronic formats; and
- Utilize mindful self-regulation to present a calm, nonjudgmental presence when working with infants, young children and families.

## **Competency 2. Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice**

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) social workers recognize the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and values that every child has the fundamental right to freedom, safety, privacy, adequate health care, education, and standard of living. IECMH social workers understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations and their impact on infants, young children, and families, governing policies and subsequent services. IECMH social workers understand how a family's unmet basic needs can influence a parent's sensitivity and availability. IECMH social workers critically analyze strategies to improve access to services and resources for infants, children, families, and constituents whom IECMH concentration social workers serve. IECMH social workers recognize how personal experiences and affective reactions may impact the ability to advocate for human rights of infants, young children, and families.

*IECMH social workers:*

- Apply an understanding of advocacy for children, families and larger systems to practice situations;
- Consider strategies contributing to significant improvement in the quality, effectiveness, and equity of education and social services for all infants, young children, and families; and
- Negotiate differences and sometimes conflict with and on behalf of diverse infants, children, families, and constituents to advance social, economic, and environmental justice.

## **Competency 3. Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice**

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) social workers recognize the intersectionality of identity including, but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, tribal sovereign status, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual

orientation, and how these multiple factors may play a role in the lives of infants, young children and families. IECMH social workers value the ways in which cultural factors serve as protective factors and promote resilience of infant, young children, and families. IECMH social workers recognize the need for cultural humility and reflect on the ways personal bias may influence all aspects of social work practice and research with diverse clients, families, and communities. IECMH social workers analyze how issues of diversity, oppression, and poverty may affect client vulnerability and help-seeking behaviors.

*IECMH social workers:*

- Recognize how developmental level, socioeconomic status, culture, race and ethnicity, disability, gender, sexual orientation, and urban environment affect the social and emotional functioning of children;
- Recognize that each family is unique and will perceive the social worker and intervention through the lens of their own experience; and
- Engage and collaborate with parents and community in mutual decision-making that honors difference and diversity.

#### **Competency 4. Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice**

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) social workers are knowledgeable of the principles of logic and scientific inquiry that support the selection of valid and reliable assessment tools appropriate for use in practice. IECMH social workers apply critical thinking skills to interpret assessments of infants, young children, and families from a culturally competency lens. IECMH social workers recognize how affective reactions and personal experiences may influence the interpretation and translation of research findings for infant, young children, and families. IECMH social workers translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery for infant, young children, and families.

*IECMH social workers:*

- Evaluate mutually agreed upon measurable goals with infants, young children, and families;
- Select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of children, families, and constituents whom IECMH concentration social workers serve; and
- Utilize technology to maintain relevant data that will assist in planning, management, and evaluation of effective social work practice with infants, young children, and families.

#### **Competency 5. Engage in Policy Practice**

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) social workers are able to analyze the processes of policy development and implementation that affect infants, young children, and families. IECMH social workers understand legislative, judicial, and administrative processes by which child and family policies are formed. IECMH social workers value the need to engage in policy practice in order to advance social and economic well-being, and to deliver effective social work services to infants, young children, and families. IECMH social workers recognize how affective reactions and personal experiences may influence policy development and decision making at multiple practice levels for infants,

young children, and families. IECMH social workers assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services for children and families.

*IECMH social workers:*

- Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services for infants, young children, and families; and
- Participate in strategies that may positively influence policy for children and families in urban and suburban settings.

### **Competency 6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of infants, young children, families, and constituents. IECMH social workers understand systems theories and ecological systems framework as they relate to infants, young children, and families in urban and suburban settings. IECMH social workers value the right to self-determination and promote mutually agreed upon goals with diverse populations of infants, young children, and families. IECMH social workers understand their role in facilitating inter-professional collaboration, when appropriate, to support the effectiveness of intervention goals.

*IECMH social workers:*

- Attend to developmental, cultural, contextual, and interpersonal dynamics, factors that both strengthen and potentially threaten the therapeutic alliance;
- Utilize inquiry, adjusting questions, and pace to the parents' style and openness, to explore the parent's perceptions and baby's internal and external experiences, temperament, and behaviors;
- Focus on parent-child relationships rather than to engage exclusively with parent or with baby; and
- Expand their understanding of family structures beyond the primary caregiver-child dyad to facilitate additional partner engagement in infant and early childhood mental health.

### **Competency 7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of infants, children, families, and constituents. IECMH social workers understand systems theories and ecological systems framework as they relate to infant, young children, and families in urban and suburban settings. IECMH social workers critically analyze how issues of difference as well as privilege, oppression, and environmental justice may also influence the assessment of and response to infants, young children, and families. IECMH social workers recognize the importance of reflective practice, and the ways their personal experiences and affective reactions may influence their assessment and decision-making. IECMH social workers value the importance of the use of culturally appropriate methods of assessment with diverse infants, young children, and families to advance practice effectiveness.



*IECMH social workers:*

- Utilize inter-professional collaboration when appropriate in the assessment process;
- Conduct clinical interviews, make observations, and administer any necessary screenings or assessments to complete assessments or reports; and
- Recognize developmental, medical, or social indicators that indicate an infant may need a specialized kind of evaluation in an area such as speech and language, cognition, adaptive skills, sensory motor integration, motor skills, or social emotional development, and can work with parents to obtain these services.

**Competency 8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) social workers recognize that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, infants, children, families, and constituents. IECMH social workers critically analyze theories of child development, and human behavior and the social environment, and apply this knowledge through employing evidence-informed interventions to achieve the goals of children, families, and constituents. IECMH social workers value the importance of inter-professional teamwork and communication in interventions, recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary, inter-professional, and inter-organizational collaboration. IECMH social workers apply self-regulatory techniques to manage their personal experiences and affective reactions that may impact the ability to effectively intervene with infant, young children, and families.

*IECMH social workers:*

- Demonstrate the use of appropriate, evidence-based intervention techniques for a range of presenting concerns identified in the assessment, including crisis interventions strategies as needed; and
- Facilitate the parent/caregiver in engaging in techniques designed to soothe, protect, or set limits for the infant of young child.

**Competency 9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of children, families, and constituents. IECMH social workers understand qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness. IECMH social workers understand how personal experiences and affective reactions may impact the ability to objectively evaluate program outcomes. IECMH social workers value the importance of evaluating processes and outcomes to advance social work practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. IECMH social workers critically evaluate and apply theories of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in evaluating children and family outcomes.

*IECMH social workers:*

- Select and use appropriate methods for evaluating outcomes;
- Consider, observe, and monitor impact of interventions on the family; and

- Apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at various levels for infants, young children, and families.

### **Competency 10. Integrate a developmental perspective into social work practice**

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) social workers possess a deep understanding of child development as well as development across the life course. IECMH social workers value that development is at the heart of social work practice which influences all interactions with each person, family, group, and community. IECMH social workers understand how personal experiences and affective reactions may impact the ability to objectively evaluate program outcomes. IECMH social workers utilize a developmental perspective in the engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation of services of children, youth, and families, as well as working to overcome differences and sustain relationships with colleagues. IECMH social workers critically consider barriers that hinder and strategies that contribute to significant improvement in the development for all children and families.

#### *IECMH social workers:*

- Utilize a developmental perspective in the engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation of services to children, youth, and families.

# Assessment of Professional Competencies

To assess whether students have acquired the competencies required by Erikson Institute and the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the faculty have developed a set of culminating requirements for graduation which includes assessments to determine student mastery of the CSWE competencies and associated practice behaviors.

## Culminating Requirements

The goal of the culminating requirements at Erikson is to ensure that upon graduation, all master’s degree students, regardless of program, have achieved an acceptable level of competence in each of three fundamental domains: knowledge, practice, and reflection. The system is designed to present a balanced, overall view of students’ professional preparation, while recognizing that students may perform better in one domain than in another. Culminating requirements are tailored to the specific variables of the degree program and are measured through a culminating portfolio with three key elements: 1) knowledge artifacts; 2) practice artifacts; and 3) reflection artifacts. The system culminates in an integrated assessment, referred to as “culminating requirements” which combines performance data across the domains of knowledge, practice, and reflection into a two-tiered numeric score structure that determines whether the student has fulfilled the requirements for graduation.

Culminating requirements for MSW students are defined below, followed by a description of each component of the requirements.

### Culminating Requirements for MSW Students:

COMPETENCY

	Knowledge	Practice	Reflection
Assessment Tools	Culminating Portfolio  Artifacts assessing knowledge of: Development across the life course Integration of human development knowledge with social work theory and practice Issues of human rights and social justice Research-informed practice and practice-informed research	Culminating Portfolio  Artifacts assessing practice skills: Engagement with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities Assessment with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities Intervention with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities Practice Evaluation Policy Practice	Culminating Portfolio  Artifacts assessing reflective capacity Ethical and professional behavior Engage anti-racism, diversity, equity and inclusion (ADEI)
Total Possible Score	Total possible = 40 points	Total possible = 40 points	Total possible = 40 points

Minimum Score	20 points	20 points	20 points
Minimum Graduation Score: 80 points			

## Knowledge Requirement

The culminating portfolio includes a section on the Knowledge requirement. Students submit artifacts from coursework to demonstrate competency in three areas of knowledge:

- Students will integrate human development knowledge across the life span with social work theory.
- Students will critically analyze the complex issues around human rights and will engage in the advancement of social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.
- Students will engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice.

## Practice Requirement

Practicum education provides an opportunity for students to deepen their knowledge and skills through supervised social work practice. Each of the four semesters of practicum will be taken concurrently with reflective seminars and practice courses in order to enhance the blend of practice, reflection, and theory. Each semester's work in practicum is designed to provide content, sequence, and progression in learning. Practicum evaluation tools are used to measure a student's progress toward the development of social work practice competencies in practicum. The *MSW Generalist Practicum: Assessment and Self-Assessment of Student Practice* is utilized in the first year in practicum, and the *MSW (CAA or IECMH) Practicum: Assessment and Self-Assessment of Student Practice* is used during the specialized practice year. The student's practicum supervisor assesses the student's progress toward learning objectives both at the end of the first and end of the second semesters. The student's level of competence on each competency is rated using a 5-point Likert scale. A rating of "3" on a specific competency is considered the minimum requirement for acceptable performance. Ratings below 3 on any competency indicate that the student is performing at an unacceptable level, and the seminar instructor will work with the student and practicum supervisor to develop a plan for improvement. The student's progress toward the development of social work practice competencies and their willingness to reflect upon their progress will form the basis for evaluating the student's capacity for reflective practice during the first and second semesters of the student's final year. See the *Practicum Manual for Students: Master of Social Work (MSW) Program* for the definitive policies and procedures regarding the practicum education program.

### Practicums

Practicum education is a pivotal component of social work education at Erikson and is designed to support student's emerging identity as developmentally-informed social workers. Beginning in their first year in the program, two-year students will be given the opportunity to engage in two year-long, supervised practicums, during which they will be expected and encouraged to integrate the knowledge and theory gained through course work with practice in the field.

For three-year students, their practicum opportunities will begin in their second year.

Erikson has connections with a wide range of available practicum sites, and students are matched individually with a site that best fulfills their educational, experiential, and developmental needs. Practicum sites are expected to have ample and clearly defined learning opportunities, an experienced supervisor with a Master's Degree from a CSWE-accredited school of social work, a commitment to meeting the requirements of the program, and demonstrated values compatible with those of Erikson Institute. The MSW program reinforces a social work perspective through the Reflective Practice Seminar and consultation with the seminar instructor on the rare occasion when a practicum supervisor has a master's degree in an area other than in social work and is otherwise qualified. Over the years Erikson has developed relationships with a broad network of private and public agencies, schools, hospitals, organizations, and programs that provide rich and varied practicum experiences. These agencies and organizations serve a diverse range of clients within a large metropolitan setting. It is expected, that as part of their preparation as social workers, students will develop a capacity for and commitment to working competently with various populations, and develop also a commitment to equity and social justice in the interests of serving all individuals and families in our communities.

Organizations serving as practicum sites make a significant investment in Erikson students. In return, students and the Institute both have an obligation to fulfill the terms of the practicum site agreement. Students will be expected to work the hours agreed upon, respect the organization's goals and procedures, and adhere to a code of professional ethics and confidentiality. In addition, students will be expected to adhere to the student responsibilities that apply to all students of Erikson Institute and that are discussed in more details in the "Student Rights and Responsibilities" section of the Student Handbook.

Prior to beginning a practicum, each student will be required to undergo and successfully complete a name-based student background check. The existence of a conviction in an applicant's record does not necessarily mean that they will be dismissed from the program. Each case is evaluated individually on its facts and not all convictions or disciplinary actions are considered disqualifying to the course of study at the Institute. Students must have, at minimum, a 3.0 grade point average (i.e., good academic standing) to enter practicum. Therefore, if a student is on academic probation, they are not allowed to enter practicum.

In assigning both generalist year and specialized practice level practicums, Erikson considers the student's interests, long-term professional goals, previous experiences, and area of specialized practice in the context of Erikson's broad knowledge of agency resources. Students submit an updated resume and an application expressing their interests and educational goals to the practicum office. Practicum faculty will advise students around connecting with a site that best fulfills their educational, experiential, and developmental needs, and facilitate the process for securing a placement. An orientation to practicum education will be provided to students prior to their generalist year practicum. A similar placement process occurs for the specialized practice year practicum.

Throughout their practicums, Erikson’s MSW students are expected to exemplify the Institute’s mission by demonstrating their knowledge of both social work and child development at increasingly complex levels. Students will be guided toward demonstrating their increasing ability to implement appropriate and effective methods and strategies in a variety of social work settings in order to provide optimal environments for children and their families. See *the Practicum Manual for Students: Master of Social Work (MSW) Program* for the definitive policies and procedures regarding the practicum education program.

### *Admission to practicum*

#### **Generalist year—2-year program**

All students who meet criteria for admission to Erikson Institute’s MSW program and who have completed the *Generalist Year Practicum Application* form are eligible to engage in a generalist year level practicum. The practicum is arranged by practicum faculty in conjunction with the student and practicum supervisor of the designated site. Most practicum sites require interviews.

An orientation to practicum, Practicum 101, will be provided by Erikson to students prior to beginning their practicum. This orientation will include workshops on professionalism and ethics, safety, DCFS mandated reporting responsibilities, working with diverse populations, basic interviewing skills, and crisis intervention. Students are expected to successfully complete 400 hours in the generalist year.

#### **Generalist year—3-year program**

Students in the 3-year program are expected to have successfully completed coursework from the first academic year of the 3-year MSW program in order to be eligible for a generalist year level practicum in the 2nd year of their studies. Three-year students are expected to follow the same eligibility process as students in the 2-year program as described above.

At the conclusion of their specialized practice year, as part of their culminating portfolio, students will submit artifacts demonstrating competency in these practice areas:

- Students will demonstrate effective and culturally relevant engagement skills with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
- Students will demonstrate effective and ethical assessment skills with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
- Students will critically analyze and effectively choose intervention strategies with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
- Students will effectively and ethically evaluate practice individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze, formulate, implement, and evaluate policies aimed at addressing social issues.

## Reflection Requirement

The reflective practice essays, journals, and discussion in the reflective practice seminar during both the generalist and specialized practice years are means by which students demonstrate their competence in critical reflection. As part of their reflective seminars, students are asked to reflect on aspects of their professional practice in a systematic, rigorous way, demonstrating their ability to turn their experience into understanding, and ultimately, competence. The goal is to relate their practice to theory and research and to demonstrate an understanding of how their history, experience, and cultural background may influence their work with children, families, and colleagues. The essays should illustrate their ability to articulate a philosophy and rationale for their decisions and to evaluate the effects of their choices and actions on others. They should also reveal the students' ability to respond to others with sensitivity and to use relationships to encourage growth in others.

During both the generalist year and specialized practice year reflective seminars, students also present a major case study based on their practicum. The assignment is designed to encourage students to reflect on their current practice and to integrate their understanding of cultural, systemic, developmental, theoretical, and clinical factors.

At the conclusion of their specialized practice year, as part of their culminating portfolio, students will submit artifacts demonstrating competency in these reflection areas:

- Students will demonstrate ethical and professional behavior.
- Students will engage anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion (ADEI) in practice.

These reflection points are then aggregated with student's scores on the knowledge and practice domains. The highest possible score on each of the three domains is 40 points, for a total possible score of 120 on the culminating requirements. The minimum total passing score is 80, with a minimal passing score on each domain of 20.

### Policy for students who achieve passing scores in each domain but do not achieve a total of 80 points

If a student passes (i.e., receives 20 or more points) in each of the three areas of assessment in the Culminating Requirements, knowledge, practice, and reflection, but does not achieve the overall minimum of 80 points required for graduation (for example, earning 25, 25, 25 points respectively in the three required areas), the student will meet with the Dean of Students to pursue the following steps:

1. Establish a 3-person committee including the Program Director to oversee the completion and assessment of additional work assigned by the committee. Possible people on the committee may include the Dean of Students, seminar instructor, and other faculty.
2. The committee will work with the student to determine the appropriate additional work to be completed based on a discussion of the student's relative strengths and areas for potential growth as reflected in their culminating scores profile.
3. The committee will establish a timeline for the completion of the additional work. All work will be completed within one year, at most, of the initial meeting with the Dean of Students.
4. The committee and Program Director will evaluate the student's additional work, once completed.

## Assessment for Attainment of CSWE's Competencies

In addition to the culminating requirements, Erikson has developed an assessment plan tied specifically to measuring student attainment of the competencies that are core to social work practice as specified in the CSWE 2022 EPAS. Each competency in the generalist and specialized practice curriculum has been mapped to course content, readings, and assignments.

Erikson faculty have identified two measures for assessment of student achievement of competencies for both the generalist and specialized practice years. One measure of student achievement of competency during both years is the faculty rating of student's level of competency as demonstrated by an assignment that is linked to the CSWE competencies. Utilizing a rubric with a 1 to 5 Likert scale ranging from (1) equivalent to: Absent/Unacceptable to (5) Fully Developed, faculty determine a rating for the specific dimension of competency (i.e. knowledge, values, skills, cognitive processes, and affective reactions) being measured, along with a grade for the assignment. Students are rated using this rubric which operationalize the CSWE competencies at both the Generalist and Specialized Practice year Levels. The faculty ratings of student demonstration of competence on the linked assignments specified will be utilized for Measure I of the assessment of competency. The criterion for student attainment of competency for both generalist and specialized practice years is a rating of 3 or higher on the linked assignments.

The second measure is in the practice domain. The student's level of competency on each of the competencies and their associated dimensions is assessed by the practicum supervisor in both the generalist year and specialized practice year practicums using the appropriate practicum assessment tool. During the generalist year practicum, the practicum supervisor, student, and seminar instructor create a learning agreement to identify opportunities for students to practice, develop, and evaluate their developing social work practice skills which are reinforced in the Reflective Practice Seminar. Similarly, during the specialized practice practicum, the practicum supervisor, student, and seminar instructor create a learning agreement to solidify foundational skills, and to build upon them to reach an advanced level of competency in the student's area of specialized practice.

At the end of each semester, the practicum supervisor rates the student's level of achievement of each dimension using the appropriate practicum assessment tool (generalist or specialized practice). Student's development of competency is rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) equivalent to: Absent/Unacceptable to (5) Fully Developed. To meet criteria for attainment of competency students are expected to score 3 or higher on each of the competencies by the end of both their generalist and specialized practice years.

The two measures—faculty rating of student's level of competency on assignments and ratings from practicum evaluation tools—will contribute equally to determine the degree to which the competencies have been achieved by students. Scores of individual students on both measures will be aggregated, and mean calculated. If the aggregate mean score for each competency is 3 or above, then mastery of that particular competency is considered acquired.



Erikson Institute has set the benchmark that 80% of students in the MSW program will achieve mastery of the social work competencies essential to professional social work practice. Results from the competency measures are analyzed by the Erikson Institute Assessment Committee and MSW faculty and utilized to strengthen and adjust MSW curriculum as needed. Results of the most recent assessment outcomes are published on Erikson's web site every two years.

# Licensure Requirements for Social Workers

Social workers wishing to practice in the state of Illinois must apply for a license to the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR). Instructions and application documents may be found on the IDFPR website: [www.idfpr.com/renewals/apply/forms/sw.pdf](http://www.idfpr.com/renewals/apply/forms/sw.pdf).

There are two levels of licensure in Illinois: Licensed Social Worker (LSW) and Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW).

LSWs are authorized to engage in social work practice. According to the Illinois Clinical Social Work and Social Work Practice Act, this includes providing social services to individuals, groups, or communities in any one or more of the fields of social casework, social group work, community organizations for social welfare, social work research, social welfare administration, or social work education. LSWs may engage in clinical social work practice as long as it is not conducted in an independent practice as defined by law.

Persons wishing to obtain an Illinois license as an LSW must:

- Have a degree from a graduate program of social work approved by IDFPR or
- Have a degree in social work from an undergraduate program approved by CSWE and have successfully completed at least three years of supervised professional experience as established by rule;
- Apply for licensure to IDFPR in writing on the prescribed form;
- Be of good moral character; and
- Pay the appropriate fee.

LCSWs are authorized to independently practice clinical social work in Illinois under the auspices of an employer or in private practice. According to the Clinical Social Work and Social Work Practice Act, “Clinical social work practice” means the providing of mental health services for the evaluation, treatment, and prevention of mental and emotional disorders in individuals, families, and groups based on knowledge and theory of professionally accepted theoretical structures, including, but not limited to, psychosocial development, behavior, psychopathology, unconscious motivation, interpersonal relationships, and environmental stress.

Persons wishing to obtain an Illinois license as an LCSW must:

- Successfully complete at least 3,000 hours of satisfactory, supervised clinical professional experience by an LCSW after receiving a master’s degree in social work from a graduate program approved by CSWE;
- Apply for licensure to IDFPR in writing on the prescribed form;
- Pass the Clinical examination for the practice of social work as a licensed clinical social worker;
- Be of good moral character; and
- Pay the appropriate fee.

IDFPR-approved programs of social work include programs accredited by the Council on Social Work Education

(CSWE), or by CSWE's Foreign Equivalency Determination Service, and programs accredited by the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work. Accreditation of Erikson's MSW by CSWE will provide sufficient proof that our MSW curriculum prepares graduates of the program to meet the requirements of licensure.

The requirements for social work licensure in each state vary. Please refer to individual state's department of professional regulation for more specific information.

## How Erikson's MSW Program will meet the Requirements for Licensure

Erikson's MSW curriculum and assessment program have been developed to meet the rigorous requirements of the Council for Social Work Education. Since graduation from a CSWE-accredited MSW program is the foundational educational requirement for licensure and advanced credentialing, accreditation by CSWE is evidence that Erikson's MSW will meet licensing requirements.

As of January 1, 2022 the ASWB examination is no longer required for the LSW license in Illinois. If students are interested in licensure in another state they must inquire of that state's licensing board regarding their requirements for licensure.

## National Association of Social Workers

Social workers have the option of seeking additional credentialing from the National Association of Social Workers. NASW's Credentialing Center establishes and promotes NASW Professional Credentials and Advanced Practice Specialty Credentials for excellence in the practice of social work. Seeking a professional credential is "a voluntary process for the dedicated careerist seeking differentiation from the usual or the average." An NASW advanced practice specialty credential attests to expertise, skill, and knowledge in a particular area, as well as a certain number of years of practice experience following award of the MSW.

# Degree Requirements

## General MSW Degree Requirements

To earn an MSW degree from Erikson, students must:

- Complete all degree requirements within five years of the student's entry into the program
- Maintain a B average (3.0 on a 4.0 scale) with no more than two grades of C (i.e., grades of D or F are prohibited and are not allowed to count toward degree completion).
- Complete the culminating requirements related to assessment of professional competencies in the three areas that are the focus of graduate study at Erikson Institute: knowledge, practice skills, and reflection.

Program descriptions for the MSW areas of specialized practice are found on the following pages. Course descriptions for the MSW program are found in a separate document: Erikson's Course Catalog.

## Conferral of MSW Degree

Erikson has four official degree conferral dates each year. Dates for 2024–25 are January 10, May 9, June 20, and September 20. Master's degree students who plan to graduate must complete and submit an application for master's degree conferral, along with the \$175 degree conferral application fee. Applications for master's degree conferral are available on [my.erikson.edu](http://my.erikson.edu). To receive your master's degree, you must have been certified by the Registrar at Erikson as having fulfilled all academic and administrative program requirements including passing the culminating requirements. All tuition and fees must be paid and all library materials returned before a student can be approved for graduation.

# Specific MSW Degree Requirements: Concentrations

## Master of Social Work: Clinical Practice with Children, Adolescents, and Adults

### Concentration

*60 credit hours*

The Master of Social Work program emphasizes the importance of child development and development over the life course; relationships, critical reflection, and social justice. The curriculum integrates social work knowledge, values, and skills with deep, interdisciplinary knowledge of child development. Clinical practice in children, adolescents, and adults prepares advanced, developmentally- informed, and critically reflective practitioners to engage with individuals, families, communities, and systems in a range of practice settings—mental health, child welfare, hospitals, schools, social service and child care organizations, courts, foster care settings, and others. The two-year option is available hybrid and the three-year option is available both hybrid and online.

### Course work

SOWK K408	Proseminar (1)
SOWK K411	Anti-Oppressive Reflective Practice (3)
SOWK K419	Youth, Community, and Systems Change (3)
SOWK K420	Research Methods (3)
SOWK K421	Social and Emotional Development I: Infancy and Childhood (3)
SOWK K422	Social and Emotional Development II: Early Adolescence through Adulthood (3)
SOWK K430	Clinical Practice with Individuals, Families, and Groups I (3)
SOWK K433	Clinical Practice with Individuals, Families, and Groups II (3)
SOWK K435	Biopsychosocial Assessment and Diagnosis (3)

### Specialized practice course work

#### **Clinical Practice with Children, Adolescents, and Adults area of specialized practice**

SOWK K437	Advanced Clinical Practice with Trauma (3)
SOWK K439	Child and Family Policy (3)
SOWK K454	Advanced Practice with Children, Adolescents, and Adults (3)
SOWK K480	Advanced Clinical Practice with Addictions (3)
SOWK K481	Advanced Clinical Practice with Couples and Families (3)

### Practicum Instruction and seminars

SOWK K440	Generalist Practicum Instruction I
SOWK K441	Generalist Seminar I
SOWK K442	Generalist Practicum Instruction II
SOWK K443	Generalist Seminar II
SOWK K448	Specialized Practice Practicum I
SOWK K449	Specialized Practice Reflective Seminar I

- SOWK K468 Specialized Practice Practicum II
- SOWK K469 Specialized Practice Reflective Seminar II

## Electives

The Clinical Practice with Children, Adolescents, and Adults area of specialized practice allows for 5 credits of electives, 3 credit hours of which must be a development course. Students may select from the following possible courses.

### *Child Development courses*

- CHLD C425 Applied Neuroscience (3)
- CHLD C426 Cognitive Development (3)
- CHLD C427 Language Development (3)
- CHLD C428 Cognitive and Language Development (3)

### *Social Work courses*

- SOWK K412 Introduction to Play Therapy
- SOWK K500 Introduction to the FAN
- SOWK K472 Introduction to Group Work

## Master of Social Work with Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Area of Specialized Practice

*60 credit hours*

The first advanced MSW offering of its kind in the nation, the area of specialized practice in Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health prepares social workers who are skilled in supporting the mental, emotional and physical health and development of children from birth to age 6. Utilizing a relationship-based approach, the program trains social workers to identify, intervene, and/or collaborate with others to support parent/child relationship challenges and children's social/emotional behavioral concerns. Students pursuing the infant and early childhood mental health area of specialized practice will take three IECMH courses and complete a practicum in a setting that serves children from birth to age 6 and their families.

### Course work

SOWK K408	Proseminar (1)
SOWK K411	Anti-Oppressive Reflective Practice (3)
SOWK K420	Research Methods (online) (3)
SOWK K421	Social and Emotional Development I: Infancy and Childhood (3)
SOWK K422	Social and Emotional Development II: Early Adolescence through Adulthood (3)
SOWK K430	Clinical Practice with Individuals, Families, and Groups I (3)
SOWK K432	Family and Culture (3)
SOWK K433	Clinical Practice with Individuals, Families, and Groups II (3)

### Specialized practice course work

#### *Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health concentration*

SOWK K435	Biopsychosocial Assessment and Diagnosis (3)
SOWK K454	Advanced Practice with Children, Adolescents, and Adults (3)
SOWK K474	Parent-Child Relationship Assessment in Early Childhood (2)
SOWK K475	Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Practice: Parent- Child Relationships (4 credits, 2-semester course)
SOWK K480	Advanced Clinical Practice with Addictions (3)

### Practicum instruction and seminars

SOWK K440	Generalist Practicum Instruction I
SOWK K441	Generalist Seminar I
SOWK K442	Generalist Practicum Instruction II
SOWK K443	Generalist Seminar II
SOWK K448	Specialized Practice Practicum I
SOWK K449	Specialized Practice Reflective Seminar I
SOWK K468	Specialized Practice Practicum II
SOWK K469	Specialized Practice Reflective Seminar II

## Electives

The Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health area of specialized practice allows for 5 credits of electives, 3 credits of which needs to be a child development course. Students may select from the following possible courses.

### *Social Work courses*

- SOWK K412 Introduction to Play Therapy
- SOWK K500 Introduction to the FAN
- SOWK K472 Introduction to Group Work

### *Child Development courses*

- CHLD C425 Applied Neuroscience (3)
- CHLD C426 Cognitive Development (3)
- CHLD C427 Language Development (3)
- CHLD C428 Cognitive and Language Development (3)



### **Degree/Certificate Granting Authority**

Erikson is authorized by the Illinois Board of Higher Education to grant the MS in Child Development, MS in Early Childhood Education, the Master of Social Work, and the Child Development, Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health, Leadership and Advocacy, and Social and Emotional Learning graduate certificates.

### **Nondiscrimination policy**

It is the policy of Erikson not to discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, age, disability, veteran status or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state, or local law, in matters of admissions, employment, or services or in the educational programs or activities it operates, in accordance with civil rights legislation and institutional commitment. It is also the policy of Erikson not to retaliate against any person for making a complaint in good faith about alleged discrimination or for supporting any other Erikson student or representative in making such a complaint. Any alleged violations of this policy should be directed to the Vice President for Academic Affairs/Chief Academic Officer.

### **Right to change**

Erikson reserves the right to change or supplement, with or without notice, any statement in this publication concerning, but not limited to, rules, policies, procedures, tuition, fees, curricula, and courses. Erikson Institute also retains the sole discretion and reserves the right to modify, withdraw, or replace any of the procedures set forth in this Handbook or to modify them to meet the needs of a particular case or situation.

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# Student Acknowledgement

Please visit the following link to acknowledge you have read, accepted, and agreed to abide by the 2024-25 Erikson Handbook and your Program Book: [STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 2024-25](#)