

Frequently Asked Questions about Child Diversity and Development Practicum

How am I assigned to a site?
What do you do at the site?
Why do you go?
How many times do you go?
How is my experience at the site connected to the theory class?

1. How am I assigned to a site?

Students are placed at practicum sites based on the answers to a questionnaire that they will fill out shortly before the semester start. Questions regarding age groups, specific topic areas of interest, and previous experience will determine where each student is placed. Students are not able to pick, choose, or individually request sites.

The sites are located throughout the greater Copenhagen area, and DIS will provide you with additional transportation passes should you require it. **Students are not always placed at sites geographically close to where they live.

2. What do you do at the site?

Your experience at your practicum site will vary depending on your placement. (If you are interested in learning more about the various possibilities for placement, please see the link on our course webpage!)

At their sites, students will participate in the every-day routines of the institution. This could involve planned activities, field trips, snack time, etc. However, it is important to note that some institutions may have more focus on observing the children, whereas other sites encourage and expect active involvement with children, staff, and parents.

Students are often concerned about the possible language barrier between English and Danish. This is part of the experience! Working with children who do not speak English encourages you to develop advanced non-verbal communication skills. Play is the same in all languages!

At each site, students will be put in contact with a site supervisor. This supervisor speaks English! In Denmark it is also common that MOST adults speak English, so should you have any questions or thoughts, it should not be a problem to discuss these with the other staff at your site. This is a chance for you to get first-hand information about the ideas and theories you are learning in class. If you are unsure – always ask!

3. Why do you go?

This unique opportunity is offered to students because of the importance of making connections between theory and practice. While you are abroad learning about the differences in pedagogical theory, the importance of play, and the Danish concept of “the good childhood” you can put your classroom knowledge into context at your practicum site! You have the chance for experiential, hands-on learning. Although it is not possible to place all students at sites that relate specifically to special needs or multiculturalism, the point is for students to have the opportunity to see the

Danish system in action. It is then possible to layer your classroom knowledge about specific topics on to what you observe at your site every week.

4. How many times do you go?

Students go to their assigned practicum site 10 times over the course of the semester. The times of day will vary depending on the site (some are earlier in the morning, and others are later in the afternoon). As mentioned above, students are not able to request specific sites. While the average number of hours spent at the site are between 50 and 60, it is important to note that students are required to go to their site ALL 10 TIMES, regardless of how many hours you go each time. Practically speaking, this may mean that one student could be at their practicum site 50 hours, and others could be there 80.

As you complete each visit, it is advised that you try to be flexible with the specific hours you spend at the site. Visit at different times of the day, or perhaps even on another free day during the week! This enables students to see the children at different times of the day, when parents are dropping them off or picking them up, or even at different locations (during field trips, for example).

5. How is my experience at the site connected to the theory class?

The theory and practicum portions of the course are combined during your class sessions on Monday's. Through class discussions, course assignments, and readings, you will be asked to draw upon your experience at the site (either through observing children, or active involvement).

Part of each class will be focused on getting feedback from your experiences, and giving other students a chance to hear about peer experiences.