# **Letters of Recommendation**

Letters of recommendation from cooperating professionals and university supervisors provide potential employers with both a professional assessment of the student’s performance and projections of the student’s suitability for future employment. Employers indicate that the information they want to see in the letters of recommendation provided by cooperating professionals and university supervisors includes the following: a description of the practicum assignment; a description of the student’s responsibilities; an assessment of the student’s academic preparation; a description of the student’s teaching ability; and related information, such as the student’s personal qualities exhibited in daily interaction with children, families, teachers, and others in the school setting. Note that cooperating professionals and university supervisors are not required to write letters of recommendation.

**Suggestions on Content**

* Letters of recommendation generally contain the following basic information:
  + Information on the practicum assignment
    - Name, type, and size of school/program
    - Beginning and ending dates of practicum
    - Length of assignment: Half or full day
    - Description of responsibilities
    - Ages taught
    - Type and number of teaching preparations
    - Type and number of children taught
    - Type of class arrangement (self-contained, open, etc.)
    - Type of instruction (individualized, group, or both)
    - Specific lessons, units, etc. taught
    - Responsibilities for student assessment and evaluation
    - Extracurricular responsibilities
    - Other responsibilities
  + Description of the student’s academic preparation
    - Depth and breadth of academic preparation for the practicum placement
    - Student’s understanding of fundamental principles of the discipline, as well as areas of specialization
  + Description of student’s teaching abilities
    - An assessment of student’s abilities to teach, including:
      * Ability to assess children’s needs
      * Ability to plan and organize lessons, units, and learning activities to meet student's needs,
      * Ability to evaluate effects of teaching on children’s learning
    - An assessment of student’s ability to improve their teaching practices through self-evaluation and the evaluation of others
  + Description of personal qualities related to teaching
    - Description of the personal qualities related to teaching that recommendation writer feels the student exhibited during daily interactions with children, families, teachers, and others in the school setting
  + Description of student’s special strengths or needs
    - Description of unique talents or areas of expertise exhibited by the student
    - Description of areas in which the student may need additional development and knowledge
  + Statement of recommendation
    - A final statement in which the writer of the letter of recommendation recommends the student for employment, possibly specifying age groups (e.g., 0-3, 3-5) which might be most appropriate for the student’s abilities and interests. Writers generally discuss this first with the student to learn the type of positions(s) students will seek after graduation.