ECSE 541 – USING ERIC
These examples and tips are very close to the examples used in class

Let's say you are looking for evidence-based research studies on children age 5 and younger who have developmental disabilities. You decide to use the ERIC Thesaurus to check and find search terms and then use those terms to search ERIC itself.

1. USE THE ERIC.ed.gov THESAURUS TO CHECK AND DISCOVER SEARCH VOCABULARY

Check developmental

- Type developmental into the search box; [NOTE: to search for variations of a term, type just the root, e.g., disabil – do NOT add an asterisk (*)]
- Click on either developmental disabilities or developmental delays to expose any Broader, Narrower, or Related terms
- Read the Scope Note, if any
- You should see the following for developmental disabilities

Check preschool

- Type preschool into the search box
- Explore preschool children – Are there related terms? Is there a broader term? Is there an obsolete term?
- Click on the Broader Term young children; you should now see four terms for children up to age 5: young children, infants, preschool children, and toddlers
2. CONSTRUCT A SEARCH FOR ARTICLES
Use ERIC via ProQuest to Search for Articles Using the Checked / Discovered Vocabulary
Be sure you are on the Advanced Search page.

1st line – "developmental disabilit*" OR autis* OR "developmental delay*" OR "developmental disorder*" [phrases need to be enclosed with quotation marks
2nd line -- "young children" OR "preschool children" OR infants OR toddlers
Select peer reviewed to limit the results to articles in scholarly journals

NOTE: Placing an * at the end of the root of a word is a shortcut for searching variations of a root term, e.g., disabilit* will find disability and disabilities; disabl* will find disable and disabled. BE CAREFUL, many databases limit the number of additional letters to 5 or less.

There will be around 3,450+ results
Note the NARROW RESULTS BY choices on the left
Select DOCUMENT TYPE | Reports - Research
Now there will be about 2,350+ results. This is a good sized pool, so now we can begin to narrow.

3. REVISI NG BASED ON RESULTS
Since you are interested in evidence-based research, you add that term to your search:

Click on modify search immediately below the search box. Leave your search as it was, but click on Add a row and enter on the 3rd line:
3rd line – "evidence based"

There will be about 80 results, of which only about 50 are research articles. You decide to use some of the other suggested research terms from the ECSE 541 guide, and your revised 3rd line now looks like this:
3rd line – "evidence based" OR longitudinal OR "randomized controlled" OR "control group*"

This search will have about 500+ results, of which 400+ are research articles. Selecting 2012 forward as the date range will result in about 235+ research articles. You may decide to stop here and select from this group, or you might want to try adding another line of terms, e.g., mother* OR father* OR parent* OR famili*; or eliminating autis* from the search or using only autis* in the search; or substituting a particular disability or delay.
4. EXAMINING AND EVALUATING ARTICLES
Click on PREVIEW to reveal the entire article abstract. Click on the title to reveal the entire record for the item.
Note the subjects used for the item. Note significant words used in the abstract. You may want to incorporate words you find into your searching. Note authors.

Look for Cited by and References links. Cited by will be articles written after the reference; References will be articles written before the reference.

5. OBTAINING ARTICLES - GET IT @ VCU
Get it @ VCU will get you as close to the article in one click as the publisher allows. Many times you will land at the article. Other times you will land at the Table of Contents of the issue, or at a listing of available issues. In these cases, you will have to drill to the article. NOTE: When you see a PDF link, use that instead of the Get it @ VCU link.

If VCU Libraries does not have the article at all, there will be prompts for you to enter an interlibrary loan request. You will usually receive the article in PDF format within 1-7 business days after you submit your request.

FINAL NOTE: Be open to changing your topic and/or emphasis based on your findings. REMEMBER, your topic might be better covered in another database, e.g., PsycINFO, so test your topic in several databases before making a change.