Early Childhood:

Program Planning

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Introduction

Welcome to *Early Childhood: Program Planning,* an interactive distance learning course designed to give you a new perspective on planning and implementing developmentally appropriate practices for young children from birth through age eight. In this course you will learn what is meant by curriculum, assessment, evaluation, and program planning as these terms apply to early childhood education. We will discuss several historical perspectives and theories on child development and examine best practice for early childhood education. We will also examine key concepts and specific activities for teaching various curricular content areas, including language and literacy, mathematics and science, and the expressive arts.

This computer-based instruction course is a self-supporting program that provides instruction, structured practice, and evaluation all on your home or school computer. Technical support information can be found in the Help section of your course.

Course Materials (Online)

Title:	Early Childhood: Program Planning
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Instructor:	Dr. Marrea Winnega
Facilitator:	Aumony Dahl, M.Ed.

Academic Integrity Statement

The structure and format of most distance-learning courses presume a high level of personal and academic integrity in completion and submission of coursework. Individuals enrolled in a distance-learning course are expected to adhere to the following standards of academic conduct.

Academic Work

Academic work submitted by the individual (such as papers, assignments, reports, tests) shall be the student's own work or appropriately attributed, in part or in whole, to its correct source. Submission of commercially prepared (or group prepared) materials as if they are one's own work is unacceptable.

Students are required to view/read each screen in each exercise of each chapter. Screens, exercises and chapter content may not be skipped. Students are also required to access and read all content in each course handout. A participant who fails to complete the entire course in the manner intended and as outlined, may have their grade reduced or fail the course. It is the student's responsibility to contact the facilitator, instructor-of-record, or VESi registrar if there is any question as to the manner in which this course is to be completed.

Aiding Honesty in Others

The individual will encourage honesty in others by refraining from providing materials or information to another person with knowledge that these materials or information will be used improperly.

Violations of these academic standards will result in the assignment of a failing grade and subsequent loss of credit for the course.

Level of Application

This course is designed as one of a five-part series on early childhood education. Upon completion of the five-course series you will have covered most competencies found in a Child Development Associates (CDA) program, however, completion of all five courses does not earn participants a CDA unless they are formally enrolled in a program that recognizes these courses within that program. This course specifically covers competencies 1–9, 12, and 13 **(it is recommended you check on individual state competencies),** which all relate to the establishment of well-run, purposeful programs for young children that are responsive to individual needs and advance the development of the whole child. This course also incorporates the applicable Division for Early Childhood (DEC) *Recommended Practices in Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education*, in addition to the newest *National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation Standards (2018),* and the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA),* which was signed into law on December 10, 2015. ESSA both sustains and expands the nation's investment in increasing access to high-quality early childhood education for all children. This course is designed for anyone who plans programs for young children: child-care providers, early childhood educators, and healthcare or social services providers, to name a few.

Expected Learning Outcomes

As a result of this course, participants will demonstrate their ability to:

- Identify the general guidelines for early childhood curriculum, assessment, and evaluation as presented by NAEYC.
- Explain the key components of a developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) for young children.
- Discuss numerous ways to make adaptations, accommodations, and modifications for students with special learning needs.
- Explain the *three principles for learning* presented by the National Research Council that directly apply to classroom teaching for children of all ages.
- Discuss research-based positions and standards for various curricular content areas.
- Identify and plan key components of an integrated early childhood curriculum that fosters curiosity and promotes the process of inquiry.
- Describe a variety of ways to integrate language and literacy, mathematics and science, and social studies and expressive arts activities in meaningful ways throughout the early childhood curriculum.
- Provide the most current requirements for earning a CDA Credential or NAEYC Accreditation.

Course Description

This course, *Program Planning,* has been divided into four chapters. It discusses numerous considerations for planning and implementing a comprehensive, research-based curriculum for young children. Included will be topics such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Understanding by Design (UbD), differentiated instruction, and the use of developmentally appropriate technology for young children. Various perspectives on the history and theory behind early childhood education and child development will be examined, in addition to discussing various forms of diversity among children. We will also discuss what curriculum is, and identify guidelines presented by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) for appropriate curriculum for young children through eight years of age. We will take an overall look at the basic steps for creating an appropriate curriculum, planning a daily schedule, and creating lesson plans and activities for early childhood programs. In addition to focusing our attention on appropriate curricular approaches, we will touch briefly on several curricular approaches to avoid.

While the first chapter of the course provides an overview of general considerations and approaches for early childhood curriculum, assessment, and evaluation, later chapters of the course will take a more in-depth look at appropriate curriculum for various age groups such as infants & toddlers, preschoolers, and primary school children. Curricular considerations for integrating specific content areas such as language and literacy, math and science, and social studies and expressive arts will also be discussed.

Each chapter contains additional handouts or attachments that cover specific topics from the chapter in greater depth. They are provided for you to read, ponder, and apply to the early childhood

education setting in which you work. Some of the topics are intended for you, as the professional, while others are intended for you to pass on to parents, when appropriate.

Student Expectations

As a student you will be expected to:

- Students are required to view/read each screen in each exercise of each chapter. Screens, exercises and chapter content may not be skipped. Students are also required to access and read all content in each course handout.
- Complete all four section examinations, showing a competent understanding of the material presented. **You must obtain an overall score of 70% or higher, with no individual exam score below 50%, and successfully complete ALL writing assignments to pass this course**. *Please note: Minimum exam score requirements may vary by college or university; therefore, you should refer to your course addendum to determine what your minimum exam score requirements are.**
- Complete a review of any section on which your examination score was below 50%.
- Retake any examination, after completing an information review, to increase that examination score to a minimum of 50%, making sure to also be achieving an overall exam score of a minimum 70% **(maximum of three attempts). *Please note: Minimum exam score requirements may vary by college or university; therefore, you should refer to your course addendum to determine what your minimum exam score requirements are.**
- Complete all course journal article and essay writing assignments with the minimum word count shown for each writing assignment.
- Complete a course evaluation form at the end of the course.

Chapter Topics

Chapter One: Developing Appropriate Programs for Young Children—A Look at Curriculum, Assessment, & Evaluation

- What is curriculum?
- Curricular approaches to avoid
- NAEYC's position on ECE curriculum, child assessment, and program planning
- Developmentally Appropriate Practice—What is it?
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Differentiated Instruction (DI), & Understanding by Design (UbD)—Connecting Content to Kids
- Planning the ECE program—Planning the daily schedule, lesson plans and activity plans
- Considerations for use of developmentally appropriate technology with young children
- Making adaptations and modifications for students with special need
- A note about social-emotional learning (SEL)

Chapter Two: Developing Appropriate Programs for Young Children—A Look at Language & Literacy

- Creating the curriculum—What does research say?
- A look at Language and Literacy: oral language, written language, reading
- Language and literacy activities across the curriculum
- Curricular considerations for children with special needs: sensory, cognitive, and physical impairments, cultural considerations, giftedness

Chapter Three: Developing Appropriate Programs for Young Children—A Look at Mathematics & Science

- NCTM and NSES principles and content standards for mathematics and science
- NCTM's curricular focal points for each age group, pre-K through 2nd grade
- Key mathematical concepts for young children: classification, ordering, counting, adding and subtracting, measurement, geometry
- Key science concepts for young children: physical science, biological science
- Assessment: A critical component of ECE and program planning
- Integrating mathematics and science activities throughout the ECE curriculum

Chapter Four: Developing Appropriate Programs for Young Children—A Look at Social Studies & Expressive Arts

- A look at social studies: historical perspectives
- National Council for Social Studies (NCSS): ten themes
- Suggestions for thematic social studies curriculum: Categories of intertwined content
- Social studies disciplines: history, geography, sociology, anthropology, economics, political science, values education
- An important social studies theme: conflict resolution
- Integrating social studies activities across the curriculum
- A look at expressive arts: art, music, movement
- A look at child development: cognitive development, social and emotional development, physical development
- Considerations for infants, toddlers, preschool, kindergarten, and primary children
- Integrating expressive arts activities across the curriculum
- A note about quality research improvement systems (QRIS) for ECE programs

Examinations

At the end of each course chapter, you will be expected to complete an examination designed to assess your knowledge. You may take these exams a total of three times. Your last score will save, not the highest score. After your third attempt, each examination will lock and not allow further access. The average from your exam scores will be printed on your certificate. However, this is not your final grade since your required writing assignments have not been reviewed. Exceptionally written or poorly written required writing assignments, or violation of the academic integrity policy in the course syllabus, will affect your grade. As this is a self-paced computerized instruction

program, you may review course information as often as necessary. You will not be able to exit any examinations until you have answered all questions. If you try to exit the exam before you complete all questions, your information will be lost. You are expected to complete the entire exam in one sitting.

Writing Assignments

All assignments are reviewed and may impact your final grade. Exceptionally or poorly written assignments, or violation of the Academic Integrity Policy (see course syllabus for policy), will affect your grade. Fifty percent of your grade is determined by your writing assignments, and your overall exam score determines the other fifty percent. ***Refer to the Essay Grading Guidelines, which were sent as an attachment with your original course link. You should also refer to the Course Syllabus Addendum, which was sent as an attachment with your original course link, to determine if you have any writing assignments in addition to the Critical Thinking Questions (CTQ) and Journal Article Summations (JAS). If you do, the Essay Grading Guidelines will also apply.***

Your writing assignments must meet the minimum word count and are not to include the question or your final citations as part of your word count. In other words, the question and citations are not to be used as a means to meet the minimum word count.

Critical Thinking Questions

There are four CTQs that you are required to complete. You will need to write a minimum of 500 words (maximum 1,000) per essay. You should explain how the information that you gained from the course will be applied and clearly convey a strong understanding of the course content as it relates to each CTQ. To view the questions, click on REQUIRED ESSAY and choose the CTQ that you are ready to complete; this will bring up a screen where you may enter your essay. Prior to course submission, you may go back at any point to edit your essay, but you must be certain to click SAVE once you are done with your edits.

You must click SAVE before you write another essay or move on to another part of the course.

Journal Article Summations

You are required to write, in your own words, a summary on a total of three peer-reviewed or scholarly journal articles (one article per JAS), written by an author with a Ph.D., Ed.D., or similar, on the topic outlined within each JAS section in the "Required Essays" portion of the course (blogs, abstracts, news articles, or similar are not acceptable). Your article choice must relate specifically to the discussion topic listed in each individual JAS. You will choose a total of three relevant articles (one article per JAS) and write a thorough summary of the information presented in each article (you must write a minimum of 200 words with a 400-word maximum per JAS). Be sure to provide the URL or the journal name, volume, date, and any other critical information to allow the facilitator to access and review each article.

To write your summary, click on REQUIRED ESSAYS and choose the JAS that you would like to complete. A writing program will automatically launch where you can write your summary. When you are ready to stop, click **SAVE**. Prior to course submission you may go back at any point to edit

your summaries, but you must be certain to click SAVE once you are done with your edits. For more information on the features of this assignment, please consult the HELP menu.

You must click SAVE before you write another summary or move on to another part of the course.

Facilitator Description

Early Childhood: Program Planning has been developed by Aumony Dahl, MS/ED, the instructor of record. Aumony received her master's degree in Exceptional Children from Western Washington University. She is certified to teach in K–12 Special Education with an additional endorsement in P–3 Early Childhood Special Education. Aumony began her career working as an elementary special education teacher for several years. She then served for over 22 years as a senior instructor in the Special Education Department at Western Washington University, where she taught a variety of classes on topics related to early childhood special education, students with complex special needs, assessment and evaluation, and program planning. While at WWU, Aumony also enjoyed her role as a field supervisor for practicum students training to become teachers. Recently, Aumony decided she was ready to get back in the classroom and is now serving as a special education preschool teacher in an Inclusive Early Learning Center where there is never a dull moment! In addition to this course, Aumony has authored two other courses in this Early Childhood series: *Early Childhood: Family-Centered Services* and *Early Childhood: Infant & Toddler Mental Health*.

Instructor Description

Dr. Marrea Winnega, is a Licensed Clinical Psychologist with 20 years of experience in the field of Autism Spectrum Disorders. Currently, she is an Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychology in the University of Illinois at Chicago Department of Psychiatry. She consults for schools and agencies serving individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders, including Asperger's Disorder. She has also conducted numerous workshops, in-services, and trainings throughout the United States. Please contact Professor Dahl if you have course content or examination questions.

Contacting the Facilitator

You may contact the facilitator by emailing Professor Dahl at aumony_dahl@virtualeduc.com or calling her at 509-891-7219, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. PST. Phone messages will be answered within 24 hours. Phone conferences will be limited to ten minutes per student, per day, given that this is a self-paced instructional program. Please do not contact the instructor about technical problems, course glitches or other issues that involve the operation of the course. Please contact Professor Dahl if you have course content or examination questions.

Technical Questions

If you have questions or problems related to the operation of this course, please try everything twice. If the problem persists please check our support pages for FAQs and known issues at www.virtualeduc.com and also the Help section of your course.

If you need personal assistance then email support@virtualeduc.com or call 509-891-7219. When contacting technical support, please know your course version number (it is located at the bottom left side of the Welcome Screen) and your operating system, and be seated in front of the computer at the time of your call.

Minimum Computer Requirements

Please refer to VESi's website: www.virtualeduc.com or contact VESi if you have further questions about the compatibility of your operating system.

Refer to the addendum regarding Grading Criteria, Course Completion Information, Items to be Submitted, and how to submit your completed information. The addendum will also note any additional course assignments that you may be required to complete that are not listed in this syllabus.

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National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning. (2020). *Teaching practices: Building a solid foundation*. Head Start, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. https://www.headstart.gov/teaching-practices/article/building-solid-foundation

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Next Generation Science Standards. (n.d.). The standards. https://www.nextgenscience.org/standards

Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation. (2023). *Children's learning and development benefits from high-quality early care and education: A summary of the evidence*. Administration for Children and Families, U.S. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/report/childrens-learning-and-development-benefits-high-quality-early-care-and-education

Teaching with Haley O'Connor. (n.d.). The 5 components of social-emotional learning. https://teachingwithhaley.com/2022/03/24/the-5-components-of-social-emotional-learning/

U.S. Department of Education. (2025). Early learning. https://www.ed.gov/birth-to-grade-12-education/early-childhood-education/early-learning-home-page

Resources

American Academy of Pediatrics (http://www.aap.org)

American Institute for Research (https://www.air.org/)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov)

Center for Parent Information and Resources (http://www.parentcenterhub.org/)

Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (https://developingchild.harvard.edu/)

Council for Exceptional Children (http://www.cec.sped.org)

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (https://www.ed.gov/laws-and-policy/laws-preschool-grade-12-education/every-student-succeeds-act-essa)

High/Scope Educational Research Foundation (http://www.highscope.org)

National Arts Education Association (http://www.arteducators.org/)

National Association for the Education of Young Children (http://naeyc.org)

National Association of Counsel for Children (http://www.naccchildlaw.org/)

National Center on Accessible Educational Materials (http://aem.cast.org/)

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (http://www.nctm.org/)

National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (https://fpg.unc.edu/projects/national-early-childhood-technical-assistance-center-nectac)

National Ed Tech Plan (NETP) (https://tech.ed.gov/files/2017/01/NETP17.pdf)

National Science Education Standards (https://www.nsta.org/science-and-children/science-and-children-julyaugust-2021-0/global-connections-0)

P21 Partnership for 21st Century Learning: A Network of Battelle for Kids (https://www.battelleforkids.org/networks/p21)

Technical Assistance Center on Social-Emotional Intervention for Young Children (http://challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu/)

U.S. Department of Education–Early Learning
(https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/earlylearning/index.html)

Zero to Three Organization (http://www.zerotothree.org)

Course content is updated every three years. Due to this update timeline, some URL links may no longer be active or may have changed. Please type the title of the organization into the command line of any Internet browser search window and you will be able to find whether the URL link is still active or any new link to the corresponding organization's web home page.

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COURSE SYLLABUS ADDENDUM

It is each student's responsibility to read all course materials, including course syllabus and addendum, and to know and understand the course requirements, exam score minimum requirements, and deadlines. Students enrolled in VESi courses are required to check their email for any communications regarding the course until their final grade is posted with the college or university. Once your course materials are received by VESi and have been reviewed, the GRADE IS FINAL.

Grading Criteria:

You must obtain an overall score of 70% or higher, with no individual exam score below 50%, and successfully complete ALL writing assignments to pass this course. This course requires a minimum overall passing grade of "C-" to receive credit. The average from your exam scores will be printed on your certificate. However, this is not your final grade since your required writing assignments have not been reviewed. Exceptionally written or poorly written required writing assignments, or violation of the academic integrity policy in the course syllabus, will affect your grade. Fifty percent of your grade is determined by your writing assignments, and your overall exam score determines the other fifty percent.

No grade will be submitted for partial completion of course assignments, regardless of partial score. An F will be reported if course is not completed by the end of the term enrolled. Exceptions only apply to those that request an extension (must have extenuating circumstances) prior to course deadline.

Letters will be assigned as follows:

90% to 100%   A
80% to 89%   B
70% to 79%   C
69% - lower   F

Course Completion Information:

Grading will take approximately two weeks from the time your materials are received by the instructor, after which we will submit grades to the college/university weekly. If you have a timeline to meet certain school or state requirements, please keep this time period in mind when planning your course completion dates.

Course Completion Instructions:

- Once you have completed all of the course requirements, follow the instructions from the Complete Course toolbar to submit your materials to VESi's office for processing. You can only submit the course ONE TIME. Be sure that you have completed all requirements and exams.
- Course Evaluation: Please take a moment to fill out the course evaluation which is also found under the Complete Course toolbar.
- Print Certificate: You can print a copy of your course certificate for your records. Print Certificate: You can print a copy of your course certificate for your records.

Accessing your NDSU Transcript:

After the grade for your course(s) is posted, approximately two weeks after the course submission, you can access your NDSU transcript for documentation of course completion and performance. Instructions are found at this link: Transcript Instructions | Continued Learning | NDSU

Drops & Refunds:

Once learners have received the course materials, they are no longer eligible for a refund. Appeals will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Questions or Concerns:

Please direct any questions or concerns regarding this class to ndsu.dce@ndsu.edu. Please include the title of the course in your correspondence.