NEW/CHANGE PROGRAM REQUEST
Undergraduate Programs

FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

Department Curriculum & Instruction

College Education

UUPC Approval 10-12-2026
UFS Approval _____
Banner _____
Catalog _____

Program Name
Early Childhood Environmental Education (ECEE) Certificate

☐ **New Program***
☑ **Change Program***

Effective Date
(TERM & YEAR)
Spring 2027

Please explain the requested change(s) and offer rationale below or on an attachment.

Add EEC 4623 Foundations and Practical Applications of Play-Based Learning for Young Children to elective list of the certificate program. This course addresses outdoor environments or settings as places of play and learning for children. The course intersects with important content relevant to the disciplines of early childhood as well as environmental education.

*All new programs and changes to existing programs must be accompanied by a catalog entry showing the new or proposed changes.

Faculty Contact/Email/Phone
Yash Bhagwanji / ybhagwan@fau.edu

Consult and list departments that may be affected by the change(s) and attach documentation
See attached no conflict statements

Approved by	***Date***
Department Chair: Michelle Vaughan-McGovern	9/11/2026
College Curriculum Chair: Charles Dukes	9/22/26
College Dean:	9/22/2026
UUPC Chair: Korey Sorge	10-12-2026
Undergraduate Studies Dean: Dan Moeroff	10-12-2026
UFS President:	
Provost:	

Email this form and attachments to mjenning@fau.edu seven business days before the UUPC meeting.

UNIVERSITY CATALOG – COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

https://www.fau.edu/registrar/university-catalog/catalog/education/

Add EEC 4623 Foundations and Practical Applications of Play-Based Learning for Young Children to elective list as indicated below:

EARLY CHILDHOOD ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATE

(Minimum of 12 credits required)

This certificate program complements a growing list of academic programs focused on preparing educators and their engagements in the development of environmental education programs in schools and communities. Complementing programs such as the Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Arts in Education with Honors in Environmental Education, Environmental Education Certificate and the Master's in Environmental Education, this certificate program focuses on the preparation of educators and leaders in guiding the development of young children's early environmental literacy skills as well as program development in both formal and non-formal educational settings serving young children and their families. The curriculum's specific focus is on emergent curriculum development and delivery in outdoor natural environments, experiential learning as a significant mode of teaching and learning, whole-child development and scaffolding, children's growth of environmental understanding and ecological identity, and sustainable practices in instruction and programming.

Curriculum

The certificate program requires 12 credits of coursework, consisting of the following required courses:

Course Title	Course Number
Foundations of Early Childhood Environmental Education	EEC 4020
Exploring Natural Habitats as a Curriculum for Young Learners	EEC 4237
Community Engagement in Early Childhood Environmental Education	EEC 4404

Select one of the following electives

Course Title	Course Number
American Environmental History	AMH 3630
Introduction to Biological Anthropology	ANT 2511
Introduction to Astronomy	AST 2002
Life Science	BSC 1005
Life Science Lab	BSC 1005L
Biological Principles	BSC 1010
Biodiversity	BSC 1011
Anatomy and Physiology	BSC 2085
Contemporary Chemical Issues	CHM 1020C
Chemistry for Health Sciences	CHM 2032
General Chemistry 1	CHM 2045
Survey of Current Environmental Issues through Service Learning	EDG 4044
Civic Engagement through Environmental Service Learning	EDG 4045
Creative Arts for Young Children	EEC 4303
Effective Practices in Early Childhood Environmental Education	EEC 4322
	ESC 2000
Foundations and Practical Applications of Play-Based Learning for Young Children	EEC 4623
The Blue Planet	
Nature: Intersections of Science, Engineering and the Humanities	ETG 2831
Environmental Science and Sustainability	EVR 1001
Environmental Science and Society	EVR 2017
Critical Thinking in Environmental Science	EVS 4021
RI: Human-Environment Interactions in South Florida	GEA 4275
Biogeography	GEO 4300
Water Resources	GEO 4280C
Physical Geology/Evolution of the Earth	GLY 2010C
The History of the Earth and Life	GLY 2100
Coastal and Marine Science	GLY 3730
Weather, Climate and Climate Change	MET 2010
Food, Nutrition and Health	NUR 3183
Marine Science	OCE 4006
Evolution	PCB 3674
General Physics 1 or General Physics for Engineers 1	PHY 2048
College Physics	PHY 2053
Physical Science	PSC 2121
Principles and Methods: K-9 School Science	SCE 4350
Designing the City	URP 2051

Sustainable Cities	URP 4403
Environmental Planning Methods	URP 4420

For other appropriate course electives, contact Yash Bhagwanji, ECEE Certificate Coordinator.

DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

COURSE NUMBER: EEC 4623 (Section XXX, CRN XXXXX)

COURSE TITLE: Foundations and Practical Applications of Play-Based Learning for Young Children

Credit hours: 3 semester hours
Semester/Year: TBD
Instructor: TBD
Office: TBD
Email: TBD
Office hours: TBD

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course explores foundations and practical applications of play-based learning for young children (birth-8 years)**.** An in-depth examination of theories of play, play-based learning environments, and strategies for facilitating both child-initiated and teacher-supported play will be emphasized.
3 semester hours.
Prerequisites: EEX 3201 and Programmed BECE major

COURSE DELIVERY AND INSTRUCTIONAL METHOD: Fully Online This is a fully online course accessible only through FAU's learning management system, Canvas. You must log into Canvas with your FAU ID and Password to access the materials and assignments in this course. If you do not know your FAU ID or Password, contact OIT for help.

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH CERTIFICATE: FAU now offers an Undergraduate Research Certificate to recognize undergraduate students for the systematic development of excellence in undergraduate research. Students seeking a certificate must complete 12 credits in research-intensive (RI), skill-building, exposure, and research dissemination activities. Successfully completing this course earns you three credits in research-intensive coursework. Learn more about the RI Certificate here: https://www.fau.edu/ouri/undergraduate-research-certificate/

COURSE RESEARCH DESIGNATION: This course meets the criteria for *Research*

Skill-Building, operationalized through these OURI Student Learning Outcomes (OURI SLO):
SLO 1: Knowledge. Students will demonstrate content knowledge, core principles, and skills.
SLO 2: Formulate Questions. Students will formulate research questions or scholarly/creative problems with integration of fundamental principles and knowledge in a manner appropriate to their discipline.
SLO 3: Plan of Action. Students will develop and implement a plan of inquiry to address research and inquiry questions or scholarly problems

REQUIRED TEXT:
Frost, J., & Wortham, S. (2021, 4th edition). *Play and child development*. Pearson.

GUIDELINES USED IN DEVELOPING COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- CEC/DEC/EI/ECSE Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards for Early Interventionists/Early Childhood Special Educators (2020)
- NAEYC Professional Standards, and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators (2020)
- FAU Academic Learning Compact (A. Content/Discipline Knowledge and Skills; and C. Critical Thinking Skills)

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES (CLO):
[CO: Course Objective, PLO: BECE Program Level Objective, OURI SLO: Office of Undergraduate Research Student Learning Outcome].
By the end of this course, students will:

- CLO1: Explore and discuss the role of play in human lives/society, define ideas about play, and explain characteristics of children's play (*PLO 1, PLO 2)
- CLO2: Describe and apply and apply classical, modern, and post-modern play theories (PLO 1, PLO 2, **OURI SLO 1,2,3)
- CLO 3: Describe and apply the connection and impact of play on children's developmental skills (PLO 3)
- CLO 4: Observe and document children's play (PLO 4)
- CLO 5: Interpret children's play using theoretical lenses (PLO 4)
- CLO 6: Design appropriate play environments for children (PLO 6)
- CLO 7: Describe and apply appropriate facilitation and teaching strategies that promote children's development through play (PLO 3, PLO 6)
- CLO 8: Discuss and design adaptations for individualizing play (PLO 3, PLO 6), and
- CLO 9: Explore and discuss special topics related to children's play (PLO 7)
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*BECE Program Level Objective (PLO).
**OURI Student Learning Outcome (OURI SLO)

COURSE EVALUATION: Students will complete a midterm and final exam, weekly assessment and discussions, a project, and a final paper designed to assess their understanding of the theoretical and practical applications of children's play in early childhood and primary grade settings.

Assignments	Weight	Points
Mid-term exam	15%	30
Final exam	15%	30
Weekly assignments	20%	60
Play Activities	20%	60
Compare and Contrast paper	30%	180

COURSE GRADING SCALE: Assignment weights are cumulative, and the grade scale represents the percentage of total points earned. If you do not complete all assignments, you will not be able to earn an "A" in this course. The final tally for course grade is also subject to change based on your attendance, participation, and professionalism.

A = 93-100	A- = 90-92	
B+ = 87-89	B = 83-86	B- = 80-82
C+ = 77-79	C = 73-76	C- = 70-72
D+ = 67-69	D = 63-66	D- = 60-62
F = Below 60		

COURSE ASSESSMENTS:

1. Midterm and Final Exams. 30 points or 15% each = 60 points, 30% of the course grade. These exams will cover assigned readings and classroom lectures. (CLO 1,2,3,4,6,7).

2. Individual and group assignments and discussions. 40 points or 20% of the course grade. Complete weekly assignments (individual, group, or discussion) related to play-based curriculum development appropriate for young children (CLO 1,2,3,4,6,7).

3. Play Activities. Design ten play activities based on theories of play. 40 points or 20% of the course grade.

A. CSelect *at least two* of these theories of play: Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory,

B. Froebel's Play Theory, Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory, or Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory. (CLO 1,2,3, OURI SLO 1,2,3).

C. Conduct library research to determine credible sources to create an annotated bibliography of credible sources to support the play-based activities. You are to obtain *at least two articles* that describe *each of the theories* selected. Provide an integrated summary of each theory's premise as well as important conceptual, operational, sequential, and other important considerations and perspectives of the theory. A minimum of two integrated summaries is required, commensurate with at least two selections of theories. Be sure to include the APA references for the articles and cite the sources, as appropriate, within the summary narratives. **Note: This is a *Research skill-building* assignment, meeting OURI SLOs 1,2,3.**

D. Design ten play activities, grounded within the selected theories, for children in three age groups: (a) three play activities for *infants and/or toddlers,* (b) three play activities for *preschool-aged children* (3-4 year-olds), and four play activities appropriate for children in primary grades, *K-3 or 5-8 years in age*, for a total of 10 play-based activities. Be sure to identify the theorists, theories, and the specific aspects of their theories used as the basis for developing the play activities. Utilize the articles selected for Part B of this assignment to support your narrative description of the activities.

4. Compare and contrast the play of a child without special needs AND a child with special needs. 100 points or 30% of the course grade. Students are to obtain permission to observe the play activities and behaviors of two children of similar ages (e.g., 3-4 years, 5-6 years, or 7-8 years old), one child must be typically developing, the other atypically developing (i.e., has a disability or special needs). The children do not need to be in the same setting or school, nor do they need to be playing with each other. (CLO 4,6,7)

Observe the children individually or independently of each other, that is, *not at the same time.* Observe each child for at least three hours, over the course of at least two days, during unstructured routines. This might include center or outdoor times when free play takes place. Use running record documentation as the method of collecting information/data on the children's play.

Following the completion of observations and running record documentation of both children, write a seven to nine-page paper (single-spaced) describing and interpreting:

(a) Play of the child without special needs (2.5-3 pages, single-spaced) utilizing play theories discussed in class as a lens for interpreting the child's play, interactions, and use of toys or materials;

(b) Play of the child with special needs (2.5-3 pages, single-spaced) utilizing play theories discussed in class a lens for interpreting the child's play, interactions, and use of toys or materials; and,

(c) Individualized play-based curriculum *recommendations* for each child to support their learning and play engagements within their individual Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (2-3 pages, single-spaced).

TOPICAL/CONTENT OUTLINE:

Module	Topic(s)	Assignments
Week 1	Introduction to play in children's lives ▪ Importance of play in human development ▪ Definition and characteristics of play ▪ Benefits of play in the lives of children	Discussion Individual assignment
Week 2	Perspectives and theories of play ▪ Classical or Historical ▪ Aristotle ▪ Freud ▪ Froebel ▪ Groos ▪ Hall ▪ Lazarus ▪ Schiller & Spencer Child observations and assessments ▪ Observing ▪ Documenting ▪ Interpreting	Discussion Individual assignment
Weeks 3-4	Perspectives and theories of play ▪ Cognitive ▪ Bruner ▪ Piaget ▪ Social-cultural and emotional ▪ Erikson ▪ Montessori ▪ Parten ▪ Vygotsky Child observations and assessments ▪ Observing ▪ Documenting	Discussion Individual assignment

Module	Topic(s)	Assignments
	▪ Interpreting	
Week 5-6	Play types ▪ Constructive ▪ Practice play ▪ Pretend play ▪ Socio-dramatic play ▪ Games with rules Child observations and assessments ▪ Observing ▪ Documenting ▪ Interpreting	Discussion Individual assignment
Week 7	Play schemas ▪ Trajectory ▪ Positioning ▪ Enveloping ▪ Rotating ▪ Enclosing ▪ Transporting ▪ Connecting ▪ Transforming ▪ Orienting Child observations and assessments ▪ Observing ▪ Documenting ▪ Interpreting	Discussion Individual assignment Mid-term exam
Week 8	Settings ▪ Play zones ▪ Classroom designs ▪ Outdoor play designs or environments	Discussion Individual assignment
Week 9	Play-based teaching strategies ▪ Promoting social and emotional regulation and growth	Discussion Individual

Module	Topic(s)	Assignments
		assignment Assignment due: Design play based on theories
Week 10	Application of play theories to play ▪ Creating play-based learning environments ○ Indoors ○ Outdoors	Discussion Individual assignment
Week 11	Application of play theories to play ▪ Content integration ○ Developmental domains ○ STEAM, music ○ Play-based curriculum	Discussion Individual assignment
Week 12	Supporting play of children with special needs	Discussion Individual assignment
Week 13	Special topics or themes on children's play and influences	Discussion Individual assignment
Week 14	Advocacy of children's play	Discussion Individual assignment Assignment due: Compare and contrast play of a child without special needs AND a child with special need**s**

Module	Topic(s)	Assignments
Week 15	FAU Final Exams Week	Final exam

COURSE POLICIES

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

AI USE IN CLASS POLICY. FAU recognizes the value of generative AI in facilitating learning. However, output generated by artificial intelligence (AI), such as written words, computations, code, artwork, images, music, etc., for example, is drawn from previously published materials and is not your own original work. FAU students are not permitted to use AI for any course work unless explicitly allowed to do so by the instructor of the class for a specific assignment. Class policies related to AI use are decided by the individual faculty. Some faculty may permit the use of AI in some assignments but not others, and some faculty may prohibit the use of AI in their course entirely. In the case that an instructor permits the use of AI for some assignments, the assignment instructions will indicate when and how the use of AI is permitted in that specific assignment. It is the student's responsibility to comply with the instructor's expectations for each assignment in each course. When AI is authorized, the student is also responsible and accountable for the content of the work. AI may generate inaccurate, false, or exaggerated information. Users should approach any generated content with skepticism and review any information generated by AI before using the generated content as-is. If you are unclear about whether the use of AI is permitted, ask your instructor before starting the assignment. Failure to comply with the requirements related to the use of AI may constitute a violation of the Florida Atlantic Code of Academic Integrity, Regulation 4.001.
The use of the AI tool, IF ALLOWED, must be properly documented and cited. For more information on how to properly cite the use of AI tools, visit www.fau.edu/ai/citation.

> **AI USE SPECIFIC TO THIS COURSE:** ***AI Flexible Policy:*** *The use of AI to assist in work assigned in this specific course is permitted only for specific assignments as indicated by the instructor. Use must be properly documented and cited per instructor guidelines.*

ATTENDANCE POLICY: According to University policy, "Students are expected to attend all of their scheduled University Classes and to satisfy all academic objectives as outlined by the instructor." Attendance includes meaningful, active involvement in all class sessions, class discussions, and class activities as well as professional and ethical conduct in class. Students are expected to be on time and to remain for the duration of each class session. Since late arrivals and early departures are disruptive, they will be treated as absences and will affect your grade. Reasonable accommodation is made for university-approved absences.

INSTRUCTOR ATTENDANCE POLICY: *In this class, the use of AI to assist in any work assigned in this specific course is prohibited.*

PLAGIARISM, CHEATING, AND ACADEMIC HONESTY: Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the University mission to provide a high-quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the University community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty, which include an "F" on the assignment, an "F" in the course, or even removal from the degree program. The penalty for plagiarism and cheating is determined by the instructor in this class.

Florida Atlantic University Regulation 4.001, "Honor Code, Academic Irregularities, and Student's Academic Grievances" is strictly adhered to in this course. The regulation states:

> (1) Academic irregularities frustrate the efforts of the faculty and serious students to meet University goals. Since faculty, students and staff have a stake in these goals, the responsibility of all is to discourage academic irregularities by preventative measures and by ensuring that appropriate action is taken when irregularities are discovered. Thus, FAU has an honor code requiring a faculty member, student, or staff member to notify an instructor when there is reason to believe an academic irregularity is occurring in a course. The Instructor's duty is to pursue any reasonable allegation, taking action, as described below, where appropriate.
> (2) The following shall constitute academic irregularities:
> (a) The use of notes, books or assistance from or to other students while taking an examination or working on other assignments unless specifically authorized by the Instructor are defined as acts of cheating.
> (b) The presentation of words or ideas from any other source as one's own – an act defined as plagiarism.
> (c) Other activities which interfere with the educational mission within the classroom.

(http://www.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/4.001_Honor_Code.pdf.).

In the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA, 2009), plagiarism is defined as:

> Plagiarism (Principle 6.22). Psychologists do not claim the words and ideas of

another as their own; they give credit where credit is due. Quotation marks should be used to indicate the exact words of another. Each time you paraphrase another author (i.e., summarize a passage or rearrange the order of a sentence and change some of the words), you will need to credit the source in the text.

RECORDING OF LECTURES: Students enrolled in this course may record video or audio of class lectures for their own personal educational use. A class lecture is defined as a formal or methodical oral presentation as part of a university course intended to present information or teach students about a particular subject. Recording class activities other than class lectures, including but not limited to student presentations (whether individually or as part of a group), class discussion (except when incidental to and incorporated within a class lecture), labs, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving student participation, test or examination administrations, field trips, and private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the lecturer, is prohibited. Recordings may not be used as a substitute for class participation or class attendance and may not be published or shared without the written consent of the faculty member. Failure to adhere to these requirements may constitute a violation of the University's Student Code of Conduct and/or the Code of Academic Integrity.

RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION: In accordance with the rules of the Florida Board of Education and Florida law, students have the right to reasonable accommodations from the University in order to observe religious practices and beliefs regarding admissions, registration, class attendance, and the scheduling of examinations and work assignments. University Regulation 2.007, Religious Observances, sets forth this policy for FAU and may be accessed on the FAU website at www.fau.edu/regulations. Any student who feels aggrieved regarding religious accommodations may present a grievance to the Executive Director of the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX. Any such grievances will follow Florida Atlantic University's established grievance procedure regarding alleged discrimination.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY: In any case involving allegations of sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report the matter to the University Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX (OCR9). If University faculty become aware of an allegation of sexual misconduct, they are expected to report it to OCR9. If a report is made, someone from OCR9 and/or Campus Victim Services will contact you to make you aware of available resources including support services, supportive measures, and the University's grievance procedures. More information, including contact information for OCR9, is available at https://www.fau.edu/ocr9/title-ix/. You may also

contact Victim Services at victimservices@fau.edu or 561-297-0500 (ask to speak to an Advocate) or schedule an appointment with a counselor at Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) by calling 561-297-CAPS.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (A.D.A.), students who require special accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) located in Boca - SU 133 (561-297-3880), in Davie - MOD I (954-236-1222), or in Jupiter SR 117 (561-799-8585) and follow all OSD procedures. The purpose of this office "is to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities." Students who require assistance should notify the professor immediately by **submitting a letter from the Disabilities Office to your instructor** requesting your need for specific assistance. Without such a letter, the instructor is not obligated to make any accommodation for students.

TIME COMMITMENT PER CREDIT HOUR: For traditionally delivered courses, not less than one (1) hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction each week for fifteen (15) weeks per Fall or Spring semester, and a minimum of two (2) hours of out-of-class student work for each credit hour. Equivalent time and effort are required for Summer Semesters, which usually have a shortened timeframe. Fully Online courses, hybrid, shortened, intensive format courses, and other non-traditional modes of delivery will demonstrate equivalent time and effort.