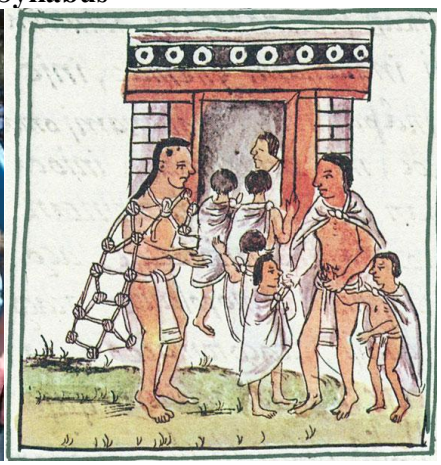
ECED-2120: Curriculum Development through Play: Birth through Age 4 (PreK)
UNM-Valencia
Fall 2026
Syllabus

(Left: My oldest son, Aidán and myself; Right: Mexica Calmecac or advanced School)

Instructor: Joshua Frank Cárdenas, Ph.D.
Classroom: Online via Canvas (canvas.unm.edu). You must have a UNM net ID to access it.
Class Days, Times and Location: Thursday 4:30pm-6:59pm, Synchronous Online via Zoom
Office: In person Rm. #111, Arts & Sciences building or via Zoom
Office Hours: Thursday 2:30-4:30pm (Online via Zoom). These times may be subject to change, but I'll let you know at the beginning of the week with an announcement. If you would like to meet at a time more convenient for you, please suggest 3 times in a Canvas message and I will respond promptly.
Office Phone: (505) 925-8618. Leave a message if it is not a pressing matter and can wait.
Cell phone (academic emergencies only): (505) 369-6694
Email: jstjoshn@unm.edu, however, the best way to communicate with me is with a **Canvas** message. Note: I do not usually respond to messages from Friday evening until Monday morning. If you have an academic emergency, you can also phone a friend-classmate, contact a Librarian, a Writing Center tutor, or PASOS for help on or off campus.

Land Acknowledgement

Founded in 1889, the University of New Mexico sits on the traditional homelands of the Pueblo of Sandia. The Valencia Campus sits on the traditional territory of the Tiwa of Isleta Pueblo. The original peoples of New Mexico Pueblo, Diné/Navajo, and Ndé/Apache since time immemorial, have deep connections to the land and have made significant contributions to the broader community statewide. We honor the land itself and those who remain stewards of this land throughout the generations and also acknowledge our committed relationship with Indigenous peoples. We gratefully recognize our history.

Course Description & Outcomes

The beginning curriculum course places play at the center of curriculum in developmentally appropriate early childhood programs. It addresses content that is relevant for children birth

through age four in developmentally and culturally sensitive ways of integrating content into teaching and learning experiences. Information on adapting content areas to meet the needs of children with special needs and the development of IFSPs is included. Curriculum development in all areas, including literacy, numeracy, the arts, health, science, social skills, and adaptive learning for children, birth through age four, is emphasized.

Course Competencies

1. Use appropriate guidance to support the development of self-regulatory capacities in young children. A.11
2. Demonstrate the integration of knowledge of how young children develop and learn with knowledge of the concepts, inquiry tools, and structure of content areas appropriate for different developmental levels. D.2
3. Demonstrate knowledge of what is important in each content area, why it is of value, and how it links with early and later understandings within and across areas. D.3
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the language, reading and writing components of emergent literacy at each developmental level. D.4
5. Adapt content to meet the needs of each child, including the development of individualized family service plans (IFSP) or individualized education plans (IEP) for children with diverse abilities through the team process with families and other team members. D.6
6. Demonstrate knowledge of varying program models and learning environments that meet the individual needs of all young children, including those with diverse abilities. E.1 ‘
7. Create environments that encourage active involvement, initiative, responsibility, and a growing sense of autonomy through the selection and use of materials and equipment that are suitable to individual learning, developmental levels, diverse abilities, and the language and cultures in New Mexico. E.2
8. Create and manage inclusive learning environments that provide individual and cooperative opportunities for children to construct their own knowledge through various strategies that include decision-making, problem solving, and inquiry experiences. E.4
9. Demonstrate understanding that each child’s creative expression is unique and can be encouraged through diverse ways, including creative play. E.5
10. Plan blocks of uninterrupted time for children to persist at self-chosen activities, both indoors and outdoors. E.6
11. Demonstrate understanding of the influence of the physical setting, schedule, routines, and transitions on children and use these experiences to promote children’s development and learning. E.7
12. Demonstrate knowledge of developmentally appropriate uses of technology, including assistive technology. E.12
13. Demonstrate knowledge of assessment techniques, interpretation of assessment information in the application of this data to curriculum development of intervention planning. F.9

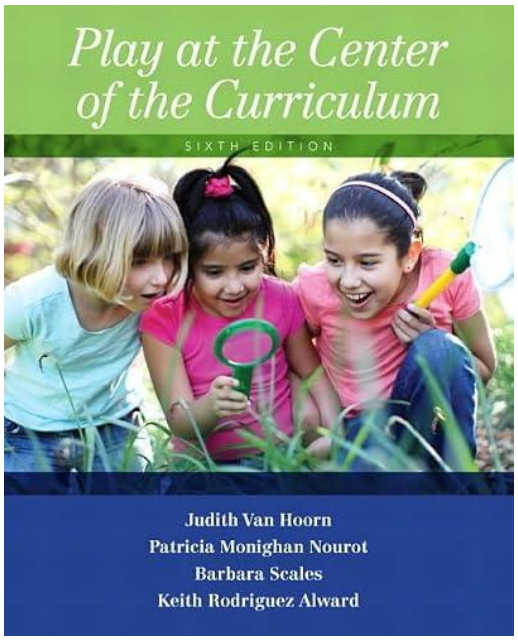
Student Learning Outcomes

- Explain how young children develop and learn with knowledge of the concepts, inquiry tools, and structure of content areas appropriate for different developmental levels.
- Use and explain the rationale for developmentally appropriate methods that include play, small group projects, open-ended questioning, group discussion, problem solving,

cooperative learning and inquiry experiences to help young children develop intellectual curiosity, solve problems, and make decisions.
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of varying program models and learning environments that meet the individual needs of all young children, including those with diverse abilities.
- Design curricula and learning environments based on developmental observational assessment, children's interests, and relevant content topics.

Required Textbooks & Materials

Van Hoorn, J. M., Nourot, P. M., Scales, B. R., & Alward, K. R. (2015). *Play at the center of the curriculum* (6th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
ISBN (EBook): 978-0133461756



Other required readings, texts and materials will be provided on Canvas. Suggested sources are found always in the Library folder in the Major Resources module.

Credit-Hour Statement

This is a three-credit-hour course delivered in blended-hybrid format over 16 weeks during the Fall 2026 (Aug 17 to Dec 12). Please plan for a minimum of 16 hours per week to learn course materials and complete assignments.

Course Webpage on Canvas (canvas.unm.edu)

Course information including this syllabus and grades will be available via canvas.unm.edu. This course will appear in your Canvas course listing. I will send messages via Canvas, give announcements or updates, as well as being the place where our resources, assignments and work is completed. Students should check their email at least every couple of days, if not every day.

Attendance Policy

Student's must attend class each day. A maximum of 3 missed classes is allowed with instructor notification. Lateness and leaving early is not acceptable and will count as ½ class missed. All students must attend the first day and week of class or will be dropped. Excessive absences, lateness and leaving early prior to census will force a student to be dropped.

Quizzes and exams will be administered on Canvas at specific times that will be posted in advance. It is the prerogative of the instructor to decide what is an extreme circumstance. Students who do not attend and complete their 60 or more practicum hours in a qualified ECE classroom shall be dropped. Email me if you have something unusual that comes up that interferes with your ability to complete assignments or your required service committment.

Academic Dishonesty (from the UNM Catalog)

Cheating and plagiarism (academic dishonesty) are often driven by lack of time, desperation, or lack of knowledge about how to identify a source. Communicate with me and ask for help, even at the last minute, rather than risking your academic career by committing academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty involves claiming that work created by another source is your own original work. It is a Student Code of Conduct violation that can lead to a disciplinary procedure. When you use a resource in work submitted for this class, document how you used it and distinguish clearly between your original work and the material taken from the resource.

The use of AI on assignments is expressly prohibited except ***after*** you have completed your work to review, revise, edit and improve your own writing and work. The most common uses of AI include having AI applications to write for you, do research for you, creating images, or create presentations. Using AI to create a presentation is only allowed for structural components like color, shapes, text or image boxes, etc., rather than a content-quality component, whereby words and images are created, and AI generated searches and research is substituted for your own efforts. Every single word and image choice must come from you as a student. Asking AI for suggestions is okay, but replacing your choices with AI generated work is not allowed. Instead, do the work and research, advance your own voice and analysis, make friends and find support with people who can help you over the long term and can add to your knowledge, skills and abilities academically and socially. AI is not your friend; it is a crutch and artificial conjuror that often gets things wrong. I am also an expert at detecting AI use and will strictly reinforce my standards and rules. One rewrite is allowed; otherwise, repeated use will be subject to disciplinary procedures.

University of New Mexico-Valencia faculty, staff, and students commit to values of trust, honesty, integrity, and accountability. We will not tolerate academic dishonesty. By enrolling in any course at UNM-V, the student accepts the UNM Academic Honesty Code and affirms the following pledge:

I will not lie, cheat, fabricate, plagiarize, or use any other dishonest means to gain unfair academic advantage.

Required Reading Assignments

Throughout the course, you will be provided with required reading assignments. Our textbook is found via RedShelf (left-hand side tab) or you can purchase/rent a physical copy. Our Major Resources module has other important texts, pages and links and other important information/resources. The assignments are located in each Module and in the Syllabus or

Assignments tab on the course menu. Major Projects has its own tab but are limited to the midterm and final. You are expected to complete all of the required reading assignments and to integrate what you have read into your course assignments as well as your online discussions.

Reflection Papers

Discussion Reflection: Every Thursday we will begin discussion in class prompted by pre-reading sources, attending to lectures and other resources made available. Each Sunday, 1-2 page reflection will be due based on your analysis of class lecture, careful reading-viewing of materials, visits to classroom sites, personal research and participation in small and large group discussion. Student's will either self-pair/group or will be assigned a "study buddy" or "study group" to facilitate this process and hold each other accountable for participation and work. If you miss a class date, call up your study group or study buddy to review the materials, lectures and to take part in a discussion with others. Listen carefully, take turns talking, take notes and ask questions when appropriate. We can help each other through. Visiting office hours are another way to boost your total work along with your own study sessions and experience in and out of the k-5 classroom.

- ✓ Feel free to incorporate ideas from in-class discussion and other relevant sources.
- ✓ CITE YOUR SOURCES (use APA, "in-text citation" or "parenthetical citation" styles. See OWL Purdue APA for more information), focused on our textbook and required sources.
- ✓ This can be in an audio or video format, 5-10 minutes (cite your sources in APA style)
- ✓ Using "I" and the personal subjective voice is okay but keep it academic.
- ✓ Due: Weekly on Canvas on Sunday @11:59pm
- ✓ They do not repeat or replace lecture, attendance or discussion and will be marked down if they reflect a lack of study, reflection, and discussion.

Objectives 2, 5, 7

CLAP

These are Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Play activities. There are 4 of them and must reflect a focus on 4 out of 5 Domains. These will be in-class presentations and submitted as curriculum templates. Play is the primary method of introducing material, demonstrating and sharing knowledge, engaging students and checking for understanding (assessment).

Letter

Each student must write an introductory letter to parents, families and caregivers that gives insight into who you are as a person, why you want to become an early childhood educator, your experience in and with education and what you have to offer as a (future) teacher.

Quizzes

There will be two quizzes, one which covers weeks 1-4 and weeks 9-12. These are utilized in order for students to test their knowledge, have a goal towards keeping up on the readings and to assure the textbooks are being read, understood and consistently referenced.

Mid-term

A mid-term cumulative exam will test your knowledge at the midway point, ideally weeks 1-8. A pre-test will be given the week before and study materials will be provided after an in-class study session. It will include multiple kinds of questions, you will have unlimited time to take the exam, and unlimited attempts. It can be revised or taken again until you are happy with your grade using instructor feedback and a rubric.

Final

The final exam is cumulative and will cover the material from throughout the whole course, especially focused on the textbooks.

Due Dates Policy, Late Work and Revision

Students are expected to turn in work on the date that it is due. Feedback comes along with each assignment, and so will be given liberally for on time material while late work will receive the minimum of feedback. Late assignments will be accepted; however, students who turn in late work must write an expanded post for discussion posts, of 2 paragraphs along with 2 responses of equal length and for projects an extra page minimum. Late work is graded also in the order it was received along with other late work, and never is graded before current ungraded work. All work can be revised for a better grade, but like above, will be regraded in the order it was received as a regrade, which will be graded *before* late work. Turn in the work on time and often, and receive liberal, constant feedback. This is a drafting and editing process. Get used to this. Get used to reading and writing 1-2 pages each week as notes, weekly reflections, projects, papers, quizzes, exam questions, and more. This is all practice.

Grading and Assignments

Assignments	Grade Percentage
Attendance, In-Class Discussion & Reflection Papers (15 x 10) = 150 pts	24%

Letter to Parents, Families, Caregivers and Advocates 50 pts	8%
Syllabus Quiz 25 pts	4%
Quizzes (2 x 50) 100 pts	16%
CLAP Curriculum Presentations (25 points each, 4 in total) 100 pts	16%
Mid-Term Exam (100 points, 1 in total) 100 pts	16%
Final Exam (100 points, 1 in total) 100 pts	16%
Total 625 pts	100%

Percentages and Grade Equivalent

100-97 A+	89-87 B+	79-77 C+	69-66 D+	58-0 F
96-93 A	86-83 B	76-73 C	65-62 D	
92-90 A-	82-80 B-	72-70 C-	61-59 D-	

Course Outline

Week	Topic	Readings	Assignments
Week 1: 08/20	Exploring our experiences of Play and Adulthood	Course Overview / Introductions	Personal Introductions Syllabus Quiz
Week 2: 08/27	Play and Learning	Ch. 1: Looking at Play Through Teachers' Eyes	Reflection 1
Week 3: 09/03	Theoretical Lenses on Play	Ch. 2: Play and Development: Theory	Reflection 2
Week 4: 09/10	Play and Development	Ch. 3: Play as the Cornerstone of Development: The Literature &	Reflection 3 Letter to Parents
Week 5: 09/17	Play in Early Childhood	Ch. 4: Orchestrating Children's Play: Setting the Stage &	Reflection 4 Quiz 1

Week 6: 09/24	Teacher's Role in Play	Ch. 5: Orchestrating Play: Interactions with Children &	Reflection 5
Week 7: 10/01	Play and Assessment	Ch. 6: Play as a Tool for Assessment &	Reflection 6
Week 8: 10/08 (No Class)	Mathematics Play	Ch. 7: Mathematics in the Play-Centered Curriculum &	Reflection 7 Midterms
Week 9: 10/15	Language and Literacy Play	Ch. 8: Language, Literacy, and Play &	Reflection 8 CLAP 1
Week 10: 10/22	Science Play	Ch. 9: Science in the Play-Centered Curriculum &	Reflection 9
Week 11: 10/29	Play and Creativity	Ch. 10: The Arts in the Play-Centered Curriculum	Reflection 10 CLAP 2
Week 12: 11/05 (No Class)	Play and Socialization	Ch. 11: Play and Socialization	Reflection 11 Quiz 2
Week 13: 11/12	Outdoor Play	Ch. 12: Outdoor Play	Reflection 12 CLAP 3
Week 14: 11/19	Play and Popular Media	Ch. 13: Toys and Technology as Tools for Play	Reflection 13
Week 15: 11/26 (No Class)	Creating Communities of Players	Chapter 14: Conclusion: Integrating Play, Development, and Practice	Reflection 14 CLAP 4
Week 16: 12/03	Final Review	No readings	Reflection 15 Final Exam
Week 17: 12/10 Finals			Late Work Accepted until 12/10
** Instructor reserves the right to make required changes during the course			

Classroom and University Policies & Best Practices

Tips for Being Successful

1. Recognize, Nourish and Develop Your Power, Your Gifts, Your Strengths, Your Abilities, Your Knowledge and Your Experiences, these are what we carry as an individual.
2. Recognize, Nurture and Engage Your Culture, Language, Values & Traditions, for these are what we carry as one of the People.
3. Build and Rebuild Your Relationships, Family, Friends, Students, Instructors, Staff & Community, for these are what we depend upon for support and in turn, support. Don't abandon them and they won't abandon you.

4. Valencia.unm.edu/library, Library.unm.edu, Archive.org and Canvas.unm.edu are our local and extralocal storehouses of knowledge. Use them at will.
5. Everyone needs a Mentor, to be Seeking & Finding Alumni and Advanced Students to learn from and how better to learn.
6. Everyone needs Tutoring and Advisement: so, reach out and ask for help all the time. There is no shame in struggling to learn, everyone does in their own way.
7. "Take Copious Notes", or a ridiculous amount of notes. Type up your assignments & review the Sources before class. Don't cheat yourself, you need strong study skills.
8. Take a Fun or non-Academic Class such as Art, Music, Martial Arts, Yoga, Etc.. for balance, health/sanity.
9. Go to Office Hours, usually before or after class and communicate regularly with instructors, for me it's via Canvas messaging for others another method.
10. Make Friends, Have Study Buddies, & Study Sessions. Others learn differently and can provide new and innovative ways to succeed that may work for you, while yours may work for them.
11. Attendance is mandatory as is participation. Show up on time and ready. Online students need to show their faces and be present so find the right place to take synchronous classes and get comfortable being uncomfortable. If your teacher and other students do not get to know you, by exposing parts of your self-identity, you will not get to know them either.
12. You will need a computer and good internet connection all the time. Check email every day. Check Canvas every day.
13. Draft your work. Start with your own reading of the materials and your own notes. Add lectures, discussions, teacher communications, handouts, etc.. Then attempt the regular assignments and gain instructor and peer feedback in the process. Work on assignments early and draft your work from first to final.
14. Frequent advisement. You must know where you have come from to know where you are headed. You must talk to others who have been successful and those trained to serve as advisors for advice and guidance.
15. No judgements, no assumptions, no disrespect or discrimination. Come with an open mind and heart and you will leave fuller than you can imagine.
16. Find a job that will support your academic experience, that will give you the time off when you need to study, or better, it provides financial assistance to attend and complete. Scholarships exist within your school and outside of it and you must attempt many of them to get a sense of the standards and rationales of each, and to get the hang of rejection and acceptance.
17. Talk to your family and community about your desire to gain an education. Let them know what it will take, how to support you, the sacrifices you will need to make, and that you will not leave them behind or forget about them. Many of our family does not understand everything that is involved in going to college and so misunderstand our actions or motives or feel rejected or left behind when we devote so much time to gaining knowledge, a degree and a profession. It may be foreign to them so let them in on what it's like so there is mutual understanding and support.

Accommodations

UNM is committed to providing equitable learning opportunities for students with documented disabilities. As your instructor, it is my objective to facilitate an inclusive classroom setting, in which students have full access and opportunity to participate. To engage in a confidential conversation about the process for requesting reasonable accommodations for this class and/or program, please contact The UNM-Valencia Equal Access Services (Sarah Clawson, Coordinator), at (505) 925-8840 or by email at sjclawson@unm.edu.

Student Support

Confidential services for students are available at LoboRESPECT Advocacy Center, Women's Resource Center, and the LGBTQ Resource Center. The Women's Resource Center supports all students, including those who are pregnant or are parents. UNM Pregnancy and Parenting Support information is available. UNM-Valencia has lactation stations located in LRC 112 (Tomé campus) and in the Workforce Training Center.

Student Health and Counseling (SHAC) at (505) 277-3136.
TimelyCare: Free 24/7 virtual care services (medical, emotional support, health coaching, self-care, basic needs support).
LoboRESPECT Advocacy Center (505) 277-2911: help with contacting faculty and managing challenges that impact your UNM experience.
PASOS Resource Center (505) 925-8546, mailto:pasos@unm.edu. The Resource Center is an on-campus center that serves as a "one-stop" for all non-academic needs of UNM-Valencia students.
Laptops are available to check out with a Student ID and current enrollment at the Administration building.
The Library is also an incredible resource which provides reference desk help either in person (LRC), call (505) 925-8990, text (505) 916-1647, or you can Schedule an Appointment with a Librarian including Chat Reference - Ask a Librarian from our Facebook page.
The library also provides numerous other services including the following:

- Library has a scanner.
- Library makes your LOBO ID. More Info
- Library will borrow books/articles not owned (interlibrary loan).
- Library does not buy textbooks.
- Library has a Study Room available for group study.
- Library provides Reserve Collection for class support
- Library requires your LOBO ID to borrow materials.
- Library also has black and white printing available.
- Weekly events such as an ASL social, Gaming Club meetings and tournaments.

Other Resources are available on the Student Resources website by clicking the link.

Learning Commons: Tutoring Services and Writing Center

Tutoring is available to you in education, math, science, writing, and other subjects through the Learning Commons: Learning and STEM Centers and Writing Center. In-person tutoring is in these centers in the LRC (the building that also has the library). In addition, tutoring in Zoom and, for writing, through email, is also available. Tutoring is a fantastic way to use your resources and set yourself up to learn deeply and well in your courses. To schedule an appointment, please go to Learning Commons Bookings.

If you have difficulty with the scheduling link above, would like an appointment in a subject not listed at that link, or have a question, email tutor@unm.edu. You'll get answers during business hours Monday through Friday. **T**he webpage, with more details about available hours, is here: Learning Commons: Tutoring Services webpage.

Title IX: UP2720 & UP2740

Our classroom and university should foster mutual respect, kindness, and support. If you have concerns about discrimination, harassment, or violence, please seek support and report incidents. Find confidential services at LoboRESPECT Advocacy Center, the Women's Resource Center, and the Arcoiris Center. UNM prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex (including gender, sex stereotyping, gender expression, and gender identity). All instructors are "responsible employees" who must communicate reports of sexual harassment, sexual misconduct and sexual violence to Compliance, Ethics and Equal Opportunity. For more information, please see UAP 2720 and UAP 2740.

COVID-19 Health and Awareness

UNM is a mask friendly, but not a mask-required, community. If you have a positive COVID-19 test, please stay home for five days, and isolate yourself from others, per the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines. If you need an extension, please get in touch with me via CANVAS; I can work with you to provide alternatives for course participation and completion. UNM faculty and staff know that these are challenging times. Please let me, an advisor, or another UNM staff member know that you need support so we can connect you to the right resources. Please be aware that UNM will publish information on websites and emails about changes to our public health status and community response.

Citizenship and/or Immigration Status

All students are welcome in this class regardless of citizenship, residency, or immigration status. Your professor will respect your privacy if you choose to disclose your status. As for all students in the class, family emergencies are usually excused with reasonable notice to the professor, as noted in the attendance guidelines above. UNM has committed to the success of all our students and our undocumented community members community. The Administration's welcome is found on our website: http://undocumented.unm.edu/

Religious Accommodations

Every effort shall be made to reasonably and fairly accommodate religious obligations that will conflict with scheduled assignments or required attendance, provided advance notification is given. Whenever possible, you should give at least two weeks' advance notice to request special accommodation.