COURSE: CURRINS 585: Best Program Practices in Early Childhood for Children & Families

COURSE INSTRUCTOR: Cathy Howe Thwaits
Center for Early Childhood Professional Development & Leadership
School of Continuing Education, UW-Milwaukee
howec@uwm.edu
www.sce-earlychildhood.uwm.edu

OFFICE HOURS: By appointment

CLASS DATES/TIMES: Open House: Wednesday, January 23 -- January 27, 2013
Online: Monday, January 28 -- Saturday, March 30, 2013

CLASS LOCATION: Online

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

CURRINS 585, Best Program Practices for Children & Families in Early Childhood, is the fifth of six courses, that together, are designed to prepare participants to receive a certificate and credential as a child care administrator. The Credential is intended to meet the needs of those who are employed, or would like to be employed as administrators in child care programs, Head Start, nursery schools, school age programs and family child care programs as they master the necessary skills to be successful at managing quality early childhood programs.

This course is designed to identify best program practices by taking a broad, interdisciplinary look at the many facets of quality programming within early care and education. The course will review professional and ethical guidelines used to define and identify best practices. We will review child growth and development theories and principles and discuss the integration of these theories and principles into identified best practices. The course will assist students to understand, develop and apply best practices that support healthy growth, development and learning for all young children. Focus areas include: creating a family-friendly community; assuring multi-cultural and anti-bias approaches in curriculum, materials, activities, and relationships; designing environments that promote the development of the whole child; and providing effective professional development and training opportunities for staff.

The overarching goal of this course is to enable students to understand and integrate all aspects of best practices into the day-to-day operations, programs, and services for young children, parents, families, and the community within their own programs.

3-Credit Course Accelerate Format

For this 3-credit course, you can expect to spend a minimum of 144 hours completing required components of the class. This will include readings, discussions, written assignments, group activities, etc. Because this is an accelerated course, you can expect that you will spend no less than 18 hours per week dedicated to course work (online and offline). Because every student learns differently and at different rates, you may spend more time learning the content to meet the objectives.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will demonstrate: (additional objectives for Graduate students in bold)

- Knowledge of professional and ethical guidelines for best practice in early care and education programs and the ability to apply them to program planning
- Knowledge of child growth and development theories and principles and the ability to apply them to quality programming
- Ability to design programs that support healthy growth and development of the whole child: physically, socially, emotionally, intellectually and artistically.
- Ability to plan for and establish a family-centered child care community that fosters partnerships with families and promotes strong and meaningful family involvement in the program
- Understanding of diverse cultures of families served, and ability to apply this understanding to recruitment, staff development, organizational relationships, and program planning
• Ability to plan for integration of multi-cultural and anti-bias curriculum, materials and activities into all aspects of the program
• Understanding of training and professional development needs for staff and the ability to implement staff development plans for staff and program improvement
• Ability to access current research on each topic and to use research to inform practice
• Ability to analyze current research and to synthesize information from multiple sources as it relates to course topics

TEXTBOOK/MATERIALS

All students in the Wisconsin Professional Credential for Child Care Administrators program are required to purchase the package of leadership materials that the Registry has arranged with the publishers of Exchange. The package includes:
• Two-year subscription to Exchange
• Two-years of unlimited access to Exchange Articles on Demand
• Subscription to ExchangeEveryDay

This package has been approved by T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood WISCONSIN per book reimbursement guidelines for those on scholarships. See the Registry Exchange Package order form in the Course Information module.

Additional text for Graduate students:

Other course materials will be handed out during the face-to-face session of class and available for viewing online.

READINGS

Required and recommended readings are available from a number of sources. Once you have purchased the Exchange Package of Leadership Resource Materials you will have access to all Exchange articles at Exchange Articles on Demand. Login at ChildCareExchange.com and you can download and print these and many other articles and resources on best practices for children and families in early childhood programs. Readings are also available within the Desire2Learn (D2L) online learning environment.

* Denotes research based readings.
Additional required readings for Graduate students in bold.

Unit 1: Defining Quality & Identifying “Best Practices”:

Katz, L. Multiple perspectives on the quality of early childhood programs. ERIC Digest.


Unit 2: Supporting Healthy Child Development


Unit 3: Focusing on the Family


Unit 4: Honoring Diversity


Unit 5: Welcoming All Children


Unit 6: Creating Empowering Places and Spaces


Duncan, S (2011) Breaking the Code: Changing Our Thinking About Children’s Environments


* The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R)
* The Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ITERS-R)
* The Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale – Revised (FCCERS-R)
* The School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS)


Unit 7: Understanding and Implementing Research


Elkind, D (2011) Societal Change and the Growing Divide Between Knowing and Understanding. Child Care Information Exchange

Hannaford, C How Singing Songs with Infants and Toddlers Helps Brain Development http://www.jackstreet.com/jackstreet/KIAT.hannaford.cfm


Schiller, P (2001) Brain Research and Its Implications for Early Childhood Programs – Applying Research to Our Work. Child Care Information Exchange


Unit 8: Training & Professional Development for Staff


**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

This is an online course. Students who enroll in this course are expected to have regular access to a computer with Internet access. The instructor will be using the most up-to-date version of [Microsoft Office](https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-365). It is also highly recommended that you have a compatible form of Office Suite to include a spreadsheet, word processor, and presentation program in order to both view and create documents needed to participate in this course. It is the student's responsibility to convert any submitted documents to a readable version, for example a document should end in .doc or .docx.

Some activities in this course may also require you to download current plug-ins such as [Adobe Reader](https://get.adobe.com/adobe-reader/) or [Flash](https://helpx.adobe.com/flash-player.html) for viewing certain content. Most computers may already have some version of these already installed but it's important to have the most current version. Some activities will also require you to have speakers.

For information on specific software and instructions on how to download/install please see the 'Pre-Course Checklist' that was mailed prior to class.

**Discussions**

Discussions will be conducted in the 'Discussion' forums in D2L.

The weekly discussion forum is your opportunity to exchange ideas, information and resources, and to discuss the issues and topics presented in the Unit. Your active participation in the discussion is essential to your success as an online student, and to your ability to create a meaningful and rich learning community at a distance. Since the messages are saved in the forum, you don't have to be online at the same time to read and respond to each other.

The length of your posting is not as important as your quality contribution to the discussion, the richness of your ideas, and the extent to which it "weaves" into what others have been saying. [Additional Graduate student discussion expectations in bold](#).

Process for participating in the weekly discussions:

- In each Unit you must to respond to my initial Discussion Question and post at least two replies to other students *(in their initial post thread)*. Only postings that extend the discussion count in discussion grading.

- **Read at a minimum, 60% of the posts in your Discussion group.**

- In each unit you must use the readings from that unit and add other resources.
• It is important that you give the other students time to comment on your responses. Therefore, you need to respond to the discussion question by Thursday of each week. This will give other students time to read your response and comment on it.

• You are required to post on a minimum of at least two different days within the week. Postings should be evenly distributed during the discussion period from Monday morning to Sunday evening (not concentrated all on one day or only at the beginning or end of the week).

• Build on others’ responses to create conversations.

• Bring in related prior knowledge and experience and share effective practices.

• Avoid postings that are limited to “I agree”, “great idea”, and “good point” that do nothing to extend the discussion and add significant time to the process of participating. Say why you agree or think it is a good idea by sharing a personal experience or example from your center or supporting your statement with concepts from the readings. Only postings that extend the discussion count in discussion grading.

• **Graduate Students:** In each Unit you must to respond to my initial Discussion Question and post at least four replies to other students. Then read at a minimum, 80% of the posts in your Discussion group. Your posts should clearly connect the readings to the discussion through citing or referencing articles, authors, etc. Include outside resource(s) from scholarly journals not already included in the class. Cite all sources appropriately.

• Graduate students are expected to add substantially to each discussion. They are expected to research each discussion topic and to include the information from at least one additional research article from a refereed journal as part of the discussion. They are expected to analyze and synthesize the information from the listed readings and the article(s) they choose.

Discussions will be graded based on the following: (See Discussion Rubric below)

• **Participation:**
  o **Undergraduate Students:** Participate at least 3 times throughout the week. Met the posting deadline. Read 60% or more of the postings.
  o **Graduate Students:** Participate at least 5 times throughout the week. Met the posting deadline. Read more than 80% of the postings.

• Quality of Information: Showed clear understanding of the topic. Used at least two readings from the unit being discussed to compare and/or contrast ideas. **Graduate students included** outside resource(s) from scholarly journals not already included in the class. Cited all sources appropriately.

• Critical Thinking: Demonstrated a clear ability to connect the topic to effective management practices. Provided appropriate explanations/examples. Included outside resources or real-life situations. **Graduate students:** Demonstrated the ability to analyze and synthesize the information from various sources and to relate it to effective management practices in early childhood programs.
• **Contributions to the Community:** Shared a unique perspective or personal experience to enrich the conversation. Contributed thought-provoking and insightful information. Encouraged others to exchange ideas and share information.

**Journal Entries**

Journal entries are your opportunity to reflect on the personal and professional implications of the topics and issues that have been addressed during the unit. Unlike the Discussion Forums, your journal is intended only for you and your Instructor and will not be read by other members of the class. Your Journal Entries are to be submitted through the Dropbox in D2L.

*Undergraduate Students:* A typical Journal submission will be approximately 1 page in length showing thoughtful reflections.

*Graduate Students:* A typical Journal submission will be approximately 2 pages in length, showing thoughtful reflections. Journal must include at least one other resource from a scholarly journal about the topic, appropriately cited.

**Assignments**

The strength of this course depends on academic and personal integrity. In this course, you must be honest and truthful. All written work is to be individually produced. When there is evidence that a student has committed plagiarism, copied the work of others, or allowed others to copy their work, the incident will be investigated. The consequences for academic dishonesty are severe.

Plagiarism is the use of the written work of others (either direct copies or close paraphrases) as one’s own original work. If quotations and/or passages from other works are used in papers, they must be properly cited/quoted, giving proper credit to the person/persons whose original work it is, to avoid any misunderstandings about plagiarism.

A detailed description of each assignment is provided in the Activities Checklist for each Unit. Course assignments include individual, small group, collaborative learning, information exchange and networking activities include:

- Completion of all assigned readings
- Completion and timely submission of all individual activities and projects
- Active participation in, and meaningful contributions to, all online discussions
- Active participation in small group projects and presentations (May require additional offline meeting time by phone or in person)

**Portfolio**

The portfolio is part of the final evaluation process and is the culminating experience of the Certificate in Child Care Administration. The portfolio process also supports students in the development of the final project and presentation required by the Registry to earn the Wisconsin Professional Credential for Child Care Administrators. Your portfolio will be built over the time you are enrolled in the six Certificate courses.

**Graduate Assignment**

The Assignment:
Find a minimum of 5 articles from refereed professional journals or publications (eg: Early
Childhood Research Quarterly, Early Childhood Research and Practice, Young Children, etc) and write an 8-10 page research paper. These articles should be related to the topic of study (see below) and different from those included in the required readings and weekly Study Guides, but may include the additional articles you choose for discussions and journals.

Use the following book as one of your primary resources:


**Topic of Study:**
Supporting children's social and emotional development in Early Childhood Education and the role of the administrator.

**Critical Analysis:**
Identify, discuss and analyze the major issues in this topic. Identify inconsistencies, challenges and unanswered questions in a review of the relevant literature.

**Reflection:**
Reflect on the information from the articles and/or book. Does this information match what you have learned in your experience and/or education? How did the authors challenge you to modify your own practice?

**Synthesis:**
Synthesize the information from the 5 articles and your resource book in a summary section. Analyze their applicability to the administration of early childhood programs and their implication for “next steps” in furthering high quality early childhood practices.

**Layout**
Develop content logically and systematically
Paper should be double-spaced, have appropriate pagination and follow APA style guidelines. (see Content tab for APA resources)
Write in a style that is easy to read and communicates clearly. Paper should be free of gender and cultural bias, and grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors.

**Grading**
This research paper is worth 90 points total and must be completed to pass this course. See scoring rubric on Content tab for specifics.

**GRADING**

Your grade for this course will be determined by your participation in class activities and discussion. You are required to complete all assigned readings and written assignments. See the Points/Grade Summary for a list of each assignment in order by Unit, including the number of points that can be earned for each assignment. Final letter grades will be based on your point total as well as an assessment of your level of participation and the quality of your contributions to the online learning community. Students can keep track of their progress and points earned for each assignment in the Grades area of D2L.

**Points/Grade Summary**
When all assignments and activities from Unit 1 through Unit 8 are included, the total number of points equals 380 for Undergraduate students. Graduate students: total points is 510.

Note: Any missing assignments and discussions will lower your final grade by one full grade. For example, if you’re final grade is a B+ and you did not participate in the Unit 4 discussion, your final grade will be lowered to a C+.

**Graduate Students Please Note:** The graduate assignment must be completed in order to pass this course.

**Undergraduate and Graduate students,** grades will be based on the following assignments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit 1 - Defining Quality &amp; Identifying “Best Practices”</th>
<th>Undergraduate Points</th>
<th>Graduate Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome Discussion</td>
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<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion 1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>Journal 1</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards Assignment</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<th>Unit 2 - Supporting Healthy Child Development</th>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal 2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit 3 - Focusing on the Family</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion 3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal 3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Family Friendly Is Your Center?</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<th>Unit 4 - Honoring Diversity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal 4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anti- Bias Case Studies</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<th>Unit 5 - Welcoming ALL Students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion 5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal 5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inclusive Child Care Case Studies</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<th>Unit 6 - Creating Empowering Places &amp; Spaces</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion 6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal 6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<th>Unit 7 - Understanding &amp; Implementing Research</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion 7</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal 7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Best Practices in Early Care &amp; Education Staff In-Service Presentation</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate Assignment</td>
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<tr>
<th>Unit 8 - Providing Training &amp; Professional Development</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion 8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal 8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Portfolio: Professional Development Plan</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Evaluation</td>
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Grading Scales:

### Undergraduate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Possible Points</th>
<th>380</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Points Earned</td>
<td>Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>380 to 353</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>352 to 346</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>345 to 334</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>333 to 327</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>326 to 319</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>318 to 308</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>307 to 300</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>299 to 293</td>
<td>C-</td>
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<tr>
<td>292 to 281</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>280 to 274</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>273 to 266</td>
<td>D-</td>
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<tr>
<td>265 or below</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Graduate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Possible Points</th>
<th>510</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Points Earned</td>
<td>Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>510 to 474</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>473 to 464</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>463 to 449</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>448 to 439</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>438 to 428</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>427 to 413</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>412 to 403</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>402 to 393</td>
<td>C-</td>
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<tr>
<td>392 to 377</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>376 to 367</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>366 to 357</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>356 or below</td>
<td>F</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Tips:**

- Check your online grades regularly to keep track of which assignments you have completed and which are due.
- Remember, there is time lag between when you turn an assignment in, when I read it and return my comments to you, and when I post your points.
- Don't wait for my comments or your grade on an assignment before moving ahead. Keep working at a steady pace, and post your assignments as they are completed. That way you'll stay on schedule even if I fall behind with posting the points.
- Some assignments are not unit-specific in terms of when points are earned. I will post points for these assignments after you complete them, regardless of the unit we are currently in.
- To meet Registry Credential and TEACH Scholarship requirements you must earn a minimum grade of C.
IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Participation by Students with Disabilities
If you need special accommodations in order to meet any of the requirements of this course, please contact me as soon as possible.

Accommodation for Religious Observances
Students will be allowed to complete examinations or other requirements that are missed because of a religious observance.

Academic Misconduct
The university has a responsibility to promote academic honesty and integrity and to develop procedures to deal effectively with instances of academic dishonesty. Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others' academic endeavors.

Complaint Procedures
You may direct complaints to the head of the Administrative Leadership department. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed to the head of the department in which the complaint occurred or to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy.

Grade Appeal Procedures
You may appeal a grade on the grounds that it is based on a capricious or arbitrary decision of the course instructor. Such an appeal shall follow the established procedures adopted by the department, college, or school in which the course resides.

Sexual Harassment
Sexual harassment is reprehensible and will not be tolerated by the University. It subverts the mission of the University and threatens the careers, educational experience, and well being of students, faculty, and staff. The University will not tolerate behavior between or among members of the University community which creates an unacceptable working environment.

Financial Obligation
The submission on your registration form and your subsequent assignment to classes obligates you to pay the fee-tuition for those classes or to withdraw your registration in writing no later than the date specified in the schedule of classes. It is important to both you and the University that you make payment on time.

Incomplete
A notation of "incomplete" may be given in lieu of a final grade to a student who has carried a subject successfully until the end of a semester but who, because of illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond the student's control, has been unable to take or complete the final examination or to complete some limited amount of term work. An incomplete is not given unless you prove to the instructor that you were prevented from completing course requirements for just cause as indicated above.