

**Item AS: A-2(c)**

**Request to offer a new Master of Education degree in Early Childhood Education**

The Department of Curriculum, Culture, and Educational Inquiry (CCEI) is proposing a new 36 credit degree program, Master of Education in Early Childhood Education. This new program replaces the current Prekindergarten/Primary Education track in the Master of Education degree in Curriculum and Instruction. The new program represents and includes recent research, theory, and quality practice in the interdisciplinary field of early childhood education and responds to the current increase in demand for early childhood professionals. To strengthen the interdisciplinary focus, the Department of Exceptional Student Education (ESE) additionally supports the program with courses that incorporate a more inclusive content so that graduates gain knowledge and teaching skills for young children with a range of developmental issues.

The M.Ed. in Early Childhood Education program will provide early childhood content expertise for practicing professionals who will assume a variety of leadership roles in their respective educational settings, school districts, or the non-profit sector. Some of these early childhood leadership roles are: classroom teacher, curriculum consultant, curriculum supervisor, child and family advocate, child services coordinator, education services coordinator, family services coordinator, program administrator, and program director.

Institutional and State University System Missions

This program is designed to build upon the knowledge and experience of practicing educators. This focus is consistent with the mission and philosophy of the graduate programs in the CCEI Department. The design also reflects an expanded approach to the current field of early childhood teacher education, emphasizing the role of teacher as practitioner, researcher, and advocate. Faculty from the departments of CCEI and ESE developed the program and adhered to the goal of preparing educators to respond to challenges both local and worldwide.

The proposed M.Ed. program in Early Childhood Education builds on existing institutional strengths in several significant ways. First, it completes a high quality career path for early childhood educators, providing a “next step” career option for graduates of FAU’s recently approved Bachelor of Early Care and Education degree program. Second, the Toppel Early Childhood Education Institute, recently established at FAU, includes graduate students in its academic learning community, thus extending their research, advocacy, and practice

opportunities and activities. And third, but not least, the Karen Slattery Child Development Center will serve as the demonstration school for students in the new program. The center has been fully accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and has participated in the Quality Instruction System (QIS) of Palm Beach County, and has received a 4-star rating (highest), an indicator of program excellence.

The proposed new program is consistent with the current State University System (SUS) Strategic Planning Goals for 2005-2013, adopted by the Board of Governors in 2005. The new degree directly supports Goal #1: Access to and production of degrees; Goal #2: Meeting statewide professional and workforce needs; Goal #3: Building world-class academic programs and research capacity; and Goal #4: Meeting community needs and fulfilling unique institutional responsibilities, based on Florida Atlantic University's commitment to the development of the Toppel Family Early Childhood Education Institute.

Florida's Next Generation PreK -20 Education Strategic Plan, approved in 2008, intends to educate and prepare a globally competitive workforce. The proposed new early childhood education degree directly supports the Plan's focus area #3: Expand opportunities for post-secondary degrees and certificates, with the objective of increasing the diversity and number of SUS students who enroll in and complete upper division programs of study. The new degree program similarly supports the Plan's focus area #4: Improve the quality of teaching in the education system, with the objective of improving the quality of preparation programs and professional development. Additionally, the new degree program indirectly supports the Plan's focus area #1: Strengthen foundational skills, with the objective of producing highly qualified early childhood teachers and leaders who will, in turn, more effectively educate young children.

#### Curricular Framework and Sequence of Study

The program emphasizes three areas – research, early childhood, and capstone experiences – and is proposing the following sequence of study:

##### Fall Semester (Year 1) – 9 credits

STA 6113 Educational Statistics

EEC 6666 Principles and Models of Early Childhood Curriculum

EEX 5017 Atypical Development Early Childhood/ESE

Spring Semester (Year 1) – 9 credits

EDF 6481 Educational Research

EEC 6711 Creative Arts for Young Children

EEX 5015 Survey and Assessment in Early Childhood Education/ECSE

Summer Semester (Year 1) – 3 credits

EEC 6219 Integrated Curriculum in Early Childhood

Fall Semester (Year 2) – 9 credits

EEX 5245 Methods in Early Childhood and Exceptional Student Education

EEX 6264 Strategies and Environments that Promote Positive Behavior in Young Children

EEC 6932 Seminar in Early Childhood Education: Local, National, and International Issues

Spring Semester (Year 2) – 6 credits

EEX 5755 Family and Community Resources in Early Childhood/ESE

EDG 6285 Program Evaluation **OR**


EDF 6918 Action Research in School and Communities **OR**

EEC 6947 Field Project/Portfolio in Early Childhood Education

The new program is responsive to multiple needs at the university, local, and state levels. By including the recommendations of two prominent professional national organizations (the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Council for Exceptional Children) and the incorporation of content from eight education disciplines (Art, Mathematics, Multicultural Education, Science, Social Studies, Special Education, Reading Education, and TESOL/Bilingual Education), a state-of-the-art program is created. This benefits the university as students from sources previously not served will now be able to enroll in a program that meets their varied learning needs at the university. The new sources of students include teachers, education staff, and administrators from federally-funded (e.g., Head Start), state-funded (e.g., Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten), and private programs.

Fiscal Implications


The new degree program will be delivered in the same way as the program it is replacing. Courses will be offered through in-person on the Boca, Davie, and Jupiter campuses. The degree is cost neutral and will require no further funding. No additional space, special equipment, or library resources are needed to implement the program.



## Request to Offer a New Degree Program

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Master of Education in  
Early Childhood Education  
Executive Summary



## Acronyms/Terms

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- ECE = Early Childhood Education
- CCEI = Dept. of Curriculum, Culture, and Educational Inquiry
- ESE = Dept. of Exceptional Student Education
- NAEYC = National Association for the Education of Young Children



## Early Childhood Education/ Needs the Program will Address:

- Quality early childhood education continues to be a high priority and focal point for educational initiatives at the national, state, and local levels.
- The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) recommends graduate degrees in early childhood education with the purpose of creating a cadre of early education leaders for the future.



## Early Childhood Education/ Needs the Program will Address:

- A significant positive connection has been made between professional development, quality programming, and positive childhood outcomes.
- States across the U.S. have identified the need for high quality early childhood education due to the increasing numbers of women in the workforce, corporations providing child care and education, and heightened attention to early literacy that is correlated with future school success.



## Early Childhood Education/ Program Overview:

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- Degree (36-credits) awarded through the College of Education -- Department of Curriculum, Culture and Educational Inquiry
- Designed to build upon the knowledge and experience of practicing educators.
- Faculty from two departments – CCEI and ESE -- developed the program and adhered to the goal of preparing educators to respond to challenges both local and worldwide.



## Early Childhood Education/ Program Overview:

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- The design reflects an expanded approach to the current field of early childhood teacher education, emphasizing the role of teacher as practitioner, researcher, and advocate.
- The Karen Slattery Child Development Center will serve as the demonstration school for students in the new program. The Center has been fully accredited by NAEYC and has received a 4-star rating (highest) in the Quality Instruction System (QIS) of Palm Beach County.



## Early Childhood Education/ Correlation with State and University Goals

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- The proposed new program directly supports Florida's Next Generation PreK-20 Education Strategic Plan (2008):
- #3: Expand opportunities for post-secondary degrees and certificates
- #4: Improve the quality of teaching in the education system
- #1 (indirectly): Strengthen foundational skills



## Early Childhood Education/ Correlation with State and University Goals

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- SUS Strategic Planning Goals for 2005-2013 adopted by the Board of Governors:
- Goal 1: *Access to and production of degrees*
- Goal 2: *Meeting statewide professional and workforce needs*
- Goal 3: *Building world-class academic programs and research capacity*
- Goal 4: *Meeting community needs and fulfilling unique institutional responsibilities*



## Early Childhood Education/ Correlation with FAU Strategic Plan


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**FAU Strategic Plan Goal 1: Providing Increased Access to Higher Education**

**FAU Strategic Plan Goal 2: Meeting Statewide Professional and Workforce Needs**

**FAU Strategic Plan Goal 3: Building World-Class Academic Programs and Research Capacity**

**FAU Strategic Plan Goal 4: Meeting Community Needs and Fulfilling Unique Institutional Responsibilities**



## Early Childhood Education/ Distinctive Qualities

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- This new program replaces the current Prekindergarten/Primary Education track in the M.Ed. in Curriculum & Instruction degree.
- To strengthen the interdisciplinary focus, the Dept. of ESE additionally supports the program with courses that incorporate a more inclusive content so that graduates gain knowledge and teaching skills for young children with a range of developmental issues.





## Early Childhood Education Distinctive Qualities

- The program provides a “next step” career option for graduates of FAU’s recently approved Bachelor of Early Care and Education degree program.
- This program will provide early childhood content expertise for practicing professionals who will assume a variety of leadership roles such as classroom teacher, curriculum consultant, curriculum supervisor, child and family advocate, child services coordinator, education services coordinator, family services coordinator, program administrator, and program director.



## Early Childhood Education/ Fiscal Implications

- No additional state funding required.
- The new degree program will be delivered in the same way as the program it is replacing.
- Courses will be offered through in-person on the Boca, Davie, and Jupiter campuses.
- No additional space, special equipment, or library resources are needed to implement the program.