

GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE
DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

CD2020
ENVIRONMENTS

CREDITS: 2
HOURS: 30
SEMESTER: _____
INSTRUCTOR: _____
PHONE: _____
TEXT: _____

PREREQUISITES: Students must be eligible for enrolment in CD2140/2160/
(Spring Nursery) immediately following completion of CD2020.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course focuses on how the child's environment supports social, cognitive, physical, and emotional development in the early years. Students will analyze specific aspects and components of high quality environments for young children and will learn important principles that can be applied to the design of indoor and outdoor environments for preschool children.

"We value space because of its power to organize, promote pleasant relationships between people of different ages... provide choices and activity, and its potential for sparking all kinds of social, effective, and cognitive learning. All this contributes to a sense of well-being and security in children. We also think that the space has to be a sort of aquarium which mirrors the ideas, values, attitudes, and cultures of the people who live within it" (Ioris Malaguzzi, 1994).

COURSE OUTLINE REVISED: OCTOBER /98

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UNITS

UNIT 1

The learner will demonstrate an awareness of elements which may affect the range and quality of children's play experiences.

UNIT 2

The learner will demonstrate understanding of the potential impact that outdoor play spaces (natural and designed) have on the development and behavior of young children.

UNIT 3

The learner will demonstrate an understanding of elements which affect the quality of educational and caregiving environments designed for young children.

UNIT 4

The learner will be able to design, establish, and evaluate a process-oriented environment which responds to the developmental needs of young children.

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Unit One: The learner will demonstrate an understanding of elements which affect the range and quality of children's play experiences.

Objectives: Upon successful completion of this unit the learner will be able to:

1. Explain how their own environmental history has affected their development as a unique individual.
2. Identify factors which may affect the extent of children's play ranges and the quality of play which takes place within those ranges.
3. Explain the relationship between play ranges and child development.

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Unit Two: The learner will demonstrate understanding of the potential impact that outdoor play spaces (natural and designed) have on the development and behavior of young children.

Objectives: Upon successful completion of this unit the learner will be able to:

1. Explain why play experience in natural outdoor environments should be considered a significant and essential component of the curriculum for young children.
2. Identify ways in which designed outdoor play spaces (playgrounds, children's gardens, etc.) can support and promote the growth and development of young children.
3. Use specific design principles and guidelines to plan and/or evaluate playgrounds for young children.

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Unit Three: The learner will demonstrate an understanding of elements which affect the quality of a young child's environment in educational and caregiving settings.

Objectives: Upon successful completion of this unit the learner will be able to:

1. Define the term, **physical environment**.
2. Discuss and apply specific design principles/guidelines which work together to create a high quality environment for young children. This includes discussion of:
 - a) aesthetics
 - b) crowding/density
 - c) size/scale
 - d) softness/hardness
 - e) environmental openness
 - f) complexity of play materials
 - g) high/low mobility play opportunities
 - h) noise level, lighting, temperature
 - i) room arrangement

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Unit Four: The learner will be able to design, establish, maintain and evaluate a process-oriented environment which responds to the developmental needs of young children.

Objectives: Upon successful completion of this unit the learner will be able to:

1. Identify appropriate goals for a specific educational/caregiving environment, e.g. Spring Nursery.
2. Use appropriate goals to design and establish a preschool environment which supports and facilitates children's development.
3. Use their knowledge of environmental psychology to evaluate a specific preschool environment.

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Upon successful completion of this course, students will have acquired and demonstrated specific knowledge, skills and attitudes.

They will gain knowledge of:

1. The ways in which one's environmental history can affect one's growth and development.
2. Environmental design terminology such as: aesthetics, play ranges, environmental stressors, psychology of arrival.
3. The relationship between children's play ranges and children's growth and development.
4. Factors which may affect the extent of a child's play ranges and the quality of play which takes place in those environments.
5. The ways in which man-built environments can support and facilitate children's growth and development.

They will gain skill in:

1. Developing and using appropriate environmental goals to direct the designing of educational/caregiving settings.
2. Applying environmental theory to the design of educational/caregiving settings for young children.
3. Evaluating man-built environments to determine how they meet the needs of young children and their caregivers.

They will develop attitudes which reflect:

1. An understanding of how the physical environments of young children affect their development and well-being.
2. An ability to see environments from a child's perspective.
3. A commitment to providing preschool environments which support and facilitate the development of young children.