

Early Childhood and Multicultural Education Program Vision Statement

❖ The faculty of the Early Childhood Program at the University of New Mexico believe that

- ❖ Childhood is a significant development and learning period that lays the foundation for learning throughout life. All children have the natural tendency to explore their worlds, develop, and learn.
- ❖ Teaching young children is based on a deep understanding of human development, the whole child, and the contexts in which the child lives.
- ❖ Teachers of young children are committed to providing excellence in early care, early education, and family support. They are responsible for creating optimal contexts that afford interest, understanding, growth, and development, grounded in developmentally appropriate practice and respect for individual differences in young children.

❖ The faculty envision early childhood educators as individuals who

- ❖ Value a life-span approach to human development and appreciate the complexity, sensitivity, and plasticity of early human development.
- ❖ Support children's natural growth and capacity to learn, which provides a foundation for children's learning in school and throughout their lives.
- ❖ Help children develop responsibility, resourcefulness, and respect through flexible and developmentally appropriate curriculum.
- ❖ Advocate for equitable, accessible, and high quality early care, education, and family support.
- ❖ Hold a deep respect for children's cultures and are responsive to how culture, family, and young children are inherently intertwined.
- ❖ Engage in on-going professional development, deepening their understanding of theory, research, and practice that informs their work with children and their families.

❖ The Early Childhood Program recruits individuals from diverse backgrounds, experiences, and communities who want to become early childhood educators who

- ❖ Are committed to life long learning, innovation, and ongoing professional development.
- ❖ See potential in all children from all backgrounds.
- ❖ Use children's interests and understanding to build developmentally appropriate curriculum, which recognizes the standards and benchmarks of the field of early childhood education.
- ❖ Are passionate about working with and learning from children, families, and communities, recognizing that all three inform each other.
- ❖ See themselves as change agents who are committed to improving the quality of life of children and who believe they can have a positive impact in early childhood development, care, and education.

❖ The faculty of the Early Childhood Program provide a well-organized, academically rigorous, and supportive program that

- ❖ Is grounded in the research and knowledge base in early childhood education, and that recognizes local, state, and national guidelines for early childhood education.
- ❖ Develops competence in the application of knowledge and research to practice.
- ❖ Provides a context for innovation and creativity in designing learning environments that reinforce, extend, and improve the teaching of young children.
- ❖ Evidences interdisciplinary approaches in teaching and in understanding children and their world.
- ❖ Provides students and faculty with opportunities to draw on students' and faculty's practical experiences.
- ❖ Engages students and faculty in critical examination of the knowledge base and research in early childhood education, in application of knowledge of child development to the practice of teaching, and in reflection on professional practice.
- ❖ Provides excellent models and options for professional practice in teaching and research, enhancing students' credibility and marketability in the field.
- ❖ Forms partnerships with teachers, school leaders, and communities to foster collaboration and communication.
- ❖ Engages partners in collaborative work guided by a vision of early childhood in which all children learn and thrive.