



**South Central College
Program Design**

AAS 3701 Early Childhood Education - Outdoor/Nature Studies

Program Information

Instructional Level Associate Degree

Career Cluster Human Services

Description

The Outdoor/Nature Studies Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education offers a unique and immersive approach to nurturing young minds. Spanning 60 credit hours, this program integrates the wonders of nature with current educational techniques. Students learn to utilize outdoor environments as dynamic classrooms, fostering a deeper connection to the natural world while promoting cognitive, physical, and emotional development. Through hands-on experiences, learners explore nature-based learning methods, knowledge in biological and earth sciences, ecological literacy, environmental ethics, and sustainable practices. Graduates will emerge as innovative educators, equipped to create engaging and enriching experiences that cultivate a love for nature, foster environmental stewardship, and lay the groundwork for a lifelong love of learning.

Grade Policy

Grades lower than a C may not be accepted in transfer by the receiving institution.

Program Admission Dates (Fall and/or Spring)

Fall

Program Location (North Mankato and/or Faribault)

North Mankato

Program Student Learning Outcomes

- 1 Explore the physical, social, emotional, linguistic, cognitive, and creative development of young children from birth through age eight.
- 2 Demonstrate strategies for developing an appropriate nature-based learning environment both indoors and outdoors.
- 3 Apply guidance and management techniques to accommodate the developmental characteristics of young children from birth through age eight.

- 4 Demonstrate the ability to use assessment results to identify needs and learning styles, and to plan appropriate programs, outdoor environments, and nature-based learning experiences in order to successfully interact with children, families, and the community.
- 5 Understand how a child's development influences learning and demonstrate how to plan and implement age- and developmentally-appropriate learning experiences based on nature and the outdoor environment.
- 6 Identify and implement techniques of collaboration with parents, colleagues, children, and community services.

Program Configurations

Fall Start

Credits

Technical Course	37
Arts & Sciences	23
Total Credits	60

Semester One

Course #	Course Title	Credits	Function
ECE 1205	Introduction to Early Childhood Education	3	Technical Course
ECE 1210	Child Growth and Development	3	Technical Course
ECE 1230	Behavior Guidance	3	Technical Course
GEOG 101	Introduction to Physical Geography	3	Arts & Sciences
PLSC 1100	Soils I	3	Technical Course

Semester Two

Course #	Course Title	Credits	Function
ECE 1220	Health, Wellness and Nutrition	3	Technical Course
ECE 1240	Diverse Children and Family Relations	3	Technical Course
ECE 1270	Creative Activities and Environments	3	Technical Course
PHIL 210	Environmental Ethics	3	Arts & Sciences
GEOG 103	Introduction to Cultural Geography	3	Arts & Sciences

Semester Three

Course #	Course Title	Credits	Function
ECE 2530	Curriculum Planning	3	Technical Course

ECE 2580	Observation and Assessment	3	Technical Course
GEOG 104	Introduction to Weather and Climate	3	Arts & Sciences
AIS 112	Native American Perspectives	4	Arts & Sciences
ART	Elective	3	Arts & Sciences

Semester Four

Course #	Course Title	Credits	Function
AGRI 1810	Intro to Sustainable Microfarming	1	Technical Course
BIOL 100 or 101	Introduction to Biology or Introduction to Ecology	4	Arts & Sciences
ECE 2310	Introduction to Special Education	3	Technical Course
ECE 2560	Introduction to Language and Literacy	3	Technical Course
ECE 2570	Capstone	3	Technical Course

Program Course List

Number	Title	Credits	Pre/Corequisites
AGRI 1810	Intro to Sustainable Microfarming	1	None.
AIS 112	Native American Perspectives	4	Next-Generation Accuplacer Reading score of 250 or higher, or Classic Accuplacer Reading score of 78 or higher, or completion of either READ 0090 or EAP 0090 with a grade of C (2.0) or higher, or ACT Reading score of 21 or higher or MCA Reading score of 1047 or higher.
ART	Elective	3	
BIOL 100 or 101	Introduction to Biology or Introduction to Ecology	4	
ECE 1205	Introduction to Early Childhood Education	3	None
ECE 1210	Child Growth and Development	3	None
ECE 1220	Health, Wellness and Nutrition	3	None
ECE 1230	Behavior Guidance	3	None
ECE 1240	Diverse Children and Family Relations	3	None
ECE 1270	Creative Activities and Environments	3	None
ECE 2310	Introduction to Special Education	3	ECE 1210
ECE 2530	Curriculum Planning	3	ECE 1270
ECE 2560	Introduction to Language and Literacy	3	ECE 1210
ECE 2570	Capstone	3	
ECE 2580	Observation and Assessment	3	ECE 1210 and ECE 1230

GEOG 101	Introduction to Physical Geography	3	Accuplacer Reading Comprehension Score of 78 or above or completion of READ0090
GEOG 103	Introduction to Cultural Geography	3	Accuplacer Reading Comprehension Score of 78 or above or completion of READ0090
GEOG 104	Introduction to Weather and Climate	3	Accuplacer Reading Comprehension Score of 78 or above or completion of READ 0090
PHIL 210	Environmental Ethics	3	Must have a score of 78 or higher on the Reading portion of the Accuplacer test or completion of READ 0090 with a grade of C or higher
PLSC 1100	Soils I	3	None