

Early Childhood Studies 2019 v1.0

Sample module of work

Module 4: In love with nature...

Overview

Module 4: In love with nature...

Module description

This module explores ways of using play-based learning activities to teach children respect for the natural environment.

Time allocation

27 hours

Elective/s	Underpinning factors
Indoor and outdoor learning environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Applied learning<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community connections<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Core skills for work<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Literacy<input type="checkbox"/> Numeracy



Assessment

Assessment number	Assessment description	Technique and mode	Assessment conditions	Dimensions and objectives
—	Plan, justify, evaluate and implement a play-based learning activity to encourage five-year-old children to gain an understanding and appreciation of an aspect of the natural environment.	Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance component • Written component 	Performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length determined by play-based learning activity • Play-based learning activity implemented with five-year-old children Written <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 500–900 words • Planning, justification and evaluation of play-based learning activity in a newsletter to parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing and understanding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – describe concepts and ideas related to fundamentals of early childhood – explain concepts and ideas of practices of early childhood • Analysing and applying <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – apply concepts and ideas of the fundamentals and practices of early childhood learning – use language conventions and features to communicate ideas and information for specific purposes • Planning and evaluating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – plan and justify play-based learning activities responsive to children's needs – evaluate play-based learning activities in response to children's needs

Teaching and learning sequence

Notional hours	Core topics		Learning experiences
	Core concepts and ideas	Knowledge, understanding and skills	
14 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundamentals of early childhood <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – F1 — Growth and development includes the developmental milestones, similarities and differences that children experience aged from birth to five years. – F3 — Children are connected with and contribute to their world through respecting diversity, social responsibility and being aware of fairness. • Practices in early childhood learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – P1 — Play-based learning is a context for learning through which children explore, experiment, discover and solve problems to make sense of their world. – P3 — An active learning environment encourages opportunities for children to explore and interact with the environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s learning is holistic; individual children develop at different rates. • Areas of development include physical, social, emotional and intellectual development. • Understanding children’s development and learning can be assisted by the work of theorists, e.g. Piaget and Erikson • Many factors may be considered when determining uniqueness and individuality. • External factors influence the growth and development of children and include environmental, biological, interpersonal relationships, and early environments and experiences. • Children have an awareness of respect for the environment. • Play-based learning values and develops children’s curiosity, interests, skills, abilities, culture and knowledge in order to extend their learning. • Play-based learning is inclusive of the developmental milestones, supported by 	<p>Unit orientation</p> <p>Outline the knowledge, understanding and skills that students will learn, including the assessment. Encourage discussion regarding individual and group work strategies to identify personal strengths, weaknesses and goals for the unit.</p> <p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use the syllabus for Early Childhood Studies to identify <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the fundamentals and practices they believe are relevant to this module and justify their choices in a class discussion – syllabus cognitions (listed below), write their own definitions and provide an example of each, specifically in relation to play-based learning activities in the natural environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ explain ▪ describe ▪ plan ▪ justify ▪ evaluate – the key points in Elective 5 (Indoor and outdoor learning environments) that are relevant to this module and answer the following question: ‘How do the knowledge, understanding and skills in this elective connect to the learning already undertaken?’ <p>Play-based learning in the natural environment</p> <p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore the benefits of implementing early childhood play-based learning activities in the natural environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – create a value continuum for the following quote to examine their own values and debate responses with peers: ‘Engaging in play-based learning activities about the natural environment in early childhood has never been more important.’ – watch clips of children engaged in gardening activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ note body language and interaction with both the landscape and others in a table with columns titled: Positives; Child’s dialogue/actions; Negatives;

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		<p>current research and provides learning environments that foster quality play experiences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Characteristics of play-based learning are child-centred, peer initiated, teacher guided/supported/scaffolded and intentional. • High-quality active learning environments have clearly identifiable characteristics such as being challenging and safe, have flexible space and allow time to pursue own ideas, to make choices and experience a variety of learning opportunities. • Quality learning environments may be accessed through experiences such as visiting early childhood education and care settings, viewing videos, inviting visits from families/carers with children, and undertaking excursions or inviting visits from early childhood education and care educators. 	<p>Child's dialogue/actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ revisit earlier position and re-assess • research benefits of nature-based learning activities, e.g. encourage interest in science, develop a sense of well-being, stimulate creativity, develop a sense of responsibility for protecting natural landscapes • use the information from their research to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – arrange the list of benefits in order of their personal priorities – link these priorities to gardening activities and how they could complement one another in a play-based learning activity • research learning environments for early childhood <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – individually reflect on the qualities they associate with a learning environment in terms of what is stimulating, fun or entertaining – create a Y-chart about the qualities they chose — what it looks like, sounds like, feels like – predict the ways learning environments can affect mood, ability to form relationships and health (e.g. colour, tactile objects, olfactory and sensory play) – develop a definition of learning environments to compare with a peer's definition, discuss similarities and differences, and provide justifications for their definitions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resource: <i>Child Australia</i>, 'Create the perfect play space: Learning environments for young children', www.ecrh.edu.au/docs/default-source/resources/ipsp/Create-the-perfect-play-space-learning-environments-for-young-children.pdf • tour their school to engage with the natural landscape, such as plants, soil and leaves <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – describe physical textures – sketch aspects of the environment they respond to and explain why – describe smells and sights – blindfold each other and listen intently to surrounding sounds, e.g. birds, bells, voices, crickets, wind, leaves in the trees – evaluate the effectiveness of the school's gardens as a learning environment • describe and justify their ideal natural landscape for children to play in (either

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			<p>face-to-face or using a website like Edmodo) by considering the following criteria (outlined in their reading/research)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - social interaction - decision-making opportunities - risk-taking activities and risk management - other criteria identified from their research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read the White and Early Childhood Australia newsletter articles (below) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - highlight key ideas from the articles and share these ideas using an interactive tool, e.g. Thinglink, Padlet - compare their ideal natural landscape for children to play in with the activities identified in the articles and note any changes to thinking - highlight sections of the articles using assorted colours to indicate sections that relate to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fundamentals 1 and 3 ▪ Practices 1 and 3 - describe and explain the fundamentals and practices evident in the articles - Resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ White, R 2004, 'Young children's relationship with nature: Its importance to children's development and the Earth's future', <i>White Hutchinson Leisure and Learning Group</i>, www.whitehutchinson.com/children/articles/childrennature.shtml ▪ Early Childhood Australia 2013, 'Rethinking outdoor learning environments', <i>National Quality Standard Professional Learning Program</i>, no. 59, www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/nqsplp/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/NQS_PLP_E-Newsletter_No59.pdf • locate two more newsletters or articles about outdoor learning activities and critique them <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - find gaps in descriptions about Fundamentals 1 and 3 - find gaps in explanations of Practices 1 and 3 - fill in these gaps by adding sentences to relevant sections of the articles.

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			<p>Gardening</p> <p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluate the importance of interacting with the natural landscape, using a play-based gardening activity, to respond to the following statements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Outdoor play is critical for _____ - The importance of playing in the dirt cannot be underestimated because _____ - Interacting with plants helps children connect with their world through sensory _____ • read the suggested article to create a mind map on the benefits of indoor plants in an early childhood setting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resource: <i>Early Childhood Australia</i>, 'Improving air quality with indoor plants at the Honey Tree Preschool Bellbird', www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/EC1801-improving-air-quality.pdf • identify language from the article that justifies and/or evaluates interaction with plants in an early childhood setting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify the criteria used as justification in the article and list in a table format - write responses to sentence stems, such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This gardening activity is important for _____. ▪ This gardening activity extends children's _____. ▪ Piaget states that _____ and as such, this play-based learning activity is specifically designed to encourage _____. ▪ Being responsive to children's needs is an important component of quality play-based learning activities, which is why _____. • explain how a play-based gardening activity relates to the core syllabus concepts and ideas for fundamentals and practices and the concepts and ideas for the chosen elective • research ways of using young children's engagement with natural landscapes to devise a gardening activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - access Piaget and Erikson's theories - visit a childcare centre and take extensive notes on how they achieve engagement

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - access the Early Years Learning Framework website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resource: <i>Department of Education and Training</i>, 'Early Years Learning Framework', www.education.gov.au/early-years-learning-framework-0 - watch children's shows with a focus on gardening, such as <i>dirtgirlworld</i> and <i>Get Grubby TV</i> • explore creative ways of blending literacy with gardening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - write a wildlife garden diary with a focus on the five senses, where children write down (or draw) everything they see, hear, touch, taste and smell - encourage children to make decisions about where plants should be positioned in a garden <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ create patterns in the dirt using outlines where plants could be positioned ▪ examine each plant's properties and colours and make decisions about aesthetic and care requirements ▪ draw pictures of their favourite vegetables/fruit before planting them in the best location for growth ▪ examine required quantities of mulch and compare 'too much' versus 'not enough' • review the article 'Gardening for children' (Resource: <i>Better health</i>, 'Gardening for children', www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/gardening-for-children) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - discuss tips for successful gardening activities with a peer - create a list of activities they are interested in doing with children in the performance component of their project - evaluate these proposed activities for suitability against the stages of growth and development of theorists such as Piaget and Erikson - justify any alterations to activities.

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1 hour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practices in early childhood learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> P1 — Play-based learning is a context for learning through which children explore, experiment, discover and solve problems to make sense of their world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play-based learning values and develops children's curiosity, interests, skills, abilities, culture and knowledge in order to extend their learning. Play-based learning is inclusive of the developmental milestones, supported by current research and provides learning environments that foster quality play experiences. Characteristics of play-based learning are child-centred, peer initiated, teacher guided/supported/scaffolded and intentional. 	<p>Values education</p> <p>Select a stimulus (e.g. YouTube clip, images) to use in a brainstorming activity.</p> <p>As a class, students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> review the chosen stimulus to brainstorm answers for the following questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can the environment be used to teach children important values? What personal values do I have that can be developed in a gardening activity? e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> valuing health by creating a vegetable garden valuing organic fresh produce by using only natural pesticides in gardening activities valuing colour in gardens by planting flowers or valuing tropical landscapes by planting palm trees valuing the conservation of water by doing water-conserving activities and mulching What learning opportunities can I create for gardening activities?
4 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practices in early childhood learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> P3 — An active learning environment encourages opportunities for children to explore and interact with the environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High-quality active learning environments have clearly identifiable characteristics such as being challenging and safe, have flexible space and allow time to pursue own ideas, to make choices and experience a variety of learning opportunities. 	<p>Health and safety regulations</p> <p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> read the newsletter from Early Childhood Australia about health and safety regulations and identify the regulations applicable for their project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource: <i>Early Childhood Australia</i>, 'An environment for learning', http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/NEL/NQS_PLP_E-Newsletter_No30.pdf read the National Quality Standards (NSQ) and devise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a quiz focusing on safety requirements and regulations for their peers to answer a cloze exercise or a find-a-word for peers to complete. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource: <i>Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority</i>, 'Guide to the National Quality Standard', http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/National-Quality-Framework-Resources-Kit/NQF-Resource-03-Guide-to-NQS.pdf

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			<p>Written assignment preparation</p> <p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • write a paragraph describing their favourite childhood memory and submit for feedback about spelling, grammar and punctuation • write a paragraph summarising two key learnings from the module to date and submit for feedback about spelling, grammar and punctuation • plan and justify possible gardening activities and check their safety requirements against the NQS in the following documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority</i>, ‘Active supervision: ensuring safety and promoting learning’, www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-04/QA2-ActiveSupervisionEnsuringSafetyAndPromotingLearning_1.pdf – <i>Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority</i>, ‘The environment as the “third teacher”’, www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-04/QA3_TheEnvironmentAsTheThirdTeacher.pdf • devise a layout suitable for demonstrating the planning and justification of a learning activity for the project, and critique the layout with a peer • experiment with the suitability of language required for a written newsletter aimed at parents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – examine a range of Facebook/Instagram/Twitter posts aimed at parents and compare them to official newsletters to analyse the use and suitability of language • critique an early childhood newsletter for parents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – identify the structure of the newsletter by highlighting key sections, e.g. title, hook, images, captions for images, introduction, planning, justifying and evaluating sections, conclusion – highlight effective sentences and state why they are effective using specific criteria.

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4 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundamentals of early childhood <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – F1 — Growth and development includes the developmental milestones, similarities and differences that children experience aged from birth to five years. – F3 — Children are connected with and contribute to their world through respecting diversity, social responsibility and being aware of fairness. • Practices in early childhood learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – P1 — Play-based learning is a context for learning through which children explore, experiment, discover and solve problems to make sense of their world. – P3 — An active learning environment encourages opportunities for children to explore and interact with the environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s learning is holistic; individual children develop at different rates. • Many factors may be considered when determining uniqueness and individuality. • Children have an awareness of respecting diversity, which includes recognising and appreciating uniqueness and differences in values, beliefs, histories, cultures, languages, traditions. They have an awareness about being fair, and a sense of their own rights and responsibilities. • The additional needs of children include having a disability, living in complex or vulnerable circumstances and their cultural, linguistic or family background. • Characteristics of play-based learning are child-centred, peer initiated, teacher guided/supported/scaffolded and intentional. • High-quality active learning environments have clearly identifiable characteristics such as being challenging and safe, have flexible space and allow time to pursue own ideas, to make choices and experience a variety of learning opportunities. 	<p>Planning play-based learning activities for outdoor play (non-gardening activities) Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • research ways of planning play-based learning activities for outdoor play that are not gardening based • select three play-based learning activities to evaluate using criteria established earlier in the module • select one learning activity and adapt the chosen activity for the purposes of satisfying their chosen criteria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – give it to a peer for feedback • work as a class to identify and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the learning activity in preparation for their own play-based learning activity on gardening. <p>Planning play-based learning activities for outdoor play (gardening activities) Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop a play-based gardening activity (different to the one that will be used in their final assessment) • implement the practice activity with a peer to check for workability and possible issues including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – checking risk management processes – checking the sequence and timing of activities – assessing suitability of tools for a particular age group • review feedback from the practice activity to develop a different play-based learning activity for their performance assessment. <p>Differentiated instruction Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • watch the video of Carol Ann Tomlinson discussing differentiation (Resource: <i>Institutes on Academic Diversity</i>, ‘What is differentiated instruction?’, http://differentiationcentral.com/what-is-differentiated-instruction) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – understand the necessity of being responsive to children’s needs and regarding children as individuals – identify and justify ways in which differentiation can be applied during the performance assessment.

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4 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundamentals of early childhood <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - F1 — Growth and development includes the developmental milestones, similarities and differences that children experience aged from birth to five years. - F3 — Children are connected with and contribute to their world through respecting diversity, social responsibility and being aware of fairness • Practices in early childhood learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - P1 — Play-based learning is a context for learning through which children explore, experiment, discover and solve problems to make sense of their world. - P3 — An active learning environment encourages opportunities for children to explore and interact with the environment. 		<p>Assessment: Project</p> <p>Revisit documenting processes for the assessment. Explain appropriate use of language conventions and features to communicate ideas and information.</p> <p>Check documentation of progress at indicated checkpoints. Provide progressive feedback on the progress of the project, with regards to skills, development and the analysis and evaluation of processes.</p> <p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use specific terminology relevant to the subject to document their planning, justification, implementation and evaluation including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using language conventions and features to communicate ideas - explaining the concept/idea, planning and developing the play-based learning activity, including skills and resources used - evaluating the effectiveness of their choices in developing a suitable play-based activity.