

Early Childhood Education degree approved

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KOKOMO, Ind.—The Indiana Higher Education Commission has approved Indiana University Kokomo’s proposal to offer a Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education. Courses will start in fall 2006.

Joining the existing bachelor’s degree in elementary education, the B.S. in Early Childhood Education will focus on learning in the first eight years of life, said Assistant Professor of Education Shirley Aamidor, Ph.D. “The time from birth through age 8 is when early experiences and opportunities begin to define the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical capacities of future learning,” she said. “This is when children’s brains are the most receptive to learning. Teachers of early childhood education must know how to integrate all areas of a child’s development in order to plan and implement appropriate curricula in the classroom.”

Aamidor helped craft the degree proposal and will be a lead faculty member in the program. She explained that the B.S. in Early Childhood Education will be taught in distinct “clusters” corresponding to three developmental levels—infant/toddler, preschool, and kindergarten–grade 3. Course work within each cluster will cover child development, curriculum development, and teaching principles. “Consistent with educational best practices and the principles of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the bachelor’s degree curriculum will focus on play for meaningfully engaging children and providing them with educational experiences and opportunities,” Aamidor said.

Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Stuart Green said local demand for the B.S. in Early Childhood Education degree “resonates with the concerns and goals” of Howard County’s new Early Childhood Education Center (ECEC). Based in IU Kokomo’s Early Outreach Building, the center will work with educators in pre-school through grade 12 (P–12), childcare providers, families, and libraries to promote best practices in preparing youngsters for kindergarten. Last September, Lilly Endowment granted \$1.5 million toward the ECEC’s start-up costs, through the endowment’s Community Alliances to Promote Education (CAPE) program.

“IU Kokomo students in the Early Childhood Education degree program will be extensively involved in CAPE grant activities,” said Green.

For information on the B.S. in Early Childhood Education, contact the IU Kokomo Division of Education, (765) 455-9441.