

# CATHERINE O'BRIEN ED.D

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Passionate, organized, and motivated, leader, educator, and advocate with experience in online curriculum design, professional development training, accreditation processes and school administration. Research areas of interest include advocacy, developing professional pathways for early childhood professionals around the state, workforce compensation, early childhood degree articulation, access to affordable high-quality early childhood education for all children and families, cooperative learning, advocating for play-based and nature-based learning and developing ecological community partnerships.

## EDUCATION

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- Edd** Grand Canyon University, Phoenix, AZ 2022  
Dissertation: O'Brien, C. (2022). A Narrative of early childhood educator faculty experiences using synchronous cooperative learning amid a pandemic. ProQuest 29390890.
- MaEd** Ashford University Clinton, IA 2016  
Thesis: Developing Instructional Strategies Using Differentiation in the Preschool Classroom  
Research emphasis in Early Childhood
- BA** Ashford University Clinton, IA 2014  
Early Childhood Education and Administration  
Graduated Summa cum Laude

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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- Texas A&M University San Antonio September 2023-present  
**Adjunct Faculty**, Early Childhood
- Child/Adolescent Development as it Impact Instruction, an undergraduate course
  - Social/Emotional Development, an undergraduate *online* course
  - Academic, Creativity, and Play, an undergraduate course
  - Professionalism, Leadership and Ethics, an *online* undergraduate course
  - Action Research in Early Childhood, and undergraduate research course
  - Practicum of Growth and Development an experiential learning course
- Texas A&M University San Antonio January 2020 to September 2023  
**Lecturer**, Educator and Leadership Preparation
- Child/Adolescent Development as it Impact Instruction, an undergraduate course
  - Social/Emotional Development, an undergraduate *online* course

- Academic, Creativity, and Play, an undergraduate course
- Professionalism, Leadership and Ethics, an *online* undergraduate course
- Infant/Toddler Development, an online undergraduate course
- Cognitive Development, an online undergraduate course
- Practicum for early childhood, an undergraduate course
- Action Research, an undergraduate course
- Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum, an undergraduate course
- Advocacy, a **graduate** course
- Special Problems in Early Childhood: The Reggio Approach

Texas A&M University San Antonio August 2017 to December 2019  
**Adjunct Faculty**, Early Childhood

- Child/Adolescent Development as it Impact Instruction, an undergraduate course
- Social/Emotional Development, an undergraduate *online* course
- Academic, Creativity, and Play, an undergraduate course
- Professionalism, Leadership and Ethics, an *online* undergraduate course

Texas A&M University San Antonio August 2018 to December 2019  
**Adjunct Faculty**, Curriculum and Instruction

- Classroom Management, an undergraduate course
- Teaching and Pedagogy, an undergraduate course

Texas A&M University San Antonio August 2017 to December 2019  
**Adjunct Faculty**, First Year Experience

- Jaguar Tracks I, an undergraduate course
- Jaguar Tracks II, and undergraduate course

San Antonio College August 2016-December 2019  
**Adjunct Faculty**, Early Childhood Studies

- Infant and Toddler Development, and undergraduate course
- Guidance, an undergraduate course
- Infant/Toddler Field Placement Lab, an undergraduate course

## RELATED EXPERIENCE

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### ***Texas A&M University San Antonio***

Director of Campus Childcare

September 2023-present

- Oversee the daily operations of the campus childcare afterschool program Young Jaguars
- Adhere to HHS Minimum Standards for licensed childcare and maintain compliance
- Hire, train, and supervise staff
- Support and supervise field placement students and maintain compliance with HHS Childcare licensing.
- Other duties as assigned

***Community Actions Inc.***

Adult Education Instructor

May 2018 – August 2020

- Instruct adult education course: Child Development Associate Credential

***Country Home Learning Center***

Director of Curriculum Development

June 2009 – December 2016

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- Created and implemented a family engagement program to support parent partnerships to enhance child development.
- Created, designed and edited 12 months of theme-based curriculum for ages 6 weeks to 13 years aligned to state and accreditation standards.
- Created, designed and implemented research-based professional development as it impacted classroom experiences and curriculum improvements. Created a scope and sequence for curriculum and instruction for classroom teachers teaching children ages infant through early elementary.
- Supervised and mentored 10 Curriculum Coordinators at multiple locations.
- Provided key support for 10 school locations through the AdvancED/SACSCOSOS, TRS, and NAC accreditation processes including program assessment, continuous improvement plans, and created protocols for organizing documentation to increase program effectiveness, and wrote yearly reports to maintain high quality status.
- Designed and implemented a professional development program for approximately 900 employees across 10 early learning centers.

***Country Home Learning Center***

Lead Teacher (Infant-Pre-Kindergarten)

June 2006 – June 2009

- Created lesson plans to meet the state guidelines for Pre-Kindergarten and the individual needs of the children
- Created hands-on activities to ensure skill mastery
- Designed and implemented a "take Home" reading program to enhance the school-home connection
- Effectively communicated daily with parents
- Conducted continuing observations and assessments to improve student learning
- Served as a mentor for a team of preschool teachers.
- Created developmentally appropriate lesson plans for children ages infant through four-years-old.
- Effectively communicated with families about their child's developmental needs

***La Petite Academy – San Antonio, TX***

*Preschool Teacher*

October 2005 to June 2006

- Created lesson plans for children ages 3 and 4-years-old
- Cared for children ages 3-4 following the minimum standards for the state of Texas
- Used developmentally appropriate practices while teaching children ages 3-4 language, cognitive, physical and social/emotional skills

***Colorful Beginnings Consulting LLC***

Owner/President/Consultant

2000-present

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- Provide as needed support for licensed childcare centers focused on program improvement, curriculum and instruction, and professional development of staff.
- Provided in-home care for preschool children ages 3-5.

- Created a “Parent’s Day Out” program for infant/toddler and preschool-aged children.

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**COUNCIL FOR PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION**

**2016-PRESENT**

- Professional Development Specialist #P59256279

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**PUBLICATIONS**

***Journal Publications***

O’Brien, C. (2022). A Narrative of early childhood educator faculty experiences using synchronous cooperative learning amid a pandemic. Proquest 29390890

Garcia-Alvarado, S., Inan, H., Jozwiak, M., **O’Brien, C.** (2022). Everybody is on Play: Familias United Project Bridges for Community Partnership. Chapter proposal Submitted.

O’Brien, C. (2019) A play on words: Using *Show Tune Rewrite* in training session. *Early Years*, vol. 40, no. 3, Fall 2019, pp. 8.

O’Brien, C. (2019) Going Beyond the Standards: Providing Effective Environments for Learning. *Early Years vol. 40, no. 2*, Summer 2019, pp. 9-10.

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**Grants/Awards**

Jozwiak, M. M. (PI), Garcia-Alvarado, S (Co-PI), Janysek, M. (Evaluator), **O’Brien, C.(Co-PI)**, & Watts, G (Co-PI). (2022). Campus childcare as resource enhancing student-parent success: Campus CARES. Department of Education, Office of Post-Secondary Education C-CAMPIS. \$437,482.66/year: **\$1,750,000 total**, Funded September 2022.

Added Personnel Hatice Inan, Co-PI (10/01/2022) Sarah Flotte, Co-PI (01/01/2023) Maria Acevedo-Aquino, Co-PI (01/01/2023)

Martinez, J., Baden, T., Jozwiak, M., Sheperis, C. J., Garfield, T., **O’Brien, C.**, Garcia-Alvarado, S. (2020). REACH for the STARS: Reaching every available child quality project. Workforce Solutions Alamo. \$9,125,490.00. Not Funded

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**PRESENTATIONS AND INVITED LECTURES**

**Presentation, *SHARE: Students Hundred languages Abroad Real-life Experiences.*** (Poster presentation) at the National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators conference, Nashville, Tennessee, November 2023

**Presentation, *Using Clay, Drama, and Storytelling to Strengthen Family Bonds. Practical Insights from “Building Bonds with Families through Art & Family Culture Stories” Research.*** (Workshop session) at the Triannual IPA World Conference, Glasgow, Scotland, June 2023

**Presentation, *A Narrative of EC Educator Faculty Experiences Using Synchronous Cooperative Learning Amid a Pandemic* a Round Table Paper Session (45 minutes)** at the 2022 National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educator's Conference, Washington DC., November 2022

**Poster Presentation, *Building Bonds with Families through Art and 5 Family Culture Stories***, Garcia-Alvarado, S., Inan, Inan, H.Z., **O'Brien, C.**, a **Poster Session**, at the 2022 National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educator's Conference, Washington DC, November 2022

**Presentation, *Creating Connections: Using Clay and Drama in the form of Storytelling***. O'Brien, C. Garcia-Alvarado, S., Inan, H.Z. IPA-USA Conference, San Antonio, TX, October 2022

**Presentation, *Advocacy 101: Using Your Voice to Create a Promising Future***. TXAEYC Annual Conference, San Antonio, TX, September 2022

**Presentation, *Higher Education and Articulation***, Children and Risk Annual Early Childhood Summit: Supporting Today's Workforce for Tomorrow, May 2022

**Presentation, *Advocacy Voice with an Equity Lens***. At TXAEYC Virtual Summit, February 2022

**Presentation, *The Growing Child: Foundation of Child Development***. Voices for Children Annual conference at TX A&M San Antonio, November 2021

**Presentation, *Collaboration for challenging times: Young learners, families, and universities***, Jozwiak, M., Garcia-Avarado, s., **O'Brien, C.**, at NAECTE Summer Virtual Conference, June 2021

**Presentation, *Community Partnerships as Advocacy*** at TXAEYC Master Series, Virtual mini conference, 2021

**Presentation, *Advocacy with an Equity Lens*** at TX A&M Agrilife Virtual professional Workshop, 2021

**Presentation, *Let's Get Creative and Play to Learn***. Presentation at Texas Association for the Education of Young Children Early Childhood Conference San Antonio, TX 2017, 2018, 2019

**Presentation, *Making Connections in the Infant/Toddler Classroom***. TXAEYC Annual conference. September 2019

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## PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

**Adjunct Faculty Certification**, Alamo Colleges, August 2018

Description: Certification course including 48 hours of professional development, Research, and Instructor Presentation: *Multiple Intelligences and how it impacts instruction in the adult classroom.*

**Nature-Based Educator Certification**

NAAEE/EEPro, Washington, DC.

June 2023

**Online Learning Consortium Digital Badging**

OLC, June 2021

**Quality Matters Online Instructor Certification**

Alamo Colleges, December 2018

**Quality Matters Peer Reviewer Certification**

Texas A&M SA, July 2020

**Zero to Three Certified Trainer of Trainers *The Growing Brain***

Zero to Three, July 2021

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**PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

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Alpha Sigma Lambda Honor Society

Council for Professional Recognition- CDA

Golden Key International Honor Society

International Play Association IPA-USA/World Member

NAAEE/NSA North American Association for Environmental Education

NAEYC/TXAEYC/SECA Member

NAREA North American Reggio Emilia Association

TECPDS -Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System

Texas Children in Nature Network

OLE Texas-Outdoor Learning Education San Antonio Chapter

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**PROFESSIONAL SERVICE**

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***San Antonio Chapter of the TXAEYC (AKA-SAAEYC)***

- **Committee Chair for Professional Development**
- **Past-President**

**June 2022-May 2024**

**June 2021-May 2022**

**Texas Association for the Education of Young Children-TXAEYC**

- **VP of Advocacy (Board Member-at large)** **June 2021-June 2023**
- Early Years Publication, TXAEYC Reviewer* **August 2017 – Present**
- NAECTE Conference Proposal Reviewer** **September 2022**
- NAECTE Journal Reviewer** **October 2020-Present**
- Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System** **January 2018-Present**  
*Master Registered Trainer #7314*

## REFERENCES

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**Ana DeHoyos O'Connor,**  
Professor Early Childhood Studies  
San Antonio College  
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**Dr. Karen Kohler,**  
Lecturer Curriculum and Instruction  
Texas A&M University San Antonio  
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