

**Denise D. Cunningham, Ph.D.****University Address:**

Missouri State University  
 Childhood Education & Family Studies  
 901 S. National  
 Springfield, MO 65897  
 417 836-4492  
[DeniseCunningham@missouristate.edu](mailto:DeniseCunningham@missouristate.edu)

**Home Address:**

1100 State Hwy A  
 Crane, MO 65633  
 417 300-5141

**EDUCATION**

- 2005 Ph. D. Teaching and Learning Literacy/Reading and Early Childhood Education  
 University of Missouri-St. Louis St. Louis, MO
- 1999 M.A.T. Multidisciplinary Studies Reading  
 Webster University Webster Groves, MO
- 1980 B.S. Ed. Secondary Education Social Science  
 Northwest MO State University Maryville, MO

## Additional hours:

Early Childhood Education	24 hours (certification)
Elementary Education	12 hours
Guidance & Counseling	28 hours

**DISSERTATION**

*Relating Quality of Urban, Public School, Preschool Learning Environments to the Language and Literacy Development of At-Risk Preschool Children*

**HIGHER EDUCATION EXPERIENCE**

- 2016-present Department Head – Childhood Education & Family Studies  
 Missouri State University Springfield, MO
- 2015- present Full Professor – Early Childhood Education  
 Missouri State University Springfield, MO
- 2010 - 2015 Associate Professor – Early Childhood Education  
 Missouri State University Springfield, MO
- 2005-2010 Assistant Professor – Early Childhood Education  
 Missouri State University Springfield, MO
- 2001-2005 Adjunct faculty – Early Childhood Education  
 University of Missouri-St. Louis St. Louis, MO
- 2002-2005 Adjunct faculty – Early Childhood Education  
 Maryville University St. Louis, MO

2002-2005     Adjunct Instructor – Early Care & Education  
                    St. Louis Community College                      St. Louis, MO

**COURSES TAUGHT**

**Missouri State University**

***Undergraduate courses:***

Emerging Literacy/Communication Arts in Early Childhood  
Socio-Moral Development/Social Studies  
Mathematics & Science for Young Children  
The Early Childhood Professional  
Administration of Programs for Children & Families  
Multicultural Studies in Child & Family Development  
Principles of Development in Middle Childhood  
Elementary Teaching Methods in Communication Arts

***Graduate courses:***

The Educational Role of Play (developed & taught)  
Literacy in the Early Childhood Years (developed & taught)  
Family Literacy (developed & taught)  
Orientation to Early Childhood & Family Development (developed & taught)  
Research Proposal Development  
Seminar in Early Childhood & Family Development

**University of Missouri-St. Louis**

***Graduate courses***

The Educational Role of Play

**Maryville University**

***Graduate courses***

Rethinking Children's Literature  
Early Childhood Curriculum  
Integrated Curriculum

**St. Louis Community College – Meramec Campus**

***Undergraduate courses***

Administration of Early Childhood Programs  
Introduction to Early Childhood Education  
Language & Literacy Development of Young Children

**P-12 TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

Academy of Mount St. Scholastica – Social Studies Teacher	01/1981 – 05/1981
Primary Teacher -Wilkinson EC, St. Louis Public Schools	1995 - 2000
Instructional Coordinator - Wilkinson EC, St. Louis Public Schools	2000 - 2003
Literacy Coach - St. Louis Public Schools	2003 - 2005

## SCHOLARSHIP

### *Publications*

- Cunningham, D. D.** (Ed.) (2020). *Professional and ethical consideration for early childhood leaders*. PA: IGI Global
- Cunningham, D. D.** & Hallgren, D. (2020). USA ECE Management, leadership and governance. In Clark, C. D. & Waniganayake, M. (Eds.), *Bloomsbury Education and Childhood Settings*. London: Bloomsbury Press.
- Cunningham, D. D.** Breault, D. A. (2017). *Educative experiences in early childhood: Lessons from Dewey*. In L. Cohen and S. Waite Stupiansky (Eds.), *Developmental to Critical Theories of Early Childhood Education*. New York: Long Island Press.
- Cunningham, D. (2015, Winter). Phonics their way: First grade students take a new look at old phonics. *The Constructivist*, 22(1), 102-114. Available at: <https://sites.google.com/site/assocforconstructteaching/journal>
- Cunningham, D. (2014). Re-conceptualizing early childhood teacher education: Enacting a paradigm shift to bring developmentally appropriate practice to higher education. *Critical Questions in Education*, (1), 52-63.
- Cunningham, D. (2010). Relating preschool quality to children's literacy development. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 37(6), 501-507.
- Test, J. E., **Cunningham, D. D.**, & Lee, A. (2010). Talking with young children: How teachers and administrators can make a difference. *Dimensions in Early Childhood*, 38(3), 3-14.
- Cunningham, D. (2009). Second grade students investigate instructional approaches and behavior through action research. *The Constructivist*. Electronic journal: [www.odu.edu/educ/act/journal/index.html](http://www.odu.edu/educ/act/journal/index.html)
- Cunningham, D. (2009). Interactive book reading: Parents and children as literacy partners. *Early Years*, 1(1), 14-16.
- Cemore, J. J. & **Cunningham, D. D.** (2008). Curiosity and the engaged child in nature: A perfect fit for science. *Play, Policy & Practice Connections Newsletter of the Play, Policy & Practice Interest Forum of the National Association for the Education of Young Children*, XI(1), 5-7.
- Cunningham, D. (2008). Preschool quality and children's attitudes toward reading and writing. *Literacy Teaching and Learning*, 12(2), 19-36.
- Cunningham, D. (2008). Preschool quality and children's literacy development.

*Conference Proceedings 2007*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the National Coalition of Campus Children's Centers, St. Louis, MO.

**Cunningham, D.** & Wubbena, J. (2008). Home, school, and community connections – as simple as A-B-C. *The Missouri Reader*, International Reading Association, 3(1), 14-18.

Cunningham, D. (2006). The seven principles of constructivist teaching: A case study. *The Constructivist*. 17(1): [www.odu.edu/educ/act/journal/index.html](http://www.odu.edu/educ/act/journal/index.html)

Cunningham, D. (2000). A trip through Ancient Egypt that ended in a web. *The Missouri Reader*. International Reading Association, (24)2. 12-18.

### ***Book Reviews & Activities***

Cunningham, D. (2016). *I know an old lady who swallowed a dreidel*. A book review and cross-curricular activities. In *What's New in Children's Literature? (2016 Edition)*. Little Rock, AR: Southern Early Childhood Association, p. 18.

Cunningham, D. (2013). *World class initiatives and practices in early education: Moving forward in a global age*. (L. B. Swiniarski, Ed.) Springer Publications.

Cunningham, D. (2013). *I will keep you safe and sound*. A book review and cross-curricular activities. In *What's New in Children's Literature? (2014 Edition)*. Little Rock, AR: Southern Early Childhood Association.

Cunningham, D. (2012). *Can you see what I see?* A book review and cross-curricular activities. In *What's New in Children's Literature? (2012 Edition)*. Little Rock, AR: Southern Early Childhood Association.

Cunningham, D. (2008). *All afloat on Noah's boat*: A book review and suggested activities. In *What's New in Children's Books? (2008 Edition)*, Little Rock, AR: Southern Early Childhood Association, p. 7.

Cunningham, D. (2008). *When the cows got loose*: A book review and suggested activities. In *What's New in Children's Books? (2008 Edition)*. Little Rock, AR: Southern Early Childhood Association, p. 30.

### ***Non-Peer Reviewed Scholarly Works***

Farb, M. L. & **Cunningham, D.** (2001-2005) *Wilkinson Early Childhood Center/Maryville University professional development school partnership: Annual report*. School of Education: Maryville University: St. Louis, MO.

### ***Works in Progress***

- Cunningham, D. (submitted). *Symbolic Representations of Preschool Children: Relations Among Block Play, Picture Drawing and Emergent Literacy*. Manuscript submitted to *Early Childhood Education Journal* (September 2020).
- Mowrey, S. C., **Cunningham, D. D.**, Baker, S. J. (submitted) *Elementary principals perceptions of early childhood education*. Manuscript submitted to *Journal of School Leadership* (September 2020).
- Cunningham, D. & Maerz, J. (in progress). *A Comparative Study of Early Childhood and Elementary Pre-Service Teacher's Beliefs about Primary Grade Curriculum and Instruction*

### GRANTS

#### *Funded Grants*

- Carroll, D., **Cunningham, D. D.**, Mowrey, S. (2017). *Community Partnership of the Ozarks-Darr Family Foundation Early Learning Grant*. (\$1,000,000 funded over 5 years). Darr Family Foundation, Springfield, MO.
- Cunningham, D., Sims-Giddens, S., & Hallgren, D. (2014). *Missouri Preschool Project* (\$19,733 requested). Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Jefferson City, MO. (\$24,438 funded)
- Cunningham, D., Sims-Giddens, S., & Hallgren, D. (2013). *Missouri Preschool Project* (\$48,874 requested). Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Jefferson City, MO. (\$48,875 funded)
- Cunningham, D., Sims-Giddens, S., & Hallgren, D. (2012). *Missouri Preschool Project* (\$73,313 requested). Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Jefferson City, MO. (\$73,313 funded)
- Brinson, S. & **Cunningham, D.** (2011). *Flattering Mirrors and Complimentary Windows: The Making of Good Readers with Culturally Responsive Books*. (\$500 requested). Missouri Campus Compact Micro Grant (\$300 funded).
- Cunningham, D. (2009). *Improving the quality of child care and education competitive grant award program*. (\$24,078 requested). Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Jefferson City, MO. (\$9,800 funded).
- Cunningham, D. (2008). *Family literacy workshops in Greene County*. Slusher Foundation (\$1,000 funded). Collaboration with Ozarks Literacy Council.
- Cunningham, D. (2008). *Citizenship and Service-Learning Travel Grant* Funded \$100 to present at Missouri Compact Conference in St. Louis, MO.
- Cunningham, D. (2007). *CASL Research Stipend Grant*. Citizenship and Service

Learning, MSU to fund Graduate Assistant for Spring semester 2008. (\$7,780 funded).

Cunningham, D. (2007). *Abundant Books for Children Project (ABC Project): A Family Literacy Project in Stone County*. (\$15,000 requested). Louis L. & Julia Dorothy Coover Charitable Foundation Regional Grant (\$15,997 funded) Collaboration with Ozarks Literacy Council.

Cunningham, D. (2006). *Fostering Developmentally Appropriate Instructional Practices in the Primary Grades' Content Areas*. MSU - Funding for Results (\$2,800 funded).

### ***Unfunded Grants***

Cunningham, D. (2010). *Enhancing Early Childhood Science Instruction Project*. Monsanto Foundation. (\$130,000 requested). Collaboration with Southwest Missouri Resource Conservation and Development Center, United States Department of Agriculture South Missouri Water Quality Project. (not funded)

Cunningham, D., Mann, M. E., Roam, K., & Hulgus, J. (2007, December). *Implications of teacher beliefs and behaviors on the language, literacy, and social-emotional development of rural Head Start children*. Head Start-University Partnership Research Grant. Requested \$650,000 over 3 years. (*blind review*) Not funded.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

Cunningham, D. & Breault, D. A. (2016, April). *The earliest educative experiences: Evaluating public preschool curriculum with a Deweyian framework*. American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, Washington, DC.

Cunningham, D. (2012, November). *Building literacy one block at a time: Research on preschool children's block play and its relationship to literacy development*. Annual Conference & Expo, National Association for the Education of Young Children, Atlanta, GA.

Cunningham, D. & Agnew-Tally, J. (2012, June). *Transitioning to universal preschool - Queen Bee to Super Hero?* National Professional Development Institute, National Association for the Education of Young Children, Indianapolis, Indianapolis, IN.

Cunningham, D. (2012, October). *Connecting home, school, & community through family literacy – As easy as A-B-C*. Rivers Bend “Stepping Up To Leadership” Conference, St. Charles, MO.

Cunningham, D. (2011, September). *The A-B-C Project: Enhancing Home Literacy for Young Children*. “Growing Missouri’s Leaders” Conference, Missouri

Association for the Education of Young Children, Springfield, MO.

- Cunningham, D.** & Wubbena, J. (2008, October). *Connecting home, school and community – as simple as A-B-C*. 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Missouri Campus Compact Conference, Washington University, St. Louis, MO.
- Cunningham, D.** & Wubbena, J. (2008, October). *Abundant Books for Children: A family literacy project in Stone County*. CASL Research Forum, Springfield, MO.
- Cunningham, D. (2008, October). *Attitude, Ability and Environment: What's the literacy connection?* Missouri State Council/International Reading Association Annual Conference, Springfield, MO.
- Cunningham, D. (2008, March). *Graduate students investigate play through action research*. 34<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference for The Association for the Study of Play (TASP), Tempe, AZ.
- Rollinson, P., MacGreggar, C., **Cunningham, D.**, Long, B., & George, S. (2007, April). *Hear Their Voices: Springfield's Children in Poverty*. Mayor's Summit on Children. Springfield, MO (*invited speakers*).
- Cunningham, D. (2007, March). *Preschool quality and children's literacy development*. National Head Start Association 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Training Conference. San Antonio, TX.
- Cunningham, D. (2007, March). *Preschool quality and children's literacy development*, National Coalition of Campus Children's Centers, National Conference, St. Louis, MO.
- Cunningham, D. (2006, October). *Attitude, environment, & ability: What's the literacy connection?* Educational Studies National Conference, Springfield, MO.
- Professional Development Seminars***
- Cunningham, D. (2012, April). *Literacy for little ones: Home literacy activities for infants and toddlers*. Missouri State Child Development Center, Springfield, MO.
- Cunningham, D. (2010, August). *Introducing OPIE (Observe, Plan, Implement, Evaluate): An assessment framework for preschools*. Lee's Summit, MO. Public Schools
- Cunningham, D. (2009, May). *Reading to young children: Parents and children as literacy partners*. Reed's Spring School District Parents As Teachers meeting, Reed's Spring, MO.

Cunningham, D. (2009, February). *Conscious Discipline – Part 2*. Professional development provided to Reeds Spring School District Preschool Program and community child care providers.

Cunningham, D. (2008, December). *Conscious Discipline – Part 1*. Professional development provided to Reeds Spring School District Preschool Program and community child care providers.

Cunningham, D. (2007). Parent use of the interactive reading approach with their children. Workshops presented in Blue Eye, Crane, Galena, Hurley, and Reeds Spring (MO) School Districts. Funded through the ABC Project.

Cunningham, D. (2006-2007). Professional development for preschool & kindergarten teachers at the Republic Early Childhood Center, Republic (MO) School District.

- Professional Development Portfolios for Teachers
- Literacy Centers
- Performance-based Assessment
- Creating a Classroom for Writers
- Writers Workshop in Kindergarten
- Analyzing Writing Samples – What do they tell us?

Cunningham, D. (2007, Summer & Fall) *Teaching in a culturally and economically diverse classroom: The importance of relationship building*. Invited speaker for CFD 560 and CFD 305 (respectively).

### SERVICE

#### **Dept. of Childhood Education & Family Studies**

SPA (ACEI) Writer (National Recognition with Conditions)	2017-2018
SPA (NAEYC) Report Writer (National Recognition)	2017-2018
Program Coordinator – Early Childhood Special Education	2016-Present
Program Coordinator – ECE Program	2015-2019
Program Director – CFD & ECE Programs	2010-2015
Program Coordinator – ECE Program	2009-2010
Search Committee Chair (CFD & ECE faculty)	2013-2015
Peer Review of Teaching	2008–2011
SPA (NAEYC) Report Co-Writer ECE Program	2010–2011
DESE MoSTEP Report Co-Writer ECE Program	2010–2011
Promotion & Tenure Committee	2010-present
Search Committee (ELE instructor)	2008
Search Committee Co-Chair (CFD faculty)	2008
ECE Candidate Selection Committee Chair	2005–present
Early Childhood Advisory Committee	2006–present
Mentor at Child Development Center (CDC )	2005–present
CDC searches (assistant & lead teachers)	2011–2012
CDC Director Search – chair	2011
ECE & ELE student teacher supervision	2006-present



ECE portfolio supervision	2007-present
<b>College of Education</b>	
College Council Committee	2006–2009 & 2013-present
Faculty Fellow (Counselors to Campus Project)	2013-2015
Dean’s Task Force (chair)	2012-2013
Pre-Education Task Force (chair)	2015-present
Faculty Advisory Committee	2011-2015
College Council Committee	2005–2009
COE Budget Committee	2014-present
COE Search Committee (Acting Department Head)	SU 2007
COE Special Projects Committee	SU 2007
Ready to Learn Literacy Committee	2005–2006
<b>University</b>	
Provost Task Force (review of Outreach & Access)	2017-2018
Citizenship & Service Learning Advisory Board	2012-present
Professional Education Committee	2011–2013
Educator Preparation Program Committee	2015- present
Conceptual Framework Committee	2013-2014
Faculty Center for Teaching & Learning Peer Mentoring	2010-2012
Associate Provost’s Peer Evaluation of Teaching Committee	2008-2009
Graduate Council	2007–2009
Graduate College Scholarship Committee	2007–2009
University Budget Committee	2012-2014
<b>Professional Service</b>	
<i>Journal of Early Childhood Literacy</i>	2013-present
Manuscript reviewer	
<i>Early Childhood Research Quarterly</i>	2010–present
Manuscript reviewer	
<i>Early Childhood Education Journal</i>	2006-present
Manuscript reviewer	
<i>Southern Early Childhood Association</i>	2006-present
Children’s literature reviewer	
Association for Constructivist Teaching	1995–present
Member	
NAEYC member	1990–present
International Literacy Association	1998–present
Member	
Academy for Educational Studies	2006–2009
Member	
Association of Childhood Education	2005–2009
Member	
Association for Early Childhood Teacher Education	
Member	2007–present

Secretary	2010–2012
The Association for the Study of Play	2007–2011
Member	
Southern Early Childhood Association	2008–2010
Member	

### **Community Service**

Professional Development School Partnership	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Republic Early Childhood Center</li> <li>• Preschool &amp; Kindergarten teachers</li> <li>• Monthly Professional Development Workshops</li> </ul>	2005–2010
Ozarks Literacy Council (regional organization)	2006-2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governing Board</li> <li>• Membership Committee Chair</li> <li>• Secretary</li> <li>• Personnel Committee</li> <li>• Vice President</li> </ul>	2006-2010 2007–2008 2008–2009 2009-2010
Missouri Child Care Resource & Referral Network	2006-2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nominating Committee</li> <li>• Financial Oversight Committee</li> </ul>	2006-2008 2007-2011
Mayor’s Commission for Children Springfield, MO	2006-2007
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research group</li> <li>• Summit presenter</li> </ul>	2007

### **TEACHING CERTIFICATIONS**

Early Childhood Education (Birth – Third Grade)	Missouri Career Certificate
Reading Specialist	Missouri Life-Time Certificate
Secondary Education Social Sciences	Missouri Life-Time Certificate

### **PROFESSIONAL TRAINING**

On-Line Course Design	MO State University	2012
Peer Review of Teaching	Charlotte, NC	2010
Boys and Girls Town Model	Springfield, MO	2010
Early Language & Literacy Classroom Observation Toolkit	Newton, MA	2004
School Observation Measure	St. Louis, MO	2003
Reading Success Network	St. Louis, MO	2003
Critical Friends Groups	St. Louis, MO	2000
Project Construct	St. Louis, MO	1994’

**FELLOWSHIPS**

Counselors to Campus Faculty Fellow	2013-present
Dean's Leadership Institute Faculty Fellow	2014-2015
Provost's Academic Leadership (PAL) Program	2009-2010
Service-learning Faculty Fellow	2009

**AWARDS AND HONORS**

MO Educators of Family & Consumer Sciences <i>Business Woman of the Year Award</i>	2020
MSU Program Collaboration Award	2017
<i>Excellence in Teaching</i> – MSU Foundation Award	2013
<i>Excellence in Teaching</i> nominee – MSU Foundation Award	2010
Community Caravan Recognition	2008
Partnership with US Department of Agriculture - South Missouri Water Quality Project – Integrated Service-Learning	
Partnership Award United States Department of Agriculture South Missouri Water Quality Project	2007

**MENTORING AND ADVISING**

Research Advisor	2008-present <sup>1</sup>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 31 Seminar Papers</li> <li>• 4 Thesis Paper</li> </ul>	
Post-Bac students working on ECE certification	2001-present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16 students</li> </ul>	
New Faculty Mentor	2013-present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 Early Childhood Education faculty</li> <li>• 2 Child &amp; Family Development faculty</li> </ul>	

**OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

<b>Deaconess Hospital Early Childhood Center</b>	<b>St. Louis</b>
Founder & Director	1984-1995
Center licensed capacity 110 children from 6 weeks – 6 years	
Summer Camp 6 – 12 yr olds (75 children)	

**Kinder Care Learning Centers, Inc.**

Director

Center licensed capacity 100 6 weeks – 12 years

**St. Louis**

1983-1984

**Little People's World Learning Center**

Assistant Director

Toddler Teacher

Preschool Teacher

**Kearney, Nebraska**

1982-1983