

OVERVIEW

Our Philosophy

We believe that children and adults construct knowledge with others. Our primary goal is to create pedagogy of collaborative inquiry— one in which teachers, children, and parents construct knowledge in relation as processes of learning are developed that support inquiry (e.g. resourcefulness, critical thinking, problem solving, autonomy, and deliberate attention). Consequently, we strive to create group experiences in which children will develop relationships with people, materials, and space from which discoveries can be made. It is the responsibility of teachers to purposefully create and provoke rich experiences for child discovery and to extend previous, more serendipitous, experiences that occur at home, school, and the greater community. As such, teachers function as active partners with children and their parents so that the learning context is relevant and meaningful to the lives of the children enrolled.

Our Missions

Early Education Mission

Our mission is to design and provide developmentally and culturally appropriate programs that promote children's development, support families, and are reflective of our community. An integral component of our curriculum is that children and teachers construct the content of the curriculum and the processes for learning in partnership through *inquiry*. We make a special effort to promote a diverse and inclusive community of learners.

Pre-service Teaching Mission

Our mission is to provide UNH students with excellent teacher training in early childhood education that parallels our work with children and families, as well as offer opportunities to learn about child and family development in a naturalistic setting. Each year more than one hundred students enrolled in Family Studies courses at UNH use the Center as a laboratory for experiential teaching and learning, and documentation of those experiences. Students from other disciplines, for example, education, psychology, occupational therapy, and communication disorders, also use the Center as a laboratory for the study of children.

Research and Outreach Mission

Our mission is to engage directly in action research that supports our work with children, to provide the UNH community with access to a relevant research site, and to engage the broader professional community in learning about innovative early childhood practices. The seven classrooms in the center are equipped with observation booths that are used by college students, faculty, parents, and visitors. These booths provide researchers with the opportunity to observe children in a natural context. Research projects have ranged from the effects of infant child care on attachment to the development of emergent literacy. All research projects must be approved by the UNH Institutional Review Board and by the Associate director. The center hosts an annual conference and frequent tours by educators from across the country and internationally.

Diversity Mission

"Lack of the free and equitable intercourse which springs from a variety of shared interests makes intellectual stimulation unbalanced. Diversity of stimulation means novelty, and novelty means challenge to thought."

John Dewey, 1916

We believe that human diversity is integral to the care and education of young children and to all those who touch their lives. Diversity at the University of New Hampshire can be defined as "a fully inclusive campus community that is enriched by persons of different races, genders, ethnicities, nationalities, economic

backgrounds, ages, abilities, sexual orientation and gender identity or expression, and religious beliefs.” Our goal is to promote awareness and acceptance, affirm equity, and take an active stance against bias in our community.

We strive to respect and value the differences in each child and family in our community through all that we do. We value the development of strong relationships with families and colleagues in order to better understand how we can respond to cultural and historical differences in experiences, values, and practices. We offer an environment that welcomes and celebrates the sharing of family history and culture in the classroom in meaningful ways. In our curriculum we are intentional in providing children with opportunities to explore similarities and variation, and we are responsive to the questions that emerge.

We support children in being active participants in their world by connecting them to their community in ways that foster an understanding of diversity and an ability to effect change. We are committed to an open and ongoing dialogue among colleagues, families, and the students we mentor, seeking insight into how we contribute to social bias and the process of change. As adults we strive to be models of active participation in our field by speaking out against bias and seeking equity.

History

On the occasion of 75 years of educating young children and future teachers in 2004, the Child Study and Development Center (CSDC) at the University of New Hampshire embarked on a process of reflection about the identity of the center. One starting place for better understanding *Where are we now?* and *Where are we going?* is to look carefully at *What came before?* Through this process we created a visual timeline, an *Identity Card* of sorts, that acts as a provocation for dialogue among teachers, faculty, families, community members, and, of course, children. In lieu of this more detailed photographic record and timeline displayed in our Community Room, we have included a much briefer history of the CSDC below.

The history of the CSDC mirrors many of the significant shifts in the broader society, including changing gender roles, the increasing participation of women in work outside the home, and challenges of cultural pluralism. More specifically, our center has often ridden the edge of the wave of innovations in early childhood education.

In January 1929, the Home Economics Department collaborated with the Durham Kindergarten Association to provide a laboratory for child development classes. Children from the private nursery school kindergarten attended the preschool. The University furnished the building, heat, light, maintenance, and the supervisor for the students taking the courses. In order to have the school near enough for university students to use, the program was set up in the location in what was called the “Practice House”.

In 1937, due to financial and administrative needs, the use of the Practice House as a nursery school was discontinued and the building was converted into a Craft Cottage. Weaving and other crafts, which had been a part of Home Economics, were transferred to the newly created Department of the Arts. In order that some work with children could be continued, one room in the new home management building, the Elizabeth DeMeritt House, was used to maintain a nursery school for six children.

In 1947, the small Home Economics Nursery School merged with the mother-run G.I. (Government Issued) Nursery in the College Road Apartments. In 1950, the Nursery School moved back to the Craft Cottage. There was one morning and one afternoon program for preschoolers. The student teachers’ primary role then was to observe through screened observation booths. A typical session included rest time on rugs, juice and story time. At that time there were only two courses taught in Child Development.

Shortly before 1980 a new program for toddlers was started, and in 1983 permanent positions with benefits were approved for two teachers. After years of discussion and development, the current facility was constructed in 1988, and full-day programs were initiated to offer year around services to children six weeks to five years of age. The existing nursery school programs also moved to the new facility, located at O’Kane Farm. In 1993 a full day kindergarten was added as a result of parent interest. The Child Study and Development Center (CSDC) was accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in 1999 and in 2005 celebrated 75 years of operation.

Licensing and Accreditation

The CSDC is licensed by the State of New Hampshire and was initially accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in 1999. NAEYC accreditation sets the norm for what it means to be a high-quality early childhood program. The program standards and criteria represented are evidence-based and grounded in six explicit values:

- The uniqueness of childhood as a developmental phase;
- The essential contribution of optimal child learning and development of reciprocal, respectful, relationships with children and their families;
- The distinctive opportunity from birth through kindergarten to support children’s intellectual, language, and social-emotional development;
- The essential role of partnerships with families and communities;
- The significance of a strong program infrastructure in providing high-quality care and education;
- The importance of the quality of children’s lives in the present, not only as preparation for the future.

For more information regarding NAEYC accreditation please visit the CSDC website and click on the link.

Confidentiality

CSDC operates as a community in which the building of trusting relationships between families and center personnel is important to the quality of our programs, the delivery of a developmentally appropriate curriculum, and our mission as a research and teacher training laboratory. To be in compliance with federal and state regulations and to respect the privacy of everyone, confidentiality of information is of primary importance at our center.

Child and Family Records:

1. All child/family records are confidential and kept in secure cabinets.
2. Only full-time CSDC staff members have access to children’s records on an educational or administrative need to know basis. Other staff/students/external bodies view files only under the supervision of an administrator or staff member. A log entry is made on each occasion. Parent permission is secured as required
3. Parent questionnaires and developmental records may be reviewed at CSDC by UNH interns and student teachers for children in their assigned classroom with permission from the classroom teacher.
4. All CSDC staff, interns and volunteers sign a confidentiality policy form.
5. Parents/guardians can review records of their own child in the CSDC office.
6. Under no circumstances should records be left out unattended.

7. The status of children and families is discussed in an appropriately private space only by CSDC personnel who are working with or have a legitimate educational need regarding that child or family.
8. Limited information regarding a medical condition of a child that is necessary for the safety of the child (e.g. allergy information) is provided as needed to personnel working directly with children.
9. Personal information regarding children and families is only shared as needed or requested by the family/staff and with respect to the privacy of each individual.
10. Information about families and children may not be released to other agencies or individuals without written permission from the parent/guardian. Current law permits CSDC to transfer educational records to an appropriate public school.

Research and Teacher Training:

1. CSDC Parents/Guardians sign a release on admission to CSDC which stipulates the use of educational documentation (e.g. photos, children's work) by CSDC staff and students, and the use of photographs by UNH and the media. When prior permission is not given, CSDC will seek verbal approval to the extent possible.
2. All research projects that require UNH Institutional Review Board (IRB) permission will also be reviewed and approved in writing by the CSDC Director or Associate Director.
3. All research projects involving direct collection of data from children/families require prior parent written informed consent and, as needed, oral consent from the child.
4. When writing for college assignments and other research, UNH students and researchers use only the child's first name, initials, and a date of birth.

Visitors to CSDC are not permitted to take photographs that include children's faces, except with parent permission.