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Children's Center
 Student Engagement Report
 FY 2011-2012

Mission Statement

The Children's Center supports the University community by providing high quality care and education for young children in a convenient, safe and affordable environment. The Center ensures that student parents will have access to higher education and university employees will have an on-campus facility for their children. At the Children's Center, children engage in a stimulating educational program that contributes to their intellectual, emotional, social, and physical well-being. Parents participate in the program and are given opportunities to learn how children develop. The Children's Center is committed to providing experiences that help student employees and interns to value and practice developmentally appropriate early childhood care and education.

Program Description

The CSUF Children's Center is a campus child development program at California State University, Fullerton serving infants, toddlers, and preschoolers whose parents are enrolled in University courses as well as children of CSUF faculty and staff. Founded by students in 1971, the program is funded and operated by the Associated Students, Inc. and also receives funds from the California Department of Education and the California State University.

The children at the CSUF Children's Center are placed in one of six classrooms based on their age at time of enrollment. Each of the classrooms is staffed with a Master Teacher who, with the assistance of a Lead Teacher is responsible for setting the direction of the program, planning, and working closely with parents and student staff to ensure the best possible program for the children enrolled.

The student staff includes Student Assistants and Interns from the University. Both paid and volunteer staff work closely with the Master Teachers in implementing the program.

Engagement Results

Event/Activity	Fall 2011 (Participants)	Spring 2012 (Participants)
How many CSUF Students we provided with Child Care	151	169
How many CSUF students we provided professional development.	96	88

Results Summary/Philosophy

The cornerstone of this program is a belief that healthy self-esteem is the most important goal for children, as well as for parents and staff. It underlies all decisions, systems, policies, and planning, and generates a feeling of respect by and for each individual. To build healthy self-esteem in children, we help them know that they are lovable, special, competent and capable and show them that we trust them to take responsibility for their behavior. Adult-child communication is the most significant factor in developing these feelings, so staff training in the area of communication skills is emphasized. Through skillful communication we create an atmosphere in which feelings and ideas are expressed openly and heard respectfully, from the youngest to the oldest participant. This forms the foundation of the interactions of adults and children, adults and adults, and children and children; it is central to the parent education plan and to the curriculum.

Future Goals

For Children

To establish a play-based learning environment that encourages each child to...

- ◆ be part of a community of friends
- ◆ develop a positive sense of self
- ◆ be an effective communicator
- ◆ be an effective learner
- ◆ communicate ideas through the expressive arts
- ◆ use their whole body effectively
- ◆ practice basic safety and health habits and understand why they are important

For Parents...a program which provides

- ◆ flexible scheduling of child care in order to support their student/family schedule
- ◆ support of their relationship with their child
- ◆ opportunities to increase understanding of their child, and young children in general
- ◆ opportunities to influence and contribute to their child's program
- ◆ recognition that parents are doing the best they can do on any given day
- ◆ encouragement to trust their ability to resolve parenting issues
- ◆ mutual support from and for other parents

For Staff and Interns...a work environment which helps them

- ◆ develop greater understanding of young children
- ◆ foster problem-solving among and with children and adults
- ◆ interact with children in non-authoritarian, authentic manner
- ◆ facilitate learning opportunities which are relevant to the children
- ◆ gain insight about themselves, their relationships with children and as members of a team
- ◆ gain work experience and training applicable to future employment
- ◆ gain knowledge of professional practices and ethics in the field of early childhood