

Annual Report to ECDC Families 2014

August 1, 2014

Dear Parents,

As an academic service unit within the School of Education, Health, and Human Performance (SOEHHP), we submit annual program reports to College of Charleston (July) and our national accreditation body, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in May. These reports are published on our website (<http://ecdc.cofc.edu/licensing-and-accreditation/index.php>) as well as our annual re-certification materials for the *NatureExplore* program. I should have the 2014 reports posted before the beginning of the 2014 school year and I would highly encourage you to read them!

The purposes of this letter/report are to (a) describe how our program evaluation process works, (b) explain how your thoughts and ideas inform the process, and (c) update you on goals/priorities for the upcoming academic year.

ECDC Program Evaluation Process

Our *Program Goals Assessment Plan* is published on the ECDC Website “Mission” page <http://ecdc.cofc.edu/about-the-center/mission/index.php>. The template for this plan displays a timeline of evaluation activities that take place over the course of each academic year. These activities provide us with feedback from families, lead & student staff, and campus faculty/staff related to goals for (a) children, (b) families, and (c) campus. It also outlines how we analyze and report our findings to take actions for continuous program improvement.

How Your Thoughts and Ideas Inform the Program Evaluation Process

While we are not like a traditional preschool or child care program and our parents do not have governing authority, we need your feedback, support, and participation in program evaluation to continue developing our program and maintaining our standards of excellence. We gather feedback through:

- New Family Surveys (Fall)
- Annual Family Surveys (Spring)
- Annual CofC Faculty/Staff Surveys [for those who use ECDC for practicum/research] (Spring)
- Annual ECDC Staff surveys (Spring)
- Unsolicited Feedback (emails, conversations, conferences, etc.)
- Parent Advisory Committee activities
- PTO (Parent Teacher Organization) activities and meetings
- Conferences with families, teachers, and/or the director

Feedback from families is primarily useful for monitoring our goals for children and families. But because so many of you are either faculty or staff members at the College, your ideas are often also very helpful for furthering the ways we serve and interact within our campus community. Those of you who work outside the College assist us with making connections in the local and Tri-County communities.

As we consider the feedback/data we gather, we are looking for both general themes and direct connections to each goal. Fall 2013 New Family Surveys (NFS), were 100% positive for all 13 survey items, indicating families felt welcomed, accepted, and comfortable with the way transitions were managed (16 surveys distributed & returned). Side-by-side comparisons of the annual Family Survey data collected each spring for the past three years show that our families overwhelmingly believe we have a very strong program across all ten categories (overall 2014 survey score 97.3% positive) and that we also continue to make improvements noticeable to our families. The high response rate (91%) also provides confidence that feedback is representative of our parent group. 2014 Spring Family Survey Data is summarized in Table 1 below.

Annual Report to ECDC Families 2014

Table 1. 2014 Family Survey Data Results

Number Distributed: 45

Number Returned: 41

Response Rate: 91%

Focus Category	Positive Response rate
Relationships (6 questions) <i>Comments analysis (12 comments): Parents view this area as a particular strength but one family would prefer detailed daily information about their individual child.</i>	96.3
Curriculum (2 questions) <i>Comments analysis(3 comments) : Parents are highly satisfied with curriculum, in particular incorporation of children's individual interests and family culture</i>	97.2
Teaching (3 questions) <i>Comments analysis (11 comments): Parents highly satisfied with teacher qualifications and interaction; one family indicated they wish they could participate more in the classroom.</i>	97.4
Assessment (8 questions) <i>Comments analysis (15 comments): parents feel informed about their child's progress; several indicated they would be open to alternate means of reporting/sharing assessment data</i>	96.0
Health (3 questions) <i>Comments analysis (4 comments): parents particularly pleased with information sharing about specific health issues.</i>	99.2
Families (15 questions) <i>Comments analysis (6 comments): uniform level of satisfaction about supports provided to families; one family would prefer more communication about daily activities of their individual child.</i>	99.1
Community Relationships (3 questions) <i>Comments analysis (2 comments): one family indicated they would like to be more involved in ECDC support for the larger community, but don't have time.</i>	93.3
Leadership & Management (6 questions) <i>Comments analysis: (8 comments) uniform support for leadership/management; one family would like more support for home/school/home transitions after master teacher is gone for the day.</i>	99.6

The two themes most represented in comments across these data were:

1. *Families feel a strong sense of community at ECDC and a high level of confidence in the quality of the program.* We continue to be encouraged that families recognize and support the unique nature of our program, its mission, and our ongoing efforts.
2. *Building and maintaining effective home/school/home communications and transitions continues as a high priority.* Finding a balance between what families want and what we can realistically provide is an ongoing challenge that is also complicated by the logistics of fluctuating arrivals/departures and our great dependence on student support staff. Parents responded positively to our graduate assistants' involvement in classroom and program websites, blogs, and newsletters. We also had a high number of families who indicated they understand and feel positively about our assessment and progress reporting process. In 2014-2015 we will continue to explore possibilities for
 - Determining family communications preferences (this is a 'moving target' and often changes year to year)
 - Different ways to share information about group and individual children's activities, especially when the master teacher is not available for informal conversation at drop-off or pick-up
 - Streamlining reporting tool(s)
 - Providing print copies of assessment reports/narratives

Annual Report to ECDC Families 2014

2013-2014 Activities

Our 2014 Annual Report (<http://ecdc.cofc.edu/licensing-and-accreditation/index.php>) summarizes what we did this year to address specific priorities relative to broad goals, and describes goals for 2014-2015. In addition to broad goals related to our program mission, we identify priorities in the Annual Report to the College for (a) program quality and distinction, (b) professional development and research, and (c) service to the campus and community. This report also includes demographic information about our community as well as statistics representing how our program served both the campus and general communities. Highlights from 2013-2014:

- 54 children enrolled (45 families)
- 7.5% Special Needs
- 24.1% Minority population
- 14.8% Bi-lingual/ESL (7 languages)
- 341 (165 CofC) wait list
- 6 Permanent, 31 student staff
- 560 visitors
- 1149 observation/practicum hours by CofC students
- Re-structured student staff orientation and professional development activities
- Campus collaborations:
 - Office of Sustainability/Grounds (playground)
 - TEDU Faculty Search Committee
 - R.E.A.C.H Internship program
 - 3rd Annual CofC ECE Summit
 - Hosting WINGS Summer Camp
 - 3 SOEHHP field students
 - Admissions (hosting prospective students)
 - Event planning with SOEHHP faculty and students
 - 40th Anniversary Team committee work
- Community collaborations:
 - Memminger partnership re-established
 - Meeting Street Academy, teacher coaching and in-service training
 - Charleston Senior Citizens Foster Grandparents, volunteer in-service training
 - Association for Constructivist Teaching (ACT), December 2014 conference planning
 - *Corpus Collosum*, Sudoku quilt project
 - CCSD Curriculum Task Force
 - Academic Magnet High School Senior Thesis mentoring

In 2014-2015 our curriculum priorities include:

- Continuing to incorporate “loose parts” play outside that promotes imaginative, constructive and sustained play.
- Supporting activities that connect children with the natural world (look for collaboration with Memminger faculty and children on this)
- Collaboratively read/discuss current curriculum literature we feel is particularly informative to our program philosophy. This year we read Christine Chaille’s book, *Constructivism across the curriculum in early childhood classrooms: Big ideas as inspiration* (2007). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Explore our use of digital and print media for visual documentation of children’s projects/work
- Continued expansion of relevant professional development activities for our student staff

Final thoughts

2013-2014 was a successful and satisfying year in many respects. Initiatives we have worked on for the past four or five years really took off this year, especially those relative to our outdoor play space and building collaborative relationships that advance advocacy for young children’s rights to high quality early childhood education. The highlight of our 2014-2015 academic year will be a year-long celebration of ECDC’s fortieth anniversary. I am

Annual Report to ECDC Families 2014

reminded how fortunate I am to be the leader of a program with such a wonderful tradition of quality, caring, and leadership in our early education community.

I hope that this report is helpful and I thank all of you all for your openness, honesty, and willingness to provide us with feedback and to participate in this process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Candace Jaruszewicz".

Candace Jaruszewicz, Ph.D.
Director, Miles ECDC