
N.E. Miles Early Childhood Development Center

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Narrative Description of the Status of the Discipline(s) from a National Perspective (including emerging issues and trends)

Providing high quality early childhood education and securing access to affordable high-quality care for children birth to age five continue as high visibility issues presently persist across the country and in South Carolina. An increasing body of research from multiple sectors of the academic community on brain development is also provoking new thinking on issues like the role of executive function skills for school readiness, the importance of social and emotional development, and the role of play in the development of creativity and critical thinking. With increasing integration of technology and interactive media in early childhood programs, intentional and developmentally appropriate quality care and early childhood best practices are necessary to support young children's development across the country and beyond.

Program

Mission statement - The N.E. Miles Early Childhood Development Center has served as a demonstration program and laboratory school for the college as part of the School of EHHP since 1974.

- A demonstration preschool for research, observation, and practicum purposes
- Quality care and early education for children ages two through five from the College and neighboring community
- An active model of child advocacy in the Charleston community

Strategies and tactics in the College's strategic plan your department or program would place as highest priorities

Student Experience & Success

Strategy 1: Upgrade and maintain physical facilities to enable and foster effective learning experiences.

Strategy 4: Recruit, retain and graduate greater numbers of underrepresented minority and first-generation students.

Strategy 5: Create a welcoming and inclusive environment where all students feel they belong.

Academic Distinction

Strategy 2: Attract and enroll more highly-qualified, civic-minded and intellectually curious students.

Strategy 4: Make experiential learning a differentiator of the College of Charleston educational experience.

Strategy 5: Support and incentivize faculty to lead the way in implementing innovative teaching models and practices and contributing to cutting-edge thought leadership and research in their respective fields.

Employee Experience & Success

Strategy 1: Address compensation, salary compression and cost of living.

Strategy 3: Invest in faculty and staff learning and development to foster professional growth, leadership and lifelong learning.

Strategy 5: Create a sense of purpose and belonging for all.

Program goals and their relationship to the College's strategic plan

Our program provides support to the EHHP and the campus and general communities-at-large that connects to the College's strategic plan in both direct and indirect ways. Our mission and goals focus on consistent program excellence grounded in current research, furthered by professional development, and shared through service and advocacy at the local, state, and national level.

| CofC Strategic Plan Goals | ECDC |
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| Student Experience & Success | ECDC employs between 25-35 undergraduate and graduate students and hosts between 300-700 students annually for academic, practicum, and/or research activities. |
| | Our population reflects the socio-cultural and linguistic diversity of the CofC campus and surrounding community. Our curriculum and activities are responsive to the needs and interests of children, staff, and those with whom we work on campus and in the greater community. |
| | ECDC has been a full participant in campus life since 1974. We offer many ways that CofC students can engage with the program through employment, volunteer work, and service-learning activity. We provide the limited number of CofC student parents we are able to serve with much needed affordable childcare of the highest quality. |
| | ECDC strives to upgrade and maintain the physical facility. In spring 2019 ECDC conducted a land survey with ADC engineering to assess improvements on the playground and budget cost. In fall 2019 ECDC partnered with Trident United Way's Day of Caring to redesign the shared green space between ECDC and Memminger Elementary to promote partnership efforts and create a collaborative gathering place. |
| | In spring 2020 ECDC hosted a REACH intern in the prek/kindergarten classroom. |

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| Academic Distinction | ECDC is nationally accredited (NAEYC) and also certified as an outdoor classroom program (Nature Explore). As a demonstration program, we provide CofC students, parents, and members of the greater community with the opportunity to see and experience excellence in practice. Our curriculum is contextualized to our neighborhood, campus, and community. |
| | ECDC continues to attract curious and civically minded students to partner together in collaborative campus experiences. In 2019-20 these included partnering with Delta Gamma, Child Life, the President's Office, Jewish Studies and Memminger Elementary. |
| | ECDC provides experiential learning for undergraduate and graduate students in early childhood education, elementary education, special education, psychology, performing arts, and the Child Life program. |
| Employee Experience & Success | We provide the limited number of CofC faculty/staff parents we are able to serve with much needed affordable childcare of the highest quality. ECDC serves children ages two through kindergarten. |
| | ECDC Master Teachers Stone and White and Director Katie Houser presented at the 2019 Association for Constructivist Teaching conference. |
| | ECDC hosted a campus wide Peace Parade in collaboration with the College's Peace Initiative in spring 2020. ECDC director Katie Houser and Master Teachers Mary White and Ryan stone presented at the 2019 CofC Early Childhood Summit. |
| | Director Katie Houser and Dr. Katie Swart conducted the <i>Early Childhood Play and Academics: What Are Parents' Perceptions?</i> study and presented at the 2019 NAECTE conference and 2020 SCECA conference. |
| | Director Katie Houser, Dr. Kelley White and Dr. Katie Swart conducted the <i>ECDC Transitions Study</i> . |
| | Master Teachers Stone and Gates served as adjunct faculty during the fall 2019. |
| | ECDC consistently makes efficient use of its resources, promotes and models sustainable practices, and actively engages in efforts to seek supplemental funding through various sources to keep our costs low while maintaining the highest possible standards. |

Student Learning Outcomes of the program

“At ECDC, we believe the purpose of early childhood education is to help children acquire skills and dispositions needed to become life-long self-directed learners and citizens. We believe that in an increasingly global environment, we learn these things in a community that celebrates both the things we share in common and the differences that make us each unique and interesting human beings. We believe that every child has special needs, so all children are accepted and welcomed at ECDC and fully included in all dimensions of our program.”

Our program places the highest priority on development of “executive function” skills, the dispositions and abilities currently determined by research in the cognitive psychology, education, and health sciences literature to be the best predictors of long-term social, academic, and life success. These skills include self-regulation, focus, persistence, curiosity, problem solving and conflict-resolution, critical thinking, and language and literacy skills.

Narrative Summary and Analysis of Departmental or Program Accomplishments

Please discuss any of the following that apply to your department or program over the past year, making reference to the analysis of any data provided to you on the [Academic Affairs Program Information Portal](#). Discuss your strengths and where would you like to develop/improve.

Curricular offerings unusual for your program(s)

Unlike most preschools, we do not use commercially produced curriculum products at ECDC. For many years, we have modeled an idiosyncratic interpretation of Lucy Calkins’ *writing workshop* that is now in use in many of our local public schools. In our 4/5K classroom we design our reading instruction in a multi-faceted approach. This includes a combination of research-based practices including *Fountas & Pinnell* Guided Reading texts, Independent Reading and individual student leveled texts, and *Targeted Reading Intervention* strategies developed at the University of North Carolina. We believe these strategies provide a highly effective means to address individual needs and teacher priorities and an appropriate balance between reading and writing instruction. Our math approach is holistic and includes hands on materials, real life problem solving, number sense, and the integration of Montessori materials.

We also use an “emergent” and long-term project-based approach to content curriculum inspired by the preschools in Reggio Emilia, Italy. Emergent curriculum responds to the needs, strengths, and interests of the children in each group and therefore, the investigative part of our curriculum varies greatly from one year to the next. Children are involved in long periods of time to play, explore, and investigate with a variety of classroom materials. Classroom projects emerge out of the interests of the children. We address the SC Early Learning (SC-EL) standards, SC College and Career Ready Kindergarten standards and NAEYC standards by intentional planning, balancing and documenting child-initiated and teacher directed activities and assessments. Master teachers develop weekly lesson plans using the standards and children’s interest to guide their planning and decision making of classroom materials.

Instructional contributions to other units, programs, and initiatives, including the Honors and First Year Experience programs, undergraduate and graduate programs outside your department program, the REACH program, etc.

In light of COVID-19 in spring 2020, ECDC was actively engaged in a variety of instructional collaborations that contributed to other units across the campus. Students from three FYE courses 1) Learn it, live it, give it—Mentorship 2) Children and Families with Diverse Needs: How are they served in your community? and 3) Power of Play for Young Children’s Learning and Development participated with their professors at ECDC in 2019-20. In spring 2020 ECDC also hosted a REACH intern in our 4/5 classroom. In addition, ECDC collaborated with Ms. Flynn and EHHP students in two PE courses during the fall and spring semesters. In fall 2019, ECDC collaborated with the Theater Department’s creative drama students for three weeks of collaborative drama sessions.

Distance education or hybrid course offerings

Our website is an on-going resource for other programs locally, across the country, and internationally. We are also making increased use of social media, primarily our Facebook page, to share daily events and reflections about high quality early education. Additionally, we have shared our children’s stories using digital techniques such as Adobe Premier and other digital platforms to create animations shared on a private YouTube channel. We have been continuing to strengthen the ECDC blog to share documentation and best practices.

In spring 2020 and in response to the school closure for COVID, ECDC provided distance learning from spring break to the end of the spring semester. This included daily Zoom sessions providing children with instruction through whole group and small group lessons. In addition, ECDC organized a Google Drive folder for families to access with a variety of instructional websites, videos, and virtual activities to use with their children at home. ECDC staff also recorded asynchronous videos for ECDC families to access and created an ECDC Google site to share communication and resources with families virtually.

Departmental or program contributions to interdisciplinarity, internationalization/globalization, personalized education and high impact student experiences (such as research and creative activities, civic engagement, study away, internships, peer education and service learning) during review year. *(If departmental faculty entered applicable data in fields on the “Scheduled Teaching” section in the FAS, data for the chair’s use in creating this **analysis** can be pulled from the FAS.)*

We placed 10 graduate students from Early Childhood, Teaching, Learning & Advocacy, and Environmental Studies programs to assistantship positions during 2019-20. Undergraduate student staff’s program majors included Early Childhood, Elementary, Special Education, Exercise Science, Middle Grades, Communications, Psychology, Dance, and Biology.

ECDC hosted 9 CofC practicum students (EDEE 510 and FYSE 138) who completed 93 hours of practicum. ECDC hosted 482 hours of observation from student visitors. These students were from 15 course sections in Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Psychology, Special Education, and Child Life Departments. Students also completed 89 service/volunteer

hours. We facilitated two faculty research projects from TEDU. (Swart & Houser and Houser, White, & Swart). We also hosted visiting teachers from the Little School at Grace Church, Island School and Memminger Elementary. In addition, ECDC served on the TCCC's Kindergarten Readiness Network and TCCC's Continuous Quality Improvement working group. The total number of hours the program was used for inter-disciplinary outreach was 630.

ECDC also organized a fall community donation drive for people affected by Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas. ECDC families and staff donated supplies such as clothing and toiletries. Additionally, ECDC hosted a variety of community visitors including Teaching Fellows, CCSD, the Office of Sustainability, Memminger Elementary and University School of the Lowcountry. ECDC has also developed the "*Pathways to Peace*" partnership with Memminger Elementary hosting a variety of collaborative projects and experiences for students and staff at both schools.

Changes in departmental or program enrollments

During the 2019-20 school year 49 children were enrolled at ECDC (48 enrolled for 2018-19). There were 4 Master Teacher positions, 1 Director, and 1 Administrative Assistant (no difference). ECDC employed a total of 26 Teacher Assistants (decrease from 2018-19) and 6 full time Graduate Assistants.

Summary of student and/or graduate accomplishments

Several of our undergraduate and graduate students received scholarships and graduated in fall 2019 and spring 2020. We celebrated the accomplishments of 2 graduate assistants and 8 undergraduate students.

Please provide a brief narrative summary of the curricular assessment activities undertaken by your unit this year, along with both actions taken in earlier years that have led to improvement and plans for improvement.

Our program is now entering year five of the five-year cycle for accreditation through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC accreditation requires programs to engage in continuous monitoring, data collection, analysis, adaptations, and annual reporting for continuous improvement. NAEYC revised the 10 Early Learning Program Accreditation Standards and Assessment Items for 2019. This year will be the reaccreditation year and ECDC submitted an intent to renew in May 2020. During 2019-20 we spent time organizing portfolio documentation of curriculum activities and child assessment artifacts to prepare for the 2020-2021 reaccreditation process. Due to COVID, ECDC had to submit a site visit disruption form. We expect the reaccreditation site visit to take place sometime during the spring of 2021.

The program is in the process of completing all required assessment activities using the CAS (Compliance Assist Software) system. The CAS system documents program goals, alignment with EHHP and University strategic plans, data collection methods, data for 2019-20, and documentation of program improvements based on data analysis.

Due to COVID and ECDC's closure in spring 2020, all spring parent conferences were conducted virtually. All end of the year assessment data was collected through individual virtual Zoom sessions.

Please discuss the diversity among your faculty, including efforts made in recruitment (if applicable) to increase the presence of under-represented groups.

ECDC strives to be a community that reflects the University's diversity goals. Our 2019-20 child population included:

- 49 enrolled children
- 29% minority representation
- 8% bilingual children (5 languages in addition to English)
- 6% children with special needs (including special health needs)

Our staff is not as diverse as our family/child population, but we are trying to recruit males and a more diverse group of teachers; in 2019-20 there was 5% minority in our staff and 6% population of males on our staff (both a decrease from 2018-19).

Our efforts to increase the presence of under-represented groups are primarily done by attending student orientation and association meetings, and word-of-mouth recruiting. The director also makes classroom and department visits to share about the program with faculty and staff.

Please provide a summary analysis of research and professional development productivity in your department or program, referring to the Supporting Data section as appropriate. What are your strengths and challenges?

Pre-K/K master teachers Stone and Gates actively served as Adjunct Professors in the MAT Early Childhood graduate program during the fall of 2019. The program director planned and served on the 2020 *College of Charleston Early Childhood Summit Committee*. The program director also served on the Memminger/ECDC Advisory board, Trident United Way's Cradle to Career Kindergarten Readiness Network committee, the National Coalition for Campus Children's Centers Communication and Outreach committee, and Trident United Way's Continuous Quality Improvement working group.

Two ECDC Master Teachers (Stone and White) and the program director (Houser) were accepted to present at the annual ACT Conference in Ann Arbor, MI in October 2019. Director Katie Houser, Dr. Kelley White and Dr. Katie Swart conducted the *ECDC Transitions Study*. Director Katie Houser and Dr. Katie Swart conducted the *Early Childhood Play and Academics: What Are Parents' Perceptions?* study and presented at the 2019 NAECTE conference and 2020 SCECA conference. Master Teacher Gates attended the SCAEYC conference in Columbia, SC in October 2019. Master Teacher Johnston attended the annual MEPI conference in Kiawah, SC in February 2020.

Our strengths in this area are a lead team committed to engaging in scholarship and collaboration with others. Our challenges are budgetary, but we feel we make good use of creative solutions to fund PD activities. For example, the program director is designated CofC coordinator for SC Teacher Certificate Renewal, which provides for an expanded set of options for campus faculty

and ECDC teachers to maintain current teaching certificates. Since DSS requires our director and teachers to acquire between 15 and 20 contact hours per year of professional development, we look for local opportunities or online training to minimize professional development costs.

Please provide a summary of departmental or program service and outreach contributions to the school, College, community (of a professional nature), or profession. What are your strengths and challenges?

Our strengths in this area are a result of institutional credibility and the reputation of the EHHP and the ECDC. Many teachers and administrators from other programs visit ECDC to observe and/or consult with us on varying dimensions of early childhood education, sometimes resulting in longer-term collaborations. In 2019 the program director provided guidance to the Preschool of the Arts Charleston at the Center for Jewish Life. The director is a member of both the Memminger Elementary School partnership/collaboration effort and TEDU Early Childhood program committee. Master Teacher Stone and director Houser also serve on both the MES Partnership committee and MES/ECDC advisory boards. Stone provided service and outreach to Memminger Elementary school's Kaleidoscope program in collaboration with his EDEE 650 course in the fall.

In fall 2019, ECDC provided outreach to the Charleston Area Senior Center and Florence Crittenton Programs of South Carolina.

Because of our long-standing collaborations and interactions with the Office of Sustainability and the Grounds Departments, our program is known as a leader in the area of outdoor education and nature play. We are currently the only program in South Carolina certified through the *Nature Explore* program as an outdoor classroom. This year ECDC hosted Trident United Way's Annual Day of Caring and revitalized the gathering space between ECDC and Memminger.

This year we expanded our outreach of the "*Pathways to Peace*" project as a part of CofC's Peace Initiative in Spring 2020. In January 2019 ECDC received a gracious donation to formalize the "Pathways to Peace Collaborative Partnership." This gift helped to formalize three strategic areas of focus: direct student support, parent and partner engagement, and programming & professional development. ECDC continued to host play dates for students in child development through kindergarten from Memminger to visit and explore the outdoor playground. In the fall, ECDC hosted a collaboration between Memminger and Charleston Day School students. The partnership continued into the spring when students at both schools collaborated to design a peace garden located in the shared space between the two schools. ECDC expanded this peace project in March 2020 and invited President HSU, Interim Provost Welch, staff, faculty, and students across the campus to join in the campus wide Peace parade to promote peace and equity in the community.

During spring 2020 and the challenges associated with COVID-19, the program director collaborated with Winthrop University's Macfeat Early Childhood Lab school's director. This outreach together supported a collaborative effort to plan for a safe reopening of both lab schools.

Our challenges to service and outreach continue to be the result of the necessity to follow state mandated DSS ratios and regulations and the challenges associated with arranging substitutes for director and staff to attend meetings, conferences, and community events.

Has your department or program conducted professional development opportunities for faculty? If yes, what are examples of those opportunities?

Yes, the program director regularly develops and conducts PD workshops and seminars for both the Master Teacher group and the student staff at ECDC. The program director hosts bi-weekly workshops and meetings with ECDC graduate assistants to discuss curriculum, classroom management, and child assessment strategies. The program director utilizes connections to the local community and partners with the local school district to provide professional development opportunities and school visits for staff.

What success have you had in meeting program, departmental, school or College goals? What obstacles prevent you from reaching specific program, departmental, school or College goals? In what way can Academic Affairs support your efforts?

Our goals don't change that much from one year to the next and our accreditation body's priority is ongoing program improvement; therefore, we remain focused at all times and committed to providing the highest model of excellence possible, significant outreach and advocacy in the community, and maintenance of productive scholarship efforts. Within each of these three areas, particular projects or initiatives may change, but on the whole, we believe our program operates at a high level of consistency with the goals of the university and our parent School, the EHHP. This year the Director was included in the Administrative council and this contributed to improved communication between EHHP and ECDC, opportunities to connect to other programs and faculty in EHHP and remain current on ongoing goals within EHHP.

Our challenges focus primarily on meeting the need for desired access to our program, articulated in the C of C Strategic Plan as *Academic Distinction Strategy 4*. The waiting list continues to hover around 350 children, while our enrollment is typically @ 48-50 children. The challenge to ECDC is the capacity of our facility and our limited ability to accommodate a small enrollment on campus. This provides limitations for college employees who desire access to a high quality early childhood program and less opportunities for field placements and experiential learning for college students seeking hands on experience.

Another challenge to the program is articulated in the *Employee Experience & Success Strategy 3*. As a demonstration preschool for research, observation, and practicum purposes our staff must be provided with ongoing professional development to grow in all areas to model best practices. In addition, staff are expected to maintain annual professional development credit hours for DSS regulations (15 credit hours for teachers, 20 credit hours for Director). Currently, professional development funding is shared by the staff from the ECDC Research and Development account. This account typically provides about \$2,292 annually that is shared by the six full time staff members to attend conferences, travel, or other professional development events.

ECDC is experiencing challenges associated with *Student Experience & Success Strategy 3* in regard to our infrastructure. There are significant drainage issues on the playground and flooding. There are also two leaks contributing to water damage in the Butterfly classroom. Two more leaks are contributing to water damage in the multi-purpose room and kitchen. I have reported all of these to facilities and placed work orders for repairs. ECDC is concerned the water damage is contributing to possible mold and mildew problems in the building. This is unsafe for all children and staff, especially those with respiratory issues like asthma and concerns with COVID-19.

As we embark on our NAEYC reaccreditation for 2020-2021 the director and ECDC master teachers have collected documentation and evidence to submit classroom portfolios and the program portfolio. This has required additional hours dedicated to collaboration, reflection, documentation, and writing to support evidence for reaccreditation. Academic Affairs can help support our efforts by funding a part time GA to help support necessary organization and data collection. In an effort to align ECDC salaries in parity with similar positions, ECDC will plan to conduct a salary study and tuition increase 2021-22. ECDC has not increased tuition costs since 2017. This is supported in *Employee Experience & Success Strategy 1*.

What curricular development or other major changes in the program(s) are planned for the next three years? Briefly, what resources are required to implement these?

| ECDC Mission | Program Goals | Curricular Development/Possible Changes | Resources Needed |
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| A demonstration preschool for research, observation and practicum purposes | Strengthen pedagogical knowledge and leadership capacity in aspiring early childhood teachers by cultivating a stronger university-school partnership. | Support the university-school partnership with Memminger Elementary School and continue to serve as a liaison to strengthen the development of Early Childhood teacher leaders and help to diversify practicum experiences for pre-service teachers. ECDC partnership efforts will focus on sharing best practices in developmentally appropriate practices, inquiry and play, strengthen teacher training, and teacher retention. Possibly replicate and expand ECDC or create a small-scale Early Childhood Development program to allow more access to quality programming at a satellite setting *Note* At this time, this is an idea and would require multiple resources across the campus and an action plan if ever feasible. | Facility space for school events and programming and Funding for PD opportunities for staff. This will be supported by the Pathways to Peace Gift donation. Continue strategizing for the building and planning of expanding ECDC and possible partnership opportunities with ECDC/EHHP. |
| Quality care and early education for children | Transition ECDC kindergarten students to | Continue “ECDC Transition Study” in collaboration with Dr. White and | Time allocated for research, |

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| ages two through five from the College and neighboring community | formal schooling with support and guidance. Retain ECDC families for kindergarten in the 4/5 classroom. | <p>Dr. Swart to better understand how ECDC graduates fare as they exit the program and progress through elementary school and beyond. Analyze parent entrance/exit interviews and follow up with parents of students that graduated from ECDC.</p> <p>Use research-based practices in the multi-age classroom to support Master Teachers in the delivery of the diverse needs of the students in ECDC's Butterfly class.</p> <p>Develop school readiness skills.</p> <p>Discuss how policies and practices affect children and families transitioning from ECDC to K-12 settings. Offer guidance and support to parents through informational sessions and informal conversations with local public-school teachers.</p> | <p>interviews, and data collection.</p> <p>Professional development opportunities and support for traveling to school site visits for Master Teachers. Support of curriculum/teacher workdays days embedded in ECDC calendar and the need to be closed to students.</p> <p>Funding to support substitutes to maintain DSS ratios and appropriate staff coverage.</p> <p>Continue funding 5 GA positions allocated to ECDC to help facilitate small groups and targeted intervention in 4/5 year old classroom.</p> |
| An active model of child advocacy in the Charleston community | Strengthen relationships with parents, the local community and partners in the community. | <p>Invite parents to serve on the ECDC parent advisory committee. Continue to host family events on the ECDC campus. Invite Memminger parents to attend. Partner with faculty and students in the School of Education, Health, and Human Performance to provide parent workshops two times a year on a variety of topics such as: nutrition, health, behavior strategies, special education, and literacy.</p> <p>Strengthen the visibility of ECDC into the local community by partnering with local businesses and</p> | <p>Campus wide support of the ECDC mission and support for campus and community wide partnerships to diversify learning experiences for ECDC children.</p> <p>Connections to possible community partners to help</p> |

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| | | <p>local community partners for ECDC events.</p> <p>Continuing to create an inclusive environment supporting campus families, community families, and students with special needs.</p> | <p>strengthen the program.</p> <p>Continued efforts to share responsibility for the education of young children and creating a welcoming, inclusive environment for all young learners.</p> |
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SUPPORTING DATA

Student (and recent graduate) accomplishments

During 2019-20 two of our GAs graduated and 8 undergraduate students graduated. Four of these students accepted teaching positions in early childhood classrooms in South Carolina. All of the others have accepted employment in their fields.

Faculty Productivity in and Support of Research and Professional Development

Presentations:

- Houser, K., Stone, R., & White, M (October 2019). Association for Constructivist Teaching Conference, Ann Arbor, MI
- Houser, K., & Swart, K (November 2019) NAECTE Conference, Nashville, TN
- Houser, K., & Swart, K (February 2020) SCECA Conference, Charleston, SC

Conferences attended:

- Stephanie Johnston attended the MEPI conference, Kiawah Island, SC.
- Katie Houser, Mary White, and Ryan Stone attended and presented at the Association for Constructivist Teaching conference, Ann Arbor, MI
- Katie Houser and Memminger Elementary EC lead teacher attended the NAEYC Conference, Nashville, TN
- Phyllis Gates attended the SCAEYC conference, Columbia, SC