

Orfalea Family Children's Center at UCSB

Newsletter Fall 2006

In Defense of Play: It's Just What the Doctor Ordered!

What does it say about our society when early care and education programs must become staunch advocates of play for young children? It is quite likely a sign of the depth of concern that parents, educators and society at large have that children are being given every chance for success as they move forward. High school drop out rates, racial disparity in academic success, 'low-tech' workers ill prepared for the changing demands of a 'high-tech' world, these are some of the issues that propel us to look to our educational system for solutions. There we find the acknowledgement of the

rapid brain development that occurs in the early years of life, coupled with the push for research-based practices that produce measurable outcomes to which schools can be held accountable, conspiring to give play a bad name!

However, a paper recently published by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has now added a significant voice to those sup-

porting play as "so important to optimal development".

It is difficult to quantify the thrill of discovery, the satisfaction in helping a friend, the joy of creativity or the pride in cooperative problem solving. And yet, these are but a few of the valuable skills that are revealed in a rich child-centered active-play experience. Other essential benefits include healthy brain development,

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Center Notes

1. *Warm welcome* to the new families & staff in our Center community. Since the Spring we have many new faces. Crystal Swanson, Enrollment Co-

ordinator joins us along with teachers Jennifer Convey, Ruth Jeppeson and Cherie Swanson. And congratulations to Erin, Marina and Theresa in

their new positions.

2. *Expansion Update:* Construction of the new classrooms in the Student Resource Building has a projected completion

January 2006

Schedule of Events

- Jan 1-2 *Closed for New Year Holiday*
 - Jan 3 *Center Re-opens*
 - Jan 8 *Welcome Coffee
8:30 - 10:00 a.m.*
 - Jan 10 *Parent Council
4:30 - 6:00 p.m.*
 - Jan 15 *Holiday ; Closed in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King*
 - Jan 26 *Staff Appreciation
By Blue/Purple*
- Coming Up Feb 1st Kindergarten Perspectives
Parent Meeting 7- 8:30 p.m.*

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Happy New Year!	2	3 Center Re-opens	4	5	6
7	8 Welcome Coffee	9	10 Parent Council	11	12	13
14	15 Martin Luther King	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26 Staff Appreciation Blue/Purple	27
28	29	30	31	2/1 Kindergarten Perspectives		

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new competencies, building resilience, learning to work in groups, resolve conflict and negotiate. Active outdoor play promotes healthy physical development while imaginative play in a well prepared play environment can facilitate academic learning skills.

A well prepared environment has nothing to do with 'educational' toys. Conditions that promote meaningful play are at once simpler and at times difficult to create. Freedom to explore, both emotionally and physically, is a primary step to foster complex and creative play. This safety is provided when children have meaningful and trusting relationships with the adults caring for them and are given the skills to navigate social relationships with peers. Play will thrive when adults

honor child driven play, show interest in the children's ideas and, when joining in, become co-players following the child's lead. Clearly a most essential factor is therefore *time*.

In the busy-ness of our everyday lives, and our desire to make the most of our time, it is very hard to stop, slow down, and allow anything to unfold on its own. And yet this is essential for the most productive play.

The AAP, citing the importance of promoting physical and social well-being and supporting children in de-

“If we encourage...children’s true play, we bequeath them an important and priceless gift, an album of joyous memories.”
David Elkind,
Developmental Child Psychologist
Tufts University

veloping resilience, urges parents to promote active play by creating “ample, unscheduled...time to be creative, to reflect...”. “True toys’ such as blocks and dolls” that encourage imagination are more beneficial than toys that entertain or require only passive or one dimensional involvement. They go on to say that “parents who share unscheduled, spontaneous time and who play with children are being *wonderfully supportive, nurturing and productive.*”

Draw on your own memories of building forts from blankets and chairs, jumping on piles of leaves, naming the shapes of clouds as they floated lazily overhead... then take the time to build new and precious memories of play with your child. Because... it’s good for you!

Rolling towards Re-Accreditation

Much progress has been made over the past few months as we move towards our January 31st candidacy deadline for accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The Center will receive up to \$5000. from the Accreditation Project sponsored through Santa Barbara First Five to help offset application and improvement costs. The process itself has been enormously time consuming beginning with our self-study surveys of families and staff last Spring. Guided by staff and family evaluations and our interpretation of the over 400 criteria (!) we have clarified some policies and changed and developed others. Evidence has been gathered, in the form of parent and teaching staff surveys, classroom observations, tour forms and classroom and program portfolios. The final reporting process now begins and will be followed by an unannounced assessor visit sometime between February 1st and July 31st 2007. In order to share 'lessons learned' Marina Nolte, Erin Barnett and Chelsea Aiello will be presenting the teacher perspective in a workshop at the California AEYC convention in March and Leslie continues to advise other programs.

Please continue to check the Parent Board for updates and information. And many thanks to all who took the time to give us feedback in the family surveys last Spring as well as recently. Parent surveys are conducted annually and your input and participation in the process is invaluable. Also... be watching for your 'new and improved' revised Parent Handbook in the New Year!

SAFETY FIRST: Rules of the Road

In order to consistently keep our children safe it is essential that all families observe these critical rules when arriving at or departing from the Center.

1. **ALWAYS keep your children with you when in the parking lot; hold hands, use a stroller, carry them... until safely inside the gate. Please do not allow them to run ahead or cross the lot by themselves.**
2. **Children are NOT allowed to remain unattended in vehicles under any circumstances. Car seats are the law.**
3. **Bicycles MUST follow the flow of traffic; you can safely walk your bicycle on the sidewalk once in the lot.**
4. **SLOW DOWN**
5. **The Handicapped Parking space is reserved for our families and visitors with a handicapped parking permit ONLY.**

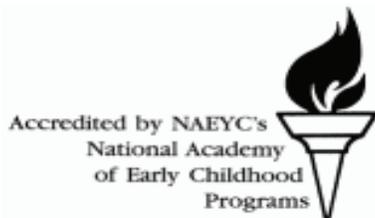


Partial list of projects completed during this process:

- Assessment/Referral 'policy' clarification on consent language
 - New intake form / conference reminder tips suggested by staff work group
 - TA units beginning winter quarter (working with Grad School of Ed)
 - TA report on related coursework at hire
 - TA pre-service observation, info form to facilitate connections, peer mentor program to encourage retention, enhance training and acknowledge exceptional performance (ideas generated by staff work group)
 - Contract with a 'health consultant'
 - Add 'sun exposure' language to clothing policy
 - Reflect choking foods in food policy
 - Stop serving popcorn
 - Update field trip pol.
 - Sunscreen/bug spray permissions
 - Create 'Curriculum' statement
 - Add 'translator preferred' to registration form
 - ADA review of building; looking into buzzer for front gate
 - Develop cleaning checklist with and for FM nightly cleaning
 - Begin annual inspection by E,H & S
- And more!

Orfalea Family Children's Center
UCSB
Santa Barbara CA
93106

Phone: 805-893-3665
Fax: 805-893-4907
Web: childrenscenter@sa.ucsb.edu



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towards the beginning of February 2007. Our search for teaching staff continues and opening of the new classrooms is dependent on this recruitment.

3. *Shake, Rattle & Roll!* Emergency Preparedness: We continue to refine our emergency plans in conjunction with Student Affairs and Environmental Health & Safety. We have a cellular phone and a 800 mhz two-way radio that will allow us to stay in communication with the on-campus Emergency Operations Center. We've added walkie-talkies for communication with the clubhouse should we need to 'shelter-in place'. The Children's Center has several large containers filled with emergency supplies such as food and first aid supplies. In the event of a

natural disaster, please understand that *we will not release your child to anyone who is not on your Emergency Form*, be sure to list several friends or family members on this form. In an emergency, OFCC information will be broadcast on the Campus radio station **KCSB 91.9 FM and 1250 AM**.

In the event of a major disaster in Santa Barbara friends and family can call **1-900-200-UCSB** for information. 3. *Calling all translators* for assistance in translations of our Parent Handbook (especially needed Korean & Chinese). Many thanks to Adriana Gonzalez, Red Door parent, for her work on the Spanish version. If you can help or know of someone who might, please call Leslie. Diane.

The Swing

How do you like to go up in a swing,
Up in the air so blue?
Oh, I do think it the pleasantest thing
Ever a child can do!

Up in the air and over the wall,
Till I can see so wide,
River and trees and cattle and all
Over the countryside--

Till I look down on the garden green,
Down on the roof so brown--
Up in the air I go flying again,
Up in the
air and down!

by Robert Louis
Stevenson



OFCC Teaching Staff:

***Infant
Clubhouse***

Tes Tarango, Lead Teacher
Jenny Greaney, Teacher
Barbara Sanchez, Teacher

White Door

Nancy Erisman, Lead Teacher
Lupe Guerrero, Teacher

Yellow Door

Kathy Sargent, Lead Teacher
Holly Carlson, Teacher
Gloria Montague, Teacher

Toddler

Green Door

Thrisha Francia, Lead Teacher
Alicia Trigueros-Cardenas, Teacher

Grey Door

Erin Barnett, Lead Teacher
Ruth Jeppeson, Teacher

Brown Door

Linda Lafond, Lead Teacher
Heather Schieve, Teacher

Preschool

Blue Door

Ana Dominguez, Lead Teacher
Chelsea Aiello, Teacher

Orange Door

Tamara Thompson, Lead Teacher
Elena Lopez, Teacher

Purple Door

Chris Pollock, Lead Teacher
Mike Peterson, Teacher

Red Door

Mary Hoffman, Lead Teacher
Cherie Schroff, Teacher

Pink Door

Jeri Vaccaro, Lead Teacher
Terri Douglas, Lead Teacher

Support Teacher

Jennifer Convey

Administrative Staff:

Director: Leslie Voss is responsible for the oversight of the entire Children's Center program. She works closely with our Infant/toddler and Preschool Program Coordinators, our Family Coordinator, and the office administrative staff to ensure a high quality early care and education program for the University community. Leslie serves on the SB County Child Care Planning Council.

Program Coordinators: Theresa Embry (Preschool), Patricia Nixon (Infant/Toddler) , Marina Nolte (Infant/Toddler) are responsible for the daily staffing of classrooms, our professional development program for teachers, supporting development of age appropriate curriculum, staff evaluations, in addition to supervising student interns, volunteers and on-going research projects at the Center. The Coordinators are always available to talk with parents about the Center's philosophy that follows the NAEYC guidelines for developmentally appropriate practices and the "Resources for Infant Caregivers" philosophy in our infants and toddler class-rooms.

Family Coordinator: Diane Jones coordinates parent activities and works with staff and families whose children have special needs. Diane plans our parent education program, works closely with the OFCC Parent Council, and is available to meet with parents who need support for special situations affecting families. She facilitates our Full Inclusion Program, maintains the parent library in her office, and will continue our Program's outreach effort to all families living in the student housing complexes.

Staffing Coordinator/Business Officer: Jesse Rosenzweig is responsible for the daily staffing of the Center to ensure that the mandated ratios between teachers and children are met. He also works with the Program Coordinators to hire and make classroom assignments for our UCSB student teacher assistants. Jesse is primarily responsible for creating our annual budget models for each fiscal year, monitoring our progress in meeting our income and expense projections and creating viable financial models for the future fiscal health of the program. He also oversees the smooth daily operation of our front office.

Enrollment Coordinator: Crystal Swanson is responsible for maintaining our waitlist and enrolling new children into the Center. She maintains the children's files including keeping their immunization records up to date for our required annual reviews from both the California Department of Social Services and California Department of Health. In addition, Crystal is responsible for the monthly collection and depositing of tuition as well as paying our monthly bills for supplies and equipment.

Grant Coordinator: Mia Shellabarger is responsible for the management of our California Department of Education Child Care Grant Program and the Center's Federal Food Program. She enrolls income eligible families, maintains quarterly eligibility documentation and attendance records for both programs, and completes monthly and quarterly reports for the California Department of Education (CDE). Mia additionally coordinates the CDE's periodic 'Program Quality Review' and our annual CDE audit. Finally, she is responsible for the purchase of food and cleaning supplies for the entire Center.

