

The Phyllis Bodel Childcare Center at Yale School of Medicine, Inc.
2008, Annual Report

Overview of Events

In this year we have completed our third expansion in the last five years, we have increased our daily enrollment to 96 children and we increased our staff to over 40 full and part time teachers. We have now maximized the space available to us in Harkness Dormitory and we could have done none of this without the support of the Medical School. Though many are frustrated by their inability to secure a space in Bodel for their child, the Medical School has demonstrated their commitment to childcare by allowing us to grow into all the useable space in our facility. It is important to mention that the University was also extremely helpful in this expansion by financially supporting the ramp up of new staff to ensure that we were ready for the November 1, opening of our new Infant and toddler rooms last year.

Before the end of this calendar year we hope to have in place signs on Cedar St. that will set aside spots for drop off and pick up for our children within designated times. We hope that this will end the ticket mania of some of the parking officials in the area and reduce stress for our families.

It was a year of great change but we came through the new accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children with the highest of commendations, we were relicensed by the State of Connecticut and the New Haven Health Department. This year, 21 teachers have been taking college courses to continue their education and pursue the next level of degree.

Finally, we have begun structural changes in the administration of the Center with the purchase of a new computer software program to help with managing the application file, the class lists, the health records for the children and eventually the collection of tuition. We hired a business manager, Joseph Firine, to oversee the "money" aspects of the Center and are working toward another level of administration with the addition of a head Infant Toddler teacher and a head Pre-School teacher. As the Center has grown, we strive to improve our communication with parents and the supportive environment for children and staff.

The Infant Program:

With three infant rooms and the ability to care for 23 infants, we are fortunate to have 8 warm, caring and nurturing staff members. Our teachers understand the importance of the development of trust this first year and are responsive to the changing needs of the infants. In a program where the emphasis is on social development compounded by the fact that we are always full, this can present challenges in planning curriculum, modifying space and always being creative and demonstrating good humor. There are times when children simply should not or cannot move to another space and it is then that our infant teachers shine in changing the environment and being creative in planning to meet each child's needs.

The Toddler Program:

This year with the addition of the new toddler room in November, we find that there are some growing pains in planning for the next step in the Center's expansion.. Each year we make changes in the groups depending on the children enrolled at that time. This year, we find that Toddler 2 is an older toddler group with many turning 3 just after the first of the year. This will not always be the case but as we learn to move children from three infant rooms into two toddler rooms and then into two three year old rooms, some fine tuning and creative thinking will need to take place. Again, with our experienced and well educated staff, the curriculum for the room will change depending on the needs of the children and the individual needs of each child will be met.

The Pre-School:

We have four pre-school classrooms. There are two three year old rooms and two four year old rooms. Each room has its own flavor and character dependent upon the children and teachers in the room. Although all the curriculum is driven by children's interests expressed in each classroom, each room's plans are founded upon the Connecticut Pre-school Framework. Many of you may have noticed in your journals or on the lesson plans, "PS1" or "COG14". These acronyms refer to the Performance Standards from the Connecticut State Department of Education upon which the teachers plan in order to help support each child's development through the benchmarks for each standard. This year we plan to share more of how our staff plan and how they individualize for each child with our families. The majority of our pre-school staff is degreed in early childhood, several have masters and several are certified. We have an incredible staff and during these early years they work very hard to provide opportunities to support skills, social opportunities to help all become "good citizens" and nurturing opportunities that provide for every child a safe place to try new skills, make new friends and trust in their own abilities to be active learners.

The Kindergarten Program:

This September will start the fifth year of the Bodel Kindergarten. Susie Gravel and Sarah Ferns continue as our Kindergarten teachers. This year the kindergarten started a garden, put on their play, and went on four field trips. Several leave us this year for first grade and several will repeat kindergarten in other schools. All have learned so much about their world, themselves, and their ability to take risks in learning. Without that important sense of self awareness and personal safety in asking how, and, why....., children cannot learn and we feel that his is the most important lesson of kindergarten. Our kindergarten continues to hold a highly respected reputation within the community and was highly commended during our Accreditation site visit for developmental appropriateness.

Board of Director's:

Officers:

This year Lisa Suter completed her second year as Board President. This has been one of the most challenging years for any Board President with meetings with the University,

administration with the Medical School and the challenges of growth. Lisa did an extraordinary job at all these meetings. She was always prepared, articulate and a strong advocate and valuable attribute to the Center. She is to be congratulated and the Center is very fortunate to have her as Board President, especially during these changing times. Christina Herrick will leave the Board as Vice-President this year after 7 years on the Board and over 8 years in the Center. Both of her children have graduated the program and Christina will bring her energy and her dedication to children to her new school. It is with sincere appreciation that Christina is thanked for all that she has done for the Bodel Childcare Center.

Mayur Desai is our Secretary and Nancy Scanlon is our Treasurer. All three of Nancy's children have graduated the program and we hope to train a new Treasurer over the course of this year so that Nancy can continue her talents in support of our children's current school. We all sincerely appreciate her time, talent and dedication to the program.

Parent Board Members this year: Robin Masheb, Harriet Friedman and Erica Herzog.

Faculty Board Members:

The Board consists of six faculty Board members, many have been with the Board for over fifteen years. We are very fortunate to have their dedication, support and history. They are, Susan Baserga, Daniel Biemesderfer, Michael Caplan, Nancy Close, Caren Gundberg and Merle Waxman.

Board Committees:

The Finance Committee: This committee is chaired by our Treasurer and is the committee that writes the Budget for Board approval, decides on eligibility for scholarship and is responsible for all fiscal components of the Center. Nancy Scanlon oversees this committee and even though last year she "volunteered" to stay on until a replacement was found, she fortunately has "volunteered" for one more year and this year we believe we have a new treasurer to train.

Personnel: The members of the Personnel Committee were Nancy Scanlon, Donna Bella, the Director of the Edith B, Jackson program and our Education Consultant, Nancy Close, Board member and our Early Childhood Consultant, Erica Herzog, Board member and parent and the Director. This year Nancy Scanlon acted as Personnel Chair as there were so many fiscal decisions related to personnel.

Long Range Planning:

This year, even with the best of intentions, our meetings were limited but no less important as they involved meetings with administration of the University and the Medical School. It is our plan to more actively reinstate the committee and have had several parents express interest in joining the committee. For the past year, Lisa Suter was chair and Merle Waxman, Mayur Desai and Caren Gundberg were the members. The Director sits on all committees.

Consultants:

Educational Consultant:

Donna Bella, the director of the Edith B; Jackson Child Care Program, a Yale affiliated program is our Education Consultant. Donna has been at Yale for almost 17 years and her interest in early childhood and her expertise are appreciated.

Early Childhood Consultant:

Dr. Nancy Close is our Early Childhood Consultant. Nancy has a long history with Phyllis Bodel and we are very fortunate to have her expertise in the development of children and of teachers as a resource for our families and staff.

Pediatric Consultant:

Dr. Joseph Avni-Singer is our Pediatric Consultant. Joe has been our consultant for over 15 years and although I sincerely miss the time when he was able to stop and visit weekly, he is only a phone call away and we are always able to rely on his expertise.

Nurse Consultant:

It is through the support of the University and Yale School of Nursing that we are able to have on sight health consultation for over five hours every week. Kim Sandor, FNP, is our very able and competent health consultant. She is working with Caleb Kleppner to develop an health and safety component on our website. She trains our teachers in medication and Epi Pen administration and she has been the driving force in rewriting and clarifying the endless documentation required for all our children. In addition, she is one of the warmest, kindest, and funniest people you will ever meet. We are extremely fortunate to have her at Bodel.

Psychiatric Consultant:

Dr. Brian Keyes has been our psychiatric consultant for over twelve years. Although scheduling no longer allows for weekly visits, Brian does faithfully call in each week to check on the children and the Center and does come to the Center when needed. He continues to provide us with strategies, guidance and important perspectives in dealing with children and parents who are going through challenging times. The consistency of his dedication to the Center is sincerely appreciated.

Dental Consultant:

Dr. Donald Kohn is our Dental Consultant. He and his staff are available for the bumps that involve children's teeth and during National Dental Health Month (February) his

staff come and talk with the pre-school and kindergarten about the importance of caring for your teeth.

Social Work Consultant:

Miriam Berkman, former Bodel parent, is our Social Work Consultant. We are very fortunate to have a social work consultant who knows our population, parents and teachers and can be such a valuable resource.

Yale Child Study Center:

We are fortunate to be located next to one of the world's most renowned centers for children. They provide us with information, support and resources.

Yale School of Medicine:

We are most fortunate to be associated with the Yale School of Medicine. From the highest level of its administration we benefit from their support and dedication to our mission of providing a quality early childhood experience at the Medical School. With sincere appreciation we thank Dean Alpern, Cynthia Walker, George Zdru and the members of the Facilities Department. Our appreciation to Richard Levine, Ray Mirando, Ernie DeSalvo, Bill Fiandello, Michael Ferland, Scott Goeben and Nathan from the Fire Department, Our special thank you to John Phifer, Steve Sennet, Steve Murdzia, Rob Klein, the Yale Security staff, thank you's to Jeff and Larry the carpenters and to Barbara the locksmith, thank you's to Phil and Donna in Security and Lenny and his staff for the Hayrides and the Kindergarten garden and the maintenance of all our sandboxes and play spaces. We thank Usha Carr for all his help and support for our Pot Luck suppers, Auctions, book fairs, etc. We thank the plumbers and painters, and electricians that we must call almost daily to keep the Center operating in top condition. We thank Ron and Mitzi and the staff in dispatch for promptly taking our calls and ensuring that we get immediate service. There are so many who each day work to help us maintain a healthy and safe environment. All these important individuals work for the Medical School and all are invested in the Center and in the Children.

Our Substitutes: We are very fortunate to have a strong, supportive and dedicated substitute (part time pool). Thank you to Laura Montiero, Gloria Sanchez, Lela Smith Brown, Diana Santaella, Sandy Germe, Roberta Hall, Roberta Lapidés, Domina Glenn and our college students, T.J. Matthias and Lindsay Alling.

Administrative Staff:

This year Tracey Thomas, former parent and Board President, stepped into the office to help with Accreditation, the expansion and the implementation of a new computer program. Personally speaking, I am very grateful for all Tracey's efforts and support. Tracey has gone back to her own field and taken a position at the University. This year,

in thinking about the Center's needs we changed the operational paradigm and hired a business manager to oversee the details of the finances and the management of the computer program. We are pleased to introduce Joe Firine to our staff and many of you have already received notices and letters from him. He has been a tremendous help and his attention to detail is just what is position requires.

Director's Report:

The number one goal from last year was to increase communication with our parents. With the help of parent John Lee, we started our website last year. When John moved, we were so fortunate to have parent Caleb Kleppner take on the role of our "webmaster". We are building the website and we hope that this will be a place that parents can consistently go to for information about what is happening in the Center, forms for well child checks, medication administration, information on developmental issues, etc.

Our second goal was to continue the work of the Long Range Planning committee. A major goal met was one time financial support from the University for our expansion. Again, it can not be stated too many times how our Board President, Lisa Suter was instrumental in facilitating this support.

During the months of January through March our staff was decimated by flu and ill health. Our goal to reach out to the community as part of our Long Range Plans had to be put on hold as we struggled to reach out to ourselves. We hope for better health and more effective flu vaccine this coming year.

Finally our third goal was to work on consolidating our new and expanding program and ensuring that our philosophy and mission remained intact. With a few internal growing pains, I believe we met that goal. Your input on whether we met this goal is always appreciated and taken as useful ways to help us grow and meet the needs of our families.

Goals and Conclusion:

In the coming year, as in all preceding years our goal is to increase the communication between home and Center. We hope our website will help, we find email effective and we are always open to suggestions from our families. Partnership with our families is one of the best assurances we have for a quality early childhood experience for your children.

The Second Goal for this year will be to increase our technology and work on using all the components of our new computer program more effectively. One component of the program that we hope to have up and running in about a month is a notice to all member of the community in our application file. A major complaint is that families apply and never hear from us. Since it is impossible for us to call about 200 families to say we have no room, the program will allow us to generate a notice every six months to families asking if they need to update or make any changes in their application and, to find out if they remain interested in a spot for their child. The second component that we would like to have in place by next spring is that we can become our own "bank". Rather than FACTS collecting the funds from our families, then holding the money for 10 days

before depositing it into our account, this new software program allows us a secure means of collecting directly from our families and eliminating the overhead cost for FACTS and the delay in income and the stress of the monthly worry if the deposit will hit before a payroll. This is a large goal for us but one that will be extremely beneficial for the Center..

Finally, our third goal is curriculum based and one that we have already begun work on. The Connecticut Pre- School Assessment Framework offers teachers the tools and opportunities to meet the needs of NAEYC, the needs of our Grant and the needs of children. Several teachers and I have already been to several day workshops on the Framework and have participated with State support in a new model called “Training Wheels”. This year we will all be working on a written document that we hope makes the process clear for all staff and will be a written legacy for new staff in the future regarding intentional planning for children and the supporting observation and assessment necessary for that planning.

In closing, thank you all for your trust in the Bodel Center and for your support

Respectfully Submitted:

Cynthia H. Olson, Director