

The Phyllis Bodel Childcare Center at Yale School of Medicine, Inc.
2009, Annual Report

Overview of Events

After so many changes over the last two years this has been a year of settling. We did not have any expansions and although we are always busy, there was sufficient time to reflect on new plans for long range planning and to allow the new administrative leadership to define their roles. Having a Head Infant Toddler teacher has been a tremendous support to our three infant and two toddler classrooms and the addition of a Business Manager has both increased communication with our families and supported conversion to an electronic record system for finances and management of our application file. Our Board of Directors and its committee's have been active and their accomplishments this year will be addressed under their headings.

The Infant Program:

Currently the Center has three infant rooms and the ability to care for 23 infants. Our application file far exceeds the ability of our program to care for so many babies within the Medical School community. In our program, the emphasis is on social development and, when dealing with the variety of ages within an infant space, there can be challenges in planning curriculum. The teachers are aware and responsive to the changing needs of the infants and plan creatively and with enthusiasm activities that meet each child's needs.

The Toddler Program:

Toddlers are full of energy, exuberance and curiosity. They can also from time to time be obstinate and challenging but they are always completely adorable. Our teachers know this, plan for these changing behaviors, and support their need for autonomy and independence. Our toddler spaces, both Toddler 1 and Toddler 2 meet the individual needs of the children and ensure that this year of development is a happy one for the children. Parents are encouraged to review the posted lesson plans to see how much planning goes into each day and to attend the parent teacher conferences in October and March to review with your child's teacher their child's development and the individuality of the plans for each child. The addition of the Head Infant Toddler Teacher role has enabled the teachers in these rooms to expand their curriculum development and provide the increasingly complex documentation required for accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

The Pre-School:

We have four pre-school classrooms. There are two three year old rooms and two four year old rooms. Each room reflects the style and character of the staff and children in those rooms. Our curriculum is driven by the children's interests expressed in the classroom and the plans are based on the Standards of the Connecticut Pre-School Framework. Within each Standard are benchmarks that the teachers use for planning for individual children. During the parent teacher conferences in October and March the teachers have the opportunity to share with parents the individual plans for each child and the emerging and mastered skills that have been observed during the year.

The Kindergarten Program:

We are about to start the sixth year of the Kindergarten. The curriculum this year has been significantly supported by the availability for transportation of the children by the Yale Handicap

Van to a variety of locations. In addition, the learning experiences provided by the Kindergarten with two certified teachers and only ten children provides an opportunity for children to learn about the world, themselves and to feel safe in asking how and why. Our kindergarten continues to be highly respected in the community and was highly commended for developmental appropriateness by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Board of Director's:

Lisa Suter has completed her third year as Board President. This year was calmer than the previous year but this a position that always carries responsibilities. The Center is very fortunate to have Lisa as Board President. She brings energy, insight and is a strong advocate for the Center.

Linda Arnold is our Vice President; Mayur Desai the Secretary and Nancy Scanlon is Treasurer with Trish D'Errico is Associate Treasurer.

Parent Board Members are: Susan Busch, Patty Seo-Mayer and Erica Herzog. Leaving the Board this year as their children move on are Robin Masheb and Kristin Blanchfield.

Faculty Board Members:

The Board consists of six faculty Board members. Many have been on the Board for over sixteen years. We are very fortunate to have their dedication and history. They are:

Merle Waxman, Susan Baserga, Caren Gundberg, Nancy Close, Daniel Biemesderfer, and Michael Caplan.

Board Committees:

The Finance Committee: This committee is chaired by the Treasurer. Members include the Associate Treasurer (who this year will take over the position of Treasurer this year), the Director and the Board President who participates in Scholarship decisions. This committee sets the budget, tuition and scholarship.

The Personnel Committee: The members of the Personnel Committee are Nancy Scanlon Chair, (Personnel and Finances are very much connected), Donna Bella, the Director of the Edith B. Jackson Program and our Early Childhood Consultant, our Education Consultant Nancy Close and Erica Herzog, Board Member and parent. The Director sits on all committees.

The Health and Safety Committee: Linda Arnold and Patty Seo- Mayer co-chair this committee. Members include Kim Sandor our Health Consultant and the Director. This year we focused on smoking in the area surrounding the Center and were able to get appropriate signage to move the smokers away from the building. Moving the smokers still requires a high degree of enforcement but the signs really help. Parent support of a non-smoking zone is needed and it is requested that parents who view smokers remind them that the Center is a smoke free area and ask them to move. Most recently the committee has been working on guidelines and potential policy for addressing the H1N1 outbreak.

Long Range Planning: Our Board President, Lisa Suter is chair of this committee and members include Merle Waxman, Mayur Desai and Caren Gundberg. One major focus of the committee has been the desire to expand the Center with an offsite annex. At this time Facilities is assisting with the evaluation of potential annex sites and we are hopeful that the Medical School will be able to find a suitable location to increase slots for infant and toddler care.

Consultants:

Educational Consultant: Donna Bella, the Director of the Edith B. Jackson Child Care Program, a Yale affiliated program is our Education Consultant.

Early Childhood Consultant: Dr. Nancy Close, Assistant Professor at the Yale Child Study Center and Lecturer in Psychology and Associate Director of the Yale Program in Early Childhood Education, is our Early Childhood Consultant. Nancy has a long history with Phyllis Bodel and we are fortunate to have her as a consultant, on our Personnel Committee and on the Board of Directors.

Pediatric Consultant: Dr. Joseph Avni Singer is our Pediatric Consultant. Joe has been our consultant for over sixteen years. Though he can no longer make weekly visits, he is only a phone call away and very responsive to the needs of the Center.

Nurse Consultant: Kim Sandor, FNP, is our nurse consultant. Kim is here over nine hours a week and oversees the health records of the children and staff. She does the medication administration training and epi –pen training for the staff and has rewritten the forms for health care plans and topical medications. She sits on the Health and Safety committee and contributes to our website. We are so fortunate to have Kim on sight every week and appreciate the support of the University and the School of Nursing in supporting this important and necessary position at our Center.

Psychiatric Consultant: Dr. Brian Keyes has been our psychiatric consultant for over thirteen years. Brian is on site one to two times a month and available by phone anytime. Brian provides us with strategies, guidance and perspective and his consistency over the past years is a tremendous asset to the center and the children.

Dental Consultant: Dr. Donald Kohn is our dental consultant. He and his staff are available for bumps that may involve the children's teeth and his staff will come each February during National Dental Health Month to talk with the pre-schoolers.

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 parents and teachers and can be such a valuable resource.

Yale Child Study Center: We are fortunate to be located next to such a renowned center for children. They are a tremendous resource for us.

Yale School of Medicine: The School of Medicine is very supportive of their childcare center. We are very grateful to Dean Alpern, Cynthia Walker, George Zdru and all the staff at Facilities. We want to thank Richard Levine, Ray Mirando, Ernie DeSalvo, Bill Fiandello, Scott Goeben and Nathan Reynolds. In addition we want to thank Steve Sennet, Steve Murdzia, Yale Security, Jeff and Larry the carpenters and Barbara our locksmith. We thank Phil and Donna in security and Lenny and his staff for our Hayrides and the Kindergarten garden and the maintenance of all our sandboxes and play spaces.

We thank the plumbers and painters and electricians. We thank Ron, Mitzi and Monea in Dispatch. There are so many who work each day to help us maintain a healthy and safe learning environment.

Our Part-time Staff: We are so fortunate to have consistent part time staff, several of whom have been here ten years. We thank Roberta Hall, Laura Montiero, Gloria Sanchez, Lela Smith-Brown, Diana Santaella, Roberta Lapidés, Kim Warren, and Sandy Germe. We want to thank our college students, Lindsay Alling (this was her third summer), Patryce Murphy, Tiffanie Russell and Avital Sokolow-Silverman.

Administrative Staff: Joseph Firine is our new part-time business manager. As he has completed his first year at the center he will be the first to admit that the financial management of an early childhood education center of this size is far more complex than one might imagine. With a firm footing under him, Joe has many plans for the coming year to streamline the operations of the center. Dannielle Sidaoui has taken on the position of Head Infant and Toddler teacher. She has done an excellent job in supporting the teachers work with planning, observations, documentation and maintenance of their classroom portfolios. The staff is very happy to have her support and expertise and her position has been a tremendous asset to the Center.

Director's Report:

In reviewing our goals from last year we find that we still have room for improvement. Regarding our goal of communication, busy parents are not reading the newsletters and the addition of bulleted headings has not helped. Our website, so ably monitored by parent, Caleb Kleppner is not used with any consistency so that parents know about calendar changes, available forms, etc. We will continue to be open to any suggestions and pursue more creative ideas to improve communication with our families.

Our second goal from last year, to increase our use of technology is partially met. It has taken longer to work toward becoming our own "collection" source and end the need for FACTS but we are getting closer and hope by next year to have this in place. We do have a system to consistently reach out to families on the wait list update their applications. This year, all receipts were moved to email to be put into email folders or printed by parents.

Our third goal from last year was to solidify our curriculum base using the Connecticut Pre-School Assessment Framework. We had coaching support this year from the State and the teachers have worked on implementing new observation forms and forms for documentation. The coming year will allow time for all the new forms to be used for a full cycle, but we feel we have come close to meeting this goal.

Goals and Conclusion:

In the coming year our Number One Goal will be to continue to find the best means possible of communicating with our families and ensuring they have the necessary information to support a growing partnership between Center and families. I cannot emphasize enough how open we are to any suggestions to continue on our journey toward mastering this Goal.

Our Second Goal has to do with fundraising. This year we will be giving out almost \$50,000.00 in Scholarship and Grant support. (Many do not realize that even when a family is on the School Readiness Grant only part of the tuition is covered by the Grant, the balance is supported by the Center). We must therefore increase fundraising. Fundraising not only supports families in financial need but also helps all the families by keeping down the overall tuition costs. In the Parent Handbook (2009-2010) there is a statement that all families receiving financial support are expected to participate in fundraising events sponsored by the Center. There is also a statement in the Handbook under fundraising that states, "The Center has limited fundraising events throughout the year. Fundraising helps keep all tuition rates lower. Parents are expected to participate in fundraising events sponsored by the Center." The Goal is to create an active Fundraising Committee and to work with our families to find creative, useful and easy fundraising events that will increase our Scholarship Fund.

Our Final Goal is to increase overall parent participation in the Center. This will be the fourth year that we will have an open "Breakfast" for families to stop by and review the classroom portfolios, be certain that we have all email addresses, and answer any questions that families

may have. This year, we will also be holding small, classroom Open Houses the week of September 7th. The calendar for these gatherings will be in the September Newsletter. Parents are invited to stay at 5:30 until 6:00 and the teachers will go over the classroom, the reasons for certain paperwork, their goals for the coming year and their process for observation, assessment and lesson planning and to ask parents their preferred method of communication. We hope that these meetings will start off the new academic year on a more solid footing and support the partnership of teachers and parents in their child's early childhood education.

The Phyllis Bodel Childcare Center is a warm, supportive environment but it is also a professional environment. We are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and all staff are required to follow the Code of Ethical Conduct put forward by the Association. One critical portion of the code is that staff may not use parents for financial gain. Babysitting is not only against the code, it is a potential liability for the Center. Although we have an existing policy on babysitting that states that "the Center does accept any responsibility or liability for teachers watching children outside of the supervised setting of the Center" and in addition, teachers are frequently reluctant to say no to a parent even if they have no desire after 40 hours or watching children, to care for one more child, parents still ask. In accordance with the accreditation requirements, the Board is reviewing and revising existing policy related to financial relationships such as babysitting between staff and Center families in order to strengthen and support the professionalism of the staff and protect the Center from liability. Parents are reminded that there is the Yale Babysitting Service for childcare. We ask you to please remember that Center staff have a professional responsibility to follow the Code of Ethics, which specifically prohibits financial relationships between staff and Center families outside of the Center. Please do not place our staff in the awkward situation of trying to balance their professional Code of Ethics and their precious relationship with you and your children by asking them to baby-sit for you.

The Board is in the process of writing a policy regarding staff and babysitting that will support the professionalism of the staff and protect the Center from all liability. Parents are reminded that there is the Yale Babysitting Service for childcare. We ask you to please remember that staff has a professional responsibility to follow the Code of Ethics.

The Center continues to grow professionally and perhaps if the plans for a satellite center come to fruition, physically. There may be some growing pains along the way but the philosophy of our Center, our dedication to your children and to practices that are in their best interest, remains constant. We thank you for sharing your precious children with us and look forward to growth together in building a community within this center.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Olson, Director