To: Dr. Paula Knudson  
Fr: Sue Wrobel, Program Manager  
Campus Child Center  
Re: Year End Report  
Dt: May 22, 2013

The staff at Campus Child Center enjoyed another fulfilling year with the children and families we serve. Our center continues to be filled to capacity, providing education and care for a number of children who are busy exploring the environment designed for their work and play.

- Over the course of the year we served 115 children from 83 families. Many of our families use our service over a period of time, allowing us to establish strong connections and relationships with them. We are very proud of the relationships and partnerships with families that we have helped to build and maintain.
- Our full-time teaching staff worked with 59 student staff members this year. They are truly energetic individuals, each bringing unique skills, interests, and talents to our setting. Their work here offers them the opportunity to place the knowledge they are gaining in their coursework directly into practice, serving as an excellent means to gain essential job skills.
- Once again, our teaching staff served as guest speakers in early childhood classes here on campus and in our local early childhood community. Topics ranged from Music and Movement, to Working with Infants and Toddlers, to Leadership in Early Childhood Education. We work closely with the Early Childhood department here on campus – a connection that is both supportive for us and for our students.
- This year marked the end of our five-year accreditation through the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Our renewal materials were accepted by the Academy in early September and the wait began for our on-site assessment visit. The window of time to expect the visit was October 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013. After what seemed to be (and truly was) a very long wait, our assessment visit was completed on March 25, 2013. We are awaiting results of the visit with the hopes that our accreditation has been renewed. The staff works exceedingly hard on accreditation. This is a tough, challenging, and perpetual process. But all indicators point to the children as this process results in a better center and program for them, which makes it is worth the work.
- Campus Child Center continues to serve as a field study site for students in a variety of programs, including Occupational Therapy, Early Childhood Education, Exercise and Sport Science, Psychology, Art Education, and Nutrition.

- Some practices just can’t change. Our annual Oktoberfest Parade, our annual Music and Art Show, the Family Potluck Supper, our Scarecrow Contest in the garden, and the Fancy Dance are things that have to happen here...the children (and our parents!) make sure traditions remain.

- Campus Child Center completes an annual evaluation with the families we serve. (Please see Appendix A for program evaluation information.) Survey results are summarized and posted on our website so that our families have the opportunity to provide additional comment and feedback. Results are used as a basis for discussion at our annual meeting and very often help drive and determine the goals established for the upcoming school year. (Please see Appendix B for Annual Meeting information.) Instead of the typical quantitative survey, we chose to proceed with a qualitative survey this spring. We listed 4 broad categories: relationships, curriculum, resources, and communication and asked the parents to provide feedback on elements in each category. Of special interest to us was the overwhelming positive feedback that we received concerning our thematic unit development and the changes we make to the learning environment. We have always felt that the way in which we implement the curriculum meets the needs of our children. It was good to know that our parents believe it to be effective and appropriate as well.

- At the close of the 2012 school year, we developed a vision statement highlighting what we believe to be the essential ingredients for our work with our children. Over the course of the school year, we expanded on our vision by writing an informative series of articles for our parents called “Vision in Action.” Our goal of helping others better understand the unique needs of young children was realized through this series. We look forward to the possibility of implementing another article series next year on the topic of social growth and development of young children.

- We consider our UW-L colleagues to be a treasure. So many people, with so many interests and talents, share their work with our children. We received visits (or visited others) in the fields of Exercise and Sports Science, Biology, Music Education, Art Education, English as a Second Language, Recreational Sports, and Landscape Services to name a few. Their willingness to share their time, interests, talents, and expertise with our children is truly appreciated.

- Our full-time staff enjoyed the special opportunity to meet with Claire Warden, who works as an advocate for nature education for young children. We enjoyed spending a day with her, gained an enormous amount of information concerning children and the great outdoors, and came back refreshed and committed to continuing our work in our school garden. Thanks to our parents, the elements in the garden continue to change and evolve, so that each year the garden looks a bit different. The garden also continues to be planted in a way that not only serves as a source of food, but also beckons the children to enter for play and exploration.

- Our staff continues to enjoy working together to bring a program of excellence to the children and families we serve and look forward to our future work together.
Appendix A

Annual Evaluation Survey Results – 2012-13

Summary of Responses to 2012-13 Program Evaluation

For the past five years we have used a quantitative, “yes/no” type of survey to evaluate the program we provide for our children and families. This year we chose to do a more qualitative type of survey, with the goal of gathering a bit more feedback and information. We chose four broad categories to address. They are listed below and are followed with a summary of responses in each category.

**Relationships:** Relationships are the basis of everything that happens here at the center. Think of your child...does he like school? Does she trust the adults here? Does he find support and comfort? Do we meet the social/emotional needs of your child? Do you find the center welcoming? Do you feel supported by our staff? Etc.

There were several relationship themes that appeared often in our parents’ survey responses. These included that their child:

- loves school
- gets needed support from the staff
- trusts her caregivers
- feels safe at school

Another compelling theme was that the center is a welcoming place. The staff was described as pleasant, kind, supportive, helpful, positive, patient, and amazing.

The parents feel that they are supported when they have a question and/or a concern. They also feel as though the building of relationships is encouraged and fostered.

Of special note: parents appreciate the home visits Dawn completes before their child enters her group.

**Concerns Shared by Parents:** Is there emotional support for my child when bullying occurs? Sometime other children exclude my child from play. Does Cindy discuss the transition to kindergarten with her children?

**Curriculum:** When we hear the word “curriculum,” we often immediately think “academics.” Weaving literacy and math into our curriculum is important. So too is the integration of art, music, pretend play, large motor play, small motor control, science exploration, construction play, etc. The environment is also a part of the curriculum. Please consider the entire realm of curriculum as you ponder this. Do the
toys and tools provided stimulate thought, creativity, exploration, critical thinking? Is the environment conducive to learning? Is it interesting? Challenging?

The response most often given related to the way in which the unit plans and the environment supporting the unit plan changes weekly. At the end of the week, the children and their parents look forward to seeing what is being planned for the next week and how the environment is going to change. Most of them described it in this manner: “We can’t wait to see what’s going to happen.” “We talk about it all weekend.” “We get excited about the changes.”

Our parents also viewed the variety in toys, tools, and materials as supporting a range of ability levels. They described these tools as being interesting, stimulating, and challenging. They also indicated that the toys and tools offer opportunities for exploration and creativity and that the teachers consistently use effective teaching strategies.

Of question or concern by parents: Could a list of the signs that my child knows be provided so that we can use them at home? At conferences we are asked about brainstorming ideas of what is of interest to our children – what about asking about our ideas? Please keep tv time limited…it is not used often and we appreciate this.

Resources: Your first thought may relate to the resources that are provided for the children as they explore and discover the world around them. These are important – please consider them. But please consider yourselves as well. Does our staff provide you the resources you need as a parent? Do we supply enough pertinent parenting information to you? Do we provide enough opportunities for you to get together with fellow parents? Do we inform you of resources in our community?

There were two over-riding themes in the resource category: the center staff is appreciated as a resource and so are fellow parents. Parents appreciate the fact that the center staff have an answer to many parenting questions or are willing to find an answer to a question. Parents also feel as though they are encouraged to ask for help when help is needed. Parents value the opportunities the center provides for them to connect with each other (parent meetings, the Parent Group, Facebook, family events, etc.). The resources that are available in written form (books, “newsletters” we have written, postings in the entry) are viewed as “abundant and useful.”

Of question or concern by parents: More opportunities to connect with other families are always appreciated. Could the parent group meet occasionally in the evening so that those unavailable during the day could join in? Could there be more chances to ask child development questions of more than one teacher in hopes of hearing different perspectives/ideas/responses. Could we plan some summer events for families?

Communication: Good, solid two-way communication is essential for providing a high-quality service. Do we answer questions promptly and respectfully? Do you feel comfortable sharing your concerns?
Do you find our website to be helpful and informative? Have you found the Facebook group to be supportive for you? Do we provide information in a timely and efficient manner?

And the question I would really like to address is: How would it affect you if we started distributing information concerning events and deadlines only electronically? This would mean no more notes on lockers – information would come only via email or placed on our website. Would you find this helpful? Or do you prefer paper? How can we best get information to you?

The dominating theme in this area is that exceptional lines of communication exist between staff and families. Parents appreciate the thoughtful, respectful, and prompt answers to questions. The website is viewed as helpful and informative and is used by many of our families. Email reminders of upcoming events and/or deadlines and verbal updates concerning one’s child are appreciated.

The electronic-only distribution of information received mixed reviews. Although many people stated it would work very well for them, an equal number perceived the need for occasional email reminders, paper reminders (a note), and/or signs in the doorway to make sure the information really “hit home.”

Of special note: the school-to-home notebooks that Dawn and Angela keep with their families are valued means of communication.

*Of question or concern by parents: What is the best way to reach each of the teachers? Some seem to use email routinely while others don’t. What is the preferred contact method for each? Sometimes the nap chart is not fully completed and this information in entirety is useful.*

*Other concerns: Please consider the use of cloth diapers.*
Appendix B

Annual Meeting Minutes
May 10, 2013

Attending: Kim Amundson, Angela Dingel, Becky Vianden, Cordial Gillette, Melissa Walbrun, Sue Wrobel

The meeting began with introductions and a review of the goals established last year:

- **Start a parent group that could help plan events for families to network with other families and/or to hold appreciation events for the student staff.** The parent group was very well received. The group met face-to-face monthly and established a Facebook page as another way to stay in contact. They worked on several appreciation “events” for the student staff during the course of the year – which was very much appreciated by our student employees.

- **Display the vision work done by the staff in each group area and possibly offer short (one-page) explanations about what we are doing and why (“Vision in Action”) as a follow-up.** The vision work is complete. It was well-received and very much appreciated by our parents. They reported that it prompted them to stop to consider what we do with the children and why we do it. The information provided good parenting reminders and prompted a request for future writings on the social growth and development of young children, with a special emphasis on resiliency.

Additional Topics Discussed:

- Building security was discussed with a suggestion for more security to keep out people who are not supposed to be here. Sue will continue to meet with Scott Rhode to examine this issue. We decided that taking down the sign explaining how to release the magnet on the doors would provide additional security for our children.

Review of Program Evaluations - Remarks:

- A suggestion was made to rotate the meeting times of the parent group so that it alternates between a mid-day meeting time and an evening meeting time.
- Those in attendance understood the reluctance to allow the use of cloth diapers in the center.
- The subject of bullying was brought up in the program evaluation. The staff explained that our children are still learning to socialize and that their words and actions do not meet the true definition of bullying. The issue of bullying (what it is and is not) can be addressed in a written series on social development in young children.
- The thematic units of study and the weekly changes to the environment (and the ways in which the units of study are embedded into the environment) are truly appreciated by the parents.
- Our parents understand that individuals are unique in the ways in which they prefer to gain information – we should continue to provide information in paper and in electronic form.
- Our parents look forward to the summer garden schedule and feel that it offers our families enough opportunities to get together over the course of the summer.
Goals for Next Year:

- Rotate meeting times for the parent group so that more parents have an opportunity for participation.
- Write and distribute a series of articles for parents on the social growth and development of young children.

Submitted by,

Kim Amundson