

Campus Child Center Annual Report 2016-17



Submitted by Dawn Hays
Director of Campus Child Center

From the Director:

2016-17 was a year of transition for Campus Child Center, with the retirement of long-time director, Sue Wrobel at the end of the 2015-16 school year. Campus Child Center hired the fourth director in its history at the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse, and for the first time in 20 years, a new lead teacher, Jodi Strong was hired. We also added a new Associate Teacher position, which was filled on an interim basis by former student employee, Ashley Stender.

Jodi Strong, Lead Teacher



Throughout the transition, Campus Child Center was able to maintain its service to the campus community, providing quality care to children of students and staff/faculty of the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse.

Our Mission:

The Campus Child Center was established in 1985 to provide quality care for the children of University of Wisconsin-La Crosse students and employees. Our program was first housed in what is currently the Mississippi Valley Archeology Lab. In 1997 we doubled our capacity when we moved to the new child center adjacent to the Recreational Eagle Center.

Established as a program to provide high quality care to the children it served, the center believed that attaining high quality involved attention to the following: providing age-appropriate activities that stimulate both exploration and discovery; viewing play and socialization as essential to young children; celebrating each child's unique needs and capabilities; providing a well-balanced mix of large and small group activities, indoor and outdoor activities, and restful and active play times; and by building strong connections and partnerships with the families we serve. These beliefs still guide the center as we continue to provide high quality care for our children.

Included in the vision of high quality was the commitment to recruiting and maintaining a staff whose knowledge base was firmly planted in sound early childhood practice. As the staff grew from two full-time employees to six full-time employees, a team evolved that has proven itself in its commitment to young children. We take pride in a staff turnover rate that is virtually non-existent.

From its inception, Campus Child Center built and maintained strong ties within the University setting. From its beginnings, the staff and children participated with other programs on campus. This practice continues to this day, as Campus Child Center describes itself as an active member and participant of our university community. Our center is used as a field site for programs in education, recreation, foreign language, psychology, and physical education. Reciprocating arrangements are valued as a source of expanding ideas and activities for the children, our staff, and the college students involved.



Our Staff:

Campus Child Center continues to maintain a low staff turnover rate, a point of pride for any Early Childhood program. Our full-time staff is comprised of the director and 5 lead teachers, with a total of 142 years of service in the field and 123 years of service to the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. Our full-time staff is supported by our Associate Teacher and a group of student employees who work as teacher assistants. In 2016-17, we employed 65 students over the course of the year.

University Collaboration:

Campus Child Center has a rich history of collaboration with the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse. Throughout the 2016-17 school year, students from the departments of Early Childhood – Middle Childhood, Middle Childhood – Early Adolescence, Health Education, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Nutrition, Music Education, and Psychology visited our center in relation to their coursework to get insight into the growth and development of young children, to complete research, and to meet their student teaching requirements. Campus Child Center was a site for 853 student volunteer/observation hours and 1625 student teaching hours.

In addition to serving as a site for UWL students to enrich their studies, Campus Child Center also collaborated with the University in other ways. Two of our full-time staff members served on the Early Childhood Education Department Advisory Board, Children from Campus Child Center joined the Organization for Campus Women to sing at their Holiday Social, and we hosted members of the Aspiring Educators Group for a day of reading with children. We look forward to continuing our collaboration in the future.

Community Connections:

One of the highlights for our year continues to be the annual Oktoberfest celebration, including our parade. We are happy to be joined each year by members of the Screaming Eagles Marching Band, as well as local Oktoberfest Royalty.



Family Involvement

A strong indicator of successful early childhood programs is the development of relationships. In addition to building relationships with the children in our program, our goal is to build relationships with their families and to help them build relationships with each other. This year we provided several opportunities for families to come together in our program.

In the fall, Campus Child Center hosted its annual Pizza Party for the children and their families. Held in early October, it is often the first event for families to meet each other and begin building those relationships. During the spring semester, families were invited to join their children for breakfast during our Week of the Young Child celebration.

Each spring, families are invited to help us prepare and plant our garden located on our playground. During the summer when the center is closed, the garden is opened twice each week for the children and their families to meet each other while maintaining the garden and enjoying the harvest.

