



NEWS RELEASE

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USI Children's Center receives NAEYC accreditation

The University of Southern Indiana Children's Center was granted accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in May. The accreditation remains in effect through April 2003.

"The heart of NAEYC accreditation focuses on the child's experience," said Pam Buschkill, director of the Children's Center. The process considers health and safety, staffing and staff qualifications, and the physical environment. The greatest emphasis is on the children's relationships with the staff and how the program helps each child grow and learn intellectually, physically, socially, and emotionally.

USI Children's Center is licensed to serve 44 children between the ages of three and seven. The facility currently serves 60 families due to flex-timing, which allows a parent to bring a child for short time periods of the day without charging for the entire day. Of the 60 families served, 75 percent are student families, 22 percent are USI employee families, and three percent are community families. Community families are served if there are openings after university families are registered.

Buschkill said, "We believe that education begins at birth. We create an environment that encourages children to develop their capabilities and interests at their own pace and according to their individual needs. We recognize the uniqueness of each child and provide positive encouragement for the child's continued growth."

USI Children's Center goals are for the children to experience a sense of self-esteem, exhibit a positive attitude toward life, demonstrate cooperative, pro-social behavior, acquire learning and problem solving skills, expand logical thinking skills, and to use all senses in learning.

USI Children's Center lead teachers are Jean Cobb, Virgie Szalga, and Sue Ealum. During the fall and spring semesters 10 to 12 USI students work as teaching assistants. Student teaching assistants this summer are Kelli Reidford (graduate), Stacy Kubida, and Nicole Fleming.

NAEYC accreditation has been achieved by approximately seven percent of early childhood programs nationwide - some 6,943 programs as of December 1999, serving 635,190 children. NAEYC accreditation is a rigorous, voluntary process by which early childhood programs demonstrate that they meet national standards of excellence. Childcare centers, preschools, kindergartens, and before- and after-school programs are eligible to seek NAEYC accreditation. Approximately 15,000 programs are engaged in seeking accreditation.