

Child Development Center

A program transforming children's lives

July 2011



The program and children it serves

The Wilder Child Development Center is a full-day child care and early childhood education program for children age 16 months to kindergarten. It is accredited by the NAEYC National Association for the Education of Young Children. Through the development of a combination of partnerships and with financial support from the Wilder Foundation, the Center is able to offer the highest-quality early learning environment. It has attained the highest Parent Aware rating, a Minnesota child and early education rating tool.

The program serves about 70 children at a given time. Many of the children live in the Frogtown neighborhood where the Center is located; others are bused by the Center from the east side of Saint Paul. The program welcomes families from all ethnic, economic, and education backgrounds. Most of the children are African American (61%) or multi-racial (19%). Fourteen percent of the parents are foreign-born. Almost all of the children's families are low-income, with nearly half earning \$12,000 a year or less.

Fully preparing children for school success

Supportive environment

Set in a nurturing environment, the program works to ensure children are fully prepared for learning success. Nutritious home-cooked meals and snacks are provided to help children stay focused and engaged and to promote healthy physical development. A highly-qualified, stable staff and low child-teacher ratios help build a foundation of trust among the children and staff and enables staff to give each child individual attention.

Family involvement

Understanding that family involvement is vital to the learning process, program staff and families work together to share their respective values, their beliefs about the child's needs, and their individual hopes and dreams for the child and his/her education. The Center offers monthly family events, field trips, athletic activities, and creative arts programs.

Strong early learning curriculum

Age-appropriate learning activities, equipment, and materials encourage children's engagement in the education process. A standardized curriculum incorporates innovative and research-based models that address personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematic thinking, the arts, and physical development. Classrooms provide many enrichment opportunities for students, including music classes and community socialization activities (e.g., field trips) which promote social learning. Staff are given opportunities for and are encouraged to continue their professional training.

Emotional competence: Incredible Years

A unique feature of the Child Development Center is the evidence-based Incredible Years curriculum which teaches social skills and promotes emotional competence of young children. A teacher component helps teachers manage challenging children and build positive relationships with students, while helping children appropriately express and articulate their feelings and improve their interaction with other children. A parent training/support program is available to help parents effectively respond to their child's needs.

What parents say...



I would not change a thing. My kids have been at Wilder before, and I think they are excellent.

It's a great place.

Good program. My child adapted well to the program.



PARENT SATISFACTION

Parents of children at the Child Development Center are invited to participate in a telephone interview and share their feedback about the program on a bi-annual basis. Overall, parents are very satisfied with the Center. During the most recent assessment, nearly all parents rated the skills, knowledge, and communication of the Center's teachers and staff highly, and most (92%) were satisfied with their children's progress toward achieving their individual goals. The majority of parents (92% to 97%) felt the Center's services were accessible and convenient. All parents interviewed said they were satisfied with the program overall and would recommend the Child Development Center to other parents whose children needed similar services.

In 2009, the Wilder Foundation's Incredible Years program was awarded the national Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Science and Service Award for exemplary implementation of evidence-based interventions.

Community partners

The Child Development Center partners with several other initiatives and programs in the East Metro, including **Head Start**, a Federal program for preschool children from low-income families, and **Project Early Kindergarten**, a Saint Paul Schools demonstration program which aims to ensure school readiness. To enhance learning, music has been integrated into the pre-school curriculum through a unique partnership with **The MacPhail Center for Music**. Music experts from MacPhail provide ongoing training to childcare teachers on how to implement music as a tool to promote cognitive, language, socio-emotional, and motor skills. Wilder was the first to partner with MacPhail to develop this program. Due to its success at Wilder, the program is now being implemented at several other child care centers. The Center also offers numerous volunteer opportunities for students and individuals at local high schools, community-based agencies, and businesses.

Ongoing assessment

Regular monitoring and assessment of children's progress in the program is key to a child's growth and development. It helps teachers identify ways to continually challenge students and improve learning.

Using a range of measures, teachers assess a child's development in a number of areas including:

- Overall development including cognitive, social-emotional, and physical - *Creative Curriculum (Teaching Strategies GOLD as of 2010/11), Work Sampling System®*
- Developmental milestones and social and emotional health - *Ages & Stages Questionnaires® (ASQ); Ages & Stages Questionnaires: Social-Emotional® (ASQ:SE); Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)*
- Language and literacy of pre-school children - *Teacher Rating of Oral Language and Literacy (TROLL); Individual Growth and Development Inventory (IGDI); Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS)*
- Music, visual arts, and creative movement - pilot tool developed by MacPhail

Program results

Children are showing gains in multiple domains of development. The following are highlights from the 2009-10 school year.

Social-emotional development

Although most children are on-track developmentally when they enroll at the Center, some show gains in the area of social-emotional development over the school year.

- Over the year, social-emotional development improved by 53 percent for toddlers, and between 43 and 61 percent for preschoolers. (*Creative Curriculum*)
- About one-quarter (24%) of 3-5 year olds showed improved pro-social skills, such as helping and sharing. One in ten (10%) also had enhanced peer relationships by the spring. (*SDQ*)

Language and literacy skills

Project Early Kindergarten has established benchmarks for student achievement, and most children at the Center are achieving or exceeding these benchmarks.

- Many preschoolers met or exceeded benchmarks in skill areas such as picture naming (74%) and alliteration (60%) by the end of the school year. (*IGDI*)
- Sixty-six percent of preschoolers met or exceeded benchmarks for alphabet recognition, and 69 percent met or exceeded benchmarks for print and word awareness. (*PALS*)



Cognitive skills

Children showed enhanced cognitive development over the course of the school year.

- Among toddlers and two-year olds, scores in cognitive development improved by 73 percent by the spring. (*Creative Curriculum*)
- About half of 3-4 year olds gained proficiency in science (42%) and math (58%) by the spring. (*Work Sampling System*®)
- Nearly two-thirds or more of 3 and 4 year olds demonstrated proficiency in language development (63%), literacy (68%), and their overall approach to learning (74%) by spring. (*Work Sampling System*®)



Music, visual arts, and creative movement

Preliminary data suggest that toddlers and preschoolers are acquiring music and personal expression skills, which appear to be linked to the classroom music instruction. Studies suggest that music instruction may promote certain cognitive abilities, especially spatial-temporal reasoning, which is important for learning mathematics and science.

- During the 2009-10 school year, just over one-third of toddlers gained “proficiency” in the areas of music (38%) and visual arts (35%). (*MacPhail assessment*)
- Other assessments of children’s development in the creative arts show similar gains, with some 3-5 year olds (21% to 32%) improving in the area of creative arts. (*Work Sampling System* ®)

Physical development

Children demonstrated gains in their physical development over the course of the school year as well. More than one-third of 3-4 year olds (37%) and 4-5 year olds (42%) improved in the area of physical health and development. (*Creative Curriculum and Work Sampling System* ®)

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JULY 2011

For more than 100 years, the Wilder Foundation has combined direct service, research, and community development to address the needs of the most vulnerable people in greater Saint Paul.

WILDER FOUNDATION’S COMMITMENT TO THE SUCCESS OF ALL CHILDREN

Wilder Foundation provides programming to help all children thrive, especially those who are most vulnerable. We look for innovative ways to best serve the evolving populations in the Saint Paul metro area. We offer programs to meet particular challenges faced by Saint Paul’s Southeast Asian and African American populations. We provide support and education for in-home child care centers, a variety of in-school programs, and mental health services through our Child Guidance Clinic. Our program areas include:

Achievement Plus is a private/public partnership between the Saint Paul Public Schools and the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation to improve student achievement in schools located in low socio-economic areas of the city.

Kofi Services offer a culturally-specific, school-based mental health program for African American youth in grades 2-8 and their families.

Primary Project is a national model to serve young children who have trouble adjusting to school by focusing on helping children to promote behavior control, task orientation, peer social skills – all predictors of school achievement.

Incredible Years, implemented in the Child Development Center, provides comprehensive curricula for children age 2-5, their parents, and teachers that work jointly to promote emotional and social competence and to prevent, reduce and treat children’s behavioral and emotional problems.

School linked mental health services provide pre-diagnostic work and create partnerships between mental health providers and school employees who provide counseling and related services.

