Children's School Process for Approaching Re-Accreditation
(expiration 3/31/08)

Sharon M. Carver, Ph.D.
Director, Children's School
Teaching Professor, Psychology
Carnegie Mellon University
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
412-268-1499
FAX 412-268-5627
www.psy.cmu.edu/childrensschool

During the spring of 2006, we got the book “NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Criteria” in order to begin exploring the changes in the system.

21 months to Candidacy

May 2006 – Self-Study began with Small Group Accreditation Preview (Quick Rating of All Criteria) on 5/23 compiled by director for Staff Report on 5/30 [Written Report in Portfolio]

Our first staff consideration was scheduled for a 3-hour session during our May staff development time. We split into 3 teams, each of which reviewed the criteria for 3 of the standards plus Administration. Teams were composed of one staff member from the administration, plus one from each teaching team. Each team used a computer to record their best estimate of the current rating for each criterion, with explanation for any judgment less than a 3. The director compiled the three reports into one document, which the whole group reviewed while eating Chinese food the following week. The purpose of the whole group review was to give everyone a sense of the school’s situation re: re-accreditation, as well as to clarify the rationale for specific ratings as needed.

June / July 2006 - During the summer, when our program is closed, the director and assistant director recruited a graduate student interested in a possible administrative career to help review the school’s situation, locate
relevant resources, collect current space measurements, etc. Together we prepared a synthesis document for review with the staff.

18 months to Candidacy

August 24, 2006 – Whole Staff Discussion re: Accreditation Focus based on Administrative Review, with help from a Prospective Parent / PhD Student re: items requiring background research [Written Report in Portfolio]

When the staff returned in August for the professional development time prior to the start of our new year, we spent another 2-hour session discussing the synthesis mentioned above. The discussion focused on standards that need improvement and that relate directly to the teacher’s actions, routines, etc. We decided which items to tackle immediately vs. those that could wait for action. For example, we decided to include handwashing in the entry routine for all classes and to change the water table between morning and afternoon sessions, both of which were easiest to change at the beginning of the year when new routines are being learned. Other items, like policies, consultants, etc. were put on hold for future efforts.

January 2007 – Psychology Department Annual Report Compilation (Root of Yearly Strategic Planning Process) [Notebook for each year’s report located in Director’s office]

12 months to Candidacy

February 16, 2007 – Whole Staff Discussion re: NAEYC Process, with particular emphasis on Classroom Portfolio and the Spring 2007 aspects of our Self-Study

Spring 2007 – Classroom Portfolio Boxes prepared by Administrative Coordinator, so each classroom team could collect information from the last 4 months of the school year – Assistant Teachers had one full day to work on the portfolio while teachers did conference prep in April and then reported to the staff on 5/4/07 re: status & items to collect

Enrollment for Self Study submitted by 3/31/07 along with Annual Rpt
April 13, 2007 – Staff review of Director’s proposed Self-Study Family Survey, which was then revised and distributed.

April / May 2007 – Collected Family Surveys, compiled data for Staff Review during professional development time in late May

9 months to Candidacy

May 2007 - Professional Development time included NAEYC classroom tour, staff survey & discussion of NAEYC’s 3 Priorities and used NAEYC standards for professional review of teaching staff and administrators
• May 18 – Whole Staff review of steps in Re-Accreditation Process, including exploration of standards books & distribution of all materials to be read / completed during May
• May 21 – 6 hours professional development time for each team to complete the classroom tour and work on the classroom portfolio
• May 22 – 4.5 hours of individual time to complete self and team member evaluations relative to NAEYC standards
• May 23 – 2 hours of individual time to read NAEYC’s “Things to Think About” and complete the Teaching Staff Survey, 1.5 hours of team time to reflect about the year relative to NAEYC’s priorities, followed by 3 hour whole staff discussion (outside in the treehouse pavilion) of the alignment between our philosophy and practice with NAEYC’s priorities
• May 30 – 2 hours to complete administrator eval re: NAEYC standards

Summer 2007 – Administrative work to align details of policy with NAEYC and DPW standards, organize documentation, etc.
• Review Department of Public Welfare standards to check level of compliance, create a written report to document status, and take necessary steps for voluntary compliance with all items

Application submitted by 6/30/07 for 1/31/08 Candidacy Deadline
• Create computer file for Program Portfolio for easily searchable documentation of what materials are included in each section
• Create a Staff File Documentation form as cover / summary document for each staff file
• Compile previously separate sections of Family and Staff Handbooks so that each was one unified document with NAEYC codes integrated into the text throughout
6 months to Candidacy

August 2007 – Whole Staff Review of Status & Decisions re: Changes
• Begin utilizing new forms and following new policies
• Review & Revise Family and Staff Handbooks prior to final printing
• Review plans for Fall 2007 Self-Assessment Data Collection (allocation of
  staff time documented in Professional Development Calendar)

September 2007 – Begin Classroom Portfolio work in earnest, with the
  Director and Assistant Director doing a portfolio review / coaching session
  with one classroom team for one to two hours each Friday morning (4 total)

October 2007 – Provide substitute time one day per week to allow each
  staff member 1.5 hours for classroom observation (forms completed during
  regular planning time or at home) - Portfolio work occurring during regular
  planning time except for 2 hours per team during Staff / Parent Brown Bag

3 months to Candidacy

November 2007 - Final Self-Assessment Data Collection via Anonymous
  Family Survey (conference days), Anonymous Staff Survey (week after
  conferences), and School / Classroom Tour (conducted by Administrative
  Team during the week after conferences) - Two full days of classroom
  portfolio work for each assistant teacher during conferences

8 weeks to Candidacy

December 2007 - Administrators polish Program Portfolio and prepare
  Candidacy Materials, while Teaching Teams polish classroom portfolios
  during regular planning time, plus one day of sub coverage for each team

January 2008 – One additional day of substitute coverage for each
  teaching team for last minute details of portfolios before Final Classroom
  Portfolio Reviews (again conducted on Friday mornings)

Submit Candidacy Materials before 1/31/08

Spring 2008 Wait for On-Site Assessment Visit
Children's School
May 2007 Team Evaluation
Team Name
Team Members

The format of this year’s Teaching Team Review is based on NAEYC’s Classroom Tour, plus some additional emphases related to features not covered there and a reflection on the progress your team has made relative to the goals set last year. In preparation, please re-read last year’s team evaluation and review your lesson plans / teaching notes for this year to refresh your memory. Copies of the year’s newsletters and other parent memos might also be helpful to review. Please submit your report electronically to Sharon by Thursday afternoon for review prior to our meetings on the following Tuesday. Be sure to make copies for each member of your team to use at the meeting.

NAEYC Classroom Tour
When you meet as a group, begin by conducting NAEYC’s Classroom Tour according to the directions on page 1. Write N/A if a criterion does not apply to your group(s).
• List your team’s items for improvement & specific plans here:

Program Evaluation (Consider diverse aspects of curriculum, assessment, family involvement, etc.)
• How did your program advance this year? How did each change occur?
• What challenges have you faced? How did you overcome them? Which remain to be addressed?
• What ideas / plans do you have for next year?
• Who will do what over the summer in preparation?
• What support do you need from the administration?

Team Functioning
• How have you grown as a team?
• What is unique about your team?
• How does your team contribute to the rest of the school?
• How does the time allocated for individual and team planning work for your team?
• How is the space allocated for individual and team materials working for your team?
• In what ways do you want to improve as a team next year? Who will take what specific steps to begin?

Other
• What suggestions do you have for others?
• What most excites you about next year?
• What else should we discuss?
Reflection on My Professional Practice
re: NAEYC’s Standards for Teachers, Relationships, and Teaching
Name: Date:

Consider your progress since your last professional review (see attached summary).
What progress have you made relative to the specific professional growth goals you set last year?
What remains to be done? Why?
What else is new for you professionally this year?

For each of the standards listed below, begin by reviewing all of the criteria, reflecting and making notes about your individual practice. After doing a thorough review, list the criteria in each set (by number and a brief phrase) that are your most important strengths (4 – 6 per standard). Be sure to indicate why you chose each one. Then choose the few (2 - 3) on which you would like to improve during the coming year and indicate the strategies that would help you to grow.
Teachers (Standard 6)
   Strengths & Reasons for Choosing
   Areas for Improvement & Ideas re: Strategies
Relationships (Standard 1)
   Strengths & Reasons for Choosing
   Areas for Improvement & Ideas re: Strategies
Teaching (Standard 3)
   Strengths & Reasons for Choosing
   Areas for Improvement & Ideas re: Strategies

Reflection on My Teaching Teammates
re: NAEYC’s Standards for Teachers, Relationships, and Teaching
Name: Date:

Now that you are thoroughly familiar with the criteria for Teachers, Relationships, and Teaching, consider which aspects of your teaching partners’ professional practice you most appreciate. List several for each standard. Offer a few suggestions for improvement in each area as well, indicating how you can support that growth.
Teachers (Standard 6) Strengths Appreciated
   Areas for Improvement & Ideas re: Support
Relationships (Standard 1) Strengths Appreciated
   Areas for Improvement & Ideas re: Support
Teaching (Standard 3) Strengths Appreciated
   Areas for Improvement & Ideas re: Support
Reflection on School Philosophy & Practice
re: NAEYC’s Three Essential Themes (INDIVIDUAL)
Name: Date:

After reading “Things to Think About” and the associated sections from the Relationships, Teaching, and Teachers Standards books, summarize your PERSONAL perspective on each theme. Then reflect on the fit between your perspective and the school philosophy and practice, as well as making suggestions for improvement.

• Meeting the developmental needs of children
  Personal Perspective:
  Contrast between Personal Perspective and School Philosophy, if any:
  Contrast between Personal Perspective and School Practice, if any:
  Suggestions for improving Children’s School philosophy and/or practice:

• Being sensitive to culture and language in your program practices
  Personal Perspective:
  Contrast between Personal Perspective and School Philosophy, if any:
  Contrast between Personal Perspective and School Practice, if any:
  Suggestions for improving Children’s School philosophy and/or practice:

• Meeting special needs of all children, including children with disabilities
  Personal Perspective:
  Contrast between Personal Perspective and School Philosophy, if any:
  Contrast between Personal Perspective and School Practice, if any:
  Suggestions for improving Children’s School philosophy and/or practice:

Reflection on School Philosophy & Practice
re: NAEYC’s Three Essential Themes (TEAM)
Name: Date:

After reflecting individually on the three essential themes, work with your team to consider the ways that each theme is currently evident in your practice. It might be helpful to reread all of your team’s newsletters and other communication from throughout the year to see what is evident therein. A similar review of your lesson plans and other written notes might reveal additional evidence. List ways that your team plans to improve practice, communication, etc. in the coming year to strengthen our support of these themes.

• Meeting the developmental needs of children
  Current evidence in our team’s practice:
  Improvement plans for the coming year:

• Being sensitive to culture and language in your program practices
  Current evidence in our team’s practice:
  Improvement plans for the coming year:

• Meeting special needs of all children, including children with disabilities
  Current evidence in our team’s practice:
  Improvement plans for the coming year:
Reflection on Administrative Practice
re: NAEYC’s Program Administrator Definition and Competencies
Name: Date:

For each of the three areas listed below, begin by reviewing all of the criteria and reflecting about administrative practice at the Children’s School. After doing a thorough review, list the criteria in each set that are the most important strengths for Sharon and for Jean. Be sure to indicate why you chose each one. Then indicate suggested improvements for each administrator to focus on during the coming year. If you have specific suggestions, please feel free to offer them. Finish by adding any other praise or constructive criticism that is not covered by the criteria. On a related note, please offer input that will help in the selection of a new Administrative Coordinator to replace Erlina Mae Bowers.

Feedback for Sharon Carver, Director
Re: Functions of the Program Administrator
   Strengths & Reasons for Choosing
   Areas for Improvement & Ideas re: Strategies
Re: Management Core Competencies
   Strengths & Reasons for Choosing
   Areas for Improvement & Ideas re: Strategies
Re: Early Childhood Core Competencies
   Strengths & Reasons for Choosing
   Areas for Improvement & Ideas re: Strategies
Other Feedback

Feedback for Jean Simpson, Assistant Director
Re: Functions of the Program Administrator
   Strengths & Reasons for Choosing
   Areas for Improvement & Ideas re: Strategies
Re: Management Core Competencies
   Strengths & Reasons for Choosing
   Areas for Improvement & Ideas re: Strategies
Re: Early Childhood Core Competencies
   Strengths & Reasons for Choosing
   Areas for Improvement & Ideas re: Strategies
Other Feedback

Feedback Regarding the Administrative Coordinator Position
Most important characteristics of an effective Administrative Coordinator:
Anything to purposefully avoid?
Suggestions for improvements in the Administrative Team division of responsibilities and/or functioning:
Ways the Administrative Team could better support the Teaching Teams:
Ways the Teaching Teams could better support the Administrative Team:
Other Input?
Pennsylvania Regulations re: Child Care
Chapter 3270 – Child Day Care Centers

Chapter 3270.3 b.4 This chapter does not apply to care provided during the hours of instruction in nonpublic schools and in private nursery schools and kindergartens.

Standards begin with 3270.14, with the preceding numbers being about definitions, compliance certificates, appeals, waivers, etc.

References to NAEYC Standard Codes (in parentheses throughout this document) indicate the location of the evidence in the NAEYC Program Portfolio.

Children’s School Voluntary Compliance

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

14 Carnegie Mellon departments coordinate the university’s compliance with pertinent laws and regulations (e.g., Human Resources handles Department of Labor & Industry issues, Environmental Health & Safety handles Department of Environmental Resources & Department of Health).

15 Firesafety Compliance 34 PA Code Chapter 54 – documentation from Carnegie Mellon’s Environmental Health and Safety Department

16 The Children’s School is also exempt from Department of Education licensure because of being a university laboratory school.

17 The Children’s School is not a “specialized day care service for children with disabilities”, though we do offer inclusion opportunities for children with mild disabilities, such as learning disabilities, autism, etc.

18 The Children’s School is covered under Carnegie Mellon’s liability insurance (see NAEYC 10.B.05).

19 Child Abuse Reporting Policy (NAEYC 10.D.03/04)

20 The Children’s School reports injury, death, or fire to Carnegie Mellon officials via the Carnegie Mellon Police (documented on Incident Report).

21 Health and Safety Policy & Procedures (NAEYC 5C)
69 Our water sources is the Pennsylvania Water & Sewer Authority (NAEYC 9.D.02). All faucet water is kept below 110°F (NAEYC 5.B.07). Children are permitted to get drinks from the red room drinking fountain or via paper cups from the classroom sinks. Our outdoor play periods are less than 1 hour for most of the year, but the playground also has a drinking fountain available.

70 Carnegie Mellon HVAC personnel are responsible for keeping our indoor temperature at least 65°F and no more than 85°F. (NAEYC 9.D.05)

71 There are no hot water pipes accessible to children and all other sources of heat exceeding 110°F are used only by adults (e.g., stove, oven). When children are using the kitchen, adults ensure that they are working at a safe distance from the oven and stove.

72 The Children’s School relies on mechanical ventilation. Windows above ground level have child safety devices that either prevent an opening larger than 6" or have child safety bars that can be opened only by an adult in an emergency. Adjustable window screens are available for every window in the event that there is a problem with the mechanical ventilation and the windows need to be opened.

73 The Children’s School has three phone lines, with the primary, widely published number being 412-268-2199. We also have a cell phone for use on field trips and after office hours.

74 Emergency numbers for Carnegie Mellon police (also EMT), poison control, and fire department are posted by each phone.

75 First Aid kits are kept in high cabinets with secure latches in each classroom and the kitchen, in a high cabinet in the bathroom, in each teacher’s emergency fanny pack (also used for field trips), in the locked playground shed, and in the office and classroom emergency backpacks.

76 Staff monitor and Carnegie Mellon professionals maintain all building surfaces to be in good repair and free from visible hazards. Staff members do indoor and outdoor hazard checks daily.

77 Lead paint that was previously contained by safe paint layers on Children’s School windows was removed using appropriate procedures during the summer of 2005. (NAEYC 9.D.01)

78 The Children’s School gets much natural light from our large windows, but we also have effective artificial lights as a supplement.

79 Weapons, firearms, and ammunition are prohibited on Carnegie Mellon’s Campus. (NAEYC 9.D.06)
Children’s School Program Portfolio Entries
[Note that the Complete Parent Handbook is part of the Staff Handbook, so policies listed in the Parent Handbook are not repeated separately in the Staff Handbook.]

Standard 2: Curriculum

2.A. Curriculum: Essential Characteristics

01  Written statement of philosophy and curriculum framework

• Ed Philosophy Statement
  Staff Handbook p. 4
  Family Handbook p. 3
  Web Site under Program – Our Unique Approach
• Continuum of Developmental Objectives (3 years / 6 domains)
  Staff Handbook p. 14 (overview) and
  Curriculum & Assessment Section (full set)
  Family Handbook p. 8 (overview only)
  Web Site under Program – Our Unique Approach
• Sample Director’s Corner articles using framework (e.g., play, summer, dramatic play)

02  Curriculum framework as focus for planning but adaptable
03  Curriculum guides intentional implementation of learning opportunities consistent with program goals
04  Curriculum reflects responsiveness to diversity

• Curriculum and Assessment Statement
  Staff Handbook p. 14-18
  Family Handbook p. 8-12
  Web Site under Program – Our Unique Approach
• Handouts from Thematic Unit Workshop 8/07
  (with diversity sections highlighted)
• Team Planning Overview for Sample Thematic Units
  (with diversity sections highlighted)
• Bird / Carver presentation from NALS ’07 re: Music and Games: Building Skills in All Developmental Domains via Early
Children’s School Program Portfolio Entries

[Note that the Complete Parent Handbook is part of the Staff Handbook, so policies listed in the Parent Handbook are not repeated separately in the Staff Handbook.]

Standard 7: Families

7.A. Knowing and Understanding the Program’s Families

Staff and Family Handbooks include Interactions Guidelines, etc.
• Family Handbook p. 5 (Interaction Guidelines) and 6-7 (Parents as Partners)
• Staff Handbook p. 6-9 (Interaction Guidelines, with separate sections for staff-child and staff-family)

01 Staff training re: diversity

• Interaction Guidelines section re: Diversity (Staff Handbook p. 6-7)
• 2007-08 Staff Book Discussion Series re: Starting Small: Teaching Tolerance in Preschool and the Early Grades (Children’s School discussion guide produced for this book)
• See Staff Files for prior training re: diversity

02 Formal and informal strategies to familiarize with families

• Rosenblum / Simpson presentation re: Connecting with Parents from PAEYC 12/06
• Enrollment Form includes family preference for addressing child, request for info re: birthplace, occupation, hobbies & interests of parents / guardians, information about family context, information about child’s background, special interests, discipline techniques, eating, sleeping, toileting, languages used, special fears, special needs …
• ESL Form used for families whose children do not speak English as a first language (includes a section asking parents if they need materials in another language, a translator at conferences, etc.)
NAEYC Accreditation

Staff File Documentation List
[Staff files are kept in a locked drawer of the Director’s Desk. (10.E.08)]

Staff Member:  
Position:  
Hire Letter Dated:  

Hiring Procedures (10.E.02, 10.E.04)
  Date of Birth on Photocopy of Drivers License:  
  Date of Criminal Record Clearance:  
  Date of Child Abuse Clearance:  
  Date of Most Recent Health Assessment:  
  Date of Most Recent TB Test:  

Evidence of specified qualifications
  (Teacher 6.A.05, Assistant Teacher 6.A.06, Administrator 10.A.02)
  College Transcript from xx documenting yy degree in zz
  PA Dept of Education Professional Personal ID #xxxxxxx

CPR / Pediatric First Aid Training (5.A.03)
  [3-hour course conducted annually in September for all staff]
  Dates Attended: 9/22/06, 9/7/07
  Copies of Cards are located in program portfolio under 5.A.03
  2-hour Fire Response Seminar (Bob Anderegg, CMU) 9/1/06, 8/31/07

All Children’s School Staff Members are PAEYC Members - ID #xxxxx

Professional Ethics Training (6.A.01)
  Definition of Professionalism (Sharon Carver, CMU)
  1-hour Whole Staff Seminar 8/29/05 (after everyone re-read the
  NAEYC ethics brochure)

Diversity Training re: Race, Culture & Language (6.A.07)
  Staff Book Club (2007-08) discussing Starting small: Teaching
  tolerance in preschool and the early grades (seven sessions
  from 8/29/07 to 4/11/08 for a total of 21 hours)
  Preschool in Three Cultures Video & Discussion 2/13/04

Training re: Teamwork, Collaboration & Communication (6.A.07, 6.A.08)
  Communication Through Dialogue (Ron Placone, CMU Learning and
  Development) 2-hour Whole Staff Seminar on 8/31/06
  Whole Staff Read & Discussed “The Art of Possibility: Transforming
  Professional and Personal Life” by Rosamund and Benjamin
  Zander (Spring 2005), followed by full-day
Adult Supervision, Mentoring, & Leadership Development Training (6.A.09)
  Leadership Training (Ron Placone, CMU Learning and Development)
    3-hour Whole Staff Seminar on 8/30/07
  Dealing with Student Depression and Anxiety (Karin Arnds, CMU Counseling Center) x-hour Whole Staff Seminar 2/05

Child Development Training re: Preschool / Kindergarten (6.A.10)
  Seven Elements of Art (Sharon Carver, CMU)
    4-hour Whole Staff Exploration & Outing 8/31/07
  Yoga Exploration (Wyndham Bailey, CMU)
    2-hour Whole Staff Seminar 8/31/06

Assessment Training re: Children & Program -> Adaptations (6.A.11)
  Assessment Plan & Developmental Screening (Sharon Carver, CMU)
    2.5-hour Whole Staff Seminar 8/24/07

Special Needs Training (6.A.12)
  Giftedness (Extensive snow day reading & notetaking packet used on 2/13 and/or 2/14/07, followed by staff discussion on 4/13/07)
  Autism, Sensory Integration & Sensory Processing (Chuck Gallagher)
    3-hour Whole Staff Seminar 5/24/06

Individualized Professional Development Plan (6.B.01, 10.E.09, 10.E.10)
  [Yearly self-evaluation & meeting with director, who then summarizes via a written performance evaluation / plan that is signed by both and used to plan the next year's professional development]

  Most recent evaluation was for year xx, conducted on yy date
  Previous annual performance evaluations are also included.

Additional Training Tailored to the Individual (6.B.01)

  College Coursework:
  Conference Attendance:
  Other Professional Development Participation:
  Presentations Given:

Work to Improve the Conditions of Children & Families (6.B.02)
  In addition to direct service to Children’s School children and families:

Participation in Community Cultural Events for Children & Families (7.A.04)
  In addition to Children’s School Open Houses, Family Festival, and Celebration Picnic:
Dear Children's School Team,

Welcome to the 2007-08 school year!! I am excited about the ways that we can collaborate during the coming year to provide a high-quality learning environment for each other, our children, and their families.

As the staff of a university laboratory school, we serve multiple constituencies - researchers, undergraduate and graduate students, pre-service teachers, and colleagues seeking professional development - in addition to those served by most of our early childhood colleagues. We can best meet the diverse needs of all these individuals by combining a clarity of purpose, policy, and practice with effective communication between all parties, flexibility in adapting to changing needs and circumstances, and cooperation in solving problems to improve all aspects of the services we provide.

The materials in this handbook have been collected as one means of clear communication. Many of them have been significantly revised as part of our NAEYC re-accreditation self-assessment process. We will review them both individually and as a team so that we can further refine them prior to their official adoption. Please review them carefully and be prepared to make suggestions during our August staff development time. I encourage you to keep this notebook handy and to add to it regularly as we refine these documents, distribute monthly and weekly memos, and work on enhancing our program. During our professional development and staff meeting time this year, we will focus on the mentoring and supervision of adult learners, assessment, and teaching tolerance. We will also take further purposeful steps in our consideration of longer-term issues in response to local trends in pre-kindergarten programming.

Because of the high level of professional expertise and personal commitment of each staff member, I am confident that we can continue to be a highly effective staff team. I invite each of you to engage fully in this year’s self-assessment process so that we can improve our program, successfully earn re-accreditation, and then work to help other programs achieve their best through NAEYC accreditation. Best wishes for a positive, productive, and personally satisfying year.

Warm regards,

Sharon M. Carver, Ph.D., Director
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**Additional Resources:**
- Each staff member has a Staff Notebook, with contact information and sections for policies and procedures (included in this document, plus separate handouts for NAEYC's ethical guidelines and the CMU Emergency Handbook), staff memos and meeting notes, curriculum and assessment, staff development, family information (newsletters, handbook, etc.), undergraduate information (schedules, handbook, etc.), and research information (schedules, assignments, etc.). Please be sure to add information to this notebook as it is distributed throughout the year.
- The Carnegie Mellon Human Resources Department provides helpful information for current employees regarding staff policies (10.E.), benefits, professional development opportunities (called learning and development), and equal opportunity services (http://hr.web.cmu.edu/).
- LifeWorks, an expanded Employee Assistance Program, is available to employees and their dependents at no cost. Use of any LifeWorks service, from web surfing to materials requests to counseling, is always 100% confidential (http://hr.web.cmu.edu/current/work-life/lifeworks/).

Note that the numbering throughout this handbook corresponds to the NAEYC standards reflected in that section.
STAFF TEAMS (10.B.01)

The Children’s School is staffed by five teams of educators. The administrative team includes a Director, an Assistant Director, and an Administrative Coordinator. The Preschool 3's, Preschool 4’s, and Kindergarten Teams each include two teachers and one assistant teacher. The Extended Day Team includes one teacher and one assistant teacher working in partnership with one representative from each of the Preschool Teams. All teachers and administrators have many years of experience in education, as well as a bachelor’s degree and often an advanced degree in early childhood education, psychology, or a related field (see Staff Team Biographies). Undergraduate interns and student employees complement each team, and pre-service teachers from local colleges often do field placements or student teaching at our school.

Full-time Children’s School employees are hired and managed according to the Human Resources policies of Carnegie Mellon (10.E.). They are thoroughly oriented (6.A.03), earn a competitive salary, have paid planning time, and receive full benefits, including tuition. The Children’s School provides an extensive professional development program of approximately 90 hours per year, as well as supporting each individual’s goals for growth via additional seminars, publications, and professional experiences.

Our experienced educators participate actively in the local and national early childhood communities by serving in leadership capacities, giving regular presentations, providing consulting to other programs, and, most recently, by partnering with neighboring high-quality programs to develop new avenues for early childhood professional development (8.C.). The partner organizations are seeking ways to support each other and create synergies between their training initiatives that will enhance the quality of reflective training opportunities and serve as a resource for early childhood educators across the broad continuum of professional development.

Each staff member is responsible for being thoroughly familiar with his or her job description, Children’s School staff, family, and undergraduate handbooks and ongoing communication, Carnegie Mellon policies and procedures, and the NAEYC standards.

INTERACTION GUIDELINES (7.A., 10.B.01)

Regardless of position, each staff member’s job description includes the following priorities for action and interaction. “Speak and behave in a professional manner with staff, children, parents, visitors, service people, et cetera, at all times. Be prepared to flexibly adapt to the diverse situations that arise in early childhood education, particularly in a University lab school.”

Children’s School staff members share the following core values as guides for interactions among staff members, between staff and children, between staff and parents, between staff and undergraduates, researchers, university employees, etc (1.A., 1.B.).
Operating the Security System

Given the large number individuals continually entering and leaving our laboratory school context for varied purposes, our security depends on everyone being aware of potential hazards and taking responsibility for monitoring entry and exits. All staff members are responsible for knowing and following the security system procedures. No undergraduates or families should be given staff codes for bypassing doors; they use entry and exit codes only.

Responding to Environmental Conditions

All staff members are responsible for knowing health & safety hazards and protecting children from harm.

Heat and Cold: Use the Child Care Weather Watch chart to determine whether the heat index or wind-chill factor are within range for safe outdoor play (5.A.07). Generally speaking, under 80°F is safe with any level of humidity, and under 90° is safe with relative humidity less than 50%. In similarly general terms, air temperatures above 10° are safe on calm days, but winds above 10 miles per hour make even an 30° day feel like it’s below 10°. Contact the Assistant Director with questions.

Air Pollution: The Assistant Director subscribes to an air quality alert system that provides notice of hazards in our area. She will notify teaching staff if conditions prohibit outdoor education (9.D.03).

Supervising Children

• All staff members are responsible for knowing all children and should take appropriate action in response to any child’s needs or behavior.

• Maintain appropriate staff – child ratios at all times (10.B.12).
  Minimum of 1:8 for 3’s Programs
  (though we aim for 1:6 with undergraduate support)
  Minimum of 1:10 for 4’s Programs
  (though we aim for 1:6 with undergraduate support)
  Minimum of 1:12 for Kindergarten
  (though we aim for 1:8 with staff support)

  These ratios are applicable both indoors and outdoors. Off campus field trip ratios are 1:3 for preschool and 1:4 for kindergarten. Wading pool ratios are 1:5 for both preschool and kindergarten.

• Staff members, as a group, must supervise preschool children primarily by sight (3.C.04). Classroom space must be designed so that there are no areas of the room where children can hide. Supervision by sound is
Dear Partners in Education,

The Children’s School at Carnegie Mellon is a laboratory school that is actively involved in preschool and kindergarten education, developmental research, undergraduate teaching, and professional development of pre-service and practicing educators (10.A.01). We offer a model half-day preschool and full-day kindergarten program for 96 children ages 3-6, plus an extended day program for 30 of those children. Our program runs from September through mid-May, with the option of a half-day summer camp in June. The Children’s School was founded in 1968 and has been accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) since 2003. Serving as a laboratory school in a Psychology Department on the campus of a major research university enables our staff to both learn about and participate in current developmental research. We continually strive to use developmentally appropriate goals for young children as a framework for planning our educational program and assessing children’s progress in all aspects of the social, cognitive, and physical foundations necessary for success in primary schooling. We emphasize diversity throughout our program, and our individualized, developmental approach lends itself to meeting the unique needs of most children. Similarly, we utilize theories of adult development to support the lifelong learning of the wide range of staff, family members, researchers, undergraduates, and colleagues that participate in our programs. By capitalizing on our talents in all of these areas, our laboratory school explores new directions that can be utilized by professionals in various disciplines to meet the changing needs of society.

We invite each Children’s School family to become actively involved in all aspects of our mission. As prospective families, you gained basic familiarity with our philosophy, staff, programs for children, approach to meeting learning goals, and research involvement. We hope that you have and will continue to utilize our web site to explore each aspect of our laboratory school in more depth (www.psy.cmu.edu/childrensschool). The purpose of this Family Handbook is to provide an organized source of detailed information specifically related to the ways that families can partner with the school to ensure a high quality experience for all of the learners at the Children’s School. We provide this handbook in a three-ring binder for easy organization of important papers. All subsequent newsletters and other important information will come three-hole punched for easy insertion into the notebook. In addition, interested families can review and/or download supplemental materials, such as the staff handbook, developmental objectives, research policies, presentations/publications, Emergency Action Plan, etc. from our web site, as well as finding useful links to accreditation standards and a variety of parent resources. Please have all of your children’s primary caregivers (e.g., extended family, nannies, etc.) review the handbook and other materials regularly.

As your interests and schedule permit, please respond to our varied offers to become involved in learning at the Children’s School. We look forward to collaborating with you.

Warm regards, 

Sharon M. Carver, Ph.D., Director (on behalf of the entire staff)
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Note that the numbering throughout this handbook corresponds to the NAEYC standards reflected in that section.
Uses of Assessment Results (4.B.05)

Results of Children’s School assessments are primarily used to shape the current year’s program planning and to discuss individual children’s developmental progress with parents so that we can work together to best support each child’s growth.

In addition, the group results impact the school’s quality improvement process via each teaching team’s annual evaluation and the whole school annual evaluation, both of which are conducted in May in preparation for enhancements implemented for the next school year (10.B.07, 10.F.01).

Each fall, we offer a staff-parent brown-bag discussion related to general school choice issues among public, private, and parochial options, together with individual consultation related to choices for specific children (7.C.05-07). If parents initiate private elementary school applications for their children, they will be required to provide recommendations from the Children’s School. The Children’s School staff members are not permitted to complete the rating scales typically requested by the local private schools in the Pittsburgh area. Instead, when given a written request for recommendation by the parents, the Assistant Director prepares a letter to the school indicating our policy and attaches a copy of the most recent conference report. If several months have passed since the conference, the Assistant Director will first ask the primary teacher to check the report to determine whether there have been significant changes. If there have, then the teacher will prepare a revised conference report to be sent to the elementary school, with a copy given to the parents.

Confidentiality (4.E.07)

Because the staff at the Children’s School works as a team, each adult knows and interacts at times with every child. Therefore, all observations and other assessment data may be shared with all staff members. Information about family situations, special needs, and other sensitive issues is shared on an as needed basis. Student workers, volunteers, and other adults working within the school are only informed of such sensitive issues when they are a part of keeping the child safe, supporting the child’s inclusion, or when the information might impact their coursework. All adults working in the Children’s School sign the following confidentiality agreement.

“As an adult working, observing, conducting research, and/or regularly volunteering at the Children’s School, I may become privy to confidential information regarding children and families. It is of the utmost importance that I realize that all such information is strictly personal and confidential and can only be shared within the confines of the Children’s School. I will discuss children’s behavior out of the hearing distance of the children, and I will discuss the families, children, and staff for professional purposes only. When I encounter families, children or staff outside the school, I will be courteous but use discretion. I understand that written authorization
HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES (9.C.08, 10.D.01)

At all times, health and safety are top priorities at the Children's School. Each individual's vigilance regarding health and safety issues contributes significantly to our effectiveness. Always assume that you are the only one who notices a problem or potential problem and bring it to the attention of a staff person.

**Staff Responsibility**

Staff members are responsible for maintaining a healthful environment (5.C.01-05). We begin with our own health by submitting annual health appraisals and following even more strict illness exclusions than those required for children. All full-time staff members submit criminal record and child abuse clearances as part of the employment process. We participate in an annual pediatric first aid / CPR class (5.A.03), fire safety class, and review of our emergency procedures. Each classroom has a well-equipped first aid kit, as does the bathroom and playground shed (9.C.10). Each teacher has a fanny pack with basic first aid and emergency information that is used for all field trips, as well as a backpack with additional supplies for emergency situations. We practice a variety of evacuation and lock-down drills specified in our Emergency Action Plan (10.D.08) in a serious but non-dramatic fashion with the children at a rate of one per month. The Assistant Director also conducts a monthly health and safety check of the entire facility and works with staff and university personnel to rectify any hazards identified. Staff members are responsible for daily checks of their classrooms and shared spaces for hazards such as missing safety covers on outlets, elevated water temperature in the bathrooms, discarded cigarettes or food on the playground, etc.

The Children’s School is a smoke-free environment (9.D.06) with a safe water supply from the Pennsylvania Water and Sewer Authority (9.D.02) and heating, ventilation, and cooling systems maintained in accordance with national standards (9.D.05). Carnegie Mellon’s Environmental Health and Safety Department has abated all asbestos and lead from the Margaret Morrison building and does periodic checks for other environmental hazards, as well as diligently monitoring the status of our safety equipment (9.D.01) and using an integrated pest management program (9.D.08). [Overall 10.D.02]

With the help of the university cleaning staff, we follow NAEYC’s frequency table for cleaning and sanitation throughout the school, including toys and water play areas (5.C.01,03,10). All staff members follow standard precautions to minimize spread of infectious disease (5.C.02) and store hazardous materials in locked cabinets. We follow parent and/or health professional recommendations regarding children who have allergies, and we limit classroom pets to birds, fish, amphibians, worms, and insects (5.C.05). We use the Child Care weather watch chart to determine safe temperatures for outdoor play, as well as subscribing to an air quality alert system that provides notices of hazards in our area (5.A.07, 9.D.03).