

## **WELCOME to the Early Learning Center!**

Thank you for your interest in the University of Delaware Early Learning Center. Below is information about the Early Learning Center (ELC) to help you decide if the center is the right place for your family.

### **Mission of the Early Learning Center**

The Early Learning Center has been created to:

- Provide the best services possible to children and families through full-day early care & education, as well as family services and support programs;
- Conduct research in prevention, intervention and education; and
- Provide training for students, faculty and community professionals.

### **Participation in Programs, Research and Training Activities at the Early Learning Center**

In addition to the services provided to children and families, we are a research and training center. Because the mission of the Early Learning Center is to provide excellent services to families and children and to learn about how to improve those services, we ask that all families enrolled in the ELC participate in the research, training, and program activities that will allow us all to learn more about children's development and how to support families.

At the time of your enrollment, and each year after that, these activities will be described to you. The Early Learning Center is a state-of-the-art facility that includes observation windows, audio-recording and video-recording in all classrooms and most other spaces. If you feel that you and/or your child cannot participate in these activities, it will be necessary for you to find another source of care for your child.

*Below is a description of the types of activities that take place at the ELC:*

### **Research, Programs, and Training at the Early Learning Center**

While providing child care and family support services, at the same time the ELC conducts research, pilot programs, and training for professionals in a wide variety of fields. We do this in order to develop even better services for children and families. The training, research, and programs taking place at the Center are reviewed by a committee of faculty, staff, and parents to ensure that they do not jeopardize the quality of services to children and families.

► **Programs at the Early Learning Center**—Quality early care and education is the foundation service at the Early Learning Center, based on what research says is best practice for children ages birth through twelve. Additional programs for children and families are also provided. Some of these programs may be family support programs that focus on education, literacy, and family interactions. Others may be enhancements to the child care, such as special activities within the classroom to enhance children's skills. Families will always be made aware when new programs are available and when programs are to be added. All programs that are provided at the ELC are reviewed to ensure that the quality of services to families and children are not compromised.

► **Research at the Early Learning Center**—Many research activities take place at the Early Learning Center, so that we can better understand how children grow, learn, and interact, and to better understand how families and children are supported. These activities include such things as measuring your child's development over time, observations of children's interactions with toys, activities, and other children, and audio- and video-taping of children's activities. Research also includes asking families to complete questionnaires about their background and their views of their children. Finally, teachers and other staff are asked about their views of children, the activities that take place at the ELC, and how effective they think services are for children and families. All research that takes place at the Early Learning Center is reviewed and approved by both the Center committee on research and the University of Delaware's research review board.

► **Training at the Early Learning Center**—We believe that families and children in the community will be better served by having well-trained professionals who know about children's development, skilled ways to teach and interact with children of varying ages, and how best to provide services and supports to families. To do so, university students from teacher education, nursing, physical therapy, and multiple other programs at the University have clinical experiences in the ELC so they can gain hands-on education and experience. The Center's committee on education reviews placements of university students to ensure that services to families and children are not compromised.

**If you have any questions, please call the center at (302) 831-6205. We look forward to having you join us!**