



Child Development Center Overview

"The school for young children is extremely important to our understanding of certain factors including, what kind of future will we build for the children and with the children." Carlina Rinaldi

The Mentor Graphics Child Development Center, located at the company's Wilsonville headquarters, is a model program for early childhood and family support. Open year-round, the full-day childcare program and its facility have been designed to be responsive to the unique needs of young children and working parents since its inception in 1992. The CDC provides an outstanding early learning environment with attention to small learning groups and routines of care. It offers an innovative project-based curriculum and low child-to-teacher ratios for children birth through preschool age.

Facilities

The Mentor Graphics Child Development Center has 7 classrooms and 2 studio spaces with the capacity to serve up to 100 children and their families per day. The physical design and floor plan of the facility promote high-quality care with features that support relationship building, supervision, and teamwork. At just over 15,600 square feet, the building is roomy yet home-like, with cozy spaces and alcoves ideal for teachers working with small groups of children. Careful attention to the development needs of each age group is reflected in the organization of classroom suites by age specific or mixed aged groupings. This allows families to consider two different styles of classroom placements to support the individual needs and learning styles of their child.

The play yard, over three-quarters of an acre in size, takes advantage of the natural wooded setting of the Mentor Graphics campus and engages children at a very early age to be stewards of the environment. The design of the outdoors offers a balance of developed and natural space that encourages children's inherent wonder and investigation of the world around them. Three covered barns allow children opportunities to play outdoors all year long, even in Oregon's wet climate.

Licensing and Accreditation

The CDC is licensed by the State of Oregon through the Oregon Child Care Division and is accredited through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the nation's largest organization of Early Childhood Educators. Only about 8% of all programs for children achieve the rigorous standards required.

Teachers

The experience and education of CDC teachers meet or exceed requirements for teachers in the field of Early Childhood. CDC teachers hold a minimum of an Associate of Arts degree or the equivalent, a CDA (Child Development Associate credential) in Early Childhood Education (ECE). Several teachers hold Bachelors or Masters Degrees in the field of education.

Mentor Graphics generous professional development funding ensures the CDC is staffed with highly qualified educators who continually improve their skills through ongoing course work, research, professional development, and membership in national organizations. As a result, teacher turnover is low, with half of the current teaching team having committed 10 or more years of their professional lives to the work of the CDC.

To stay at the forefront of advances in education and research, the CDC partners with local colleges and universities. It serves as a learning laboratory and field site for ECE students completing their student teaching requirements and graduate-level research.

Program, Philosophy and Curriculum

Curriculum at the CDC is influenced by the constructivist theories of education and the work of Howard Gardner, Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, and the schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy. It is designed to respond to the developmental and cultural needs of the classroom community. Teachers work closely together on teams to create a learning community for children, families, and staff that are organized around listening and relationships. Relationship building is a foundational value of the program that is strongly backed by research in the field of education and neurology. Attention is given to individual learning goals, content that can be explored over time (project-based), and the emergent interest of the children, teachers, and parents. CDC teachers have regular, ongoing conversations with parents regarding curriculum and each child's development. CDC teachers have been instrumental in early detection, referral, and ongoing support for children with special needs.

Programs for infants and toddlers have strong pedagogical roots in the Resources for Infant Educators (RIE) philosophy and champion the research of Magda Gerber, the founder of RIE. Classrooms for infants and toddlers are organized around primary caregiving and continuity of care, a model further supported by recent brain research. Careful attention is paid to the individual rhythms, developmental needs, and interests of each child.

Innovations

Teachers at the CDC are continually challenged to be innovative and keep pace with advancements in the field. In response, they have devised a number of best practices, family-friendly policies, and unique program models. At the end of each day, for example, families receive a journal that provides a narrative and photos of the classrooms' work. The journals invite conversations that involve families in the ongoing curriculum. Another innovative practice is the CDC's strong focus on documenting children's work. Documentation makes both the process and the product of the children's learning visible and honors the powerful voice of the children. CDC teachers have published articles about their work in journals for Early Childhood educators and have been invited to address local and national conferences as well as hosted professional development opportunities for area educators. Annually, the children's work is celebrated at the Art and Curriculum show, which has attracted over 150 participants from the local community.

The Mentor Graphics Child Development Center celebrates the joy and wonder of childhood. Its ongoing commitment to best practice creates a dynamic and welcoming environment for children's first educational experience outside of the home. The CDC is recognized as a leader in the field by Oregon's Early Childhood Education community and has an outstanding reputation in the Wilsonville community.

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