

Assessment of Non-Academic Outcomes (Fall 2003 and Spring 2004)

Unit: **Child Development Laboratory (CDL)**
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I. Mission: The Child Development Laboratory

The Child Development Laboratory in the College of Education is a preschool program for young children using best practices based on established quality standards and research in the field. The program supports the education, training, development, and research efforts of UNT students and faculty while offering excellent learning experiences to the children of the families it serves.

- Goal 1: Provide an observation site for university students who must observe young children of diverse backgrounds and abilities to meet course requirements.
- Goal 2: Offer practical experience and training in an educationally supportive environment to undergraduate and graduate students in fields related to young children.
- Goal 3: Model a high quality and nationally accredited early education program for students, the university and Denton communities, and the state.
- Goal 4: Serve as a research site for faculty and graduate students and support research efforts.
- Goal 5: Provide quality preschool education to families at UNT and in the Denton community.
- Goal 6: Act as a support and referral agency to other organizations, programs and schools in Denton and the greater Metroplex.

II. Previous Evaluations of the Unit: A Sunset Review was conducted in 1994 by the University of North Texas. The review recommended that this support center, the oldest on the university campus, continue as an observation, practice, and research site for undergraduate and graduate students and faculty in the early childhood education, child development, and play therapy programs in the College of Education. The program is also regularly reviewed by the Texas Family Regulatory Agency, Texas Workforce Commission and North Texas Child Care Services, and the National Association for Early Childhood Academy, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

III. Statement of Expected Outcomes for 2003-2004:

1. Renew National Association of Early Childhood Education Academy
2. Maintain Texas Family and Protective Agency certification and meet Texas Workforce Child Care Services standards in the service of low-income children
3. Facilitate student observations for course purposes for faculty members requesting this service
4. Supervise early childhood students who practice teaching skills in the center
5. Secure permission from parents and facilitate the participation of children in the training program for graduate students in play therapy
6. Maintain state mandated records (criminal record checks, TB tests, orientation) on students who come in contact with children enrolled in the center
7. Serve the families of 60 young children, collecting the appropriate fees, providing appropriate programming, parent participation, and recommending other community services as needed
8. Provide resources and information to students, faculty, the greater university and the Denton community and surrounding area regarding young children

OBSERVATION SITE: Expected Outcomes and How These Activities Support UNT Student Learning:

1. Students in approximately 15 to 18 courses related to young children per semester use the Child Development Laboratory for observation purposes. Whether a course focuses on early literacy, child guidance, early development, or other topics of study, students have an opportunity to connect theory to practice and observe and reflect on what they are learning in the classroom and through their readings. They are able to do this in a program which is designed to show them best practice and provide a model early childhood education setting with degreed teachers.

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING: Expected Outcomes and How These Activities Support UNT Student Learning:

Students in early child education, child development and play therapy are required to complete a course related number of training hours with young children. The Child Development Laboratory makes sure each student has on file the documentation required by the state for those who work with young children. Degreed teachers supervise and support students' activities in the preschool classroom. Children participating in play therapy training sessions have the required parental approval and are taken to and from the therapy room by a Child Development Laboratory staff member. This allows students to focus on training activities rather than finding access and securing permission to work with young children.

HIGH QUALITY AND NATIONALLY ACCREDITED EARLY EDUCATION: Expected Outcomes and How These Activities Support UNT Student Learning:

The Child Development Laboratory meets all state standards for early childhood programs, and also maintains national accreditation through the National Early Childhood Association Academy. This assures that students will observe and participate in an early childhood setting that matches the criteria being taught in university courses. Children and families using the center also benefit from the quality of the program, which is a model for the community and the area, and is frequently visited and toured by scholars within and outside the university, including those from other countries. Students are able to observe the high regard with which visitors hold the program.

RESEARCH SITE: Expected Outcomes and How These Activities Support UNT Student Learning:

Graduate students, as well as faculty, are encouraged and supported in their efforts to conduct research related to young children at the Child Development Laboratory. Every attempt is made to ensure that children who participate in the preschool are from a wide range of diversity and abilities to serve the research needs of graduate students and faculty. Good rapport with the families of the children ensure a high return rate of permission forms, as well as parent approval of child participation in studies conducted in the center.

PRESCHOOL EDUCATION FOR FAMILIES OF YOUNG CHILDREN: Expected Outcomes and How These Activities Support UNT Student Learning:

Approximately 60 children attend the Child Development Laboratory at any given time. The majority of the parents of these children are students and faculty at UNT. Knowing their children are in a superior educational facility supports the teaching and learning capabilities of the parents of children in attendance. All university students who access the program as part of their course work also have an opportunity to learn from their observations of good parent, teacher and program relationships.

SUPPORT AND REFERRAL AGENCY: Expected Outcomes and How These Activities Support UNT Student Learning:

The Child Development Laboratory acts as a support and referral agency for the university, the community, the Metroplex area and the state. The program provides referrals to other agencies, loans materials and books to the children's parents, university students and teachers in the community, and answers daily emails and phone calls to those with questions related to young children. Students in the field of early childhood education are able to observe the many ways a preschool program can support children, their families, and their communities. The program director serves on many local and state boards and is able to provide students who access the center with current information on local and state initiatives related to young children. Students who have assignments to attend professional meetings in their field are provided with a variety of information to suit their needs.

IV: Measuring Expected Outcomes:

Parents with children in the Child Development Laboratory complete at least an annual evaluation of the program which has been designed by the national accreditation body (NAECEA).

Faculty who place students in the Child Development Laboratory complete a form requesting particular services they wish to have provided to their students.

All staff members, including the director, are evaluated annually, and also provided with a form to evaluate the program.

Students who participate in teaching activities complete an evaluation on the classroom teachers in whose rooms they are placed.

V: Use of Assessment Results:

Evaluations of parents whose children attend the Child Development Laboratory are used as one criterion in the re-accreditation of the program. They are also carefully reviewed for ways to improve services for children and families and maintain accreditation standards.

Faculty members use the request for services form they complete to ask for changes in what is provided for their students.

Staff evaluations, both by the staff and of the staff, are used in discussions for providing optimal services to, first, the children and families who pay for and utilize the facility, and second, to the faculty and students who are the primary focus of all our efforts.

Student evaluations are reviewed by teaching staff in the following semester to look at areas of practice for possible improvement, both of the overall program and individual classroom teaching.

VI: Changes Made Based On Assessment Results:

The Parent Handbook, listing program philosophy, policies and standards, is revised annually and integrates comments made by parents. Parent requests for information on the web site have also been incorporated, including a "news" section for the most current activities taking place and a listing of the daily schedule and semester themes.

New web information requested by parents is also being accessed by students, and facilitates their use of the center. Policies for student use of the Child Development Laboratory have been streamlined to make access easier while still maintaining security.

Classroom teachers are asked to choose two items most frequently rated low on the student assessment form for improvement in the new semester. Director support and additional paid training are provided as needed to support growth.

Signature of Person Completing the Form:

_____ Date: _____

Signature of Unit Head after Reviewing the Form:

_____ Date: _____