Parent's Guide:

About UCLC

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA
We See Tomorrow in Every Child

UCLC goes above & beyond
And is QUALITY RATED at Step 4
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The Administrative Staff
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Ph.D., Teacher Education, UND
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Learning Center Teaching Team
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Pictures and information about the UCLC Caregiver Team is available on the website: [www.und.edu/uclc](http://www.und.edu/uclc)
University Children’s Learning Center

Mission Statement
The mission of UCLC works on multiple, intersecting levels: to provide quality, educational child care in keeping with the best practices in the field of Early Childhood Development; to provide interactive, experiential learning opportunities for UND’s students; to provide a research site that will increase national knowledge about families and young children; to contribute to a vibrant campus climate by supporting cultural diversity; by offering a summer program that brings school-age children to the UND campus; and by supporting the recruitment and retention of faculty members, students, and international scholars.

Philosophy
The University Children’s Learning Center’s objective is two-fold:
1. To provide quality early care and education to for young children.
2. To provide UND students with an environment in which they can acquire learning experiences in the field of Early Childhood Education.

Emergent Curriculum
The Learning Center uses Emergent Curriculum to create developmentally appropriate learning experiences designed to meet the individual needs of each child. It is based on the philosophy that each child learns best when early childhood educators’ focus is on being responsive to children’s individual interests to create learning experiences that are meaningful. Children’s active participation, teacher’s building a relationship with each child, flexible and adaptable methods built on inquiry- and play-based learning are important aspects of the philosophy behind an emergent curriculum approach to teaching young children. Learning experiences should be child-initiated, rather than something initiated only by the teacher.

To create an emergent curriculum learning experience teachers closely observe children at play to discover what they are interested in at this time. Then they creatively brainstorm with one another to determine how to best help children investigate the topic of interest.

Each emergent curriculum is designed to promote children’s physical, social, emotional, language, intellectual, and aesthetic development. The environment is prepared/organized based on close observation of the children’s play to learn their interests and the teacher’s professional knowledge of early childhood education. The children are encouraged to make decisions about their play, actively explore their environment, solve problems, discover new ideas, and be creative.

Emergent Curriculum is play-based. The teachers understand the value and the benefits to the children of play, rather than a more formal paper, pencil, and workbook approach. Teachers instill in children a life-long love of learning because they have fun while they are learning and it is excited to celebrate new knowledge or skills gained through their playing.

Emergent Curriculum allows teacher to respect each child as an individual who learns in their own way. It encourages children to become deeply vested in a caring community with other children who are eager to learn. It is an active way of learning, where the children reach out and gain new skills and knowledge.

The child’s lead in the interest of the topic is followed, therefore, an Emergent Curriculum may last 3 hours or 10 weeks. Teachers follow the children by helping them to develop hypotheses, test their ideas, retest when necessary, and determine their next set of questions, where they must develop hypotheses, test their ideas and determine new questions. The cycle continues down a winding path, in which teachers provide the materials and the environment that allows the children to investigate. All the learning experiences are designed to ensure that children meet the ND Early Learning Guidelines and the ND Pre-kindergarten Standards, but because the children guide the topics, they may not notice that learning is happening.
Assessment and Teaching Strategies Gold
The Learning Center teachers can assure you that your child is meeting the necessary benchmark to ensure they will be kindergarten ready. Authentic assessment is occurring along with every learning experience. Teachers are watching, assessing, and documenting all the learning that is occurring. This allows them to quickly see where there are gaps that need to be filled the child can continue along the continuum of their own learning.

The University Children’s Learning Center utilizes a valid and reliable online assessment tool, Teaching Strategies Gold (TS Gold or just Gold), to document and record their observations of individual children’s learning on an ongoing basis. TS Gold utilizes identified objectives that meet the ND Early Learning Guidelines. The guidelines are used to assess individual children’s growth on a developmental continuum. The objects are focused around four (4) domains: social/emotional, cognitive, physical, and language. Additionally, Gold allows for five (5) specific content areas to be assessed: literacy, mathematics, science and technology, social studies, and the arts.

Teachers at the Learning Center utilize the developmental continuum on TS Gold to effectively plan and implement learning experiences for the class and learning goals for each individual child, which may be discussed at the family/teacher conferences. Individual progress reports are generated using Gold, and will be shared with families once during the fall and once during the spring. The progress reports will provide an overview of each child’s current level of development in the four domains and some of the content areas. Parents may ask teachers for progress updates between conferences.

All experienced teachers are required to successfully complete an online Inter-Rater Reliability Training and to ensure the validity and reliability of their decisions regarding each child’s growth and development. This training is repeated every three (3) years.

Nature Explore Outdoor Classroom
UCLC has two Nationally Certified Nature Explore Outdoor Classrooms. One is designed for the preschoolers and one for the toddlers. You will see logs for climbing on, walking across, and jumping off. You will see stumps for rolling around, walking along, and building. We have tree cookies – round chunks cut from trees and branches of various sizes that allow the children to carry heavy loads and build unique structures. Our outdoor classroom has an Akimbra or a Marimba for creating wonderful music. You will also see children pounding real nails with real hammers.

Teachers are often asked about the children getting hurt in our Outdoor Classroom. The reality is that children can get hurt doing any activity. The key is providing as many safety nets and securities as possible. We do this in a number of ways, particularly in having a sufficient amount of supervision at all times. Hammers and nails are never taken out unless one teacher is able to devote his/her complete attention to this activity. A teacher is always on hand to walk beside a child practicing walking across a log to hold their hand or just offer encouragement, as well as monitor how many children are on a given log or how closely they are walking to one another.

The Outdoor Classroom serves many purposes, such as helping children learn about the world through play in a natural setting; planting, growing, nurturing, and eating healthy foods they have grown themselves; and teaching children to take risks appropriately. The immediate benefits of taking appropriate risks is the self-confidence that is built. The children are so proud of themselves when they accomplish something that is really hard and little bit risky. During the activity, the teacher is asking a lot of questions. Questions like, what do you think could happen if you… do you think you could get hurt if you continue to … how could we play like this in the safest way possible… is there a safer way this could be done… Teachers are encouraging children to think through their actions before they do it. Such as when they are hammering nails, the teacher is talking about how close someone is standing and what would happen if they swing that hard and miss the nail. The long-term benefit is that children are learning to process through the risks of an activity. They are doing it when it is safe because they have a teacher right there helping them to think of the possibilities and assess the type of risk that exists. Allowing children to practice this type of risk assessment will hopefully instill the importance of assessing decisions and outcomes when they are older and don’t always have an adult helping them think of the possible consequences.

Additionally, children are going to be digging, planting and playing in dirt and mud. As parents, we understand the inconvenience of the really dirty clothes. But as educators, we understand the important learning that occurs when getting dirty. The National Wildlife Federation put out a written report in 2012 that outlines the many benefits of

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getting dirty when playing including to the child’s immune system, their cardiovascular system, their mental health and many other health benefits.

The UCLC teachers ask that you send your child dressed to play and get dirty, because chances are they will get messy on a daily basis.

HOW YOUNG CHILDREN LEARN

- Young children learn through doing. They are active human beings, and they learn best when they are totally involved and have space in which they can be active.
- Young children learn through a concrete, hands-on, manipulative approach; through handling objects, children discover relationships of their everyday world.
- Young children learn through actual experiences such as a trip to the post office or a visit to a pet store, and in so doing, discover what their world is like.
- Young children learn through their senses; through opportunities to touch, to taste, to hear, and to see. Children learn to understand their world through exploration.
- Young children learn through play. Play is the most complete of all educational processes. It is the young child's way of learning, exploring, and understanding the world, as well as a source of pleasure. Concepts are developed, along with a background information, as teachers plan activities, which capitalize on children's natural curiosity and interests. In this environment of play, children test new ideas, practice new skills, and begin to see relationships.

General Goals

- To create an environment that promotes discovery, divergent thinking, continual growth in abilities, and positive self-image.
- To provide an educational program to meet the needs of each individual child with concern for his/her interests, special needs, and special talents.
- To provide opportunities for children to grow and develop through exploration and experimentation with various learning materials and activities.
- To provide stimulating activities that are developmentally appropriate.
- To foster cultural awareness and appreciation.
- To provide a nurturing environment in which each child is respected as a person and encouraged to be a member of a caring community.

Specific Goals

Physical Development: The Learning Center pledges to help children develop physically by:

1. Structuring a clean and pleasant environment.
2. Providing for rest, sleep, and nutritional needs.
3. Encouraging self-help skills in the areas of toileting, washing, eating, and dressing.
4. Promoting healthy habits conducive to good physical health.
5. Developing children’s knowledge of the necessity for safety habits.
6. Providing opportunities for large and small muscle activities that enhance coordination, dexterity, balance, rhythm, strength, and endurance.

Social and Emotional Development: The Learning Center pledges to help children develop socially and emotionally by promoting:

1. A positive self-concept in regard to physical appearance, worthiness, gender identity and skills.
2. The ability to trust others to meet needs, as well as the ability to be independent and meet their own needs.
3. Acceptance and expression of feelings.
4. Sensitivity to the feelings and views of others.
5. Play activity with peers (observation, parallel, associative, and cooperative play).
6. The ability to resolve conflicts with peers in positive ways.
7. The ability to feel comfortable and to contribute when in a school family and eventually to enjoy being part of that school family.
8. The acceptance and appreciation of individual differences and cultural differences.

**Language Development:** The Learning Center pledges to help children develop language by offering children opportunities to:

1. Hear basic vocabulary and an enriched vocabulary used in a meaningful context.
2. Express needs and wants.
3. Talk about meaningful experiences with adults and with peers.
4. Describe objects, events, places, and relations.
5. Express feelings in words (happy, sad, angry, lonely, frustrated, scared, etc.).
6. Have one’s own language written down by an adult and read back.
7. Encounter and use print in a variety of natural ways.
8. Have fun with language: rhyming, making up stories, singing, listening to poems, songs, and stories.
9. Maintain the family’s native language.

**Intellectual Development:** The Learning Center pledges to help children develop intellectually by involving them in a process that provide opportunities for:

1. Developing curiosity, wonder and the asking of questions.
2. Exploring actively with all the senses (observing, touching, tasting, hearing and smelling).
3. Discovering cause and effect.
4. Making decisions -- choosing materials, activities, and purposes.
5. Developing creativity, imagination and original idea.
6. Problem solving.
7. Representing thoughts and ideas, objects and actions.
8. Understanding number and time concepts.

**Respecting Diversity**
At the University Children’s Learning Center diversity is valued and respected. During a staff meeting the following concepts were listed to discuss with children in an attempt to recognize similarities and differences in their ethnic backgrounds:

- How “family” is defined
- Art
- Care of extended family - young and old
- Music
- Homes, architecture and décor
- Foods
- Language
- Traditions and holidays
- Special talents
- Dress
- Educational systems, philosophy
- Concept of time
- Parenting style and discipline
- Games
- Ways of showing respect, customs
Ways children can be taught about the above:

- Have multicultural crayons and markers available
- Have little people of different cultures available in Lego and Block areas
- Talk with children, observing and describing likenesses and differences
- Talk about holidays/birthdays and customs/traditions that become evident in the classroom
- Display, observe, and talk about family photographs
- Display and share books that show the diversity among cultures
- Study visuals in the Color Area to be certain they represent diverse cultures
- Post language charts which will help children to learn each other’s languages
- Talk about/learn each other’s languages
- Sing songs in each other’s languages, chart songs
- Cook food, taste foods from different culture
- Invite families to participate in the activities listed above

**English Language Learners**

Because The University Children’s Learning Center is on a large university campus, the Learning Center has families from around the world. Often, there are many cultures and languages represented at the Learning Center. Families who enroll their children at the Learning Center want their child(ren) to become fluent in English. Teachers will endeavor to learn a few words in each represented language. Children who come to the Learning Center with little or no English will be encouraged to participate as fully as possible. UCLC also wants to honor the child’s native language and provide enriching experiences for native English speakers.

Some children who are raised in bilingual or trilingual homes show language delays until they are about 4 or 5. These delays are not unusual and are to be expected. Children are organizing the languages in their brains and sorting through different syntax structures. When this occurs, the teacher is expected to gently name the missing English word by repeating what the child has said with the appropriate English word.

**Serving Children with Special Needs**

The University Children’s Learning Center often has children who have been identified through screening and testing processes as having special needs. Experienced Teachers will attend any meetings that impact their work with the child, such as an IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan) or IEP (Individual Educational Program), called by the child’s team of specialists. Experienced Teachers will include recommendations developed in such meetings in their lesson plans and programming for the child. The child will be included in all Learning Center activities and reasonable accommodations to the environment will be made to best meet the individual needs of the child. The program will accept all children with special needs if it is deemed to be an appropriate placement for the child by the child’s team of specialists.

In order to gain an understanding of the child’s individual needs, UCLC requests a written Health Care Plan from the child’s medical provider and/or family member(s) with information related to the child’s special needs. Information may include a description and/or definition of the diagnosis, general information for emergency, and required care such as usual medications and procedures.
**Typical Pre-school Daily Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:00-8:30</td>
<td>Arrival and Center Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30-9:00</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00-9:30</td>
<td>Circle Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30-10:00</td>
<td>Family Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15-10:45</td>
<td>Outdoor Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00-11:30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30-11:45</td>
<td>Quiet moments of Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45-1:00</td>
<td>Nap/Rest Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00-3:00</td>
<td>Afternoon Center Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00-3:30</td>
<td>Snack, Circle Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30-4:00</td>
<td>Family Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00-5:00</td>
<td>Outdoor Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00-5:15</td>
<td>Center Time (only one or two areas are open)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:15</td>
<td>Gather in the Book Areas of Select Classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:30</td>
<td>Center Close</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Typical Toddler Daily Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:00-8:30</td>
<td>Arrival and Center Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30-9:00</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00-9:30</td>
<td>Diapering and Transition to Outdoor Center Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30-9:50</td>
<td>Outdoor Center Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:50-10:50</td>
<td>Indoor Center Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:50-11:00</td>
<td>Clean the Classroom and Wash Hands before for Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00-11:30</td>
<td>Lunch Time and Diapering as Necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30-11:45</td>
<td>Transition to Nap Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45-12:00</td>
<td>Nap Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00-2:00</td>
<td>As children awake they are encouraged to play away from the sleeping children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00-2:30</td>
<td>Diapering as necessary and Center Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30-3:00</td>
<td>Outdoor Center Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00-3:30</td>
<td>Snack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30-5:00</td>
<td>Center Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00-5:15</td>
<td>Offer reading or read with children who ask to be read to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:15</td>
<td>Offer children an opportunity to participate in a Family Time Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:30</td>
<td>Diapering as necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Staff History</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dawnita S. Nilles</strong></td>
<td>2015 – present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jo-Anne A. Yearwood</strong></td>
<td>2015 - present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jo-Anne A. Yearwood</strong></td>
<td>1998 – 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DeLaine (Lizakowski) McGurran</strong></td>
<td>1978- 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dr. Michael Gallo</strong></td>
<td>2012 - Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dr. Glenn Olsen</strong></td>
<td>2000 - 2012</td>
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<td><strong>DeLaine McGurran &amp;</strong></td>
<td>1998</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dr. Sara Hanhan</strong></td>
<td>1986 – 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gayle Nelson</strong></td>
<td>1992 – 1998</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Susan Block Moe</strong></td>
<td>1991 – 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lorna Greene</strong></td>
<td>1990 – 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Laurel Hulteng</strong></td>
<td>1988 – 1991</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Debi Furches</strong></td>
<td>1987 – 1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gayle Nelson</strong></td>
<td>1983 – 1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wayne Kuklinski</strong></td>
<td>1978 – 1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mae Marie Blackmore</strong></td>
<td>1972 – 1990</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>