1. **Executive Summary: Whelan Children’s Center**

**Mission Statement**

Whelan Children's Center is a high quality childcare program for the children of the faculty, staff, students and alumni of Loyola University New Orleans which operates according to the standards established by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The primary teaching goals are to help young children use the classroom environment productively, interact with other children and adults, and see themselves as capable learners - as individuals who are developing the skills and understandings that will enable them to make sense of the world and to succeed in it.

The Whelan Children's Center, located in the Mercy Building, provides a safe, stimulating, educational environment with a highly qualified, experienced, nurturing staff. The Center has earned a four star rating through the Quality Rating System, which is governed by the State of Louisiana. The process considers all aspects of a program, including: curriculum, staff, health and safety, nutrition, and evaluation. The sixty-two children enrolled are grouped by ages. Teachers are selected for their sense of commitment, an ability to nurture children, and knowledge of child development. The program promotes the development of the whole child, taking into account the physical, emotional, cognitive, and social level of each child while responding to the needs of the family. The faculty has utilized the center in the past for observations, practicum, and research projects. The Whelan Children's Center accommodates any student who wishes to utilize the center for educational needs or volunteer work.

**Summary of Activities and related assessment results for AY 2011-12**

The Whelan Children’s Center met all the program goals set forth for the 2011-12 year, most notably the renewal of the four star rating in the State of Louisiana Quality Rating System. Listed below are activities that support the overall mission of the Whelan Children’s Center and the 2011-12 program goals and strategic plan.
Curriculum Development
Curriculum revision was a major initiative during 2011-12. Based on results from the parent evaluations, it was evident that some parents were not aware of the curriculum in their child’s class. This was especially evident in the toddler classrooms. A curriculum committee was formed in order to revise the current curriculum to align with the State of Louisiana Early Learning Guidelines. Workshops about the early learning guidelines were attended, and changes to the curriculum were based on recommendations by the committee. The changes will be implemented during the 2012-13 program year. The changes to the curriculum take into account the differing developmental levels of the children in each class noting that themes discussed should be pertinent to the age group and not all-encompassing. Lesson plan forms will be revised during the 2012-13 program year. This relates to the action plan for the center’s strategic goal #2.

Customer Satisfaction
Verbal communication by several parents indicated a desire for information regarding the schools in the area and the application process. Information regarding the application process and procedures of several area elementary schools was compiled and distributed to the soon-to-be school age children at the center. Information from a variety of schools, including private, parochial, charter and recovery school district, was included.

The center offered free hearing, speech, language, and vision tests to the children of the center through a grant received by the New Orleans Speech and Hearing Center. This screening, along with the developmental assessment on each child, enabled parents to ensure their child does not have developmental delays or physical limitations.

Policy and Procedure Revision
The Center’s Emergency Operations Plan was revised, and several scenarios were added, including what should happen in the event of: a shooter on campus, criminal act, and hazardous materials release. A synopsis was written and distributed to the parents. An emergency cell phone for center use was purchased that parents can utilize to contact staff in the event of an evacuation. Out of the Area contact persons were established by parents in the event that an emergency arises and local area codes will not go through. This relates to the action plan for the center’s strategic goal #4.

Student Involvement
Students of Loyola University New Orleans, as well as students from other universities and colleges in the outlying community, were able to use the center as a learning environment for observation, research, creative activities, and service for courses. The center also employs an average of 30 work study students each semester.
Key Assessment/Programmatic Enhancement Initiatives
The additional assessment of children using the center-developed assessment tool aided assessment by providing a standard of measurement of student learning and growth over the course of a year. By assigning numerical values to the ratings and skills accomplished, a percentage of growth was able to be assessed for each particular skill as well for each child and the class as a whole. This will be a very useful tool in order to determine how each child is progressing in particular domains such as social/emotional, gross motor, etc. as they progress from year to year.

2. Summary and Assessment Results for Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)/Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Key Performance Indicators
The Whelan Children’s Center supports the University’s mission and vision in a very unique way. Listed below are the ways that the center enhances the university’s strategic goals:
1. Enhance Jesuit values.
   The children at the Whelan Children’s Center are taught at a very early age the importance of helping others. Through programs such as the adopt-a-family program for Christmas and the St. Jude trike-a-thon, the children are helping others who are less fortunate.
   The center is fortunate to have a large number of work study students who act as teacher assistants in the classrooms. Through the guidance of the staff at the center, the work study students learn many valuable “life lessons” that go far beyond what can be taught in a classroom.
2. Enhance Reputation and Stature. The presence of a high-quality children’s center on campus is a great benefit to the university. It shows that Loyola University strives for quality in every aspect of the Loyola community and it gives students with children and faculty and staff members the peace of mind knowing that their children will be well cared for while they are in class or at work.
   The good reputation is evident based on the results from the statement “I am comfortable recommending this program to friends” on the Parent Evaluation. The statement had a 100% response rate of usually.

Student Learning Outcomes
The Whelan Children’s Center focuses on the development of the whole child. The age range of children in our care is 4 months to 5 years. The rate of growth and development during this time is astounding. Due to this fact and the knowledge that all children develop differently and at their own rate, it can be difficult to pinpoint specific student learning outcomes. Listed below are student learning outcomes and assessment results:
SLO 1: All classes should show growth in each category of the center-developed assessment from fall to spring. 
Assessment/Outcome: All classes showed growth in the category “Learning to Think and Do”. 40% of classes showed growth in all categories. Results indicated that some of the assessments were not valid due to different facilitators between fall and spring due to illness and limited assessment. Measures have been taken to endure more authentic assessment methods are used and to maintain consistency of facilitators.

SLO 2: Children will learn social emotional competence. 
Assessment/Outcome: Research has shown that social emotional competence is the most important skill a child can gain in early childhood education. Learning how to interact well with others is a skill that, if not gained in early years, will affect the person throughout life. The success of this outcome should be determined by growth in all classes in the “Working and Playing with Others” category of the center assessment and a 90% rate of children in the “white” area of the Ages and Stages personal-social category indicating typical development. The 10% window is due to the prevalence of autism and other conditions that cause children to have difficulty with social skills.

The center assessment results show that 60% of classes showed improvement from fall to spring in the “Working and Playing With Others” category. As noted in SLO 1 Assessment/Outcome, some assessments were not valid, but measures have been taken to ensure validity in the future. The Ages and Stages assessment showed 94% of children were in the “white” area showing that there are no developmental delays in personal social skills.

3. Summary of Center Achievements and Committee Service

Awards/distinctions for the Whelan Children’s Center
The Whelan Children’s Center maintained a four star rating in the State of Louisiana Quality Rating System. Only 5% of the licensed child care centers in the state have earned this high rating. Compliance reviews by the following State of Louisiana Departments: a) Bureau of Licensing, b) Office of the State Fire Marshal, c) Office of Public Health, as well as the New Orleans Fire Prevention Division, were passed with no deficiencies. The center maintained a wait list with an average of 130 children, which indicates the demand for the high quality care the staff at the Whelan Children's Center provide.

Student Achievements
All children who completed their time at the center were accepted into their first school of choice for elementary school. This includes private, parochial, and highly sought-after charter schools across the metro area.
Staff Achievements
All of the staff members attended conferences and workshops for continuing education throughout the year. The director and preschool teacher attended the National Association for the Education of Young Children conference in Orlando, Florida. All of the staff members attended the Greater New Orleans Association for the Education of Young Children conference.

Community Engagement Activities
An open house was conducted for current and prospective parents from the university and non-Loyola community. Events for the parents and community were held, which included: parent/grandparent snack days, holiday parties, the preschool circus, a visit from the New Orleans Fire Department, adopting a family for the holidays, and the St. Jude trike-a-thon. Students of Loyola University New Orleans, as well as students from other universities and colleges in the outlying community were able to use the center as a learning environment for observation, research, creative activities, and service for courses.

4. Strategic Planning and Goals for AY 2011-12
The Center does strategic planning for the year every August with staff at our annual meeting. The staff assesses their classrooms and plans for the upcoming year taking into account the strengths and weaknesses in curriculum. The Whelan Children's Center’s strategic plan supports the university’s mission by setting goals that will ensure the high quality program the center has will be maintained and improved. Through staff development, assessment of policies and tuition rates, continuous research into the latest findings in the early childhood field, and facilities improvements, the Whelan Children's Center will continue to benefit the university in numerous ways.

The 2011-12 goals for the Whelan Children’s Center are as follows:
1. to maintain a four star rating in the State of Louisiana Quality Rating System
2. to re-evaluate the curriculum in all classes to incorporate more university and community resources; and ensure the curriculum is meeting the needs of the children
3. to enhance the knowledge of staff through continuing education
4. to increase knowledge of the application process for elementary schools to aid parents whose children are ready for kindergarten
5. continue to review procedures and policies to ensure compliance with the following State of Louisiana Departments: a) Bureau of Licensing, b) Office of the State Fire Marshal, c) Office of Public Health, as well as the New Orleans Fire Prevention Division and the Child and Adult Care Food Program
6. continue to enhance communication with parents to ensure their needs are being met in regards to high quality child care

5. Assessment during 2011-12
Both internal and external assessments are used to assess our programs and services provided to Loyola faculty, staff, students, and community members. Internal assessments include: daily monitoring of classroom and administrative functions; continuous review of e-mails, letters, and verbal communication from parents to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the program; Ages and Stages questionnaires, which are a developmental assessment tool, are completed for all children once a year and twice for infants; Center-Developed Assessments tailored to each age group are completed for all children in the toddler through preschool classes each fall and spring; Parent Evaluation distributed each fall; and Parent Exit Survey distributed to all families whose children have left the center. External assessments include: evaluations performed by assessors from the State of Louisiana Quality Rating System; and compliance reviews by the following State of Louisiana departments: a) Bureau of Licensing, b) Office of the State Fire Marshal, c) Office of Public Health, d) New Orleans Fire Prevention Division.

Assessment of SLOs
Both SLOs, All classes should show growth in each category of the center-developed assessment from fall to spring and Children will learn social emotional competence, were assessed using the Center-Developed Assessment and the Ages and Stages Questionnaire. It was shown that SLO1 was not accomplished due to invalid assessment. This finding led to staff training on assessment, which took place May 2012 (Codes 6, C). The criteria set forth for measuring SLO2 is that 90% of the children will be in the “white” area (typical development) in the personal social category. This outcome was realized when a 94% rate was achieved.

Summary of Assessments and Outcomes

Ages and Stages Questionnaires
The Ages and Stages Questionnaire is a tool that is used to assess the developmental level of each child to ensure that a normal rate of development is taking place and there are no delays. One way to determine whether our program is meeting the needs of our children is to assess the number of children with scores in the “gray” area indicating a developmental delay with the number of children who are still in the “gray” area in the re-test three months later. 19% of children had scores that fell into the “gray” range on their first questionnaire. When re-tested, only 8% of children remained in the “gray” area. This showed a 58% improvement.
**Center-Developed Assessments**
The Center-Developed Assessments is more of a skill-based assessment than a strict developmental assessment. It shows social-emotional development as well as motor development, in addition to school readiness skills that are age appropriate in each classroom assessment. Analysis of these assessments showed that classifying and name recognition should be focused on more frequently in the two year old classroom. Classifying and name recognition activities have been incorporated into the curriculum in the two year old program for 2012-13 (Code 3). The results also showed that there was a large growth in the preschool room in letter recognition, math, and personal information, which are all key factors in kindergarten readiness. There were negative factors that affected some of the results. Differing facilitators between fall and spring and a lack of authentic assessment measures caused some of the assessments to be invalid. Staff training took place in May 2012 to ensure authentic assessment would be used going forward (Codes 6, C).

**Parent Evaluation/Exit Survey**
The Parent Evaluation Survey is a very important assessment tool used to ensure customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is critical to ensuring that the goal of providing a high-quality childcare program is being met. A 90% or higher response of “usually” for each question is the desired outcome. There were four statements that had a 100% answer of “usually”. Out of 18 statements only 2 had an answer rate of “usually” less than 90%. The first statement is “The meals and snacks served are nutritious and varied.” There were several deletions and additions to the menu since this survey was completed. The following items were eliminated from the menu: nachos, bagel bites, pizza rolls, and chocolate and strawberry milk. The following items were added to the menu: hummus and pita bread, homemade French bread pizza, and soy butter on bagels. In addition, more fresh fruit for snack was added to the menu which allowed water to be served instead of juice for many snacks (Codes 1,A). Another statement that had an answer rate of “usually” less than 90% was, “The daily conversations and parent-teacher conferences sufficiently inform me of my child’s development”. Parents have access to at least one of their child’s teachers at drop-off and pick-up. The parents are informed several times a year that they can schedule conferences as they see fit. Unfortunately, conferences can only be scheduled during nap time, due to personnel coverage. Several parents requested that there be a specific time that conferences are scheduled at least once a year. This would have to be approved by the university and advisory board. It was not possible to accomplish during the 2011-12 program year due to lack of time to give parents notice; however, it is a matter that will be brought to the attention of the advisory board during 2012-13 and the best way to proceed will be determined (Codes 1,A).

**Quality Rating System Assessment**
One class was assessed during this program year. The Three Year Old class was assessed using the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale. The scores earned enabled the center to earn the maximum number of points possible in
program given our class sizes. It was noted on the assessment some “centers” were not clearly defined. This caused the score on multiple items to be a great deal lower than usual. In order to rectify the situation, the teachers removed the waffle blocks from the block area because they were considered a “manipulative” due to the fact that they could interlock (Codes 7, G).

Compliance Reviews:
- **Bureau of Licensing:** There were no deficiencies cited and no recommendations for policy/procedural changes.
- **State Fire Marshal:** There were no deficiencies cited and no recommendations for policy/procedural changes.
- **Public Health:** There were no deficiencies cited and no recommendations for policy/procedural changes.
- **New Orleans Fire Prevention Division:** There were no deficiencies cited; however, the fire marshal made a suggestion. He asked that the exit signs be more clearly illuminated to ensure they could be seen in the event of a fire. Physical plant was approached with the recommendation and all the exit signs were replaced (Codes 7, G).

6. **Budget for AY 2011-12**
For the 2010-11 fiscal year, the center was able to maintain a high quality program in terms of staffing and materials needed to maintain a high quality program within the salary and operating budgets. The department was able to utilize funds from the Child and Adult Care Food Program to supplement the money needed for the purchase of food. The large number of work study students assigned to the center positively affected the salary budget. The addition of the full-time substitute greatly helped prevent a deficit in the salary budget. Two staff members were out on medical leave for several weeks due to surgery, and one staff member was out for three months due to complications with pregnancy and maternity leave. This was an unforeseen hardship, and student assistant funds had to be used to cover substitute expenses since the full-time substitute alone was not sufficient. There were several weeks when two employees were on leave at the same time. Several large purchases were made this year including two new cribs for the infant room and other materials and equipment needed to maintain the level of quality necessary for the Quality Rating System. The operating budget was sufficient to cover these additional costs in part due to the funds from the Child and Adult Care Food Program. The revenue was decreased due to an unexpected withdrawal of a child in the preschool room in the fall and two children in the spring. Unfortunately, the circumstances causing the withdrawal were due to finances and relocation. It is difficult to fill spots outside of the summer and the beginning of fall since most children are already settled into programs.

7. **Supportive Documents**
All of the assessment data reports and compliance review findings can be found on the department’s intranet, as well as copies of the Parent Evaluation Survey, examples of the Center-Developed Assessment, and examples of the Ages and Stages Questionnaires.

APPENDIX

List of all Personnel and Associated Position Titles 2011-2012

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<th>Personnel</th>
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Personnel Headcount by Status Over Last Four Academic Years
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