Loyola University New Orleans 2013 Whelan Center Annual Report

1 Executive Summary

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 2012-13

The Whelan Children’s Center met all the program goals set forth for the 2012-13 year, most notably the continuation 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 2012-13 program goals and strategic plan.

Curriculum Development: Curriculum revision was a major initiative during 2011-12, which led to implementation during 2012-13. The changes to the curriculum took 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 were revised during the 2012-13 program year to address cognitive, physical and social emotional domains. It appeared that the children were more engaged in learning, especially in the toddler classes. This of course is simply an opinion based on observation; however, when analyzing the data from the 2011-12 and 2012-13 center assessments, the children in 2012-13 started at a higher level than the previous year during which the curriculum had not been changed. The curriculum revision was well received by the parents. The statement "The curriculum meets my child’s needs and is fun for my child." was given the answer “usually” on all parent evaluations, which increased 7% from 2011-12. This relates to the action plan for the center’s strategic goal #2.

Customer Satisfaction: 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. The tornado drill procedure was revised based upon recommendations by the Department of Child and Family Services Licensing specialist. Once the main revision was made, several smaller adjustments were made to complete the revision process. Staff members received training on the new procedure and drills were completed. 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.

Exterior Improvements: The infant/toddler play yard received a much needed update with the re-surfacing of the poured rubber play surface. The previous surface was over 15 years old and was brittle to the touch. It also included a step down to the yard which was a safety issue, as well as concrete that was exposed due to weathering. The step was replaced with a gradual slope and the children now have a safe surface for play. In addition, cracks in the surface on the preschool yard were repaired. Parents expressed approval for the updates on the parent evaluation in the comment section.

Key Assessment/Programmatic Enhancement Initiatives: The Ages and Stages: Social Emotional questionnaire was added to the list of evaluations performed throughout the year. The collaboration of the teachers and parents in completing the questionnaire gives insight into the children’s home life and any potential hindrance to the child’s social emotional development. This relates to the center’s strategic goal #2.
The communication system between the office and teachers in regards to children’s information was upgraded to include a central list that includes all pertinent information from the child’s enrollment form. This upgrade made it easier for teachers to access important information easily such as: phone numbers, people who were allowed to pick-up children, allergies and special needs, etc.

2.0 Unit Profile Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personnel</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Position Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bennett, Anna</td>
<td>PT</td>
<td>Substitute</td>
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<td>Gazzaniga, Hillery</td>
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<td>Scott, Amanda</td>
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<td>Clendenin, Elizabeth</td>
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<td>Guadiana, Daisy</td>
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<td>Bermudez, Jacqueline</td>
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<td>Lansou, Debra</td>
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<td>Scott, Rebecca</td>
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<td>Soublet, Rhonda</td>
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<td>Usner, Amanda</td>
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<td>Teacher II – Two Year Olds</td>
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<td>Brower, Claire</td>
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<td>Eiserloh, Becky</td>
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<td>Teacher III – Three Year Olds</td>
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<td>Glynn, Jennifer</td>
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<td>Assistant Teacher – Three Year Olds</td>
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<td>Landry, Brooke</td>
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<td>Teacher III - Preschool</td>
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2.1 Faculty Staff Profile

Personnel Headcount by Status Over Last Four Academic Years

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<tr>
<th>Whelan Center</th>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>FY 09-10</th>
<th>FY 10-11</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Full-time</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Part-time</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Staff</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
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</table>

3.0 Goals for Current Academic Year

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 2012-13 goals for the Whelan Children’s Center are as follows:

- to maintain a four star rating in the State of Louisiana Quality Rating System
- to find a tool to assess the social-emotional development of the children to ensure early intervention
- to enhance the knowledge of staff through continuing education
- to upgrade the communication system between office and classrooms in regards to children’s information
- 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
continue to enhance communication with parents to ensure their needs are being met in regards to high quality child care

4.0 Budget for Current Academic Year

For the 2012-13 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 large number of work study students assigned to the center positively affected the salary budget. Three staff members were out on medical leave for several weeks due to surgery. 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 a new washer and dryer.

The operating budget was not sufficient to cover all operating costs in part due to the funds from the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) being allocated differently from past years. The funds the center received from the Child and Adult Care Food Program were not able to be transferred into the operating pool as they had been in the past. Since the center relies on these funds to purchase some of the food for the children, funds from the operating pool were exhausted without the addition of the CACFP reimbursements. The deficit of operating pool funds was covered by the CACFP funds that went into revenue. The revenue was decreased slightly due to an unexpected withdrawal of a child in the preschool room in the fall. The circumstance causing the withdrawal was a spot that became available at a hearing impaired school that would allow the child to receive the help needed free of charge. It is difficult to fill spots outside of the summer and the beginning of fall since most children are already settled into programs.

5.0 Assessment Report

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; Ages and Stages: Social Emotional questionnaires, which focus solely on social emotional development, are administered according to the child’s ages either once or twice a year, depending upon the child’s age; Center-Developed Assessments tailored to each age group are completed for all children in the toddler through preschool classes each fall and spring; and Parent Evaluations distributed each fall. 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, e) Child and Adult Care Food Program.

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:

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.

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.

5.2 Results of In-House/External Studies and Inventories

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. 12% of children had scores that fell into the “gray” range on their first questionnaire. When re-tested, none of the children remained in the “gray” area.

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 from 2011-12 showed that classifying and name recognition should be focused on more frequently in the two year old classroom. Classifying and name recognition activities have improved. The results showed that 90% of the children were able to classify and 66% of the children were able to recognize their names. 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. Differing facilitators between fall and spring and a lack of authentic assessment measures caused some of the assessments in 2011-12 to be invalid. Staff training took place in May 2012, which increased the validity of the assessments.

When comparing the average growth in each category from fall to spring in 2012-13 and 2011-12, numbers were lower in 2012-13. Upon further review, the children began the year at a higher level than the previous year; therefore, the room for measured growth was not as large. These results show that the children are advancing at a faster rate in the younger classes, which allows teachers to build on a strong foundation. This also ties into the curriculum revision that took place in 2011-12, demonstrating that the changes made to the curriculum are benefiting the children.

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 three statements that had a 100% answer of “usually”. Out of 18 statements only 3 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 during the 2012-13 year. The following items were eliminated from the menu: corn dogs, French toast sticks, and the beef/pork hot dogs were changed to lower fat turkey dogs. The following items were added to the menu: muffins for breakfast and arroz con pollo. In addition, more fresh fruit for lunch was added to the menu and frozen vegetables were substituted for canned vegetables. Another statement that had an answer rate of “usually” less than 90% was, “The communication systems keep me well informed about what is happening in the center each day and what I need to know to plan.” In 2013-14, parents will receive reminder emails before each special event, in addition to the calendars and weekly newsletters that are already distributed. The teachers will also be more diligent about writing reminder notes for the parents. The third statement is “Outside spaces are thoughtfully designed and well maintained.” During 2012-13 the play yard underwent a major repair when the surface on the toddler yard was replaced and the preschool yard was repaired. Some of the older structures such as the tree house on the toddler yard and the horses on the preschool yard had to be removed due to disrepair. This has created a lack of play structures on the toddler yard. Since structures are very expensive, fundraising activities and budget cuts need to be made in order to make the purchases. In 2011-12, the statement “The daily conversations and parent-teacher conferences sufficiently inform me of my child’s development” had a “usually” response on the parent evaluations of less than 90%. The response rate improved greatly this year. In response to this item, a parent-teacher conference day was scheduled to take place October 15, 2013. Parents will be able to schedule a conference with teachers and have a formal discussion in addition to the daily conversations that take place.

Quality Rating System Assessment
Two classes were assessed during this program year. The Two Year Old class was assessed using the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale. The children were inside due to a rainy day causing the two and three year old classes to be inside together. This caused the scores to be lower than anticipated. The assessor stated that the time between breakfast and lunch was 10 minutes too long. In order for this issue to not negatively affect the score, a snack time will be added to the schedule of the Two and Three Year Old classes and the Preschool class. This assessment was a practice assessment. The other class that was assessed was the Infant classroom. The scores were very high and will be able to be used for the renewal of the star rating in September 2013. The center maintained the four star rating during 2012-13.

Compliance Reviews:
Bureau of Licensing: There were no deficiencies cited and one recommendation for changing the procedure for the tornado drill. This change was implemented in March 2013 and practice drills were performed.
State Fire Marshal: There were no deficiencies cited and no recommendations for policy/procedural changes.
Public Health: There were three non-critical violations noted during one of the four inspections that took place in 2012-13. They were: 1. a dead bug was spotted in the far back corner of the storage room of the kitchen behind the air conditioner unit; 2. a couple of holes were noted in the wall that needed to be sealed; 3. the vent above the range was dusty and needed to be cleaned. In order to correct these minor violations, the following steps were taken: 1. the pest control company was made aware of the dead bug and increased the spraying of the center and the cleaning crew was asked to check for any evidence of dead insects when cleaning; 2. the holes in the wall were sealed by physical plant; 3. the vent over the range was cleaned and will continue to be cleaned on a regular basis. The deficiencies were cleared and no other violations were noted on the 2 latter inspections.
New Orleans Fire Prevention Division: There were no deficiencies cited and no recommendations for policy/procedural changes.
Child and Adult Care Food Program: The center was audited by the CACFP during 2012-13. The program audits participating centers every three years. The center passed the audit with no deficiencies noted. There was one recommendation for policy/procedural change. It was recommended that we keep food purchased that is reimbursable by CACFP should be on a separate receipt from food that the center could not claim under the Child and Adult Care Food Program for accounting purposes. In order to make this change, any food purchased that is reimbursable by CACFP is purchased on a separate receipt from the other food purchased for extra snacks, etc. Any purchases for CACFP reimbursable food is purchased using the 3097 sub code.
6.0 Summary of Achievements

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. 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.

Staff Achievements

All of the staff members attended conferences and workshops for continuing education throughout the year. The director and Toddler Two teacher attended the National Association for the Education of Young Children conference in Atlanta, Georgia. Staff members attended the Greater New Orleans Association for the Education of Young Children conference.

Daisy Guadiana, the center’s Infant room teacher, graduated from Delgado Community College with an Associate’s Degree in Early Childhood Development. Since graduation, she has begun taking classes at SUNO. Daisy received an award her first semester for having the highest GPA in the education department.

Student Achievements

All children who applied for private or parochial schools were accepted into their first school of choice for elementary school. Students were accepted into private, parochial, and highly sought-after charter schools across the metro area.

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, 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.

7 Supporting 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.

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”. 33% of classes showed growth in all categories. Results were not valid last year due to differing assessment methods and inconsistency between assessors. These issues have been rectified by daily observations and records of skills and consistency of assessors. The results do not show as much improvement as desired. This is due in part to the fact that when a child achieves the highest score possible in a category on an evaluation, there is no room for improvement to be noted and the data for that child will show no increase. There would likely have been growth over the next few months, but the growth could not be measured. One could argue that the assessments need to be tailored to include children who are excelling in various categories. Since all children develop at different rates, the center assessments are designed to determine whether a child is hitting the developmental milestones and skills that are typical of a child his/her age. In order to assess growth in the skills-based portion of the assessment, higher level skills could be tested and noted on the assessment.

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. A 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 100% of classes showed improvement from fall to spring in the “Working and Playing With Others” category. This percentage is up 60% from last year. This can be contributed to the addition of the social emotional domain in lesson planning where specific activities designed to foster social emotional development are planned and executed on a daily basis. (FY 2011-12 goal #2, strategic goal #2) 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 99% of children were in the “white” area showing that there are no developmental delays in personal social skills.

Whelan Center Supporting Documents