

THE FISHBACK CENTER FOR ECE ANNUAL REPORT



South Dakota
State University

School of Education, Counseling,
& Human Development

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2023-2024



The Fishback Center for
Early Childhood Education



FISHBACK CENTER FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION VISION STATEMENT

To provide solid Early Childhood Educational Best Practices in a changing society.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Fishback Center for Early Childhood Education is a model of inclusive early childhood education that: (1) Ensures optimum experiences for education and professional preparation of early childhood professionals who will serve children, and their families, on local, state, and national levels; (2) Connects with families to form family-school partnerships to enrich each other's experiences and lives; and (3) Provides a unique environment for faculty and student research that contributes to knowledge about child development and quality early educational experiences.

PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

At the Fishback Center for Early Childhood Education, the philosophy is grounded in social constructivism, inquiry-based learning, and is Reggio-inspired. Children are capable, competent, and build their knowledge through exploration and social interaction. Relationships with caring and responsive teachers are not only children's rights but are crucial to their growth, learning, and development. These relationships help children nurture, sustain, develop questions, and hypothesize so they may make meaning of their world.

The Fishback Center for Early Childhood Education sees parents as the children's first teachers. Teachers and college students are seen as their second teachers and the environment of learning as their third teacher. Special consideration is given to the materials chosen for the children's opportunities for learning and how teachers construct the spaces where children will play, learn, and interact with their peers and adults in the center.

OVERVIEW OF THE YEAR

DECLARATION OF INTENT

Declaration of Intent for the Academic Year 2023-2024 - We declare this year to be a year of advocating for the importance of early childhood education.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

This year, the Fishback Center for Early Childhood Education teaching team saw the addition of two new staff members: one full-time kindergarten and ECE instructor, and one part-time mentor in the lab school. We also witnessed the return of frequent use of the observation booths by families and different SDSU courses, such as our ECE and HDFS Human Development classes. The program also continued to partner with the SDSU Physical Education and Music departments as they provided lessons and activities for our kindergartners, and with the ECE Physics class, who provided experiences with the preschool children. Additionally, the Fishback Center for Early Childhood participated in the SDSU Yellow and Blue Block Party to showcase what our program offers to the community and as a service to the community. This year also provided the opportunity to participate in two episodes of the South Dakota Public Broadcasting's South Dakota Focus program. Laura Gloege and Jen Johnson were interviewed for both episodes as part of a documentary-style discussion on early childhood education and why it matters. Videotaped segments of the Fishback Center for Early Childhood Education were used for the episodes, as well as what the Fishback Center for Early Childhood Education program provided to children, families, and college

students was shared. Another important highlight was the coordination of a photo shoot and videotaping of the program spaces along with the scheduling of specific interviews with various stakeholders for the sole purpose of creating promotional videos for both the Fishback Center for ECE and the Early Childhood Education Department.



This year also provided the opportunity for new collaborations. For example, Laura Gloege and Jen Johnson hosted a two-day professional development training in August for a group of educators from the Little Wound School on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in Kyle, South Dakota. A trip out to the Little Wound School then occurred in September to visit their program and meet with teams of educators from birth through 3rd grade. This collaboration continued throughout the year through Zoom meetings and a final day spent in the Fishback Center for Early Childhood Education in April 2024.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

One of this year's professional development experiences was conducted by Dr. Kay Cutler for the Fishback Center Mentor Teachers and ECE Faculty that focused on affordance studies with watercolors and clay. Specifically, we explored the capabilities of the different materials and the nuances of how one might use that knowledge with learners to demonstrate what they are thinking or to showcase their learning. The group met once in the fall semester and once in the spring. The Mentor Teachers also completed professional development experiences centered around personal interests and goals. For example, some took the AIM Science of Reading courses, participated in online trainings, attended conferences, and took other book study/courses for SD Teaching License renewal credits.

HIRING NEW POSITIONS

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER & ECE FACULTY MEMBER

Carrie Benson was hired as the SDSU Kindergarten Teacher and an ECE Faculty Member in July 2023. Carrie is a graduate of SDSU with a master's degree in child and family studies with a specialization in early childhood education. She worked at the Children's Museum of South Dakota for 13 years and brought with her a passion for working with children and families with a commitment to inquiry-based and Reggio-inspired practices. In the spring semester of 2024, Carrie also took on the role of teaching the ECE Kindergarten Education course.

PART-TIME FISHBACK CENTER FOR ECE MENTOR TEACHER

Jenna Suhm joined the Fishback Center for ECE as the part-time 3- & 4-year-old mentor teacher in the fall of 2023. Jenna is a graduate of SDSU with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education. She also attained a Master of Education from the University of Sioux Falls. Jenna previously taught second grade for one year and kindergarten for three years. She is a welcome addition to the program and brings a

passion for education and a developmentally appropriate knowledge base in working with children and families.

INTERNAL ACTIVITIES

FAMILY ADVISORY COUNCIL (FAC) INVOLVEMENT

The FAC continued to show support for the Fishback Center staff by donating a variety of items for the staff coffee bar in the program resource room. Additionally, discussions were held throughout the year regarding finding ways to support program staff. The group also conducted a yearly review of the program's policies and procedures.

HOW GOALS WERE MET FOR THE 2023-2024 ACADEMIC YEAR – A YEAR IN REVIEW

Goals for the 2023-2024 academic year included: (1) To advocate for the importance of early childhood education 2) To participate in an affordance study to enhance our Reggio-inspired practices in materials exploration, and (3) To continue to promote balance and wellbeing.

We progressed on these goals in the following ways:

- (1) This year the program hosted a two-day professional development experience with a group of educators from the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in Kyle, South Dakota. This collaboration continued throughout the year through Zoom meetings and an observation day of our Lab School. Additionally, the program coordinators were interviewed and included in the South Dakota Public Broadcasting's South Dakota Focus episodes where discussions were held regarding the importance of early childhood education.
- (2) The Fishback Center teaching teams promoted balance and well-being mindfulness practices, as well as safety practices throughout the Fishback Center.
- (3) The mentor teaching team participated in an affordance study of watercolor and clay. This experience supported our exploration of different types of watercolor utensils, and the properties of clay while using tools to manipulate this material.

NAEYC ACCREDITATION

The Fishback Center for Early Childhood Education became the first program in the state of South Dakota to be accredited by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs (NAECP) in affiliation with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The center pursued accreditation at the inception of the process in 1978. In March 2022, the Fishback Center for Early Childhood Education successfully completed its re-accreditation visit with an overall 97.3% pass rating.

NAEYC Accreditation is a voluntary process by which early childhood programs demonstrate that they meet national standards of excellence. It is a rigorous process. Programs seeking accreditation undergo an intensive self-study process (usually a two-year-long process) collecting information from parents, teachers, and administrators. The collected information is in the form of questionnaires, observations, and documentation showing evidence for the national standards. Programs receive an onsite visit by an early childhood professional validator to confirm the results of the self-study. The validator's report is then submitted to the NAECP review board made up of a panel of early childhood education experts to grant or defer the program's accreditation status. Currently, there are 5 NAEYC accredited programs in South Dakota, which include Enemy Swim Day School FACE Program in Waubay, SD, Ellsworth AFB Child

Development Center on Ellsworth AFB, Skies the Limit Academy in Fort Meade, SD, the Early Learning Center of Brookings in Brookings, SD, and the Fishback Center for ECE in Brookings, SD. Neighboring states with accredited centers include North Dakota (5, decreasing by 1 from last year), Minnesota (299, decreasing by 10 from last year), Iowa (73, decreasing by 8 from last year), Nebraska (35, decreasing by 24 from last year), Wyoming (24, no change from last year) and Montana (5, decreasing by 2 from last year). There are a total of 5,698 accredited centers in the US, Guam, and Puerto Rico which is a loss of 64 accredited centers in the last year.

Throughout this annual report, the description of activities and events illustrate how the Fishback Center for Early Childhood Education has actively supported the university's mission, the department's mission, the center's mission, and the NAEYC Accreditation mission, as well as meeting the needs and desires of the families and children it serves.

TEACHING IN RELATION TO THE FISHBACK CENTER

During the 2023-2024 academic year, the Fishback Center for Early Childhood Education continued its teaching mission as it facilitated the professional development of undergraduate students through field experiences, teacher candidate placements, and observations.

Teacher research topics continued to be authentic and deeply explored questions that were important to the teacher candidates and mentor teachers' thinking (See Table 1 for a list of inquiry investigations with the children).

Children must be taught how to think, not what to think. ~ Margaret Mead

PLACEMENT SITES

Throughout the academic year 2023-2024, 339 teaching and laboratory placements occurred. Professional Skills I (PS I) Field experiences occurred once a week in the classroom for 3 ½ hours each; students in field experiences worked with children in guidance situations and observed their learning. Teacher candidate placements are full-time placements, present during the entire laboratory program for a particular group of children. Various methods laboratory experiences are shorter (1/2 to 1 hour) experiences where students plan and implement activities that coordinate with the curriculum studied in their methods courses. The Fishback Center for Early Childhood Education served as a site for 27 weekly PS I field experiences, 36 teacher candidate placements, and 276 methods observations and experiences (see Table 2 for details). Those individuals completed 16,665 observations (see Table 3 for details), and 1,498 assignments (see Table 4 for details).

RESEARCH IN RELATION TO THE FISHBACK CENTER

Through a Fall 2023 NSF iCorp Commercialization grant, SDSU undergrad students; Ally Ercink (Mechanical Engineering and Music), Connor Tigges (Mechanical Engineering), graduate students; Makayla Griffin (Educational Administration), and Tim O'Brien (Mechanical Engineering), along with advisors Kay Cutler (Early Childhood), and Craig Silvernagel (Entrepreneurial Studies), Mechanical Engineering course instructor, Todd Letcher, and Chris Hume from Kodo Kids took on the project of constructing a musical instrument that demonstrated physics and math concepts. As part of this project, Carrie Benson, SDSU kindergarten teacher and Early Childhood Education Instructor, eight SDSU kindergartners, and three SDSU kindergarten parents participated in interviews regarding potential interest in the creation of a musical instrument that included physics concepts. The SDSU Sound Constructor was developed and included eight tunes, an LED touchscreen display with a song menu, three different rhythmic modes for various skill levels, and a lightweight frame with wheels for maximum portability. Further research on this item will occur during the upcoming year with the SDSU kindergartners exploring the Sound Constructor in their classroom.

OUTREACH AND PARTNERSHIPS

The focus of this year's Declaration of Intent was on advocating for the importance of early childhood education. As shared in the highlights of the year, we took the opportunity to advocate for early childhood through the sharing of spaces and programming through program tours and collaborations. A significant partnership and collaboration occurred between the Fishback Center for ECE and the Little Wound School on the Pine Ridge Reservation in Kyle, South Dakota. Not only did the coordinators of the program; Laura Gloege and Jen Johnson, conduct a two-day professional development opportunity for the Little Wound staff team, but they also visited their school and met periodically throughout the school year. As a cumulating experience, educators and administrators from Little Wound School spent a day observing the different lab classrooms, as well as meeting with Laura and Jen to reflect on their experiences. Additionally, Laura Gloege and Jen Johnson actively participated in two different South Dakota Public Broadcasting episodes on the importance of early childhood education and the critical need for highly trained and skilled educators to best support children and families. Another project that began this year was the coordination of videotaping and gathering of photos of the teachers and children in the Fishback Center for ECE. Along with the footage and photos gathered, individuals were identified and interviewed for the purpose of putting together promotional videos for both the Fishback Center for ECE and the SDSU Early Childhood Degree Program. Lastly, three of the mentor teachers also presented at the South Dakota Early Childhood Conference in Chamberlain, SD.



ENROLLMENT STATISTICS

During the 2023-2024 academic year, the center enrolled 8 younger toddlers, 12 older toddlers, 32 3- & 4-year-olds, 31 4 & 5-year-olds, and 13 kindergartners of whom 10 were enrolled in the center's Out-of-School-Time (OST) Program. The total enrollment was 96.

Of the children who were enrolled, their family members identified as being a member of the following nationalities: American (48), Bangladesh (1), Bohemian (3), Caucasian (4), Cuban (2), Czech (2), Danish (1), Dutch (3), Egyptian (1), English (3), European (1), Filipino (2), French (3), German (16), Ghanaian (1), Haitian (1), Hispanic (2), Indigenous (1), Irish (6), Italian (4), Moroccan (1), No Identified Nationality (6), Norwegian (12), Palestinian (1), Spanish (1), Swedish (4), and Vietnamese (2).

Of the children who were enrolled, their family members identified as being part of the following cultural heritages: American (33), Bangladesh (1), Bohemian (1), Cherokee (1), Columbian (1), Cuban (2), Danish (2), Dutch (1), Egyptian (1), English (1), European (1), Filipino (2), French (1), German (4), Guatemalan (1), Italian (1), Irish (2), Jewish (1), Mexican (1), Moroccan (1), Native American (1), No Identified Culture (14), Norwegian (5), Palestinian (1), Scandinavian (1), Spanish (2), Swedish (3), and Vietnamese (2)

Of the children who were enrolled, we had seven different languages represented: English (63), Spanish (5), Tagalog (1), Arabic (3), Vietnamese (2), Bangla (1), and Tiwi (1). Of those speaking a second language, all used English as a spoken language, as well.





SPACE USAGE

The entire Fishback Center was used for classroom and programming space. Visitors and faculty also used the program spaces.



TABLE 1: INQUIRY TOPICS WITH TEACHER CANDIDATES AND SMALL GROUPS OF CHILDREN

Name of topic	Classroom	Semester Inquiry Occurred
Building & Dinosaurs Investigation	Toddler Lab	Fall 2023
Babies Investigation	Toddler Lab	Fall 2023
Things That Go Investigation	Toddler Lab	Fall 2023
Sensory Investigation	Toddler Lab	Fall 2023
Building & Construction Investigation	Toddler Lab	Fall 2023
Aircraft Investigation	3 & 4 Morning Lab	Fall 2023
Marching Band Investigation	3 & 4 Morning Lab	Fall 2023
All About Me Investigation	3 & 4 Morning Lab	Fall 2023
Insect Investigation	3 & 4 Morning Lab	Fall 2023
Building Investigation	3 & 4 Afternoon Lab	Fall 2023
Farming Investigation	3 & 4 Afternoon Lab	Fall 2023
Snakes Investigation	3 & 4 Afternoon Lab	Fall 2023
Transportation Investigation	3 & 4 Afternoon Lab	Fall 2023
Camouflage Investigation	4 & 5 Morning Lab	Fall 2023
Bear Investigation	4 & 5 Morning Lab	Fall 2023
Storytelling Investigation	4 & 5 Morning Lab	Fall 2023
Ocean Investigation	4 & 5 Morning Lab	Fall 2023
Science Investigation	4 & 5 Afternoon Lab	Fall 2023
Safari Animals Investigation	4 & 5 Afternoon Lab	Fall 2023
Butterflies & Bees Investigation	4 & 5 Afternoon Lab	Fall 2023
Storytelling Investigation	4 & 5 Afternoon Lab	Fall 2023
A Home for Rose	Kindergarten Lab	Fall 2023
A Bakery for Muffin	Kindergarten Lab	Fall 2023
A Town for Whisper	Kindergarten Lab	Fall 2023
Art Investigation	Toddler Lab	Spring 2024
Storytelling Community Helpers Investigation	Toddler Lab	Spring 2024
Music Investigation	Toddler Lab	Spring 2024
Sensory Investigation	Toddler Lab	Spring 2024
Garden Investigation	3 & 4 Morning Lab	Spring 2024
Rainforest Investigation	3 & 4 Morning Lab	Spring 2024
Storytelling Investigation	3 & 4 Afternoon Lab	Spring 2024
Cooking Investigation	3 & 4 Afternoon Lab	Spring 2024
Physics Investigation	4 & 5 Morning Lab	Spring 2024
Campus Investigation	4 & 5 Morning Lab	Spring 2024
Cause & Effect Investigation	4 & 5 Afternoon Lab	Spring 2024
Storytelling Investigation	4 & 5 Afternoon Lab	Spring 2024
Water Park Investigation	Kindergarten Lab	Spring 2024
Amusement Park Investigation	Kindergarten Lab	Spring 2024



TABLE 2: PLACEMENTS IN THE FISHBACK CENTER FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Number of Placements	Course	Type of Experience
27	PS I – ECE 360	2nd Year Field Experience
32	ECE 488	Student Teaching Preschool-Age
4	ECE 488	Student Teaching K-3
12	PE 460/360	Phys. Ed. Kindergarten Field Exp/Fall
17	PE 342	Phys. Ed. Kindergarten Field Exp/Spring
46	PHYS 216	Physical Science for Early Childhood
22	MUS 351	Music Ed. Kindergarten Field/Fall
29	ECE 240	Toddler Developmental Observations
150	HDFS 227	Toddler/Preschool/Kindergarten Development Observations
*Numbers vary as some choose to complete assignment in another placement	MATH 245/345	Math for the Primary Grades Lesson Plans
Total of 339 Placements during the 2023-2024 Academic Year		



TABLE 3: OBSERVATIONS IN THE FISHBACK CENTER FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Number of Observations/Hours of Observations	Course	Total Enrolled	Type of Experience
2,282 Observations	PS I - ECE 360	27	Developmental & Curricular Observations
11,648 Observations	ECE 488	32	Student Teaching Toddler-Preschool Age
1,820 Observations	ECE 488	4	Student Teaching-Kindergarten
465 Observations	ECE 240	29	Toddler Developmental Observations
450 Observations	HDFS 227	150	Toddler/Preschool/Kindergarten Developmental Observations
Total of 16,665 Observations during the 2022-2023 Academic Year			

TABLE 4: ASSIGNMENTS IN THE FISHBACK CENTER FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Course Number	Number of Assignments	Types of Assignments	Number of Students
PS I – ECE 360	2 7 3 3 8	Guidance Journals Child Descriptive Review Questions Analysis Obs. Affordance Studies Obs. & Lesson Plan Small Group Inquiry & Lesson Plan	27
PE 460/342	1	PE Lesson Plan	29
MUS 351	1	Music Lesson Plan	22
PHYS 216	2	Plan and implement a physics activity with the preschool children.	46
ECE 488 (PreK)	4 4-9 4-9 3 3 1	Student Teacher Meet & Greet Visit Summaries Portfolios Family-Teacher Conferences Lesson Plans Newsletters Small Group Investigation	32
ECE 488 (K-3)	7 5 5 1 1	Weekly Lesson Plans Cognitive Coaching Observations Parent Teacher Conferences Newsletter Small Group Investigation	4
Total of 1,498 Assignments during the 2023-2024 Academic Year			

TABLE 5: PRESENTATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

Presentations:
<i>Advocacy for Early Hearing Detection and Intervention.</i> Haselhorst, A. SD Special Education Conference, March 5, 2024, Sioux Falls, SD.
<i>The Environment as the Third Teacher: Purposeful Classroom Set-ups.</i> Gloege, L., Johnson, J., Haselhorst, A. SD ECE Conference, April 13, 2024, Chamberlain, SD.
<i>Books, Books, and More Books: How to Use Children’s Literature to Incorporate Developmentally Appropriate Activities.</i> Gloege, L., and Johnson, J. SD ECE Conference, April 13, 2024, Chamberlain, SD.
<i>Developmentally Appropriate Practices When Working with Toddlers.</i> Haselhorst, A. SD ECE Conference, April 13, 2024, Chamberlain, SD.

I am not a teacher, but an awakener. ~ Robert Frost



TABLE 6: FISHBACK CENTER LEADERSHIP IN THE COMMUNITY AND FIELD

Highlights for the Year
Jen Johnson is a member and acting president of the Head Start Pre-Birth to 5 Policy Council and serves as the Early Childhood Consultant to the Head Start Board.
Ashlee Haselhorst also works as a Birth to Three provider for the Brookings community.
We collaborate with the Early Head Start program in Brookings, where we share our classrooms and other program spaces for family programming throughout the school year.



TABLE 7: TOURS OF THE FISHBACK CENTER

Role	Number of Individuals
Jackrabbit Previews, Daily Visits, & Blue & Gold Days	133
Interviews of Human Development Faculty Candidates	4
Interviews for College of Education & Human Sciences Dean	4
Interviews for Elementary Education Faculty Candidates	4
Interviews for Special Education Faculty Candidates	4
Little Wound School Educators and Staff (3 times)	62
Flandreau HS Family & Consumer Science class visit	16
Brookings HS Family & Consumer Science class visit	8
Baltic HS Family & Consumer Science class visit	11
Brookings School District Leadership-superintendent, principals, school board president	5
Newdale Colony-Elkton School District	7
SDSU 50 TH Anniversary Celebration	5
Potential Enrolled Children and their Families	9
Potential Donors & Current Donors	2
Total:	274



**Campus
Field Trips
& Guest
Speakers**





**Brookings Community
Field Trips**

