

Farmington Public Schools

Early Childhood Report

April, 2006

Each April, Michigan communities celebrate the Month of the Young Child. This month, in particular, we focus on early childhood issues and highlight the needs of young children. Research clearly demonstrates that a strong preschool education can develop the pre-academic skills, imagination and social and emotional capacities of three and four year olds that can literally transform children's lives with continuing benefits into adulthood.

Focusing on young children shows clear benefits:

- Experiences in infancy and early childhood build the brain getting it ready for higher levels of thinking skills.
- The extent to which children are on a path leading to academic, personal and social success is determined by experiences in the first years of life.
- By the time children reach school age much of the wiring of a child's brain has been set.
- These benefits are especially true for children of immigrants and poor families.

To kick off the month of April and recognize the importance education to our districts our youngest learners, the following report has been compiled to showcase the Farmington Public Schools Early Childhood programs. This report will detail our Early Childhood program options, a brief overview of our preschool curriculum, a highlight of our staff and professional learning community activities, a report on our market efforts, and an update on enrollment figures. The report concludes with a brief update of the consolidation plans for the 2006-07 school year.

Preschool Program Options

We pride ourselves upon the fact that we can meet the needs of all families with preschoolers in Farmington and Farmington Hills. We have 2, 3, & 5 day options for 2, 3, and 4 year old children. We have programs options for those who seek full or half day preschool. We offer wrap around care beginning at 7:15 AM and ending at 6:00 PM. We have programs for parents and their toddlers, and for parents and their babies. We offer special enrichment classes at our Early Childhood Centers including Spanish, Movement and Music, Cooking for Kids. Our tuition averages approximately \$5.75 per hour.

We offer free preschool programs for qualifying families of 3 and 4 year olds. We have a modest scholarship fund to help those who need assistance with the tuition.

We offer special intervention screening and services for families who may be concerned about their child's development. Our Child Find team screens and identifies children suspected of having a developmental delay. We offer Early Intervention services for children ages 0 – 3, Our Play and Learn (PAL) program serves children ages 3-5. We are also happy to announce the opening of a new service next school year specifically designed to meet the needs of our youngest students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. We also provide speech services.

We are very excited to be able to offer a new parenting program/partnership with Botsford Hospital called "Growing Together." This program was designed by Alameda Center Coordinator, Julie Laburn. An overview of this program is attached to this report.

We will offer all or a portion of these preschool programs at the following locations for the 2006-07 school year:

- Alameda Early Childhood Center
- Farmington Community School
- Hillside Elementary School
- Eagle Elementary School
- Gill Elementary School
- Wood Creek Elementary School

Curriculum Overview

Emergent Literacy

During the preschool years, children are emerging as language users and developing competence as listeners, speakers, readers, writers, and viewers. Each area of language arts is strengthened by integrated literacy experiences in print- rich environments. (MI ECSQ)

The following curricular goals guide our instruction in emergent literacy:

- Children will develop effective and differentiated listening skills.
- Children will speak effectively to express themselves clearly and will move toward being grammatically correct.
- Children will understand the diversity of communication.
- Children will develop writing skills to communicate and express themselves clearly for a variety of purposes. (Children may exhibit many of these indicators at the same time.)
- Children will demonstrate knowledge of books and print materials.
- Children will demonstrate a beginning knowledge of letters and numbers.
- Children will show increasing ability in phonological awareness.
- Children will develop an interest in reading and writing.
- Children will understand and use words describing spatial relations, sequence and time.

Early Childhood staff use three sections of the Michigan Literacy Progress Profile (MLPP) to assess the emergent literacy learning of our preschool students (Concepts of Print, Letter/Sound Identification and Phonemic Awareness). The results of these assessments are used in daily classroom planning, Professional Learning Community Meetings and information sharing with parents. Students in 4-yr-old classrooms (the year before Kindergarten) are assessed in the fall. Students about whom staff have concerns are assessed mid-year to make sure they are making progress. All students are again assessed in spring. The assessments are then passed on to the Kindergarten teachers in May, just before Kindergarten Orientation.

Math

Young children's early understandings of mathematics are broad in scope and extend well beyond numbers and counting. Problem solving is the central focus of the mathematics curriculum from the early years onward. How children's early understandings are supported and extended by their parents and teachers enable them to use and expand their knowledge. Mathematical experiences involving interactions with the environment, materials, peers and supportive adults give children opportunities to build, modify, and integrate simple mathematical concepts. (MI ECSQ)

The following curricular goals guide our instruction in the development of mathematical concepts.

- The ability to compare and to classify is essential to the development of thinking and reasoning skills. Children will manipulate, describe, analyze, infer and invent relationships and structures.
- Children will develop the ability to seek out and to perceive patterns and meaning in their everyday life.
- Children will develop skills of sorting, comparing, and organizing information and will use information to make predictions and solve new problems.
- Children will explore and discover measurement relationships.
- Representing, discussing, reading, writing, and listening are vital to the learning of mathematics. Children will translate a problem or activity into a diagram, model, symbol, or words). Gradually children will record their experiences in increasingly abstract forms.
- Children will develop increasing ability to count in sequence to 10 & beyond. They will begin to make use of one to one correspondence.

Over the past two years our Early Childhood staff have developed, piloted and are now using a math assessment based upon developmental guidelines that informs our teaching, and allows us to identify the developmental level of the skill. A copy of this assessment is attached to this report.

Social and Emotional Growth

To develop socially and emotionally, children need to develop the capacity to experience, express and gain self control over their emotions and social interactions. Children learn and thrive when they feel emotionally secure with and socially connected to adults who provide nurturing relationships and positive early learning experiences. When children feel emotionally secure and physically safe they feel more confident to explore their environment and to learn. The children will grow in emotional health and self esteem, are active members of a supportive and cooperative classroom community, grow in their ability to care for others and be responsible for their own behavior. (MI ECSQ)

The following curricular goals guide our instruction in the areas of Social and Emotional Development:

- Children will grow in emotional health and self esteem.
- Children are active members of a supportive and cooperative classroom community in which they freely participate.
- Children grow in their ability to care for others and be responsible for their own behavior.

Our staff have been trained in and use the Second Step Violence Prevention Curriculum to assist in achieving these goals. We also have identified Social and Emotional Development as an area for further study and as a department wide goal. We hope to further develop our knowledge and skills in the very important area of development.

Physical Development

Good physical health and well being, and a safe environment contribute to improved learning. Physical development is important to the achievement of general health. Gross motor development enhances body awareness, understanding of spatial relationships, and cognitive growth. Fine motor development fosters dexterity as well as coordination of the hand and eye when using the small muscles of the fingers. (MI ECSQ)

The following curricular goals guide our instruction in the area Physical Development:

- Children will gain the ability to control their bodies with ease.

- Children will experience growth in fine motor development and use small muscles to improve a variety of fine motor skills.
- Children will participate in activities that emphasize cooperation and minimize competition.

Health, Nutrition and Safety

Children learn to value their bodies and keep themselves healthy and safe. In the preschool years, children improve movement skills, cooperative and social interaction skills and develop greater knowledge about the importance of physical activity and exercise. They begin to learn that their behavior affects their health and safety and recognize that not all children can participate in activities in the same way. (MI ECSQ)

The following curricular goals guide our instruction in the areas of Health, Nutrition and Safety:

- Children will practice health and safety knowledge in making choices in daily life.
- Children will recognize their role in preventing accidents or potential emergencies.
- Children will become aware of and develop healthy nutritional habits.

Science

A science program for young children provides them with a better understanding of the world around them and how it works through building on their natural sense of wonder and curiosity. Early learning expectations for science model the nature of scientific inquiry which has at its core the opportunity to ask and answer questions and apply problem solving skills. Children bring their emerging skills in mathematics to their experiences and use their growing abilities in representing ideas through language and the creative arts to portray their scientific knowledge. (MI ECSQ)

The following curricular goals guide our instruction in Science:

- Children will develop positive attitudes regarding science.
- Children will utilize the scientific method of study.
- Children will begin to acquire general scientific knowledge.
- Children will begin to acquire scientific knowledge related to life science.
- Children will begin to acquire scientific knowledge related to physical science.
- Children will begin to acquire scientific knowledge related to earth science.
- Children will begin to use senses and a variety of tools to gather information, investigate materials and make observations.

Social Studies

Children study their social world from the moment of birth. By the time they are three and four years old, children are becoming increasingly sophisticated in observing and understanding their social world. The preschool classroom is a perfect situation for children to learn the knowledge skills, and attitudes required to live in an interdependent democratic society as adults. (MI ECSQ)

The following curricular goals guide our instruction in Social Studies:

- Children will begin to develop an understanding of the concept of time and begin to realize that they are a part of a history, which includes people, places, events, and stories about the present and days gone by.
- Children will begin to construct an understanding of location, place, relationships within places and movement.
- Children will begin to learn about the reasons for rules and laws in the classroom and community.

- Children will begin to recognize the number of different influences that shape people's thinking and behavior.

Our Staff & Professional Learning Communities

Farmington Public Schools Early Childhood Curriculum closely follows the Michigan Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Pre-kindergarten standards, and is aligned with the standards set forth by the National Association for the Education of Young Children Accreditation. Our Early Childhood Programs provide developmentally appropriate, assessment driven instruction.

To ensure that our Early Childhood staff have the professional development required to meet these standards, we provide up to 18 hours of professional development opportunities to build their understanding of individualizing instruction of our early childhood curriculum. 12 of these hours are offered during district professional development days, 6 of the hours are the choice of the staff member.

In addition to the professional development opportunities our staff also participate regularly in Professional Learning Communities. 6 times per year, our entire Early Childhood Staff join together for curriculum and assessment meetings. During these meetings we deeply study focus areas of our curriculum (i.e. Math & Social and Emotional Development). In addition to the entire staff meeting, individual Center's meet as a group or in teams regularly to enrich staff knowledge of the curriculum and to individualize instruction to meet the needs of all of our children.

Marketing Efforts:

Over the past 10 months the Early Childhood staff and administration have marketed our Early Childhood programs and centers in the following venues:

Community events:

- Founders Festival
- Kids Day in the Park
- Founders Parade
- Heritage Festival
- Preschool Orientation
- Preschool Open Houses held Sunday, April 2.
- Farmington Area Preschool Council Information Night
- City Wide Open House

Improved district awareness:

- New Employee Orientation
- Preschool Information Meeting mass mailing of postcard invitations
- Kindergarten/EduCare Information Meeting mass mailing of postcard invitations
- TV 10 News Releases
- Up-date
- Pipeline
- Presentations and involvement with to High School Child Development Classes

Media Highlights, News Releases, Informational Ads:

- Kids Directory
- Metro Bureau Newspaper
- Civic Theatre Ad
- Observer & Eccentric Ads
- Senior Adult Calendar
- Community Education Brochure
- Preschool Information Meeting mass mailing of postcard invitations
- Kindergarten/EduCare Information Meeting mass mailing of postcard invitations

- Parenting Series on TV 10
- Early Childhood Program Growth Chart (attached to this report)

2006-07 Marketing Plan

The 2006-07 Marketing Plan will be developed during the month of May, 2006 and will continue to support the strategic objectives identified in the April 7, 2004 Marketing Plan. The main goal of the plan will be to expand marketing of early childhood programs and services, including our new satellite sites, and also expand marketing of our EduCare programs. Our goal is to increase enrollment and for our community to become ‘raving fans’. The report will follow the same format with key messages, mission statements, target markets, goals and strategies, and our recommendations for implementing the plan over a 12 month period.

2005-06 Early Childhood Program Enrollment

Preschool Program Enrollment

Fairview	December 2003	February 2004	February 2005	February 2006	Fall 2006 Registrations
Tuition	172	190	148	168	0
Special Education	42	60	83	64	0
Grant	44	44	52	50	0
Farmington Community School	December, 2003	February, 2004	February 2005	February 2006	Fall 2006 Registrations
Tuition	44	85	130	132	50
Special Education	12	15	18	18	60
Grant	111	88	84	74	84
Alameda	December, 2003	February, 2004	February, 2005	February 2006	Fall 2006 Registrations
Tuition	317	266	319	317	287
Special Education	2	2	4	18	51
Grant	54	54	46	12	10
Eagle					Fall 2006 Registrations
Tuition					2
Grant					6
Hillside					Fall 2006 Registrations
Tuition					6
Grant					6
Gill					Fall 2006 Registrations
Tuition					6
Grant					0
Wood Creek					Fall 2006 Registrations
Tuition				10	2
Grant				19	20
TOTAL ENROLLMENT	798	804	884	879	598

EduCare Program Enrollment

	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Alameda	38	42	60	59	49	38	18	0	0
Beechview	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	22	27	36	25
Fairview	46	50	54	40	31	17	0	0	0
Flanders	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Forest	38	18	24	37	42	43	35	32	26
Gill	0	0	0	0	0	0	24	18	19
Hillside	15	17	20	21	22	22	40	39	18
Kenbrook	0	0	0	0	0	23	23	23	
Lanigan	19	19	0	0	0	0	19	0	0
* Longacre	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15
William Grace	18	18	11	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wood Creek	0	0	0	17	24	20	22	17	
Wooddale	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	1
Total Enrollment	174	164	169	174	168	185	208	182	104

* New for fall of 06-07

Consolidation Update

- The proposed plan for 2006-07 includes operating preschool from 2 Early Childhood Centers, and 4 elementary satellite sites - **Eagle, Gill, Hillside and Wood Creek**.
- Preschool students attending at the elementary sites will have the same qualified teachers and paraprofessionals, the same enrichment opportunities, and the same curriculum as the Centers.
- A lottery was held at Alameda on March 24th. Those who were registered during the first week of registration were drawn first. Those who did not get their first choice preschool program were automatically enrolled in their second choice, put on a wait list and have received a personal phone call from our offices to ensure satisfaction.
- Total tuition enrollment for all of our preschool programs at this time is 352. Grant program (Head Start, Achieving Preschool Excellence, and Michigan School Readiness Programs) enrollment begins the week of April 25, 2006. 155 spots will be available for eligible families
- Grants programs are expected to continue to be funded as they currently are.
- We are confident that our Elementary Preschool sites will fill quickly!
- We are working closely with the personnel office on staffing plans for fall. We anticipate minimal layoffs.
- We have met with our entire Early Childhood staff, with positive results.
- We are communicating regularly with staff and parents via memo's, parent meetings, staff meetings, and conversation.
- We are forming transition committees to ease the closure of one building, and consolidation to other locations.

References:

Michigan Department of Education Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Pre-kindergarten, 2005
Farmington Public Schools, Early Childhood Curriculum

Attachments:

- Farmington Public Schools Early Childhood Math Assessment
- “Growing Together” Parent Series
- Farmington Public Schools Early Childhood Program Growth Chart