

Mission Statement

The Douglass Psychology Child Study Center is a University childcare center designed to provide a wide range of enriching and recreational activities in an environment that is conducive to discovering joy in learning and developing a positive self-image for every child. The Center is dedicated to promoting research in early childhood education and development and supports these endeavors through active participation in research studies conducted at the University.

“The Douglass Psychology Child Study Center: Research in Early Learning”

Our Philosophy

The administration and teaching staff at the Douglass Psychology Child Study Center believe that young children acquire knowledge through active participation in the world, that is, by acting upon objects and people in their environments. This active participation may be represented by, (but not limited to): jumping, running, hopping, pouring, mixing, measuring, building, playing, painting, drawing, writing, reading, listening, talking, and questioning. Therefore, teachers must provide abundant materials that can be physically explored and adapted to the needs of the children in the group at any given time. The classroom schedule should have ample time for unstructured, child-directed activities so that children have time to pursue their own interests and formulate and test ideas about their world. Children also need time to reflect on their discoveries, so the schedule should also include a period of time for quiet reflection or in other words, time to daydream.

We believe that children come into the school environment with a pre-existing basis of knowledge with relation to their family and home life experiences. The school experience should encourage the sharing of this knowledge and incorporate it into the curriculum of each classroom and the school as a whole, wherever possible.

We believe that each child is a unique individual and that as such, individual children may acquire knowledge about the world in different ways, and in fact, may excel in different areas. This is a key component of Howard Gardner’s multiple intelligence theory:

“We are not all the same; we do not all have the same kinds of minds (that is, we are not all distinct points on a single bell curve); and education works most effectively if these differences are taken into account rather than denied or ignored.” (Gardner, Howard, p. 91 in Intelligence Reframed)

Therefore, the school curriculum should provide positive learning experiences that encompass various ways of learning such as visual, sensory, and auditory; as well as providing an environment that is rich in different learning materials. The curriculum should be diverse and offer learning experiences in math, science, social studies, writing, reading, music, art, social skills, and cultural tolerance. The NJ Core Curriculum Content Standard and the Early Childhood Education Program Expectations: Standards of Quality require this diversity as do guidelines for developmentally appropriate practice according to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

With this in mind, the role of the teacher and the school is to provide a safe, child-centered environment in which children may develop to their fullest potential socially, physically cognitively, emotionally, and linguistically. Children have the right to be respected as individuals with individual needs and the teacher-child relationship should reflect this right. Teachers should not attempt to pigeon-hole students into one particular style of learning. Similarly, children have the right to be respected by their peers and must be given the opportunity to contribute to the learning experiences of the classroom and the school. The school will recognize that children are valued individuals within their home communities and that they bring their unique experiences to the school community as a whole. The unique experiences of contributions of each child will be valued and looked upon as additional learning opportunities for the school as a whole.