

## **Early Childhood Profile**

### **Programs**

The Early Childhood Program follows the Alliance Public School Calendar. Two half-day sessions are offered, 4 days per week. A sliding fee scale is available for families using the free and reduced lunch form. Sessions are 3.5 hours in length with snack and lunch served to the students.

The Alliance Early Childhood Program offers a Toddler program for children ages 2-3 years that is funded through a grant from the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation called Sixpence. This grant allows a maximum of 8 students per class. Families must meet one of the following eligibility requirements:

- a) Family qualifies for free or reduced lunch
- b) Child was born premature or low birth weight
- c) Child uses English as a second language
- d) Parent is a teen parent or is working on completing a GED or High School Diploma.

A Preschool program is offered for children ages 3 years to Kindergarten entrance age, 5 by July 31. The Preschool program enrolls approximately 36 children in both sessions.

### **Demographics**

Approximately 60 children were enrolled in the Early Childhood program in the 2015-2016 school year. Sixty percent of the children qualified for free-reduced lunch. Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity included 66% white, 28% Hispanic, 5% American Indian and 1% two or more races. Twenty-two percent of the students enrolled qualified for Special Education Services. An additional 20 students were served in Special Education, Birth to Kindergarten-entrance age, who attended private preschools or received home-based services.

Of the 16 students enrolled in the Toddler program, 56% qualified for Free lunch and 19% qualified for Reduced lunch in the 2015-2016 school year. Twenty-five percent were born premature/low birth weight and 6% had English as a Second Language. Thirteen percent were children of teen parents.

### **Mission**

The Alliance Early Childhood Program wants to ensure that children from categorically and economically diverse groups have access to research based, effective, developmentally appropriate, preschool programs with a strong emphasis on family participation.

### **Philosophy**

It is our philosophy that parents are the first and foremost teacher of their children. Our program provides support to parents using developmentally appropriate

classroom activities that are designed to help children reach their fullest potential in all areas of development. Through a structured routine and with input from parents regarding their individual child, the program recognizes each child as an individual and strives to meet their individual needs.

### **Curriculum and Evaluation**

The Early Childhood Program participates in the Nebraska Department of Education, Results Matter. Results Matter measures child progress and program quality to accomplish these purposes: improve experiences, learning, development, and lives of young children birth to age five and their families; inform program practices; demonstrate program effectiveness; guide the development of local and state policies and procedures; and, provide data to demonstrate results.

The Early Childhood Program utilizes the *Creative Curriculum™* series. Each child's development is monitored using *Teaching Strategies GOLD™*, which is the assessment component of the *Creative Curriculum™* series.

According to the summary of the Federally mandated Year End Report of Preschool Special Education Outcomes, 100% of the 8 children who exited the program in the 2015-2016 school year had improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers in Outcome 1: Positive social-emotional skills. In Outcome 2: Acquiring and using knowledge and skills, 87.5% of the children improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers and 12.5% of the children improved functioning, but not sufficiently to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-aged peers. In Outcome 3: Taking appropriate action to meet needs, 62.5% of the children improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers and 37.5% of the children maintained functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers.

The Preschool program participated in an evaluation of the educational environment called the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scales-Revised (ECERS-R) in the 2015-2016 school year. The program's overall score was a 4.94 compared to the statewide average of 4.21. Subscale scores were Space and Furnishings-4.00, Personal Care-3.00, Language and Reasoning-6.75, Activities-4.50, Interaction-6.0, Program Structure-6.25. Statewide averages for the 2015-2016 school year were Space and Furnishings-3.81, Personal Care-2.46, Language/Reasoning-5.37, Activities-4.7, Interaction-4.92, Program Structure-4.21.

The Toddler program conducted two language assessments to monitor language outcomes of the students, the McArthur-Bates CDI, and the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-IV. Language results by Spring indicated 64% met the program goal compared to the Sixpence overall Spring score of 35% in the 2015-2016 school year.

The Devereux Early Childhood Assessment was also administered in the fall and the spring of the 2015-2016 school year. The three outcome areas were Attachment:

Fall-35, Spring-66; Initiative: Fall-38, Spring-60; Self-Regulation: Fall-41, Spring-61. The overall total Protective Score was Fall-37, Spring-64. The Sixpence Averages were Attachment: Fall-54, Spring-56; Initiative: Fall-55, Spring-56; Self-Regulation: Fall-51, Spring-52; Total Protective Score was Fall-54, Spring-56.

The Toddler Class participated in the CLASS™ assessment in the 2015-2016 school year. The CLASS™ measures teacher-child interactions and instructional strategies. The results for the Alliance Toddler program were Emotional and Behavioral Support-6.85; Instructional Support-6.08. This is compared to the Sixpence Mean Score of Emotional and Behavioral Support-6.4; Instructional Support-4.46.

### **Regulatory Requirements**

The Early Childhood Program is regulated by the Nebraska Department of Education, Rule 11, Regulations for the Approval of Prekindergarten Programs Established by School Boards or Educational Service Units and for the issuance of Early Childhood Education Grants; and Rule 51, Regulations and Standards for Special Education Programs. The Early Childhood Program is also licensed by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Child Care licensing Department.

