Dear Parents,

As the year comes to a close, I want to share some of the enhancements the Child & Family Center has made or will be making to serve families even better and an update on our annual parent survey.

You may have noticed over the past year that we’ve been updating toys, replacing materials, and working on the “curb appeal” of our facilities such as playground canopies at the Patterson and 18th Avenue centers, new vitriturf at Edgehill and 18th Avenue, and a piece of new playground equipment on the preschool playground at Edgehill. In addition, we enhanced our centers’ security by adding cameras that are connected to the Vanderbilt University Police Department, panic buttons and Alphones at entrances to communicate with visitors more safely and securely. We have added car lock-out kits to each site. After successfully piloting an electronic sign in and out system at our Edgehill center, we are in the process of adding this feature to our other centers.

Our annual survey is an important way we gather your feedback on things we are doing well and should keep doing, as well as ways we can improve. One example of your feedback in action is the improved lunch and snack menus we have implemented in the past year, which now include more fresh fruit, vegetarian and healthier options. We consulted with an on-campus dietician and spent several months testing various options to ensure they worked in terms of storage, ease of preparation, and limited “plate waste.”

I am pleased to tell you this year’s survey had our highest response rate ever: 74.5 percent. Thank you to all who participated. Based on your feedback, we have identified two areas to focus our improvement efforts in the coming year: continuing to develop the teacher/parent partnership and enhancing the content of our curriculum. We have already planned a few ways to address these opportunities including providing more comprehensive parent/teacher conferences, enhanced communication through newsletters and daily report forms, and lesson plans aligned with Tennessee Early Learning Standards. Please let us know what you think!

I sincerely appreciate your constructive suggestions, and was equally pleased to see the positive comments many of you had about our teachers and staff. We are thankful for the trust you place in us to care for your little ones, and take our responsibility to prepare them to succeed in school and life very seriously. It is extremely gratifying for all of us to see and hear examples of when we have successfully done that. In this spirit, I’d like to recognize the 2014 Commodore award winner Clair Gant. Letters from current and former parents in support of her nomination were amazing and we are grateful to have had her on our team up until she retired this year.

More exciting things are in store for next year. Thanks to the Chancellor’s continued support, we are opening a fifth center for infants through 2-year-olds next summer. We will continue to make improvements to the playgrounds and furnishings at our facilities and adding an additional floater at all sites to assist with planning times for the teaching teams. Look for more soon!

Thank you again for being part of the Vanderbilt Child & Family Center,

Diane Neighbors
Director, Vanderbilt Child & Family Center

2015 planned enhancements:

- More comprehensive parent teacher conferences for preschoolers.
- Lesson plans aligned to Tennessee Early Learning Standards.
- Enhanced parent communication including improved newsletters and daily report forms.