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Fostering a Lifelong Love of Literacy

As a former kindergarten teacher, you can imagine my delight when I recently entered one of our preschool classrooms at lunch time and was greeted by the children with the amazing announcement that their class has read 200 books! Their excitement for this accomplishment reflects their teachers' enthusiasm. I am an unapologetic book lover, and especially admire the artful care with which children's literature is written and illustrated. However, VCFC is not interested in teaching children to read. Literacy is a developmental process very much dependent on the individual child; to hasten this process in early childhood through mere skills development is inappropriate. Learning letters and sounding out words is useless devoid of their meaning.

VCFC is absolutely committed to *teaching children to love to read!* This point of view prioritizes the value for joy in learning and a love

for language, recognizing how literacy begins with sing-song snuggles, board books and the warm relationship of adult to infant lap-sits and evolves in preschool through Circle Time and Reader's Theater (pictured here.) Reading comprehension is not simply reiterating a linear summary of the narrative; we turn the tale inside and out and apply our personal experiences to understand the possibilities for all its aspects of meaning. The Newberry Award winning author, Kate DiCamillo said, "The story is not complete until it is in the hands of the reader." By exploring our big ideas and how we represent these in our speech, through Art processes, in scribbles, and in print, we learn to write because we have something we urgently need to communicate.

It is inspiring to watch the VCFC children grow in confidence on their learning journey!

Warmly,
Kathleen Seabolt

VCFC Advisory Task Force

The VCFC Advisory Task Force was formed to research and make recommendations for the scope of services that the Child & Family Center provides to Vanderbilt University families and to advance the vision for VCFC to become a center of excellence in early childhood care and education.

The ATF Facilities sub-group partnered with the Steering Committee to attend proposals by three architecture firm finalists and the unanimous recommendation to work with Lord Aeck Sargent (LAS) on a feasibility study for a new child care center has been supported by Provost Wenthe and Chancellor Zeppos to move forward. Additional discussion by this group included how to make visible to VCFC child care center parents the value for sensory-rich outdoor play and Nature education, and how this will inform playground transformation at all three child care centers in the next months. Rusty Keeler, a playscape architect consulting with the LAS team, is a visionary Nature Educator and his insight will inform these design choices. <https://earthplay.net/>

Research out of the ATF Scope of Services sub-group has inspired VCFC to lean-in to our partnership with VU for breastfeeding advocacy. The maternal and child benefits from nursing are well established. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breast feeding for the first six months of the child's life, yet many lactating women return to work when their child is eight weeks old. When VCFC undertook the task of inventorying every VU lactation room it led to recognition of the need to make this resource more visible to VU mothers.

Alice Shi, our FSC, has created a VU lactation room interactive map which VCFC hopes to launch with a new VCFC webpage design in the next few months. As a gift to the VU community of breastfeeding mothers, VCFC has put a Love Basket in each dedicated lactation room on campus to support their nursing and work-life balance. VCFC hopes to inspire every department that sponsors a dedicated lactation room in their building to promote this value by ensuring this resource is accessible, clean, and

well-maintained. New moms may want to access the following class:
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/beginning-breastfeeding-tickets-52629388919>



The ATF Staff Compensation and Professional Development sub-group was informed by a rather thrilling meeting about training and mentorship that took place in December. It included many VCFC preschool Lead Teachers from all three child care centers in conversation with esteemed faculty from Peabody College, with a commitment to continue the discussion in 2019 to further identify mutually beneficial strategies and supports. Dean Camilla Benbow, who serves on this sub-group, has suggested that VCFC consider writing our own internal training modules which she christened *VCFC University*. Amber Williams, site director for the 19th Avenue child care center, has begun to outline this project to align with DHS regulatory deliverables.

*VCFC Town Hall Meeting
Tuesday, February 12, 2019
12:00 PM – 1:00PM
Student Life Center Meeting Room 3
Topic: Kindergarten Readiness*

Campus Partnership



VCFC is so excited to begin our partnership with the Vanderbilt Next Steps program. It has been a privilege to engage with director Tammy Day and to work with Lindsay Krech, assistant director of career development, to launch our internship. Next Steps at Vanderbilt is a 4-year inclusive higher education program committed to providing students with intellectual disabilities inclusive, transformational postsecondary education in academics, social and career development. Next Steps received an expansion grant in 2015 and moved to be administratively housed in the Peabody College Department of Special Education. In October of 2017, Next Steps at Vanderbilt officially became a federally approved four-year Comprehensive Transition Program (CTP).



VCFC welcomes our first Next Steps student as an intern in January 2019. Ms Teresa Brogan has an interest to explore career pathways in early childhood education. She was an outstanding interview and we were impressed with her preparation and charmed by her sparkling personality. VCFC is very excited to engage her in our preschool program at Edgehill child care center.

Vanderbilt Child & Family Center's K-Camp!

Hey ho, let's go! The first K-Camp Parent Meeting is Wednesday, February 20th from 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM in the Student Life Center Meeting Room 3. VCFC parents will have an opportunity to meet with alumni parents and K-Camp Coordinator Pam McColl to learn about this unique program for rising kindergarteners who will be matriculating in August 2019. Nature is the central organizing concept of the VCFC K-Camp Program, the integrating thread that intentionally ties together the camp's philosophy, methodologies, design and identity. Children are citizens of the world with the right to play!



Child Care Learning Environment Winter 2018-19

Furniture

Families enrolled in the VCFC child care centers will continue to see new furniture coming in to the classrooms over the next few months. VCFC is excited to refresh classrooms with high quality pieces designed for early learning. Children are excited by the giant cardboard boxes! VCFC is hosting an Upcycled Art Contest to see which classrooms most creatively utilize these packing items in their learning environment. Categories include: Most Creative Use, Most Sustainable, and Child-Initiated Innovations. Judges from the SEMO office will determine three winners from each site!

Welcome to Jamie Broadwater, our new
Assistant Site Director at 18th Avenue!

Outdoor Play

Through play, children create a strong foundation for life skills. Children construct their understanding of the world by drawing on their direct physical and social experiences. VCFC pedagogy recognizes that play is the most efficacious method that children (people) use to construct knowledge and the learning environment must reflect this high value for children's active exploration and self-directed inquiry. It is important for adults, especially educators, to reflect on the dignity of risk. There is an opportunity for experience of failure to provide children with the habit of persistence. An ideal learning environment is filled with risk and challenge, and rewards the daily practice of trying. This is resilience!

VCFC will be modifying playgrounds to ensure that all of our centers offer children an abundance of "loose parts" defined as materials which support children's open-ended discoveries (e.g., sand, water, dirt, other natural elements, blocks.) This empowers children to repeat an interesting process many times.

Loose parts in active play do not confine learning to one particular discipline, but reflect multiple domains to educate the Whole Child.



The DHS licensing requirements have updated adult to child ratio in their regulation, reclassifying as a "field trip" any class experience that takes the children outside of the boundaries of the child care center (excepting the playground.) This includes our much beloved walks to Magnolia Lawn and Scarritt Bennett. To continue our jaunts, VCFC will be relying on our parent and grandparent volunteers to increase our chaperones in compliance with DHS.



The fun of outdoor play is specifically related to a sense of independence! This includes the freedom to be messy. Parents are encouraged to dress children for success in hearty playclothes that can withstand sensory-rich, active outdoor play.

Sensory-Rich Inquiry

Creating a learning environment that encourages children to explore the world with all five senses requires teacher mindfulness.



VCFC teachers reflect on where there is opportunity to more fully investigate the scents, sounds, tastes, colors, shapes and textures in our lives within our daily routine, both in the classrooms and on the playground, by taking time to observe children's interests and expand on this by structuring activities that further engage their innate curiosity.



Teachers support children's language acquisition and development during sensory learning by modeling pro-social conversation during cooperative play, and expanding

vocabulary by intentionally describing the items being used and the actions taking place.



Experiential learning within social relationships is how children construct their knowledge of the world.

Books

Curating the child care center libraries has been a labor of love. The privilege of selecting books for our learning community comes with the responsibility to ensure high quality literature is chosen to reflect the VU guiding principles of diversity and inclusion. This year there has been an intentional focus on choosing books that reflect themes of identity and community.

Some of our new books:

- Mae Among the Stars by Roda Ahmed
- Sometimes You Fly by K.A. Applegate
- Moon Bear's Shadow by Frank Asch
- From the Stars in the Sky to the Fish in the Sea by Kai Cheng Thom
- Love by Matt de la Pena
- Islandborn by Junot Diaz
- All the World by Liz Garton Scanlon
- Good People Everywhere by Lynea Gillen
- Red (A Crayon's Story) by Michael Hall
- All the Colors of the Earth by Sheila Hamanaka
- How to Catch a Star by Oliver Jeffers
- Dance by Bill T. Jones
- Black Bird, Yellow Bird by Steve Light
- Collected works of Gerald McDermott
- Counting on Community by Innosanto Nagara
- Bein' With You This Way by W. Nikola-Lisa
- They Say Blue by Jillian Tamaki
- Introducing Teddy by Jessica Walton

Developmental Documentation

VCFC will be adding the ASQ developmental checklist as part of the Parent-Teacher Conference process in Spring 2019 to further engage parents as partners to understand and support their child's development. While a checklist is not a Whole Child, the data is helpful to create teacher/parent understanding as we identify and document the individual child's strengths and opportunities together.

Lead teachers will begin training on this new tool in February 2019. Jamie Broadwater will support this professional development, having implemented this tool for other organizations. VCFC welcomes Josie Mark from Peabody who will be supporting this initiative as part of her ECE student study project.

Service Awards

The following staff are recognized, with gratitude, for their length of service to Vanderbilt University:

18th Avenue:

Carla Avery - 10 years

Deborah (Debbie) Birdsong - 10 years

Sheteka Phillips - 5 years

LaDonna Shaw - 5 years

Christina Weathers - 5 years

Jarrita (Rita) White - 5 years

19th Avenue:

Marybeth Briney - 5 years

Sandra Williams - 10 years

Edgehill:

Anna Diehl - 10 years

Tonya Byrns - 25 years

Tanga Russell - 15 years

The Division of Administration Awards Ceremony was held on December 19, 2018 in the Student Life Center, Board of Trust room. VCFC is pleased to honor Elaine Gallagher, Administrative Assistant at 18th Avenue Child Care Center, for her exemplary work.



Elaine's attention to detail, her flexibility to help where she is needed, and her initiative to problem-solve are just a few of the qualities that define her performance as excellent. Beneath her no-nonsense attitude there is the deep caring she brings to her work on behalf of children and families, and her actions consistently go above and beyond, for example the many hours she volunteered coordinating and working the Saturday playdate last April 2018. Thank you, Ms Elaine, we appreciate you!

Community

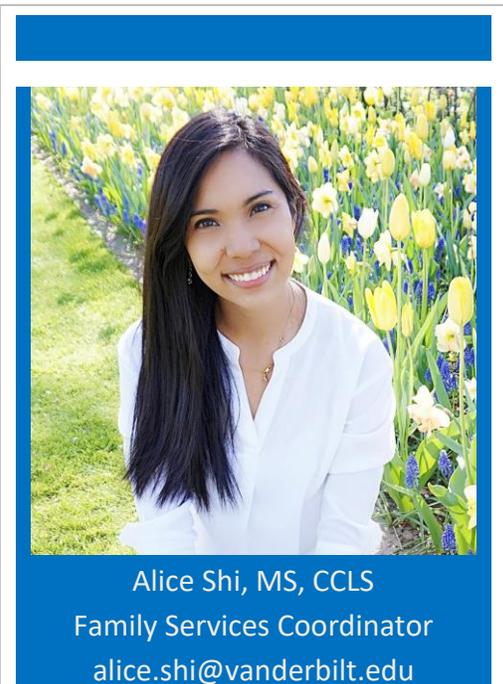
Demonstrating the joy of giving, the children, parents and staff of the three child care centers collected 788 pounds of food and infant hygiene items to donate to the Second Harvest Food Bank. <https://secondharvestmidtn.org/learn/>

Thank you to the PlantOps moving crew for helping us to deliver this gift! VCFC is so grateful to all the participants for sharing their caring spirit by taking meaningful action.

**A Note from Alice Shi,
Family Services Coordinator**

Time has flown by and I can't believe the end of the calendar year is approaching! I want to take the opportunity to thank you for such a warm welcome these past two months. I've been able to connect with so many individuals within Vanderbilt and the Nashville community, and I have seen committed and compassionate groups of service providers and nonprofits ready and willing to support individuals and families with a variety of needs.

As faculty, staff, and students of Vanderbilt University we are all faced with the challenges of finding ways to manage our personal and work lives. Maintaining boundaries when it comes to making decisions about where, when, and how to tackle our To Do list may often become blurred. My role as the Family Services Coordinator is to help provide the Vanderbilt community with events and resources to help manage this delicate balance of work and life. I am also available to answer questions, facilitate connections to other organizations, and be an advocate for individuals in need. As we all prepare for 2019, I encourage you to check out the upcoming events VCFC will be hosting as a resource for you!



Caregiver Support Group

This support group meets monthly on the 2nd Wednesday of every month from 12pm - 1pm in Light Hall Room 431. This is a safe place to discuss the stresses, challenges, and rewards of providing care for a loved one. Our next group meeting will be on January 9th with guest speaker Karen Mevis from Tennessee Disability Pathfinder.

Boomers, Elders, and More Speaker Series

VCFC will be hosting guest speakers to give talks on a blend of topics related to elder care and caregiving. This event will be held monthly on the 3rd Wednesday of every month from 12pm -1pm in Light Hall Room 431. Mark your calendar now for the upcoming Speaker Series on February 20th, 2019. The guest speaker will be Jim Kendall from Work/Life Connections-EAP speaking on "The Joys and Emotional Toll of Caregiving, and the Importance of Self Care."

Summer Camp Fair

The annual Summer Camp Fair will be on February 28th, 2019 from 11:30 - 2:00pm in the lobby of Light Hall North Lobby. Save the date for the perfect opportunity to meet with representatives from a variety of summer camps and start planning for your child's summer break!

Boomers, Elders and More E-Newsletter

E-mail me at alice.shi@vanderbilt.edu to join our mailing list to receive updates on upcoming events and resources related to elder care.

Grace Note

I commit to caring for myself in these three ways:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

VCFC Home to School Connection:

Young children like to scribble, make marks that look like letters, and play with writing. Chances are, your child will experiment with writing long before he or she learns to read. Here are some ways to help your child learn about and practice writing.

- **Display children's writing in a special place.** Hang your child's work on the refrigerator, a bedroom door, or a cork board; tape it to a bathroom mirror or tile. Or, scan the writing and send it to the grandparents. You will be telling your child that her writing is important and worthy of being shared. She will want to write more and more.
- **Write in front of your child and talk about it.** Whether writing a shopping list, thank you note, or e-mail; completing an application; or ordering from a catalog, explain what you are doing. Ask him what to add to the list or what to say in the thank you note or e-mail.
- **Invite your child to dictate stories.** While playing together, encourage your child to tell you a story about where the cars and trucks are going or who lives in the Lego house. Write down exactly what she says. Read it aloud afterward. Suggest that she draw some pictures to illustrate her story.
- **Create greeting cards for special occasions.** Provide paper and crayons or markers so children can make cards and then "sign" their names when finished. Show them old cards with phrases like "Happy Birthday," "I Love You," and "Season's Greetings" to copy on their cards.
- **Create an "office" for your child.** Gather different kinds of paper, envelopes, pencils and pens, crayons, stickers, and labels. Place them on a shelf near a desk or table or in a basket your child can carry to a comfortable place for writing. Add interesting and exciting items like address and date books, calendars, or an old computer keyboard.
- **Involve your child in writing while running errands.** Offer a pad and pencil and suggest your child make a "reverse shopping list"—a list of things you've already bought. At the bank, give her a blank deposit slip while you fill out yours. These tasks let children write and keep them busy as they learn new skills!
- **Put writing materials in several places around the house.** Provide pencils, crayons, or markers in coffee cans or baskets, along with a basket of small unlined pads, notebooks, or clipboards with paper. Place these collections in the bathroom, kitchen, or living room. Be sure to remind your child to write on the paper and nowhere else.
- **Take it outside!** Let your child write or draw with chalk or old paintbrushes and water on sidewalks and fences. Fill a backpack with writing tools and paper to take in the car or while doing errands.
- **Encourage all writing efforts.** Make writing an everyday part of your children's lives at home! Remember, those first scribbles are important—they are the first step in learning to write.

Source: Adapted from the Message in a Backpack for J. Strasser & L.M. Koeppl, 2008, "Supporting Writing in Preschool," *Teaching Young Children* 1 (3): 10–12.
<https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/support-writing-home>