FAQ

What is the Owls Program?
- VCFC’s developmental kindergarten offers an emergent curriculum informed by social constructivist thinking theories
  - What does that mean?
    - Children learn best through play, constructing knowledge and making meaning when exploring their big ideas hands-on and hands-in
    - Peer engagement adds richness to this process
- A learning framework with a Nature Education focus - children’s learning will be informed by their exploration of the Vanderbilt campus
- Anticipated teacher to child ratio is 1:14 and will not exceed 1:20

Is my child eligible for the Owls Program?
- Children must turn five years of age by August 15, 2020
- VCFC will prioritize for enrollment in the Owls Program:
  1. Children currently enrolled in VCFC’s The Acorn School
  2. Children of Vanderbilt University employees, post-doctoral scholars, and students
  3. Children in Nashville and surrounding communities

What happens after my child completes the Owls Program?
- Children will be eligible for 1st Grade in August 2021
- Parents may opt to enroll their child in an additional year of kindergarten

What are the Owls Program Hours?
- August 10, 2020 – May 28, 2021
- Monday – Friday, 8:30 AM – 3:30 PM
- Closed on days as same schedule as VCFC’s The Acorn School calendar

What are the Owls’ Teacher’s Qualifications?
- A joy-filled life-long learner ready to engage with children
- A mover and shaker who loves to explore outdoors
- An Early Childhood Educator with a TN K-8 teaching credential
- A teacher adept at fostering language development and critical thinking skills in young children by empowering them to observe, speak, listen, and reflect
Who else will support the Owls Program?
- VCFC will administrate the Owls Program
  - VCFC staff provide lunch breaks for the Owls teacher
- The Owls program anticipates a collaboration with some faculty of the Peabody College of Education and Human Development:
  - Children will regularly engage with Peabody faculty and students* in activities that benefit research and children’s learning and development
  *only individuals that meet the requirements of VU’s Protection of Minors (POM)

Where is the Owls Program?
- Children will gather at one of VCFC’s The Acorn School sites by 8:30 AM to review their day of adventure and return for lunch and by 3:30 PM.
- Children will explore the campus of Vanderbilt University. Anticipated stops include:
  - The Peabody Library Children’s Collection
  - The Community Garden
  - The Wondr’y
  - The Commons
- Parents will be provided with a weekly calendar to support their understanding

What does the Owls Program cost?
- $900/month August 2020 – May 2021
- A non-refundable application fee of $100 is required by May 1, 2020
  - This fee will be returned if less than ten families engage with this pilot* by May 5, 2020
- A non-refundable instructional supplies fee of $1200 is required by June 1, 2020
- Lunch, a child’s t-shirt and three field trips will be included in the tuition
  - Campus Dining will cater lunch
    - There is no discount if parents provide the child with lunch from home
- Early drop-off and late-pick-up fees are in place for children that arrive before 8:25 AM and are picked up after 3:35 PM – fees are $10 for every five minutes or portion thereof, and due and payable within 24 hours.

Is there Before and After Care for children attending the Owls Program?
- Before and after care will be offered by The Acorn School:
  - 7:00AM - 8:30 AM $150/month
  - 3:30 PM-6:00 PM $250/month
- Before and after care hours will include a snack catered by Campus Dining
- Children will be placed at the same child care center as their younger sibling
How will Parents partner with the Owls Program?
❖ Parents will be asked to volunteer a minimum of four hours within August - April
  ➢ This can be completed by chaperoning one field trip OR as a classroom helper
❖ There are three required parent/teacher conferences per year
  ➢ September/February/May
    ▪ The last scheduled conference is a child-led Presentation of Learning
❖ The Owls Program is a “homework-free” school year, with the following exceptions:
  ➢ Children and parents may be asked to photo-document some of their home-life activities and the child will present these photographs at Owls Public Speaking
  ➢ Children and parents will be asked to obtain a library card for the child
  ➢ Parents are encouraged to read to their child two hours or more each week
    ▪ American Library Association recommends 20-30 minutes daily
    ▪ BUT create these opportunities in a way that supports balance with other competing activities because the goal is a happy family
  ➢ Children and parents are required to keep a home reading log and bring this list of titles to the trimester conferences
  ➢ Children and parents are required to keep a home kindness journal and bring the list of good deeds to the trimester conferences
    ▪ this can be helping someone without being asked
    ▪ this can be participating in some kind of community helpers event like tree planting or park clean-up

How does our family sign up for the Owls Program?
❖ Parents will complete the VCFC Owls Program Whoo Are You form and return it with their $100 application fee by May 1, 2020:
  ➢ Mail to: Vanderbilt Child and Family Center
        1105 18th Avenue South
        Nashville TN 37212

*Vanderbilt Child and Family Center recognizes that families interested in the Owls Program are taking a leap of faith and we are grateful. Families are encouraged to continue to enroll in their public school options as this presents no conflict.

Due to the investment of time and resources required by the development of innovative programming, VCFC reserves the right to cancel this program offering if an insufficient number of families (less than ten) choose to participate. If the Owls program is cancelled, VCFC will notify families by May 5, 2020 under which circumstances the required non-refundable fees will be returned to parents.