Parent Participation

We believe that parents, educators, and children are partners in the educational process and that the participation of parents is essential to the life of our school. There are many possibilities for parent involvement within our school that have been developed for all levels of commitment and interest.

Parent Educator Committee
The mission of the Parent Educator Committee is to coordinate and stimulate the participation of parents in the educational and community goals of the Cyert Center. The Committee is comprised of one parent and one educator representative from each classroom, the Cyert Center Directors, and the Carnegie Mellon Assistant Vice Principal of Human Resources. Meetings are held monthly and all parents and educators are welcome to attend.

Participation in the Daily Life of our School
Parents are welcome to participate in a wide variety of experiences that take place within the daily life of our school. Participation can range from a spontaneous moment of storytelling during the morning transition to more in-depth involvement in a classroom project. Another opportunity for parents to work with their children is our Parent-Child Studio Explorations and our birthday celebrations.

Program for Collaborative Learning

Since 1997, The Program for Collaborative Learning has offered a series of professional development opportunities to support the early childhood educator's understanding of the philosophy and principles of the Reggio Emilia approach. In addition, the mission of the PCL is to enhance quality and promote lifelong learning for early childhood educators, administrators, art educators, architects, designers, and those who are interested in the early childhood profession.

Another important focus of the Center is to provide opportunities for professional exchanges, training, and collaborations with other early childhood educators and administrators in dialogue with the Reggio Emilia Approach through the Program for Collaborative Learning. The PCL offers a series of evening seminars, on-site Visitation Days, and tours and observations to small groups for a minimal fee. These events provide a vehicle through which the work of the children, educators, and families can be shared with the early childhood community.
History and Philosophy

Originally known as the Carnegie Mellon Child Care Center, the Cyert Center was founded in 1971 by working parents, for working parents. Since then, we have grown from a program for 12 children, located in the basement of our current building, to our current enrollment of 140 children between 3 months of age and kindergarten. Our name honors Margaret Shadick Cyert, a longtime advocate for early childhood education, and her late husband, Dr. Richard M. Cyert, President Emeritus of CMU. Over its history, the Cyert Center has always been a community committed to the highest quality care and education for infants, toddlers, and young children. We believe that all children are thinkers, researchers, and problem solvers. Our program revolves around valuing the development of relationships, open dialogue, and collaboration, which we believe supports the development of strong relationships between all members of this community—children, parents, and educators and the communities beyond these walls.

The Center is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and is licensed by the Department of Public Welfare.

Since 1993, the Cyert Center’s educators have been strongly influenced by the philosophy and characteristics of the schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy, and continue to be involved in a serious study of the Reggio Emilia approach to early education. Notable among the many features of this approach include the following:

- A deep respect for the potential of all young children.
- Communication and collaboration among the three partners of education: children, parents, and educators.
- Amiable, rich environments, which are engaging, welcoming, organized, beautiful, and supportive of the work of children and educators.
- Voices of children, parents, and educators are made visible through various forms of documentation (reflections, panels, binders, etc.).
- Relationships are considered essential for the well being and learning of children and adults.
- Children and educators construct knowledge together through exploration and problem solving.
- Emergent curriculum and small group work is based on the negotiation between the children and educator’s interests.
- Many expressive “languages,” such as clay, paint, wire, drama, play, music, and graphic arts materials are used to represent ideas, questions, and learning.

We believe our current practice, which is rooted in the inspiration from the philosophy of the Infant Toddler Centers and Preschools of Reggio Emilia, is the natural growth and evolution in the Center’s long-time commitment to providing the highest quality care and early education and is built from our own history and University context.

Our Organization

The Cyert Center for Early Education is a full-day, year round early care and education program at Carnegie Mellon University serving the children of University faculty, staff, and students. Children range in age from three months to kindergarten. The program is part of the Department of Human Resources. The Center is open 7:15 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Our Professional Team:
1 Administrative Director
1 Program Director
1 Business Manager
1 Program Assistant
7 Educational Coordinators
23 Early Childhood Educators (all with bachelor’s degrees, some with master’s degrees, special certifications in reading, special education, and art education)
2 Studio Educators
3 Kitchen Staff
10 Student Employees

Teachers arrive and depart at different times during the day, which allows for facilitation of a familiar teacher remaining with the children throughout the entire day.

NAEYC Accreditation

The National Association for the Education of Young Children established its accreditation system to raise the quality of early childhood education and help families identify high-quality child care centers, preschools, kindergartens, and other early childhood programs. NAEYC accredited programs are committed to providing high-quality educational services to young children and their families. To earn accreditation, programs comply with national standards of quality that go well beyond state health and safety licensing requirements. The Cyert Center received re-accreditation in November 2010 and was one of the first 100 programs in the United States to receive national accreditation status in 1987.