

# Day care center stresses parental involvement

By Erin Hicks  
Daily Nebraskan Staff Writer

Brightly colored finger-painted masterpieces, laughing children, and the smiling faces of dedicated instructors all contribute to the warm atmosphere at the University Child Care Project.

The UCCP first opened 15 years ago as an effort of the Associated Students of the University of Nebraska, Campus Ministries, the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid and a group of students who saw a need for a day care center for low-income students, the UCCP director said.

Valdeen Nelson said the center started as a parent cooperative, where parents served as the staff members. Originally, there was no charge for the day care services. However, as enrollments increased and costs rose, professional staff members were added and weekly fees were collected.

The center currently cares for 71 children and charges a weekly fee of \$50 for 3 to 5 year olds; \$60 for infants.

UCCP operates two year-round centers, one for children age 3 to 5, at 333 N. 14th St., and another for infants 6 weeks to 3 years of age, at 640 N. 16th St.

The UCCP is administered through UNL's Office of Student Affairs, along with the United Ministries in Higher Education. The center operates primarily as a student service,

but also for UNL faculty and staff, and for families in the community as openings occur.

The UCCP centers its philosophy on child development and self-confidence, much lower child-to-staff ratios, a psychological consultant and a natural foods program sponsored by the USDA.

The UCCP also emphasizes parental involvement in the center. Parents are the sole members of the Governing Board of Representatives, and their input and suggestions have direct impact on planning. Parents also are encouraged to visit frequently, eat lunch with their kids and attend the monthly meetings.

Child Care Supervisor Joyce Nelson, Infant Care Center Supervisor Melinda Brown and the head teachers all have bachelor's degrees in early childhood education, elementary education or human development.

Along with the regular part-time and full-time staff, approximately 30 work-study students receive practical work experience at the center.

"The main goals of the UCCP are to provide high quality day care service for the children, to provide this as a support for parents so they can go on with their jobs with a free mind, and to provide a work site and a training site for students in the child care field," Nelson said.

Bridget Niofussi, a UNL graduate student, said, "I like the



Kathleen Green/Daily Nebraskan

Children and two assistants from the University Child Care Program play Ring-around-the-Rosie Tuesday before taking a lunch break.

center because it focuses on children as individuals, and because of the emphasis on parental input. We have the opportunity to make changes and I feel that's important to good child care."

Nelson said the recent controversies over sexual abuse in day care centers have not affected the UCCP. She said the center has been holding briefing sessions, and have held demonstrations by Child Abuse Information Services for the last two years. She said she

thinks these sessions are important as information sessions and also because they inform teachers and parents of signals of sexual abuses that children may exhibit.

Child Care Supervisor Joyce Wagner said she thinks that although the recent controversy over sexual abuses in day care centers has shed a negative light on the system, it has served to make parents more aware and concerned with the care their children receive.

The UCCP provides a quality

child care setting which is an invaluable service to this university, Nelson said.

"Parents can feel confident that their children will spend a day that will stimulate their minds, and is filled with lots of love and attention," she said.

Currently, the Commonplace building which houses the UCCP may be bought by the university at the end of this academic year. If the building is sold, the UCCP must find another affordable, convenient location.

By Ann Rasmussen  
Daily Nebraskan Staff Writer

A new requirement in the Teachers College will allow the students to get a jump on the inevitable, said Donna Aksamit, assistant dean of the Teachers College.

"We will be requiring a series of pre-professional skills tests as a condition for admission into the teacher education program," Aksamit said.

Adopting the requirement was a faculty decision made after passage of LB994, which authorized Nebraska students to take the tests before admission into a teacher education program.

Although regulations on the bill are not complete, Aksamit said, the tests eventually will be mandatory and UNL students have the advantage of taking them sooner.

Beginning this year, first semes-

ter sophomores in Teachers College who have accumulated 50 to 55 credit hours, should register to take the tests by Friday. Testing will be Nov. 3. However, there will be another session later in the spring.

Students can register at the Career Planning and Placement Center in Nebraska Union 230. There is a \$35 fee.

Aksamit said junior and senior students already in the teacher

education program eventually will be tested by the state before they are certified.

The test format will be similar to the ACT and SAT tests given to high school students. The test will assess the students' overall abilities in reading, writing and math. Students can review their graded test to see if there are areas they can improve.

Aksamit said she thinks UNL students will perform well on the tests.

## Skills tests now required for admission

## Book prices . . .

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Gilbert said the length of the book, typeface and the quality of publisher determine the price of a book. He said the final cost of the book has a set limit on what can be charged.

Publishers want to make a profit, he said, but at the same

time they consider students' welfare.

Gilbert said there is not a good amount of investment capital in publishing. The publisher usually receives 5 percent of the total sale and any income beyond that is usually from the sale of subsidiary rights — literal pieces rowed for other use.

"With the profit the publisher receives, the company must also pay for its failures," Gilbert said.

If every one of three textbooks was a failure, Gilbert said, "the publisher would go broke."

"If every one of five textbooks were a failure, the company could end up doing very well," he said.

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