

Our Program

The Hamilton-White Child Development enrolls children from six weeks to five years old and operates on a 12-month basis in accordance with the university calendar. The Center is administered by a Director, who is supported by thirteen staff members.

The center employs five teachers. The support staff includes six assistant teachers and two part time cooks who prepare breakfast, lunch and snacks. A teacher and an assistant are assigned to each group of children. The infant/toddler class has one additional assistant. All staff members participate in workshops and in-service training sessions throughout the school year to complete 25 hours of staff development required by law per year. We consider all of our workers as teachers and encourage each of them to design and follow an individual plan of study to gain knowledge and improve teaching practices. Lab students in Child Development, work study students, and graduate assistants also may be assigned to work with groups of children for short periods of time in the day. Students are *never* left alone to supervise children.

Children are placed according to chronological age and developmental level. Infants, toddlers, and two-year-olds are housed on the first floor of the Ewing Building. Preschoolers ages three to five are housed in Bailey Hall, using a three-room suite for activities. The room numbers for each class are listed below.

Infants	Ewing 132	Three-year-olds	Bailey 174
Toddlers	Ewing 132A	Four-year-olds	Bailey 175
Two-year-olds	Ewing 136		

License

The DSU Child Development Center is licensed by the Mississippi State Department of Health. Periodic inspections are made by the Health Department to insure compliance with all health regulations and standards. An operator's license is posted in the hallway at Bailey in compliance with guidelines from the licensing agency. A second license is posted in Ewing in the hallway next to the office of the Director.

Curriculum

The curriculum, a planned set of experiences, is designed to be developmentally appropriate and to consider the interests and needs of children as a group and individually. The center recognizes and supports the importance of play as the ideal learning environment for young children. Play is fundamental to a child's development and learning. The learning environment in all rooms is designed to give children opportunities to explore, investigate, and manipulate equipment and materials. Children also are given many opportunities to make choices, learn to solve problems, practice new skills, and work cooperatively with their peers.

A theme approach is used as an avenue for implementing the curriculum. Teachers use a child-centered approach as outlined in the Creative Curriculum.

Five Components of the Creative Curriculum:

- How Children Develop and Learn
what children are like in terms of their social/emotional, physical, cognitive and language development, and the characteristics and experiences that make each child unique
- The Learning Environment

the structure of the classroom that makes it possible for teachers to teach and children to learn

- What Children Learn
how children acquire and learn skills through daily experiences
- The Teacher's Role
how careful observations of children lead to a variety of instructional strategies to guide children's learning
- The Family's Role
the benefits of developing a partnership with every family and working together to support children's development and learning

Along with the Creative Curriculum, we use Mississippi Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum in the three and four-year-old classrooms.

The goals for this curriculum are:

- to help the children develop a positive self-concept
- to help the child achieve intellectual growth
- to help the child enlarge his/her world of people, experiences, ideas and things
- to help the child increase competence and skills in reading, writing, listening, thinking, and speaking
- to help the child increase the skills involved in physical coordination
- to help the child increase competence in dealing with emotional feelings and social situations
- to help the child increase competence in self-direction and independence.
- to help the child develop cooperative, trusting relationships
- to help the child develop his/her natural curiosity and his/her creative potential

Learning Centers

Each classroom (except the infant classroom) is set up with learning centers. Learning centers provide the students with opportunities for participation and social development as they explore each center together. Children are encouraged to visit each area daily.

Art Center

- Provides opportunities for students to work with different media such as, paper, paint, markers, crayon, glue, scissors, pencils, etc. The process of working with the materials is what's important, not the finished product. Teacher-directed and student-directed art activities are done daily. Art supplies are readily available each day for children to explore.

Manipulative Center

- Includes games, table toys, puzzles, etc. This helps to improve fine motor skills. Controlled movements of the fingers and hands help children to strengthen the muscles necessary for writing.

Homeliving/Dramatic Center

- Allows children to role-play and explore through imagination. Helps children build

vocabulary, as well as social skills needed for life.

Literacy Center

- This early exposure to books will help with pre-reading, vocabulary, and language skills.

Block Center

- This area helps children develop and control small muscles and fingers and hands. Children can learn to think, plan and solve problems.

Science Center

- Provides opportunities for cause and effect learning. Students can make observations, predictions, and try out possible causes. This area includes class pets, plants, sand/water and science manipulatives.

Computer Center

- Provides opportunities to become independent, as well as help to improve a variety of developmental skills.

With the Director's guidance, teachers use their knowledge of developmental levels to plan developmentally appropriate experiences to meet the interests and needs of the children. Not all children will be on the same developmental level. We accept each child where he is and build from that point. Lesson plans will be posted in each classroom.