The Adele and Dale Young Child Development Laboratory

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The Adele and Dale Young Child Development Laboratory is part of the Department of Human Development and Family Studies, within the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services. Consistent with Utah State University’s Land-Grant mission, the Laboratory has a three-pronged focus. These three components include engagement (providing service for children and families), discovery (research) and learning (training pre-professionals in the field of early childhood).

The Laboratory has a rich history, beginning in the early 1930’s with the creation of Utah State Agricultural College’s Department of Child Development and Parental Education. At that time, the Laboratory was housed in a war-surplus Quonset hut, located where the current Taggart Student Center now stands. Over the many years, the Laboratory has moved six times, and is now a permanent fixture on the first floor of the Family Life Building. It is an active, vibrant hub of activity with a professional team of five master teachers and two co-directors. A typical semester finds 104 children from birth through 5 attending each day, and over 50 college students participating on a weekly basis.

Our programs are theoretically and practically devoted to the development of social competency skills in the children we serve. Regardless of the child’s age, social competency goals are inherent in every program. While the methods for attaining the goals may vary with age, these underlying goals provide a thread of continuity for the Laboratory as a whole.

Basic to the social competency framework is the notion that children learn most effectively through active exploration and participation in their environment. Moreover, each child has specific interests, curiosities, talents, and a self-esteem that must be nurtured and enhanced. Our programs offer children a hands-on, discovery-based learning environment, and teachers focus their planning on the interests and needs of individual children in their classrooms.

Each program is built upon a foundation of providing children with a wide variety of developmentally appropriate divergent activities, a stimulating multi-sensory environment, opportunities for discovery and making choices, interpersonal interactions, and independence-promoting experiences. It is recognized that there is no single standard towards which all children work. Instead, children progress according to their individual abilities in developing, for example, independence, cognitive skills, creative thinking, problem-solving strategies, curiosity, self-help skills, and interpersonal skills.

For families wanting to put a child on the enrollment waiting list, please go to https://hdfs.usu.edu/services/cdl/enroll_apply.

For student information, please go to https://hdfs.usu.edu/services/cdl/.