Utah State University (USU) is Utah’s land-grant university. With this designation, USU has long focused on promoting higher education throughout the state. In 1967, USU’s first regional campus was created in Roosevelt, Utah to serve students in Uintah Basin (UB). In the beginning, Logan faculty would fly to Roosevelt to teach nightly classes and then fly back to lecture on campus as well. As the regional campus grew, full-time faculty were hired to teach and build a more permanent USU UB campus. This original growth in the Uintah Basin spread to Vernal, Utah and now has extended throughout the state.

There are currently three regional campuses and twenty-six centers where students can access USU’s higher education opportunities; in addition to the university’s three residential campuses and online classes. The number of students attending USU from off-campus sites has continued to grow with this outreach. For example, since 2008, over 16,000 students have attended USU’s regional campuses and centers while pursuing bachelorette, master and doctorate degrees.

The Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS) degree has been one of the highest conferred degrees in the Uintah Basin. The community, administration and especially students have long recognized the value of this degree as it strengthens homes, families, and communities.

In the early efforts to support HDFS students earn their diplomas, Logan campus early childhood faculty worked diligently to provide practicum opportunities necessary for degree completion. In the earliest years, much of this entailed loading up a trailer with preschool supplies, driving four hours to Roosevelt, and then setting up “temporary” early childhood classrooms for students to teach in for two to three-week periods. But, as enrollment and the needs of the students grew, so did the local desire to establish a more permanent early childhood presence in the Basin.

In 2001, Dr. Susan Talley, a USU UB HDFS faculty member, obtained funds to secure the beginnings of this goal. In 2002, the first on-site early childhood laboratory for the USU UB campus was started. It was a windowless, waterless, empty classroom with a budget of $3000.00 to make it happen.

The initial lab situation worked but was not adequate for the desired high-quality early childhood programs that USU is recognized for. In efforts to improve the lab, a proposal was designed that outlined the desired needs of a future lab school. With the support of the USU UB administration, this remodel was completed in 2010. The remodel not only revamped the four-year-old classroom, but it also added an additional three-year-old classroom, observation room, storage area, and outdoor play space, thus creating another exemplary USU early childhood laboratory classroom.

In 2013, the USU UB Child Development Laboratory received national accreditation through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and has actively maintained it.

The growth of the regional campus system and the emphasis on providing high-quality instruction throughout the state has positively impacted more students than one would have ever imagined 50 years ago. Students who are pursuing degrees in HDFS now have the opportunity to do so throughout the state and beyond. The HDFS department is committed to providing equally engaging and relevant educational opportunities to all students. The growth and the quality of the early childhood programs located at the Uintah Basin, Brigham City, and Logan campuses are an excellent example of how the department continues to impact students both “young” and “older.”