

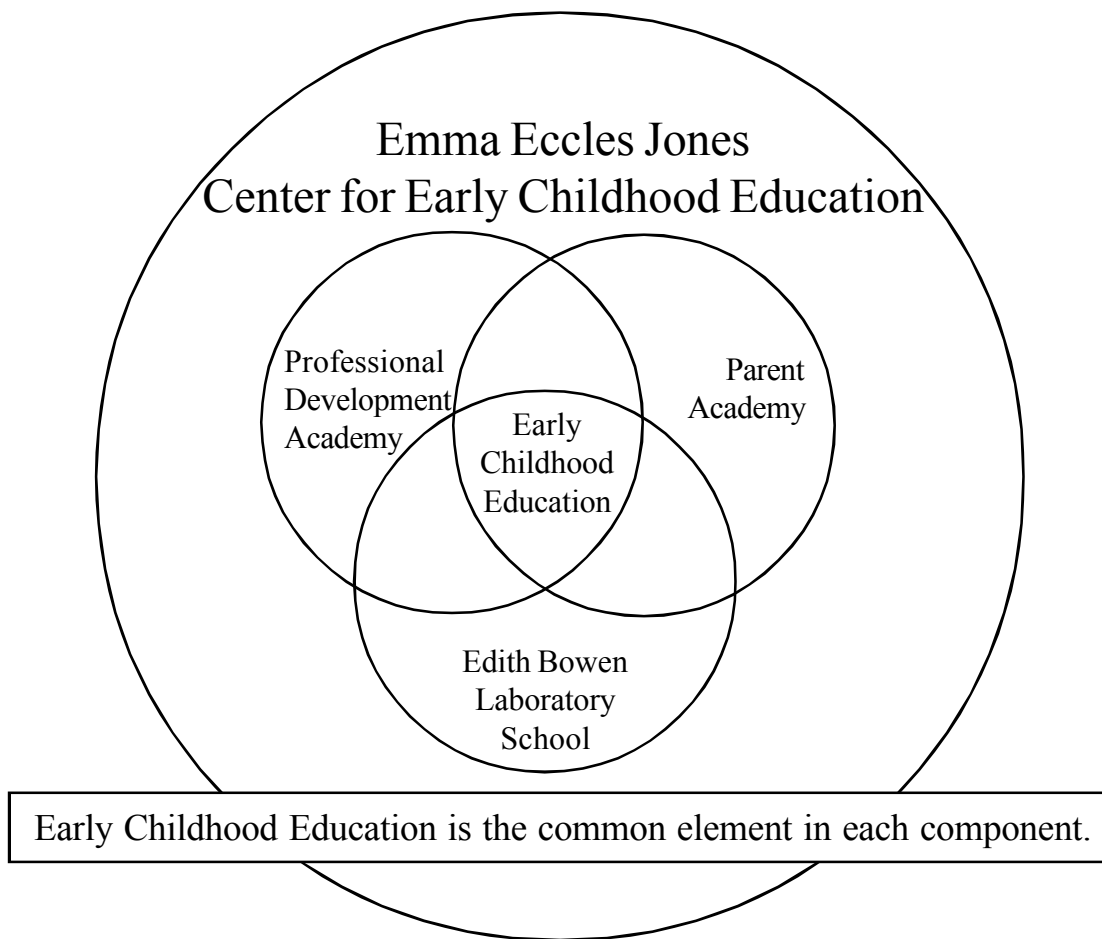


Emma Eccles Jones Center for Early Childhood Education

*July 1, 1998 - June 30, 1999
Annual Report*



Utah State
UNIVERSITY™



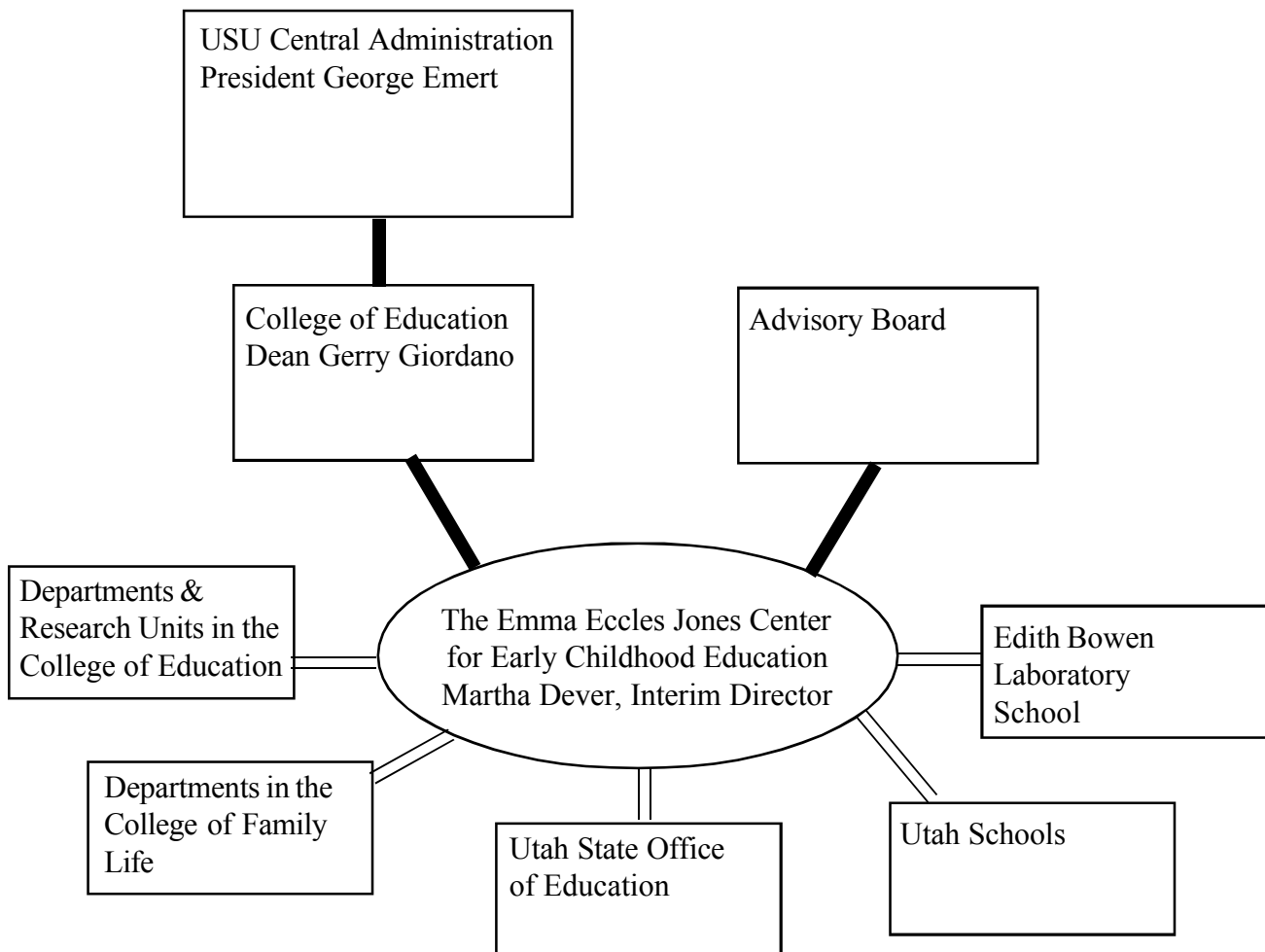
The mission of the Emma Eccles Jones Center for Early Childhood Education includes a comprehensive program for educational innovation, research and dissemination.

Collaboration among the Emma Eccles Jones Center for Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education Department, Edith Bowen Laboratory School, and related departments provides major emphasis in the area of early childhood education at USU. Dr. Diane Burts has been hired as the Emma Eccles Jones Distinguished Professor. The Eccles Jones Professor directs the day-to-day operation of the Center, engages in research at USU, lectures, consults with university faculty and staff and at the Edith Bowen Laboratory School, and is featured at the annual Emma Eccles Jones Symposium for Early Childhood Education.

The Professional Development Academy is part of the Emma Eccles Jones Center for Early Childhood Education. Mentor teachers at the Edith Bowen Laboratory School are identified to host selected teachers (recipients of a Jones Fellowship) for observations and teaching experiences at the laboratory school and to work in the Center to acquire the latest research and techniques in early childhood education.

Because an optimal learning environment involves collaboration between teachers and parents, the Parent Academy is also part of the Center. The Academy enables parents and individuals in community programs to receive information in areas critical to the education and health of young children.

Organization of the Emma Eccles Jones Center for Early Childhood Education at Utah State University



————— Line of Governance
===== Collaborative Partners

Interim Director

Martha Dever, Assistant Professor
Elementary Education, USU



Associate Director

Jay Monson, Professor
Elementary Education, USU

Staff Assistant

Gwen Ruebush



Advisory Board

(* Denotes Operating Board member)

Linda Alder, Curriculum and Instruction
Utah State Office of Education

*Kaye Rhees, Principal
Edith Bowen Laboratory School

Frank Ascione, Professor
Psychology, USU

Richard Roberts, Professor
Psychology, USU

*Julie Baker, Early Childhood Education
Utah State Office of Education

Darline Robles, Superintendent
Salt Lake School District

Lyn Burningham, Alternative Language Services
Consultant
Jordan School District

*Delphine Rossi, Lecturer
Health, Physical Education & Recreation, USU

*Shelly Lindauer, Associate Professor
Family and Human Development, USU

*Sarah Rule, Professor and Director
Center for Persons with Disabilities, USU

Hector Mendola, Diversity Specialist

*Carol Strong, Professor
Communicative Disorders & Deaf Education,
USU

*Martell Menlove, Superintendent
Box Elder School District

Ellen Williams, Associate Director of Grants
Granite School District

Barry Newbold, Superintendent
Jordan School District

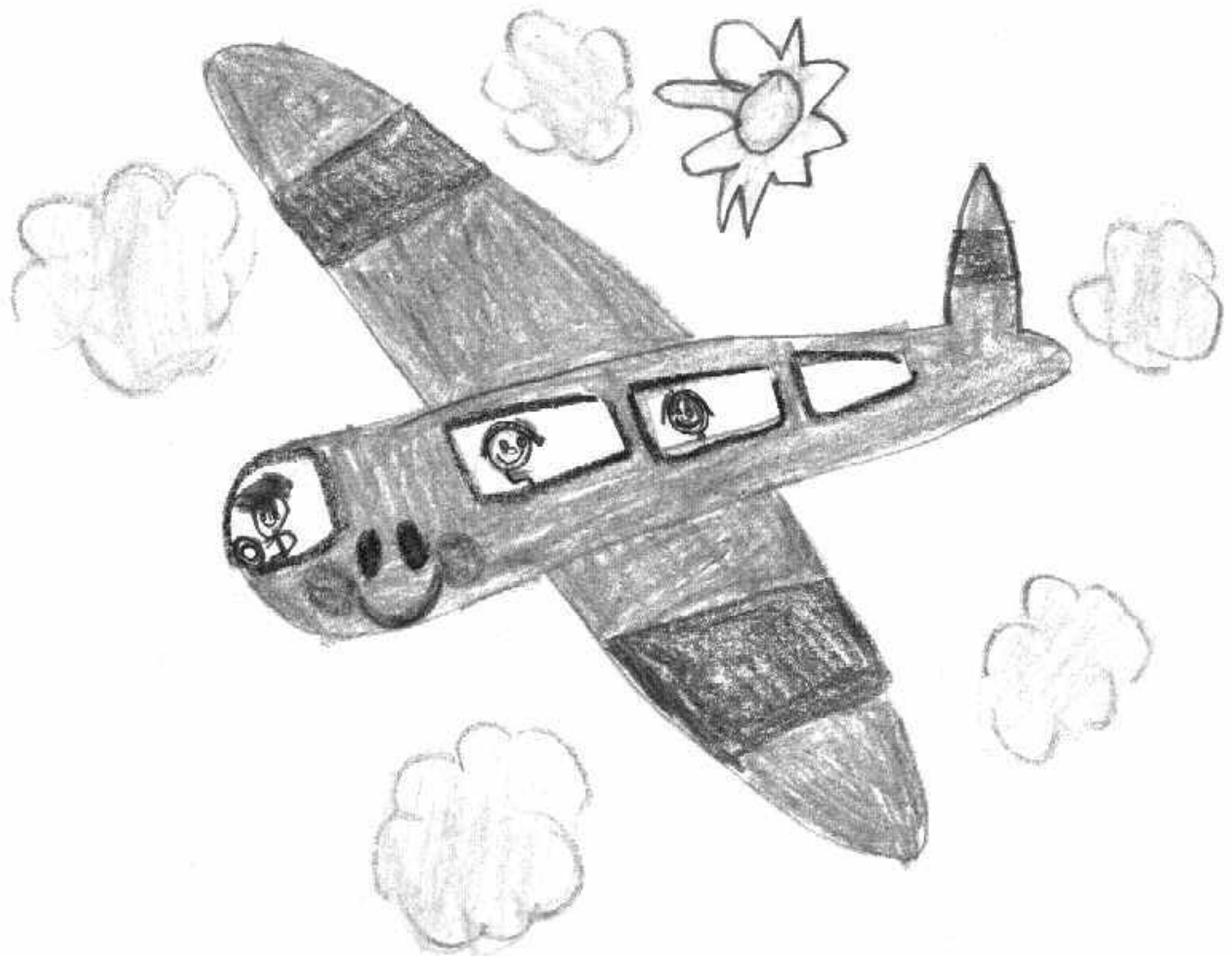
Linda Wolcott, Associate Professor
Instructional Technology, USU

*Bill Peck, Teacher
Edith Bowen Laboratory School

Mission Statement

The Emma Eccles Jones Center for Early Childhood Education provides a comprehensive program for educational innovation, research, and dissemination. The major role of the Center is to provide educational experiences and resources for teachers and parents that reflect the most current understanding of the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive needs of children in prekindergarten, kindergarten, and the primary grades. The Center is also committed to serve as a clearinghouse of validated procedures and processes for the improvement of education in kindergarten and the primary grades.

The Emma Eccles Jones Center for Early Childhood Education fosters collaborative interaction between Utah State University's Department of Elementary Education and Edith Bowen Laboratory School as well as other departments at Utah State University, the Utah State Office of Education, and school districts throughout the state. The Center supports an on-going research agenda, a Professional Development Academy, and a Parent Academy. In addition, it serves as a clearinghouse for quality educational resources.



Belief Statements

The following principles guide professional development programs at the Emma Eccles Jones Center for Early Childhood Education.

Effective professional development:

- is on-going.
- includes training, practice and feedback.
- provides opportunities for individual reflection.
- provides opportunities for interaction with peers.
- supports school-based and teacher initiatives.
- is rooted in the knowledge base for teaching.
- incorporates constructivist practices.
- involves collaboration between schools and universities.
- builds regional, national, and international networks.

The following principles set forth by the National Association for the Education of Young Children frame the knowledge base for working with young children and their families.

- Domains of children's development are physical, social, emotional, and cognitive and are closely related.
- Children demonstrate patterns in their development as they acquire abilities and skills that build on those already mastered.
- Children have unique timing and patterns of development.
- Early experiences have cumulative and delayed effects.
- Optimal periods exist for specific types of development.
- Development proceeds in predictable directions toward greater complexity, organization, and internalization.
- Development and learning occur in and are influenced by multiple social and cultural contexts.
- Children are active learners who draw on physical and social experiences as well as culturally transmitted knowledge to construct their understandings of their world.
- Development and learning are a result of the interaction of individual children's biological maturation and environment.
- Play serves as an important vehicle for and reflection of children's social, emotional, and cognitive development.
- Children's development is advanced by opportunities to practice newly acquired skills and experience challenges beyond the level of present mastery.
- Children demonstrate different ways of knowing, learning, and representing what they know.
- Children develop and learn best in the context of a community where they are safe and valued, and their physical and psychological needs are met.

Report on Achievements

1998-99

A major goal for the initial year of operation for the Emma Eccles Jones Center for Early Childhood Education was to promote the Center throughout the state and the nation. That goal was accomplished. Interest in the Center has been expressed from institutions as far away as SUNY, University of Illinois, University of Alberta, and Brigham Young University. The on-going activities of the Center have been enthusiastically received by teachers and administrators in school districts throughout the state.

Framed by the objectives of the 1998-99 Strategic Plan, the achievements of the Emma Eccles Jones Center for Early Childhood Education, 1998-99, are outlined below.

Objective 1: *Develop the initial framework for the Emma Eccles Jones Center for Early Childhood Education.*

Mission Statement

A mission statement, including belief statements, was articulated to ground program development within the Emma Eccles Jones Center for Early Childhood Education. The Center consists of the Professional Development Academy where activities focus on educational opportunities for kindergarten and primary grade teachers and the Parent Academy, which focuses on parent education.

Advisory Board

An advisory board was formed consisting of various stakeholders throughout Utah State University and Utah. The board membership includes representatives from the College of Family Life, the College of Education, the Utah State Office of Education, Edith Bowen Laboratory School, and Utah School Districts. While the Advisory Board meets annually, a smaller Operating Board meets five times annually to advise the activities of the Center.

Facility

A temporary facility located in the Human Services Research Center on the USU campus was secured to house the Center director, staff, and materials. Plans for fund-raising and building a permanent facility are in progress.

Survey

To ensure program development at the Center meets the needs of teachers, a survey was developed and disseminated to primary grade teachers in seven representative school districts in Utah. Teachers were asked to identify curriculum areas and professional development experiences in which they are most interested.

Curriculum areas of most interest to teachers included ESL, literacy, math, science, and social studies. Teachers were also interested in learning about parent education, center development, integrated curriculum, social development, and integration of fine arts. Presenters in many of these curricular areas were solicited for the Emma Eccles Jones Symposium for Early Childhood Education, held in April.

Observation of exemplary teachers was the professional development experience of most interest. Observation and dialogue via interactive technology and co-teaching with a mentor teacher were of

moderate interest. Several local teachers expressed interest in working with a mentor teacher at the Edith Bowen Laboratory school. In terms of materials, teachers were most interested in a video library for classroom use.

Distinguished Professor

In April 1999, Dr. Diane Burts accepted the position of Distinguished Professor and Director of the Center. Dr. Burts is highly esteemed nationally and internationally as an early childhood scholar, researcher, and teacher. She has a distinguished record of research and publication particularly in the area of developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood and has won various teaching awards. Dr. Burts will leave her faculty position in the Department of Human Ecology at Louisiana State University to begin her work at the Center on August 16, 1999.

Objective 2: Encourage excellence in teaching in the primary grades (K-3)



The mission of the Emma Eccles Jones Center for Early Childhood Education is to provide educational experiences for parents and teachers. It is comprised of a Parent Academy and a Professional Development Academy.

Professional Development Academy

Training Mentor Teachers

The Edith Bowen Laboratory School is a collaborative partner with the Emma Eccles Jones Center for Early Childhood Education and serves as a demonstration site for best practice in early childhood classrooms. Thus, a major objective for the initial year was to address the needs of Edith Bowen Laboratory School teachers as future mentor teachers within the Professional Development Academy. The Edith Bowen Laboratory School teachers participated in professional development experiences related to mentoring, grant writing, and research based practice in early literacy instruction.

Symposium

On April 30, 1999, the Emma Eccles Jones Center for Early Childhood Education sponsored the first annual Emma Eccles Jones Symposium for Early Childhood Education for teachers. The one-day conference included a keynote address, breakout sessions, and lunch. The topics addressed were aligned with teachers' interests as indicated by the survey data. One-hundred and twenty early childhood professionals attended. The mean evaluation scores for most sessions were in the high to very high range in terms of helpfulness. Plans are in progress to expand the conference into a three-day summer symposium event.

Library

Development of a professional library was initiated. It currently includes several professional books and videos for teachers and curriculum materials for classroom use. Additional materials are being developed.

Parent Academy

Family Literacy Bags

The Emma Eccles Jones Center for Early Childhood Education supported the development of 30

Family Literacy Bags (FLB) as a parent education project. The bags contain guidebooks and materials to support and encourage parents to read with their children at home. Each guidebook provides information to assist parents in gaining optimal benefit from time spent reading with their children. Many of the materials have been translated into Spanish.

The intent of this project is to provide a model for quality parent involvement and education. The bags are available for teachers to check out and send home with their students.

The bags were piloted in two kindergarten classrooms, one in the Edith Bowen Laboratory School and one in a Title I school in the Logan School District. Twenty-six parent evaluations were received in the Title I school and sixteen were received in the Edith Bowen School. In addition, both teachers evaluated their experience with the bags.

The overall response to the FLB project was extremely positive from both parent populations. In general, many parents learned new and effective ways to read with their children, many learned of new book titles, and all indicated they appreciated having the books in their homes. One mother said her husband spent much more time reading to the children because the books were in Spanish. The teachers indicated that they highly valued the project as well.



Parent Fair

On May 1, 1999, the Emma Eccles Jones Center for Early Childhood Education hosted a Parent Fair. Parents were invited to enjoy a continental breakfast buffet followed by various sessions during which early childhood experts shared their knowledge of ways parents can support their children's growth and development. Forty parents attended the Parent Fair. The mean evaluation on all sessions was in the high to very high range in terms of helpfulness.

Parent Newsletter

TOP: Tips on Parenting is a quarterly newsletter published by the Emma Eccles Jones Center for Early Childhood Education. It includes activities for parents to enjoy with their children and short articles by early childhood experts on interesting topics (discipline, language development, health issues, etc.). The current mailing list is approximately 200 people and arrangements have been made to translate the newsletter into Spanish.

Objective 3: *Provide an environment conducive to research, scholarship, and creative activity.*

Funding Sources

The Center houses a comprehensive list of funding sources to support various types of research related to early childhood education. In addition, the Center houses equipment and software to support data collection and analysis.

During the 1998-99 academic year, the Center supported the pilot evaluation of the Family Literacy Bags project. The project is being refined and additional data will be collected during the 1999-00 academic year. Application has been made to present the results at the annual Association of Childhood Education International Conference in April 2000, and a publishable manuscript is in progress.



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