

The Phyllis Bodel Childcare Center at Yale School of Medicine, Inc.  
2007 Annual Report

Overview of Events

In the history of the Center there has not been a year where so much has happened. The new process of Accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children was completed, our application for a site visit mailed, our two day site visit completed and I had hoped by the writing of this report, we would have an answer regarding our re-accreditation. We still wait to hear from Washington. It is difficult to explain how many challenges this process brought for the teachers and the Center. The designing and maintenance of classroom portfolios, the documentation and to be honest, the redundant and often tedious details required brought many new challenges to the teachers. It was a learning process, and we did learn! Many good things came from going through the re-accreditation. We found there were many practices that we as a staff followed that were never written down. We rewrote in a clear and hopefully concise manner our Parent and Staff Handbooks. We grew from the experience but it was very hard.

As if Accreditation was not enough, we went through re-licensing through the State Department of Public Health and the New Haven Health Department. Under normal circumstances these renewals bring their own challenges however, for the last year, we on the pre-school side of the building have been under major construction. The drilling, the water leaks, the blocked windows, the guinea pig having a 'nervous breakdown' from the noise, the rotating rooms, the fact that supplies kept moving around and we often could not find anything, all while maintaining a high quality early childhood facility has tested all our skills. The highest compliment we, the staff of Phyllis Bodel, recently received was from a parent who feels that it has all gone smoothly. For the children's sake, we sincerely hope that this has been true.

By November 1, the Center will be licensed for 100 children. The new infant room and the new toddler room, both scheduled to be opened by November 1 are fully enrolled. We have completed most of our new staffing and are only, at this time, in need of two toddler teachers and one infant teacher. We all look forward to the calm of November. The Medical School has been unbelievably supportive of the Center. This is our third expansion in five years. We have fully occupied the first floor of Harkness Dormitory at this point and we have reached our capacity in this building. We are now the largest of the Yale affiliated centers and most fortunate to be affiliated with the Medical School.

The Infant Program:

The high regard that our infant program has earned in the community is based on the care and compassion of our infant teachers. By November 1, we will be opening a new infant room with spots for 8 more infants. To ensure that the 'new room' maintains the same quality of our existing two infant rooms, the infant room will be staffed by two teachers already at Phyllis Bodel, and one new teacher yet to be hired. One infant teacher is from our Sea Otter room and one from our part time staff. There is a philosophy to the early childhood experiences we provide and to ensure that philosophy exists in each room, we

have had to 'break up' some existing teams placing an experienced teacher with a teacher new to Bodel.

#### The Toddler Program:

Toddlers make up a large number of our application file. The addition of 8 more toddler slots will not solve the problem but will help at least 8 families. As with the new infant room, we need to move an experienced Bodel teacher to that room. We are taking on full time one of our part time teachers and will need to hire a new toddler teacher. Our toddler teachers are known for their patience, consistency and enthusiasm for under three's. The program, regardless of the space it occupies - the current toddler space or the new room, will remain the same.

#### The Pre-School:

There are four pre-school rooms. We have two three year old classrooms and two four year old classrooms. Each room takes its own character and flavor based on the staff and children in that room, however, curriculum in all the rooms is based on the Performance Standards from the Connecticut State Department of Education for children 2.6 yrs-6yrs. Our staff is trained in using the standards and plan individually for children. The Standards are the base for our conference forms and for assessing the development of all the children in the pre-school. The State has put together a book of the Standards that is easier to manage rather than the flip chart that the teachers use. If any parent is interested there is a copy in the office they may borrow.

#### The Kindergarten:

It is hard to believe that we are about to enter the fourth year of the Bodel Kindergarten. We will be in our new room with a view of green grass and a more spacious environment with the removal of the walls. The kindergarten went on four field trips this year, put on their play, and mastered many new skills. We are sending some on to first grade and some to a year of kindergarten in other private schools. Our kindergarten teachers have done an extraordinary job of preparing them for their next challenge. Our program is highly respected by the State and in the community and we are proud of its reputation.

#### Board of Director's:

This year Lisa Suter has been our Board President, Christina Herrick our Vice President, Mayur Desai our Secretary and Nancy Scanlon our Treasurer. Parent Board Members are: Robin Masheb, Lesley Devine, and Harriet Friedman.

Faculty Board Members: The Board consists of six faculty member's, many have for many years consistently shared their time and talents supporting the Center. They are: Susan Baserga, Daniel Biemesderfer, Michael Caplan, Nancy Close, Caren Gundberg and Merle Waxman.

#### Board Committees:

The Finance Committee: The Finance Committee is chaired by the Center's treasurer. The Finance Committee sets the budget, decides on scholarship and is responsible for all fiscal components of the Center. Nancy Scanlon's youngest child will be going to

Kindergarten this September. Nancy has had children in the Center over the last ten years. She is a dedicated parent and a great treasurer. She has 'volunteered' to stay on next year as our treasurer and we hope to use this year to help orient a new parent to fill her position. Thank you does not suffice to express my and the Center's appreciation for all she does for the program.

Personnel:

Zehra Patwa has, even though her youngest child graduated the program a year ago, remained this year as chair of the Personnel Committee. This dedication to the Center has been sincerely appreciated in light of the number of new staff we had to hire to open the new rooms and to fill the positions vacated by staff who will be moving to the new rooms. Fellow members are: Nancy Scanlon, our educational consultant Donna Bella, and our early childhood consultant Nancy Close. Zehra will be stepping down this year as it does become more difficult to attend meetings when you are not on site at the Center. She has promised to be available by phone. Speaking personally and on behalf of the Center we have all benefited from Zehra's wisdom, patience and forthrightness. Thank you very much Zehra.

Long Range Planning:

This year we reinstated our Long Range Planning Committee. With the expansion of the program and the University's renewed interest in childcare this was an important addition for the Center's leadership. The Committee consists of Lisa Suter, Chair, and members Merle Waxman, Mayur Desai and Caren Gundberg. The Director sits on all committees.

Consultants:

Educational Consultant:

Donna Bella, the Director of the Edith B. Jackson Child Care Program, a Yale affiliated childcare center is our education consultant. Her efforts on behalf of the Center as a resource for the Director and member of the Personnel Committee are sincerely appreciated.

Early Childhood Consultant:

This year the Center has been fortunate to not only have Dr. Nancy Close rejoin the Board but to also have her act in the role of Early Childhood Consultant. We are able to call on her for advice regarding the often normal developmental 'bumps' that children face as they grow.

Pediatric Consultant:

Joseph Avni-Singer is our pediatric consultant. Joe has been our consultant for over fourteen years and we can and have always been able to rely on his expertise.

Nurse Consultant:

Carol Case has been our consultant for the past three years. Carol and her husband will be retiring this fall and we are pleased to announce, with the support of the Yale School of Nursing and the Human Resource Department at the University, that Kim Sandor, FNP will be joining our Center this fall. We cannot thank Carol enough for all her help these

past years. She is knowledgeable, patient, kind, and an excellent teacher and resource for us all. Our very best wishes go to Carol and her husband as they begin this next chapter in their lives.

#### Psychiatric Consultant:

For the past eleven years, every week the Center has benefited from the knowledge and wisdom of Dr. Brian Keyes. He knows the staff, the culture and climate of our Center, many of the children and has met with some of our families. He provides us with a wealth of strategies and guidance in working with children and families. We are so fortunate to have this level of consistent dedication and the program has benefited from this exceptional level of consultation. We are unbelievably fortunate to have him as our consultant.

#### Dental Consultant:

Dr. Donald Kohn is our Dental Consultant. During the month of February, Dental Health Month, his staff comes to the pre-school and kindergarten to talk with the children about dental health. He has always been available when we have had to call regarding bumps that have involved the children's teeth.

#### Social Work Consultant:

Miriam Berkman, a former Bodel parent, is our Social Work Consultant. She knows the philosophy of the Center, many of our staff, and the environment at the Medical School. She is a valuable resource and an appreciated member of our support staff.

#### Yale Child Study Center:

We are fortunate to be located next to one of the world's most renowned centers for children. They provide us with information, support and resources.

#### Yale School of Medicine:

Yale has four affiliated childcare programs. The Phyllis Bodel Childcare Center is fortunate to be associated with the Medical School. As mentioned above, they have supported three expansions in the last five years, built us a new playground, they maintain our environment and promptly respond to all our calls for assistance. We want to acknowledge and extend our appreciation to Dean Alpern, Jacklyne Boyden, and to the Facilities Dept. at the Medical School; Richard Levine, Wilfred Lamb, Ray Mirando, Bill Fiandello, Scott Goeben and Nathan from the Yale Fire Department. Our gratitude to John Phifer, Steve Sennet, Steve Murdzia, Rob Klein, Robert Cervone and the staff in Security, to Officer Carlos Perez, to Larry and Jeff the carpenters, Bill and John the painters, and Barbara the locksmith. We want to thank Phil and Donna in security, Lenny and his staff for their help maintaining our grounds and their wonderful hayride in October. We thank Usha Carr and his staff for all their help with our Pot Lucks, Auctions, and Book Fairs. We thank the plumbers and electricians who keep us up and running and we thank Ron, Mary, and the staff in dispatch who send them to us when we call. There are so many who help us I am certain that someone has been forgotten, for that I apologize. It takes so many wonderful, generous and kind people to keep the

Center operational each day. We have all this support ultimately from the Medical School.

#### Our Substitutes:

Childcare is a field where most Directors struggle with the lack of subs. We are very fortunate to have a pool of wonderful part time people. They are so good that we have hired several of them to move to full time positions. The majority of our part time staff, have been with us for five to seven years. This loyalty in a part time position is unheard of in this field but I believe speaks volumes about the community that exists within this Center. Our sincere appreciation to Laura Montiero, Gloria Sanchez, Roberta Hall, Roberta Lapedes, Mychia Reed, Maria Warren, Sandy Germe and our loyal college students T.J. Mathias and Christina Martins.

#### Administrative Staff:

When we were a smaller center of 34 children it was easy to manage all the details of running a center and still have time to be in the classrooms and meet with the staff. As we have increased our numbers over the years, taken on grants and the new guidelines for the State and Accreditation, the need for office support has increased. This year the Center hired Tracey Thomas, former parent, past Board President, and Advisor to the Board to act as assistant to the director while we take on the additional task of computerizing all aspects of the program and freeing some of the directors time to be in the classrooms. Tracey is part time. In addition, Kathleen Crowley, a teacher for almost five years in the Center and familiar with our operation has moved to a part time position as administrative assistant. Danielle Abel has expressed interest in moving to another level in the field of early childhood and she will also begin part time hours in the office to become familiar with the details of running a childcare center. At this point this model is working and the Center is thriving.

#### Director's Report:

The number one goal from last year was to complete the Accreditation process. We have met that goal and we are waiting for word from Washington DC regarding our outcome. We are optimistic and we will of course notify our parents regarding the outcome.

Our second goal was to find ways to form partnerships with our families. We are definitely making progress in this goal based on the increased support for our Auction which earned over \$7,000.00 this year, the increased participation at our emailing Newsletters and updates has helped and next year we will be building list serves for the individual classrooms in addition to our full parent list to increase communication from the teachers regarding activities and events related to specific groups.

Our third goal was to address long range planning. We reinstated the committee, met with representatives from the Dean's office, the Provost's office and Human Resources. We wrote a variety of financial scripts and ultimately came to only one conclusion, with half of our program infants and toddlers with a one to three ratio, the tuition increase you all received this year was the only answer. We needed to hire new staff, insurance costs rose over 10% this year and we cannot increase the size of our pre-school or kindergarten

to offset the financial costs of infants and toddlers. The Long Range Planning Committee continues its dialogue with sources who may help us financially. Your input is not only welcomed, it is needed.

#### Goals and Conclusion:

In the coming year, our first goal is to increase communication with our families. This year one of our Dad's, John Lee is helping us set up a web site. We hope that this will help. We are purchasing a program that will computerize all our data which we also hope will help. We now have a Phyllis Bodel email address which we hope will be yet another way to communicate. The email list serves, parents increased participation on committees, parent visits to the classrooms and the increased coverage in the office when I am not in my office we hope will help. Parent participation is one key to a quality center.

The second goal for the coming year will be to continue the work of the Long Range Planning Committee. One component of our long range plans was to have our teachers share their knowledge by acting as mentors for an hour or two each month in the community. We have connected with All our Kin to have our teachers volunteer to help home care providers. It is our goal to get this project up and running this year. The staff are very excited about this project as it allows professional opportunities for them without imposing any disruption in their classroom. The committee also will continue work on finding funding and in kind support from the University.

Finally, our third goal and one that will take planning and effort will be to consolidate the "new" and larger Bodel and to be certain that with this expansion and the addition of new staff, more children and parents that the very qualities that have made us Phyllis Bodel are still in place. Larger does not always mean better and we need to be aware of the changes and be certain that we follow our mission and philosophy.

In closing we thank the Facilities Department of Yale School of Medicine and the Taulman Construction Company, in particular their site supervisor Larry Litevich for their support during this awesome construction. We thank our parents for their patience and kindness during all these transitions and we appreciate the terrific children who have taken this experience and turned it into a wonderful learning opportunity.

Respectfully submitted:

Cynthia Olson, Director

