Greetings!!!

With the school year well underway and the arrival of the fall season, UCC children, family and staff are settled into their new classrooms and daily routines. Curriculum specials have started for all ages with extra support provided by UGA faculty staff and students. Security improvements are wrapping up and staff continue to participate in ongoing professional development. The UCC October Newsletter highlights just a few of the exciting current events happening now.

In this edition of University Childcare Center Newsletter, you will find columns featuring curriculum updates, sharing with you information about the creative ways UCC is offering creative learning opportunities. In addition to curriculum highlights, you will read about ways you can help best support UCC. Please take a moment to check out the reminders section as well as read about an upcoming initiative to strengthen UCC/Parent relationships.

New to the UCC Newsletter is a segment entitled “Super Staff.” In this section we will share brief information about a selected staff member in order to introduce them to our UCC families. Suggested by a UCC parent, this is a way to familiarize yourselves with staff from other classrooms and areas of the program, essentially strengthening the UCC community. If you have any suggestions for our newsletter or additional information that you would like for us to share, please send Ashley Gunter an email. We are happy to consider any and all feedback!

There are so many wonderful things happening at UCC. In all that we do, we continue to strive for even higher quality care and education for your children. Thank you for your continued support and for choosing UCC as your Childcare Center!

Outreach Efforts

UCC is working closely with the College of Education at UGA in order to better provide curriculum as well as offer outreach services to the UCC community. Our partnership with the Speech and Hearing Clinic began this week with an initial hearing screening offered to our 3 and 4 year old classrooms. Anticipated screenings will include a scheduled re-screen at the beginning of November and a speech screening to be offered the end of this month. Parents in these classrooms have received a one page assessment with the results from the initial screening and will be notified of the re-screen and speech results from their child’s Lead Teacher. The assessment indicates if a referral for additional services is recommended. You are not obligated to participate in screenings or additional services; however, UCC would encourage families to work with the UGA Speech and Hearing Clinic upon recommendation.

Another partnership UCC is participating in is with faculty from the College of Pharmacy at UGA in order to offer flu shots for the UCC community. The UCC “Flu Clinic” will be held on October 23 from 7:30AM-9:30AM located in the UCC break room. Shots will be offered for a low cost to all UCC parents and staff members only at a first come, first serve basis. Other community members are NOT welcome. More information to come!
Parent Council and Support

Interested in getting more involved at UCC? Implementation of the long awaited UCC parent council is finally in the works. In order to gauge interest, intention and availability, we are asking that you stop by the UCC Tailgate on Oct. 25 to fill out a short parent council survey. After completed surveys have been reviewed, UCC will share next steps and any additional information. We look forward to working together in the near future! In the meantime, UCC could use your support in other ways, particularly in the form of donations. UCC is always looking for gently used, unwanted items in order to better support our curriculum and learning environment. Located in the column to the left is a wish list of items that teachers have requested. If you would like to donate any of these items, please drop them off with any of the Administration at arrival or departure times.

Sick Child Policy

UCC needs your support in providing a healthy work and learning environment for our children and staff. I can not stress enough the importance of keeping children with illness home from school until they are healthy enough to return. Not only does this put UCC in a uncomfortable situation, but it affects those beyond the classroom. Ill children can potentially infect children and teachers in other classrooms, parents and siblings of other children and so on. It truly can turn into a vicious cycle. Additionally, UCC appreciates knowing when your child is out ill and what they have been diagnosed with. Keeping us informed allows us to inform others as well as respond appropriately within the classroom.

Thank you for working with us to minimize the spread of infectious diseases. If you have questions regarding symptoms or are unsure of our “sick child policy,” please be sure to ask UCC administration and/or familiarize yourself with our Parent Handbook.

Super Staff: Cook Amber

UCC would like to introduce to you our Cook, Amber Coyle. Amber previously worked in our two year old program, has years of childcare experience and recently completed ServSafe certification. Amber has a passion for cooking and is excited to be given the opportunity to offer healthy meals to those enrolled at UCC. Stop by the kitchen to say “Hi!” to Amber any day between the hours of 7AM and 4PM, or catch her in the hallways delivering meals to the classrooms around 8AM, 11AM and again at 2PM.
Curriculum Corner: Community Helpers

Often times in Early Childhood Programs, teachers spend time near the beginning of the school year focusing instruction surrounding the theme of “Community Helpers.” Familiarizing children with Community Helpers supports them in identifying who those people are, what their roles are and how to respond in emergency situations. Recently, UCC invited a UGA Police Officer and an Athens/Clarke County Fire Fighter to visit with the children in their classrooms. Children interacted with their guests by engaging in conversation, observing their uniforms and transportation, and listening to how they help our community.

When appropriate, UCC will continue to invite members of the community to support our curriculum. It is always a great way to support learning and encourage a sense of unity!

Georgia Association on Young Children

For UCC staff, the October Professional Learning Day will be spent in Duluth, where they will attend the Georgia Association on Young Children (GAYC), “Together For Children” conference. This is an opportunity for all staff to participate in workshops facilitated by carefully selected early childhood professionals on a wide range of topics, including but not limited to, positive discipline, curriculum development, strengthening parent relationships and classroom management. Each staff member is required to attend three sessions and complete a short but detailed worksheet describing the information they learned and how they plan to apply it in their classrooms. Ultimately, strengthening the care and education for your children.

We understand that UCC closing for Professional Learning Days sometimes make it difficult to find alternative childcare. We want to thank you in supporting us in offering ongoing training for our staff and acknowledge the efforts made by all in order to make it possible to provide quality care and education for all those enrolled. Thank you again!!

Literacy Groups

Graduate students along with a clinical supervisor from The University of Georgia Speech and Hearing Clinic have been working with the children in the 4 year old class each Thursday morning on pre-literacy skills.

We just wanted to share a little about the things we’ve been working on. Our current focus right now is on word rhyming, letter recognition, identifying letter sounds, segmenting words (clapping out the words of a sentence), sound manipulation (e.g. learning that replacing the "b" for "p" in "bat" makes "pat"), alliteration (words that all start with the same sound) and print concepts. Some activities to promote these skills include building necklaces by adding specific numbers of beads as we clap out the number of words in sentences, finding objects that begin with the letter and sounds they are learning, and singing familiar songs while blending sounds to form words (“b-all” makes “ball”, “p-ot” makes “pot”).
Dear Families,

Many parents continue to have questions regarding classroom transitions. As indicated in our October 2012 and February 2013 newsletters, UCC is moving toward a single program wide transition per year for several reasons. Continuity of care being the most important reason, is to offer consistency of care providers and classroom dynamics. If UCC were to continue with rolling individualized transitions, classrooms would experience constant change. Thus, compromising the quality of programming offered. Additionally, a program wide transition aligns with the public school system in order to best support children in preparing them for Georgia Pre-K or Kindergarten.

Whether your child is the eldest or youngest in their classroom, teachers are formally trained on how to implement differentiated instruction in order to meet the needs of all children in their classes. Activities are structured using simplifications and extensions based on the developmental level of each child, essentially providing individualized lesson planning. The progress of your child is documented through use of authentic assessment and will be shared with you during our next scheduled set of conferences in December. If you have questions or concerns prior to conferences, I encourage you to touch base with the Lead Teacher in your child’s classroom. Arrangements can always be made in order set up an informal meeting for you.

This years transition was by no means seamless; however, I can say with confidence that it was successful. We learned from this experience and look forward to some improvements that are already arranged for the next program wide transition next fall.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact any of the Administration. As always, we are happy to help.

Regards,

Nadia Perez-Director

Oct. 11 PL Day:
Georgia Association on Young Children (GAYC), “Together for Children” Annual Conference.

UCC Newsletter

UCC offers a variety of methods when it comes to parent communication. One of the methods, is weekly emails. Since UCC is offering more frequent electronic messaging, it has been decided that our newsletter will now be offered every other month. Additionally, newsletters are always archived on our website for you to refer to if necessary.

Birthday Celebrations

Due to the high volume of birthday celebrations that happen at UCC on a regular basis, we would like to encourage you to support the efforts made by UCC supporting healthy eating habits. Naturally, cake and ice cream go hand in hand with birthdays, but we are asking that if you chose to bring a birthday snack, please consider a more healthy option. Ideas may include but are not limited to yogurt, fresh fruit and dip or fruit salad, fruit and cheese kabobs, etc. We welcome your creative ideas and look forward to celebrating with you!