



2023

Annual Report



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LAURA CORTNER

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The Road We Walk Together

Our journey would not have been possible without our valued families, dedicated teachers, and the many professionals who helped our school. Together over the years, we have raised awareness throughout the community, partnered with local organizations for unique educational experiences, and received millions of dollars through donations and grants to provide educational materials. All the while, we retain exceptional educators and provide professional development to them and completed many building improvements.

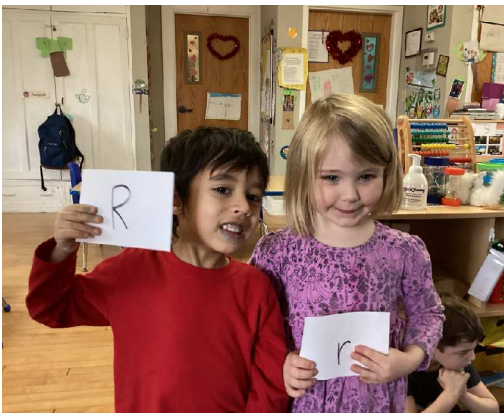
DIRECTOR

2022-2023 school year was one of growth and continued improvement for Clayton Early Childhood Center. A few success are noted below:

- Our Center provided care to 128 children and their families.
- CECC continued to maintain and meet the guidelines and criteria for NAEYC accreditation.
- 100% of our preschool graduates were kindergarten ready as evidenced by Developmental Checklists and Creative Curriculum Continuum.

- CECC maintained class size and exceeded state requirements for teacher-child ratios.
- Negotiated a 10-year lease with the City of Clayton.
- Our Cardinal and Dragonfly classrooms, as well as the Lower Gross Motor Room, received new flooring.
- Grants for operating expenses were secured through The Childcare Relief Fund.
- Grant through the Tracy Family Foundation made possible the purchase of creative curriculum kits for our classrooms.
- Retention grants provided direct financial assistance to our valued educators.
- Technology and enhancement grants have afforded us the opportunity to upgrade our technology and program essentials.
- 4 exterior, perimeter cameras were installed.
- CECC partnered with The City of Clayton Parks and Recreation to celebrate Arbor Day and memorialized the planting of 6 trees which over time will weave into 1 large tree.
- A tree was planted commemorating 12 employees who have dedicated 10 or more years with CECC.
- Each staff member received CPR, First Aid, safe sleep training and additional professional development opportunities through CECC.
- The Board and administration worked to strengthen infrastructure and continue to be fiscally responsible.

Our Educators. Our educators have over 400 collective years of early childhood experience. This knowledge is expressed every day through carefully crafted lessons, classrooms designed for exploration, and compassionate and thoughtful interactions. It is their dedication to their craft and your dedication to ensuring that your child has the best possible early learning experiences that make Clayton Early Childhood Center such an industry-leading, high-quality program. Thank you for entrusting the care of your child with us and for partnering with us in the raising of your most incredible gift. We continue to grow and improve and thank you for your support.



MISSION & VISION

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OUR VISION:

Enriching every child's life to promote: courageous students, life-long learners, and compassionate leaders.

OUR MISSION:

Clayton Early Childhood Center provides engaging, challenging, and developmentally appropriate play experiences in a safe, nurturing, and loving educational environment.

PHILOSOPHY

To accomplish this mission & vision, Clayton Early Childhood Center promotes an educational philosophy that seeks the following:

PROFESSIONALISM: In order to cultivate excellence and encourage innovation across our program, CECC provides and supports ongoing education and professional development for all faculty and staff.

RECIPROCITY: In order to foster trust, respect, and collaboration, CECC promotes regular, open communication between all members of our school community.

COMMUNITY: In order to engage and challenge our students. CECC promotes active, hands-on learning, which allows children to find their own way with teachers as their guides, who emphasize the joy of learning.

TRANSPARENCY: In order to fairly represent all members of our school community, CECC commits to both spirit and practice of openness in all activities.

SUSTAINABILITY: In order to ensure the long-term health of our school and our broader community, CECC commits to developing responsible and prudent policies that take into account all stakeholders, as well as the natural world.



OUR STORY 3

Clayton Early Childhood Center began as a partnership between parents and teachers who imagined a school that would provide a loving, creative, and thoughtful education to children from their very first weeks of life.

This initial group of parents became a committee who began to share their talents and formalize their ideas and soon evolved into the governing Board of CECC.

Momentum built and the future of CECC came into focus: An intimate educational community where families and teachers work together to support the creative learning, health, happiness, social growth, and development of our children.



Today, CECC offers high-quality education and care in a tranquil setting, at competitive tuition rates, with flexible, full-day programs (7:30 am – 6:00 pm) which meet the needs of working parents without additional before and after school care.

We work to build long-term relationships with the families we serve and consider the opportunity to share in their children's growth and development to be an honor and privilege.

Our school is a nonprofit, cooperative effort with a strong commitment to maintaining responsible, transparent, and flexible practices to maintain trust among those we serve and to ensure the organization will grow and evolve with its members.

As a state-licensed and nationally accredited preschool, CECC follows all guidelines outlined by the State of Missouri and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Our school is inspected by State and local Fire Marshals, State Sanitation Inspectors, and State Child Care Specialists.



DID YOU KNOW?

FACTS & FIGURES



Meals include fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, hormone free milk and eggs



CECC serves over 130 children



100% of teachers meet the state requirement for professional development each year. Many teachers go above and beyond in acquiring additional professional development

Approximately \$400,000 was earned through grants and donations from local organizations, State of MO, PPP, and both current and alumni families



CECC exceeds the state requirement in terms of teachers to child ratios



Board members are volunteers and receive no pay or discounted tuition in return for their service



CECC employs approximately 52 staff members



CECC offers health, dental, flexible spending accounts, and a 401K option to employees



A certified dietitian designs our seasonal menus



CECC offers Missouri teacher training hours onsite and virtually for all employees



NAEYC

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ACCREDITED

HIGH-QUALITY PRESCHOOL

CECC is nationally accredited through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and meets the 10 early childhood program standards. Standards are based on the latest research on the education and development of young children. All NAEYC-Accredited programs must:



- Promote positive relationships for all children and adults to encourage each child's sense of individual worth.
- Implement a curriculum that fosters all areas of child development: cognitive, emotional, language, physical, and social.
- Use developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate and effective teaching approaches.
- Provide ongoing assessments of a child's learning and development and communicate the child's progress to the family.
- Promote the nutrition and health of children and protect children and staff from illness and injury.
- Employ and support a teaching staff that has the educational qualifications, knowledge, and professional commitment necessary to promote children's learning and development and to support families' diverse interests and needs.
- Establish and maintain collaborative relationships with each child's family.
- Establish relationships with and use resources of the community to support the achievement of program goals.
- Provide a safe and healthy physical environment.
- Implement strong personnel, fiscal, and program management policies so that all children, families, and staff have a high quality experience.



LEARNING FOR LIFE



100% of preschool graduates were kindergarten ready in 2023



By the time children reach kindergarten entry, many are reading sight words and writing simple sentences. Of all five-year-olds, 100% scored above the 98th percentile on Creative Curriculum Assessments and developmental checklists. Cognitive structures crucial to future learning are fully developed and children are well prepared both academically and socially for both private and public kindergartens.

CURRICULUM

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CREATIVE CURRICULUM

Creative Curriculum is an award-winning, state-approved curriculum for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. It features research-based content and daily resources that are fully aligned with the Missouri State Early Learning Standards.

Using explorations and discovery as a way of learning, the curriculum enables children to develop confidence, creativity, and lifelong critical thinking skills. Children are encouraged to explore the environment and learn from hands-on experiences. Daily lessons are taught in small focused groups of 3-4 children and in whole class groups.

A portion of the academic day is structured with teacher-directed activities and unstructured with child-directed activities. Preschoolers and toddlers provide input as thematic units are created. Creativity, exploration, and discovery are encouraged. Content areas include reading readiness & literacy, dramatic play, science, math, art, physical, and sensory activities.

Infant curriculum includes regular routines and procedures which meet the unique needs and development of each individual child.

4 major focus areas:

Social & emotional skills



Physical growth



Cognitive awareness



Language development



All areas address several goals:

- ✓ **Developing responsibility for self and others**
- ✓ **Strengthening gross and fine motor skills**
- ✓ **Improving reading and writing proficiency**
- ✓ **Increasing language and problem-solving techniques**

Developmental assessments are completed several times a year for children ages six weeks to five years. Results are shared at parent/teacher conferences and assist teachers in preparing classroom activities that encourage development and academic achievement.

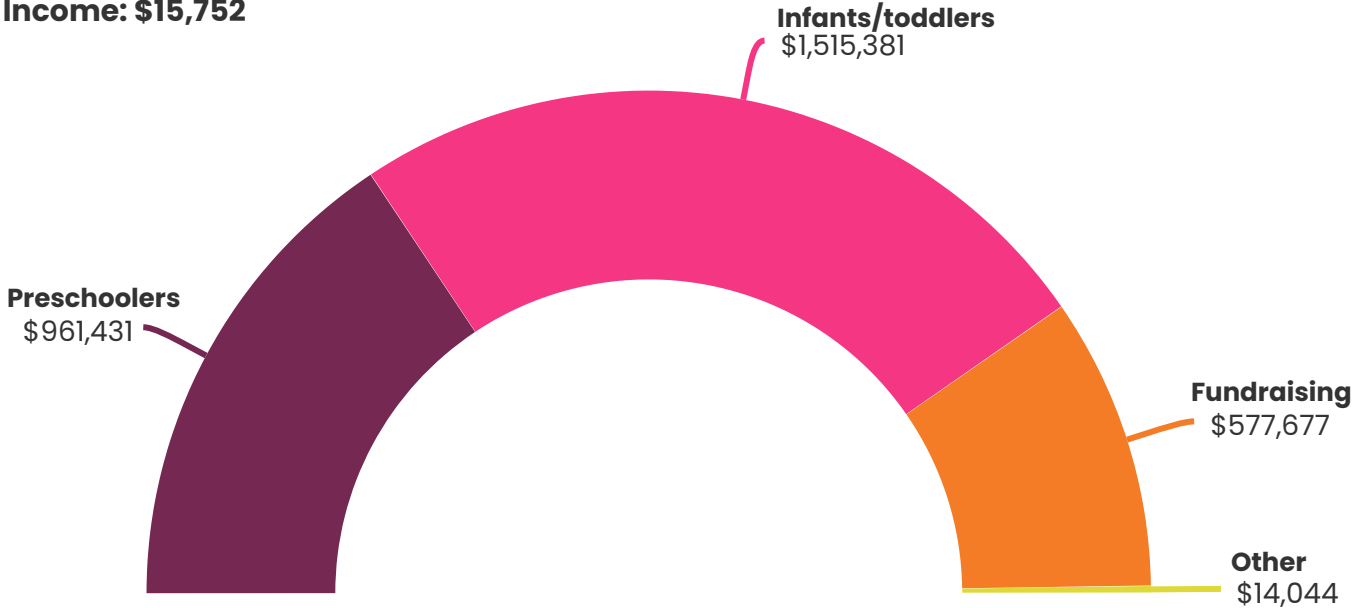
FINANCIAL REPORTS

2023 YEAR ENDING MAY 31, 2023

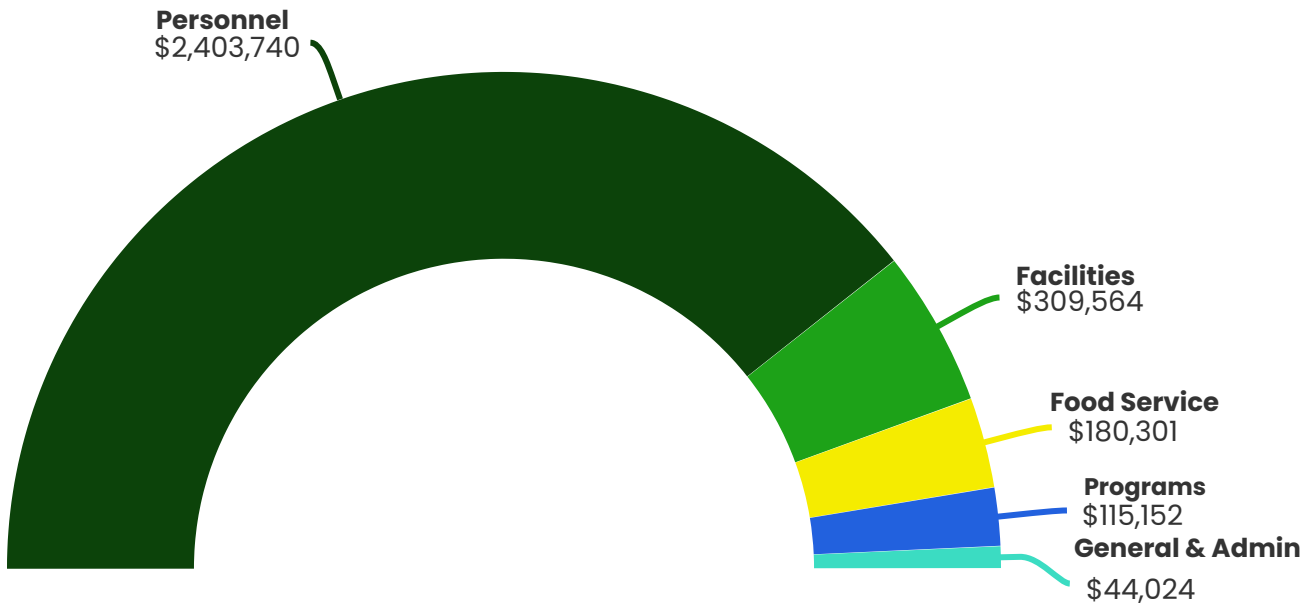
Total Expenses:
\$3,052,780

Net Income: \$15,752

REVENUE:



EXPENDITURES:



REVENUE:



INFANT/ TODDLER TUITION:
 Infants up to age 2
 \$2,000/month \$123/day
 Toddlers 2-3
 \$1,763/month \$110/day

PRESCHOOL TUITION:
 Preschoolers ages 3-5
 \$1,568/month \$102/day

OTHER REVENUE:
 Donations, Grants, CPO, PPP

EXPENDITURES:



FOOD SERVICE
PERSONNEL:
 Health insurance, 401K, payroll
PROGRAM EXPENSES:
 Accreditation, classroom & educational materials

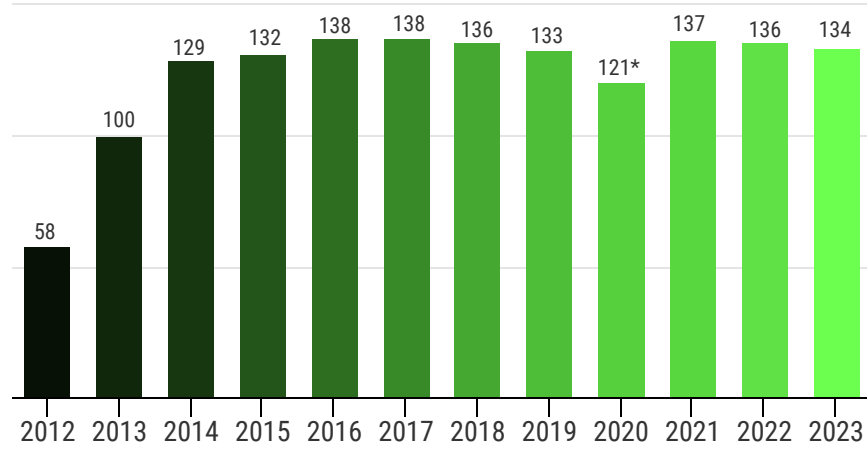
TOTAL FACILITY EXPENSES:
 Rent, utilities, maintenance
GENERAL & ADMINISTRATION EXPENSES:
 Accounting, office supplies, marketing



ENROLLMENT

Classrooms have been at capacity with low turnover rates. Over the 2022-2023 school year, our waitlist continued to grow, indicating a demand for quality child care.

ANNUAL ENROLLMENT FOR **MAY** OF EACH SUBSEQUENT YEAR



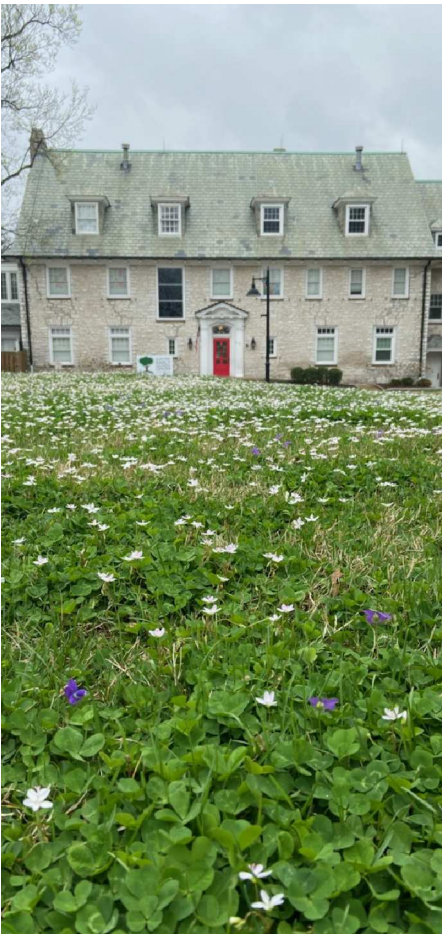
*Safer at home order per pandemic

CLASSROOM MODELS

The chart below illustrates individual classroom models. Teacher/child ratios exceed state requirements. For the 2022-2023 school year, full-time teachers were offered to work four, 10-hour work days to eliminate the need for a part-time teacher.

CLASS:	FT	PT	# OF TEACHERS:	AGE:	CAPACITY:
DUCKLING	●	●	3 FT, 1 PT	1-2 YEARS	8
CATERPILLAR	●	●	3 FT, 1 PT	6 WEEK - 1 YEAR	8
LADYBUG	●	●	3 FT	6 WEEK - 1 YEAR	8
BUNNY	●	●	3 FT	1-2 YEARS	8
GOLDFISH	●	●	3 FT	1-2 YEARS	8
TURTLE	●	●	3 FT, 1 PT	1-2 YEARS	8
BUTTERFLY	●	●	3 FT	2-3 YEARS	14
DRAGONFLY	●	●	3 FT	2-3 YEARS	10
FROG	●	●	3 FT	2-3 YEARS	17
CARDINAL	●	●	3 FT	3-5 YEARS	18
OWL	●	●	3 FT, 1 PT	4-5 YEARS	15

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



As parents and members of the community, the Clayton Early Childhood Center Board of Directors have a vested interest in the preschool and are very supportive of the staff and school in general. As a governing body, the Board works to strengthen infrastructure and create policy. The Board ensures competitive salaries and benefits, including health, dental, flexible spending account, paid time off, and a 401K option. The Board also supports professional growth opportunities for teachers by funding staff development.

ERIN JURRENS – PRESIDENT

Joined 2022-2023



LAURA LONG – TREASURER

Joined 2021



CAROLINE MAY – SECRETARY

Joined 2020-2023



CATHY JOHNS – MEMBER

Joined 2020-2023



CHALLIS KINNUCAN – MEMBER

Joined 2020



BRIGID KINSELLA – JOINING SECRETARY

Joined 2023



MEGHAN ROHLF – JOINING PRESIDENT

Joined 2023



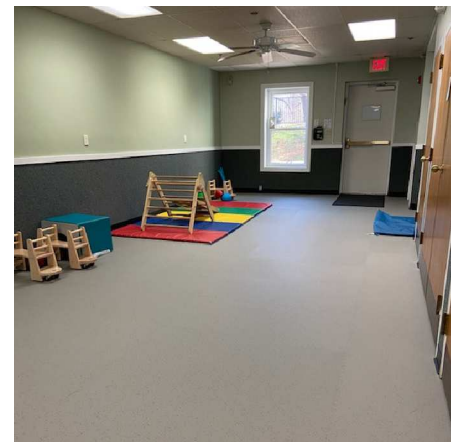
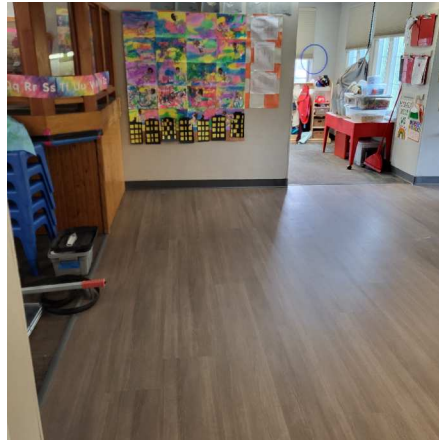
OUR BUILDING

IMPROVEMENTS & UPDATES

CECC's historic building provides a home-like atmosphere to our classrooms. As we continue to grow as a center, we are improving our spaces to best fit our needs.

Recent improvements to the building include:

- All new ADA-approved handles
- New lower gross motor room floor
- New floors in the Cardinal and Dragonfly Room
- Repair to the outside of the building (by the Ladybug Room)
- Roof repairs (total roof replacement anticipated in 2024)



OUR EDUCATORS

MILESTONES & ACHIEVEMENTS



Ms. Kathy & Ms. Laura presented at the Child of the Young Years conference in March 2023. Kathy's presentation was shared with educators throughout the state and focused on lessons learned from Mr. Fred Rogers and how his practices and techniques are still relevant today.

Mayor of Clayton, Michelle Harris, visited with a proclamation declaring April 3-7, 2023, as the Week of the Young Child as part of our celebration of NAEYC's Annual Week of the Young Child.



Ms. Raegan and Ms. Laura traveled to Jefferson City for Child Advocacy Day in MO.

With the Arbor Day Foundation, Clayton Parks Department, and CECC, our students assisted in planting six new trees in Oak Knoll Park that will form a "basket tree" as they grow together.



FROM OUR PARENTS

The first day of daycare is rough for everyone.....especially new parents. I remember dropping Camden off for his first day at CECC and being completely overwhelmed at the thought of leaving my 13-week-old firstborn in someone else's hands. The classroom teachers, parents, and staff were so welcoming and warm that day. I immediately felt like a part of the community. In the blink of an eye, Camden's journey with CECC is about to end as he heads to Kindergarten. My eyes tear up as I think about how much he has grown and developed in our five years here. Brooks and I attribute a lot of his progress to the amazing teachers and staff who have loved and supported him along the way. We are fortunate enough to have more time at CECC with our 17-month-old, Beckett. Just like Camden, we feel that Beckett has been loved and supported by everyone he has encountered to date at CECC. Every child is different, including mine, and the individualized approach to learning and interacting that teachers embrace is so important in these early years. We are blessed to be part of this amazing community from which we have made many lifelong connections and friends!

-The Borglum Family , Cardinal & Ladybug

It's hard to put into words how truly grateful we are to be a part of the CECC community. Since first enrolling our son in 2022, we have been in awe watching him grow from a shy 18-month-old into an independent and talkative toddler. We are so thankful for the thoughtful and exciting lesson plans his teachers put together that stimulate his mind but also encourage physical movement. The confidence he has gained over the past year is amazing!

In addition to the robust lessons, we've been so impressed with the effort made by the entire staff to truly get to know our family. Each morning we are greeted warmly, by name, as we walk into the building and at our son's classroom. Seeing our son's excitement reflected in the face of each staff member we encounter only reassures us that our son is in the right place.

We couldn't think of a better place for our almost three-year-old to spend his days. His little sister can't wait to join him in the new school year!

-The Burgdorf Family, Goldfish



As a new mom, there was nowhere else and no one else I would trust with my baby other than CECC and Quita in the Duckling Room. She made going back to work feel conceivable, and taught us both so much about being parents. A couple of years later, there was nowhere and no one else I'd have trusted with my kids as we recovered from a global pandemic. Having now seen two kids through CECC, I cannot say enough about how exceptional this place is, both as a parent and as an outgoing Board Member. The teachers' and staff's dedication to our kids is obvious, but the amount of experience, average tenure, and teacher-to-child ratio are all truly remarkable. It is such a special place, and I have seen first-hand that with the support of our community, we can overcome and accomplish anything.

-The May Family, Owl & Dragonfly



FROM OUR TEACHERS

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I have been at the center for over 38 years, never would I have dreamed I would be at the same school that long! Working at CECC and being a part of an exceptional school has been truly rewarding. We work to create a nurturing and caring environment for our families and children entrusted in our care. It starts with our families and building relationships with each other, and these relationships are what make this important and passionate work. I still have contact with so many past families! Over the last few years, former students have been bringing their own children to our center, coming full circle speaks volumes to me about how wonderful CECC's reputation has continued through the years.

In addition to wonderful, meaningful work with children and families, CECC itself is an exceptional center that offers many benefits to its employees. We have open communication with the administration and our Board of Directors. Benefits include medical insurance, PTO, competitive salaries, as well as a 401K retirement program. These benefits make us teachers feel seen and valued by our community. I and I know many other teachers, who are grateful to the center and to our families for all their support as we care for their children in their early years.

-**Vicki Chitwood, Lead Teacher**

THANK YOU

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PARENTS, VOLUNTEERS & DONORS

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU

Thank you to all who have given a monetary, in-kind, and/or time contribution.

On behalf of the children and staff of Clayton Early Childhood Center, we would like to thank you for your most kind and generous donation.

Your support is vital to the success of our students and contributes to promoting courageous students, life-long learners, and compassionate leaders.

501(C)3: 43-4835595

A special thank you is given to Laura Cortner, who served as our Executive Director since August 2019. She navigated the complexities of COVID, assisted in bringing in more than \$1 million in grants, and negotiated our continued lease with the City of Clayton, all of which have ensured our program can operate at the highest quality for years to come.

Please join us in sharing our gratitude for her contributions and celebrating the care she has shown for our school, families, teachers, and most importantly, our children.

CONTACT

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