

Children's partners with preschoolers at FCLC

Three mornings a week, sounds of busy children fill the first floor classroom of the Family Child Learning Center (FCLC) in Tallmadge. During those mornings, preschool children from varied developmental backgrounds join together for all their classroom activities.

The developmental preschool at the FCLC is an innovative program sponsored by Children's Hospital through a four-year grant by the Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. This four-year model demonstration grant provides the FCLC preschool with \$150,000 for each year. The model combines a center-based preschool with home-based interventions for three- to five-year-old children with special needs. The classroom curriculum is designed to encourage children to be active and engaged in their environment. It follows criteria for a developmentally appropriate program set forth by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The home-based curriculum focuses on responsive parent-child interactions.

In each of FCLC's morning and afternoon classes, the program includes six children with special needs and four typically developing children. Children with special needs participate in the Partnering with Preschoolers program, one of the first of its kind in the United States. The program is based on research that shows preschool intervention is unlikely to enhance children's development without parent involvement. As part of the Partnering with Preschoolers program, staff make bi-weekly home visits to families where they provide parents with strategies known to be effective in promoting the early learning and development of young children with special needs. To allow opportunity for one-on-one interaction, the program has a high adult to child ratio with a total of four staff members and three graduate



FCLC classroom teacher Christa Coleman engages preschoolers in a game of dress-up. Christa is one of several team members presenting at the National Association for the Education of Young Children's Annual Conference and Expo in New York City in November 2002.

students from Kent State University assisting children. There is a minimum of three adults in the preschool classroom at all times.

Preschool Director Abbie Wheeden McCauley said, "Parents play a critical role in their children's development and education, not only in the early years, but through preschool and later. Our research has shown that parents who implement these strategies in their daily routine activities have a major impact on the developmental functioning of their children."

Data is collected to evaluate the impact of this model on children's cognitive, social, language and motor development. This project will help identify the types of interaction styles and activities that are most effective in engaging children actively in their classroom and home activities which maximize opportunities for learning. The preschool staff will present findings from data collected during the first year of the preschool at the NAEYC conference in New York in November 2002.

For information about the preschool program at FCLC, contact the center at 330-633-2055.

41st Annual Harness Race Rally raises money for Burn Center

The Friends of Children's Hospital held their 41st Annual Harness Race Rally on Wednesday, August 7, 2002, at the Northfield Park Race Track. The event raised \$67,500 for the Clifford R. Boeckman M.D. Regional Burn Center of Children's Hospital.

The grand prize raffle winner was Donald Jackson, Jr. of Akron, who won a 2002 Chrysler Sebring from the Brunswick Auto Mart. Some of the other prizes included a trip to the Kentucky Derby, a Goodyear blimp ride, a television and a cocktail ring.

The 2002 Harness Race Rally event chairperson was Linda Churchman. Madeline Bozzelli is the current President of The Friends of Children's Hospital.



Dr. Robert Klein, Chairman, Department of Surgery, and his family enjoyed pre-race activities during the 41st Annual Harness Race Rally.