



## Child Development Center



# Message from the Director

Welcome to the 2011-2012 school year at the UTSA Child Development Center. We all want to make sure your experiences in our *learning community* are enjoyable and stress-free!

Parents and teaching staff will be working together as partners in the early care and education of young children in the center. Please make sure to arrange an informal or formal parent-teacher conference sometime in the first two weeks, if you and your child are new to the center – or if you have new teams of teaching staff because your child has changed classrooms. We encourage you to provide input to your child’s early education by sharing your goals and dreams for your children.

As we go through the school year, I encourage all our families to get to know each other and all the staff. There will be an opportunity in early October to join in with some fun events at our fall celebration for families. You will hear more about this as the date gets closer. It is always a networking and social occasion that you won’t want to miss.

The Child Development Center is a great place for children, families, and students. Beginning on September 1, 2011, the UTSA CDC becomes connected to the College of Education and Human Development (COEHD) with even more learning activities for students engaged in early childhood education course work. We are excited to discover where that new venture will take us all.

Please feel free to call or stop by my office at any time. I invite you to let me know if I can help in any way.

## Spotlight

We would like to acknowledge the staff and families of the UTSA CDC for all their hard work and dedication to preparing for our accreditation assessment visit by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

The assessor visited our center on July 26th, 2011. It takes some time (perhaps months) to know the results of the visit and to receive official notice that we have maintained our accreditation as a high quality program. The visit was a positive experience and we will inform everyone when we receive the news.



Here are some things to remember as we start off a new school year...

- Parents, families and staff, please utilize your key card upon entering the front door of the building. This records activity to the police department and ensures the safety of our children. We must be informed if you have misplaced or damaged your card.
- Cell phones and other digital and electronic devices are to be out of sight and not in use upon entering the UTSA CDC.
- Be aware of the policies in your parent handbook referring to illnesses so that you may be prepared if your child becomes sick during care.
- Please do not allow children (or parents!) to run in the hallways of the center for the safety of all our families.
- Dress your children accordingly for the hot hot weather! During this time of high temperatures, children may be going outside only one time in the morning, instead of twice a day.
- Be sure to provide your teachers with extra clothing AND shoes. Be mindful of what your child's teacher requests for the safety of your child.



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### Special points of interest:

- ☺ Welcome Letter for New School Year
- ☺ NAEYC Visit
- ☺ Temperament
- ☺ Policy Reminders

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# Understanding Your Child's Temperament

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Parenting is one of the toughest jobs around. Guiding children in today's world takes a huge amount of physical and emotional energy. Parenting is a lively dance involving the interplay between the child's style and the parent's approach and responses.

## What is Temperament?

Children are born with their natural style of interacting with or reacting to people, places, and things—their temperament. In the late 1950s, temperament research began with the work of Alexander Thomas, Stella Chess, and associates. The New York Longitudinal Study identified nine temperament characteristics or traits. The researchers found that these nine traits were present at birth and continued to influence development in important ways throughout life. By observing a child's responses to everyday situations, the researchers could assess these temperaments. Temperament is stable and differs from personality, which is a combination of temperament and life experiences, although the two terms are often used interchangeably.

The realization that many behavioral tendencies are inborn—and not the result of bad parenting—is perhaps one of the most important insights parents gain from learning more about temperament.

## Temperament Traits

By understanding temperament, the parent can work with the child rather than trying to change his or her inborn traits. The nine temperament traits and an explanation of the dimensions are given below.

- **Activity:** Is the child always moving and doing something OR does he or she have a more relaxed style?
- **Rhythmicity:** Is the child regular in his or her eating and sleeping habits OR somewhat haphazard?
- **Approach/withdrawal:** Does he or she "never meet a stranger" OR tend to shy away from new people or things?
- **Adaptability:** Can the child adjust to changes in routines or plans easily or does he or she resist transitions?
- **Intensity:** Does he or she react strongly to situations, either positive or negative, OR does he or she react calmly and quietly?
- **Mood:** Does the child often express a negative outlook OR is he or she generally a positive person? Does his or her mood shift frequently OR is he or she usually even-tempered?
- **Persistence and attention span:** Does the child give up as soon as a problem arises with a task OR does he or she keep on trying? Can he or she stick with an activity a long time OR does his or her mind tend to wander?
- **Distractibility:** Is the child easily distracted from what he or she is doing OR can he or she shut out external distractions and stay with the current activity?  
**Sensory threshold:** Is he or she bothered by external stimuli such as loud noises, bright lights, or food textures OR does he or she tend to ignore them?

## Temperament Types

These traits combine to form three basic types of temperaments. By understanding these patterns, parents can tailor their parenting approach in such areas as expectations, encouragement, and discipline to suit the child's unique needs.

- **Easy or flexible** children are generally calm, happy, regular in sleeping and eating habits, adaptable, and not easily upset. Because of their easy style, parents need to set aside special times to talk about the child's frustrations and hurts because he or she won't demand or ask for it. This intentional communication will be necessary to strengthen your relationship and find out what your child is thinking and feeling.
- **Difficult, active, or feisty** children are often fussy, irregular in feeding and sleeping habits, fearful of new people and situations, easily upset by noise and commotion, high strung, and intense in their reactions. Providing areas for vigorous play to work off stored up energy and frustrations with some freedom of choice allow these children to be successful. Preparing these children for activity changes and using redirection will help these children transition (move or change) from one place to another.
- **Slow to warm up or cautious** children are relatively inactive and fussy, tend to withdraw or to react negatively to new situations, but their reactions gradually become more positive with continuous exposure. Sticking to a routine and your word, along with allowing ample time to establish relationships in new situations, are necessary to allow independence to unfold.



## Parenting with Temperament in Focus

Most children have some level of intensity on several temperament traits, but one dimension will usually dominate. Refrain from using negative labels such as "cry baby," "worrywart," or "lazy." The child's abilities to develop and behave in acceptable ways are greatly determined by the adults in their lives trying to identify, recognize, and respond to his or her unique temperament. By doing so, the adults can alter or adjust their parenting methods to be a positive guide in their child's natural way of responding to the world.

Parents also need to get a clear picture of their own temperament traits and pinpoint areas in which conflicts with their child arise due to temperament clashing. When there is temperament friction between parent and child, it is more reasonable to expect that the parent will make the first move to adapt. When a parent or caregiver understands the child's temperament, he or she can organize the environment so that "goodness of fit" happens.

Here are principles to keep in mind as you strive to achieve this fit.

- Be aware of your child's temperament and respect his or her uniqueness without comparing him or her to others or trying to change your child's basic temperament. Be aware of your own temperament and adjust your natural responses when they clash with your child's responses.
- Communicate. Explain decisions and motives. Listen to the child's points of view and encourage teamwork on generating solutions.
- Set limits to help your child develop self-control. Respect opinions but remain firm on important limits.
- Be a good role model because children learn by imitation.
- Enjoy the dance.

This match between the child's temperament and the demands or expectations of his or her environment (family, school, childcare setting) greatly improves relationships. Parents who are tuned into their child's temperament and who can recognize their child's strengths will find life more enjoyable. It will be a dynamic dance that will last a lifetime.

### References

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Our Vision is to provide a safe and nurturing environment where children can develop through play and real-life experiences.

Our Mission is to provide a child-centered program for children of UTSA students, faculty and staff in which parents, teachers, and administrators work together to benefit the whole child through developmentally appropriate programs dedicated to helping children reach their fullest potential and develop necessary life skills.



## Calendar of Events

August 24, 2011— Fall Semester begins

September 5, 2011— Closed for Labor Day

October 7, 2011—Fall Festival

November 24-25, 2011— Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday

December 5-21, 2011— Parent Conferences

December 16, 2011— Fall Semester Ends

December 26-30, 2011— Closed for Christmas Holiday

January 12-13, 2012— Closed for Staff Training

January 16, 2012—Closed for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

January 17, 2012—Spring Semester begins