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The MISSION of the Acorn School for Early Childhood Development is to provide high quality, accessible, early care and education programs and to advocate for higher standards in the field of early childhood education.



Letter from the Executive Director

Happy New Year!

2012 is shaping up to be a banner year for The Acorn School! You may have heard that The Acorn School stepped up as leader in the early childhood community, and has embarked on a mission to provide a comprehensive and inclusive system for delivering services for children and families in Boulder County by opening Wilderness Early Learning Center. The opening of the Wilderness Center presents an opportunity to position The Acorn School not just as a **school**, but also a **school of thought** regarding early childhood development.

With the partnerships of numerous non-profit early childhood services and overwhelming support from the early childhood community, City of Boulder, the Boulder County Commissioners, and other private funders and individuals, The Acorn School was able to purchase the building at 2845 Wilderness Place on December 16, 2011.

We know this is a huge transition for you and your families, so please keep yourselves updated with the Acorn Newsletters, Bi-Weekly emails, and by stopping by or contacting us at anytime with your questions, concerns and comments. Please take a moment to review your email from us on Friday, January 13th which includes a summary of the Parent Meeting from earlier in the week.

We look forward to working with the Acorn community and the early childhood community at-large on this project, and the great opportunity ahead of us.

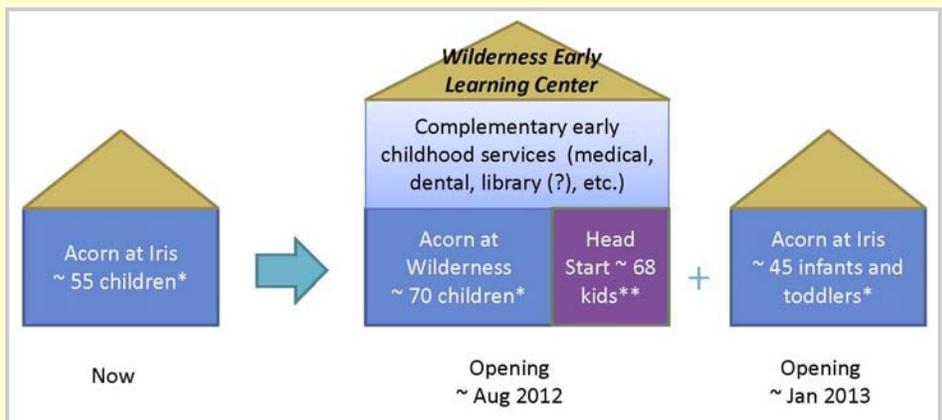
Matt Eldred –Executive Director



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Wilderness Early Learning Center Update

- The new building will be undergoing renovation to transform it from an office building into an educational facility during the Spring and Summer of 2012, and The Acorn School is projecting to open in August 2012 for the new school year servicing Infants through Pre-K. *Current families of the Wilderness location will receive priority for enrollment of other children.*
- A transition plan has been set for moving the current Acorn operations over to Wilderness Early Learning Center, allowing the renovation of the current location to be re-opened as an Infant/Toddler center in early 2013 (see slide below). *All the children will stay with their same teachers and classroom groups. The biggest difference is that they will “Move-Up” to a new class at a new location.*
- We will be increasing the licensed capacity of the classrooms, but do not plan to operate at full capacity. This will potentially allow for more drop-in opportunities, and flexible scheduling. We will continue to strive for high-quality care, and try to maintain classroom sizes much lower than requirements set by State Licensing.
- A capital campaign scheduled for this year will complete the funding of the \$3.3 million project, for which \$2.2 million has currently been raised. We have received enough funding for the purchase of the building, and the rest will go toward renovation and startup costs.
- The wrap-around services located upstairs will be easily available to families, but they will not have open access to the classrooms.
- Head Start will be renting space from The Acorn School and operating as it’s own entity. We will potentially partner with them for services and staff training, and will share playground space.



*These are State Licensing capacities, however we strive for high quality care and try to maintain classroom sizes much lower than requirements set by State Licensing.

**Head start could serve up to 17 children in a classroom at one time. 2 classrooms will offer full day programs and 1 classroom will offer 2-half day programs with the potential to serve a total of 68 individual children.

Message from our Curriculum Specialist

Here's a link to an interesting article another parent forwarded to me about the significance of "old-fashioned play", and how we have unfortunately moved away from playing how we knew it as children, toward more of an "entertainment" philosophy. The premise of the article is that when we used to think of play we thought of an *activity*, not an object. The author suggests that by introducing too many toys to our children over the last several years we have actually decreased their imagination and creativity. Furthermore, this decrease in imagination has actually led to a corresponding decrease in "executive function", or self-regulation skills, which are the single most important predictors of academic success. In short, let's provide more opportunities for free time, imaginative games of pirates or cowboys and let our kids engage in old-school play vs. overwhelming them with blinking, singing, remote control toys.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/text/s.php?slid=19212514&m=1>

Suzy Evans, Curriculum Specialist



Important Upcoming Dates

February

12th - New Year Potluck

14th - Valentine's Day

*Classroom Parties

20th - NO SCHOOL

President's Day

23rd & 24th - Picture days

March

TBD - Parent Training

11th - Daylight Savings Time

Begins

17th - St. Patrick's Day

20th - Science Fair

26th-30th - Spring Break

April

10th - Art Show

11th-27th - Parent/Teacher

Conferences



Message from our Child Health Liaison

As we come back from Winter Break and get back into the swing of the things, I wanted to remind everyone of The Acorn School's Sick Policy. Let's have a healthy and safe 2012!

We ask for parents to please not bring their children to school when they are ill. If a child has a contagious illness, they cannot return to school until they are no longer contagious. When a child becomes ill but does not require immediate medical help, a determination must be made whether the child requires exclusion.

The teacher should determine if the:

- Illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities.
- Illness results in a need for care that is greater than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children.
- Illness poses a risk of spread of disease to others.

For example: A child has an axillary (under the arm) temperature of 100° or more and he or she is acting abnormally sluggish and uninterested in participating in normal daily activities.

If any of these criteria are met, the child will be excluded, regardless of the type of illness.

If a child has exhibited symptoms of being sick, they must stay home for a minimum of 24 hours, even if their pediatrician has given authorization for the child to return. If a child exhibits sick symptoms at school, the teacher will contact the parent(s) immediately. Someone must pick the sick child up within one hour of notification. The child's teacher will complete an Illness Exclusion Form, noting the symptoms exhibited and exclusion criteria that must be resolved in order for the child to return. The child will be secluded from the other children to help keep all of the children healthy.

Thank you, Adrian Leverett - Child Health Liaison

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