

**Department of Psychology and Education**  
**Lab School Requirements/Priorities**  
5/24/07

**Overall Goal**

To create a vibrant partnership of families, teachers, and College students and faculty to provide excellent education and care for children and an academic resource for College students to study children, learn teaching skills, and conduct research in child development, education, and related fields.

**Explanation of terms and requirements**

Lab school classrooms: The facility would serve 80-90 College students a year who work IN the classrooms (for approximately 3 hours at a time one or two times each week) as participant observers for a number of different courses. While at the center, students complete course assignments that involve observing children and teachers and implementing activities. These students require close supervision by the lead teacher/lab instructor attached to the classroom (e.g., brief meetings when students arrive to up date them on recent events/changes and plans for the day and longer meetings at the end of the day to reflect on what occurred in the classroom). The classrooms where these students would be placed are referred to as “designated lab school classrooms” in the remainder of this document. These classrooms would include preschool and after-school elementary school classrooms. (The number of designated lab school classrooms would be determined by the number of children, the hours of operation and the times when participating students could come and work with children [i.e., not nap times] ).

Observational classrooms: The center would also provide observational booths or windows for 100-200 students per year who are observing from outside the classroom. These students do not participate in the classroom and do not require any supervision from center staff. The observation facilities should be planned to allow about 15-20 students to observe in the building at any one time and to offer a wide range of observation opportunities. The observational classrooms would include the designated lab school classrooms and possibly infant and toddlers classrooms to provide a wider age range for observations. “Observation only” classrooms (as distinct from lab school classrooms) would not need to have staff available to supervise college students.

**Staffing**

1. Highly qualified lead teachers/lab instructors in each designated lab school classroom (minimum of a BA or BS in early childhood education or related area and several years of experience; masters degree preferred)
2. Sufficient staff in each designated lab school classroom so that the lead teacher/lab instructor can be away from the classroom each day to meet with college students and to communicate with college faculty about student assignments and performance

3. On-site liaison/coordinator to work with college faculty and lab school lead teachers at the center to schedule observers and students working in the designated lab school classrooms and to facilitate faculty and student research projects in any of the classrooms (e.g., assisting with permission letters, scheduling interviews).
4. Continuation of current long-term teachers/lab instructors as coordinators/trainers for new staff.

### **Qualifications of teachers in designated lab school classrooms**

1. Commitment to undergraduate education and to psychological and educational research
2. Ability to demonstrate “best practices” that reflect current theories and research in developmental psychology and education
3. Ability and willingness to serve as a model and mentor to college students and other educators (i.e., teaching in a “fish bowl with large numbers of observers both in the booth and in the classrooms)
4. Flexibility and willingness to accommodate student course assignments and faculty and student research that involve in-classroom activities, demonstrations, or curricular innovations.

### **Physical Facilities**

1. Observation booths or windows attached to all designated observational classrooms that are situated, designed, and equipped so that observers can easily see and hear actions and conversations of a wide variety of children (total on-site observation capacity for 15-20 students at one time)
2. A minimum of two small meeting/research rooms appropriate for conducting interviews with children and meetings with college students and with parents (large enough to accommodate 4-5 adults)
3. Sufficient access to telephones and internet so that teachers in designated lab school classrooms can stay in touch with faculty about course assignments and student performance and maintain contact with students and faculty about plans for course work or research.

### **Enrollment and Scheduling**

1. A mix of infant, toddler, and preschooler classrooms during the morning and early afternoon with the addition of children in grades K-5 in an after-school program to provide a wide range of observational and training sites for college students and research opportunities for college students and faculty

2. Families that represent a wide range of socioeconomic and ethnic groups
3. Families who see themselves as partners in the scholarly endeavors of college students and faculty and are willing to grant permission for all children attending the center to be observed by students and faculty and to participate in on-going lab school activities (e.g., observations, individual and small group activities run by students, curriculum innovations) and are receptive to having their child participate in research projects (separate letters of permission need to be signed).
4. Flexible and creative scheduling of children's activities and routines (e.g., meals and naps) in designated lab school classrooms to maximize opportunities to observe children, to participate in classrooms, and to conduct research

**Issues to consider**

1. The research on child care quality shows overwhelming evidence that for-profit childcare centers have significantly lower quality in their teaching staff, curriculum, and provisions for health and safety (Fran Deutsch would be happy to comment further on this topic as she has done extensive research in this area.)  
What is the college going to do to ensure high quality education for children and for the College students? (Perhaps insist that the center maintain NAEYC accreditation and be periodically reviewed by the CCDLA?)
2. How do we guarantee stability/longevity of program and agreements with the department? Courses, requirements, and research projects are often planned years in advance. How can we be guaranteed that the program will continue and maintain the appropriate level of quality and staffing to function as our lab school?
3. How can the department and other interested parties at the College continue to have a role in personnel actions for teachers and other staff that will work directly with our students? (College Advisory Committee?)