



Early Childhood Development

Historical Overview

For more than a century, children's needs have been at the heart of the Thompson Child & Family Focus mission. Established near uptown Charlotte in 1886 by leaders of the Episcopal Church, the Thompson Orphanage was home and family for more than 75 years to children who did not have either.

Thompson's commitment to meeting the needs of North Carolina children and families has remained steadfast as its programs and facilities have evolved in response to more diverse needs and complex societal issues. Today, Thompson partners with at-risk children and families to help circumvent destructive lifestyle patterns and prevail over the traumatic effects of child abuse and neglect. Thompson offers a broad array of services that span a child's life from birth to maturity.

Early Childhood Services at Clanton Road Campus, 1645 Clanton Road

For more than a decade, Thompson has been working in the Charlotte community to lift up young children and families *before* precarious circumstances yield further harm and obstruct healthy development. The agency helps at-risk children knock down roadblocks to success by providing them with an exemplary learning environment where a low student-teacher ratio, a nurturing support system and high-level educational programming converge to make the difference.

Thompson launched its innovative early childhood programming in 1996 with the opening of the Thompson Child Development Center in the fragile community of North Charlotte. In early 2009, Thompson relocated to its new Clanton Road campus in West Charlotte to care for 40% more children and families. Today, the five-star licensed, nationally accredited center serves almost 150 children from birth up to kindergarten. Many of these children have been diagnosed with behavioral or medical special needs, or live in unstable family environments that include domestic violence, substance abuse and abiding poverty. Thompson's state-of-the-art programs, developmental resources and family support services equip children and families with the tools to achieve educational accomplishments and lifelong academic success.

The early childhood programs embrace the philosophy that all children can learn with excellence. To this end, Thompson's highly educated professionals work within small, interactive classroom settings to ensure personalized attention. A literacy curriculum helps to close the language gap that often plagues children as they enter public school, while the exceptional arts program cultivates creativity and natural talents.

The Thompson Child Development Center has been recognized by The Duke Endowment as one of only a handful of Model Childcare Centers in North Carolina, and is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Steady Steps

Within the past six years, Thompson has built upon its expertise and success, earning widespread recognition as a pioneering leader in early childhood outreach programming. The Thompson outreach program mentors 100 early childhood centers in Mecklenburg, Cabarrus, and Union Counties, North Carolina, offering resources and training to help those centers achieve higher ratings and accreditation. Expansion initiatives are continually underway. Headquartered at the Clanton Road Campus in West Charlotte, outreach program professionals help address the need for higher quality care in North and South Carolina by building professional relationships with other childcare providers.

Throughout the year, Thompson offers training and hands-on learning opportunities for their partner centers at the Thompson Child Development Center and at Saint Peter's Lane. Through its monthly in-service training sessions for early childhood educators, mentoring workshops for center directors, and individualized center consultations, Thompson reaches out to help create progressive child development programs for more than 10,000 children. Beyond that, Thompson provides teaching resources and tools, and delivers strategies to measure and improve program quality.

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