



## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Website:

[unl.edu/cdl](http://unl.edu/cdl)

Find us on Facebook:

[facebook.com/ruthstaplescdlUNL](https://facebook.com/ruthstaplescdlUNL)

Come Visit us:

1855 North 35<sup>th</sup> Street

East Campus

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Lincoln, NE 68583-0830

(402) 472-1675

Our program is Nationally Accredited by the NAEYC National Academy of Early Childhood Programs. We participate in Step Up to Quality. We facilitate nature-based curriculum. We have teachers recognized by the Terri Lynne Lokoff Child Care Foundation and awarded the National Child Care Teacher Award.



## COMMUNITY OF LEARNING

The educational mission of the Child Development Lab is fulfilled by creating a "community of learning," in which children, parents, students, and faculty all learn from each other. To this end, experiences are provided which stimulate curiosity and desire to learn, foster optimal development in all areas, and foster a value for all living things and the responsibility for living in the world in an ecologically wise manner.



# RUTH STAPLES CHILD DEVELOPMENT LAB SCHOOL



## NATURE EDUCATION

Our Angeline Anderson Children's Garden provides a setting where children can begin to understand the principles of the natural world interacting with natural beauty throughout the seasons.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

[go.unl.edu/cdl](http://go.unl.edu/cdl)

[facebook.com/ruthstaplescdlUNL](https://facebook.com/ruthstaplescdlUNL)

[@UNL\\_CYAF](https://twitter.com/UNL_CYAF)



# Who we are and what we strive to do...

## **We are a community of learners.**

Teaching and learning is viewed as a partnership shared by teachers, students, children, and families. We promote supportive, respectful, and trusting relationships which is the foundation of our partnership.

## **We are reflective practitioners.**

We engage in a cycle of inquiry about children's development, teaching, and the world around us. We observe, question, discuss, document, share, observe, and ask new questions. We celebrate and make visible the learning by sharing our discoveries with others.

## **We are artists and scientists.**

We believe that art and science share a core set of processes: observation, appreciation, abstraction, investigation, and communication. We provoke learners to experience and create beauty.

## **We are connected to the natural world.**

We create opportunities for children and adults to observe, wonder, and marvel in their relationship with nature. We promote stewardship and respect for all living things.

## **We believe that development is holistic.**

All areas of development are interconnected. We promote children's learning by supporting all domains of development while recognizing each learner as a whole person.

## **We believe that all children, families, and students are important.**

All children, families, and students enrich our program. We explicitly include learners with a range of abilities and prepare students to work competently with diverse learners.

## **We believe that children are precious.**

Children need and deserve to be in beautiful and respectful environments. By creating such an environment we communicate to children that they are valued within our community.

# Ruth Staples CDL as a Teacher Preparation Facility

Our Student Teachers are integrating developmental theory into the planning, implementation, and evaluation of individual and group experiences for young children in a classroom settings alongside the coaching and mentoring from Child Development faculty members at the CDL. The student teachers spend 25 contact hours at the lab school.

The students are receiving their degree in either:  
**Inclusive Early Childhood Education (Birth-Grade 3)**  
**Elementary Education/Early Childhood or**  
**Child Youth and Family Sciences**

In addition to student teachers we also have practicum students each semester. These students spend a few hours a week in the classroom focusing on curriculum and classroom management skills.

\*\*Each semester begins with a new group of student teachers. This is why we have a focus on relationships. We start the semester with a home visit. This starts the home to school connection and starts building the relationship right away with your target teacher.

We also participate in research projects with various faculty members.



# Guidance Strategies

Our goal is to assist children in learning competent and appropriate social emotional behaviors as a part of our classroom community. Our guidance philosophy involves implementing strategies at several levels. One specific strategy is called the 4Rs.

## Using the 4 R's

The 4 Rs is a way of communicating to children about the rules and consequences that have been established in our environment. Each of the 4 Rs is based on research about how children learn and is focused on how to guide children in being successful.

**Reflect** - Label behavior or feeling

**React** - Your emotion and the child's behavior

**Reason** - Safety, rights, property

**Rule** - Positive statement of what to do

**Consequence** - (when needed) What will happen if they do it again...

EXAMPLE: While walking on a field site a child runs ahead.

**Reflect** - You're excited to get to go ahead of the group.

**Personal message with Warning** - I'm worried that you could get hurt if you run ahead. Walk with me. If you run ahead again you'll have to hold my hand. (this shows the child your feelings (react) in order to help him see how his behavior impacts others. It also states the rule clearly, telling the child what to do.)

**Follow Through** - (If the child runs ahead again you follow through with a consequence). You're running ahead. Remember, I told you to walk with me. Now you'll have to hold my hand.



# Mission

Our mission provides the foundation for: discovering and implementing new knowledge about children's growth and development; developing new educational methods; refining pedagogy regarding children and adults; publishing and disseminating the knowledge, methods, and pedagogy developed through lab activities in order to promote "best practices" in early care and education. Each component of the mission -- Education, Service, and Research -- is complementary, enhancing the other components. Education and research could not exist without service to children and families; education and service are enhanced through research.

The educational mission of the CDL is fulfilled by creating a "community of learning," in which children, parents, students and faculty all learn from each other. As a teacher-training facility we provide our college students with essential experiences in early childhood education under the ongoing guidance and support of our faculty, which is an important part of our mission.

The service mission is fulfilled by providing the best possible developmentally appropriate early care and education; and, by providing various consulting and support services in Lincoln, in the State of Nebraska and nationally. The research mission of the CDL is fulfilled through both informal and formal research. Every day in the classroom students and teachers conduct informal research by observing and documenting children's development, behavior and developing hypotheses. Formal research is conducted only after significant planning and approval by the Institutional Review Board and written Informed Consent by parents for children's participation is obtained. Even with parental consent, children are always given the choice to participate. Formal research is conducted in the classroom or in the research complex and is designed to be game-like, often involving pictures, toys, or puppets.

Parental support of the mission of the CDL is essential. As parents, you contribute to the community of learning, to early care and education, and to informal research on an ongoing basis.



# Ruth Staples Child Development Lab School

We are an early childhood program which offers pre-service teachers a high quality early childhood environment to practice best teaching strategies under the coaching and modeling of Child Development Faculty. This allows us to provide education and care to 18 months to age 6 in two classrooms. The program is open to the entire community; however, children of faculty members, students, and staff of the University of Nebraska are given priority.

## HOURS AND CLOSURES

The lab school follows the UNL Academic calendar and is closed when students are not in class. An academic calendar will be provided at the beginning of each year. Our facility has the front door locked during the times of 9:30-4:00 p.m. You must ring the door bell to get access to the building.

### *Incident Weather*

The lab school is closed when the University is closed- Watch for notification by email and the UNL Web Page

### *Hours of Operation*

7:30-5:30 \*\*Late fee will begin after the doors lock at 5:30. A late fee is \$15 after the doors lock. And will be additional \$10 for every 10 minutes late.\*\*

### *Arrival and Pick Up Times*

Children must arrive in the classroom with an adult and will only be released to an authorized adult. All unknown adults will be asked to show identification before entering a classroom. Please inform staff of anyone new picking up your child or they will not be released to this individual.

### *Parking*

Parents may park with a permit for 30 minutes in the front of the building for longer visits to the lab school we ask that you park on the south side of the building in the marked parking spots.



# EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

We encourage you to enroll in UNL Alert Messages if you have an UNL account. Sign up at [unlalert.unl.edu](http://unlalert.unl.edu) Upon notification of an emergency the director or lab school faculty will notify parents of the campus emergency via email. We will identify in the email the status of teachers and children along with our location.

### *FIRE PROCEDURES:*

Children and teachers will evacuate the building and relocate to Ruth Laverton Hall. We will notify parents using the contact information on our roster.

### *TORNADO WARNING PROCEDURES:*

We will follow the national weather service announcements and local 10/11 radio news station announcements. All children and teachers will be placed in the tornado shelter the men and women's restrooms when we are placed under a tornado warning. An email will be sent out to parents notifying that we are taking shelter. A contact number will be given in the email. If a parent does come during a tornado warning they must leave the building or stay in the tornado shelter.

### *Emergency Response to Violence or Shooter on Campus*

Run if you know where the danger is and it is safe to go. Hide if it is unsafe to escape, in a secure place.

Other emergency procedures are written in the staff handbook and can be seen by request.

# FOOD

Ruth Staples Lab School proudly provides, with the support of UNL East Campus Dining Services a nutritious and well balanced breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack each day. Our meals meet all USDA and CACFP guidelines.

Families can provide their own items for meals if preferred to meet the individual needs of their child. This can be arranged with their classroom teacher.

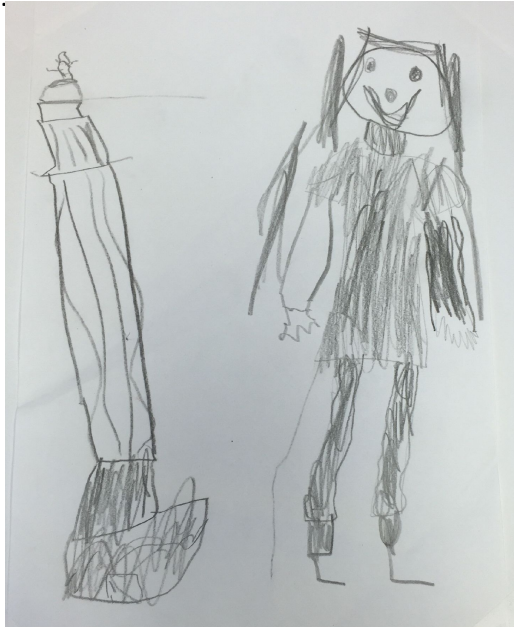
*Our center is a peanut and tree nut free facility.*

Families may send healthy food items to celebrate special moments for a child but must be store purchased food.

### What is Documentation?

Documentation, in the education field, describes the process of gathering evidence of children’s learning through observation, work samples, conversation transcripts, and children’s and teachers’ reflections. This evidence is then analyzed, interpreted and shared. While high quality documentation may be displayed, a display does not necessarily constitute documentation. Rather, documentation is an ongoing process that entails discussion, teacher self-reflection and portfolio collections. Documentation can benefit all the important adults in children’s lives. It promotes advocacy, too, because when children’s learning is “made visible” for parents through artistically-designed displays the public’s respect and valuing of early education is increased.

*“We got to study Nebraska, but like actually go and see it. (The capitol.) And so I really remember that, and now in Kindergarten when we are learning about Nebraska I know almost everything about Nebraska because I already learned it at Ruth Staples.” Ruby Age 6 in Kindergarten*



Lincoln, Ne State Capitol Building Drawing—Ruby Age 5



### TUITION

Tuition is based on a monthly rate. The tuition payments remain the same regardless of attendance. The cost of operation remains the same for the program even if your child is absent. Regular attendance is encouraged so children can fully benefit from the planned program. Tuition is for the full Academic year which is from July through end of June.

#### Late Fee

In order to operate in a quality manner timely tuition payments are needed. If payment is not received by the date due, a \$15.00 fee will be added to your account and attendance will not be permitted until payment is made. Special circumstances and arrangements should be discussed with the director before payment becomes a serious problem. We value each family and will work with you to ensure continuous participation. **Parent fees are used solely to support the programs conducted at the Ruth Staples Child Development Laboratory. In fact, parent fees only cover 60% of the full cost of care at the CDL.**

The RSCDL is open 50 weeks of the year. We are closed for Professional Development Days, for UNL Holiday shutdown, and closed for a week before UNL Academic Fall Calendar begins.

RSCDL follows UNL emergency closure procedures.

What Parents have to say about our program!

**“Work days are much more enjoyable since I know my child is well cared for and his learning is at an optimum!”**

**“I rave about CDL to everyone that I know!”**

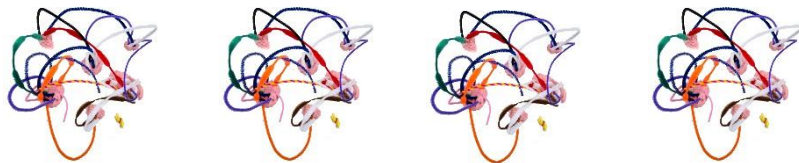
**“The facilities are excellent, the communication is terrific, and our child really enjoys the time she spends there.”**



# HEALTH AND SAFETY

We are responsible for providing a safe and healthy environment for children. We encourage safeguarding the health of all of our children and need to exclude your child from the program if any of the following has occurred:

- They have had a temperature of 100 degrees or above within the past 24 hours.
- 2 watery stools or 1 uncontained bout of diarrhea within the past 24 hours.
- Vomiting within the past 24 hours.
- Undiagnosed rash or contagious rash.
- Any symptom of infectious disease (such as red, mattery eyes)
- Mouth sores with drooling
- Wheezing, deep or chesty, croupy, or constant cough.
- Conjunctivitis and on antibiotics for less than 24 hours.
- Misery with a cold or inability to cope in group situations because of not feeling well.



If a child becomes ill while at school we will contact you to pick up your child. We require you are here within 30 minutes of when we notify you. In the event that the parent cannot be reached we will contact the individuals you have listed as emergency contacts. Children must be **SYMPTOM FREE for 24 hours** before they can return to school . Please refer to the Health Contract for more information

## Medication

Medications will be dispensed by paid staff and only with signed parent permission. **Medications must be in their original container and labeled with the child's name and correct dosage. Please do not put medication in your child's cubby!** Hand all medication directly to a teacher so that it can be stored safely.

Please inform us of any allergies or special health needs your child may have so that we may work with you to best serve your child.

# Curriculum & Assessment

## How are we learning?

We use a method inspired by the project approach which is an in-depth study of a particular interest or topic of a group of children. The children and teachers study a topic for a period of time and go into great detail to learn about the elements of this topic. The teachers are intentional and integrate content knowledge like math, literacy, social skills, art, and science into the project. Along the way while the children and teachers are investigating and exploring the teacher collects the children's questions.

Children use a variety of resources to find answers to their questions. These include traditional resources like books. They also use field sites or visits to east campus and even our community of Lincoln to investigate their questions. They make field notes also known as drawings to remember their ideas and look to think back on their ideas.

## How do we know children are learning?

Teachers collect artifacts and observe children daily. They analyze the children's work. The teachers use The Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines to guide their practice and connect their observations to this framework to document children's development and learning.



## Nature Based Education

Our curriculum focuses on experiences and connecting children with nature. When possible our learning environment is in our outdoor classroom including East Campus. Our project work topics often are initiated by an observation in nature. We spend the majority of our time learning outside and will quickly learn that it is in our culture to learn through play in the outdoor environment!

## Confidentiality Policy

- .All information regarding any family and /or child(ren) enrolled in our program is treated as confidential.
- .All children's records must remain in a locked filing cabinet in the center office.
- .Records related to center children and their families, and information contained in those records, are to be shared with other staff or other University officials only if that person has a legitimate educational interest (i.e., on a "need to know" basis only). Information cannot be disclosed with any third party without the written consent from the child's legal guardian.
- .All students and faculty are briefed on the center confidentiality policy prior to their placement at the CDL.
- .Families are not to post photos of other children on social media sites to respect the privacy of our families.



## Assessment of Children

Assessment is about looking at the processes children go through during their daily experiences and analyzing each child's strengths and areas for growth. Assessment is not about planning activities for a specific standard or assessment tool but rather should be viewed as planning an intriguing, quality experience for children and then reflecting upon what standards were met through that experience and how teachers can stretch children's thinking through future, connected experiences. It is our belief that assessment is the teacher engaging in the cycle of inquiry. There are in fact, two levels of inquiry taking place in our classrooms on a daily basis. The first is children investigating their questions through planned and responsive activities. The second is teacher's close observation of children in order to further recognize children's understanding and learning. When experiences supporting inquiry are encompassed in the classroom, assessment becomes a natural component of the day for both children and teachers. Faculty introduce assessment procedures during initial orientation as well as coach student teachers throughout the process.

The following methods are used as a part of our assessment plan with each child:

### Observations and Documentation

Teachers actively observe and document each child during his/her experiences in play, project work, and daily routines. These observations serve as a basis for the assessment of children's overall development and progress. These observations are compiled into individual child portfolios.

### Desired Results Developmental Profile

The Desired Results System consists of 6 Desired Results, program standards and assessment tools. The assessment tools consist of a developmental profile to measure children's progress towards the Desired Results, an environment rating scale to assess the learning environment, and a family survey to assess family's progress towards the Desired Results for Families.

### Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines

Teachers use these guidelines as a continuum of learning and development that represents children birth-age 5.

### Parent Interview

At the beginning of each semester each child's target teacher will conduct a home visit with their target children's parents. Parents will be asked to share goals for their individual children during the interview process.

### Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)

This is a 30-item questionnaire completed by parents. The purpose of the ASQ is to identify any children who may need further assessment.

All assessment results and information will be kept confidential. Access is limited to program administration, teachers working directly with that child and the child's parents. Only with written permission from parents can the information be shared with other individuals.

Please see the Director if you have any questions or concerns about our assessment methods.

## Diversity

We welcome children, families, students and staff of diverse ethnic, religious, economic, and social backgrounds and abilities. Diversity in the program enriches the learning environment for everyone. Students and staff are encouraged to learn as much as possible about the children and families in our program and families are encouraged to share their traditions and culture.



## Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)

The Parent Advisory Committee is composed of parents representing each classroom in the CDL, as well as the Lab Director. PAC is one method that parents can use to provide input to the program and work towards continual program improvement.



Although PAC is not a policy-making body, input from parents is crucial to the success of our program. The Parent Advisory Committee makes recommendations on issues common to all classrooms within the Lab. PAC meetings are scheduled as needed and will be announced via the program listserv. All parents are welcome to attend any meeting. If you are interested in becoming involved in PAC, please let the CDL Director know. We would be happy to have you!

## Parent-Teacher Partnerships

Providing a high quality and developmentally appropriate context for children is a cooperative endeavor, in which we value the participation of parents. Families are of primary importance in children's development. Because the family and the early childhood practitioner have a common interest in the child's well-being, we acknowledge a primary responsibility to bring about communication, cooperation, and collaboration between the home and early childhood program in ways that enhance the child's development.

You are your child's first and most important teacher. As the best expert on your own child, we will ask you what your developmental goals are and we will ask you for information that will help us get to know your child and family better. This will help us to plan appropriate activities for your child and to better meet his/her needs. Good communication is central to this cooperative partnership. Please feel free to discuss concerns about your child with your child's teacher, or with CDL Director. You may request a conference any time you feel it is necessary. Conferences are routinely scheduled near the end of each semester.

We value parent perspectives and invite you to actively participate in our program. We will have many opportunities for you to be involved but we welcome your ideas as well! Look for information about this in the weekly newsletter or visit with the Director about opportunities for your involvement.

If there is an issue or concern with a faculty member or student teacher you may email the director with the difficulties and differences that arise with the specific details of the interactions or speak in person directly with the director. If the issue is not resolved after an action plan is in place then a meeting with the Child Youth and Family Studies Department Chair will be the next steps in the action plan to resolve any issues.

### Visits

Parents are welcome in the classroom any time. There will be opportunities for you to participate in activities throughout the school year. The observation booth is available for you to use at your convenience. It is also a space for teacher evaluation and observation; so, it may be occupied at times. Please visit with your classroom teacher regarding volunteering in the classroom. We would love to have you spend time with us!

