## The School for Young Children

### I. Update on 2014-2015 Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete the Communications Document and provide training for teachers to review expectations.</td>
<td>The Communications Document has been completed and will be added into new versions of handbooks. All staff have had a chance to review and give feedback on the document. Expectations will be fully reviewed in the fall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue to work on the Assessment Document to fully outline assessment procedures for families and staff.</td>
<td>The Assessment Committee continued to work on this document throughout the year and made significant progress. We will aim to finish and distribute the document in the 2015-2016 school year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide a Community Resource binder in the Resource Room and a Community Events bulletin board in front vestibule.</td>
<td>A Community Resource binder has been added to the Resource Room and is available to all families and staff. The Resource Committee also created a Community Events board in the front vestibule which has been actively used this year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore having a PAC Community Events &amp; Projects chairperson.</td>
<td>It was a challenge to get chairpeople for all PAC committees this year. This will be explored again next year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve accessibility for persons with disabilities by making front doors ADA compliant.</td>
<td>This project was completed last summer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rename and relabel interest areas in all classrooms using child-centered names.</td>
<td>Individual classrooms made this a goal for this year and completed this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase consistency across classrooms for small groups so that all classrooms keep small groups the same for at least 1 month.</td>
<td>All classrooms are now keeping small groups the same for at least one month, as evidenced by an increased small group PQA score.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a “Recruitment and Enrollment” plan.</td>
<td>Although elements of this have been discussed and put into place, a formal written plan has not yet been developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase or obtain donations for a starting collection of books and materials that classrooms can borrow to infuse diversity into their environment and represent the cultures of the children in their class.</td>
<td>Specific materials were ordered for individual classrooms at the beginning of the year. The Resource Committee will add this to their agenda for the fall.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
II. Family Survey Results

Thank-you to all of the families and staff who recently participated in our annual NAEYC Family and Staff Survey. We had 56 families and 16 staff members return their surveys. The results of the surveys help us to analyze our strengths and weaknesses and plan for ongoing improvement in our program.

Strengths that Emerged:
- Positive staff/family relationships
- Families feeling respected and valued
- Minimal staff/family conflicts
- Support for children with special needs
- Staff address concerns with sensitivity
- Managing allergies
- Clear information provided about our philosophy as well as events and activities
- Family awareness of community events
- Drop-off and pick-up procedures
- Communication regarding contagious diseases
- Written conference reports two times a year
- Provision of materials in a language each family understands
- Opportunities for families to work with other families and to plan programs and events together
- Awareness of opportunities to volunteer

Areas Needing Improvement that Emerged:
- Regular communication (at least once a week) between teachers and families
- Communication regarding children’s needs and interests
- Asking for family input on the program in multiple ways
- Staff using information about families’ backgrounds and beliefs to modify the curriculum and environment (**We have already added this to our child information sheet for next year.)
- Volunteer opportunities for working families / more advance notice of volunteer opportunities
- Opportunities to work with staff on community projects
- Staff providing information about community resources
- Sharing information about the procedures for, purposes for, and uses of assessment

A Sampling of Comments:

Please note that the comments below are general program comments. Feedback offered in relation to specific classrooms will be shared privately with the staff in that classroom.

- In regards to regular communication:
  - *It'd be nice if the contact were a little more frequent.*
  - *If I engage the teacher on a parenting point at drop off, there is a little discussion--but this is a very chaotic time, and valuable insights are rare. Maybe a simple weekly note system could help, such as: “This week ______ was engaged in this activity; he had _____ social interaction.” Not lengthy, but some concrete information on a regular basis would be greatly appreciated! I find the 2 parent conferences per year inadequate.*
I don’t get to talk to my child’s teacher very often.
I would like more.
Twice monthly on average.

One of the biggest insights we gleaned from this survey is that regular communication with all families is something we need to improve significantly. We recently developed a Communication Document that gives teachers clear expectations for communication with families. In the fall, we will meet as a staff to develop an action plan to ensure that all families receive at least weekly communication from their teacher.

In regards to volunteer opportunities:

I don’t know if there are more regular volunteering options, such as weekly or bi-weekly. I have volunteered for book reading & helping at Fall Festival.....but these are not exactly regular events. That said, SYC appears to be welcoming to parents & families and eager to let them participate!
I would like to come more often. The teachers are very open to parent participation but there never seems a good time to come in and help.
I work full time. / I am a full-time parent so I can’t come in. / Working makes it tough.
Tons of opportunities to get involved.

There are many opportunities for families to get involved and volunteer at the School for Young Children and in their child’s classroom. There appears to be inconsistency across classrooms as to how well this is communicated. A unified approach will be developed at our fall Professional Development Day to make sure volunteering opportunities are clear across all classrooms. We will also brainstorm ways to make it easier for working families to get involved.

In regards to assessment:

I don’t think the teachers have had the opportunity to talk to us about that yet.
My child started mid-year so I may have missed this.
The tool was mentioned, but I know very little about it. I look forward to learning more at our Spring Parent Conference!
I don’t know much about this and need to ask.

It is clear to us that one of the areas we need to grow in is sharing information regarding our assessment procedure. We currently have an Assessment Committee developing a comprehensive Assessment Document which will be shared with families. We will also develop more clear requirements for teachers to share assessment procedure information with families at the beginning of the year.

This year our classroom had lice and the notice that went home did not clearly state it was in our classroom rather in the school. A more clear and concise letter would be very helpful and spring other families into action.

Whenever there is a contagious illness reported in a classroom, we send out notices to all of the families in that classroom only. If the child is in Backpack, we hand out notices to all of the Backpack families as well. When it was brought to our attention that the letter provided by our nurse said “in your child’s program” instead of “in your child’s classroom,” we immediately edited the letter. Going forward, it will be clear that the health concern is in your child’s classroom and/or in Backpack. We apologize for the lack of clarity provided by our original letter.

After the survey asking if people were interested in a TK program and many families said yes I don’t feel as though this was taken seriously and that steps have been taken to establish a TK program.
that will benefit those who wish to enroll. I also don’t think it is being advertised to people outside of the school community.

- The survey sent out by PAC asked if families were interested in a Pre-K program. We took very seriously the number of people who were interested in this option, and thus made the decision to allow children to enroll at SYC in their 5-year-old year. However, it is very important to us to stay true to the original vision of the School for Young Children when it was established in 1936. Our philosophy is that of developmentally appropriate play-based curriculum. To create a direct-instruction academic program for preschoolers would be in opposition to our philosophy. There are several other options available in the community for families who are looking for a more structured academic program prior to kindergarten. In regards to advertisement, we have advertised the third year option both in print ads and through social media ad campaigns.

- It is an amazing school & my children have had an incredible experience!! I wish the public schools would model SYC in regards to experiential & play based learning!!! I love the school.
- I could not ask for better teachers for my children and a more helpful staff. I would recommend this program to any parent
- I absolutely love SYC. My child has thrived there this year and enjoys going to school every day. The teachers and staff are amazing and do a remarkable job teaching the children good manners, respect, personal skills, independence.
- I really love SYC. I feel it has been such a benefit to my daughter and I really regret not sending her when she was three.
  - Thank you for your positive feedback!

III. Staff Survey Results

Strengths that Emerged:
- Teamwork and access to specialists and consultants to assist with behavioral concerns
- Curriculum that is meaningful to children
- Collecting assessment data in all domains and utilizing the data to inform instruction
- Meeting children’s health/medication/allergy needs
- Engaging in outdoor play daily
- Education and training for staff
- Engaging in community events
- Understanding of our mission

Areas Needing Improvement that Emerged:
- Updated training in assessment
- More time for assessment
- Communicating with each family at least once per week (particularly in 3-day rooms)
- Training in conflict resolution
- Greater knowledge of resources for families
IV. Preschool Program Quality Assessment (PQA)

The Preschool Program Quality Assessment is an annual assessment tool. Every classroom is observed for a full day or more and rated in the areas of Learning Environment, Daily Routine, Adult-Child Interaction, and Curriculum Planning and Assessment. Each area includes multiple items (for example, Daily Routine includes such items as Small-Group Time and Choices during Transition Times). Each item includes multiple indicators. Each indicator is rated on a scale of 1-5, and each item is then assigned an item score. Each classroom receives an “Average Classroom Score.” The entire school is rated on Parent Involvement and Family Services, Staff Qualifications and Development, and Program Management. This yields an “Agency Score.” Director Kimber Perrotta is a certified reliable PQA assessor and conducted all portions of this assessment. Please see the chart below for this year’s scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Classroom Score for all 7 Rooms</th>
<th>4.38 (Last year’s score 4.12)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agency Score</td>
<td>4.09 (Last year’s score 3.96)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Classroom Strengths that Emerged:
- Plentiful, varied, and open-ended materials
- Consistent daily routines
- Appropriate length of time for each part of the day
- Large-group time
- Clean-up time
- Snack and meal time
- Meeting basic physical needs
- Handling separation from home
- Warm and caring atmosphere
- Encouragement of child initiatives
- Acknowledgement of child efforts
- Encouragement peer interaction
- Independent problem solving

Classroom Areas Needing Improvement that Emerged:
- Minor health/safety concerns (many of which have been addressed by work orders since the assessment – such as an uneven sidewalk, wobbly furniture, etc.)
- Organization and labeling of materials
- Support for non-English-speaking children

Agency Strengths that Emerged:
- Opportunities for family involvement
- Staff-family informal interactions
- Support for children with special needs
- Education of all staff
- Professional development opportunities for staff
- State licensing
- Low ratios and turnover
- Written program policies
- Accessibility for those with disabilities
- Adequate funding
Agency Areas Needing Improvement that Emerged:
- Lack of home visiting
- Staff affiliation with local, state, and national early childhood organizations (need for involvement by more staff and reimbursement for memberships)
- Need for a formal recruitment and enrollment plan
- More family support for encouraging learning at home
- Staff knowledge of community resources
- More frequent program assessment and strategic planning

V. Student Data

Preschool Assessment Framework data was collected for students entering kindergarten or a third year of preschool. The child’s benchmark level for each standard was entered, with “emerging” being recorded as a whole unit (level 3 or level 4) and “mastered” being recorded as a half unit (level 3.5 or level 4.5). The average benchmark level for each standard was calculated. Please see the graph below for the results:

![Average Benchmark Level for Exiting 4-Year-Olds](image)

The expected level for a 4-5-year-old is level 3. Therefore, as seen above, the average benchmark level was above “Mastered Level 3” for all 30 standards. However, variations did occur.

Strengths of children across our program include:
- Shows self-direction with range of materials
- Sustains attention to task/goal that child has set out to accomplish
- Manages transitions, follows rules & routines
- Cares for self independently
- Sorts objects

While still at an appropriate level for their age, standards with the lowest average levels include:
- Identifies printed words
- Uses writing to convey meaning
- Shows empathy and caring for others
- Engages in scientific inquiry

VI. **Action Plan for 2015-2016 School Year**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Person Responsible</th>
<th>By</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Continued Goals from Last Year</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete the Assessment Document to fully outline assessment procedures for families and staff.</td>
<td>Assessment Committee</td>
<td>May 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore having a PAC Community Events &amp; Projects chairperson.</td>
<td>PAC/Director</td>
<td>October 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a “Recruitment and Enrollment” plan.</td>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>May 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase or obtain donations for a starting collection of books and materials that classrooms can borrow to infuse diversity into their environment and represent the cultures of the children in their class.</td>
<td>Resource Committee</td>
<td>December 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a unified plan with staff on ways to incorporate more parent volunteers into the classroom and/or how to more clearly communicate volunteer opportunities that exist.</td>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>September 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Goals</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide staff with updated training opportunities in the following areas: Assessment, Conflict Resolution, English Language Learners, Literacy, and Encouraging Learning at Home</td>
<td>Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore ways to elicit more feedback on the program throughout the year such as a physical or electronic suggestion box, classroom surveys, open forums, etc.</td>
<td>Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide an opportunity for staff to better familiarize themselves with local resources for families.</td>
<td>Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use September staff development time to address communication concerns and create plans for ensuring that communication happens weekly with each family.</td>
<td>Administration/Staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Thank you for your feedback and your help with improving our school!**