



All Things Ignatian



Russell Child Development Center Men, Women and Children for and with Others

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The children of the James R. Russell Child Development Center (RCDC) have a zest for life. They jump, skip, sing, talk, laugh, smile and enjoy their day with their whole hearts. The teachers and student employees inspire them to learn, to grow and to become the best people they can be—especially in caring for and helping those around them. Children and families at RCDC are learning to change the world.

Uniting Mind and Heart

Each child at RCDC participates in our curriculum, from 6 weeks of age to 6 years of age. One of the primary focuses in our program is building social and emotional skills. For infants, this might be playing peek a boo with their caregivers to practice eye contact, strengthen their relationship with their teachers, and to start learning to recognize expressions and feelings of others. Toddlers start learning to identify their feelings and begin to control them. They practice these skills by reading books and singing songs about feelings, by having conversations with teachers and doing pretend play to practice different social roles. It is great to watch them pretend to talk on the phone, cook dinner and rock babies in imitation of their parents and teachers! Preschoolers are beginning to focus on interactions with peers as well as teachers. The teachers are careful to create an environment where the children learn to play with other children of different ages, genders, cultures and abilities. The children learn to interact and negotiate with play partners in order to build good relationships, learn and have fun!

Children are taught and encouraged to show their classmates compassion from the youngest ages. Activities such as washing, rocking and playing with baby dolls can help children learn how to care for others. Children are encouraged to



The preschoolers enjoy spending time with the “grandmas and grandpas” at the Seven Oaks Retirement Community

frequently offer each other comfort when sad (as pictured bottom left), show excitement for each other on achieving a new skill, and generally recognize and respond to each others’ emotions. We are proud to be supporting and guiding the development of children who are for and with others!

Forming Agents for Change

The more children are connected with their community, the more they will care for it. RCDC creates these connections in multiple ways. The infants and toddlers focus mainly on their classroom community and outside community members that can come to RCDC to visit them.

The preschool classroom participates in a pen pal/friendship project with preschoolers from nearby Educare of Omaha. The preschoolers have exchanged letters and pictures and gone to play and share a picnic with their pen pals. They are learning about people who have different home lives than them, learning to make new friends and building connections in our community—whether they are aware of it or not!

The preschoolers are also building relationships with our community partner, Seven Oaks of Florence, a retirement community for low income seniors. RCDC preschoolers have sent art and taken a field trip to visit, read books, and play games with the “grandpas and grandmas” at Seven Oaks. The preschool classes are learning that they can make people happy just by interacting with them. Children and adults of all ages, cultures, abilities and economic backgrounds can find common ground when they play!

Children and families are also all invited to participate in several service learning activities throughout the year, from a recent coat drive for the neighboring Heart Ministry Center to canned foods to the Food Bank to Creighton’s annual Creighton Clean up. Each child at RCDC will learn that they can change the world through large and small acts of service and kindness.



Two toddlers console a friend as he says good bye to his parents for the morning.

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