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Rio Hondo College Child Development Center Accepting Applications for Fall 2015 Enrollment

Celebrated Center gearing up for 20th anniversary in 2016

WHITTIER – Rio Hondo College’s highly lauded Child Development Center – which soon will celebrate its 20th year in its hilltop campus facility – is accepting applications for children ages 3 and 4 for its fall 2015 preschool program, which begins Aug. 24.

The center, praised for its sustainable foods program and innovative student-directed, age-appropriate curriculum, enrolls four classes of 16 to 20 students on a sliding fee scale based on parent income levels. State and college subsidies help cover remaining costs.

Each student receives a personal developmental assessment from center staff. Curriculum programs are constructed around that assessment to provide children with the combination of skills and experiences to help them develop to their fullest potential.

“Our Child Development Center is an integral part of our mission to support our community at all levels,” said Rio Hondo College Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss. “The center offers a rich variety of experiences for all children, helping them build a strong foundation not only for their educational future, but also for life.”

In fall, preschoolers grow and harvest fruits and vegetables that are used in the center’s kitchen, where all food is prepared. In spring, they take field trips to visit regional programs dedicated to children, such as the California Science Center, Kidspace Children’s Museum in Pasadena and the children’s garden and petting zoo at Cal Poly Pomona.

The center is linked with Rio Hondo College’s child development education program, which brings supervised student instructors into classrooms for additional interaction and guidance. In spring 2015, student instructors helped provide more than 1,800 hours of intensive, hands-on interactions for preschoolers, said Dr. Sondra Moe, a Rio Hondo professor who oversees the center and teaches student instructors.

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Rio Hondo College, located in Whittier, California, is committed to the success of its diverse students and communities by providing dynamic educational opportunities and resources that lead to associate degrees, certificates, transfer, career and technical pathways, basic skills proficiency, and lifelong learning. For information on the College or its programs, please call 562-692-0921 or visit www.riohondo.edu.

That depth of knowledge and instruction helps distinguish the center's program from the state's new transitional kindergarten program for 4 year olds.

"Our program is founded on the guiding principles of early childhood learning. Transitional kindergarten programs offered through the state only require teachers to master content areas," Moe said. "As such, center students are full participants in helping to set a curriculum of interest that we then shape to meet the needs of the whole child."

To enroll, students must turn 3 years old by Sept. 1, 2015; the center also serves 4 year olds, including those who qualify for transitional kindergarten programs. Preschoolers may be the children of Rio Hondo College students and staff or members of the broader community. The center enrolls students year round, with one-week breaks between semester programs.

Center staff are already hard at work planning the coming year's programs and special events, including preparations to recognize its 20th anniversary on the Rio Hondo College campus. Started in the 1960s, the center moved onto the campus in 1996. It has been home to generations of students who now bring their children for preschool.

"Our Child Development Center is a great example of how Rio Hondo College's educational and community missions intersect," said Board of Trustees President Madeline Shapiro. "We are able to provide a much needed community service with the highest possible standards as well as a learning lab for training the next generation of early childhood teachers."

For information on enrollment and eligibility for state subsidies, go to <http://www.riohondo.edu/behavioral-and-social-sciences/child-development-center/program-description-and-fees/>.

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