



The USC/Gateway Child Development and Research Center

This is a first in South Carolina! Gateway Academy and the University of South Carolina have formed a public/private child care partnership to combine the educational resources and experts from the early care and education community to create a center of excellence for South Carolina's children. USC early childhood faculty and staff and the South Carolina Department of Education lead the educational team. This South Carolina child development model provides opportunities for the best care and education possible as well as observation, training, education and research for professionals in the state. Both a child development center (200 children, ages 6 weeks- 12 years) and a research center are housed in one building on the USC campus. The program provides a model of high quality private sector child care and a laboratory for cost of quality analyses to address the dilemma of high quality services that are affordable as well as other early childhood research issues.

Through seed funding from ABC (SC Department of Health and Human Services), the building was uniquely designed to meet the highest quality specifications for child development environments for the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the WestEd Program for Infant Toddler Caregivers. Louis Torelli, a nationally recognized environmental design expert, WestEd Program for Infant Toddler Caregivers, worked closely with the Gateway Academy owner and his architect from the initial plans through specifications for room design and set up to design a state model for child development environments. Dr. Joe Frost, nationally recognized playground design expert, designed the outdoor environment to be spacious, unique, and exciting for all ages.

Ongoing training and education for early childhood staff are a key focus of this center of excellence. A well equipped "smart" classroom in the Research Center was funded by ABC (SC Department of Health and Human Services) to meet the education and training needs of the early care and education community in order to improve the quality of child care statewide. South Carolina Educational Television provides leadership in preparing the training to be broadcast throughout the state. This distance education through the "smart" studio classroom serves not only USC but also the South Carolina Department of Social Services ABC Program, other junior and senior institutions of higher learning, the Head Start community, South Carolina Department of Education and the early care and education community throughout South Carolina. The distance classroom provides a well equipped classroom in the Research Center to meet the education and training needs of the early care and education community to improve the quality of child care services statewide. All research will be designed to continue the quality care and education for children in the state and to improve practices in the center as well as the state.

The center's unique public/private partnership currently includes:

- Gateway Academy,
- USC and the USC Development Foundation,
- The Schuyler and Yvonne Moore Family Foundation,
- South Carolina Department of Social Services (formerly South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services),
- South Carolina Educational Television (SCETV),
- South Carolina Department of Education.

Each partner brings a different perspective in seeking new strategies to address the challenges of providing a model of quality early care and education through state of the art indoor and outdoor learning environments for children from birth to twelve years of age, caring trained staff, research, and statewide distance training and education. Negotiations continue to include GLEAMNS Head Start as a key partner. New partners are invited to join this unique opportunity to broaden this exciting statewide partnership.

