

ROCKDALE CAREER ACADEMY EARLY LEARNING CENTER EARNS NATIONAL NAEYC ACCREDITATION

Program among the top in the nation by earning accreditation

The Rockdale Career Academy (RCA) Early Learning Center, operated by Rockdale County Public Schools in Conyers has earned accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) – the nation’s leading organization of early childhood professionals.

“We’re proud to have earned the mark of quality from NAEYC, and to be recognized for our commitment to reaching the highest professional standards,” said Dr. Samuel King, superintendent of Rockdale County Public Schools. “NAEYC Accreditation lets families in our community know that children in our program are getting the best care and early learning experiences possible. I appreciate the hard work and dedication of our teachers, administrators and staff so that all of our young children may enter kindergarten ready to learn and thrive.”

The Early Learning Center (ELC) is a Reggio Emilia inspired, full-day preschool program housed at Rockdale Career Academy that serves 3 and 4 year old children from low to moderate income families. The curriculum goal is to ensure that all children have the skills necessary to be successful in Rockdale County Public Schools kindergarten classrooms. The ELC follows NAEYC accreditation standards and operates as a lab school for the Early Childhood Education Department Career and Technical Education program at RCA as well as an intern site for DeKalb Technical College and Mercer University.

To earn NAEYC Accreditation, the RCA Early Learning Center went through an extensive self-study process, measuring the program and its services against the ten NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and more than 400 related Accreditation Criteria. The program received NAEYC Accreditation after an on-site visit by NAEYC Assessors to ensure that the program meets each of the ten program standards. NAEYC-accredited programs are also subject to unannounced visits during their accreditation, which lasts for five years. “I am so proud to be part of a team and work in a community that is putting children first,” says Jesseca Causey, early learning coordinator for RCPS. “The ELC staff is a tremendous group of educators who have truly earned this recognition. I believe this is not just a celebration for us as a preschool, but also a celebration for the work in early education in our community.”

In the 25 years since NAEYC Accreditation was established, it has become a widely recognized sign of high-quality early childhood education. More than 7,000 programs are currently accredited by NAEYC – approximately 8 percent of all preschools and other early childhood programs.

“The NAEYC Accreditation system raises the bar for child care centers and other early childhood programs,” said Jerlean E. Daniel, Ph.D, executive director of NAEYC. “Having earned NAEYC Accreditation is a sign that the RCA Early Learning Center is a leader in a national effort to invest in high-quality early childhood education.”

The NAEYC Accreditation system has set voluntary professional standards for programs for young children since 1985. In September 2006, the Association revised program standards and criteria to introduce a new level of quality, accountability, and service for parents and children in child care programs. The new standards today reflect the latest research and best practices in early childhood education and development. NAEYC is committed to utilizing the newest studies and analysis on positive child outcomes to ensure young children continue receiving the highest-quality care and education possible.

The NAEYC Accreditation system was created to set professional standards for early childhood education, and to help families identify high-quality preschools, child care centers and other early education programs. To earn NAEYC Accreditation, a program must meet each of the ten NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards. Programs are accredited by NAEYC for a five-year period.

For more information about NAEYC Accreditation, visit www.naeyc.org/academy.