

Big Oak Child Care Center & Orton Park Camp

Strategic Plan 2010-2015

June 23, 2010

Introduction

Big Oak Child Care Center has provided high-quality child care in a home-like setting to families of Madison's East side for more than 23 years. Big Oak has developed this strategic plan to help the staff, programs, and families to act and react purposefully in the face of opportunities and challenges and continue to be successful. The strategic plan will also give direction to staff and the board providing common purpose from year to year as board composition changes. Moving forward this plan is intended to be a living document that is reviewed regularly and adapted to address changing conditions.

Vision

Big Oak is a source that helps children plant firm roots in the world and helps ground the efforts of all families. It will be a touchstone for families during the early years of a child's life and a learning experience that continues to give beyond the Big Oak years. To achieve this Big Oak will continue to shape and refine its spaces and programs, invest in staff, strive to be more accessible, and act as a positive presence in the community.

Mission

The mission of Big Oak Child Care Center, a community-based not-for-profit organization, is to provide high quality learning experiences for young children in a safe and nurturing environment. Big Oak strives to empower children by promoting individuality, emphasizing social and emotional development, building strong partnerships with families, and creating an atmosphere committed to recruiting and retaining skilled early childhood educators.

Philosophy Statement & Values

Each child brings to Big Oak a history of life experience and cultural heritage. Partnerships between families and the Center are essential to the growth and development of the individual child. We strive to create and promote these strong partnerships with families and create a sense of community.

Big Oak recognizes the importance of play in the learning process for young children. Play is the basis for learning in our programs. We aim to provide a full, stimulating, developmentally appropriate environment which encompasses the many learning styles of young children. The environment allows for children to develop and master skills at their own pace.

Big Oak works to empower children, promote individuality, and develop strong partnerships with families while creating an environment that helps young children attain physical, cognitive, social, and emotional achievements, preparing them for the next step in life.

The spirit of the Big Oak community is thoughtful, warm and compassionate. To support it the Center will strive to be consistent with these values.

Child centered. Teachers facilitate each child's development based on the child's interests and individuality, helping learn about themselves and the world.

Open and accepting. Big Oak is open and accepting of all children and families. Big Oak cultivates an expectation of respect: that all children, families and staff will be treated with respect and treat others the same.

Play. Play offers rich experiences in which staff nurture each child's cognitive, physical, social and emotional development, guiding and challenging each child to progress.

Partnerships with families. Big Oak is committed to working collaboratively with families to promote a child's success.

Quality staff. Big Oak recognizes the importance of quality staff in all areas, and recruits, retains and supports highly qualified and skilled educators.

Goals

1. Continue to recruit and retain highly qualified staff by providing competitive pay and seeking ways to improve the facilities, benefits, policies, administrative communication and support, and other aspects of the work environment.
2. Improve indoor and outdoor facilities to better support and match the high quality of Big Oak programs and staff.
3. Expand the student population modestly in accordance with space renovation and child-staff ratios and continue to regularly evaluate and adjust programming to better serve families and children.
4. Maintain Big Oak's non-profit status, city accreditation, shared parent-staff governance and financial viability while striving to make Big Oak's programs more accessible to families of children of all abilities and socioeconomic means.
5. Adapt communication strategies to take advantage of new tools and strengthen proven methods in support of strong programs, family partnerships, and staff interactions.

Objectives & Strategies

1. Continue to recruit and retain highly qualified staff by providing competitive pay and seeking ways to improve the facilities, benefits, policies, administrative communication and support, and other aspects of the work environment.

<i>Objectives and Strategies</i>	<i>Who Responsible</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>How to Evaluate</i>
1. 1. Increase staff sense of ownership and autonomy in their roles.			
i. Ensure that staff and administration roles are clearly defined and respected via job descriptions, handbooks, etc.	Staff Board	Nov. 2010	Revisions to job descriptions, handbooks, etc. Follow-up staff survey
ii. Enhance staff and administration expectations and practices regarding communication	Staff	Jan. 2011	Follow-up staff survey
1. 2. Evaluate and address conditions of the working environment			
i. Through the upcoming and subsequent contract negotiations process address issues to optimize the work environment while staying fiscally sound. Special attention should be paid to the following issues: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Options for additional staffing (substitute pool, floating position, etc.) with the goal of staff expansion b. Compensation, benefits, leave policies c. Planning and room-ready time for lead teachers 	Board and staff contract negotiations committee	By early Fall 2010, and ongoing	Contracts signed and a new package in place – comparable to or better than other centers
ii. Provide budget for quarterly in-house training of staff	Program Director	Quarterly, beginning Sept. 2010	Evidence of implementation and staff evals of quality
1. 3. Work to recruit and retain staff with a diverse range of backgrounds			
i. Identify at least 2 new places to list job openings that reach a more diverse applicant pool and advertise future openings through these channels	Admin, Prog. Dir & Board	Next opening and ongoing	Job posting in at least 2 additional sites viewed by people of varied backgrounds
ii. Add language in job postings indicating Big Oak seeks diversity and prioritizes employing members of local community	Admin, Prog. Dir & Board	Next opening and ongoing	Job postings include indicated language

1. 4. Provide greater access to resources for staff to excel			
i. Expand and maintain a parent-volunteer pool	Board	By Jan. 2011	Regular pool/schedule of parent volunteers utilized and maintained
ii. Increase staff access to technology a. Survey staff to determine what would be most useful b. Recommend to Board to set technology budget c. Create 3-year multi-phase implementation plan	Admin.	Begin roll out by Sept. 2011	Implementation plan in place, initiate technology purchases
1. 5. Through the process of adopting Creative Curriculum use it to refine teacher and administrative roles, formal communications, and assessments, etc.			
i. Review and edit, if necessary, job descriptions of Lead Teachers, Teachers, Program Director, and Administrator to reflect Creative Curriculum	Program Director, Administrator with approval from Board	December 2010	Descriptions of roles, assessments, etc include indicated language
ii. Adopt Creative Curriculum's child assessment tool	Prog. Dir & teachers	Begin with Fall 2010 conferences	Tool will be utilized

2. Improve indoor and outdoor facilities to better support and match the high quality of Big Oak programs and staff.

<i>Objectives and Strategies</i>	<i>Who Responsible</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>How to Evaluate</i>
2. 1. By the end of 2010 assess viability of redesigning playground areas, including replacing structures			
i. Establish playground committee	Board		
a. Committee will locate existing plans and available expertise (designers, etc..) and request design options and estimates	Committee	End of 2010	Committee established
b. Committee will review and evaluate results and present to Board with recommendations	Committee	Summer 2011	Monthly Board check-ins
c. Depending on feasibility/results Board votes on how to proceed	Board	Fall 2011	

2. 2. By end of 2010 assess viability of renovating or expanding the interior space of the existing building and begin exploring alternatives for relocation.

i. Establish space renovations committee	Board	By early 2011	Committee is established
a. Committee will locate available expertise (architect, design firm) and request design options and estimates*	Committee	By end of 2011	Monthly board check-ins
b. Committee will review and evaluate results and present to Board with recommendations	Committee	By early 2012	
c. Depending on feasibility/results Board votes on how to proceed	Board	Early 2012	
ii. Establish relocation alternatives committee	Board	Early 2011	Committee is established
a. Committee will locate available expertise (realtors, etc.)	Committee	By Summer 2011	Monthly board check-ins
b. Committee will review options and present to board	Committee	By end of 2011	
c. Board will review and vote on how to proceed	Board		
iii. Determine cost-effectiveness of building renovation versus a new site within the neighborhood and expanded enrollment and the revenues and expenses associated with this growth timeline	Board	January 2012	Committee recommends to Board
iv. Board begins creating an implementation plan	Board	May 2012	Plan developed and implemented

* See list at end of plan regarding specific needs and desires identified during strategic planning process regarding renovations or new space.

2. 3. In the meantime, (i.e. before renovation or relocation) improve, fix and beautify the existing indoor and outdoor spaces.

i. Create a committee that will study improvements, prioritize and get tasks accomplished	Board member would head committee – ask for parent volunteers	Board member selected by June 2010 Committee formed by August 2010	Is committee established Monthly board check-ins
a. Improvements:			
- Better break room and/or planning area set up (address heat)			
- Painting, murals			
- Landscaping, flowers, curb appeal			
- Bike Rack			
- Bringing outdoors in			
- Repairs, etc...			

3. Expand the student population modestly in accordance with space renovation and child-staff ratios and continue to regularly evaluate and adjust programming to better serve families and children.

<i>Objectives and Strategies</i>	<i>Who Responsible</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>How to Evaluate</i>
3. 1. Evaluate and determine if Big Oak wants to try and participate in 4 year-old kindergarten following a timeline set by MMSD			
i. Be well informed about 4K in Madison and program expectations regarding curriculum, numbers, staff, hours, transportation, reimbursement rates, holding slots, space requirements, etc...	Admin. Karen R.	Attend meetings set by MMSD	Monthly Board Updates
ii. Once information gathered, redefine strategies as specific to Big Oak	Admin. Karen R.	After MMSD shares info.	Monthly Board Updates
iii. Recommendation to the Board in regards to Big Oak participating in 4K	Admin. Karen R.	After MMSD shares info.	Monthly Board Updates
3. 2. Research comparable camps for schedules to accommodate working families and costs associated with this			
i. Contact Red Caboose, Goodman, Exploration Camps, East Side CCC, and YMCA camps to gain information on rates, numbers and hours	Admin.	Spring 2011	Summary of Information
ii. Survey current families with regard to hours needed	Admin.	Summer 2011	Survey results
iii. Recommendation to Board whether to pursue changing hours (financial and staffing considerations)	Admin.	Spring 2012	Board meeting

4. Maintain Big Oak’s non-profit status, city accreditation, shared parent-staff governance and financial viability while striving to make Big Oak’s programs more accessible to families of children of all abilities and socioeconomic means.

<i>Objectives and Strategies</i>	<i>Who Responsible</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>How to Evaluate</i>
4. 1. Create a financial plan that is consistent with the strategic plan, ensures financial viability for at least the next 10 years and offers scholarship or similar opportunities whenever possible.			

i. Ensure that programming and other criteria meets or exceeds standards set forth by the Madison City Accreditation program	Admin. & Board	Sept. 2010 and ongoing	City accreditation maintained
ii. Create a committee that will produce a financial plan consistent with the strategic plan	Treasurer Bd. Pres. Accountant Admin. Parent Rep. Financial Expert	By early 2011	Committee created
iii. Committee will produce a financial plan for indefinite management of core operations (center care, camp)	Committee	By early 2012	Plan developed and followed
iv. Develop a policy that clarifies Big Oak's approach to scholarships and similar opportunities (financial assistance to families)	Board	By mid-2012	Policy developed, made public, and followed
v. Create a mechanism to regularly monitor implementation of financial plan	Treasurer	To start implementation by end of 2012	Regular reports to the board

5. Adapt communication strategies to take advantage of new tools and strengthen proven methods in support of strong programs, family partnerships, and staff interactions.

<i>Objectives and Strategies</i>	<i>Who Responsible</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>How to Evaluate</i>
5. 1. Enhance formalized communications between the organization and families, and between administration and staff			
i. Revise parent handbook to clarify policies and procedures in a family friendly manner	Admin with board input	September 2011	Newly adopted parent handbook
ii. Create a mechanism to communicate agency changes to all incoming and current families	Admin with board approval	January 2011	Parent satisfaction survey results
iii. Review and revise monthly newsletter and website	Prog. Dir.	Annual	Parent satisfaction survey results
5. 2. Adapt communication tools for the changing times			
i. Consider individualized class or staff email addresses	Admin Staff	September 2010	Individualized communication tools are created

ii. Revamp web-site that can be easily updated as needed	Consultant (ideally parent volunteer) Prog. Dir.	May 2011	New website up and running
5. 3. Improve reliability of informal communication tools			
i. Utilize white boards, signs and daily check-ins	Prog. Dir. Classroom staff	Ongoing	Parent satisfaction survey
ii. Work to ensure families know that they can set up meetings outside of classroom time for deeper conversations about care of their child.	Prog. Dir. Classroom staff	Ongoing	Written in parent handbook.

Drafted by Big Oak & Orton Park Camp Strategic Plan Work Group

Jen Burkel, Board member and current parent
 Ann Fox, Executive Director
 Simon Livingston, Teacher
 Karen Nelson, Alumnus parent
 Karen Russell, Board member and current parent
 Nicole Schneider, Program Director
 Amy Sloane, Board president and alumna parent
 Valerie Villeneuve, Current parent
 Marykay Wills, Current parent

Facilitator: Laura Hewitt, Alumna parent

Reviews and Revisions Timeline

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|---|---|
| 1. Plan Drafted | March 13-4, 2010 |
| 2. Refine language, work group review and approval | Mid-April |
| 3. Board review and feedback | April |
| 4. Family, Alumni, Staff and other interested review and feedback | May |
| 5. Revise (In-person meeting?) | May or June |
| 6. Approval and adoption by board | June |
| 7. Begin implementation | ASAP |
| 8. Regular Board review to monitor implementation | Early – quarterly
Later – semiannually |

Interior Space Renovation or New Space Relocation Desires and Needs
Renovation

- Reconfigure space to maximize OT staff:child ratios
- Office on 1st floor
- Reconfigure preschool
- Usable offices for teachers upstairs
- Remodel basement to be an indoor large motor play area

- Separate kitchen entrance, kitchen update
- Fix bathrooms
- Connect front and back playgrounds with path
- More foliage/flowers in front
- New playground in back
- Updated entry/lobby

New Construction Thoughts

Outdoor

- Car parking – not metered
- Bike racks
- Bike trailer storage
- Buggy storage
- Edible flower garden
- Vegetable garden
- Small and big kid play areas – connected

Indoor

- Office by entry
- Staff planning area/meeting room
- Break room with adult-only potty
- Kitchen
- Multi-purpose gym
- Y.T. sound proof nap room
- Entry way with adult sized couch and parent resources
- Colorful
- Multicultural art
- Ample storage
- Fully accessible