

Week of the Young Child Celebrates Early Childhood Programs at USU Logan and Statewide

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The Week of the Young Child, April 7-11, was observed at USU with campus-wide and statewide activities for the young children it serves.

The Week of the Young Child has been celebrated since the early 1970s across the country in childcare centers, preschools, and other early childhood education facilities. It is a program of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, which promotes high-quality early learning for children from birth through age eight.

Within the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services, six early childhood programs reach children within the greater USU community. The programs are Sound Beginnings, the Dolores Dore Eccles Center for Early Care and Education (DDE), the Child Development Lab, Edith Bowen Laboratory School, ASSERT, and Care about Childcare. USU Extension also administers Cloverbuds at four of the statewide campuses. Altogether, the programs serve nearly 10,000 young children every year.

Children enrolled in Sound Beginnings, the Child Development Laboratory, ASSERT, the DDE, and Up to 3 participated in the week's activities on the Logan campus. Statewide programs with participating children included Little Brigham Aggies, the Child Development Laboratories in Roosevelt and Brigham City, and Junior Aggies Academy in Blanding.

"The Week of the Young Child is a great opportunity to remember how important early childhood education is," said Lisa Boyce, executive director of the DDE and HDFS faculty member. "There's so much we can do for children in their early years that will set them on a trajectory for success in their later academic pursuits and in their relationships with others. I'm excited about the programs at USU that serve young children. We provide important services for children who come to us from all backgrounds and with differing abilities and talents. Our children are our future, and this week is a great opportunity to recognize them."

This year's festivities included daily themed activities: Music Monday, Tasty Tuesday, Work Together Wednesday, Artsy Thursday, and Family Friday. While each early childhood program customized their activities to support the weeklong celebration, Artsy Thursday and Family Friday were larger activities that included many of the early-childhood programs sponsored by USU.

The activity for Artsy Thursday was organized by the Nora Eccles Harrison Museum of Art (NEHMA), which distributed art kits to the participating child centers across the state. The kit included a craft, a brief lesson plan, and the book, *A Sense of Self and Home*, written by Shannon Erickson, NEHMA's coordinator of learning and engagement. The art project complements the 11-mural exhibit, *Repainting the I*, which is currently on display at the museum.

The art activity was designed to help children consider what it would be like to step into the shoes of a child who attended Intermountain Intertribal Boarding School in Brigham City, a federally funded boarding school for Native American school children that operated from 1950 to 1984. The school housed thousands of children who represent more than 100 Native Nations.

The illustrations in the book feature restored murals that were painted by the students over the years and displayed on the walls of the school. The book's text features a poem that examines the different meanings of home. During the Artsy Thursday activity, caregivers read the book to the children and asked follow-up questions such as, "If you were away from home, what would you paint to remind you of home?" The art kit consists of a mesh weaving circle and pipe cleaners so the children could weave symbols that represent home to them.

The week-long celebration culminated in a children's parade on the Logan USU campus that was open to the children and families served by USU's early childhood programs.