



Downtown Ithaca Children's Center

"Growing and Learning Together"

Board of Directors Information Packet

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Mission Statement

The Downtown Ithaca Children's Center provides innovative, affordable child-care for children ages 6 weeks to 5 years, plus after-school and summer-camp programs for school-age children throughout Tompkins County, on a full time or drop-in basis. With a whole-child approach, warm staff, pioneering educational curriculum, supportive environment, and healthful, freshly prepared food, DICC provides a diverse community where children are happy, healthy, and prepared to enter their next educational setting. We are located at 506 First Street, Ithaca, NY 14850.



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All About the DICC

Who Are We?

The Downtown Ithaca Children’s Center is a registered and licensed day care provider and a not-for-profit 501(c) (3) organization.

The Center is also a United Way of Tompkins County Community Partner Agency and an Ithaca City School District Universal Pre-K provider.



The Downtown Ithaca Children’s Center is a special place with a long-standing history. It was started in the early 1970’s as a parent cooperative. Over the years it grew to become a not-for-profit corporation called the Drop-In Children’s Center with paid staff as well as volunteers.

For many years the DICC operated at the Greater Ithaca Activities Center (GIAC). Community members from diverse backgrounds (including children of adults taking English classes through the BOCES ESL program) were cared for at the DICC. The DICC became a rich multicultural environment where people from a variety of cultural and economic backgrounds could feel comfortable. Eventually it grew to require its own home located on First Street in Ithaca.

In 2013, the Center was renamed the Downtown Ithaca Children’s Center maintaining it’s acronym to honor the organizations past and to focus it’s efforts in the community as not only a drop-in childcare center, but also as a full day childcare program that serves children ages 6 weeks to school-age. Our Center has grown, and we remain committed to being a place that promotes diversity, inclusion and mutual respect for all people.



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What do we offer?

The Downtown Ithaca Children's Center is more than just childcare! Our Center offers rich programs for children from birth through school age.

The focus over the last few years has shifted from drop-in childcare to full day program with trained early childhood providers. On-going staff training opportunities allow teachers to stay current with best practices in the field of early childhood. The program is strength-based, to allow the gifts of each child to become the building blocks in all areas of development. The teachers at the Downtown Ithaca Children's Center respect the value of creating a loving, diverse, educational, and inviting environment for your children that is intricately woven into the downtown Ithaca community.

Staff Training and Collaborations

2nd Step is a program that supports social and emotional resilience. Success in social emotional development provides the basis for all other developmental areas. If a child feels secure about him/herself, and has interpersonal skills to interact with peers and adults, the likelihood of success is great!

Teachers are all trained to effectively support children who are exhibiting behavior challenges. Every early childhood program will have children who go through typical developmental "testing the limits". Our program supports these times, and is prepared to also support the child who is acting out due to additional stresses in his/her life. Our teaching teams work together to immediately create a behavior support plan, to allow for greater consistency and follow up for each child, helping the child to find skills for dealing with feelings and to keep all other children appropriately cared for.

Teachers have been trained in Developmentally Appropriate Programming, and know what skills to look for at this early age. Our teaching staff is trained in assessing, on an on-going basis, the current level of development, coordinating with parents for optimal success, and creating a curriculum that inspires natural steps in growth. This programming includes weekly lesson plans with activities for each area of development provided each day. Inside and outside learning environments are created to offer distinct natural learning in interpersonal skills, language, fine motor, gross motor, intellectual, and independent living skills. Classrooms are set up to invite children to explore and learn together, and teachers are present to guide children, to provide a safe and nurturing environment at all times.



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We also collaborate with the Sciencenter. They have developed programs for our toddler and pre-K classrooms, offering opportunities for hands on exploration of the natural world. Each of the classrooms also participates in creating a monthly special assembly for our school community, and a guest appearance offers singing, magic, or some additional surprise for the children.



Food Program

Other unique traits of the Center include our food program. Breakfast, lunch, and a snack is prepared fresh daily on site with a focus on using organic vegetarian ingredients. Toddler and preschool children are served family style meals, to encourage a sense of independence and cooperation while enjoying nutritious and wholesome meals. Along with this meal program, we follow best practices using local organic ingredients as often as possible, recycling, and composting, to support an understanding of sustainability.





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Board of Directors- General Membership

1. As volunteers, board members deserve appreciation for their service to the organization. In order to perform their jobs well, they need to have good communication with other members and staff and be kept abreast of the development and operational efforts for the Center.
2. The Board will strive to reflect the diversity of our community.
3. New Board members will receive an orientation packet that includes a description of Board positions and their functions, decision-making process, organization and communication flow chart, conflict resolution process, and the DICC By-Laws.
4. Board members will be oriented to the organization, spend time in the program to get a feel for the organization's mission, culture and operations, so that there is a level of comfort in how the organization runs and communicates.
5. An annual retreat for board, to take stock, set goals and focus on future development will help keep the DICC functioning well.
6. Monthly Meetings are held the 4th Thursday of each month from 6-7:30 p.m. When a holiday falls on a meeting date, the Board will schedule an alternate meeting date and time. Meetings are being held virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic.
7. Board members attend 1 quarterly staff meeting and participate in the organization's community events.

Board Committees

Nominating Committee

- Qualifications
 - Learn about and support the DICC mission and goals. Must obtain a positive and up-beat attitude representing the organization. Must be comfortable asking people to do things.



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- Tasks
 - Gather names of potential board members from current members and other contacts.
 - Look for people who meet the current needs of the organization in diversity, skills and contacts.
 - Invite potential members to attend a meeting.
 - Provide information about the organization.
 - Submit names of potential members to the Board for election (Parent Board members are elected by the DICC member families once a year in May, or by the Board during the rest of the year. Community Board members are elected by the Board).
 - Provide orientation to new members.

- Meetings
 - Meet when necessary at a time convenient to members. Report to the Board of Directors about activities at monthly Board Meeting.

Fundraising Committee

- Qualifications
 - Learn about and support the DICC mission and goals. Must be able to ask people for money, time, or donation of goods or services.

- Tasks
 - Conduct annual Downtown Ithaca Children's Center Circle of Friends campaign – a Coordinator and people to do discrete tasks as follows:
 - Identify potential donors and provide contact information
 - Help write campaign appeal letter
 - Help with mailing
 - Do follow up phone calls
 - Work with the Executive Director and Administrative Assistant to plan and implement a yearly schedule of fundraising activities and events. (2015 Playground Campaign, Summer Fun Bash, Room Sponsorship, etc.)
 - Identify donors and sponsors
 - Recruit volunteers to work on specific events.

- Meetings



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- Meet at least once a month at a time convenient to members. Invite the Executive Director and Administrative Assistant to attend. Report to the Board of Directors about activities at monthly Board Meeting.

Finance Committee

- Qualifications
 - Understand or learn about the organization's budgets and financial statements. Learn about and support the DICC mission and goals.
- Tasks
 - Meet with the Executive Director and the Treasurer the week before each Board meeting to review the monthly financial reports.
 - Discuss DICC financial situation and make recommendations to the Board.
 - Help develop an annual budget (a working draft will be prepared by the Executive Director).
 - Research and discuss fiscal issues assigned by the Board and report back with information and/or recommendations.
 - Act as a sounding board for the Executive Director regarding fiscal issues.
- Meetings
 - Meet at least once a month at a time convenient to members and the Executive Director. Report to the Board of Directors about activities at monthly Board Meeting.

Program Committee

- Qualifications
 - Understand and learn about developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood education including curriculum that is used at the DICC. Learn about and support DICC mission and goals.
- Tasks
 - Act as a sounding board for Program Leadership (Directors and others as appropriate) in the area of program development.
 - Conduct annual parent evaluation survey of the program.
 - Devise ways to recognize staff for the hard work they do.



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- Help the Center develop a sense of community by organizing with staff regular family get-togethers for each room and center-wide. (Harvest Dinner, Summer Fun Bash, Caregiver Day, etc.)
- Poll parents and staff for interests and skills. Find ways for them to share these with the Center. (Parent Involvement)
- Meetings
 - Meet at least once a month at a time convenient to members. Invite the Program Leadership (Directors and others as appropriate) to attend. Report to the Board of Directors about activities at monthly Board Meeting.

Personnel Committee

- Qualifications
 - Understand and learn about personnel dynamics. Understand and learn about diversity and inclusion. Be open-minded and objective. Learn about and support DICC mission and goals.
- Tasks
 - Coordinate the hiring and evaluation of the Executive Director.
 - Coordinate the hiring and evaluation of the Program Director.
 - Coordinate the hiring and evaluation of the Administrative Assistant.
 - Assist with calling applicant references.
 - Be a sounding board for the Executive Director and Program Director, especially during difficult personnel situations.
 - Be a sounding board for staff issues. Help staff to use established conflict resolution process to address problems. When necessary, help staff bring issues to the Directors.
 - Work with Executive Director to explore new health insurance options.
 - Work with Executive Director to update Personnel Policies.
 - Explore personnel questions/issues assigned by Board. Research, discuss and make recommendations. (Livable Wage)
- Meetings
 - Meet at least once a month at a time convenient to members. Invite the Director's to attend. Report to the Board of Directors about activities at monthly Board meeting.



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Board of Directors Application

Please return your completed application to the DICC front office or email it to admin@dicc.org.

Date: _____

Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Education/experience: _____

Special skills/interests: _____

Which committees would you be most interested in working with? (circle)

Personnel

Program

Finance

Fundraising

Nominating

Schedule/time constraints: _____