

2012

**AMINAL
REFORT**

otherwise known as, “annual report”





yellow
happy color

“yellow helicopter”

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THE CASE FOR EARLY LEARNING

I ENDED 2012 reading a book of essays by teacher and poet Taylor Mali, called *What Teachers Make: In Praise of the Greatest Job in the World*. Mr. Mali’s classroom teaching experience was primarily with middle school students, but his observations convey what the founders of EC3 understood “... the most important work to be done in education is with the youngest possible kids, the ones in primary school and pre-primary.” He goes on to say, “... when children have access to quality pre-primary education, the advantage they get is so great that their peers who were not as fortunate will never catch up. Never. Even if I had been the greatest teacher in the history of the world, by the time a student reached my sixth-grade class, the extent to which he or she could progress intellectually had been almost entirely determined nearly ten years earlier!”

I sometimes wonder if all of EC3’s parents understand—really understand—the benefit they are giving their children by enrolling them in a high-quality early learning center. I certainly didn’t see it that way when I enrolled my daughter here in 2002; I merely looked upon EC3 as a good “daycare” that would keep her safe and happy while I went to work. Sure, she would learn a few things, perhaps get a jump-start on reading or whatnot—but I put much more value (at that time) on what

school system we’d enroll her in and where she would go to college; to me, those were going to be the real determinants of her success. Everything that mattered in her life was still in her future, or so I thought.

Sitting, now, on the other side of the desk in the EC3 office (and on the far side of my daughter’s elementary school experience), I understand completely that her “success” already happened. Her early foundation is creating more opportunity for her with each new endeavor. I get it.

My hope for 2013 is that we—parents—find ways to value early learning at least as much as we value primary and secondary education. Even before policy initiatives and funding methods are weighed and debated, we need to *get* the importance of early learning. We—parents—need to be more thrilled our children attend preschool than we would be to hear they’d been accepted to Harvard. Quoting Francis Keppel, U.S. Commissioner of Education from 1962 to 1965, “Education is too important to be left solely to educators.”

{ELISABETH WESTON}
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

{HELEN WESTON}
2006, IN TODDLERLAND



babberies & alligator

“batteries & elevator”

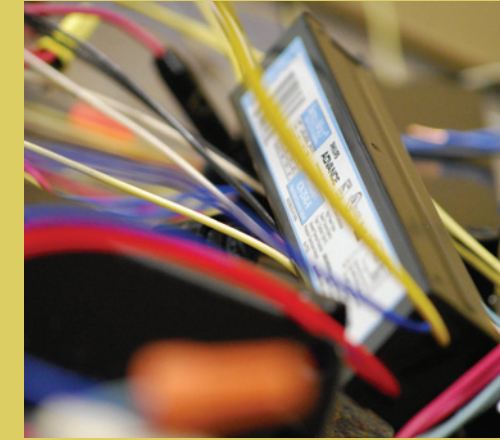
IMPROVEMENTS AT EC3

IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE to outline each event and action—large and small—that has made EC3 better this year. So many *ah-ha* moments and little discoveries happen every day—the list would simply overflow. But the successes fall into a number of categories:

PROGRAM ENHANCEMENTS to benefit both families and staff members, including a dedicated nursing room, increased spending on teacher training, and new policies on allergy-awareness, oral health, and sun safety;

COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS through neighborhood volunteerism and hosting the annual events of such groups as the Westside Neighborhood Association and the Main Street Association;

EDUCATION ADVOCACY through visiting Washington, D.C., with Michigan’s early learning leaders, and hosting an education “community conversation” sponsored by The Center for Michigan;



PHYSICAL UPGRADES to improve the educational experience of our children and obtain more energy-efficiency—we’ve refinished the gym floor, improved the parking lot, and retrofitted every light fixture in the building;

SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICES, such as developing a capital fund and embracing social media to ensure that EC3 will continue providing its unique education services to mid-Michigan families for years to come.

Throughout the past year, EC3 has continued to deliver high-quality, play-based instruction and care to those who will use the experience in becoming the future workforce—ever-mindful that the outcome of our efforts is measured more immediately in family growth and satisfaction.

This report provides only a quick glance at EC3’s past year, but we’re anxious to share it with you and we’re even more excited to have all our stakeholders participate in EC3’s future success.

DOMAINS OF DEVELOPMENT

EC3'S PLAY-BASED LEARNING environment is structured around six "domains of development." Throughout the day at EC3, we are careful to craft opportunities for exploration in all six by modeling the curriculum established by the Michigan Department of Education (Michigan's Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Infants, Toddlers, and Prekindergarten).

COGNITIVE: Knowledge of the physical world, creative problem-solving skills, decision-making skills, and appropriate social knowledge important to the culture.

LANGUAGE/LITERACY: Listening and speaking skills and emergent skills in writing and reading.

PHYSICAL (GROSS AND FINE): Small and large muscle development as well as body awareness and spatial relation.

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL: Interpersonal skills, self-discipline, respect for others, and the development of basic attitudes of trust, autonomy, and initiative, as well as a positive self-concept.

CREATIVE/SENSORY: Awareness, appreciation and enjoyment of art, music, drama, poetry, and the wonders of the natural world.

PRETEND/DRAMATIC PLAY: Imagination and role playing.



**buh-tend
mushmash**

"pretend mustache"



cwap, pwease

“clap, please”

KIND WORDS FROM A FAMILY

PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION to send Gavin into kindergarten we were really torn. Part of it had to do with his being our oldest child and turning five on August 16th, along with our local school district not offering a young-fives program. The other part had to do with reading books such as *Outliers* and researching some more recent parental trends of “redshirting” children in attempts to give them the greater advantages of being older and bigger entering the school system.

What influenced our decision the most was hearing from EC3’s Bear Room teachers, Wanda and Danielle. Knowing that they spend more time with Gavin during the day than we do, as well as their experience and professional expertise in general, we put a lot of stock in their opinions on what to consider when making such an important decision.

In the end we went ahead and enrolled Gavin in kindergarten. To date we’ve been really pleased with making that decision. We’ve both had the opportunity to volunteer in his kindergarten class as well as dialogue with the teacher through conferences, and we’re extremely pleased with how well he’s doing. It’s more than evident that he was ready, both socially and academically, to start kindergarten based upon his experiences and the care he received at EC3.

While we may second guess this decision later in life, perhaps wondering what would have happened if we held him back until he was six to enter kindergarten, we’ll never second guess our decision to have our kids at EC3. Both Gavin and his sister, Sierra, have been at EC3 since they were 18 months old and the love, care, and education they’ve received there can’t be measured.

{DANIEL LORD} EC3 FAMILY SINCE 2009

chewed fish fwamwich

“tuna fish sandwich”

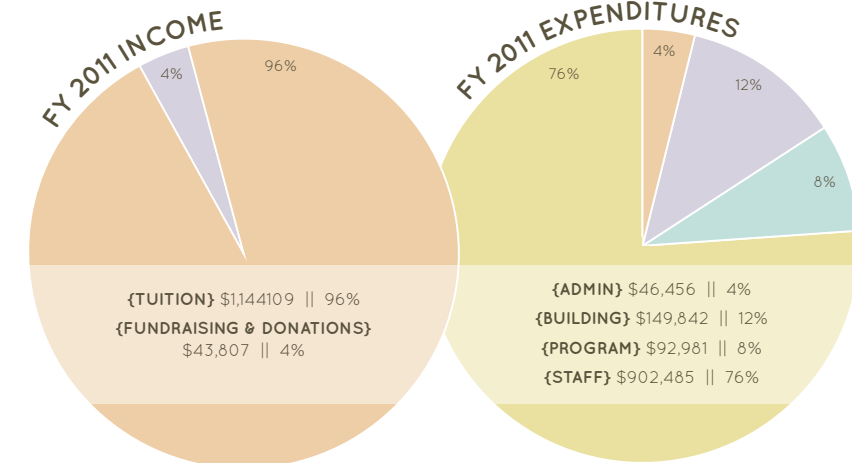
THE NUMBERS

EC3 HAS TRADITIONALLY BROUGHT in most of its operating funds from tuition and fees paid by families of enrolled children, and this was the case in FY 2011 (October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2012).

Ninety-six percent of its income came from tuition and fees, and 4% came from charitable events (fundraisers) and donations. The annual Spring Auction continues to be EC3's biggest fundraising venture, and this year we set a new record of more than \$24,000 in gross revenue. The proceeds from the auction (over \$18,000 including sponsorship contributions) allowed EC3 to make much-needed improvements to its parking lot and its gymnasium.

Appropriately for a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, the vast majority (84%) of EC3's budget was spent on its program—that is, the teachers and materials they use to educate children and their families. Owning a 1929-built structure brings with it an ongoing host of repairs and improvements, but EC3 has managed to contain such costs to just 12% of its budget. Administrative expenses took up the remaining 4%.

In its budget for FY 2012, EC3 has planned for a year with similar revenue and expenses. A copy of this budget, along with EC3's audited financial statements and IRS Form 990, is available upon request.





tbana
ophe-meal

“banana oatmeal”

EC3 BUILDING BLOCKS CAMPAIGN (BBC)

IN 2006, EC3 was quite fortunate to have the opportunity to purchase our Main Street School home from the Lansing School District. But the step up from renting to owning and maintaining our “beautiful old building” comes at a price. EC3 spends roughly \$3,000 a month paying the mortgage on our 30,000 square foot facility. In addition, capital improvements are always necessary—both general upkeep and enhancements that support our program and enrich our children’s learning environment, such as new carpeting, an updated gymnasium, and a developed outdoor classroom space. Through the Building Blocks Campaign, we will realize two fundamental components of our vision: to establish the long-term financial, enrollment, and tuition-rate stability of EC3, and to maintain and improve the facility and classroom equipment.

In establishing this enduring campaign, EC3’s Board and management have taken steps to accomplish three important goals:

- Pay off (or significantly reduce) the mortgage before its next renewal, scheduled for July 2016;
- Build a reserve fund dedicated to essential capital improvements; and
- Showcase the legacy of love and dedication demonstrated by EC3’s supporters over its long history and foreseeable future.

WE SINCERELY THANK the families and friends who have supported the Building Blocks Campaign in its inaugural year:

Lynette Biery & Eric Stinson
Lisa Brewer Walraven
Nancy Davis
Amy Derosier & Kevin Goodwin
Jennifer & John Estill
Jeff & Dawn Fedewa
Jennie Finks
Dana Kromer
Nell Kuhnmuensch & Roy Saper
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Karen Stefl & Kevin Sosnowski
Marney & Matt Turner
Tom Weston
Joy Whitten & Jeff Williams

BE PART OF THE BUILDING BLOCKS CAMPAIGN!

VISIT: EC3kids.org/donate to learn more.



fighter bisgeti

“spider spaghetti”

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EDUCATIONAL CHILD CARE CENTER

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