From the Director’s Desk…

When I speak with student and community groups about the CDC, I always stress the unique dual mission that sets our program apart. Like many programs, it is our mission to provide high-quality care and education to our families. Unlike other programs, our mission is also to serve as a learning lab for student pre-service learning experiences, faculty research, and community outreach.

To support our mission to be a learning lab, we were so pleased to be selected to host learning visits at the CDC during the Virginia Association for Early Childhood Education conference in March (p. 3). Many of our visitors came from rural areas without access to NAEYC-accredited programs, so the ability to tour and take workshops in our high-quality center was inspiring and energizing to them—and to us! Along with visits such as these with local and state community members, I often host visits with VCU students, and they are always eager to participate in our program. We are a popular volunteer placement for students who commit to service learning, as well as an early professional experience for our student workers (p. 8). This connection to the local and state early childhood community and to VCU students keeps our program enlivened and connected to the University mission.

While we are proud of who we are now, we also want to work together to plan for the best future possible for our program. Over the past year, the CDC has been engaging in strategic planning. We are so thankful for all of your participation in this long process: teachers, families, and stakeholders from the School of Education, VCU, and community groups were all involved, through focus groups, surveys, and retreat activities. We’re excited to have identified some key priority areas for the next few years and hope you will lend your talents to help us move forward (p. 4). I look forward to continuing to work together to strengthen our community.
Welcome Assistant Director, Kellie Holmes!

Ms. Kellie Holmes joins the CDC after a long search process that began last summer. The initial planning for this position began in Fall 2013, so Kellie’s arrival is much-awaited at the CDC. Kellie will assume leadership for daily operations and administration at the CDC. We are so glad she is here!

Kellie has several years of leadership and administrative experience in high-quality NAEYC-accredited programs. She holds a B.A. in Psychology from Salem College in Winston-Salem, NC, and an M.A. in Family & Consumer Sciences with a Concentration in Child Development & Administration from Appalachian State University in Boone, NC, where she worked at a child development lab similar to the CDC.

Thank you to the members of the Search Committee: Dr. Diane Simon, Dr. Carrie LeCrom, Dr. Mary Ellen Huennekens, Mr. Daynon Smith, and Ms. Karen Turner.

A special extra thank you to Ms. Lori Do, whose tireless energy, patience, and dedication in the office with numerous tasks such as tuition and administration, has helped the CDC run smoothly in the past few months. Lori will continue to help in the office until early June, when she will return to 101.

Kellie says...

Thank you for such a warm welcome! I was able to meet many of you last week and I look forward to meeting those I have not in the coming weeks. I am delighted to be a part of the VCU CDC team! Two of the most important things that set the VCU CDC apart from the rest were the center’s strong mission and values. I am excited to be able to work together with such a great team that shares my same values and commitment to high quality care!

In my role as the Assistant Director, I will be taking on the daily operations and administration of the CDC. Starting May 25th, I will begin a regular schedule of 8:45 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. Please feel free to stop by my office at any time if you have any questions or concerns, or just to say hello!
Meeting our Mission

The mission of the CDC is to provide high-quality care and education for the children of VCU faculty, staff, and student families; and, to serve as a learning lab for faculty research, pre-service learning experiences, and community outreach.

On March 19 & 20, CDC participated in the Virginia Association for Early Childhood Education annual state conference. We hosted educators from around the state who were interested in learning about what high-quality early childhood education looks like.

Clockwise, starting in upper left: 1) Marilyn Rice from VCU T/TAC leads a learning session in Room 101. 2) Educators from around the state are learning in Room 102. 3) Greta Morris leads a learning session in Room G1. 4) CDC Staff Member Lori Do discusses our program with educators.

Process-Based Art Experiences

Our children’s artwork was featured prominently at the Marriott Conference Center during the VAECE Conference. So, what is process-based art, and why is it important? Process-based art is focused on the process rather than the product, and encourages children to explore mediums and techniques. This supports children’s social-emotional, language, cognitive, and physical development. For more tips and tricks for process-based art from the National Association for the Education of Young Children, visit: http://www.naeyc.org/tyc/files/tyc/Bongiorno.pdf
Strategic Planning Update

Over a year ago, the CDC began a strategic planning initiative to plan for the future of our program. Who are we now? Who do we want to be? How do we meet our mission?

These are important questions for us to answer as a program. With the help of staff retreats, family focus groups and surveys, stakeholder input from School of Education, University representatives, and community members, and assistance from a strategic planning facilitator, we have gathered a lot of data!

During our March 2015 staff retreat, teachers and staff dug our hands into the data to determine the CDC’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis) from various stakeholder perspectives. Staff determined their priority areas that we would like to incorporate into our five-year plan.

Check out where we’ve been in the box above to the right, and where we want to go in the box below to the right. If you have a passion for any of the priority areas, we would like to invite you to participate on our priority committees. Having a diverse group of stakeholders, including staff and families, will help ensure that we best meet our mission to provide high-quality care and education to the families of VCU faculty, staff, and student families; and, to serve as a learning lab for student learning experiences, faculty research, and community outreach.

A Recap of the Last Year in Planning…
- March 2014: Staff Retreat & SWOT Analysis
- May 2014: CDC Family Focus Group & Survey
- July 2014: Strategic Planning Steering Committee
- October 2014: SOE and VCU Focus Group
- January 2015: PAC SWOT Analysis
- March 2015: Staff Retreat & Priority Setting
- May 2015: Priority Committees Form

Priority Areas & Committees
- **Facilities**: Emily Eaton, Karen Turner, Glynis Broy, Sarah Robinson
- **Technology**: Cati Howard, Amirah Bohler, Sarah Robinson, Lori Do, Christeena Claiborne
- **Professionalism**: Nakita Battle, Cati Howard, Lori Do, Glynis Broy, Benita Thompson
- **Training**: Emily Eaton, Nakita Battle, Benita Thompson, Juli Stirrup, Caroline Pavlakos, Amirah Bohler, Brittany Dix
- **Family Engagement**: Christeena Claiborne, Karen Turner, Caroline Pavlakos, Brittany Dix, Juli Stirrup
- **Healthy Eating**: Samaria Pryor, Jeremiah Sweeney, Sarah Robinson

Thank you to everyone who attended meetings, completed surveys, and participated in focus groups!
Movin’ on Up!

Information on Enrollment, Transitions, and Tuition

2015-16 Tuition Rates

To continue to increase our revenue to meet operational and programmatic needs, the CDC will announce new tuition rates annually. Our last increase, in March 2014, was 12% across the board for all families. We recognize the benefit of being able to plan ahead for your family’s finances; therefore, we are instituting a “stairstep” tuition structure on September 1, 2015. Families will lock in their tuition rates on 9/1/15 and thereafter at enrollment. We will likely continue to see tuition increases each year, so with this model, families will not have increases on any individual child’s tuition. Although we will no longer discount tuition when a child turns 3, the 10% discount on the oldest child remains in effect. Continued on p. 5...

Classroom Ages & Enrollment

Each classroom at the CDC meets or exceeds the ratio suggestions and staffing requirements established by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Each classroom has an age span of 1.5-2 years, and children will spend 9-24 months in a classroom on each floor, depending upon their age at admission and the annual transition schedule.

There is some overlapping of age groups on each floor to recognize that development happens on a continuum at the child’s own pace and not necessarily at a certain age.

G1: Toddlers, age 16-32 months in September
G2: Toddlers, age 16-32 months in September
101: Ages 2.5-4 in September
102: Ages 2.5-4 in September
201: Ages 3.5-5 in September
202: Ages 3.5-5 in September

When Will My Child Move Up?

Classroom transitions are dependent upon both a child’s developmental readiness across all domains (social-emotional, cognitive, and motor skills) and having space available in a classroom that will be an appropriate placement.

In general, most transitions will happen between late spring and early fall, as older children move out to Kindergarten and make space for younger children to move into the next classroom. Not all children will transition each year.

Teachers will work with families and administration to assist children with the transition from one room to the next.

If you have additional questions, please let us know!

If your child will be withdrawing from the Center to transition to Kindergarten, please submit a Withdrawal Form to the office as soon as possible, at least two weeks before your withdrawal date. Thank you!
This letter is for historical information only. It provides background on CDC tuition increases.

December 1, 2013

Dear CDC parents and guardians,

The mission of the VCU Child Development Center (CDC) is to provide high quality, developmentally appropriate care and education for the children of faculty, staff, and students as well as to serve as a resource to families, students, and the community. In our effort to continue to provide exceptional early childhood education, we will be increasing monthly tuition effective March 1, 2014.

A recent review of child care fees and services of programs in the area has revealed that current tuition rates at the CDC are significantly lower than other providers in the region. The average tuition for preschoolers from seven surrounding centers accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is currently $890 per month compared to the CDC’s $700 per month (see attached comparisons). Programs must frequently increase tuition rates to reflect regional and national economic changes. The CDC however has not had a tuition increase since the Fall of 2011. Consequently, over the next several years slight increases may be necessary to balance our financial responsibilities and quality programming.

In order to provide the best early childhood experience possible and offset current operational costs and provide salary support for an assistant director, we will initiate an increase of approximately 12% effective March 1, 2014. This change will result in a toddler rate (children under three years of age) of $920 per month and a preschool rate (3- to 5-year-olds) of $785 per month. The 10% sibling discount will remain unchanged. We hope this early announcement will allow families ample time to budget and plan accordingly.

The CDC is committed to providing quality, affordable, and accessible childcare to VCU families. We appreciate your continued support as we work together to provide the best early childhood education for your children. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Muriel Azria-Evans, PhD, CFLE
Director
VCU Child Development Center

cc: Dr. Chris Walther-Thomas
attachment: NAEYC Center Tuition Survey

This letter is for historical information only. It provides background on CDC tuition increases.

You can find more information in your family handbook, which is available here:

http://www.cdc.soe.vcu.edu/PDF/parent_handbook.pdf

If you have additional questions, please let us know!
Teacher Appreciation

While we appreciate our teachers every day, Teacher Appreciation Week provides us an opportunity each year to extend a special thank you for providing high-quality care and education to the children of faculty, staff, and student families. The CDC is lucky to have a combination of seasoned, experienced teachers and new teachers with recent formal coursework in early childhood education. The PAC did a terrific job of organizing a week of special treats for our teachers: snacks, lunch, flowers, and the kind notes and words of thanks were all much appreciated! Thanks to teachers and PAC for making it an excellent week.

VCU CDC Classroom Teachers & Anniversary Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Anniversary Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benita Thompson</td>
<td>June 1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lori Do</td>
<td>April 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nakita Battle</td>
<td>June 1998</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karen Turner</td>
<td>August 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christeena Claiborne</td>
<td>May 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emily Eaton</td>
<td>July 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brittany Dix</td>
<td>September 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Juli Stirrup</td>
<td>April 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glynis Broy</td>
<td>April 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caroline Pavlakos</td>
<td>September 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cati Howard</td>
<td>November 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sarah Robinson</td>
<td>December 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amirah Bohler</td>
<td>December 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stacey Farr</td>
<td>May 2015</td>
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Part-Time Teaching Staff

Our part-time teaching staff supports the Center by assisting in the classroom, acting as substitute teachers, and covering classrooms for planning time, meetings, and continued professional development. They bring a variety of experience and education to their roles and help the CDC run smoothly each day.

Thank you to Caitlin Crow, Gretchen Buis, Ally Dickerson, Kristin Cha & Lisa Burnham

Many thanks to our support staff...

Samaria Pryor, Kitchen Manager

Kenneth Williams, Maintenance

Jeremiah Sweeney, Kitchen Assistant

Ms. Lori Do and Ms. Karen Turner represented CDC teaching staff at the 2nd Annual School of Education Faculty & Staff Appreciation Luncheon
Thank you Student Workers!

One thing that makes us different than many early childhood programs is our mission to serve as a learning lab for VCU students. Over the past year, the CDC has hosted over 200 VCU students in our learning lab. These students come to the CDC for pre-service experiences in Early / Elementary Education, Early Childhood Special Education, Counselor Education, Occupational Therapy, Psychology, and more. Students participate in observations, practicum and student teaching placements, and observations and internships. It is our mission to provide a learning lab for these students to experience what high-quality early childhood education looks like in practice. Many of these students go on to become valuable student workers at the CDC.

Many Thanks to This Year’s Student Workers:
Chanell Hudson, Tierra Hardin, Azalea Flores, Maria Foy, Christina Cornejo, Emily Glynn, Kate Boheim, Lyly Lieu, Faith Hillard, Stacey Farr, Emiley Allison, Gabby Saunders, Desiree Zayas, and Bryttan Chandler

Congratulations Graduates!
We are so proud of Chanell Hudson, Azalea Flores, and Stacey Farr!
G1: Ms. Christeena Claiborne & Ms. Nakita Battle

Greetings CDC family! G1 has been super busy this winter, and we are excited that spring is finally here! During the winter months, G1 explored many themes like Famous Artists, Mail Carriers, Going to the Dentist, and Shapes. Our children had a blast learning about the recent themes, but more specifically, they absolutely loved our Famous Artists theme. We invited Angie Allen, a staff member from the Art Department at VCU, to come conduct an art project with the kids. The activity was based off of Jackson Pollock and how he used different types of lines when painting. The kids followed her lead, and the final product came out beautifully!

As we move forward into late spring and early summer, our class will explore themes like Insects, Colors, and The Beach. We will also explore Zoo Animals as the weeks get closer to our annual zoo trip. If any of our parents find interests in the upcoming themes, please do not hesitate to come in and volunteer with our classroom!
G2: Ms. Karen Turner & Ms. Caroline Pavlakos

Spring has sprung in G2! We have been learning about the rain; perfect to learn about during the many days of rainy days over the past few weeks and we are now exploring the sights, sounds, and smells of the season of Spring! We have enjoyed being outside with all the plants growing and flowers blooming. Activities inside have also been fun with learning about and making kites, butterflies and dancing with rainbow streamers. We are also learning how our new class caterpillars will soon turn into butterflies. We have been watching these fabulous creatures each day and talking about them at the start of Circle. Favorite books read include The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle and Plant Me A Rainbow by Lois Elhert and we will be learning about how plants grow throughout the next few weeks.

We are also looking forward to taking community walks in the buggies and our trip to the zoo on Thursday, May 21st. A few Spring/early Summer reminders to touch on is to please continue to sign your children in each day and to check their folders in the observation room, as well as beginning to transition extra clothes from winter into the warmer weather for spring and summer.

Spring Poem

The bushes told the birds and the birds told the trees
The trees told the flowers and the flowers told the bees
The trees stretched out their branches and yelled loud and clear:

WAKE UP! WAKE UP! SPRING IS HERE!
Greetings Everyone!

Spring is here and we are enjoying every moment of it. We are now half way through the month of April and have experienced our fair share of showers. Now that May is fast approaching, we will be preparing for lots of flowers, trees, and leaves as well as hoping for beautiful spring days with warmer, dry weather. With this spring season also comes some new and exciting themes/lessons, such as Pets, Construction, Mother’s Day, Dinosaurs, Zoo, and Insects that come out to visit as the warm weather approaches.

As the weather becomes warmer, we ask that you go through your child’s EXTRA CLOTHING to make sure that it is weather-appropriate and still fits them comfortably.

We have been covering many topics and learning lots of new things in Room 102! Our gang has been super busy these past few months! During our art unit, we learned about different kinds of art and explored different sources of art in our community. During our science unit, we spent our time making observations and discussing what we thought would happen as we did lots (and lots!) of science experiments. We focused our attention on love and friendship in February and we closed the month out by learning the best ways to care for our teeth. In March we celebrated Dr. Seuss’ birthday – we worked on improving our rhyming skills and we even had a visit from the Cat in the Hat! We had some more special visitors during our dancing unit – Ms. Caroline from G2 taught us about Greek dancing and Ms. Dvora (201 - Benjamin's Mommy) taught us about belly dancing! We’ve spent the past several weeks learning about the changes that spring has brought and how we can take steps to care for our Earth. We got to play fun soccer games with some visitors from SCOR, practice some new yoga moves with Itsy Bitsy Yoga, and even listen to the Story Lady tell her amazing stories! In the upcoming weeks, we’re so excited to spend time learning more about our students, their parents and our backgrounds! We’re planning units that focus on the countries of India, Ukraine, France, Italy and the USA since we have students with family members in or from those countries! We are also looking forward to our Zoo Field Trip and having time to meet with everyone during Family Conferences in June! As always, feel free to stop by whenever you can for a visit!
Greetings from Room 201! We have had a great winter and are really getting geared up for spring and summer! We will be learning about a lot of different things during the next three months: sports, farms, zoos, science, ocean life, the beach, camping, famous women and working on lots more math madness! We will continue to work in our garden plots all during the spring and summer. We have planted peas, beans, corn, green peppers, pumpkins, marigolds, gladiolas, daisies, lavender and sunflowers. We are looking forward to our “graduation ceremony” on May 22nd as we celebrate all of the fun and learning we have accomplished this school year as well as wishing our rising kindergartners the best of luck next year! As always, we thank you for all you do! Our families are the BEST!!

202: Ms. Brittany Dix & Ms. Amirah Bohler

Happy Spring from 202!
Room 202 News, Continued…

We are so excited to welcome in the new season and the warmer weather! This winter has been full of great lessons from holiday celebrations and winter weather to historical African American figures and friendship. Our friends have been working hard on their social skills and problem solving as they have learned appropriate ways to interact with one another. We had a special visit from Lucky the Leprechaun in March who swung by on St. Patrick’s Day to play a few tricks on us! We were happy to have him and can’t wait to see what tricks he plays next year.

As we transition into this new season there are many things we look forward to! A great number of our friends are transitioning to Kindergarten and before they do we want to spend the last of our time together doing some really awesome lessons! We will dive into the world of dinosaurs soon and take a look at how things were when they roamed the earth. We will also be taking a look at different fairy tales and legends that involve some mystical creatures many of our friends love to talk about and illustrate!
Fundraising

The CDC is funded primarily through tuition payments; however, those payments do not cover the entire cost of operating the program. We seek your help with our fundraising efforts, including those listed here and on our website.

Since 1997, schools, charities, churches, community groups, and clubs in the continental United States have collectively earned more than $26 million in cash and rewards through FundingFactory’s 100% free fundraising-thru-recycling program. Together, FundingFactory and the CDC are making an impact on the environment by keeping cartridges and small electronics out of landfills.

The CDC will collect, pack, and ship used inkjet and toner cartridges, cell phones, MP3 players, digital cameras, and GPS devices to FundingFactory. The CDC can then choose to accumulate points and spend them in the rewards catalog or request a check payment. There is a box for collecting these items on top of the teacher mailboxes. If your office would like to participate, please contact Alyson.

Scholastic Corporation is the world’s largest publisher and distributor of children’s books and a leader in educational technology and children’s media. Scholastic creates quality educational and entertaining materials and products for use in school and at home, including children’s books, magazines, technology-based products, teacher materials, television programming, film, videos and toys.

The VCU Child Development Center earns a FREE $3 book coupon every time a parent places an order (of any value) and points are awarded towards additional books based on the total amount spent by CDC families. Orders are all online, using code HLZ46 (Teacher: Dr. Williams). Orders are due the 15th of each month and will be distributed on arrival.

Tax-deductible donations may be made to the CDC through the VCU Foundation. Our account number is 040577. Your donation ensures that the Center continues to provide high-quality care and education to the VCU community.
Every parent at the CDC is a member of the Parent Advisory Council (PAC). The PAC works to provide special events for CDC children and families, as well as to work with Center administration as the voice of the CDC families. We hope you will be involved. Officers are elected each year.

Upcoming events are:

PAC Picnic is May 29th - more information to come

PAC Potluck Picnic

PAC provides meat and veggie burgers

Ground Floor provides drinks

First Floor provides desserts

Second Floor provides side dishes
Family Reminders and Information

**Did you know** that children are required to be within our **SIGHT and SOUND** at all times? When your children are with you, please help us keep them safe by holding their hands and keeping them within your own sight and sound at all times.

**Shutterfly Photos:** We hope you are enjoying all the photos of your child’s day at school. The site is members only. If you would like to visit the site, please go to: https://vcuchilddevelopmentcenter.shutterfly.com/ and complete the registration / request to join.

**NEW! Online Credit Card Payments!** We are excited to be accepting online payments through our website. We are no longer accepting credit card payments in person.

To pay online: https://www.pubapps.vcu.edu/cdc/myPayment.aspx

**Why are the halls so empty?** We recently got a visit from the fire marshal, and were instructed that the artwork displayed in our hallways and stairwells was a violation of fire code. While we know our hallways look a little naked right now, we are glad to know that we are following the fire safety regulations that will allow us to stay as safe as possible in the case of emergency. We are so glad to have gotten some long-overdue painting to update and clean our walls, and we look forward to adding our own personal touches soon. Please feel free to visit your child’s classroom to peek at the current artwork on display!

**CDC classrooms are cell-free zones.** *We believe the children deserve our full attention while at the CDC.* Please assist us in keeping everyone’s attention on the children by leaving your phones off or outside the classroom while visiting. Thank you!
## CDC Classroom Directory

**G1:** 828-1769  
Ms. Christeena Claiborne  
Ms. Nakita Battle

**G2:** 828-1781  
Ms. Caroline Pavlakos  
Ms. Stacey Farr

**101:** 828-2082  
Ms. Benita Thompson  
Ms. Lori Do

**102:** 828-2083  
Ms. Emily Eaton  
Ms. Juli Stirrup

**201:** 828-4967  
Ms. Sarah Robinson  
Ms. Glynis Broy

**202:** 828-2113  
Ms. Amirah Bohler  
Ms. Brittany Dix

## CDC Office Directory

**Dr. Alyson Williams, Director / Assistant Professor**  
*Leadership for policy, program planning, professional development, community outreach and oversight*  
828-5892  
aewilliams@vcu.edu

**Ms. Kellie Holmes, Assistant Director**  
*Leadership for daily operations, building management, curriculum, staff supervision, tuition and administration*  
828-7377  
khholmes@vcu.edu

**Ms. Cati Howard, Center Coordinator**  
*Leadership for scheduling, classroom coverage, and reception*  
828-1541  
cehoward@vcu.edu

**Ms. Karen Turner, Family Liaison**  
*Leadership for family programs, classroom transitions, tours, new family orientation, child files and recordkeeping*  
828-1542  
s2kturn@vcu.edu

**Ms. Lori Do, Interim Administrative Assistant (through June 6)**  
*Transitional assistance with tuition, administration & reception*  
828-7377  
lbsneden@vcu.edu

Get in Touch!
UCI Road World Championships Update

The CDC will be CLOSED September 19-25, 2015—Will remain OPEN August 12-14.

As you know, VCU has announced that September 19-25 will be Reading Days at the University. We have stayed in close contact with senior leadership across the University over the past several months, including representatives from School of Education and Emergency Preparedness, to determine how this event will impact both services for our families and expectations for our staff as state employees. Because we know that it will be challenging for our families to have us closed both in September and for our previously planned inservice days in August, we will be cancelling our August inservice days and will instead remain open throughout August (thanks to PAC for the great suggestion!).

For more information, the resources below are super helpful:

http://richmond2015.vcu.edu/
http://www.vabike2015.virginia.gov/
VCU Child Development Center

Important Dates

2014-2015

VCU CDC follows the University calendar (http://academiccalendars.vcu.edu/) and is closed on the holidays and professional development days listed below. In addition to the dates below, the Center may be closed on other dates for further professional development.

5/21/15  Zoo trip! Coming up next week
5/25/15  CDC CLOSED for Memorial Day
6/5/15   CDC CLOSES @ NOON for Family-Teacher Conferences
7/3/15   CDC CLOSED for Independence Day
8/12-14/15 CDC CLOSED for Professional Development
9/7/15   CDC CLOSED for Labor Day
9/21-25/15 CDC CLOSED / University Reading Days / UCI Road World Championships

The 2015-16 Calendar of Important Dates will be distributed in August 2015. Stay tuned...