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Yale to open new day care center at Divinity School

By Jim Shelton

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 Gift Article



Amy Small, director of the Alphabet Academy daycare center in Hamden, will be opening a new daycare at Yale later this summer. Peter Casolino/New Haven Register pcasolino@newhavenregister.com

NEW HAVEN >> Yale University will open its sixth school-affiliated day care center next month, this one at Yale Divinity School. Alphabet Academy, a day care provider that currently runs two centers in Hamden, will manage the new facility. It will be called The Nest at Alphabet Academy.

"We have a lot of Yale families at our other locations already," said Amy Small, executive director of Alphabet Academy. "We have an amazing community of teachers, parents and children, and we've built exciting places for children to explore their world."

The Nest is accepting applications for the center's 24 slots for infants and toddlers, ages three months to 3 years. It is the second Yale day care center to focus on infants and toddlers.

Although priority is being given to the Yale community, the general public also may apply. For application information, visit <http://thealphabetacademy.com/thenest> or call (203) 361-3324. Yale had spent months putting together a task force on childcare expansion on campus, ultimately selecting Alphabet Academy. The other university day care facilities are the Edith B. Jackson Child Care Center, the Phyllis Bodel Childcare Center at the Yale School of Medicine, the Yale Law School Early Learning Center, the Bright Horizons Child Care Center at Yale's West Campus and the Calvin Hill Day Care Center.

This will be the first Alphabet Academy center to take only infants and toddlers, according to Small. The center's approach to childhood education will remain identical to its Hamden centers. "We have a huge commitment to the outdoors," Small explained. The center will stress nature in both play and learning.

The center also has a strong focus on locally-produced foods that expand a child's palette.
- everything from anchovies to lasagna to miso soup.

Small said the center hews closely to the Reggio Emilio approach to early childhood education, which was developed in Italy after World War II. It encourages children to take an active role in their own learning through interactions with other children, teachers, staff members and the natural world.

"The cooks and custodians here are just as important to the process as the teachers," Small said. The center is expected to open in the latter part of August, but slots will be filled in the next two weeks, she said.

The center's operating hours will be Monday through Friday, from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

In announcing the creation of the center, Yale officials stressed having childcare in many parts of the campus not only helps parents but also helps the university recruit and retain faculty and staff.

"Finding a childcare center that one feels is a trusting and caring environment is invaluable to a parent's peace of mind," said Susan Abramson, manager for Yale's WorkLife and Child Care program, in a prepared statement.

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