

PSH NEWS

Campus day care center offers advantages

Elin Marcel
Capital Times Staff

Penn State Harrisburg students can now hear the pitter-patter of tiny feet on campus, as Stepping Stone, Inc. opened a day care facility here in August.

The center, located in the former Continuing Education building near Wrisberg Residence Hall, is presently available for students, faculty and staff, but will be open to the public in October if enrollment doesn't increase to 67, according to an agreement between Penn State Harrisburg and Stepping Stone, Inc., said Leanne Gast, director of the center.

Twenty-six children are currently enrolled, and there is a waiting list for children whose parents are not affiliated with Penn State Harrisburg, Gast said, adding "the next few weeks will determine how many Penn State people we get."

Parents say the prices are an important reason for sending their children to the center.

"The price is very good," said Kathryn Sherman, a junior communications major living in Meade Heights. Sherman's son, Andrew attends the center.

There are several factors determining prices for enrollment, Gast said. For example, a Penn State parent will pay \$60 per week for a preschooler, \$70 per week for a toddler, and \$87 per week for an infant, Gast said. Parents not affiliated with Penn State will pay \$10 more per week, Gast added.

Parents using the center say there are other reasons they chose the facility for their children.

"It's really close, too," Sherman said, adding "The people are really nice and the place is new and clean."

Valerie Duhig, administrative assistant to the provost, also said the reasonable price is not the only reason she chose the center for her daughter, Maury.

"The physical layout is great," Duhig said. "Children of different ages can play together. It's like one big, happy family," she added.

Presently, a staff of two teachers is employed at the center, with plans to hire more teachers and assistants as the need develops, Gast said.

"We would like to hire students," Gast said. "It would be convenient because of their class schedules." Gast speaks from experience, as she is a 1991 graduate of Penn State Harrisburg. Gast said she heard about the center and was interested in becoming involved.

"I wanted to work with children

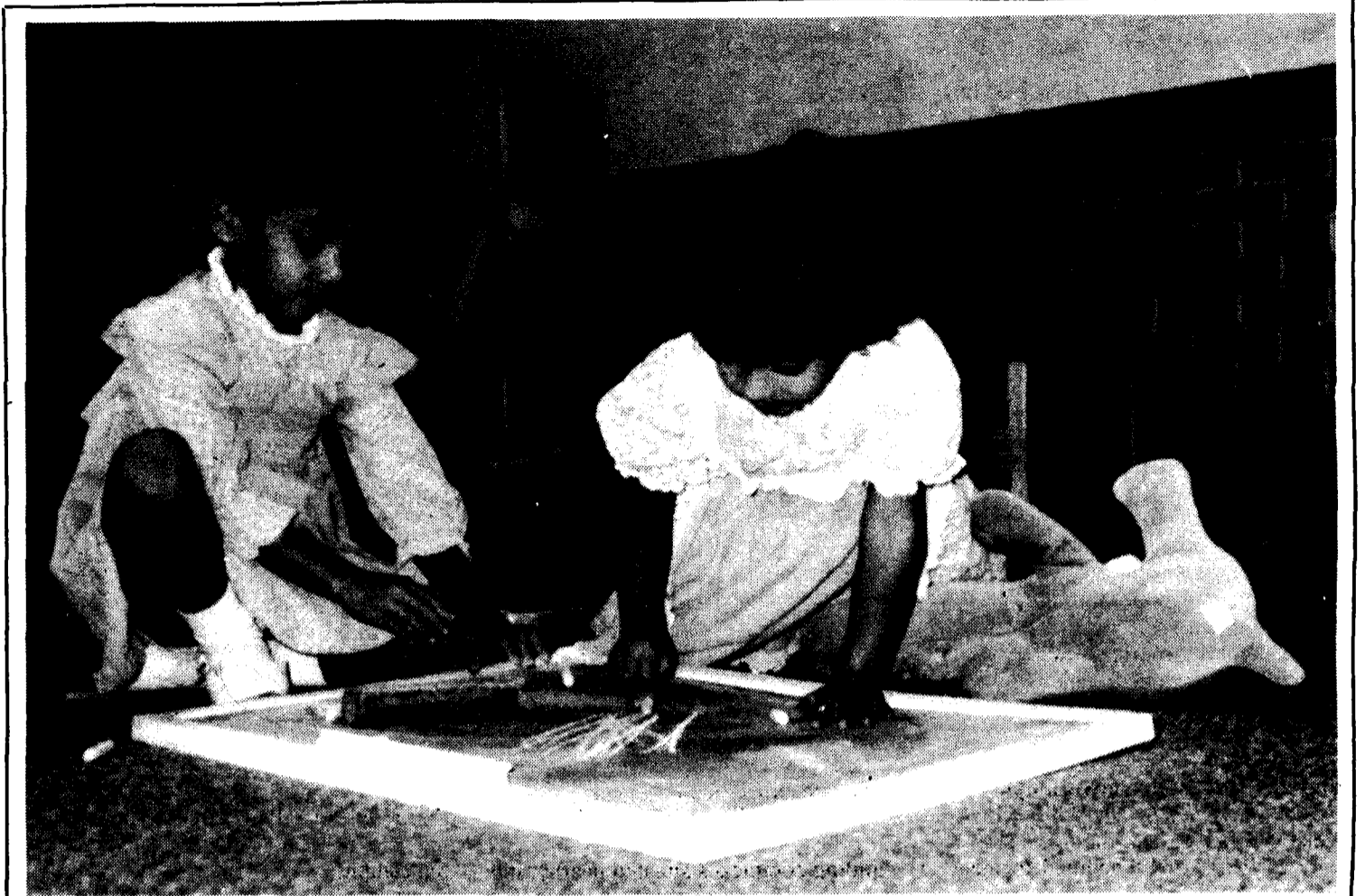


Photo by Elin Marcel

Three-year old twins Radhika and Devika Dhir enjoy playtime at the new campus day care center.

again, and it seemed like a good opportunity," Gast said.

Gast's, as well as the teachers' zeal about the center doesn't go unnoticed by the parents.

"The staff is great--the administrators as well as the young adults who watch

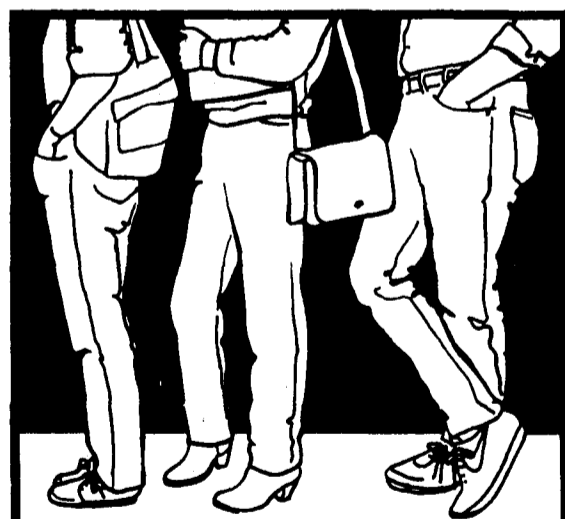
the kids," Duhig said. "They are energetic and enthusiastic," she added.

There are many activities to keep children busy during the day, Gast said. Free play, organized learning activities, lunches and snacks, crafts, physical activities, naps and clean-up complete a

tot's daily schedule, she added.

"The evening shift is a little more relaxed, because it's at night," Gast said.

The center is open Monday through Thursday from 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m., and Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Gast said.



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