The ABCs of Fun Time Early Childhood Academy

Mission: To provide safe, quality, affordable education and care for children and parents from low-income working families and to prepare the children for kindergarten, ready to read and ready to learn.

"I got so smart at Fun Time that I skipped a grade when I went to Kindergarten!" ~ Clarens

- 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization serving 96 students from low-income working families in Collier County, FL
- Opened in 1961 within a small classroom in the Old Carver School under Alma Cambridge
- Moved to a 4,200 sq. ft. trailer in 1970; relocated to the current 8,000 sq. ft. state-of-the-art facility in 2009
- Hours of operation established as 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, in 1975 to best meet the needs of working parents (excludes holidays)
- Credentialed and dedicated staff committed to a creative, research-based curriculum designed specifically to meet the needs of 2-5 year olds
- Florida Voluntary Pre-kindergarten provider
- Florida Department of Children & Families Gold Seal certified provider
- Federal Head Start program provider via the Collier County Public Schools
- National Accreditation Commission of Early Care and Education Program accreditation (2016-2019)
- Developmental screenings for each child 30 days after admission and near birthdays to detect and address any developmental delays
- Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment Tool and Galileo to measure outcomes in October, January and May to determine progress
- Graduates deemed as performing at and above kindergarten readiness levels by Florida Department of Education since 2006
- Since 1961, 2,240 graduates have entered Collier County School System ready to read and ready to learn
- USDA Food Program approved healthy menus designed and prepared in a commercial state-of-the-art kitchen and served family style (breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack) to all 96 students
- Early Literacy and Learning Model (ELLM) collaboration co-anchored with Florida Gulf Coast University and the Florida Institute of Education that increases reading instruction one extra hour per day for at-risk children
- Skills-based Instructional Delivery Systems (SEEDS) mentor initiative that works with students to teach and practice formal, Standard English and proper conversational skills
- Parents Actively Teaching their Children at Home (PATCH) expands our staff and community partner efforts to ensure our students' first teachers, their parents, understand early childhood development and have the tools to actively assist their children through the developmental process
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Math with ART (STEAM) provides hands-on practice with concepts while helping students develop a deeper knowledge of topics, expand problem-solving abilities and improve interpersonal relationship skills such as sharing
- MusicScores! Pre-K Literacy/Violin Program to enhance learning ability by providing literacy training for pre-school children while developing the skills and reaping the benefits of playing an instrument
- Books for Collier Kids partner to ensure qualified children receive a new book every month to build their home library and literacy skills
- Children's Literacy & Education PAWS Project (CLEPP) collaboration that brings experienced, trained PAWS therapy dog teams into classrooms to promote literacy, build character and citizenship

- Tuition is based on a sliding fee scale determined by family income and size
- Average weekly cost to educate a child 2- 5 years of age is $310 while the average weekly payment for Fun Time's low-income working families is $60
- Funding sources: generous donors, United Way of Collier County, Naples Children Education Foundation, private grants and foundations
- Recipient of Charity Navigator's coveted 4-star rating

"All of my brothers and I went to Fun Time and we wish we could still be here." ~ Sally

Meet Gracie!
This beautiful, shy, three-year-old arrived from China with two significant challenges – no knowledge of the English language and a cleft palate.

While several surgical procedures and comprehensive speech therapy enabled Gracie to speak more clearly and enjoy meals safely, it was her classroom of Fun Time friends that provided the environment for her to truly blossom.

Gracie's resilience and her mother's determination, combined with Fun Time's strong educational program and dedicated teaching staff, gave this remarkable young girl a sure path to success in kindergarten.

"Fun Time has served multi-cultural low-income working parents and their pre-school children with quality childcare and early education programs for over 55 years. We have more than 100 volunteers and partner with agencies like the USDA food program, Healthy Smiles, MusicScores, FGCU, HUGS, Books for Collier and many others to help us enrich the lives of our students." ~ Barbara Tyrrell, Executive Director

Fun Time partners:

- ABLE Academy
- Baby Basics
- Books for Collier Kids
- Catholic Charities
- Child Advocacy Center
- Christ Child Society of Naples
- City of Naples
- Collier Child Care Resources
- Collier County Public Schools
- Collier County Sheriff's Office
- Early Learning Coalition of SWFL
- Early Learning & Literacy Model
- Future Ready Collier
- Golisano Children's Museum of Naples
- Laces of Love
- Naples Children & Education Foundation, Founders of the Winter Wine Festival
- PAWS Assistance Dogs
- Ronald McDonald Care Mobile
- Safe & Healthy Kids Coalition
- United Way of Collier County
- Neighborhood Health Clinic
- The Shelter for Abused Women & Children

Goals: To promote the social, emotional, moral, cognitive, language and physical development of each individual child in our care; build partnerships with families through mutual respect, open communication and opportunities for active participation in their children's education; and provide resources to support the personal and professional growth of the program staff.