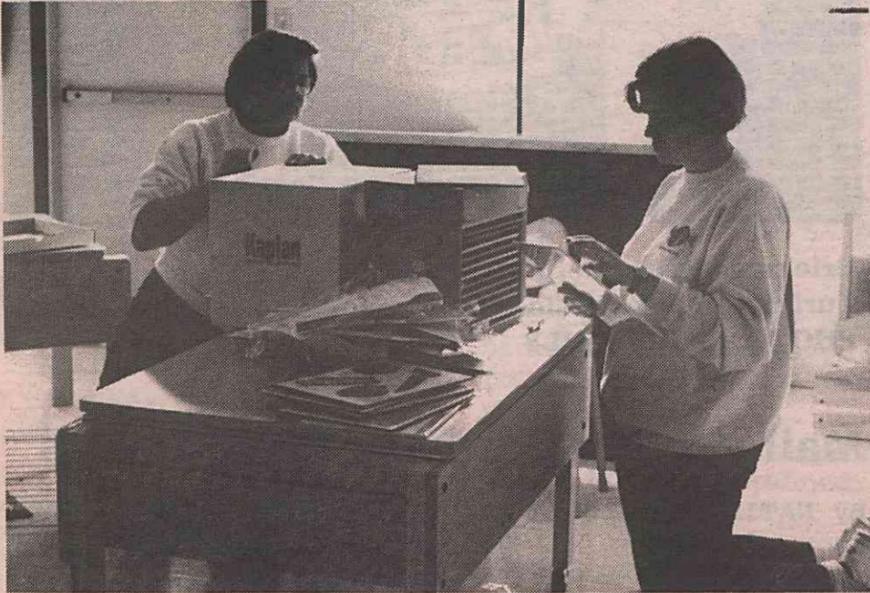


Preschool to open mid-March



Sherry Granberry, (l) instructor in the Early Childhood Development program, and student-volunteer Terese Eiser, an Early Childhood major, unpack puzzles and other materials children will enjoy.

PHOTO: JAMES ARTIS

By P. MICHELLE MIDKIFF

At about mid-March, the WCC Preschool will be ready for operation, according to Sherry Granberry, instructor and adviser in the Early Childhood Development Program.

Lisa Dunn, an ECU graduate with a bachelor's degree in Child Development and Family Relations, will direct the preschool, a joint effort between WCC and Wayne Memorial Hospital (WMH).

The preschool, a dark green modular unit located at 300 Cox Blvd., provides child care services for staff, faculty, and students of WCC as well as for employees at WMH, which owns the building that WCC leases.

WMH will provide laundry and maintenance services for the preschool.

In exchange, WMH has been granted a percentage of the child care slots.

In the summer of 1997 WCC Board of Trustees approved the preschool.

The plan has been actively pursued through the efforts of Granberry, who attended a conference last April with the National Coalition for Campus Children Centers.

Granberry has been attending pre-licensing workshops, preparing extensive research required for opening the facility, ordering supplies, and acquiring necessary state inspections.

She has been involved in an ongoing search for staff, consisting of a director and 3 full-time positions for lead teacher.

Applicants be at least 21 years old; have an associate's degree, preferably in Early Childhood Education or at least 12 semester hours in a related field; and meet current NC requirements.

The preschool has an AA license from the state, according to Granberry.

The AA status sets WCC preschool aside from most child care facilities in the area, providing a lower child-to-caregiver ratio, additional square footage, and a mandate for parent involvement.

The child care facility will provide quality care for a weekly cost of \$80, which covers lunch and 2 snacks, Granberry said.

This price is close to the cost of child care offered at Pitt Community College and near the market rate for the area AA licensed centers.

Market rate relates to the average fees in centers receiving subsidies from social services.

The goal of the preschool, according to Granberry, is to serve as a model for the community and provide a lab site for WCC Early Childhood Development students who will serve internships at the preschool.

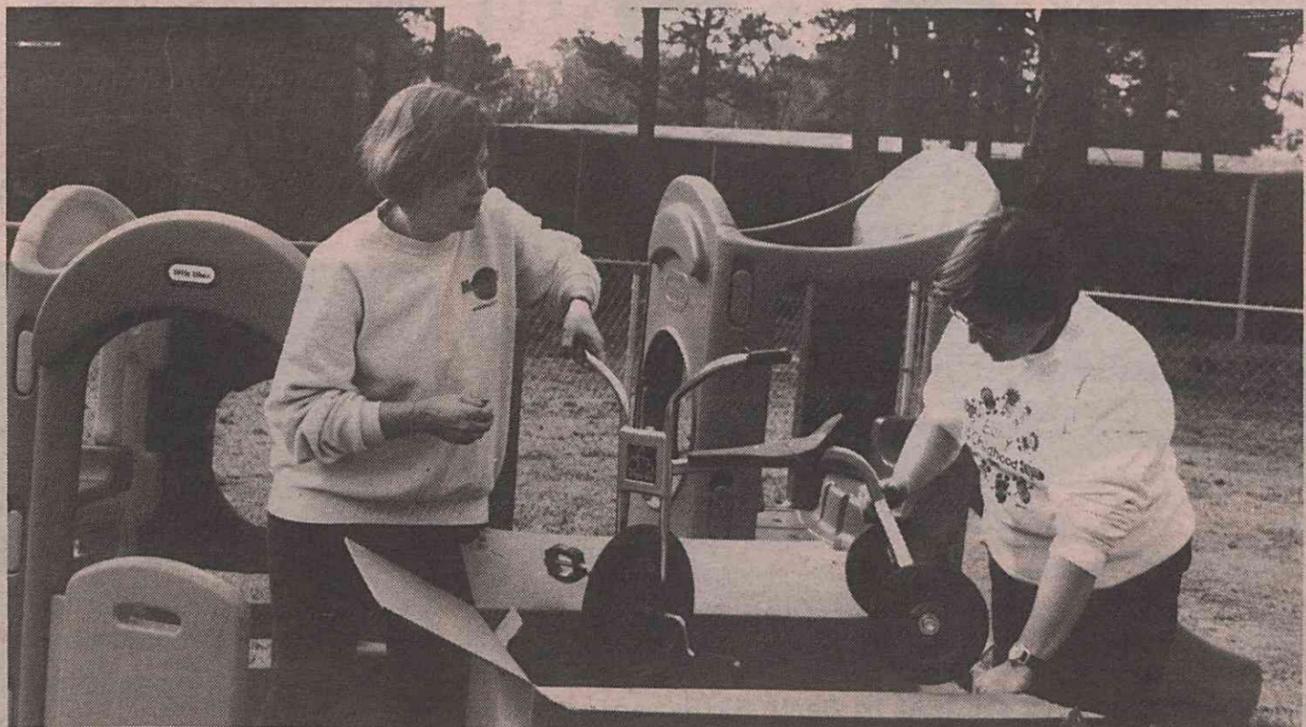
The preschool will have 3 groups based on age: a 2 year old, 3 year old, and 4-5 year old group.

The preschool has received fewer than 10 applications for the 32 child care slots available.

Yvonne Goodman, WCC Financial Aid coordinator, said that child care monies are available.

Applications for aid are taken in the Financial Aid Office.

Goodman said funds are available to assist students who wish to remain in school to achieve their educational goals.



Terese Eiser assists Granberry with playground equipment at the preschool site.

PHOTO: MEGAN NICHOLS