

UAMS News Bureau

Office of Communications & Marketing
4301 West Markham # 890
Little Rock, AR 72205-7199

uamshealth.com/news



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Media Contacts:

Leslie W. Taylor, 501-686-8998
Wireless phone: 501-951-7260
leslie@uams.edu

Yavonda Chase, 501-686-8994
Wireless phone: 501-416-0354
yavonda@uams.edu

**UAMS Holds Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony
for Child Development Center in Little Rock**

LITTLE ROCK — The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) held a ribbon-cutting ceremony today for the UAMS Child Development Center in Little Rock, a 20,000-square-foot facility that is scheduled to open in early May.

The center will provide services for about 200 children, from infancy through prekindergarten, of UAMS employees and students. Of those slots, 10% are reserved for the children of employees who live in the surrounding community, and another 10% go to workers or students who qualify for Child Care Development Fund vouchers through the Arkansas Department of Human Services.

Access to high-quality child care has long been identified as a need for UAMS employees. Stephanie Gardner, Pharm.D., Ed.D., UAMS provost and chief strategy officer, said the UAMS Child Development Center will provide a safe and welcoming place where children can learn, thrive and have fun.

“In our 10-year UAMS strategic plan, we set targets to recruit and retain a skilled, motivated and engaged workforce, the kind of workforce that will help us dramatically improve health and health care in Arkansas,” she said. “This facility hits a huge target for supporting the well-being and work-life balance of our most valuable resource — our people.”

The UAMS Child Development Center has rooms for infant care, toddlers and preschool. It features a STEM lab that encourages children to become little scientists through project-based learning, as well as Movement Matters Zones that support their physical development and nurture an interest in teamwork, creative expression and brain-body connection.

UAMS has contracted with Bright Horizons, the nation’s largest provider of employee-sponsored child care, to manage the center. The company’s Discovery Driven Learning curriculum meets children’s developmental needs while striving to spark their curiosity, create excitement and build on their individual talents and skills.

“Bright Horizons is proud to partner with the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences to provide a high-quality child care center for its employees,” said Nigel Birtwistle, group vice president of client services at Bright Horizons. “We’re excited to be part of the UAMS community and to play a role in the children’s first stage of learning.”

The nearly \$10 million project was financed through the federal New Markets Tax Credit program, with additional money coming from gifts from UAMS employees and supporters.

“UAMS is grateful for the efforts of so many people, on campus and in the community, who have helped make this project a reality,” said Cam Patterson, M.D., MBA, chancellor of UAMS and CEO of UAMS Health.

The Child Development Center is located at the intersection of 11th and Monroe streets, just south of the Hillary Rodham Clinton Children’s Library and across Interstate 630 from the UAMS campus. UAMS worked with the city of Little Rock to acquire the four-acre property.

Other community partners include Southern Bancorp, U.S. Bank and the Central Arkansas Library System. The building team consisted of Fennell Purifoy Architects and C.R. Crawford Construction.

“The opening of the UAMS Child Development Center is important not only for UAMS employees and their families, but also for the neighborhood,” said Kathy Webb, Little Rock’s vice mayor and Ward 3 city director. “This project lifts up the neighborhood and surrounding area, and it makes better job opportunities available by providing quality child-learning facilities.”

Kelly Eichler, chair of the University of Arkansas System Board of Trustees, described the UAMS Child Development Center as an important addition for Arkansas families.

“As a working mother, I fully understand and appreciate the many challenges working families face in balancing care of their children and also being able to provide for them,” she said. “As a trustee, I also now have an understanding of how this issue can affect the bottom line and morale within an organization. I applaud UAMS for recognizing this need and working tirelessly toward making this important addition a reality.”

Other stakeholders at the ribbon-cutting ceremony included Donald Bobbitt, president of the University of Arkansas System; Christina Clark, UAMS vice chancellor for institutional support services; state Reps. Tippi McCullough, Andrew Collins, Ashley Hudson and Denise Garner; Rusty Jackson of the Arkansas attorney general’s office; Tom Fennell of Fennell Purifoy Architects; Phil Purifoy of Fennell Purifoy Architects; Jenna Nissen, Bright Horizons’ center director for the UAMS Child Development Center; John Teeter, president of C.R. Crawford Construction; Justin Reeves, vice president of project management at C.R. Crawford Construction; Darrin Williams, CEO of Southern Bancorp; William Carson, vice president and senior business development officer at US Bank; Teresita L. Angtuaco, M.D., professor of radiology, obstetrics and gynecology in the

UAMS College of Medicine; Jan Shorey, professor emerita in the UAMS College of Medicine, and Lindsay Thomas; C. Lowry Barnes, M.D., professor and chair of the UAMS Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, and wife Tanya Barnes; Joseph Sanford, M.D., director of the UAMS Institute for Digital Health & Innovation; and Gloria Richard-Davis, M.D., MBA, professor of obstetrics and gynecology in the UAMS College of Medicine.

UAMS is the state's only health sciences university, with colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Health Professions and Public Health; a graduate school; a hospital; a main campus in Little Rock; a Northwest Arkansas regional campus in Fayetteville; a statewide network of regional campuses; and eight institutes: the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute, Jackson T. Stephens Spine & Neurosciences Institute, Harvey & Bernice Jones Eye Institute, Psychiatric Research Institute, Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging, Translational Research Institute, Institute for Digital Health & Innovation and the Institute for Community Health Innovation. UAMS includes UAMS Health, a statewide health system that encompasses all of UAMS' clinical enterprise. UAMS is the only adult Level 1 trauma center in the state. UAMS has 3,275 students, 890 medical residents and fellows, and five dental residents. It is the state's largest public employer with more than 12,000 employees, including 1,200 physicians who provide care to patients at UAMS, its regional campuses, Arkansas Children's, the VA Medical Center and Baptist Health. Visit www.uams.edu or www.uamshealth.com. Find us on [Facebook](#), [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#), [YouTube](#) or [Instagram](#).

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