



Steve and Priscilla with their grandchildren who are now 2nd generation EFC students

especially for children

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photography by **momento images**

Prisilla Williams is a Twin City pioneer in the childcare and preschool education sector. In the 1970s, full time childcare options were limited to in-home daycares and a number of childcare centers. Few of these childcare centers provided structured learning opportunities for children. Priscilla, with a degree in child psychology and early childhood education, knew she could provide a better option for working parents. In 1976, Priscilla founded Especially for Children, a group of child development centers that were unlike anything else available at the time. Now, 37 years later, there are eight Especially for Children Child Development Centers in the Twin Cities area.

With Especially for Children, Priscilla took the inviting, fun learning structures of the '70s nursery school and incorporated them into a full day program. She sought out teachers and staff members who were as committed to her vision for these child development centers as she was. They developed specialized programs for every age group that targeted each area of development: cognitive, physical, social and emotional.

In 1987, Priscilla's husband, Steve, came on board. With a master's in business administration and years of experience working with businesses of all sizes, Steve took over the management of the financial side of things, allowing Priscilla to focus on what she knew and loved most, the development and leadership of the programs for the children.

"Being involved in an educational organization has been a richly rewarding experience for me," Steve related. "While my daily routine revolves around the business matters needing attention, knowing that we are making an important contribution to the well-being of the children and families we serve is fulfilling in a unique way, and I'm grateful for the

opportunity to be a part of it."

Priscilla sees Especially for Children as a partnership with parents, always seeking the best for each child within the parameters provided by their parents. Parents are given many opportunities to participate in activities with their children at the centers. They are encouraged to take part in field trips and other group activities when their schedules allow.

Maintaining open and continuous communication with parents has always been a high priority in the core values of Especially for Children. Advances in technology have made that communication easier and more complete than it has ever been. The monthly newsletter provides parents with information on activities and weekly schedules and can be received in either paper form or electronically. The website is filled with information about the age-appropriate programs and additional resources for parents to connect with in the community and elsewhere.

Infant and toddler parents receive messages throughout the day about their children, as well as photos, via the classrooms' tablets. Parents no longer have to wait until the end of the day to get an update from the teacher on how things went, nor do they need to feel that they have missed out on some of the spontaneous moments of joy their children experience throughout the day.

The Star Wellness program at Especially for Children is one that staff, parents and children are very excited about. It has a three-pronged focus of food, fun and fitness. Teachers use it to incorporate more physical movements into their activities, and families are provided with challenges related to food and fitness that reinforce the concepts at home. Fun, of course, remains at the center of all these activities, where it should be.