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## Education Journal Touts Macfeat's Cherished School-Parent Relationships

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# Education Journal Touts Macfeat's Cherished School-Parent Relationships

## Quick Facts

- The Southern Early Childhood Association noted Macfeat's strong school-parent relationships.
- Macfeat will be featured in the association's Dimensions of Early Childhood journal this summer.
- Only two schools across 12 states received recognition.



ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA — Parents describe Winthrop University's **Macfeat Laboratory School** as a place that consistently encourages family involvement, a trait which makes them feel "comfortable," "empowered and reassured," and "confident" that their child is truly receiving the best education.

Recognizing this strong focus on family involvement, the **Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA)** awarded Macfeat an Honorable Mention in its **2016 Family Engagement Contest**. The school will be

featured in the summer issue of SECA's Dimensions of Early Childhood journal. Only two schools across 12 states earned this distinction.

For the contest, **Macfeat Director Erin Hamel** and staff submitted parent reference letters, conducted parent and faculty interviews, hosted a site visit and school tour, and sent in photographs and other evidence showcasing the school's philosophies, policies and strategies regarding family engagement.

Hamel said Macfeat intentionally and systematically nurtures those precious family relationships in many different ways, including face-to-face interactions, newsletters, phone calls, class social media, the Macfeat Advisory Board and many more. Families are valued as knowers, she said.

"They share their expertise, skills and hobbies in our classrooms," she explained. "They have meaningful, authentic face-to-face conversations with teachers on a daily basis and those communications, along with many others, not only help establish a sense of trust and rapport; they also provide invaluable information that allows both parties to provide the best care for the child."

Established in 1899, Macfeat is considered the oldest operating laboratory school in the United States. "Laboratory schools" refer to sites for teaching training and faculty research. At Macfeat in particular, classrooms contain two certified teachers: one with a master's degree in the education field and one working toward a master's degree.

Hamel describes the classrooms as "lively, busy spaces where children are given the time and materials to explore, create, problem-solve, think critically and imagine."

"With specific regards to family engagement, what makes Macfeat different from other childcare facilities is that our school truly embraces the mindset that strong, meaningful family-school

relationships are crucially important to children's overall well-being," she said. "The school is an exemplary organic model of families and teachers working together to support the learning and development of children."

For more information on Macfeat please visit <https://www.winthrop.edu/macfeat>.

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