



October 23, 2019

Parents, Staff, and members of the Avondale Community:

Please join me in welcoming Merrily Watts as our new Director of the Avondale Presbyterian Church Children's Center! Merrily comes to us with over 15 years of early childcare administrative experience and more than 24 years of experience working in early childhood education. Merrily earned her degree in the Science of Early Childhood Education from Western Carolina University and has been a leader in early childhood education and administration around the Charlotte region. In addition to Merrily's deep experience serving as a director of childcare centers, she also brings a wealth of knowledge from her efforts teaching other directors best practices and regulatory compliance.

Beyond Merrily's qualifications, our Search Committee was immediately impressed with Merrily's out-going and positive attitude, her leadership, and her warm and loving personality. In short, we feel blessed to have connected with Merrily and are incredibly excited for her to lead our wonderful Children's Center! We are working out the details of Merrily's exact start-date, but we anticipate that she will take the helm as our Director during the next two weeks.

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize the tremendous efforts of Millie Norris, who has served as our Interim Director during our search, as well as, Melinda Shamblin and Claudette Skidmore who provided invaluable assistance along the way. Likewise, a huge thank you to all of our wonderful Teachers and Staff members – you truly make Avondale the special place we know and love.

Similarly, a special thanks to our Search Committee members: Jodie Lawson (our incoming President), Stefanie Mitchell and Jonathan Weathers. We were very fortunate to receive an outpouring of interest in the Director position. The Search Committee combed through over 30 candidates, conducted screening interviews and held extensive in-person interviews on our campus. Lastly, thank you to Avondale's Pastor, Jim Ewing, for joining us in meeting candidates; we greatly appreciated your time and insights.

We are very excited for Merrily to join us and to begin our next chapter at the Children's Center!

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Taylor W. French". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Taylor French
President of the Board of Avondale Children's Center
Father of Margaret (Toucans) & Huntley (Alumnus)