

Kids help break ground at BC3

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BUTLER TWP — It's been a long time in the making, but this fall the Creative Children's Learning Center at Butler County Community College will have a state-of-art outdoor play space and classroom.

Center students donned construction hats and plastic shovels at the project groundbreaking event Tuesday, digging into the proverbial ground. However, the ceremony was moved inside to the Beck Library because of the rain.



Creative Children's Learning Center students and officials shovel confetti Tuesday at Butler County Community College in a groundbreaking ceremony for a new state-of-the-art outdoor play space and classroom. BC3 officials hope students can become more acquainted with the outdoors by using the space.

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Judy Zuzack, director of the CCLC, said, "The driving force behind our vision was the knowledge that studies show: The increase in technology has resulted in a decrease in the amount of time people, especially children, spend in the natural world.

"The outdoor classroom will be an extension of the indoor classroom, showing children that the indoors and outdoors are connected, and learning happens everywhere."

The program will be expanded from a fenced in grassy area to a space that has a gardening area, a music and movement area with stationary instruments, a messy materials area with mud, water and sand, and a hillside with a built-in slide. Construction costs are estimated about \$100,000, with \$25,000 coming from the Alcoa Foundation. Nick Neupauer, BC3 president, said college officials began looking at outdoor classrooms as early as 2006. But a tree falling into the program's building in 2009 delayed expansion plans.

Other expansions planned at the center include an addition to the building and a road going to the building where students can be dropped off. There are 32 students, ages 3 to 5, enrolled at the center.