

# Family Handbook

## Child Development Center at MiraCosta College

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### INTRODUCTION

This *Family Handbook* attempts to answer the questions most often asked by families enrolled in the program. Please take a moment to read through it to help familiarize yourself with the Center's policies. If you need further information, please don't hesitate to contact us directly.

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## **MISSION**

The Child Development Center serves as a campus-based child development program providing both academic instruction to students enrolled in child development/early childhood education courses and childcare and education services to students, faculty/staff, and community families. Providing demonstration classrooms to the College community, our program offers a model of best practice in early childhood education while providing students learning opportunities through observation and on-floor interactions with young children and their families. Families should be aware of the teacher training and service-learning components of the program when enrolling their child.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

At the MiraCosta College Child Development Center, we are committed to the belief that every child has a right to be treated with respect, and a right to live each day with joy and self- fulfillment. Our center operates on the belief that children are trustworthy, and with encouragement will mature to their fullest potential. As teachers, we support each child's growth socially, physically, creatively, and cognitively. We believe that children learn through self-discovery, hands-on exploration indoors and outdoors, and interaction with others; that these experiences will help them develop confidence in their own abilities; and that play is the primary medium for early learning. The environment is carefully planned to meet children's developmental needs and to provide opportunities for successful learning.

## **CAMPUS LABORATORY SCHOOL**

The Child Development Center is a learning environment for both children and adults. Each semester, ECE apprentices, service learners, observation students, and student interns will be in the classrooms. To ensure safety, these students are always under the direct supervision of an Instructional Specialist, never left alone with children, and do not assist with diapering or taking children to the restroom. The ECE Instructional Specialists (lead teachers) and ECE Instructional Apprentices work together to plan activities, change the environment, and plan the class schedules. The apprenticeship program at our center is a paid internship. It is an opportunity for child development students to have hands-on

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experiences with young children. These apprentices are hired by the district, have been life scanned, along with completing the necessary paperwork required by Community Care Licensing. Over the course of the semester, the ECE Instructional Apprentices are given more responsibility, and they are always under the supervision of the staff members at the school.

## **ADMISSION POLICY**

Admission is open to all children 18 months to 4.11 years of age regardless of race, creed, color, ability or national origin. Children of students, faculty/staff, and community may be enrolled 2 to 5 days per week for either the morning or extended-day session (extended-day programming not available in the toddler or 2-year-old classrooms). As a campus-based child development program, priority enrollment and discounted tuition are provided to student families (enrolled in 6 or more units).

In order to be admitted, children must present an immunization record, signed/stamped by a physician or other medical professional, which shows that all currently required immunizations have been received. *Physical exam forms do not meet this requirement.* A number of additional forms required by Community Care Licensing must be completed prior to a child's actual attendance in the classroom.

The online application is available on the website at the end of each semester, May 1 for fall, November 1 for spring, and during the first few weeks of each semester. All incoming applications are dated and assigned a number in the order received. They are assigned a priority ranking based on student status and application date. Continuing children are given priority for enrollment, but are asked to submit their scheduling requests each semester. A new application is needed each semester for those who are put on the wait-list as the list does not carry over to the following term.

### **Classroom Options & Eligibility**

- **Room 1: Young Toddler** (18-24 months). This room provides our youngest children what is often their first group experience. Focus is given to developing quality relationships through consistent routines, as children master self-help and social-

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interaction skills.

- **Rooms 2 & 3:** *Toddler* (24 – 30 months) and *Young Preschool* (2.7 – 3.4 years). In these classrooms, children engage in developmentally appropriate learning experiences across a variety of interest centers.
- **Rooms 4 & 5:** *Preschool* (3.5 – 4 years and 11 months). These classes provide the preschool child a developmentally appropriate early learning experience, laying the foundation for the transition to kindergarten or a final year in preschool.

Our classrooms do not require children to be toilet trained. All Center classrooms are inclusive and reflect the wide diversity of today's families. The primary criterion of eligibility is the child's emotional readiness to be separated from his/her parents and the parents' willingness to share the care of the child with the Child Development Center Staff.

## **INCLUSIVE PRACTICES**

The Child Development Center has a strong and continued commitment to include children with diverse developmental abilities in our program. This commitment is based on several beliefs and grounded in legislation accounting for the educational rights of children with special needs and their families. Children vary widely in developmental pace and style during the early years. It is not unusual to have quite a range of developmental levels in the same early childhood classroom. Children have much to learn from one another, and accounting for differences is an important part of their early experiences.

Early childhood teachers are uniquely prepared to plan for such diversity and to work effectively with children at various stages in their development. Positive, personal experiences shared by children of differing backgrounds and skills can be of great long-term value to children with and without special needs. When these experiences occur in natural and familiar surroundings, messages of belonging and individual worth are conveyed to all the children.

Instructional Specialists will be informed, as far in advance as possible, when a child of particular special needs is to be enrolled in their class. The Director and Program Specialist will coordinate any support services to be provided by school districts or community agencies. As in all aspects of Center operations, close parent/professional partnerships are

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necessary to ensure the success of all involved in this valuable endeavor.

The Child Development Center is committed to providing all children the freedom to be whomever or whatever they choose. We portray both men and women as nurturing, capable and feeling human beings, and refrain from gender-casting jobs and roles. We also encourage active and quiet play for both boys and girls.

Instructional Specialists are aware of the ways in which language, personal interactions, program features, and classroom arrangements convey information to children about their options. Non-sexist/ant-bias education is an active, ongoing endeavor.

## **STAFFING PLAN**

Each classroom is supervised by one Early Childhood Education (ECE) Instructional Specialist (Lead Teacher) and staffed by two ECE Instructional Apprentices (Assistant Teachers). ECE Instructional Specialists must minimally meet the Master Teacher requirements developed by the Child Development Division of the California State Department of Education. The ECE Instructional Specialists plan and direct daily curriculum of culturally sensitive, developmentally appropriate activities for young children (18 months to 4 years and 11 months); provide supervision of children at all times, ensuring their safety and well-being in compliance with all applicable regulations; provide student teacher and apprentice coaching and serve as a model teacher for child development students.

ECE Instructional Apprentices are MiraCosta College students, but must have completed a minimum of 6 units in child development (ideally have completed 12 units in CD course work). The education, training, and experience of center staff are prime factors contributing to overall program quality.

Center staff also includes a Center Director, a ECE Program Specialist, and an ECE Office Specialist who coordinates the day-to-day operation of the Center.

### **Classroom Ratio:**

- **Room 1:** Enroll no more than 12 children each day and maintains a teacher/child ratio of 1:4 respectively
- **Rooms 2:** Enroll no more than 15 children each day and maintain a teacher/child ratio of no higher than 1:5 respectively.

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- **Rooms 3:** Enroll no more than 18 children each day and maintain a teacher/child ratio of no higher than 1:6 respectively.
  - **Rooms 4 & 5:** Enroll no more than 22 children daily while maintaining a teacher/child ratio no higher than 1:8.

## **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

The Child Development Center has an open-door policy and invites all families to observe their child at play through each classroom's observation window. Please feel free to make use of these booths at any time, plan to use campus long-term parking lots for this purpose (rather than the 10-minute curbside parking in front of the Center). Please note because our observation booths are also used by students to observe the children to fulfill classroom assignments, please refrain from socializing or bringing children into the booths. Parents wishing to socialize with one another are requested to do so in the reception area or outside on the benches after signing their child in or out of the classroom. Responsibility for your child is yours once you have signed him/her out at the end of a session.

We hold a variety of family functions throughout the year and we invite everyone to attend. These events include classroom breakfasts and picnics, open houses, project exhibition , and informational meetings (on such topics as language development, early learning, discipline, and kindergarten transition). Look for individual notices throughout the school year. Individual family conferences are scheduled each semester (and as requested) to discuss children's developmental progress. Please make it a habit of checking the notices posted on the *Communication Board* outside the door to your child's classroom, in your family's individual mailbox, located adjacent to your child's classroom door, and emails sent by the office staff and your child's classroom teacher. Participation in some of these events may require that you provide proof of immunizations; measles, pertussis, TB and flu shot, please see the front desk for more information.

The Child Development Center works closely with many community agencies supporting parent/professional partnerships through parent education and information. We collaborate with the staff of the [HOPE Infant Family Support Program](#) and the [Exceptional Family Resource Center](#) as resources for family questions and support and for linkages to

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additional community resources. The [Healthy Development Services](#), funded through a grant obtained by Children's Hospital and [First 5 San Diego](#), provides Center families with a source of developmental screening and child assessment, as well as, ongoing parenting classes.

## TUITION

Please consult the Child Development Center web page for the current Center Tuition Schedule.

1. Tuition is based upon a *semester rate* prorated evenly across 17 weeks of scheduled programming each semester, split into 4 equal monthly payments. Monthly bills are not reduced for absences or for holidays (exceptions being the College Semester Break in December/January and Spring Break in March).
2. Bills are placed in family mailboxes before the end of the month based on projected child enrollment and college student status. There will be no retroactive adjustments to the first tuition bill due to change in enrollment status between the first week of the semester and the next month's billing period. Any changes in college enrollment status or children's schedules will be reflected retroactively on the next month's bill.
3. Tuition is due on the first (1<sup>st</sup>) of each month prior to receiving services.
4. Tuition not paid by the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) calendar day of the month is considered delinquent.
5. Tuition not paid by the fifteenth (15<sup>th</sup>) of the month may result in discontinuation of child services.
6. Fees are payable to MCC at the **Student Accounts Office** in the 3200 Building either by person with cash, check or credit card; by mail with check; or by telephone with a credit card. You may call 760-795-6835 and mention your payment is for PRESCHOOL tuition. The mailing address is: MiraCosta College, ATTN: Student Accounts Office #26, One Barnard Drive, Oceanside, CA 92056. ***We cannot accept payments at the Child Development Center. We can accept payments in the provided envelope, which will be forwarded to the Student Accounts Office.***

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7. If a check is returned unpaid, the parent/guardian is responsible for all bank fees in addition to a possible late fee.
  8. Our Federal Tax ID number is: 95-600-6662. Please retain receipts for your records.

***Parents must advise the Center, in writing, at least one week prior to dropping their child from the program, or billing will continue until written notice is received.***

## **ENROLLMENT DOCUMENTATION**

It is the family's responsibility to notify the center within five (5) working days of any change in college class schedule, emergency contact information, change of address, phone number or email. We reserve the right to request proof of college enrollment and/or progress at any time. Failure to update any information may result in the cancellation of your admission agreement.

## **DAILY SCHEDULE**

All curricular areas are included in the daily/weekly plan—arts and creative expression, music and movement, math and science, physical and outdoor activities, language and literature. A healthy snack is served in all classroom sessions. Each classroom posts a copy of their *Daily Schedule* as well as the *Snack Schedule* for parents and visitors to review.

Each class session includes child-selected time where children engage in play and structure their own activity around their interests as well as teacher-directed times such as large and small groups.

Our Child Development Center program follows the College calendar. The current college class schedule determines the start and end dates and holidays for each semester.

- **Room 1 & 2:** The primary class time is from 8:30 am to 11:30 am with morning options only. Drop off is between 8:15 am and 8:30 am; pick up is between 11:15 am and 11:30 am.
- **Rooms 3:** The primary class time is from 8:45 am to 11:45 am with extended day

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options available. Drop-off is between 8:30 am and 8:45 am; pick-up for the morning program is between 11:30 am and 11:45 am.

- **Rooms 4 & 5:** The primary class time is from 8:45 am to 12:00 pm with extended day options available. Drop-off is between 8:30 am and 8:45 am; pick-up for the morning program is between 11:45 am and 12:00 pm.

Families should plan to arrive and depart from the Center at these designated transition times. Even if an adult class ends prior to the end of the child's classroom time, we limit transitions to the times designated above as this offers each child consistent time to engage in planned classroom activities. For children staying extended day, we discourage pick-ups between 1:00 pm and 2:30 pm due to the necessity for keeping the rooms quiet and calm for napping children. Parents are encouraged to discuss individual scheduling challenges with your child's teacher, our Office Specialist, our Program Specialist, or the Center Director. Pick-up time is no later than 4:45 pm.

At drop-off and pick-up, the child must be accompanied by an authorized adult who will sign the child in or out with a **full signature** on the sign-in sheet. Photo identification is required of all individuals not known by center staff. Any certified custody orders must be provided to the Center Director prior to enrollment. Any changes in custody orders must be provided to the Child Development Center immediately.

Children will be released ONLY to a parent, legal guardian, or other person(s) designated by the custodial parent in writing on the *Emergency Information Sheet*. The addition of a pick-up person can only be made in writing; no phone authorization will be accepted.

Parking in front of the center is ONLY for **drop-off or pick-up** of children and is limited to 10 minutes. For longer periods, please use the student lot across the street. **All families should enter at the front door and proceed to their designated classroom to sign in their child.**

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## HEALTH & SAFETY

### Keep Me Home if I am Sick.

Preschool is for well children. The supervising teacher may exclude any child who appears ill. ***We expect you will call or email the office when your child must stay home due to illness and advise us of any contagious condition.*** The direct number to the office is (760) 795-6656. Please know we act in the best interests of the children and families we serve, and check all children to be sure they are well each morning upon arrival at school. You may **NOT** bring your child to school when:

- The child has a fever of 100.7 or above.
- The child's eyes have a non-clear mucus discharge or pink eye. The child must be treated with Prescription drops for 24 hours before returning to school.
- The child's nose has a non-clear mucus discharge. If due to allergies, we require a doctor's note confirming it is allergies before returning to school.
- The child has a rash.
- The child has lice/nits.
- The child has had a loose bowel movement within the last 24 hours.
- The child has been awake for a long period of time during the night.
- The child has vomited within the last 24 hours.
- The child exhibits any other symptoms of a contagious disease.

Your child must be ***symptom free*** without medication for 24 hours before returning to school. If your child becomes ill at the center, you or a designated person will be called to pick up your child. Ill children should be picked up within thirty (30) minutes after notification to a or authorized person. Failure to do so repeatedly can result in cancellation of program services. It is imperative we have current contact information on file, both for yourself and for individuals authorized to drop off/pick up your child. Please ensure that your emergency contact list includes at least two (2) individuals who are available and within reach to contact in the case of an emergency. If the parent(s) or guardian(s) do not answer their phone, we will leave a message stating we are calling the next person on the emergency list and will proceed down the list until we contact someone with authority to pick up your child and take him or her to be seen by a doctor.

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If your child had an unknown rash or other unidentifiable symptoms, they must be symptom-free or have a doctor's clearance before returning to school. It is your responsibility to find alternate care for your child when he/she is sick.

### **First-Aid and Ouch Reports**

First-aid will be administered for minor injuries. An Accident (Ouch) Report will be completed and parents will be notified. Our standard recommendation will be that the child be seen by his or her family doctor as soon as possible. In the case of a head injury of any kind, our policy is to call the parent. We also provide a handout on the signs and symptoms to watch for with a head injury. In any situation that is beyond our first aid/CPR training, Campus Police will be called to dispatch the school nurse for a professional evaluation.

### **Safety Drills**

We conduct earthquake, fire and evacuation drills once a semester. The children are told to listen for the fire alarm and then proceed to a designated outdoor meeting place, which is in front of the Center for fire drills or to the evacuation area #10 for emergency situations. Campus Police assist with traffic control during our drills. Should the center need to evacuate the campus, children will be driven to McAuliffe Elementary School at 3701 Kelton Dr, Oceanside, CA 92056 and parents can pick up their child at that site. For earthquake drills, children practice drop, cover and hold. Please note the location of fire extinguishers throughout the building and refer to the *Center Evacuation Plans* posted at each exit door for specific evacuation routes.

### **Medication**

Both over the counter and prescribed medications will be centrally stored away from children and administered according to the prescription instructions. These policies are for the protection of the children. If a child requires medication, other than those listed below, families should ask their physician to set a time schedule that meets their schedule. For example, a custodial family member might administer the medication when their child arrives at the Center and when their child is picked up to return home. Any families with special problems or concerns, please discuss with the Office Specialist, Program Specialist, or Director.

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## **Sunscreen**

At enrollment, families receive information on the sunscreen policy and will either grant or deny permission for application. With permission, sunscreen will be applied at the discretion of the Center personnel with consideration to anticipated sun exposure on the given day, especially during the months of March through October, once in the morning and once in the afternoon as the children prepare to play outside. Families are responsible to check the application of sunscreen on the sunscreen log to stay informed. For families choosing to provide their own sunscreen for their child, a separate authorization form is needed.

## **Diaper Rash Cream/ Ointment**

If a child is in need of diaper rash cream or ointment, the family must complete an authorization form and provide the product to be administered. The classroom staff will check whether a child is authorized to receive the medication prior to applying. Staff will record the applications on the Diaper/Potty Log. It is the family's responsibility to check the log to stay informed of applications.

## **Cream/ Ointment/ Lotion for Extreme Skin Conditions**

If a child has an extreme skin condition, the parent must complete an authorization form and provide the product to be administered.

## **Inhaler/ Epi-Pen/ Antihistamine**

The Child Development Center administers medication for life-threatening illnesses while the child is at school. Inhalers, Epi-pens, and antihistamines are allowed with completed authorization forms. Staff will record the medication administered on the authorization for medication form. If an Epi-pen is administered, the child must receive further medical care immediately.

When administering medication at the Child Development Center, the following requirements will be met:

- Families are required to provide a completed and signed Parent Consent for Administration of Medications & Medication Chart (LIC9221).
- Written instructions to be supplied from the child's physician (to include dosage,

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frequency and specific directions of how to administer medication).

- Staff will record each dose administered with date, time and staff signature.
- All non-refrigerated medications will be stored in the locked first aid cabinet in the child's classroom.
- All medications requiring refrigeration will be stored in a locked box that is kept in the refrigerator in the kitchen area. The key to this box is located on the wall of the front office, out of the reach of children, near the door.
- All staff will be trained to administer the above-mentioned medications in accordance with dosage and directions provided by the child's physician. Training will be provided by the Director or Program Specialist. Training will include:
  - Medication administration.
  - Safety procedures (use of gloves and washing of hands before and after medication is administered).
  - Disposal of used administration devices.
  - Cleaning and sanitization of used administration devices.
  - Storage requirements for refrigerated and non-refrigerated medications.
  - Disposal of empty medication containers.
  - Documentation of medication administration.
- All staff will be trained to recognize the signs of the following medical events and to administer above-mentioned medications in the event of a medical emergency. This will include, but not limited to:
  - Asthma attacks
  - Allergic reactions.
- The Center will require that at least two (2) staff be present at all times who are

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trained to administer the above-mentioned Incidental Medical Services.

- In the event of a disaster, the Director or classroom teacher will be responsible for retrieving the medications from the locked first aid cabinet. These medications will remain in the possession of the Director in an emergency situation. If the Director becomes unable to maintain possession, they will be given to a trained staff member.
- If a child requires administration of the above-mentioned Incidental Medication Services, the following procedures will be followed:
  - The child's parent or authorized representative will be notified by telephone immediately following the treatment. In the case of epi-pen administration, if the parent cannot be reached by phone, the secretary will look up the parent's class schedule and pull them out of their class.
  - Campus Police will be notified in the case of any administration of an epi-pen.
  - Campus Police will dispatch the College's nurse and EMTs if necessary.
  - The parent will be provided with a copy of the LIC9221 which shows the date, time, and staff member information completed at the time of administration.
  - An "Illness Report" will be completed for the child with the description of the medical event that triggered the need for the administration of the medication. A copy of this form will be provided to the parent at the time of pick up on the day of the incident.
- If any child requires medical care after the administration of the above-mentioned medications, a LIC624 will be completed and submitted to the Department of Social Services on the day of notification from the parent that medical care was provided.
- Any changes made to this plan will be submitted to the Department of Social Services immediately.
- Epi-pens will be stored in the classroom's locked first aid cabinet.
- Metered-dose Inhalers and non-refrigerated nebulizer medications will be stored in the classroom's locked first aid cabinet.
  - Any chamber, mask, nebulizer machine, nebulizer tubing or other pediatric devices needed for administration of an inhaler or nebulizer treatment will be

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stored in the classroom's locked first aid cabinet.

- Nebulizer medications requiring refrigeration will be stored in the locked medication box in the refrigerator in the kitchen area.
- Used Epi-pens will be returned to their original case and packaging, placed in a sealed plastic bag and returned to the locked first aid cabinet. When the parent arrives for pick up, staff will return the used Epi-pen to the child's parent. Families will be asked to replace it the next time the child attends school.
- All nebulizer tubing, nebulizer masks, inhaler chambers and inhaler masks will be returned to the family after use for sanitization and cleaning. The parent will then be required to return the clean devices to the Center on the child's next day of attendance.

## **ITEMS FROM HOME**

Please leave toys, books, etc., at home. In the past, we have found that most young children like to bring things from home, but may not like other children to use them. Therefore, we ask that you do not bring any personal items from home (for our youngest children, exceptions can be made for "transition objects" such as a special blanket, etc., their bottles and pacifiers are not allowed on the classroom floor). In the preschool classes, Share Days may be scheduled periodically during the semester. On these days, toys and appropriate objects from home are welcome. Your teacher will provide additional information.

## **SCHOOL CLOTHING**

*Please dress your child in play clothes in which they can feel free to get dirty as we regularly engage in wet and messy activities.* Backless or slick-soled shoes are inappropriate for school. We do allow children to remove their shoes while playing, either inside the classroom or outside on the playground. If you wish for your child to keep their shoes on, please let us know. Shoes must remain on while riding any moving vehicles or equipment. It is a good idea to bring along a sweater or jacket on all but the hottest days.

As an Outdoor Classroom demonstration site, children are encouraged to explore both indoor and outdoor classrooms at all times. Please be sure your child has weather appropriate clothes/gears so they can participate fully. Our outdoor classroom can be

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windy and cool, and part of each day will be spent outside. Also, please dress your child in clothes that are easy for him/her to manage. Remember to label all clothing with your child's name.

Each child is assigned a personal cubby space for his/her use. Please bring a **change of clothes** for your child to keep in this cubby (and check regularly so replacements are on hand). Occasionally (when a needed change of clothing is unavailable), we may share clothing from our school supply. Please be sure to launder and return all school clothing to your child's teacher.

### **FOOD POLICIES**

A nutritious snack is served during each class session and the menu is posted bi-weekly. For children who are enrolled in Lunch Bunch or Extended Day, families are required to provide a nutritious lunch consisting of a protein food such as a meat/cheese/egg, finger vegetable or fresh fruit, a drink of milk (not chocolate), 100% fruit juice, or water. For more information please refer to [USDA nutritional guidelines](#). ***Due to the increasing risk of life-threatening allergies, parents are asked to not include any nut or shellfish products in their children's lunches.***

Please note we will not be able to heat or refrigerate children's lunches. To ensure food safety, please pack cool foods with ice packs and keep hot foods in thermos.

A policy prohibiting the use of food for play, e.g. rice in the sand table, macaroni for collage, potatoes for printing, etc. has been established at the Child Development Center on ethical grounds. It is a concern that such use of food does three undesirable things: (1) wastes food; (2) teaches children that having an abundance allows one to waste; and (3) encourages children to be insensitive to the needs of others. Some acceptable uses include using flour to make play dough, planting beans and seeds, and preparing foods for snack.

### **NAP TIME**

State Licensing requires children who attend full day programs to participate in rest and nap time. The Center provides mats and individual sheets (laundered weekly). We ask families who participate in a full day program to bring a light blanket and/or a small comfort item to leave at school. It can be taken home once a week for washing.

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## **SEPARATION**

We expect and understand that young children may have a hard time separating from their family (and vice-versa!). The staff is trained in making this transition as easy as possible for both the child and the families. Your child's classroom teacher will inform you at Orientation how they prefer to handle separations. In general, once the separation process is complete, we ask parents to say a prompt, friendly goodbye and establish (and *maintain*) a consistent "separation ritual" to help children make an easier separation. Ways to help with separation anxiety and transitions include:

1. **Let Your Child Know What To Expect:** Tell your child they will be starting school and you will be at work, school, etc. Get them excited about school. Remind your child of the fun activities and new friends.
2. **Be Consistent:** Follow a daily routine.
3. **Always Say Good-Bye:** Children lose their trust in parents if they sneak out and leave, without saying good-bye. No matter how difficult it is for you and your child, say good-bye, give a hug/ kiss, and state "I will be back." Then leave the room or playground quickly. Your child's teacher will take care of your child's needs after this point.
4. **Prepare Your Child for Any Changes:** Even if your child's daily routine changes just a little, let him or her know what to expect.

The more information and support you provide, the easier the transition will be for your child. If you have any concerns about separation, please feel free to discuss them with your child's supervising teacher and/or the Center Director.

## **TOILETING**

Transition to group care can be a challenge for some young children, and teachers will remind each child to use the toilet when necessary. Individual differences will be accounted for within this process. Some children may need more time than others to fully manage this transition. As accidents will happen, particularly in the first few weeks of school, please be sure to provide several pairs of extra underwear and at least one change of clothes in your child's cubby.

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If your child has not yet fully mastered toileting, please make sure you supply plenty of diapers in his/her cubby. If we inform you that we used a school diaper, please bring a replacement diaper the next time your child comes to school. Pull-ups are difficult for changing, so please use regular diapers. ***Families are asked to bring a box of baby wipes to keep in your child's cubby.*** Toilet training is a part of growing up. We will be happy to work with you and your child in this process. Before transitioning your child from diapers to underwear, please speak with your child's supervising teacher.

### **DISCIPLINE & LIMITSETTING**

The Child Development Center's approach to discipline and conflict resolution is grounded in a respect for children, the development of self-esteem and the building of problem-solving skills. Using affirming guidance and positive direction, teachers help children understand the limits of appropriate behavior in a classroom setting. Interventions are focused on helping children understand the consequences of their behavior, reminding them of acceptable alternatives (walk instead of run) and redirection. The goal is to help children build self-control and develop autonomy. Punitive disciplinary measures, such as scolding, corporal punishment, or isolated time-out are unacceptable and inappropriate.

In solving interpersonal conflicts, Instructional Specialists guide children in recognizing each other's needs and point of view and in coming up with acceptable, workable ideas to solve the problem. The goal is to help children develop the skills to be successful social negotiators and to rely on non-violent means of resolving their conflicts. It is important to give children an opportunity to problem-solve on their own. By jumping in too soon with the solution, adults teach children to rely more on adult authority than their own resourcefulness in solving problems.

As the Center's goal is to promote the physical and emotional well being of each child in our care, situations consistently endangering a child or children will not be permitted. Children who consistently engage in such behaviors are subject to discontinued enrollment (with reimbursement made for any paid days remaining in that month).

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## HOLIDAYS AND OTHER CELEBRATIONS

The population at the Child Development Center is diverse and multicultural, bringing a wonderful richness to everyone's experiences. The Child Development Center is a place where adults and children from any background can feel comfortable, welcome and respected. Holidays from a variety of cultures are a valuable way of recognizing the similarities and uniqueness of different cultures, for example the uses of food, dress, crafts and/or songs in the celebration, while also appreciating the diversity in the forms these aspects take. Our goal is to celebrate holidays in ways that are appropriate and meaningful to young children. They should not interrupt, replace or occupy an extended amount of children's regular activities or daily routines. Any celebrations that do occur must be concrete and conducted in ways that make sense to the child's level of development.

In order to benefit the most from recognizing a variety of holidays, the Instructional Specialists consider the following in the planning of related activities:

- Avoidance of holidays having a religious purpose;
- Providing a focus on the most universal aspects of a holiday, (e.g. family, home, community) rather than the commercial aspects;
- Avoidance of any activity that could make any child or family feel uncomfortable;
- Ensuring that all activities are age-appropriate and culturally sensitive.

Instructional Specialists also routinely solicit the help of the parents of the children in their class and ask them to share information and resources about their family's cultural traditions, holidays and ideas for activities that would be appropriate for the children. Such information can be incorporated within the universal aspects of traditional American holidays.

**Note:** As examples of this policy, here at the Center we do not dress in costumes for Halloween (though we may do face-painting) and we do not bring valentines to school (though we do share feelings in letters to our family and friends).

Birthdays are very special events, which give children a sense of themselves as growing

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individuals. While birthday parties, with all of their accessories, are not appropriate at the Child Development Center, acknowledging and celebrating a child's birthday are essential to promoting self-esteem. Instructional Specialists should be sensitive to the individual child's comfort in being publicly recognized. Speak with your classroom teacher on various ways their classrooms recognize individual birthdays.

## **CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT & CHILD ASSESSMENT**

The Child Development Center is strongly committed to a play-based approach to early learning (as outlined within the Preschool Learning Foundations and the Preschool Curriculum Framework, published by the California State Department of Education). The framework for our curriculum development incorporates careful attention to design of the environment (with a focus on interest centers), developmentally appropriate practices (DAP), purposeful planning, and accurate assessment of learning outcomes. Teachers use a variety of ways to observe and document the interests and abilities of each and every child in their charge, and develop curriculum that is responsive to individual child interests. Teachers assess children's learning using a variety of tools including, the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP), designed to provide children with a seamless transition to kindergarten. They incorporate this information in their planning for learning, and explicitly communicate the outcomes of such ongoing assessment with classroom families.

Research has shown that the skills your child needs to be successful in the future are social and emotional skills! The more socially skilled children are, the more likely they are to succeed in school. Because this is so important for your child, we are using the Teaching Pyramid Framework in our program. The Teaching Pyramid is a framework for supporting the social and emotional development of our children. The goal of the Teaching Pyramid is to create an environment where every child feels good about coming to school. This is accomplished by designing classrooms that promote engagement in learning and by building positive relationships among children, families, and staff. In our use of the Teaching Pyramid, our classroom staff will work together to ensure that all children understand behavioral expectations, receive instruction in social skills, and those who are struggling receive individual support.

Elements of the ***Reggio Emilia*** approach to learning are incorporated within our program

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philosophy, and these directly influence curriculum development and child assessment. Within this approach, there are a number of key areas that require careful consideration.

***The time needed to document children's work.*** Teachers need time to both observe and reflect. Our daily schedule has few transitions - children need time for uninterrupted work and extended time for involvement in purposeful activity. Teachers share equitably in planning, documentation, curriculum development, and parent contacts.

***The role of the teacher in the learning process.*** It is important to consider how each individual staff member approaches learning necessary to re-examine our own assumptions about how children (*and* adults) learn. Within this approach, importance is placed on following the child's cues, listening to children, provoking thinking and documenting efforts, using the child's interests as a primary source for curriculum.

***The role of the child in the learning process.*** Teachers ask lots of open-ended questions, asking "why's?" to provoke and extend children's thinking about a topic or subject. Children's work is valued and given worth by the teachers. Children are encouraged to "sketch" their ideas on paper as a way of expressing their thinking across mediums and to engage in curriculum projects that extend their understanding of concepts and ideas.

***The reverence for the physical environment.*** Our environment is "softened," with attention to indirect and natural lighting, use of creative materials, documentation boards, display boards, photographs of children at work, children's artwork, glass bottles with colored water, lamps and rugs, more muted use of colors, materials that are primarily "life skills" focused, glass plates, wood and metal (little plastic), mirrors, light tables, wooden chairs and tables, etc. Note the importance of the environment's messages to children and how we include children in set-up and preparation of the environment.

**Note:** For more information, please read, [From Theory to Practice and Assumptions About Learning](#) as well as sample competencies from the DRDP which can be found at

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<https://www.desiredresults.us/www.drdpsr.org>. They provide additional information from which our approach to early learning, curriculum development, and child assessment can be better understood. Understanding how children learn and documenting what children learn is our essential endeavor. All Center families are invited to be partners with us in this process!