



T.R.E.E.

Teachers Reaching Excellence Everyday

GUIDE



WELCOME TO THE PROFESSIONAL STAFF OF THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY CHILD CARE PROGRAM!

We are proud that you are a part of our professional team. We know our teachers are passionate early childhood professionals who genuinely care about children, who are open-minded, supportive and enthusiastic about their work. We want to help each one of our teachers grow and strengthen themselves as professionals who value the following:

- the unique dignity and worth of each child, family and colleague;
- the individuality of children’s development;
- children’s play;
- continuous challenge and change;
- risk-taking, mistakes, and growth;
- reflection and self-examination;
- collaboration and peer support;
- advocacy for young children, their families and early childhood professionals.

We look forward to your participation as a professional member of the OSU Child Care Program Staff.

The [TREE Guide](#), our program guidebook, has been prepared to help you better understand the mission, philosophy, goals and procedures of the program. It is important to us that you have the information that will help you be the very best teacher of young children that you can be.

All the information needed to provide you with the framework for your work here is contained in the Employee Handbook, the TREE Guide, and the Family Handbook. All three will be given to you and reviewed with you upon your hire and then referred to many times during your employment with the program. Should you have any questions, please seek the assistance of a teaching colleague, an administrator or the Human Resources Coordinator. As a team, we are here to support you as you care for the children and the families of the OSU Child Care Program.

Welcome to our Program of Excellence!



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INTRODUCTION

to The Ohio State University
Child Care Program

*“Let us put our minds together
and see what life we can make
for our children.”*

~Sitting Bull





THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLES

Ohio State is dedicated to extending educational opportunity, improving the communities we serve, stimulating economic prosperity, promoting sound health and wellness, conducting leading-edge research, and meeting pressing societal needs as they arise. We foster the development of the whole student in our demonstrated emphasis on learning in the classroom, the laboratory, the library, the board room, the playing field, in nature, and in the community. Our institutional principles guide the ways faculty and staff carry out their daily tasks in support of those public purposes.

The principles that characterize our work at Ohio State include:

We are committed to excellence through high standards, results, and a demonstration to service in carrying out all facets of our mission.

We collaborate as One University by sharing information, promoting teamwork, and thinking creatively across organizational boundaries.

We act with integrity and are personally accountable by accepting responsibility for our actions, focusing on solutions rather than blame, and taking initiative.

We embrace change and encourage innovation regularly by demonstrating creativity, curiosity, the drive to learn, and being open to constructive conflict.

We promote openness and trust through direct and honest communication, and by our willingness to give and accept feedback and coaching.

We act in respectful ways and value diversity in people and ideas as a cornerstone to a healthy, inclusive, and respectful educational environment.

We strive for simplicity in administrative processes while exhibiting ethics, authenticity, transparency, and responsiveness.

Adopted November 2008



THE OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES ~ VISION AND MISSION

VISION

Unleashing Human Potential by Creating a Culture of Growth, High Performance, and Quality of Work/Life Through Innovative, Future-Focused Leadership

MISSION

The mission of the Office of Human Resources is to provide quality human resource services to faculty and staff in support of the university's teaching, research, and service objectives.

Our responsibilities include:

- recruiting and supporting the hiring of quality people;
- providing quality compensation and benefits programs responsive to customer needs;
- developing employees through education and training;
- enhancing the climate and quality of work life; and
- creating and valuing diversity.

In interactions with our internal and external customers, we commit to the following values:

- respect for the individual;
- open and honest communication;
- fair and equitable treatment;
- concern and sensitivity; and
- acknowledgement of and respect for diversity.

We carry out our mission by:

- maintaining the highest professional and ethical standards;
- committing to quality in all we do;
- understanding and anticipating customer needs;
- improving efficiency and productivity;
- reducing bureaucracy and simplifying processes;
- continuing to improve services;
- measuring outcomes; and
- working as a team.





CHILD CARE PROGRAM ~ VISION, MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY

VISION

Providing excellence in child care and early education for the University community.

MISSION

As an active and integral program of the University community, it is our mission to:

- provide high quality child care and early education that allows families to participate in and fulfill their responsibilities to the University.
- provide support for academic units and the early childhood community by offering opportunities for study and research by students, faculty and colleagues.

PHILOSOPHY

The Ohio State University Child Care Program was founded on the belief that high quality child care and early education benefits the growth and development of the youngest children in our University community, as well as their families.

Therefore, we strive to provide a secure, nurturing and stimulating environment that enhances young children's:

- recognition of themselves as persons of value
- understanding of individuals who are different from themselves
- respect for themselves and others
- development of self-regulation
- creativity and imagination
- critical thinking skills
- joy, wonder and knowledge of their world





ROOTS

Respectful:

- ❖ We understand, accept and celebrate the unique dignity and worth of each child, family and colleague.
- ❖ We recognize the individuality of children's development and the primacy of play in children's lives.
- ❖ We work each day to build and maintain positive relationships, communication and environments.

Other-focused:

- ❖ We place children at the center of our work.
- ❖ We recognize our work as helping and supporting others as they grow and develop.
- ❖ We trust those around us, especially the colleagues with whom we work.
- ❖ We communicate as positively, openly and effectively as we can.
- ❖ We celebrate the work and progress of others.

Open-minded:

- ❖ We seek deeper understanding, increased knowledge and new challenges in our work.
- ❖ We listen attentively to children, families and colleagues.
- ❖ We encourage and celebrate diversity and creativity in our children and ourselves.
- ❖ We take risks and accept mistakes as opportunities for growth.

Thoughtful:

- ❖ We engage in reflection and self-examination as a foundation for growth and change.
- ❖ We encourage the use of imagination in children and in ourselves.
- ❖ We problem-solve in collaboration with our colleagues and believe in our results.
- ❖ We are not afraid of the space between our dreams and reality.

Spirited:

- ❖ We take pleasure in being with children, partnering with parents and working with colleagues.
- ❖ We enthusiastically play, laugh, paint, sing, dance, hug or do other child-like things.
- ❖ We view "problems" as possibilities.
- ❖ We advocate for young children, their families and our profession.

The Ohio State University Child Care Program, 2007



ORGANIZATION OF THE CHILD CARE PROGRAM

The Child Care Program is a unit within the Office of Human Resources (OHR) which exists under the large umbrella of the Office of Academic Affairs. We report to the Vice President of Human Resources who reports directly to the President of the University.

The Child Care Program is an “earnings unit” of the university which means that the budget is separate from that of OHR. Funding for the program comes from family tuition, the university, the medical center and various local, state and federal funding sources.

The Child Care Program operates two facilities: Ackerman Road and Buckeye Village. The Ackerman Road facility, opened in 1987, serves approximately 350 children, infants through kindergarten, 6:00 a.m.-midnight. The Buckeye Village facility, opened in 2005, serves 114 children, infants through preschool, 7:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Both facilities are open Monday-Friday and are closed for university holidays and two professional development days annually.

EARLY CHILDHOOD CLASSROOM TEAM

Early childhood classroom teams include Lead Teachers, Assistant Teachers and Teaching Aides working together to provide a secure, nurturing and challenging classroom environment that enhances children’s growth and development.

Lead Teachers and Assistant Teachers are fulltime employees of the university. Teaching Aides are student employees and work under the direction of fulltime staff.

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

The administrative team establishes and maintains the policies, processes and systems that support the mission of the program.

All administrators and support staff have program-wide, as well as facility-specific responsibilities.

The **Program Director** is responsible for the overall operation of the Child Care Program, including supervising the administrative staff, and serving the larger university community. The Director also serves as one of two facility administrators for the Ackerman Road facility.

Two **Associate Directors** serve as facility administrators at the Ackerman Road and Buckeye Village facilities.

The **Family Services Coordinator** is responsible for enrollment for the entire Child Care Program, as well as providing support services for families and staff.

Three **Program Coordinators** serve as age-level specialists at the Ackerman Road facility. They are responsible for supervising teaching staff, coordinating classroom staffing and ensuring that staff has the necessary support and resources to fulfill their responsibilities. The Buckeye Village (BV) administrator serves in this role for all the BV staff, although age-level specialists are available to provide additional support.



Two Teachers provide administrative leadership and support as the **Evening Program Supervising Teacher** at the Ackerman Road facility and the **Program Assistant** at the Buckeye Village facility.

The **Human Resources Coordinator** ensures that the program offers appropriate supports for employees, complies with labor and ODJFS licensing regulations, and maintains robust staffing levels. An **Office Associate** provides additional human resources support and processes payroll needs.

The **Business Operations Manager** manages all of the fiscal transactions for the program. An **Office Associate** assists with purchasing and processing information for several funding sources.

Two **Office Assistants** serve in customer service roles at the front desks of the two facilities. Each one has additional responsibilities such as assisting in management of tuition payments or waitlist information for families.

AUXILIARY STAFF

Culinary Services Staff from Campus Dining Services works in the Ackerman Road facility kitchen to prepare snacks and meals for the children in both facilities. Food prepared at Ackerman Road is catered to the Buckeye Village location.

Janitorial Services are provided by an independent contractor at the Ackerman Road facility and by Student Life employees at the Buckeye Village facility.



BEING WITH CHILDREN

“The child must know that he is a miracle, that since the beginning of the world there hasn’t been, and until the end of the world there will not be, another child like him.”

~Pablo Casals



IMAGE OF THE CHILD

Each of us, through our own experiences and understanding, has an image of the child in our mind's eye, a picture of capabilities and expectations that guides how we respond to children. Each image is unique and yet our program staff also shares common ideas about children.

We believe that children are:

- competent
- creative
- powerful
- active
- curious
- wise
- teachers
- social
- vulnerable
- worthy of respect
- open to possibilities
- complex

CHILDREN AT THE CENTER

Think of this: the center is a point, area, person, or thing that is most important or pivotal in relation to an indicated activity, interest, or condition. We provide early care and education for young children. Children are so clearly the most important, the pivotal, people in our program.

Because of this, as we examine our policies and our practices, and even our thoughts and our attitudes, we place the children in the center of our discussions. We place the children in the center of our decision-making. We are able to read children at the center of our policies, hear children in the center of our planning meetings, and see children in the center of our classroom practices.

“Allow children to be happy their own way, for what better way will they ever find?”

~ Samuel Johnson

When we place children in the center, we find ourselves:

- Ensuring the well-being of children with our policies and practices about safety, security, and sanitation;
- Engaging in authentic, respectful interactions with children;
- Observing more closely, working harder to plan stimulating environments, and providing appropriate curriculum;
- Acknowledging our need for growth, seeking professional development, and sharing our strengths with others;
- Thinking and acting in positive ways toward our colleagues and interacting as professionals with families;
- Renewing our vision and excitement about our presence in children's lives.



SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN

There is nothing more important than the supervision and safety of the children in our care. No other work we do will have any meaning if a child is put in harm's way through inappropriate supervision.

Supervision of children requires the following:

- Understanding the abilities and vulnerabilities of the children in your group.
 - Different age groups present different supervision challenges. Know the challenges of your group and make sure that all staff assigned to your group, including teaching aides, understands them as well.
 - Your group may have children with special needs or who engage in risk-taking behaviors. Alter your supervision plans in accordance with these needs.
- Maintaining appropriate teacher/child ratios. Appropriate supervision is more difficult if group sizes or ratios are too great.
 - The Child Care Program observes the following ratios:
 - Infants – 1:4
 - Toddlers – 1:5
 - Preschool – 1:9
 - Kindergarten – 1:12
 - Staff may not be included in ratio when engaged in conversation with other staff or children's family members for extended periods of time, whether in person, by phone or electronically.
 - In order to maintain appropriate supervision, the use of cell phones, including text messaging, is prohibited when staff is working with children.
 - Family members, visitors, field placement students, student observers, research personnel, specialized therapists and student interns are not included in teacher/child ratios.
- Actively observing the entire group even when engaged with a small group or individual.
 - Ensure that you are able to observe all infants, toddlers and preschool children by sight and sound. Preschool and kindergarten children may have bathroom privacy.
 - Scan the group frequently so that you maintain an awareness of the whereabouts of every child in your group at all times.
 - Engage in quick "head-counts" to ensure that you are seeing all the children.
 - Physically check sleeping infants at least once every five minutes.
 - Be careful not to become complacent over time. These techniques are important to use every day.
- Actively moving around the indoor or outdoor space.
 - The larger the space, the more important it is to move. When outside, maintaining appropriate supervision takes precedence over engaging with small groups or individuals.
 - Develop a plan for movement on the playground so that all areas are receiving optimal supervision. Work with staff from other classrooms to supervise the entire playground when multiple classrooms are outside together.



- Communicating effectively with other staff.
 - Discuss the supervision plan with all classroom staff, including teaching aides.
 - Help one another focus full attention on the children.
 - When transitioning from one space to another, talk about roles and responsibilities before moving.
 - Plan ahead so that staff needing to leave the group, even for short periods of time, is kept to a minimum. Allow teaching aides to run errands away from the group if it is necessary, leaving the most experienced staff with the children.
- Keeping current attendance records.
 - As children arrive or depart, mark the paper attendance sheet first, then complete the computer attendance.
 - Always know the correct number of children in attendance in your group.
 - Keep the attendance sheet with the group at all times.
 - Teachers must make an individual “tracking card” for each child. The tracking card must include the child’s photo and full name. (See below for information on use.)
- Using appropriate strategies when moving the group.
 - When the group is walking together, one staff is in the front and one staff is in the back of the group. Other staff may be placed as appropriate for the group.
 - When moving from place to place inside or outside, staff must stop at entrance and exit points or other appropriate locations, completing a face-to-name check using the attendance sheet or tracking cards before proceeding.
 - When an individual or small group of children is moving with staff away from the group, the attendance tracking system must be used.
 - On the classroom clipboard is an attendance sheet and a tracking sheet.
 - The largest part of the group carries the attendance sheet.
 - All children marked in attendance, but not remaining where the attendance sheet is, must have their names written on the tracking sheet, stating their location, the staff supervising them and their departure time.
 - The smaller group must carry with them the tracking cards of the children in the small group. The tracking cards act as a “mobile attendance sheet” for the small group.

LEGAL IMPORTANCE OF SUPERVISION

No child may ever be left unsupervised for any reason while in the care of the Child Care Program. All children must be actively supervised by an employee of the program at all times.

Child care licensing rule 5101:2-12-20 mandates appropriate supervision. Non-compliance with this rule is a serious risk violation. ODJFS requires that we report to Franklin County Children’s Services any incident in which a child is left unattended or unsupervised. Once a report is made, a case may be opened and may include an investigation by a caseworker. The consequences for staff may include a finding of child neglect from Franklin County Children’s Services and disciplinary action from the university up to and including termination of employment. The consequences for the program include a substantiated complaint that must be posted at the facility, a notice in red letters on the ODJFS website indicating a serious risk rule violation at the facility, inability to apply for quality initiatives, and loss of reputation with families, the university community and the early childhood community.



ESTABLISHING RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN

INFANTS

Each infant should begin with a primary relationship with one caregiver in the room. Primary caregiving relationships allow an infant to learn about one person first, before learning about others. Be sure to select a primary caregiver who is not scheduled for any time away from the program during the first few weeks of the infant's enrollment. Primary caregivers can be selected because of an already developing relationship with the family, experience with other children or families with similar needs, or in a less structured fashion.

However the primary caregiver is chosen, it is the responsibility of the caregiver to know as much as possible about the child and family before enrollment begins. Upon enrollment, it is the primary caregiver's responsibility to develop a relationship with the infant that includes understanding non-verbal cues for hunger and fatigue, for over-stimulation and under-stimulation. The caregiver must learn how the infant prefers to be held when eating, what kinds of toys and materials the infant responds to favorably, and how the infant prefers to go to sleep for a nap. The caregiver must spend time learning who this small person is.

This information must then be shared with others in the room, so that, eventually, all caregivers will feel that they are able to care for the child in individually responsive ways.

TODDLERS

Toddlers can be in turn timid and bold, independent and resistant. A toddler who marches confidently into the room one day may be the same toddler who cries and clings to a parent's leg the next day. Allow for these fluctuating emotions when developing a new relationship with a toddler. Your relationship will take time and understanding.

Providing routines and rituals at the beginning of a relationship helps toddlers assert their sense of self. Be calm and gentle, talk and smile, but avoid being effusive or demanding. Follow the cues of the toddlers to determine their temperaments, likes and dislikes. Be clear about what's happening, but don't expect understanding or even cooperation at first.

Toddlers were infants just a moment ago. They still want to be held and cuddled. They cry and don't have all the words to tell you why. They get angry quickly, sometimes acting out instinctively with hands or teeth. They tire suddenly and sometimes fall asleep while chewing or drawing. They smile and laugh and dance just as suddenly. They take great risks, but scare easily. They are self-centered, but are often seen getting a blanket for a tired friend or stroking the hair of someone who is hurt.

To establish a relationship with a toddler is to appreciate all these many moods and embrace the ever-changing emotional landscape. Learn about the unique qualities of each toddler in your care and celebrate them in the way you plan for each day.



RESPONSIVE CAREGIVING WITH INFANTS AND TODDLERS

Watching, asking and adapting are the tools of responsive caregiving. Responsive caregiving involves knowing each infant and taking their cues about when to expand on the infant's initiative, when to guide, and when to intervene.

- Responsive caregiving begins with listening to parents and observing the child, learning the vocal, verbal and non-verbal cues that infants and toddlers use to communicate their needs and desires.
- Responsiveness requires the caregiver to take appropriate action with the child, based upon these cues, in a short amount of time. For instance, research indicates that the optimal amount of time an infant should cry before a caregiver takes action is just 15 seconds. Responding appropriately to a crying infant will increase their feeling of security in their environment and decrease crying in the future.
- Teachers must understand the basics of infant and toddler development as the foundation to understand an individual's development.
- Teachers must be aware of each child's individual temperament, as well as the group dynamics formed when the individuals come together.
- Teachers must be sure to understand that no temperament is "better" than another. Each temperament simply requires a combination of responses to best meet the needs of the infant as that infant learns to negotiate the environment.
- Appropriate communication is essential to responsive caregiving. Teachers must respond to infants' attempts to communicate. Vocalizations should be met with eye contact, facial expressions and reciprocal vocalizations. Vocalizations can be expanded upon, as well. For instance, a conversation with an infant may sound as follows:
 - Infant: "Ba."
 - Caregiver: "Ba."
 - Infant: "Ba, ba."
 - Caregiver: "Ba, ba."
 - Infant: "Ba."
 - Caregiver (singing): "Baa, baa, black sheep ..."
- Some toddlers may be pre-verbal or have a small vocabulary. For example, a toddler who is pointing at blocks and making sounds needs a responsive caregiver to say, "You want the blocks. I'll get them off the shelf for you."
- Labeling a child's crying, such as, "It's sad when Mommy goes to work," demonstrates respect for their feelings and helps them develop effective words to use as they grow.
- Responsive caregivers have a plan for the day based upon observations of the developmental tasks of each child. These observations help determine what materials are made available in the environment. Plans, however, include much room for flexibility and spontaneity.
- Responsive caregivers understand the importance of routines and the opportunities for interaction imbedded in each one. Feeding, diaper changing, and napping become times full of intimate interactions between teacher and child.



- Responsive caregivers approach the physical nature of caring for infants and toddlers with gentleness and respect. Children are told what is happening before being picked up or moved. Infants are always picked up gently: one hand under the head and neck and one hand under the bottom for young infants, both hands under the arms for older infants and toddlers. Children are never picked up by the hands, wrists or arms, and are never picked up by the teacher using only one hand.
- Responsive caregiving is creative and makes each day fresh and interesting for teachers and children.

PRESCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN

Preschool and kindergarten children have gained considerable knowledge about their world and are increasingly sure of themselves in it. They are curious, imaginative and may be adventuresome. Although often comfortable taking greater risks physically and socially, they are not always aware of their own limitations. An effective relationship with children of this age provides them with freedom, space and time to explore and a safe place to return.

Preschool and kindergarten children have strong emotions. They enjoy physical affection, have a silly sense of humor and freely experience and express the joy of life. They also can be easily frustrated, suddenly frightened or prone to defiant anger. Teachers must be understanding of the challenge of emotional regulation and guide children toward resolution.

Children of this age are still interested in their relationships with adults, but relationships with peers are equally important. They use their increasing mastery of language and social structure to build relationships, but still need adult guidance to be successful.

CONSTRUCTING A COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS

The heart of a high quality preschool or kindergarten program is the relationship among adults and children, and children and their peers. It is essential that teachers build supportive, positive and consistent relationships that rely on and encourage clear, open communication. To build these relationships, teachers must:

- show respect for children;
- be sensitive to children’s individual needs;
- develop strong partnerships with families;
- understand cultural differences;
- nurture personalities;
- respond appropriately to children’s strong emotions;
- model appropriate behavior;
- practice negotiation and problem-solving;
- learn from mistakes;
- keep a positive attitude;
- be enthusiastic about learning.



These relationships help develop the individual citizens in our community of learners. Children have developed unique personalities by the time they are in preschool. However, active, confident, effective learners have many attributes in common:

- They are persistent, even when tasks are challenging.
- They are willing to take risks.
- They make sense of their world by developing and testing hypotheses through play.
- They engage in focused participation in the play and projects which they choose.
- They are developing self-confidence and self-regulation.

APPROPRIATE INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN

The interactions we engage in with children, with families and with each other should reflect our knowledge, beliefs and values. We know that young children are not only developing knowledge and skills as they grow, but also feelings and attitudes about themselves as learners and citizens of a community. We believe that young children are worthy of our nurturing care and respect. We value children's creativity, imagination, wonder and joy. For these reasons, we engage in interactions that reflect our mutual care and respect.

Through the language of respect children learn that:

- They are valued.
- Their words and actions are worthy of careful listening and observing.
- They are competent and trusted to find answers to questions and solutions to challenges.
- They can take responsibility for their own actions.
- They can offer their help to others and work cooperatively.
- They are an important part of their group, their culture and society.

We engage in appropriate interactions with children when:

- We are attentive and responsive. We notice children's moods, concerns, and needs, whether expressed verbally or non-verbally, and respond appropriately.
- We get on the child's level physically. Sitting on the floor, kneeling, squatting, sitting on a low chair or holding a child on our lap are all ways to ensure that we present ourselves as a partner with the child in an interaction.
- We speak clearly and slowly. Children process speech more slowly than adults because their central nervous system has not matured and they are less experienced. Slowing our speech allows children to hear and respond more effectively.
- We are conversational. It is not necessary to "talk down" to a child. Be genuinely interested in what the child has to share, just as you would any person, and you will have much to share in return.



- We use the language of encouragement. It is important for all of us to understand that acquiring skills and knowledge is hard work full of opportunities to make mistakes. Encouragement helps children develop positive thinking about themselves and others.
- We emphasize successes. Even when situations are challenging, capitalizing on small successes and strengths fosters perseverance and improvement.
- We listen as much as we speak. In order to take conversational turns with an infant, a teacher must listen for the infant’s vocalizations. In order to have a conversation with a preschool child, the teacher must listen to understand the child’s ideas and feelings.
- We describe children’s actions and emotions. This is especially important for pre-verbal children, but is still important for older children as well. For example:
 - An infant opens a container and places a doll inside: “It’s open! Doll in.” An infant is likely to take the doll out and put it back in repeatedly while looking at the teacher who is saying, “Doll in. Doll out,” after each turn.
 - A young toddler points at a squirrel in the yard and looks at her teacher: “You see a squirrel. He’s looking for food to eat in the grass.”
 - A preschool child walks away from friends in the dramatic play area with an angry look on his face: “Your face looks angry. I wonder if something happened to make you feel that way.”
- We are sensitive to differences, partnering with families to learn about individual, family and cultural styles of communication and interaction.
- We enjoy our time with children, easily sharing our smiles and good humor.

It is important to understand some specific interactions that do not support our mutual care and respect of children. Inappropriate interactions include:

- Conveying favoritism of one child over another through words or actions;
- Comparing children’s abilities, behaviors or feelings;
- Conveying impatience or belittling a child’s skills;
- Using inappropriate humor with children, including sarcasm;
- Placing blame;
- Using an overabundance of praise or engaging in false praise;
- Forcing apologies;
- Conveying disinterest or busyness to a child seeking interaction;
- Directing negative emotions at children.

When we engage in appropriate interactions with children, we help them acquire effective communication and social skills, as well as a sense of themselves as worthy of respect from others and others as worthy of respect from them. There are few things more important for children as they grow into their roles as citizens of the world.



CHILD GUIDANCE

As stated in the Child Care Program philosophy, we strive to provide a secure, nurturing and stimulating environment that enhances young children's:

- Recognition of themselves as persons of value
- Understanding of individuals who are different from themselves
- Respect for themselves and others
- Development of self-regulation

In order to grow and develop in these areas, children must engage in relationships with both adults and peers. Effective relationships and effective learning both require effective social skills, emotional regulation skills and communication skills.

The development of these skills is enhanced by child guidance strategies that:

- Promote pro-social behavior;
- Use language to communicate needs;
- Emphasize problem-solving;
- Effectively use the environment as a primary support.

In the Child Care Program, child guidance is recognized as essential to helping children grow and learn. All guidance strategies are chosen keeping this goal in mind. In addition, strategies are chosen that are responsive to the individual needs of the child. All staff is responsible for the appropriate guidance of children in their care.

The following child guidance strategies are used in the Child Care Program:

Involve the Family: Parents are our partners in creating successful experiences for children. Parents know their children best and can share much about their child's personality as well as the guidance strategies used at home. Teachers will share information with parents about their child's developing social skills and emotional self-regulation. When concerns arise, teachers and parents work together to develop positive strategies and solutions.

Manage the Physical Environment: Classroom environments are designed to encourage active, meaningful, sustained play. Space is neither too large nor too confining, too quiet nor too loud, too cluttered nor too sparse. Providing children with a balanced, engaging environment helps them to have positive, successful experiences that nourish their imaginations and creativity.

Manage the Social and Emotional Environment: Staff creates an environment where all people are respected through words and actions, pro-social behavior is modeled by adults, emotions are accepted, and communication is essential for problem-solving. The use of books, songs and other activities are responsive to children's social and emotional needs.

Provide Predictability and Consistency: Children are more relaxed and comfortable when they know what to expect in their environment. Teachers provide predictability through the use of daily schedules and effective transitions. They provide consistency by involving children in the development of classroom



rules and referring to them often. When teachers speak calmly, explain rationale, and accept children where they are in their development, they can create a harmonious classroom environment.

Accentuate the Positive: Teachers recognize, discuss and encourage children’s attempts at pro-social behavior, enhancing children’s intrinsic motivation to make effective choices. Teachers also recognize and encourage each child’s innate gifts and talents, helping them to recognize themselves as persons of value. Teachers use positive language when reminding children of rules, such as “Blocks are for building,” instead of “Don’t throw the blocks.” Teachers demonstrate empathy for children’s mistakes, remembering that all mistakes are opportunities for learning.

Listen: Children need to know that they are valued members of the community and respected for the contributions that they can make. Teachers delight in listening to children, but also understand the importance of understanding their self-expression. Teachers show respect for children’s thoughts and feelings by being on their level physically and giving their full attention when listening. Teachers also observe carefully for non-verbal messages and reflect these ideas back to children.

Problem-Solve: In order to help children begin to manage their own social challenges, teachers must guide them through the steps many, many times. Teachers help children listen to one another and express their thoughts and feelings appropriately. They help children remain respectful even when upset. They help children develop negotiating skills so that satisfactory solutions can be agreed upon.

Provide Choices: Sometimes children’s behavior has unintended negative consequences that can naturally help children choose more effectively the next time. Other times, teachers must construct these choices to prevent children from being hurt or property from being damaged. Teachers may redirect children by diverting their attention to a more appropriate strategy or activity. Teachers may also offer a “limiting response” by stating two appropriate choices and allowing children to make the decision.

Observe and Reflect: Child guidance is a dynamic process that requires constant observation and reflection. Minor changes to the environment, the daily schedule, the curriculum or the teachers’ responses are needed to keep the group growing and developing in a positive direction.

Address Concerns: Sometimes a child demonstrates a pattern of challenging behavior that is not being successfully guided using typical strategies. Challenging behavior is any behavior that:

- Interferes with a child’s development, learning or success at play;
- Is harmful to the child, other children, or adults;
- Puts a child at high risk for later social problems or school failure.

It is of the utmost importance that these challenging behaviors be addressed quickly and effectively. If a teacher believes that a child is demonstrating a pattern of challenging behavior, the following steps will be taken:

- The family will be informed of the concern and will be asked to meet with the teacher, and, depending on the concern, an administrator. The goal of the meeting will be to develop a written action plan that all agree may be successful in guiding behavior in a positive direction. A follow-up meeting will be scheduled to discuss progress.



- The teacher and family will communicate regularly while the plan is being implemented. The teacher will document classroom observations of the child.
- At the follow-up meeting, the child's progress will be discussed. If the action plan does not appear to be successful, the administrator may ask for the family to allow external consultation or seek further evaluation. Additional action plans may be proposed and implemented.
- If at any time a child's behavior places the child, other children or adults at extraordinary risk for harm, it may be necessary to ask the family to withdraw their child.
- If all steps have failed to help a child become more successful in a classroom environment, the Child Care Program will assist the family in obtaining programming that will appropriately meet the child's needs.

DINING TOGETHER

GOALS OF DINING TOGETHER:

- To provide a relaxing, pleasant environment for enjoying one another's company
- To provide nutritious food choices in an environment that allows children to safely try new foods and develop new daily living skills

DINING GUIDELINES

- Because bringing the community together is a primary goal of dining together, teachers sit with children during each snack or meal. Other tasks, such as cleaning or placing cots, can be completed after the meal. The focus for all staff is the community-building potential of mealtimes.
- Enough food will be provided from the kitchen so that each fulltime staff member may have a child-sized portion in order to model healthy eating habits.
- Teachers may also eat their own healthy food at this time. As much as children might like to try a teacher's food, it cannot be shared with children.
- As role models, it is important that teachers demonstrate healthy food choices. Any less-than-healthy choices (candy, chips, fast food) should be eaten out of the sight of children. Pop bottles and fast food cups should be replaced with a more discreet container. Hot beverages must be in non-spill containers and placed out of the reach of children. No food containing nuts or nut products may be brought into our facilities.
- Teachers model positive language and pleasant manners at meal times. For instance, "I'm just going to try a little to find out if I care for it," or "Please pass the milk," or "Some people eat meat and some people don't."
- Dining together is a time for quiet conversation. Teachers not only sit with children, but help them talk with each other, guiding conversation and introducing topics as appropriate.
- Helping children understand meal times as a special community gathering time, slowing the pace of meals, and sitting with the children allows teachers to help children eat safely. Teachers are able to gently help children learn to chew food thoroughly and swallow after each bite.
- We want to provide all children with the opportunity to have healthy snacks and meals. Children who arrive late for a meal or snack and express that they are hungry should be offered the meal or snack if possible.



- While first servings of all foods will be provided for the children, at no time are children required to eat any or all of the food on their plates. Children may be encouraged to try new foods, but not forced to try them.
- Children are welcome to leave the table when they are done eating or stay at the table to interact with their friends. If children finish very quickly, a fast-thinking teacher can often help them linger at the table with their friends by engaging them in interesting conversation or activities.
- Children must always be sitting down when eating or drinking.

BREAKFAST SNACK GUIDELINES

- Breakfast snack will be served no earlier than 8:30 a.m. and should be scheduled in each room so that there are no more than three hours between the end of breakfast and the beginning of lunch.
- Breakfast snack is a morning supplement: children should be eating breakfast at home before arriving at the program. Because of this, one serving of most menu items should be more than adequate. If a child is very hungry, more can be offered.
- Breakfast should continue for no longer than one hour.
- No additional snacks will be served during the morning, unless a child misses breakfast and is too hungry to wait for lunch.
- Children may bring breakfast food from home, especially those who arrive before 8:30 a.m. No food containing nuts or nut products may be brought into our facilities.
- If possible, a teacher should sit with children as they eat breakfast.
- Since breakfast is typically served in an “open” fashion, with children coming to the table as they are ready, it is important for teachers to clean and sanitize places at the table before use by another child.

LUNCH/DINNER GUIDELINES

- The first serving of lunch is placed on plates by teaching staff. This ensures that an appropriate serving of each food is offered to children and also encourages food tasting.
- Some teachers may prefer to make plates first and then have children come to the table. Other teachers may sit at the table with children and serve after everyone is seated.
- The first serving of milk is poured by teaching staff. This ensures that an appropriate serving of milk is offered to the children.
- Children may serve themselves additional food servings as appropriate to their developmental abilities. Additional milk should be made available in appropriately-sized pitchers.
- Children are welcome to leave the table when they are done eating or stay at the table to interact with their friends. Children are not forced to remain at the table until everyone is finished.
- Cots are not placed around the room or on the floor until after lunch is completed. Children should be provided with appropriate activities between lunch and naptime that facilitate a relaxed transition. There may be times, especially with very young toddlers, when individual cots



may be provided before or during lunch. The priority is always meeting the individual child's needs.

- After lunch, teaching staff scrape plates. Children may be asked to help in the clean-up process by throwing away napkins, pouring out remaining milk from their cups, or placing dirty silverware in the appropriate bin. It is very important that staff supervise this process.

SNACK GUIDELINES

- Afternoon or evening snack time follows the basic guidelines for breakfast. Snack should be offered during a specific time and have a definite ending time.
- Since snack is typically served in an "open" fashion, with children coming to the table as they are ready, it is important for teachers to clean and sanitize places at the table before use by another child.
- If possible, a teacher should sit with children as they eat snack.
- Any additional afternoon or evening snacks should be occasional, healthy, and preferably related to the curriculum. Parents should never be asked to provide additional snack food for the class.
- If additional snacks are served (like popsicles on a hot summer day), they should be eaten at the table in the classroom or other designated eating area. Children may not be given snacks as they depart for home.
- Candy may not be offered as a snack or as a reward. There may be times when a type of candy may be used in an activity.

INFANT DINING GUIDELINES

- Teachers must hold infants in a reclining position when bottle-feeding. Older infants may prefer to sit more upright or sit in a seat. The teacher must still hold the bottle for or with the infant. Bottles may never be propped. Teachers should not bottle-feed more than one infant at a time.
- Bottle-feeding is a time for one-on-one interaction between the infant and the caregiver. Teachers must make eye contact, talk or sing while bottle-feeding. Infants should not be held facing away from the teacher.
- Infants who are learning to eat baby food or table food should be encouraged, but never forced, to eat. Encouragement should be given for all efforts towards self-feeding, no matter how messy.
- Older infants who are able to sit together to eat should be encouraged by teachers to make mealtime a pleasant social exchange. This is a good time for teachers to talk about foods, or about the infants' actions, or label with signs and words the communication attempts made by the infants.
- A teacher must always be seated within arm's reach of infants who are eating or drinking.

Information about food handling, infant food preparation, food allergies or special diets, cleaning, sanitation and meal counts can be found in Chapter 6, "Ensuring Health, Safety and Security".



NAPPING – TAKING A HEALTHY BREAK

INTRODUCTION

Naptime is an important part of a young child’s day. Young children need approximately 12 hours of sleep each day and typically at least one or two hours is gained through napping. Sleep is a vital need, essential to a child’s health, immune function, normal growth and development. Sleep enhances emotional health; children who get enough sleep are less prone to behavioral concerns and moodiness. Sleep also enhances alertness, attention and cognitive processes such as memory.

No day is so bad it can’t be fixed
with a nap.
~ Carrie Snow, comedian

Infants are expected to nap on their own schedules. Sleep needs may vary widely among infants of the same age. Staff may work with families to accommodate individual sleep patterns.

For toddlers, making a change from two naps each day to only one is a challenge. A toddler who still needs a brief morning nap should be accommodated to the extent possible. Shortening the morning nap is also important so that the group can nap together in the afternoon.

Naptime is an important part of the preschool day even though many preschoolers would avoid it if they could. Teachers should avoid making children feel forced into napping, but should encourage quiet resting. Often, this more relaxed approach results in more napping rather than less.

NAPTIME PREPARATION GUIDELINES

- Naptime preparation begins after lunch. Cots are not placed in the room before or during lunch.
- It may be necessary to place cots before lunch for very young toddlers. Individual needs take precedence over general guidelines.
- Naptime preparations should be relaxed and calm, not hurried or forced.
- One teacher can encourage quieter activities with books or songs, while the other teacher places cots.
- Children can participate in naptime preparations by helping to place cots and getting their own napping items from their cubbies.
- The classroom may be darkened, but must remain light enough for staff to see all the children in the room.
- In the Ackerman Road facility, the top portion of the classroom door must be left open during naptime.
- Cots must be placed so that staff can see all the children in the room from any vantage point.
- Cots must be placed at least three feet apart to ensure a healthy environment and adequate space for staff to move. An alternative is to place barriers (such as shelves) between cots, although this can interfere with supervision. If a cot is placed behind a barrier, staff must stand and move around the room to appropriately supervise the children.



NAPTIME SUPERVISION

- Teachers must position themselves so that all children can be observed by at least one staff.
- If only one teacher is present in the classroom, s/he must be positioned to observe all the children or must stand and move around the room.
- In classrooms where all children are 18 months or older, the teacher/child ratio may be doubled at naptime for 1 ½ hours if all the children are asleep or resting quietly on their cots. Children who are awake are not forced to stay on their cots for extended periods of time. Alternative quiet activities on their cots or in another area of the room should be provided.
- When all children are sleeping, teachers can engage in planning, documenting, organizing, cleaning, or other activities that cannot be done when children are awake. Teachers engaged in these activities must continue to supervise the children by frequently looking up from their work and/or moving around the room to observe all children.
- Children may never be left unattended when sleeping.

NAPTIME DURATION

Naptime should last no longer than two hours for preschool children and no longer than 2 ½ hours for toddlers.

For most classrooms, “wake up” time will be approximately 3:00. Lights should be turned on, blinds raised, and the transition into the next activity should begin.

Children who are still sleeping should be slowly and gently encouraged to wake.

HELPFUL HINTS

Quiet music helps some children relax and fall asleep. Music should not be overly loud. Research has shown that classical music may not be the best choice as it is musically complex rather than calm. Lullaby music provides the best background. Listening to an adult sing lullabies is also very calming for children.

Some groups enjoy having a chapter read aloud from a book like Charlotte’s Web or listening to a recorded book.

Rubbing or patting children’s backs may also help them relax. This should be a choice for children; some may not want to be touched at naptime. Other children need to play, wiggle, read, talk or sing to themselves before falling asleep. As long as these behaviors are not disruptive to others, teachers should encourage children’s normal sleep routines.

Sometimes teachers can simply ask a restless child, “What would help you relax today?” Children too restless to sleep may be provided with quiet activities on their cots.



INFANT SLEEPING GUIDELINES

Because sleep is an essential part of an infant's day, it is important that procedures are followed to ensure a nurturing and safe sleep experience.

- Infants must each have their own labeled crib. If a crib is used for a different infant on alternating days or from day to evening, it must be cleaned, sanitized and provided with clean linens prior to use by a different infant.
- Infants 16 months old or older may be placed on a cot for sleeping with written permission from parents or guardians.
- Cribs must not contain items, such as bumper pads or stuffed animals, which may pose a suffocation risk.
- All infants must be placed in their cribs for sleeping. They may not sleep on the floor, in any equipment, such as an infant seat, or on any other furniture or in any other location.
- Infants should be helped to sleep as is their preference. If an infant prefers rocking, then a caregiver should rock the infant before placing in a crib. If an infant prefers a short (five minutes) awake time in the crib first, a caregiver must remain in the crib room until the infant is asleep.
- Preparing for sleep is an excellent opportunity for one-on-one time for the infant and caregiver. Use this time for quiet talk, singing, or reading a book together.
- Infants are always placed on their backs to sleep unless a parent provides a signed Sleep Position Waiver with a physician's note indicating the need for an alternate position. A copy of the Sleep Position Waiver will be placed on the wall above the child's crib.
- Infants are not placed in a crib with bibs, pacifiers tied or clipped to clothing, or any other items that may pose a strangulation risk.
- Infants may sleep in sleep clothes or use a light blanket.
- If using a blanket, infants are placed to sleep with their feet at the foot of the crib and the blanket tucked gently along the sides and foot of the mattress. The blanket does not come up any higher than the infant's chest.
- Nothing will obstruct the staff's visibility of the sleeping infant. Nothing is hung over the sides or ends of the crib.
- Sleeping infants must be visually checked at least every five minutes. Staff must walk into the crib room and check each infant who is sleeping. It is recommended that if 1/3 or more of the infants are in the crib room, a staff member stays in the crib room in order to respond more quickly to infants' needs.
- Staff must set a timer when checking on infants every five minutes. Every time a staff member exits the crib room, the timer must be set for five minutes. A staff member must respond immediately when the timer rings by walking into the crib room and checking each infant who is sleeping.
- Keep the room at a temperature that is comfortable for a seasonably clothed adult. Infants should not be placed to sleep in heavy or restrictive clothing.
- Once an infant is awake, the infant is removed from the crib and taken to the play area.



PARTNERING WITH ADULTS

“We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color.”

~ Maya Angelou



PROFESSIONAL RAPPORT

Our first responsibility when developing a relationship with families is to establish a professional rapport. A professional relationship helps families understand and respect our roles as early childhood educators. This relationship allows families to rely on us to be professionals in the classroom, to understand their children's development, and to keep information confidential. Families need assurance that their children are safe and well cared for while also experiencing authentic learning appropriate for their age.

We need to work in partnership with families, remembering that our role as professional staff is different than their role as parents. In addition, we must remember that establishing professional rapport with families is much different than being a "family friend."

Because we are establishing a professional relationship with our program families, working for families after hours in any capacity is discouraged.

When a relationship with a family becomes difficult or is a concern, staff should first seek to resolve the matter with the family. If concerns persist, staff should seek assistance from an administrator.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Because we work with children and their families, we may become privy to confidential information regarding children's development and health conditions, as well as sensitive home and family information. We may also become privy to sensitive information regarding our co-workers and colleagues.

It is imperative that we behave as professionals at all times and recognize that this information is strictly personal and confidential and may only be shared within the confines of the operation of the Child Care Program. Information is shared with program co-workers and colleagues only on an as needed basis.

Staff may only discuss confidential information for professional purposes. Confidential discussions must occur in a private area and should never occur within hearing distance of children, other families or staff who are not involved in the situation. When children, families or staff are encountered outside the confines of the Child Care Program, staff should be courteous, but use professional discretion.

Staff may not discuss a child with another family. When reporting incidents, such as biting, staff may not share the names of other involved children; separate incident reports must be written if needed. Staff responsibility is to focus any discussion with a family on their child in order to avoid violating confidentiality or engaging in gossip.

Written authorization is required before staff discloses any information regarding a child to an outside agency. An administrator will coordinate any such information requests.

Confidentiality is an ethical obligation that protects children, families and staff. It is imperative that as professionals we hold one another to the highest standard.



ENROLLMENT

Your first contact with families and children may be during the enrollment process or you may know a family from their enrollment in another classroom. Sometimes your initial contact may be limited to one meeting when families first come to the room to meet you. However, we encourage families to make multiple visits if possible before they begin in a new room. These visits should be used to answer families' questions and help them be prepared for their first day. It should also be a time for you to learn about the family, so that you will be prepared for them. Take the time to learn if:

- This is the family's first child;
- This is the first time the family has entrusted the care of their child to anyone outside of their family;
- They have particular concerns or anxieties, hopes or dreams for their child.

Learning as much as possible about the family will help you be a more responsive teacher.

Many families are accessing center-based care for the first time. They may not know what to do or what to ask. They may have many concerns or anxieties. Listen carefully, ask clarifying questions, and be ready to repeat important information many times. Remember that even families who are quite comfortable in center-based care have never been to your classroom before and still need plenty of information.

Be sure to read any written information about the child provided by the family. Ask clarifying questions to gather the best information possible. Information that indicates how the child may react to different situations, or what responses the child prefers in those situations, provides the foundation for your relationship with the child and family. A high quality experience for young children is one that places their needs and interests at the center of classroom planning and interactions.

FAMILY COMMUNICATION AND INVOLVEMENT GUIDELINES

The following strategies are implemented by all classroom teams to keep families informed and involved:

- Maintain brief, informal conversation times with parents during arrival and departure. This is often the best way to build relationships with families.
- Maintain a family information area to display curriculum plans, daily schedule, upcoming events, teaching staff schedules and photos, weekly menu, communicable disease notifications and other relevant information.
- Provide curriculum documentation to ensure that families begin to make connections between the classroom activities they observe and their child's growth and development.
- Infant classrooms provide each family with a daily written report of activity, toddler and preschool classrooms can provide daily information based upon the needs of their families.
- Use brief phone calls or e-mails to provide families with information about their child's day.
- Provide a monthly classroom newsletter.
- Offer families a conference with teachers twice annually. Families are welcome to request additional conferences any time.
- Provide quarterly family meetings or events. These events can be educational, social or a combination. Examples include a meeting to share our curriculum planning process, a family breakfast, or a celebration at the conclusion of a project. Meetings and events should be



planned for a variety of days and times to be most inclusive of varying family schedules. Staff should plan creatively, keeping in mind the needs and interests of their classroom communities.

TRANSITION TO NEXT CLASSROOM

Helping children and families transition to a new classroom can be a rewarding, yet stressful, experience. As professionals, we are excited to see children learn and grow, ready to move forward into their next stages of development. However, we can also feel saddened by the prospect of losing the relationship with the child or family. These feelings are multiplied in both families and children as they approach this exciting change.

For these reasons, we take time to help everyone involved have a positive transition experience. These are the guidelines we follow for a typical week-long transition:

- Current teachers take child to visit new room, gradually increasing the time spent in the room until child can stay without support. For example:
 - Day 1 – Teacher and child explore new room for 20-30 minutes
 - Day 2 – Teacher and child visit during breakfast or snack and free play, 30-60 minutes
 - Day 3 – Teacher and child visit during activities, explore playground, 1-2 hours
 - Day 4 – Teacher takes child to visit during morning activities, leaving for 30-60 minutes; teacher and child lunch in new room
 - Day 5 – Teacher takes child to room for morning activities, leaves, returns for lunch and to assist child with nap; child and teacher return to current room after nap
- Family visits with child in new room each day of transition week.
 - Look in new room; greet teachers in the morning/evening
 - Walk around the new room and playground with child
 - Read a book or play in the new room with child
 - Interact with the new teachers
 - Family completes Family Information form for new classroom
- Current teacher meets with new teacher to discuss Teacher to Teacher Transition form and provide assessment information
- Administrator arranges a time for family to meet the new teacher
- Current teacher moves all extra clothes and supplies to new room

Additionally, classroom staff can support transitioning children and families by doing the following:

- New teachers must be intentionally welcoming to new children and families. Greet children and families whenever they visit, learn about them and share the new classroom community with them.
- New teachers must read the Teacher to Teacher Transition information and meet with current teachers in order to be optimally responsive to new children and families. Ask the family and the current teachers about special interests of the children. Make those materials available during transition times to provide a safe and comforting environment for exploration.
- Current teachers must take time to learn about the new classroom and be positive and supportive about the transition with the children and families.



- When helping a child move to a new classroom or receiving a new child into our classroom community, we must keep the children in the center of our thinking, placing their need for a positive experience above any of our own needs.

STAFF COMMUNICATION

All staff members are expected to communicate with one another in a professional and courteous manner. Staff should be open and honest when expressing opinions, ideas, concerns, suggestions and compliments to others. Staff should also be willing to listen attentively and thoughtfully to the opinions, ideas, concerns, suggestions and compliments of others.

Should staff members find themselves in conflict with one another, they should first attempt to work out differences together. Sensitive or difficult conversations must occur in a private area and never in a classroom. If staff feels unable to resolve a conflict, they should seek the assistance of an administrator who can provide support, mediation, suggestions and action plans for staff.

The Human Resources Coordinator is available to help staff who are not satisfied with attempts at resolution or who have a confidential concern.

All staff is expected to maintain internal connections by reading all available communications in a timely manner, responding when requested, and fully engaging in professional reflection, dialogue, planning and professional development. We use the following communications strategies:

- Daily communications come to each room via e-mail. It is important for staff to check e-mail messages upon arrival each day, mid-day and before they leave in the evening. Staff can use e-mail to communicate with other rooms or the entire program. While these communications are important, they are not more important than interacting with children: e-mail checks should be kept to a minimum. Emergency information will come to the rooms by phone or intercom.
- “TREE Mail” provides weekly e-mail education and inspiration for staff. Reminders of staff birthdays, new employees, staff meetings, and other important information are also delivered via e-mail.
- The program newsletter is published monthly and includes informative articles for families and staff.
- Staff meetings, age-level meetings or village meetings occur several times each month. These meetings provide staff with a time to come together for reviewing important information, answering questions and engaging in professional development.
- Staff is provided with planning time each week. These meetings are important for discussing the needs of the room and individual children, as well as developing plans for meeting those needs. This is also an important time for collaboration with other classrooms.
- In most rooms, naptime is an excellent time for staff to gather quietly to reflect and expand on ideas developed during planning meetings, discuss events of the week, or just get to know each other better. This time, used wisely, can greatly enhance teachers’ work.



UNIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

SUPPORT TO ACADEMIC UNITS

A part of our mission at the Child Care Program is to support the academic units of the University. This support takes several forms.

Research

Graduate and undergraduate students from a variety of departments, in association with their faculty advisors, conduct research in our classrooms after their proposals have been approved by the Human Subjects Committee.

Permission forms must be signed by a parent/guardian before a child is able to participate in a research project. Projects are conducted in the classroom under the supervision of the classroom staff unless otherwise noted on the permission form.

“One of the most important things we adults can do for young children is to model the kind of person we would like them to be.”

~ Carol B. Hillman

Class Projects and Observations

Graduate and undergraduate students from a variety of departments, in association with their class instructors, conduct both general and specific projects and observations in our classrooms. These usually relate to developmental issues of children (language, motor skills, and play relationships). Permission forms are always used if one-to-one interactions are necessary, but are not needed for general projects and observations. All projects and observations are conducted under the supervision of the classroom or administrative staff.

Field Experiences

Students from Ohio State and other schools are placed in a classroom field experience for one quarter as part of their academic program. When students have an assignment related to a specific child, permission is obtained from the family. Field experience students are directly supervised by the classroom staff and all experiences are coordinated by an administrator.

Requirements for Students, Observers and Researchers

All observers, researchers and field placement students must meet ODJFS requirements which may include the completion of background checks, non-conviction statements, medical statements, references and program orientation. An administrator will ensure that the appropriate requirements are met.

Staff should receive prior notice when an observer, researcher or student will be in a classroom. All visitors must wear a nametag from their agency or a Child Care Program visitor tag. Staff should verify the presence of any unexpected visitors with an administrator.



SPECIAL NEEDS PROGRAMMING

The Child Care Program partners with Columbus City Schools and the Nisonger Center to provide therapeutic programming for children identified with special developmental needs.

The Nisonger Center provides programming for infants and toddlers identified through Help Me Grow as being at risk for developmental delays. The program includes an Early Intervention Specialist who spends 20 hours per week on site, as well as physical, occupational and speech therapists providing contracted services as needed.

Columbus City Schools offers a special needs preschool unit for children identified through the school system. The program includes a Special Needs Teacher and Assistant Teacher who work fulltime on site, as well as therapists who work with children one-on-one or in groups as needed.

The Child Care Program can serve twelve infants or toddlers and eight preschool children in these programs. The children can be enrolled in any classroom, although most are enrolled in the Ackerman Road facility. Additional education is available to teachers encountering a child's special needs for the first time.

Professionals in these programs can also be utilized as consultants for Child Care Program staff or families regarding child development and special needs services.



CONSTRUCTING CURRICULUM

*“If you want to build a ship,
don’t drum up the men to gather
wood, divide the work and give
orders. Instead, teach them to
yearn for the vast and
endless sea.”*

~Antoine de Saint-Exupery



CURRICULUM GOALS

The Child Care Program curriculum has its foundation in research that shows play (the exploratory and creative activity that young children initiate themselves) is the primary way young children develop concepts and understanding about the world. Play provides benefits for cognitive, social, emotional, creative, physical and moral development. Play helps children develop the skills necessary for critical thinking and leadership. Play is how children solve problems and feel good about their ability to learn.

To provide these benefits, play must be consciously facilitated by skilled teachers, who are well-trained in observing children and in understanding how play contributes to children's mastery of concepts and skills. Play is not just a part of the curriculum; play is the best way to implement the curriculum.

This kind of curriculum implementation has several important features.

- It places the child at the center of the experience. Teachers develop environments, activities and experiences that are appropriate for children's development and will be most engaging for them.
- It is individualized. Because each child in a classroom is unique, teachers develop environments, activities and experiences that enhance the development of each child as an individual.
- It extends and expands children's interests. Teachers develop environments, activities and experiences that children will be motivated to explore.
- It is flexible. While teachers provide an engaging environment and materials, as well as develop activities and experiences, they must also remain responsive to the unexpected interests and plans of the children themselves.
- It is active. Children use their whole bodies to learn and grow, so teachers plan activities and experiences that meet the needs of the whole child and incorporate indoor, outdoor, large and small environments.
- It encourages family involvement. Teachers work in partnership with families, fully recognizing that the family is the first teacher and family experiences enrich the curriculum.

The Child Care Program implements a curriculum framework entitled Innovations authored by Kay Albrecht. This framework integrates theory and practice, recognizes all domains of development as equally important, encourages play as the best way to implement curriculum and incorporates all parts of a child's day: routines, activities and experiences.

The foundational goals for the curriculum are:

- The development of positive self-image, self-regulation and social negotiation. As children interact with each other, sharing materials and planning imaginative play, they learn concepts and skills in cooperating, advocating for ideas, listening to others, handling frustration, respecting differences and empathizing with others.
- The development of positive approaches to learning. When children are encouraged to pursue their natural curiosity and engage in activities they have chosen, learning is enjoyable and connected with a sense of creativity, motivation and mastery.
- The development of oral language and narrative understanding. Through dramatic play with objects, people and imagined situations, children develop their language skills and capacity to "think in stories", building a foundation for reading and writing.



- The development of representational competence. As children engage in pretend play, they develop their ability to represent objects, people and ideas, the essential foundation for literacy, numeracy and the creative arts.
- The development of logic. Through play with nearly everything – sand, water, blocks, puzzles, clay – children experiment with basic scientific concepts and invent strategies for solving problems, the basis for higher order thinking.

Additional specific age-level curriculum goals reflect the Child Care Program’s alignment with Ohio’s Early Learning Content Standards and Infant & Toddler Guidelines, as well as an individualized approach that meets the particular developmental needs of children in the group.

EMERGENT CURRICULUM

Our teachers plan curriculum using an emergent approach. This does not mean that teachers invent the curriculum from scratch, rather they use their knowledge, skills and creativity to “set the stage” on which children explore and construct their understanding of the world. It does mean that teachers do not follow an established set of themes or topics, but choose a focus of interest based upon the community of learners and multiple curriculum sources.

Curriculum ideas do not emerge only from the children. While children provide a rich source of curriculum ideas, they are just one source. Teachers are responsible for the curriculum and have many sources to draw from including their own interests, families and others in the social environment, developmental tasks of children, the physical environment, unexpected events, classroom routines, interpersonal issues, external standards and expectations and curriculum resource materials.

Balancing these many sources is challenging at best. Emergent curriculum requires teachers who will spend time observing, reflecting and engaging in careful planning with children and with one another. Observation, reflection and collaboration with others are hallmarks of an effective emergent curriculum.

PLANNING

Teachers construct a “Possibilities Plan” which details the environments, activities and experiences planned for the week. Teachers have the option of constructing a new plan each week or building on one plan for several weeks.

Plans should be complete, including family involvement, documentation and assessment ideas. Infant and toddler plans should align with Ohio’s Infant and Toddler Guidelines and preschool plans must align with Early Learning Content Standards. Alignment documents are available to help guide teachers in their planning. Plans must also be constructed in part based upon the individual developmental needs of children in the group. Notes indicating these individual goals should be included on the back of the plan for documentation purposes.

Planning time is provided weekly so that staff can reflect, discuss and plan curriculum.

A “Possibilities Plan” must be posted for families each week.



DOCUMENTATION

Curriculum should be documented for children and their families. Documentation constructed with children enables them to revisit explorations, expand on ideas and celebrate successes. Documentation for families allows them to see their children's work in new ways, gain insight into the importance of play in the lives of their children, become involved in curriculum and make connections with goals and standards.

"The art of teaching is the art of assisting discovery."

~Mark Van Doren

New documentation for families must be posted at least monthly.

OBSERVATION AND ASSESSMENT

Thoughtful observation and assessment of children helps staff learn more about children's unique qualities, develop individual goals, plan and implement effective curriculum, and make referrals as appropriate. Effective teachers observe children, talk with them about their ideas, record interesting things they do and say, and document their progress in development and learning. Working together with families, staff is able to create unique environments and experiences to meet the needs of children in their classroom.

The Child Care Program staff uses several formal developmental screening and assessment tools:

- The Ages and Stages Questionnaire is a developmental screening tool used by all classrooms within the first 60 days of a child's enrollment to identify potential developmental concerns.
- The Brigance Inventory of Early Development-II is a developmental assessment tool used by all classrooms to provide information about children's progress in development and learning. The Brigance IED-II should be completed twice annually, corresponding with conference times.
- Preschool classrooms also use The Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social and Emotional and the Get It, Got It, Go, a language and literacy assessment, to gather additional information about preschool children's development and learning.

Staff also provides a portfolio of children's work to be shared with families. Information gathered through observation and assessment is shared with families through informal conversation, curriculum documentation and formal parent conferences.

Occasionally, staff or families identify the need for additional screening or referral for professional diagnostic assessment. Staff should seek the assistance of an administrator to review the resources available for the family through Help Me Grow or the child's school district, as well as private options.



SPECIAL CURRICULUM CONSIDERATIONS

SUPERHERO PLAY

Families frequently want to know if the Child Care Program allows children to engage in superhero play or other kinds of play that may include pretend violence or weapons. The answer can be somewhat complicated. The program does not expressly encourage or forbid superhero play. Instead this kind of play is considered an opportunity to help children learn and grow.

When children want to engage in superhero or weapons play, teachers may help them consider the needs and feelings of others in the group. If the play cannot be guided in a constructive way, teachers may decide to stop the play for a period of time. If possible, teachers may help children develop a structure and guidelines for the play that prevents children from being hurt. They may even expand the interest as part of the curriculum: designing superhero costumes, choosing names, deciding on helpful super powers. A creative teacher can guide this popular kind of play to enhance children's social, emotional and moral development.

HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

Rituals and celebrations are an important part of many families and many cultures. So, throughout the year, families often want to know what the Program will do to celebrate holidays. Because our children and families are so diverse, we choose not to select specific holidays to celebrate in our classrooms.

However, we do encourage family participation in the classrooms and many families enjoy sharing a specific cultural celebration with the children. Families have shared cooking activities, music, dance and stories in our classrooms. The children themselves may initiate these kinds of activities in the classroom because they have such meaning in their lives. In addition, teachers often plan celebrations of classroom events such as a chick hatching party, a first snow celebration or a project sharing. These events celebrate the classroom community, rather than any specific tradition or culture, and help children develop respect for differences and excitement about diversity.

Families often wish to celebrate their child's birthday with the classroom community. Children eagerly await these special times and like to share them with their friends. We encourage families to keep these celebrations simple and creative. Because we need to consider the health and safety of our many children with severe food allergies, we encourage families to save the birthday foods for home. Creative alternatives include: dancing together, sharing a book, singing a favorite song, bringing materials to make party hats, and playing group games in the muscle room.



MANAGING THE ENVIRONMENT

*“Every artist dips his brush
in his own soul, and paints
his own nature into his
pictures.”*

~Henry Ward Beecher



PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Our physical environments affect us in powerful ways. Our Child Care Program environments should aid us in helping children and families feel welcomed, nurtured, engaged and stimulated. In addition, the environment should reflect our value of play, creative thought and activity, emergent curriculum and natural surroundings.

CLASSROOM DESIGN

As teachers design classroom environments, they must consider:

- Open environments and materials should predominate in order to promote creative play. Closed materials should be used more sparingly.
- Large furniture should be kept to a minimum and should be positioned for optimal use, visibility and traffic flow.
- Choose furniture and equipment that can be more easily reconfigured when emergent ideas require a change in environment.
- Soft materials should be readily available; these include play-dough, clay, finger-paints, water and sand, as well as rugs, pillows and laps.
- Home-like features should be provided, such as family photos, art, mirrors and vases. Ask families for information about their homes that may enhance the environment.
- Lighting the room in various ways throughout the day can create different moods and even highlight areas for play.
- Materials should be combined in interesting ways that promote ever more complex play ideas.
- Furniture arrangement should allow for plenty of body movement. An area of the room should be large enough for at least a small group of children to dance or enjoy other music, movement or group activities.
- Children are using all their senses. Consider how the room sounds and smells, as well as how it looks and feels.
- Include natural elements in the environment, such as plants, wood, shells of appropriate sizes, wicker baskets and found items like pine cones. Before placing any plants in a classroom, check with an administrator to ensure that the plant is safe for children.
- Create spaces for one child to be alone or with just one friend. Children need to have this space to get away from the social environment for short periods of time.
- Make sure children have their own space in the classroom, even if it is just a small cubby.
- Visual clutter must be kept to a minimum. Classrooms should appear clean and well-organized to adults and children.
- Organized materials promote more complex, productive play. Plan time each day to tidy the materials, creating the next invitation to play.
- Adults need a place in the environment, too. Consider where adults can sit comfortably and where families can join in the action.



EMOTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

The overall emotional tone of the environment is at least as important as the physical design. Intangible elements such as pace, mood, and positive regard must be considered when constructing an appropriate classroom environment.

- Young children rely on consistent, predictable routines and schedules as they learn about themselves and about successfully functioning as a group. Part of each classroom culture is the typical sequence of events, which helps the children know what to expect of their classroom and also what is expected of them.
- As each group of children becomes a community of learners, they become acclimated not only to the routines, but also to the collective pace of those routines. This pace must provide a flexible range, respecting that individual children have their own inclinations as to how slowly or quickly they move from one experience to another, one space to another and one group of peers to another.
- Mood is set primarily by the voices and interactions of adults and children. Comfortable voices in normal speaking tones are used by teachers and encouraged with the children. While teachers should express a range of emotions, using angry, exasperated tones or overly silly, effusive tones is uncomfortable and confusing for children.
- Smile, laugh and use gentle touches often.
- Soft relaxing music is often used as the beginning and ending of the day, as well as during rest time. During more active parts of the day, the children's voices are the predominant sounds that fill our environment.
- Singing, reading, dancing, drawing and playing together creates a nurturing emotional environment in which the teachers are a part of the community and the community is a safe place for exploring and creating.
- Teachers are expected to use respectful words and actions at all times. All children are deserving of our unconditional positive regard. We must always remember that if a child is exhibiting "challenging" behaviors, we must first decide who is being challenged. As professional educators, we must govern our personal feelings as we provide professional guidance to children and families.
- Being respectful to children also involves taking the time to carefully explain expectations placed on us as citizens of a community. For example, when children are all speaking at one time so that no one can be heard, the teacher may need to explain what is happening and possible solutions. This helps children make more cooperative choices in the future. This is our preferred method for guiding children, as opposed to using a technique like "Catch a bubble," which may be successful in getting all the children to stop talking, but does not guide them toward future successes.



GENERAL CLEANLINESS AND MAINTENANCE

Classroom staff is responsible for the general up-keep and cleanliness of the classroom environment, including the cleaning of furniture, equipment and materials. Janitorial staff is responsible for large tasks such as vacuuming, mopping and trash removal.

SHOE AND FOOT COVERINGS FOR INFANT ROOMS

In order to provide the safest and healthiest environment for our infants, it is the practice of the Child Care Program to remove or cover shoes worn outside the infant room before stepping into the infant room. The Program provides shoe covers for staff and parent use.

Additional guidelines regarding footwear also promote the professional image required of the Child Care Program staff.

Staff will follow these guidelines:

- Remove or cover shoes worn outside the classroom before entering the main play area.
- Socks, “room shoes” or clean shoe covers may be worn in the room.
- Staff may not be barefoot in the room except for short periods of time when involved in a specific activity such as water-play. (Parents may be barefoot during arrival and departure times.)
- Socks, “room shoes” or shoe covers may not be worn outside the room. If they are, they must be removed or covered with clean shoe coverings upon re-entry into the room.
- Staff shoes must be stored neatly out of the reach of children.
- “Room shoes” must be kept clean and in good repair, and when not in use stored neatly out of the reach of children.

STORAGE AREAS

Each classroom team is responsible for the maintenance of storage cabinets or closets. Cleanliness and organization of these areas allows teachers to access resources more easily, keeps materials in good condition and maintains compliance with fire codes and licensing regulations.

Storage areas are intended for classroom materials only. Storage of cleaning supplies or other chemicals is strictly prohibited. Storage of extra snacks is allowed in classroom kitchens or approved snack containers only.

COMMON AREAS

The maintenance of common areas such as shared kitchens, bathrooms, muscle rooms and playgrounds is shared among the classrooms that use the areas. Staff should work together to care for the spaces, developing cleaning and maintenance schedules as needed.



JANITORIAL CONCERNS AND WORK REQUESTS

An administrator should be consulted when any of the following occur:

- Janitorial work is incomplete or unsatisfactory;
- Equipment is broken or inoperable;
- Damage to the facility or playgrounds;
- Plumbing problems or leaks;
- Lighting problems;
- Equipment needs permanently installed;
- Any facility questions or concerns.

PURCHASING CLASSROOM MATERIALS

The Child Care Program is well-equipped with an abundance of supplies and materials for classroom use. Because there are few common areas for storage, it is important for teachers to make one another aware of materials in individual storage areas. It is economical to share some kinds of materials rather than purchasing the same item for multiple classrooms.

The Child Care Program generally uses five methods of procuring classroom materials and equipment:

- Kroger shopping
- Target shopping
- Star Beacon delivery
- “Stores” shopping
- Catalog shopping

A classroom purchasing calendar will be provided to staff annually listing all deadlines for ordering.

Only university-approved purchasers can purchase materials for the program.

KROGER SHOPPING

Kroger shopping occurs monthly. Items for purchase must be listed on a Kroger/Target order form and turned in to the appropriate supervisor for approval.

Typical materials purchased at Kroger include:

- Small food items for projects (gelatin, whipped cream, gingerbread mix, etc.);
- Plastic storage bags or containers;
- Aluminum foil, waxed paper, etc.;
- Kitchen notions;
- Spices;
- Household items (cotton balls, sponges, “Magic Erasers”, etc.)

TARGET SHOPPING

Target shopping occurs quarterly and may also include other discount or hardware stores. Items for purchase must be listed on a Kroger/Target order form and turned in to the appropriate supervisor for approval.



Typical materials purchased at Target include:

- Kitchen notions
- Timers, scales and clocks
- Gardening tools
- Infant equipment
- Batteries
- Curtains and other home-like items
- Brooms, dustpans, etc.

STAR BEACON DELIVERY

A consumable supplies order is placed with Star Beacon quarterly. Classroom staff will assist administrators in developing the order so that a steady supply of these essential materials is available to all classrooms:

- Paint
- Markers, crayons, colored pencils
- Paper
- Glue
- Common art supplies (craft sticks, chenille stems, pom-poms, etc.)

STORES SHOPPING

“Stores” is Ohio State’s office supply catalog. An order for office supplies needed for classroom use is placed quarterly. Classroom staff will assist administrators in developing the order so that an appropriate supply of these materials is available to all classrooms:

- Binders
- Pens
- Dry erase markers
- Tape
- Post-It notes

CATALOG SHOPPING

Annually, classroom staff and administrators will develop a prioritized list of equipment and materials needed and desired for each age group and classroom. Orders will be placed quarterly based upon need and available funding. Preferred vendors include:

- Community Playthings (furniture, dramatic play equipment, blocks)
- Kaplan and Lakeshore (preschool materials)
- Kaplan and Environments (infant and toddler materials)
- Discount School Supply (consumable materials not available with Star Beacon)
- Scholastic and The Book Vine (books)

Requested materials will be considered based on their play appeal, construction, durability, appropriateness for the age group, alignment with our program philosophy and cost.

REIMBURSEMENT FOR PURCHASES

Should staff wish to purchase materials for their classrooms using personal funds, such as purchases made at a professional conference, they must receive prior approval in order to request reimbursement from the Child Care Program. Original receipts detailing the items purchased must be provided for reimbursement.



ENSURING HEALTH, SAFETY AND SECURITY

“There is no trust more sacred than the one the world holds with children. There is no duty more important than ensuring that their rights are respected, that their welfare is protected, that their lives are free from fear and want and that they can grow up in peace.”

~ Kofi Anan



CHILDREN WITH MEDICAL OR HEALTH CONCERNS

MEDICAL/PHYSICAL CARE PLANS

All children with identified medical or health concerns have a “Medical/Physical Care Plan” written by a parent/guardian and approved by an administrator. This plan outlines the necessary information and instructions required to safeguard the child’s health and manage any special needs while in our care. All teaching staff from the child’s classroom, and often from adjoining classrooms, review, receive training as needed and sign the plan. Plans are kept in the classroom Emergency Binder for easy reference.

Common medical and health concerns include, but are not limited to:

- Asthma
- Allergies
- Congenital conditions
- Eczema
- Reflux
- Seizure disorders

All conditions that require a Medical/Physical Care Plan must also be posted in the classroom on the pink Special Health Alerts form. This form should be posted near the dining area as many food allergies are severe and life-threatening.

Some plans will include administration of medication. If this is the case, parents/guardians will complete a Request for Administration of Medication form which will also be kept in the classroom’s Emergency Binder.

Staff should make a habit of reviewing all Medical/Physical Care Plans monthly and providing important information to new staff. In addition, staff should be aware that plans must be reviewed and re-signed annually by parents/guardians, administrators and classroom staff. While administrators are responsible for properly reviewing plans, staff should alert an administrator if a plan is nearing its expiration date.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION OR FOOD SUPPLEMENTS

The Child Care Program will receive, approve and administer medication to children when the medication is needed for a chronic or life-threatening condition (such as asthma treatments or emergency allergy medication) or when it is needed for daily care (such as lotion for eczema, diaper cream or sunscreen). Other types of medication, such as antibiotics, which can be administered outside child care hours, should be administered by parents rather than Child Care Program staff.

All medications, including topical preparations such as sunscreen, must be approved by an administrator, or specially designated staff, before being taken to a child’s classroom. Classroom staff must not receive any medication or topical preparation without proper approval.

Approval is indicated by the administrator’s initials and date in the upper right-hand corner of the Request for Administration of Medication form (also referred to as the “green sheet”).



A Request for Administration of Medication form must be completed by the parent/guardian and approved by an administrator for any medication or topical preparation to be administered by staff of the Child Care Program. No unapproved medication or topical preparation is permitted on the premises; this includes medications stored in diaper bags.

Request for Administration of Medication forms are completed as follows:

- **Prescription Medications** – Prescription medication must be in the original container with a prescription label containing the child’s full name, a current date within the last twelve months, and the exact dosage and means of administration. Box 1 on the form must be complete.
- **Nonprescription Medications** – Medication must be in the original container and the label must specify the exact dosage for the child’s age or weight. The full name of the child must be printed on the container. This type of medication can be administered for no more than three consecutive days. Box 1 on the form must be complete.
- **Nonprescription Medications requiring physician’s instructions** – If the nonprescription medication label does not specify the exact dosage for the child’s age or weight or if it contains aspirin or codeine, a physician’s instructions are required. The physician may complete Box 2 on the Request for Administration of Medication form or may provide written instructions that include the required information indicated on the form. Box 1 on the form must also be complete.
- **Topical Preparations** – Diaper cream, sunscreen, lip balm and skin lotion may be administered daily for a twelve month period with specific instructions provided by the parent in Box 1 of the form. If a topical preparation is to be used for an acute skin irritation such as diaper rash, it shall be applied by the Program for no longer than fourteen consecutive days at any one period of use.
- **Food Supplements/Modifications** – In order to administer a food supplement, such as a vitamin, or a diet that eliminates a food group, written instructions from a physician are required.

An administrator or teaching staff will administer the medication according to the directions on the form, will record the time(s) the medication is given, and will sign the form after each administration. Any oral medication, even if used daily as a preventative (such as reflux medications), must be recorded after each administration. Topical preparations used as preventatives (such as sun screen, lip balm and diaper cream) will not be recorded.

Medications will be stored as follows:

- Epi-Pens, oral antihistamines if needed for a severe allergy, asthma medications and seizure medications will be stored in an easily accessible container out of reach of children. The location will be clearly labeled so that the medication can be easily accessed in the event of an emergency.
- Diaper cream, sunscreen and lip balm may be stored in a location convenient for administration, yet out of the reach of children.
- All other medications will be stored in a locked cabinet or lock box out of the reach of children.
- Medications, including lip balm, may not be stored in a diaper bag, backpack or child’s cubby.



Medications that are no longer needed or that have expired must be returned to the family and completed forms placed in the child's file. Continued storage of these medications is a violation of licensing rules.

FOOD HANDLING PROCEDURES

In order to ensure the safety of the food we serve to children, the following procedures must be practiced consistently:

- All staff and children must wash their hands in a designated hand-washing sink before handling dishes, serving utensils or food.
- In addition to the standard hand-washing procedure, when handling food, teachers must wash their hands after the following activities:
 - Using the restroom;
 - Before and after handling foods;
 - Touching hair, face or body of self or others;
 - Sneezing, coughing or using a tissue
 - Smoking, eating, drinking or chewing gum or tobacco;
 - Touching clothing or aprons of self or others;
 - Touching anything that may contaminate hands, such as unsanitized equipment, work surfaces or wash cloths.
- Staff who will be handling food directly (e.g. touching the bread to serve it, as opposed to using tongs) must wear gloves. Hands must be washed prior to putting on gloves.
- If children are helping with snack or meal preparation, they must be closely supervised so that they do not unduly contaminate surfaces, dishes and utensils.
- All serving and dining surfaces must be cleaned and sanitized before and in between use.
- While food served at appropriate temperatures is important so that the food is appealing to the children, it is also a health concern. All food is to be served within 10 minutes of arrival from the kitchen.
- Dispose of all milk left outside of the refrigerator longer than one-half hour. Opened milk remaining in the jug may be stored in the refrigerator until the “sell by” date listed on the outside of the jug. Dispose of any milk remaining in cups or pitchers.
- Foods that may be considered a choking hazard must be cut into appropriate pieces before serving. Kitchen scissors provide a safe and convenient alternative to knives. Consider the ages and abilities of children in your room before serving food.
- On occasion, families may bring food from home that is not considered a healthy choice. This is an opportunity for teachers to develop a stronger relationship with parents as they work together to help children make healthy choices. Food that may be unsafe, such as small hard candy, must be sent home.
- Children’s food allergies must be posted on a pink Special Health Alerts form and clearly posted near the dining area. It is imperative that all staff in the classroom, including floating assistant teachers and teaching aides, be aware of food allergies. If the safety of any food item is in doubt, it is better to provide a safe substitute than risk a child’s health.
- Ingredient lists for all menu items can be found in a binder at the front desk. Using these lists or checking actual product labels will help identify the presence of common allergens in food.



- Leftover food may not be stored in classrooms. Extra snack items may only be stored in classrooms in small quantity in approved containers.

INFANT FOOD PREPARATION

Teachers should seek information from parents, both in written instructions completed on enrollment forms and through personal conversation, about infants' feeding habits and preferences. Written instructions must be updated as infants grow.

- The Child Care Program provides iron-fortified infant formula, jarred baby food, and table food for infants. Parents may request for their infant to be served these foods or may bring foods from home.
- All bottles, nipples and equipment used for preparing formula or food must be sterilized daily before use.
- The kitchen workspace must be clean and sanitized before preparing any food for the day.
- Prior to preparing formula or food, teaching staff must wash their hands.
- Prior to eating or being fed, infants should be helped to wash their hands in the hand-washing sink. If this is not possible, a wipe should be used instead.

FORMULA PREPARATION

- Prepare formula according to manufacturer's instructions. Parents must provide a physician's instructions for any alterations to formula preparation.
- Label each bottle with the infant's name and the date and time it was prepared if it will be stored for any length of time. If the bottle is being made for immediate use, it must be labeled with the infant's name only.
- If you are not using the bottle immediately, refrigerate the bottle until ready for use. Bottles must be used within 24 hours from the time they were prepared.
- Once a bottle has been warmed or partially fed, it cannot be placed back into a refrigerator.
- Do not allow prepared bottles of formula to stand at room temperature for longer than one hour. Do not reuse a bottle after this time. Dispose of all unused formula left in a bottle.
- All bottles prepared at home and brought to the program must be labeled with the infant's name and the date and time formula was prepared.
- To warm a bottle, hold it under warm running water or place it in the warm crock-pot. Infants do not need bottles to be more than room temperature for feeding. Never use the microwave to warm a bottle.

EXPRESSED MILK

- Expressed breast milk must be frozen or refrigerated and clearly labeled with the infant's name and the date of receipt.
- Frozen expressed milk must be disposed of if unused after three months.
- Refrigerated expressed milk must be disposed of if unused after five days.
- Frozen expressed milk must be thawed in the refrigerator or under cold running water.
- Once thawed, expressed milk may be warmed under warm running water or in the warm crock-pot.
- Dispose of any remaining expressed milk left in a bottle after one hour from the start of feeding.
- Human milk must only be fed to the mother's own child.



SOLID FOOD

- When parents and caregivers agree that the time is right for an infant to begin eating baby food, cereal or jarred foods should be introduced at home before being fed in the program.
- Parents should provide written instructions for the introduction of solid foods.
- Baby food may be warmed by placing the closed container in the crock-pot or under warm running water. If baby food is warmed, it must be thoroughly blended to ensure an even temperature. Never use the microwave to heat baby food.
- Foods should progress in texture from pureed to mashed to finely chopped. When infants are ready for chopped foods, pieces should be no larger than ¼ inch cube or a thin slice.
- Foods that have been implicated as choking hazards will not be offered to infants. These foods include: hot dogs, raw carrots, grapes, nuts, seeds, raw peas, candy, hard pretzels, chips, popcorn, marshmallows, peanut butter and larger chunks of meat.
- Infants who are learning to feed themselves must be supervised by a teacher sitting within arm's reach of them at all times while being fed.
- Infants over 12 months old, who can feed themselves, must be supervised by a teacher who is seated at the same table or within arm's reach of them at all times while they are eating.
- Chair trays must be cleaned and sanitized before and in between every use.

CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The Child Care Program receives reimbursement equal to approximately 35% of our food costs by participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). In addition to the food handling guidelines, the following requirements of the CACFP must be managed by classroom staff:

- Appropriate food portions per serving in each age group are listed on the weekly menu. Staff must follow the portion guidelines as listed. The serving utensils ("spoodles") provided by the culinary staff help staff measure correct portions.
- One serving of each food group should be offered to each child. Additional servings are optional.
- Each snack and meal must be offered to a child to qualify for reimbursement. If the child chooses not to eat the snack or meal, it will still be reimbursed.
- Each child's snack or meal must be recorded in the Child Care Program Management System at the time that the snack or meal is being served to that child.



HAND-WASHING

Hand-washing is the single best defense of communicable diseases in a child care environment. Everyone should know and practice the correct hand-washing procedure at all times.

All staff must wash their hands at the following times:

- Upon arrival at the center;
- Upon entering a different room to interact with children or re-entering a room after interacting with other children;
- After each diaper change;
- After assisting a child with toileting;
- After any contact with bodily secretions, such as wiping a nose;
- After cleaning;
- After toileting;
- Before preparing food;
- Before feeding a child;
- Before and after eating;
- Before and after handling medicine or completing a medical procedure;
- After handling any soiled object;
- After smoking.

Hand-washing sinks must be separate from sinks used to prepare formula or food, or to rinse or wash bottles and dishes. If a food preparation sink must be used for hand-washing, it must be sanitized after the hand-washing, before it can be used for food preparation.

PROPER HAND-WASHING PROCEDURE

- Turn water on to a comfortable temperature and wet hands.
- Apply soap and lather palms, backs of hands and wrists. Rub vigorously. Clean under nails. Wash for a minimum of 15 seconds.
- Rinse hands in running water.
- Without turning off the water, use a paper towel to pat dry hands.
- Use the paper towel to turn off the faucet. Place the paper towel in a trash container.
- When in a restroom, it may be necessary to use a second paper towel to open the door to prevent recontamination of your hands.



DIAPERING AND TOILETING

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services mandates that the following diaper changing procedure be followed in order to ensure the health and safety of diapered children:

- Get organized.
 - Before you bring the child to the diaper changing area, gather what you need:
 - separation material,
 - a fresh diaper,
 - wipes,
 - gloves if you use them,
 - a plastic bag for any soiled clothes,
 - diaper cream if you have the required written permission to apply it.
 - Place appropriate amount of diaper cream on a clean paper towel prior to beginning diapering procedure.
 - Place separation material on changing table so that it fits from shoulders well past the diaper area.
 - If a toddler is going to be changed standing up, separation material must still be used.
 - Put on the disposable gloves if you use them.
- Carry the child to the changing table, keeping any soiled clothing away from you.
 - Avoid contact with soiled items: anything that comes in contact with stool or urine is a source of germs.
 - Remove clothing as necessary to expose diaper. Place soiled clothes in the bag.
 - Keep one hand on the child at all times.
- Clean the child's diaper area.
 - Unfasten the soiled diaper, but leave it under the child.
 - Use disposable wipes to clean the diaper area. Remove stool and urine front to back and use a fresh wipe each time. Put the soiled wipes in the diaper.
 - Note any skin problems, such as redness.
- Remove the soiled diaper and clean soiled surfaces.
 - Fold the diaper over and secure it with the tabs. If using gloves, remove them at this time.
 - Place all soiled items in the diaper trash.
 - Fold up the bottom of the separation material to cover the soiled area of the material.
 - Wipe your hands with a disposable wipe.
- Put a clean diaper on the child.
 - Put clothing back on or use fresh clothing if any was soiled.
- Clean the child's hands.
 - Hold younger children or allow older children to use the sink more independently.
 - Use a disposable wipe for very young children.
- Return the child to the play area.
- Clean and disinfect the diapering area.
 - Tie bag containing soiled clothes and remove from diapering area.
 - Dispose of the separation material.
 - Clean any visible soil from the changing area.



- Sanitize the area by spraying it with the prepared bleach solution. Spray bottle should be used for diapering area only.
- Leave the bleach solution on the area for two minutes. The surface can be wiped or left to air dry.
- If a toddler has been changed standing up on the floor, the floor under the child should be sanitized.
- Wash your hands and record the diaper change on the daily sheet.
 - Follow proper hand-washing procedure.
 - Use hand lotion to prevent dry, chapped hands.
 - Record the diaper change on daily sheet, noting time, contents of the diaper and any problems noted during the change.

Children who are using the toilet should be supervised as appropriate for their age and stage of development. They may need assistance with clothing, wiping, flushing and hand-washing. Toileting provides an easy avenue for the spread of viral and bacterial diseases. Appropriate toileting, thorough cleaning and careful sanitation of surfaces is necessary to maintain a healthy environment.

CLEANING AND SANITATION

Proper cleaning and sanitation are essential to maintain a healthy and pleasing physical environment. Classroom staff is responsible for the cleaning and sanitation of equipment, furniture and materials in the environment. Janitorial staff primary responsibilities include trash removal, vacuuming and mopping floors.

The Child Care Program uses the ODJFS Schedule for Cleaning and Sanitizing to guide our process. This schedule is posted in every classroom.

CLEANING

Cleaning is the process of removing soil from equipment, furniture and materials. Staff should use soapy water prepared in spray bottles for cleaning.

- Infant and toddler rooms will have two soapy water bottles: one for the diapering area and one for other cleaning. Preschool rooms need just one bottle.
- Any surface or material that is going to be sanitized must be cleaned first.
 - First remove all visible soil.
 - Then clean the surface with soapy water.
 - After cleaning is complete, the surface can be sanitized.
- Soapy water bottles must be stored out of reach of children.
- No other cleaning products may be stored in classrooms or classroom storage areas.

SANITIZING

Sanitizing is the process of killing germs from equipment, furniture and materials surfaces after cleaning. We use bleach and water solutions in spray bottles as sanitizing agents.



- Bleach solutions must be mixed daily as they lose their effectiveness after 24 hours. Always dispose of old bleach solution down the drain before mixing new solution.
- The daily preparation of bleach solution should be incorporated into staff routines.
- There are two kinds of bleach solution:
 - Weak solution is used for food preparation areas tables, highchair trays, toys that go in the mouth, dishes, cups, flatware, water containers.
 - Strong solution is used for changing tables, hand-washing sinks, toilets, cots, cribs and any items soiled with bodily fluids.
- Instructions for mixing the solutions are listed on the spray bottles and at each mixing station.
- The following have been designated as mixing stations:
 - Ackerman Road infant room kitchens
 - Ackerman Road staff lounge
 - Buckeye Village work room
- Children may not be in the mixing station area when bleach is being used.
- Full strength bleach may not be stored in classrooms, except in Ackerman Road infant rooms where it must be stored in a high, locked cabinet in the kitchen.

ILLNESS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

In order to help keep children healthy and allow families to fulfill their responsibilities at the University, the Child Care Program engages in practices to help prevent and control the spread of disease.

PREVENTION

In order to prevent the spread of disease, our staff:

- Receives Communicable Disease Management training and uses this information to observe each child daily upon arrival for signs of illness.
- Receives instruction and implements proper hand washing and sanitation techniques. Children are also assisted in proper hand washing throughout the day.
- Cleans and sanitizes equipment, furniture and materials as indicated on the ODJFS schedule.
- Do not attend work when they are ill.

MANAGEMENT

When a child in our care is observed with signs or symptoms of illness, the following process occurs:

- The family is immediately notified and is expected to make arrangements to pick up the child within one hour.
- The child is cared for in a portion of the classroom away from other children yet still within sight and hearing of a staff member, usually on the child's cot. The cot and any linens used are washed and sanitized before being used again.
- Staff monitors the child's condition and records symptoms on the Illness Notification form.
- When the child is picked up, the Illness Notification form is given to the family. In addition to information about the child's symptoms, information on when the child may return is recorded on the form.



- Decisions about when a child may return are determined by the Ohio Department of Health Communicable Diseases Chart posted in the office and the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services Child Care Licensing regulations. Physician directions do not over-rule licensing regulations.

The Child Care Program will not admit children with the following symptoms and will require that children who develop these symptoms be picked up within one hour:

- Temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit (taken under the arm) in combination with any other signs or symptoms of illness
- Temperature of 101 degrees Fahrenheit (taken under the arm) with or without any other signs or symptoms of illness
- Diarrhea (three or more abnormally loose stools in a 24 hour period)
- Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound
- Redness of the eye, obvious discharge, matted eye lashes, burning, itching
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Untreated infected skin patches, unusual spots or rashes
- Vomiting more than one time or when accompanied by any other sign or symptom of illness
- Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool
- Stiff neck
- Evidence of untreated lice, scabies, or other parasitic infestation
- Sore throat or difficulty swallowing
- Inability to participate in normal activities

NOTICE OF EXPOSURE

When a child is diagnosed by a physician with a communicable disease, an exposure notice will be posted outside the child's room and any other rooms which may be affected. The notice lists the name of the disease, the date the symptoms were first observed, the date of diagnosis, the incubation period, typical signs and symptoms of the disease, and typical treatments.

INJURY PREVENTION

Staff must be vigilant in identifying and correcting safety threats in the environment. The following are guidelines for the prevention of injury, but certainly do not constitute an exhaustive list. Any safety concerns should be brought to the immediate attention of an administrator.

- All furniture and equipment should be appropriate for use with young children in a group setting and should be frequently checked to ensure that it is in good repair with no sharp edges, torn pieces or splinters.
- Tall or very heavy equipment should be anchored firmly to a wall.
- Equipment not designed for use with young children, such as filing cabinets, should be positioned in areas where children do not have access.
- All materials used with infants and toddlers must be able to pass a choke tube test.



- Playgrounds are inspected quarterly, but staff should observe daily for broken materials, unsafe items left behind by neighbors, prickly weeds, bees, small animals and animal leavings.
- Electrical cords and blind cords must be kept out of the reach of children.
- Electrical outlets must be covered, including those on power strips, unless they are safety outlets. (Ask an administrator if you are unsure of the type of outlets in your classroom.)
- No cleaning or sanitizing supplies or other chemical products may be stored in classrooms or classroom storage areas.
- Hand lotion, sunscreen or anything labeled “keep out of reach of children” must be clearly inaccessible to children and may need to be locked.
- Staff purses and backpacks must be inaccessible to children.
- Hot beverages should be excluded from the classroom. If a hot beverage is in a classroom, it must be contained in a non-spill container and kept out of the reach of children at all times.
- The Child Care Program is nut-free. No nuts, foods containing nut products, or foods processed with nuts may be on the premises. In addition, staff must be aware of other food allergies and ensure that children are not exposed in the food we serve or in the classroom materials we use.
- Materials should be picked up frequently by staff, especially from high traffic areas, so that staff and children are not confronted with multiple tripping hazards as they move about the room.

STAFF INJURY PREVENTION

Early care and education is physical work and staff must be prepared to use their bodies in a variety of ways. Effective planning can decrease the likelihood of injuries to children and staff. Back stress and injury seems to be a particularly high risk for our staff, so the following guidelines for lifting and carrying children are offered to reduce the risk:

- Children should be picked up only by the torso with hands placed firmly under the arms.
- Infants too young to sit or stand should always be picked up with support provided under the head and bottom.
- Never pick up a child by the hands or arms. This can cause injury to the child, as well as back strain to the adult.
- To avoid back strain, staff members should pick up children using the “half-kneel lift” when possible.
- Squatting to lift is also acceptable, but should be kept to a minimum.
- Never bend over from the waist from a standing position to lift a child.
- Children should be carried close to the body and balanced in the center of the body.
- Balancing a child on one hip and supporting with one arm places undue strain on the adult’s back.
- Holding the child in the center of the body also helps adults avoid tripping and falling due to additional unbalanced weight.
- Never attempt to step over a gate or other object while carrying a child. This increases the risk of back injury, as well as the risk of injury caused by tripping and falling. In addition, ODJFS Child Care Licensing Rule 5101: 2-12-21 (10) states: No person shall step over barriers such as, but not limited to, gates, shelving units or furniture, while holding a child.



ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES

Through appropriate supervision and care of the environment, staff is able to prevent many accidents and injuries from occurring. Because some accidents and injuries will inevitably occur, all fulltime staff is trained in First Aid and CPR. If an accident does occur, the following steps are taken:

- Staff with first aid training responds to the child's immediate needs. Most accidents and injuries that occur are minor and can be resolved quickly.
- An Incident Report is completed for any injury that requires first aid. Parents are asked to sign the report upon receipt and a copy is kept in the child's file. Serious incidents must also be reported to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services by an administrator.
- Any bump or blow to the head will be reported to parents immediately, even if it appears to be minor.
- Anytime staff may be exposed to blood or other bodily fluids, gloves should be worn to protect against blood-borne pathogens.
- If it is determined that the injury may be severe, another adult calls the office to let them know that help is needed. An administrator will go to help.
- Office staff calls 911 and the University Police for assistance. The family is contacted at the same time or after the emergency call is placed.
- Emergency personnel or parents will determine further treatment.
- If transportation to a hospital is needed, emergency personnel or parents will provide transportation as indicated on the child's Enrollment and Health form. Staff will travel with the child if a family member is not present.

INCIDENT REPORTS

It is important that all injuries that require first aid, including a band-aid, and all serious incidents, such as a child being left unattended, be documented on an Incident Report using the following guidelines:

- The staff who witnessed the incident should write the report if possible.
- The summary of the incident must use objective language to describe only observable actions.
- The report is written regarding the injury or incident for one child. No other children's names may appear on the report.
- Two reports are written in the case of a biting incident. The child who bit another may have been exposed to contact or blood-borne pathogens, so it is important for the family to be aware. Incident reports do not replace other documentation and problem-solving for a child who develops a pattern of biting.
- Incident reports must be completed accurately and neatly.
- An administrator should review and sign an Incident Report before it is given to a family. However, it is more important for the family to receive the report on the day of the incident than to have an administrator signature.
- When the family receives the report, they should sign and take the white copy of the report. The yellow copy is filed in the child's file.
- Incident reports are public record and must be shared with ODJFS when a serious incident or injury occurs, when a complaint is made or when a licensing specialist wishes to review them.



EMERGENCY BINDER

Each classroom has an Emergency Binder that contains all instructions for accidents and emergencies. It includes information and instructions for:

- Alerting System
- General Shelter-in-Place
- Weather Alerts
- Shelter-in-Place: Lockdown
- Evacuation
- Medical, Dental and General Emergency Plan

This information is reviewed with each new employee and annually with all employees. Staff should also make periodic reviews of the information to be prepared for emergency situations which could occur at any time.

The Emergency Binder also contains all Medical/Physical Care Plans, Request for Administration of Medication forms and a class list including family contact information.

The Emergency Binder is located so that it is easily accessible and should be taken with the group during an evacuation or when taking a routine walk.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING

All child care staff are mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse or neglect. Training is available to assist staff in becoming more competent and comfortable with this responsibility. If staff suspect abuse or neglect, it is their obligation to report the suspicion to Franklin County Children's Services. Reports do not require consultation or permission from other staff or administrators.

However, administrators should be informed of concerns and reports to ensure appropriate support and safety for the child and staff, as well as the family involved. It is our preference to have family involvement in any reports that are made. As professionals, we must maintain our objectivity and remember that any reports are made in an effort to help the child and family.

Suspicious of abuse or neglect are confidential and information must only be shared with staff or administrators who need to be involved.

It is possible for a report of suspected abuse or neglect to be filed against a member of the Child Care Program staff. If this occurs, all attempts will be made to keep the report confidential. As circumstances indicate, staff may need to be placed on leave during an investigation.

In all cases, information is confidential and must not be shared with staff, families or media.



FACILITY SECURITY

It is our first and most important responsibility to keep children safe and secure in our care. The following are strategies we employ to keep our facilities secure for children, families and staff:

- All staff must wear a Buck ID or program badge to indicate their status as an employee.
- Visitors are provided with a program visitor badge that must be worn at all times to indicate their status as a visitor.
- Maintenance personnel or agency personnel may use their own ID badges while in the program.
- Both facilities maintain a constant presence at the front entry. Staff at the front desk can stop visitors as they enter the facility.
- The Ackerman Road facility front doors are locked at all times; staff and families must swipe an ID to gain entry.
- All classroom or hallway exterior doors must be kept locked at all times except when children are on the playground and will be reentering.
- Any suspicious persons or actions must be reported immediately to an administrator.
- If staff encounter a potentially dangerous person or situation, their first and most important responsibility is the safety and security of children. Moving away from the potential danger to a safe and secure location is the preferred action. Staff should never take action against a suspicious person unless they feel there is imminent danger to self or children.

RELEASING CHILDREN

- The only persons who may pick up a child from the Program are those listed on the Authorized Release form. Staff will not release a child to anyone not listed on the form without additional written instructions. Staff will ask to see photo identification of persons that they do not recognize.
- When a child custody issue exists, it is the responsibility of the residential parent to provide official court documentation if there are restrictions or limitations placed on the nonresidential parent. The program may not deny a parent access to their child without proper documentation.
- If the person responsible for picking up the child has not arrived by 15 minutes after the end of the contracted child care schedule, the administrator on duty will contact persons listed as Emergency Contacts on the child's Enrollment and Health form. After one hour, if the person responsible for the child or an Emergency Contact has not arrived, Franklin County Children's Services will be contacted, and will determine if the child should be brought to their agency. University Police will be contacted if it is necessary to provide transportation for the child.
- Children who arrive from another educational program by contracted transportation to the Child Care Program have a written plan, including appropriate contact information, for determining their whereabouts should they fail to arrive as scheduled.



ROUTINE WALKS

Routine walks on the grounds surrounding and in between the Ackerman Road facility and the Buckeye Village facility of the Child Care Program are permitted with family permission. These walks may include crossing Defiance Drive in the crosswalk located in front of the Buckeye Village facility.

- Staff should consult the Routine Walk map for each facility that indicates the approved routine walk paths and areas.
- Staff must sign-out at the front desk before taking children on a routine walk.
- Walks should last no longer than one-half hour.
- Afternoon walks must conclude no later than 4:30.
- Routine walks will not include walking on Ackerman Road, the portion of Defiance Drive that approaches Ackerman Road, or the portion of Fred Taylor Drive that approaches Ackerman Road. Routine walks will not include crossing Fred Taylor Drive.
- At least two staff members must accompany children on routine walks, no matter how small the group. Program teacher/child ratios must be maintained.
- Staff must take a first aid kit, Emergency Binder and necessary medications, attendance sheet and a cell phone on all routine walks.



GROWING AS A PROFESSIONAL

*“Use what talents you
possess: the woods would
be very silent if no birds
sang there except those
that sang best.*

~Henry Van Dyke



PROFESSIONALISM

A professional is one who exhibits a courteous, conscientious and generally businesslike manner in the workplace. Because our work requires us to develop close relationships with children and families, it can sometimes be challenging to maintain a professional demeanor. In fact, it is even more important that we work to establish and maintain a professional relationship in order to provide the most effective program of early care and education for our children and families. Professional behavior includes the following:

- Professional Appearance
 - Appropriate appearance demonstrates respect for children, families and colleagues from a wide array of cultural backgrounds, as well as respect for our profession and the university.
 - Dress for comfort and safety, yet project a mature, professional image.
 - Clothing should be:
 - Neat and clean, free of holes or tears;
 - Display only language or graphics appropriate for a family environment;
 - Neither too tight nor too loose and baggy;
 - Cover the midriff, back, bottom and chest;
 - Allow for a wide range of motion while providing appropriate coverage.
 - Shoes must cover the toes and have a secure back or strap around the heel. Flip-flops, mules and other open-toed or open-heeled shoes are prohibited.
 - Administrative staff should wear generally accepted business and business-casual dress appropriate for their work.
- Professional Image
 - The picture others see when they walk into the classroom affects how they think of you as a professional.
 - Early childhood educators should spend most of their time interacting with children, not working on the computer, completing paperwork, tidying the counter, talking with other staff or standing and watching. Most of these activities can occur during naptime or planning time outside of the classroom.
 - A professional early childhood educator should be actively engaged with children, playing, smiling, reading, singing, quietly discussing, observing, welcoming new arrivals and thoughtfully supervising at all times.
 - Cell phones or other hand-held electronic devices are not to be used in the classroom or playground. As a professional, your focus is with the children; other demands in your life should be cared for on a break or after work hours.
 - Eating while in the classroom, unless you are joining with children at snack or meal time, does not present a professional image. Unless eating at specific times is a health concern or a very special occasion is being celebrated, eating in the classroom is prohibited.
- Professional Speech
 - Staff must maintain a professional demeanor in their interactions with others. Positive, calm approaches and words will help us build trusting relationships and resolve conflicts when they occur.
 - Staff should become increasingly adept at articulating the philosophy, theory and practice of early childhood education.



- We call our work “child care” or “early childhood education” or “early care and education”, never “day care”.
- We work with “children”, not “kids”.
- Effective verbal and written communication is an integral part of a professional image. Share your ideas with others and be accepting of feedback. If your writing skills need development, ask for others to proofread your work and consider professional development opportunities in this area.

MENTORING TEACHING AIDES

Teaching aides are child care staff and university students. Some teaching aides are majoring in early childhood education or related fields, but many are not. Few come to the program with a thorough understanding of early childhood education, child development or the responsibilities of child care.

While teaching aides complete an orientation before being assigned to classroom work, they have only the most basic preparation and will need your guidance to understand their role.

Teaching aides should complete many classroom maintenance tasks, such as preparing for meals, cleaning tables and restocking supplies, so that fulltime staff can be involved with the children. However, teaching aides still have plenty of time to be interacting with children and will need mentoring and guidance to become effective.

Use these techniques to guide teaching aides:

- Be an effective role model. Your interactions, language, mood and tone will likely be imitated by the teaching aides in your classroom. If you are positive, energetic and engaged with children, they will learn that behavior, too.
- Be a professional. Not only will you model this behavior for the teaching aides, but you will begin to expect it of them as well.
- Spend some time getting to know the teaching aides. Find out why they have chosen this work and what they hope to get from it.
- Provide specific direction in the classroom. Don’t expect a new teaching aide to know what to do. Give them specific instructions and don’t be afraid to provide feedback for improvement.
- Be positive. Encourage them in their work. Say “thank you” for the assistance they provide to you and the children.
- Help teaching aides connect with one another to build a support system of others who share their same challenges and struggles.
- If a teaching aide is not successful, schedule a time to sit down and discuss your observations. Help the teaching aide understand the expectations for your classroom.
- Each teaching aide is assigned a supervisor. Contact the supervisor if the teaching aide is struggling to be successful.
- You will be asked for written feedback that will be shared by the supervisor in a performance planning setting. Be specific and objective in providing feedback.



QUALITY STANDARDS

The Child Care Program is mandated to be licensed by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. We also engage in several quality initiatives that require additional work toward achieving best practice.

“Ability is what you’re capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how well you do it.”

~Lou Holtz

- Step Up to Quality (SUTQ)
 - SUTQ is voluntary tiered licensing administered by ODJFS.
 - Programs can acquire one, two or three star ratings. Monetary rewards are provided with each rating.
 - Requires higher standards for group sizes and ratios, staff qualifications and professional development, program and child assessment.
 - Staff must engage in specific SUTQ approved training.
 - Requires annual application. Preparation for a SUTQ visit requires no change to classroom practice although a licensing specialist will observe in classrooms. Preparation is primarily documentation of practice.
 - Rating can be suspended or removed due to licensing violations.
- Early Learning Initiative (ELI)
 - ELI is a program to ensure a high quality preschool experience for children identified as at-risk due to socio-economic status.
 - Families apply for ELI and receive a subsidy to help pay for child care.
 - ELI is a joint effort of ODJFS and the Ohio Department of Education.
 - ELI requirements only affect preschool classrooms and include additional classroom, teacher and child assessment, higher program standards and wellness activities.
 - ELI programs must also participate in SUTQ.
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation
 - This is the highest standard of quality in the early childhood education field.
 - Accreditation requires a broad study of the entire program, improved practice and substantial documentation.
 - Classroom teachers and administrators must engage in specific documentation work to achieve accreditation status.
 - NAEYC Accreditation, once earned, must be renewed every five years. During the interim, annual reports must be submitted to maintain accreditation.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We encourage and support the continued professional development of our staff. Opportunities for professional development include:

- Paid membership to the National Association for the Education of Young Children;
- On-site training for First Aid, CPR, Communicable Disease Management, Child Abuse Recognition and Prevention, and many SUTQ approved trainings;
- Funds to support off-site training and conference attendance;
- Support for staff to present at professional conferences;
- Tuition credits for Columbus State Community College;
- Tuition benefit for Ohio State and a process for requesting schedule accommodations to take classes that affect work hours;
- Many opportunities at Ohio State to engage in professional development offered through colleges and organizations within the university.

PERFORMANCE GOALS AND GROWTH

The professional growth of our staff is the cornerstone of our high quality program and continued pursuit of excellence. Each staff has a supervisor who strives to learn their personal and professional aspirations so as to best assist them in their growth and development.

All staff begins their employment with a thorough orientation, followed by a one month performance planning session with their supervisor and the development of a professional development plan. New staff also meets with their supervisor at three and six months of employment.

We encourage each staff to meet regularly with their supervisor in order to reflect on practice, review goals and work toward optimal performance. The supervisor's responsibility is to assist staff in identifying areas of strength and opportunity, and support them in their growth.

Specific tools are used to help staff reflect, evaluate and plan. These tools may change over time, or even for individual needs, but their intent remains the same.



