



2009-2010

FSU Child Development Programs

Family Handbook

FSU UNIVERSITY
HOUSING

FSU Child Development
Programs
Askew Student Life Center
942 Learning Way
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4174

Phone: (850) 644-2860

Fax: (850) 644-7997

Web site: <http://www.childcare.fsu.edu/>



FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY



FSU Child Development Programs

A Family Handbook:

Policies and Procedures for:

Educational Research Center for Child Development
Infant and Toddler Child Development Center

This handbook supercedes Family Handbook 2008-2009



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elcome to the FSU Child Development Programs.

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you and your child to our programs. We hope that this first educational experience will be a positive one that will launch your child on a life time of learning. Our two centers are staffed by great teams who are committed to ensuring your child is well cared for and is learning in an environment that is both enriching and stimulating. We are partners with you in the education of your child and look forward to our mutual collaboration and cooperation. This handbook was prepared to help you learn about us and to communicate our policies and procedures that help ensure that our relationship has clear expectations and guidelines. We think most of your questions about how we operate are answered in this handbook but if not, please do not hesitate to ask us about anything that concerns you. We know how hard it can be to bring your child to the school for the first time and to leave to go to class or work. We are here not only to help make that transition a smooth one, but to put in place a learning environment that is characterized by enthusiasm, excitement and one that is imbued with a genuine love of learning. We're happy to serve you and your children.

Nancy Selken
Associate Director

History and Background

In August of 2003, FSU Child Development Programs brought together 4 existing programs, each with a proud history. The four centers: Alumni Village Child Development Center, Educational Research Center for Child Development, Infant and Toddler Child Development Center and Starlight Child Development Center had one central feature in common, they educated and cared for children. The four centers were established, primarily, to assist student parents in the care and education of their young children and to provide future generations of professionals “hands on” experience and training in best practices for various academic departments on the FSU campus. The consolidation process continued in the August of 2009 when the Alumni Village Child Development Center closed for renovation and the Starlight Programs was discontinued.

The Educational Research Center for Child Development (ERCCD) opened in 1980 to provide service, research and scholarly leadership to the University and surrounding community. ERCCD is located on Main campus near the Stone building. It has been continuously accredited since 1988 by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, it serves 36 preschool children, ages 2.5 to 5.

The Infant and Toddler Child Development Center opened in September of 2002. In 2001 a grant award from the United States Office of Education provided the necessary financial resources to provide student parents with quality care for their infants and toddlers, age 6 weeks to 3 years of age. It serves 22 children and was accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Child in October, 2005.

Both centers provide high quality early education and care to 58 children and their families. Each center has a director and professional teachers all with Bachelors or advanced degrees. The assistant teachers are typically students at FSU, many pursuing advanced degrees, in a wide variety of majors and interests which enriches our centers.

The Organization

Mission Statement

What we want to do is care for and nurture the young children of student parents so that they can pursue their studies knowing their children are safe and in a learning environment that, at its best, will promote life-long learning. We want to capture and extend the in-borne eagerness to learn that all children possess so that it is not lost or dampened by drill, rote or other mind-numbing practices. For the young adult students we want to provide a learning environment that extends the classroom by providing hands-on learning opportunities and a safe environment to develop professionally.

Philosophy

We believe that children are by nature curious and eager learners. We believe that young children learn best when they experience their environment first hand in play. It is their direct experience in the world with the people, places and objects at hand that spark their innate desire to “find out”, “figure out”, or otherwise solve problems that present themselves through the course of everyday events. It is how they construct understanding or “make meaning”. Emphasis is placed on educating the whole child, the physical, the cognitive, the social and the emotional aspects of the individual. The teachers provide the expert guidance and support for “knowing” how things work and how to successfully live in the world with self and others.

Values

We seek to provide excellent service to the academic community in such a fashion as to cooperate, collaborate and communicate with all who interact with us and at the same time approach our work with a sense of humility and humanity and with enough humor to lighten our way.

Goals for Your Children

They will develop a positive view of themselves and others.

They will develop a love of learning.

They will develop an appreciation for the differences among people and how to celebrate those differences.

They will learn how to cooperate and be a positive member of a community.

They will develop the basic skills to prepare them for the next level of learning.

Board

A Board of Directors oversees FSU Child Development Programs. The Vice President for Student Affairs serves as chairman. The Board is composed of one parent representative from each of the centers, student government representatives, faculty representatives, community representatives and Programs staff. The Board is responsible for setting major policies, hiring selected staff and providing support and guidance to ensure the success of the programs. One parent representative is elected annually by each center. The parent must be in good standing with the program, have no grievance procedure pending, have no criminal record and be willing to serve for the good of both centers. The duties include attending all meetings of the board and voting. Candidates for election as parent representatives are nominated at the first parent meeting in the Fall semester. Information about the candidates is published in the monthly newsletter. The election is held on two consecutive days following the announcement in the newsletter. Each family is entitled to one vote. The elected representative serves a one year term or until leaving the program or resigning. Should their child leave the center during their term they would no longer be eligible to serve on the board.

Staff

The Associate Director

The Associate Director provides the leadership and coordination for the two centers and supervises the directors of each center. The Associate Director is an ex-officio member of the Board of Directors.

Center Directors

Professionally trained, each center director oversees the daily operations of their center, supervises the staff of that center, plans and implements the center's curriculum and facilitates communication between families and the center. All financial matters are handled by the Business area of University Housing. The Director is a full-time staff member who is on site daily.

The Teaching Staff

The centers employ lead teachers who are professionally trained and committed to the field of early child education and dedicated to the education of young children. All teachers of your children undergo background checks and required training for teachers of young children. The center staff undergo continuous training both internal and external, taking advantage of the many free or inexpensive local training workshops and University resources.

State Licensing

All centers are licensed by the State of Florida through the Department of Children and Families. Annual unannounced inspections of the centers are conducted by the Department of Children and Families to ensure they meet all state standards, policies and procedures.

NAEYC Accreditation

Both the Educational Research Center for Child Development and the Infant and Toddler Child Development Center are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). What does accreditation mean? It means the centers have voluntarily undergone an assessment procedure that gauges how well the center meets NAEYC requirements for a quality early childhood program. The major indicator of quality of early childhood programs is the quality of the interaction between teachers and children. The physical environment, curriculum, health and safety, administration are other areas assessed, first by staff and then by a NAEYC validator. The validator visits each center for verification/endorsement of the information reported in the self study. If fully endorsed, the center receives accreditation status for 5 years.

The Programs

Infants and Toddlers

Ages 6 weeks to 2 and one-half years

The Infant and Toddler Child Development Center is located at 330 Pennell Circle in the University Apartment Housing complex called Alumni Village. The Center serves 22 children ages 6 weeks to 2 and one-half years. A full-time director and 2 lead teachers, all professionally trained in either Early Childhood Education or Child Development, provide the leadership for this center. The several teaching assistants who help create the caring and nurturing environment are students at FSU who are pursuing undergraduate or graduate degrees. They receive specialized training to work with very young children by both external professionals and internal professional staff. The center is open 8:30 to 4:30 on the academic calendar i.e. when FSU classes are in session, the center is open.

The curriculum, the toys, the daily schedule, the food as well as all aspects of your child's environment is planned to provide the best opportunities for maximum growth for your child. You will notice for example, if you have older children in one of the other centers, that the toys your children are provided are intentionally chosen for this age child...i.e. sturdy toys that have few pieces.

The Preschool Program

Ages 2 and one-half years to 5

The center that provides care for children two and one half **and** toilet-trained is located at 370 Hull Drive, the Educational Research Center for Child Development. It has spaces for 36 children in two classrooms. A full-time Director and two full-time lead teachers provide the leadership for this center. Like the Infant and Toddler Child Development Center the several assistant teachers are undergraduate or graduate students at FSU who receive specialized training to work with preschool children by both external professionals and internal professional staff. It is open 7:30 to 5:30 each day that FSU classes are in session.

The preschool's daily schedule consists of structured group activities, outside play, lunch, snack time, small group activities in various centers and time for rest. Each day brings your child many learning opportunities in and out of the classroom. There are opportunities to talk with and listen to adults, talk and listen to other children, to hear stories, to listen to music, to exercise, to cook, to do art activities, and to sing. According to the needs and interests of the children, special projects are planned such as walking "field trips" in and around the centers, cooking projects, special guests etc.

Teachers prepare educational opportunities to help the children become "school-ready" and to help them learn how to get along in a group and participate in the classroom community. One primary goal is to help each child feel secure and help them celebrate and develop their unique talents and abilities.

Center and Classroom Placement

In general, parents who remain fully enrolled students at FSU and wish to participate in FSU Child Development Programs will receive first priority in moving to a higher age group when spaces become available. Age, alone, however does not always determine classroom or center placement. Transitions typically occur at the beginning of fall semester or summer semester. The developmental level of the child, availability of space, overall group needs and the assessment of the professional staff and director of the center determine changes in center or classroom placement. Each decision is made on a case by case basis. Changes in centers or classrooms may be made at other times of the year if professional staff and parents feel that the move is in the best interest of the child. If at any time you feel your child is not in the most appropriate classroom, please discuss your concerns with the director of the center.

Typical Daily Schedules

Greeting/Arrival: Parents escort their child to their classroom and to their teacher

Small Group Activities/Choice Time: After arrival, children choose from a variety of centers and play areas in their classroom.

Large Group Time: Children meet with their teachers who have planned a variety of activities such as music, movement, weather and other skill building activities to focus on the specific developmental needs of the group.


Outdoor Activities: Twice each day children go outside except in extreme weather conditions. The children choose from a variety of activities including climbing, outdoor dramatic play, tricycle riding, sliding and other large motor games.

Departures: Parents pick up their children from their classrooms and talk with their teachers about the day's activities.

The following pages show the typical daily schedule for the centers.

Typical Daily Schedules

Educational Research Center for Child Development

 Sunshine Room			
7:30-8:20	Arrival/ChoiceTime/Small Group Activities		
8:20-8:30	Clean Up		
8:40-8:45	Large Group Time		
8:45-9:00	Potty/Wash Hands	<u>Rainbow Room</u>	
9:00-9:30	Breakfast/Wash Hands	7:30-8:35	Arrival/ChoiceTime/Small Group Activities
9:30-10:20	Outside Activities	8:35-8:55	Large Group Time
10:20-10:30	Potty/Wash Hands	8:55-9:00	Bathroom/Wash Hands
10:30-10:45	Large Group Time	9:00-9:30	Breakfast/Wash Hands
10:45-11:30	Choice Time/Small Group Activities	9:30-9:50	Choice Time/Small Group Activities
11:30-11:45	Clean Up/Potty/Wash Hands	10:50-11:00	Clean up/Bathroom
11:45-12:15	Lunch	11:00-11:50	Outside Activities
12:15-12:30	Wash Hands/Brush Teeth	11:50-12:00	Bathroom/Wash Hands
12:30-12:45	Story Time	12:00-12:30	Lunch
12:45-2:30	Nap Time/Quiet Time	12:30-12:45	Bathroom/Brush Teeth/Wash Hands
2:30-2:45	Potty/Wash Hands	12:45-1:00	Story Time
2:45-3:00	Snack/Wash Hands	1:00-2:30	Nap Time/Quiet Time
3:00-3:50	Outside Activities	2:30-2:50	Imagination Station
3:50-4:00	Wash Hands/Potty	2:50-3:00	Bathroom/Wash Hands
4:00-4:20	Large Group Time/Music	3:00-3:30	Snack/Wash Hands
4:20-5:20	Choice Time/Small Group Time	3:30-3:50	Large Group/Time/Music
5:20-5:30	Clean Up	3:50-4:45	Outside Activities
		4:45-4:55	Bathroom/Wash Hands
		4:55-5:15	Choice Time/Small Group Activities
		5:15-5:30	Clean Up

Typical Daily Schedules



Infant & Toddler Child Development Center Daily Schedule

8:30	Open
8:30-9:00	Greet Children/Free Play
9:30-10:00	Breakfast
10:00-10:15	Diaper Change/Potty
10:15-10:45	Center Time
10:45-11:30	Outside Time
11:30-11:45	Circle Time Stories/Songs
11:45-12:15	Lunch
12:15-12:30	Diaper Change/Potty
12:30-2:30	Nap Time
2:30-3:15	Diaper Change/Potty
3:15-3:45	Snack Time
3:45-4:00	Teacher's Choice
4:00-4:20	Outside Time
4:20-4:30	Clean Up/Free Play
4:30	Close

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK)

Background

In 2002 an amendment to the State Constitution was approved by voters. It reads: “Every four-year-old in Florida shall be provided by the State of Florida a high quality pre-kindergarten learning opportunity in the form of an early childhood development and education program which shall be voluntary, high quality, free and delivered according to professionally accepted standards.” FSU Child Development Programs qualified to be providers of the program the ERCCD which serves preschool children, . The first VPK classes began in the spring semester of 2006. This State-of-Florida- sponsored program is administered locally by the Early Learning Coalition of the Big Bend.

Eligibility Requirements

1. Child must have turned 4 years old on or before September 1 of the year preceding the Spring semester and reside in the State of Florida.

Application Procedure

As VPK is a State of Florida sponsored and funded program, enrollment in FSU Child Development Programs does **not** automatically enroll your child into the program. The parent must apply and be certified to enroll through the Early Learning Coalition of the Big Bend.

Application forms are available at <http://www.elcbigbend.org/PreKindergarten.htm>

You will need to **submit documentation** of your **Florida residency and proof of your child’s date of birth to the Early Learning Coalition of the Big Bend**. The application form describes various documents that will be accepted as proof. It is important to note that you must take this documentation **in person**. No faxes or forms sent in by mail will be accepted. The Early Learning Coalition of the Big Bend is located at the Woodcrest Office Park at 325 John Knox Road, Building F, Suite 140, Tallahassee, Florida 32303, phone number is (850)385-0504. Office hours are Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Availability of the VPK Program

FSU Child Development Programs offers the VPK program **only** in the **spring semester** of each year.

Priority for Placement

Children currently enrolled in FSU Child Development Programs will take first priority in the placement process. If there are more children currently enrolled and eligible for the VPK program than there are spaces available, date of enrollment in FSU Child Development Programs will determine the order in which placements are made. Placements filled from the waiting list will follow the priorities according to the current policies outlined in the enrollment section of this handbook .

Enrollment

FSUCDP **must receive a certifying number for each child to be officially enrolled.** The **last day to submit a certificate** is the **fourth Wednesday in November** of the fall semester to enroll in the spring semester. If the certificate of eligibility is not turned into FSU Child Development Programs at 103 Askew Student Life Center, your child is not enrolled in VPK.

Children who are four but not enrolled in the VPK program and have not completed the paperwork must pay tuition fees according to the current fee schedule as well as follow all policies and procedures of children who are not VPK enrollees until such time as they are certified. It is the parent's responsibility to insure that all the necessary steps are completed to enroll their child in the VPK program.

Hours of Operation

VPK instructional hours are 8:15 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., excluding a one-hour rest period. The VPK program begins the first day of the spring semester and continues through to the last day of the spring semester according to the FSU Academic Calendar. Our programs are closed for all University holidays, including spring break.

Program Requirements

In order to maintain your child's eligibility to participate and to gain the maximum benefit, consistency of attendance is required. The total amount of hours in the spring semester program instruction is 540.

(1) Attendance:

(a) A child **may not be absent more than 7 days per calendar month**

If a child is absent, the parent must provide the center with **a written note explaining the absence** for each day missed.

(b) The absence is excused **only for the following reasons:**

1. Illness or injury of the child or the child's family member which requires hospitalization or bed rest.
2. Physician or dentist appointment
3. Infectious or parasitic infestation
4. Funeral service, memorial service, or bereavement upon the death of the child's family member
5. Life-threatening illness or injury of the child's family member
6. Compliance with a court order (e.g., visitation, subpoena)
7. Special education or related services as defined in 20U.S.C. §1401(2004) for the child's disability
8. Observance of a religious holiday or service, or because the child's or parent's religion forbids secular activity on the instructional day
9. Family vacation, not to exceed five excused absences per program year

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10. Extraordinary circumstances beyond the control of the child and the child's parent.
- c. Beyond seven excused absences, a person other than the child's parent must document the excused absence, the person must be unrelated to the child or the child's parent, and the documentation must show that the person has personal knowledge of the reason for the child's absence (e.g., letter from a physician) and **may not exceed three unexcused absences per calendar month. (Florida Administrative Code 60BB-8.204)**
- (3) Each day your child must be **signed in and out, the day and time recorded.**
- (4) The attendance sheet must have the **signature** of the person signing your child in and out.
- (5) At the end of **each month** of participation, you will be **required to verify** by your signature, that your child attended the days indicated on the monthly attendance sheet.
- (6) To be eligible for the VPK program at ERCCD, children **must** attend during the instructional hours of 8:15 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Parents who prefer not to bring their children during those hours will be ineligible for FSU's VPK program and will be asked to seek enrollment at another program that best fits their individual needs.

Fees

(1) If a child is enrolled in the FSU Child Development Programs but is not properly enrolled in the VPK program, the child will continue in the program as a fee paying student and the parents will be responsible for paying tuition fees at the current rate.

(2) If a child loses eligibility to participate in the VPK programs as a result of failure to adhere to the attendance policy as outlined above, the parent will be responsible for paying any amount not paid by VPK for the services provided at the current FSUCDP tuition rate.

(3) Past Due Child Care Tuition Fees

It is important to note that though this is a free program, if you have any past due child care tuition fees from previous semesters of participation, you will need to bring your account current. Late fees will continue to accrue for any past unpaid balances and if not brought current **could jeopardize the child's post-VPK enrollment and may result in an FSU registration and/or transcript block.**

(4) Late Pick Up Fees

Although the VPK programs ends at 5:00 p.m., the preschools are open until 5:30 p.m. Children not picked up from the center by 5:30 P.M will be charged at the rate of \$1.00 per minute beginning the minute the center closes. Please review the late pick up fee in this handbook for more details.

(5) Parents are responsible for paying tuition fees during enrollment in FSU Child Development Programs not covered under the VPK program. Fall and summer semesters are non-VPK semesters and parents are responsible for paying tuition according to the fee schedule. If a parent wishes to withdraw their child(ren) at the end of the VPK program, **parents MUST complete a Withdrawal Notice form, providing a written 30 day advance notice of the intent to withdraw.** Failure to provide the required 30 day notice may result in charges to the family beyond the intended participation period.

In addition to understanding FSU Child Development Programs VPK policy, parents should understand their rights and responsibilities and the State of Florida VPK program. You may visit the Early Learning Coalition website at <http://www.elcbigbend.org> for more information.

Attendance Policy

It is very important that the families of the children enrolled in FSU Child Development Programs understand the attendance policies and their responsibilities related to those policies. Our attendance policies reflect the days we are open, private pay families, and voluntary pre-k families. Each category has its own set of policies and responsibilities. Failure to adhere to the policies that apply in your particular situation could result in unanticipated or extra fees on your behalf or ineligibility to participate.

When the Program is Open:

FSU Child Development Programs are open for child attendance when FSU general classes are in session. The hours for each program are posted on the website www.childcare.fsu.edu. Please refer to this website the specific hours of operation for your child's program.

- FSU Infant & Toddler Development Center 8:30am-4:30pm (M-F)
- Educational Research Center for Child Development 7:30am-5:30pm (M-F)
- Educational Research Center for Child Development VPK hours 8:15am-5pm M-F (Spring Semester Only)

We close for all FSU University holidays as well as for between-semester breaks , including the spring break. Please refer to the current Florida State University academic calendar for the exact dates we are closed. We are closed :

- Two weeks for winter break (end of December beginning of January)
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- One week for spring break (usually in March)
- Two weeks between spring and summer semesters (usually in May)
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- 2-3 weeks between the end of summer semester and the beginning of Fall semester break (in August)
- Labor Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving day and the Friday after

Absences:

We request that every family inform the program of any known upcoming absences. If your child's participation is, in any part, assisted financially by Federal or State of Florida funds , absences must be documented (excused) in writing and turned in to the program. See the previous pages for a list of excusable absences. After three absences, excuses must come from an appropriate third party (doctor, dentist, etc.)

Voluntary Pre-K:

Our Voluntary Pre-K program (VPK) is offered in the spring semester only. Children funded by VPK must be present for a minimum of 80% of the instructional hours. Participating families are expected to have the children to the program on time (8:15 am) and pick them up at the end of the program (5:00pm). Nap time is not considered instructional time in the VPK program. Every absence must be documented with an excuse by the parent or appropriate third party. Children can have no more than 3 unexcused absences in a month (see handbook for list of excused absences). After three absences, all excuses must come from an appropriate third party (doctor, dentist, etc.). Since the VPK child can not miss more than 20% of the instructional program, this means that no more than 10 days can be missed in the whole VPK semester. Missing more than 3 days will mean that the parent is responsible for payment of that particular month. Missing more than 20% of instructional time will mean loss of VPK funding and the parent will be responsible for paying the tuition for the child (any funds that VPK does not pay).

It is important to note that it is the responsibility of the parent to gain clarification of any aspect of the policy that is not fully understood.

Curriculum

Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Our centers follow research-based best practices that provides the foundation for NAEYC standards for accreditation. In short, the centers follow developmentally appropriate practice. For young children research tells us that they learn best by “doing” or through play. Play is their “textbook”. Our teachers create intentional, planned, play-based environments that facilitate all areas of development while at the same time allowing enough flexibility to respond to each child’s individual needs. Our teachers provide a wide variety of “hands on” experiences that encourage children to be active learners, to lead, to follow, to solve their conflicts, to listen, to appreciate differences, to count, to reason, to create, and to use their muscles. Our teachers teach by close observation and attunement to each child’s unique talents and abilities such that the planning for optimal learning opportunities is maximized for each child. Emphasis is placed on the process (the doing) rather than the product. The purpose is to help each child reach their highest potential intellectually, socially, physically and emotionally as well as nurture a genuine life-long love of learning.

Teachers and administrators strive to create a learning environment that is safe, predictable, and supportive where the limits and expectations are clear and consistent. Understanding that children learn from the adults in their environment, teachers and administrators model the behavior we teach, that is, we respond respectfully and kindly through words that expresses our thoughts, feelings and needs. We model cooperation and compassion while at the same time holding the expectations high knowing that children will work toward those expectations.

Each day is filled with opportunities for both active involvement and quiet reflection. You will notice the children are encouraged to make choices throughout the day’s activities. Among the many choices are science exploration, math games, manipulatives (i.e. blocks, legos, puzzles), art, language—expressive and receptive—cooking, and reading. When the children gather together as a group in circle time, they may sing songs, dance, discuss the weather, discuss letters in the alphabet etc. You will see the children on the playground encouraged to engage actively in the outdoor classroom with sand, with tricycles, or on the slide. These various learning activities foster, encourage and support key content areas such as literacy skills, mathematics, science, the arts, health etc. For infants and toddlers, the materials and equipment are used to encourage and maximize exploration, sensory learning, motor learning, experimentation and discovery.

Though teachers plan the day, week, or month’s theme with specific learning goals in mind and use *Creative Curriculum* as a base structure, they are encouraged to be flexible in order to capitalize on serendipitous events that provide opportunities to maximize each child’s learning. An example might be a particularly delightful spring day that calls everyone to be out of doors, attuned to the re-awakening of flowers, trees, or butterflies. Teachers are also encouraged to supplement their planning with other curriculums such as *High Scope*.

Character Education Curriculum

As it is our goal to facilitate children's development in all areas, we include a character education component in our curriculum. The overall goal of this component of our curriculum is to provide instruction and promote the development of common/universal socially acceptable character traits as well as to build classroom community. The traits we emphasize are: Love, empathy, gentleness, respect, visualization/relaxation, self-control, friendship, conflict resolution, kindness, responsibility, cooperation, diversity awareness including acceptance, appreciation and celebration, and compassion. These traits are whole units from the *Kindness Curriculum: Introducing Young Children to Loving Values* by Judith Anne Rice which is the curriculum selection chosen from the state-mandated pre-approved list. The major goals are to facilitate independence, promote the identification of feelings/emotions, facilitate the appropriate ways of expression of feelings/emotions, promote empathy, cooperation, caring and peace, facilitate self-control, facilitate bonding, attachment and friendship. In addition to the Kindness Curriculum, we integrate and supplement with *The Peaceful Classroom, Skill Streaming for Early Childhood, I Love You Rituals, Can Do Kids and The Cooperation Booklet*.

The character education component is not a religious or faith-based program but rather a non-biased and integrated way to help children think about and practice common courtesies and social skills. *It is important to note that no religious or faith concepts may be taught by state-funded programs.*

In our programs, attention is focused on specific character traits and social skills that are integrated/embedded throughout the themes, daily activities and children's play in the overall curriculum. In other words, there is not a "Character Education Time", as such, but rather the concepts are introduced and reinforced in developmentally appropriate ways through hands on, active and meaningful ways that young children understand and relate to as they participate in circle time in outside play, through daily routines and conversations. Teachable moments are not always predictable, so teachers are encouraged to seize any opportunities in the course of a day to emphasize or teach a character trait or a social skill.

Screening and Assessment

Purpose

Screening and assessment are an integral part of high quality early care and education programs. The purposes of the screening and assessments are multiple: One purpose is to learn about the development, interests and needs of each child which can then inform appropriate individualized teaching strategies that extend, enhance and guide each child's learning and continued development. A second purpose is to detect early signs of delay in development and/or the need for further assessment, referral or early intervention. A third is to improve curriculum and teaching practices which contribute to overall program improvements.

The Screening and Assessment Instruments

Several screening and assessments instruments are used: *Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)*, *Learning Accomplishment Profile-Revised (LAP-R)*, *the Early Learning Accomplishment Profile (E-LAP)* and *the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)*. A portfolio is also kept for each child which shows individual strengths and accomplishments. ASQ and DECA are norm referenced while the LAP-R and E-LAP are criteria-referenced assessment tools.

Screening and Assessment Schedule/Timeline

The *Ages and Stages Questionnaire* is the initial screening instrument and is administered within the first six months and every six months thereafter. It is used to learn about the developmental level of each child as well as to detect any early signs of delay or need for additional assessment and includes parental assessment.

The *Learning Accomplishment Profile-Revised (LAP-R)* for preschoolers and the *Early Learning Accomplishment Profile (E-LAP)* for infants and toddlers are administered as a pre and post test in early fall and late spring semesters. They are used to identify the developmental age of each child and are also required by the Early Learning Coalition and the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program (VPK) and NAEYC.

The *Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)* is a social/emotional screening instrument that is used as needed for additional information or planning/problem solving.

The *portfolio* for each child contains work samples, academic skills checklist, anecdotal records, photos etc. which identify and demonstrate strengths and accomplishments. Along with the other instruments, this insures the programs offered is based on each child's abilities and facilitates planning that supports continued progress and learning for each child. Depending on the child's developmental level there will be samples of block play, writing samples, drawing/painting samples, three dimensional art (ex. Play Dough), dramatic play stages, social play stages, cutting skills, gross and fine motor skills and academic concept/knowledge progress. The assessment process is expected to be an ongoing integral cycle that goes hand in hand with the curriculum. The portfolio is an ongoing assessment tool while the other tools are used periodically. The collection of items for the portfolio happen in an integrated daily fashion within the contexts of teaching the children and spending time in the classroom. These strategies are used throughout the daily routine while the children are engaged in play. This natural (authentic) type of assessment assists in getting a valid, true picture of the child's progress and development. Portfolios are intended to shape instruction and make informed decisions about program design.

Administration of Screening and Assessment Instruments

It is important that those who are conducting assessments and screenings are qualified to do so. Each lead teacher in FSU Child Development Programs has been trained to administer each of the instruments and is responsible for their timely administration. The lead teacher may be assisted by staff members who have been trained in the specific tool to conduct the screening. Every staff member in the classroom may conduct observations and keep anecdotal records.

Screening and Assessment Results

As parents, you have the most impact on your child's development and life. For this reason, all assessment and screening outcomes will be shared with you. In addition, we would like you to be fully informed of others that will have access to your child's assessment and screenings. The results will be shared only with parties on a need-to-know basis, or as required by governing criteria. Those that will have access to screening and assessment results are:

- You (parent or guardian)
- Director/Administrators of the child care program

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- Lead teacher of the child's class
 - Assistant teachers in the child's class
 - Inspectors/representatives from various governing agencies: Early Learning Coalition, Voluntary Pre- Kindergarten (VPK) Office, Department of Children & Families, Accrediting Agency – NAEYC . Occasionally, an outside consultant or referral staff (you will have been notified prior to this)

All of the people mentioned in the above list are major stakeholders in your child's optimal development. All assessment and screening results shared will be done so for the sole purpose of meeting your child's needs and offering optimal programming. Parents/guardians are informed of the results so that helpful input can be provided to the program and appropriate assistance and development strategies can be discussed. Teachers, teaching assistants, and administrators have access to assessment and screening results in order to make curriculum and programmatic decisions for your child so his/her needs can be optimally met. Representatives from the Early Learning Coalition, VPK office, Department of Children and Families, and accrediting agencies have access to screening and assessments in order to verify that the program is adhering to criteria and standards required by each agency. Occasionally, outside consultants, professors, and referral personnel require access to assist our team in planning and implementing an appropriate program for your child. Also, occasionally, students learning to become educators or development professionals administer assessments and screenings for required coursework. You will be notified of this and results shared with you. These results will be kept confidential. The results of the screenings and assessments are not used to label a child; rather, the results are used to inform parents and staff so that they can make decisions together on how best to meet the child's needs, provide an appropriate program, and ensure school success.

Referrals

Our program staff conducts only initial screening, and curricula-based assessment. After the screening and assessments are completed and parent/teacher conferences are held, if further assessment is indicated or any assistance is needed outside the scope of expertise within FSU Child Development Programs, referrals will be made with the written consent of the parents. This ensures that the assessment is conducted appropriately and can provide more information.

Parents may choose (and are encouraged) to contact outside agencies/organizations for programs or services directly (i.e. without a referral if the organization does not require one). Staff are encouraged to help families who need assistance with negotiating health, mental health, educational services or other assessments needed for their children. Center directors maintain lists of resources that can be shared with any parent who would like information about organizations that provide early intervention or other kinds of help.

Referral Process

The referral process is outlined below:

- Initial screening and assessment is conducted by the child care staff.
- If the results of the initial screen indicate a unmet need, a re-screen is conducted.
- Parents and staff discuss the outcomes of the screening/assessment.
- Simultaneously, teachers and directors review screening and assessment results to make appropriate programming decisions.
- A decision is made to make a referral.
- The parent is given the contact information for the appropriate referral agency (usually, this is Early Intervention, Child Find, the Warm-Line, or the Early Learning Coalition)
- The parent makes contact with the appropriate agency and a screening is scheduled.
- The outcomes are discussed with the teacher/director.
- The child care team and the parent discuss ways the program can assist in meeting the child's needs.

There may be occasions when parents may choose to decline referrals. FSUCDP reserves the right to discontinue services if referral and outside assistance is essential to the health, safety and well-being of the child or to the other children or staff in the center.

Confidentiality

Information obtained through screenings, assessment and portfolios are confidential information and are shared only with the child's family in a timely manner such that appropriate programming, guidance and support (as well as assistive services and referrals) can be implemented for the benefit of the child. Written consent will be obtained from parents before information is shared with other relevant providers, agencies or programs.

Children's records are kept in locked filing cabinets, accessible only to those individuals listed above.

Parental Involvement

Parents are encouraged to communicate with their child's teacher as often as needed to raise any concerns, to contribute to decisions about their child's goals and plans as well as to share any other information that may affect the development or well-being of their child. It is expected that parents and teachers will work collaboratively and in a mutually supportive fashion to insure that the child is able to take full advantage of the services offered.

Communication with Parents

Twice each year, generally in the fall and spring semesters, conferences are scheduled with each child's parents to discuss the screenings and assessments as well as the overall progress of their child. Following the conference, written summaries are provided to parents.

Holiday and Birthdays

We are very fortunate in FSU Child Development Programs to have a very diverse group of families who come from many parts of the world to study at FSU and enroll their children in our centers. As part of our multicultural and anti-bias curriculum, we like to include holidays celebrated by children of various religious and ethnic groups without overemphasizing any one of them. Occasionally, we make up our own celebrations such as Pajama Day or Silly Day. Since young children can easily be over-stimulated and our centers follow developmentally appropriate practice, we keep all our celebrations “low key”. Young children do not always understand holidays the same way adults do and some can be really scary, such as Halloween. Our philosophy is to prevent adding additional holiday stress and the over activity that often accompanies parties for young children. We believe that the most important holiday traditions are those that take place within the child’s own family and should be family traditions, not center traditions. One way to ensure this specialness is by keeping the school celebrations calm and more in keeping with a normal schedule. We do strongly encourage families to share their traditions and customs with the classrooms as they enrich the learning environment and build community. If you would like to share your family holiday traditions or holiday customs with family photos, songs or books, talk with your child’s teacher or center director.

We are happy to celebrate birthdays and encourage parents who might like to send or bring treats to keep it simple---cookies or cupcakes, commercially prepared for the birthday child to share with classmates. More elaborate parties with gifts, favors etc. are best held at home. As feelings can be easily hurt, we ask that parents not distribute invitations, treats or other special recognitions unless there is an invitation or treat for everyone.

Field Trips

The learning environment for our centers extends beyond the classroom walls and playground to the special resources in the larger FSU learning community. To take advantage of these “extras” the children may walk to the planetarium or to the FSU College of Medicine. Children at the ERCCD may use the intra campus bus shuttle (Seminole Express) to reach longer distances on main campus.

The field trips are planned in advance. Parents are informed where the children are going, what they will be doing and when they will return through the regular methods of newsletters, take-home folders, and bulletin boards—inside and outside—according to each center’s usual methods of communication. The children are closely supervised at all times. Periodically, when interest is piqued or the weather is especially inviting, there may be spontaneous excursions in and around the centers such as collecting rocks or twigs for study. There are always staff members available in the centers that know where the children are at all times. Parents are always invited to participate in the field trips.

When field trips are planned that use a mode of transportation other than walking or Seminole Express, permission is always obtained from the parent for each individual activity before the children are allowed to participate.

Special Events

A special feature of FSU Child Development Programs is the diversity of the families who participate. We invite parents or other family members to share traditions, hobbies, songs or other interests with the children in our programs. So that everyone can enjoy the enrichment activities, talk with the lead teacher in your child’s classroom to prearrange your visit. Family members are also invited to the centers on many occasions throughout the year for socials or special celebrations.

Supervision Policy

FSU Child Development Programs adhere to the NAEYC standard for teacher-child ratios. At the Infant and Toddler Center, for infants up to 12 months, the ratio is 1 teacher to 3 children. For children 12 months to 30 months, the ratio is one teacher to four children.

At the Educational Research Center for Child Development Center, for children 30 months to 60 months the ratio is 1 teacher to 9 children.

Teaching staff supervise by positioning themselves to see as many children as possible. Infants, toddlers/twos are supervised by sight and sound at all times and are positioned so they can hear and see any sleeping children for whom they are responsible. For preschoolers the teachers supervise primarily by sight and may supervise by sound for short intervals as long as the teachers check frequently on children who are out of sight.

FSU Child Development Programs expects all teaching staff to employ developmentally appropriate guidance and supervision skills. These guidance and supervision skills include awareness, positioning, scanning, redirection, and close supervision:

Awareness requires a knowledge of children, including knowing each child's range of skills, interests, and ability to interact with others and development stage. Knowledge of children helps teachers to monitor and enhance skills that promote children's positive behavior.

Positioning requires being able to see all of the children. Staff position themselves to be aware of the entire classroom and to see as many children as possible. All children are monitored by sight and sound at all times. Rule of thumb, teachers move every five minutes.

Scanning involves regularly glancing around the classroom and playground to see children's involvement and what is happening.

Redirection is a skill used as an aid in preventing undesirable and unsafe behavior. Children are redirected to other areas/activities when undesirable behavior is imminent or occurs. This skill helps ensure the safety of all children.

Close Supervision is required for all children in areas that are near where injury may occur, requires the use of all of the above methods as well as being in close proximity to the children. This is especially needed when children are waiting to be picked up due to illness or injury and need to be kept safe and comfortable.

Adapted from "Supervision Skills and Method", TMCC E.L. Cord Child Care Center, Reno, July, 2007

Guiding Children's Behavior

Guidance/Discipline Policy

The essence of parenting and teaching is to nurture and guide children at each stage of their development such that they reach their individual highest potential or growth in all areas— social, intellectual, physical, emotional—and that they become fully-functioning citizens of the world. Like adults, children make mistakes. It is through their mistakes that they learn and how we help them learn. Simply, our policy is one that seeks to promote positive behavior using methods appropriate to the age of the child. Redirection, modeling and guidance form the core of the discipline policy, not punishment. For the youngest children who are not yet using language, redirection is the most often used method. As soon as children are able to use language, they are taught to identify their feelings and use language or words to solve conflict or problems. Children then will learn how to control their own behavior and solve their own problems.

Guidance/Discipline for Toddlers and Pre-School children

Our guidance policy begins with **prevention**. Center directors and teachers carefully arrange the physical aspects of the classrooms such that the spatial arrangement, itself, helps children interact appropriately. For example, large open spaces are generally avoided to help children save their large muscle activity, such as running, for the playground. Teachers are careful and attentive observers of the children in their classroom such that they are finely attuned to each child's uniqueness. They are thus prepared to help redirect or divert as dictated by the child's personality, temperament and needs. These are the preventive measures. Then, should inappropriate behaviors manifest themselves, the teachers will first observe whatever is happening. Sometimes, just the act of **close, attentive, quiet observation** is enough to help children gain control. Next in the sequence of assisting children to maintain appropriate behavior is helping children use their language to describe the event such that other options become possible. The third step in the sequence is a more **extended use of language** in a conversation that presents other options. The fourth step again uses **language but is an intervention by the teacher** such as "We walk inside" or "Blocks are for building". The last step, if the event warrants, is **gently holding the child until self control is attained and a feeling of safety and calm returns**. Physical restraint will not be used unless it is necessary to protect the health and safety of the child or others. Parents will be contacted to pick up the child if all else fails.

In short, no harsh or physical punishments are used at the centers nor may children be spanked, slapped, pinched, shaken, teased, made fun of or threatened in any way. The centers do not use harsh or abusive tones of voice with children. Food may not be withheld as punishment nor are children punished for accidents related to toileting. Parents may not administer physical punishment in any of the centers nor on center grounds. Children are encouraged to take naps in only non-punitive and positive ways. FSU Child Development Programs reserves the right to request the withdrawal of any child in order to protect the health, safety and welfare of all those who are in our care.

Guidance/Discipline for Infants and Toddlers

The teaching staff engage infants in frequent face-to-face social interaction such as talking, cooing, repeating the sounds the infants makes, singing as well as smiling, holding, touching etc. Teachers give infants one-to-one attention when carrying out various routines such as diapering. Teachers also adjust their interactions to the child's level of arousal and immediately respond to any signs of distress such as crying by providing physical comfort and attend to any other needs for care. Teaching staff talk often with children and listen to them with their full attention and respect.

Persistent and Serious Behavior

Occasionally there will be a child whose behavior is excessively disruptive to the classroom environment or who is harmful to themselves or others. If a child becomes a threat to his/her own safety, other children's safety or staff safety, a teacher will gently hold the child until the child is able to gain control and feel safe and calm again.

If a child has frequent episodes in which he or she is a threat to others' safety the teacher, director and the parents/guardian will work together to plan an intervention that will prevent/eliminate the negative behavior. If the behavior persists and the center is unable to meet the child's needs, the family will be asked to remove the child from the center. A request for withdrawal will be the last option after all other options have been exhausted.

Children With Special Needs

The centers will make every effort to include children with special needs. Staff will assess each child on a case by case basis in cooperation with the parents/guardians and other professionals as appropriate. Every effort will be made to make reasonable accommodations and adaptations that are reasonably achievable.

Accepting children with life threatening illnesses or disabilities will be made on a case by case basis by a review committee composed of parents'/guardians, physicians, public health representatives, therapists, center director and Associate Director. Periodic reviews by this committee will assess progress, risks (self and others), staff required to take care of the child's needs.

If, after inclusion and a review of attempts at accommodation and adaptations, the center is unable to meet the needs of the children, the center reserves the right to request that the parents seek a program that does meet the needs.

For children with special needs, only staff who need to know are informed of the child's condition. The parents/guardians will be responsible for any expenses needed for observation and/or testing.

Parents' Concern About Other Children's Behavior

If you have a concern about a child other than your own, discuss your concern (s) with the child's lead teacher or the director of the center.

Biting

Especially in young children, biting is, unfortunately, common. Though our teachers use best practices to prevent biting, children occasionally do bite each other. When it happens, the area where the child was bitten is immediately washed with antiseptic soap and water. Both children, the child who was bitten and the child who did the biting are then given care. An accident/incident form is filled out and the parent of the child who was bitten is given a copy. The name of the child who did the biting will be given only to the parent of that child so that they can work with the staff to eliminate the behavior. An accident/incident form is completed and given to the parent of the child who did the biting. The lead teacher and director will work with the parents/guardians to help them form a plan to reduce any future re-occurrences. If intervention by the lead teachers in cooperation with the parents/guardians does not bring resolution and the problem continues, the directors of all the centers will be asked to help plan additional interventions. Only after all options have been exhausted will a child who bites be asked to withdraw from participation.

Admission

Eligibility

Children of FSU students are given first priority over all others on the waiting list. Priority is given to Pell grant recipients and siblings of children currently enrolled in our program. The next priority is given to FSU staff or faculty and the last priority is given to community parents.

Application

To apply for admission to our child care centers, a completed Enrollment Application form must be submitted to the FSU Child Development Programs Office. When the completed application is received in our office, the child is placed on the waiting list. The Enrollment Application form is available on our website at www.childcare.fsu.edu and may be submitted via fax at 850-644-7997 or by regular mail to FSU Child Development Programs, University Housing, 942 Learning Way, Tallahassee, FL 32306-4174.

Waiting List

One central waiting list is maintained for all centers. As the list is usually long, especially for the Infant and Toddler Child Development Center, it is important that applications are completed and submitted as early as possible. The average wait time for enrollment varies depending on parent classification (FSU student, FSU faculty/staff, community) and age of the child. As children continue to mature while on the waiting list they are automatically considered for any available space at any center for which they qualify.

Your child is placed on our waiting list **only** after we receive a fully completed application. A “wait list number” is generated for each application. This number is based solely on the date the application is received by FSU Child Development Programs. An e-mail is sent to verify receipt of the application and the wait list number. Waiting lists are purged in May of every year. Notices to confirm continued desire to remain on the waiting list are sent by e-mail with a 48-hour allowed for response. If there is no response, the child is removed from the waiting list.

Admission Procedures

When a space become available, the director of the center provides an age range for the space. A computerized system generates a list of all children that meet the age requirement. The system then assigns priority in this order: parent status (FSU students, FSU faculty/staff, and community), Pell grant recipients, siblings currently enrolled in our programs and date of application, which determines priority within each group. Beginning at the top of the list, parents are notified that a space is available for their child. *Note: Student status is verified prior to an offer of enrollment.* Parents must be enrolled and registered for class at the time the space becomes available to be eligible for the student priority.

Parents are notified, via e-mail, when a space becomes available for their child. Parents are given **48** hours to notify us of their decision to either accept or decline enrollment. If the space is declined, the child drops to the bottom of the waiting list. The date of the application will then change to the date the space was declined. If parents are unable to accept a placement due to the child not meeting eligibility requirement (i.e. not potty trained, etc.), the child will remain in the same spot on the waiting list. If parents fail to contact us within the 48-hour period, the child is removed from the waiting list.

It is the parent’s responsibility to notify the FSU Child Development Programs office of any changes in contact information. If parents cannot be reached due to invalid contact information, the child is removed from the waiting list.

Currently enrolled children take first priority for space that becomes available at the next level of care. For example, children no longer eligible for infant and toddler care have first priority for spaces that open in the preschools.

Admission

When an offer of admission is accepted, a start date is determined for the child. Parents may be allowed to delay enrollment up to 30 days to provide notice to current provider. Enrollment may **not** be delayed longer than 30 days. Parents must complete the Admission Packet prior to the child's first day of attendance.

Parents must bring to their center **before** the first day of attendance:

- (1) FSU Card
- (2) Driver's license or passport for picture identification
- (3) Cashier's receipt for registration fee
- (4) Cashier's receipt for first month's tuition payment
- (5) Copy of class schedule
- (6) Immunization Record (**must be the original form with physician's signature**)
- (7) Documentation of recent physical exam (children under school age) (**must be the original form with physician's signature**)
- (8) Child's **Birth Certificate**

Parents must complete and sign , before the first day of attendance:

- (1) Admission/Enrollment Form
- (2) Family Medical Emergency Index (**must be notarized**)
- (3) Financial Agreement
- (4) USDA food application form (required from all who participate)
- (5) Health and Safety Agreement
- (6) Discipline Policy
- (7) Release of Child from Center
- (8) Consent for Field Trips
- (9) Consent for Use of Pictures
- (10) Acknowledgement of facility as a teaching/research site
- (11) Sunscreen Consent Form
- (12) VPK Policy
- (13) Character Education Policy
- (14) Screening and Assessment Policy
- (15) Attendance Policy
- (16) Open Door and Child Access Policy
- (17) Statement of Receipt of Family Handbook and Abide by Policies

Parents will receive:

- (1) Copy of Parent Handbook on CD
- (2) Quality Childcare Brochure
- (3) Schedule of Tuition Fees for current year
- (4) 7 Super Things Brochure
- (5) NAEYC- What's Accredited
- (6) 3 Pre-Addressed Envelopes for Tuition Payments

After completing the necessary paperwork, parents need to:

- (1) Set up an appointment with your child's center director for a tour, orientation and to complete the Family Questionnaire.
- (2) Set up a time with the director to take your child for a visit to the center before the first day of attendance so that he or she can get to know the program and staff. The visits should be limited to short ones, about one-half hour. If you feel the visit needs to be extended, talk with the director of the center to avoid disruption of classroom activities.

Admission Contract

It is important that parents completely fill out all the admission materials. Since the programs are supported by a variety of funding resources, accurate data collection is vital to the accountability process and impacts continued funding.

It is the responsibility of the parents to ensure that the information in the admission documents is accurate and up-to-date, especially emergency phone numbers.

Withdrawal Procedures

A thirty day written notice must be given to avoid incurring tuition fees past the date you plan to withdraw your child. The notice **must** be in writing on the **Withdrawal Form** available at the center or at FSU Child Development Programs Office, Room 103, Askew Student Life Center, 942 Learning Way. It **must** be signed and time/date verified by a program staff member to be valid. Other notifications such as verbal communication with a staff member will not be considered valid notices. Once a withdrawal form has been submitted, changes to an earlier date will not be accepted. **Failure to give the required 30 day notice will result in monetary charges for a full month's tuition irrespective of whether the child attends or not.** This allows the centers and families adequate time to prepare for the child's departure from the center and new families adequate time to enroll. You must inform the director of the center if your child will be out for a period exceeding one month. Should the child not attend for a period exceeding one month without communication with the center director, enrollment will be cancelled.

Withdrawal packets are available at each of the centers and at the FSU Child Development Programs Office, located in the Askew Student Life Center, Room 103. The withdrawal packs contain a Withdrawal Notice form, a withdrawal checklist, and information about the Leon County public school system. When the completed withdrawal form is received, the parent is sent via e-mail a link to a web-based (SurveyMonkey) exit survey. This provides each family an opportunity to give feedback about the program at the close of their participation.

Changes in Family Schedule

No refunds, prorates or credit is given to accommodate individual family vacations, changes in family schedules, or absences due to illness or injury. In short, by enrolling your child you are agreeing to the monthly tuition fee for as long as your child is enrolled, irrespective of the actual number of hours you and your child use the service.

Termination from Participation

Every effort will be made to prevent the notice of termination of a child from center participation. FSU Child Development Programs reserves the right to give notice of termination of enrollment under these conditions:

- (1) Tuition payments are two months behind and no payment plan has been arranged.
- (2) Lack of follow through on special arrangements for payment.
- (3) Failure to adhere to policies and procedures as communicated in the parent handbook.
- (4) The program is unable to meet the developmental needs of the child.
- (5) Consistent behavioral problems that result from failure to obtain requested child guidance evaluation(s)
- (6) The child's behavior threatens the health and safety of him or herself, the other children or staff of the center.
- (7) The parent or guardian exhibits behavior which is detrimental to the health and well-being of the children and staff in a classroom or negatively interferes with the normal functioning of the class room.
- (8) Parental disputes between divorced parents/guardians that become administratively disruptive to the center.

If the center requests the withdrawal of the child within 30 days, parents are responsible for one month's tuition, irrespective of whether the child participates or not. The centers reserve the right to request immediate withdrawal if there is a threat to the health and safety of those in the center.

Operating Policies

Hours of Operation

ERCCD is open Monday through Friday 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 P.M. The Infant Toddler Center is open Monday through Friday 8:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. The Starlight Evening Programs is open Monday through Thursday 3:15 P.M. to 10:00 P.M. Funding resources do not permit extending hours of operation.

University Holidays and Closings

All FSU Child Development Programs are open when FSU classes are in session i.e. we operate on the academic calendar. Specifically, the University is closed Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day and the Friday after, Christmas or New Year's Day as well as the Fall, Spring and Summer breaks. To learn the specific dates these holidays and breaks occur you can visit the registrar's web site at <http://registrar.fsu.edu/>. Although professional staff are in the centers during the breaks preparing for the next semester's work, the centers are not open to care for children.

Emergency Closings

From time to time (especially during hurricane season June – November), severe weather may prompt University officials to close all operations. The FSU home page at <http://www.fsu.edu/> disseminates emergency information that can be accessed 24 hours. There is usually a special icon added immediately preceding (as in threat of hurricane), during, and immediately after an emergency to give everyone needed information about an emergency situation. Or, you may call 644-INFO (644-4636) for updates. In the case of an emergency that does not involve the entire University but does effect the center (s), it is at the discretion of the director to contact families to pick up their children (for example, the loss of utilities). Each center's voice mail message will convey any additional information about emergency closings.

In the event any center needs to be evacuated, the center director will follow the direction of the FSU Police.

Arrival and Departure Procedures

It is important that parents adhere to the procedures for bringing children to school and picking them up as it ensures their health and safety.

Upon arrival at the center, parents should accompany their child to the classroom or playground where they will begin the day's activities. Make sure you sign your child in and the time you arrived as well as sign out when you depart for the day. **This is a state law requirement.** Greeting your child's teacher(s) when you arrive or depart lets them know when your child is present in the center and gives you an opportunity to discuss any changes in eating or sleeping patterns or any other news about the home that might help them understand your child. If you arrive or depart during times when the teacher(s) are engaged with the group or other children, write a note for them or contact them later in the day when the children are napping.

To support your child's burgeoning sense of daily, predictable, and secure routines and the learning experiences that are planned for your child and the other children, please plan to arrive in time to help your child settle into the center before the first activities, i.e. before 9:00 A.M. For VPK participants it is important to review the attendance policy in a previous section of this handbook

In the afternoon or evening, plan your day to arrive in time to collect your child's belongings and time to "take leave" before the centers closes. If someone other than yourself is going to pick up your child, make sure they are on the authorization list for your child to be released and they bring a picture I.D. to show to the lead teacher. No child will be released to an unauthorized person.

Open Door Policy and Child Access

FSU Child Development Programs understands the value of the parent and child relationship as the family serves as the child's first teacher and the bonds of a child and their family is crucial to healthy development. It is for this reason that FSU Child Development Programs maintains an open door policy for all the families of the children served.

Parents and family members have open access to their children who are enrolled in the program at all times. The only exception is if there is legal documentation on file in the center that forbids access. Parents of children enrolled in our programs are **not** required to call prior to arriving or entering the program and may visit unannounced at any time during center operating hours.

Ongoing communication is essential between parents and the program to ensure optimal outcomes for children. This communication can take place via face to face conversations, e-mails or telephone calls. Other forms of communication and access include but are not limited to parent-teacher logs, parent conferences, parent message boards or center literature. Conferences can be initiated by parents/family or by staff of the program.

Families are welcome to visit anytime. If the visit is stressful to the child, a conference with the family may be needed to discuss the affects of the visit on the child.

Families are welcome to bring their children to attend the program at times that supports the family. However, parents must be aware of the impact of missing certain aspects of the programs. For example, if you bring your child in every day at nap time and pick them up in the afternoon, your child may be missing key curriculum experiences. If you bring your child in after breakfast is served, you will need to feed your child breakfast at home etc. It is important to discuss with your child's teacher or the center director your preferred pick up and drop off schedules so that you can fully understand curricular, developmental, and financial impact that accompanies those decisions. While you are welcome to come and go according to your family's convenience, we want you to be informed as possible about the impact of those decisions.

FSU Child Development Programs will make every effort possible to ensure the access of the child to their family at the family's convenience. In order to do this we ask parents to adhere to the following:

- Family members must be given written permission to have access to the children on the enrollment/admission materials.
- Non-family members must have written permission to have access to remove the child from the program on the enrollment/admission materials.
- If the presence of the family member creates a stressful environment, a conference will be held to discuss the impact of the visit and to reach a resolution.
- Sensitivity to the developmental needs of the children and the schedules at pick up, drop off and visits.
- Children dropped off after mealtimes are not eligible for that meal service (please ensure that you feed your child prior to entering the program in these cases).
- If parents are to be denied access, there must be legal documentation on file in the center that clearly prohibits access. For example, in some divorce proceedings or protective restraining orders prohibit access.

Late Pick Up Policy

Parents are expected to pick up their child a few minutes **before** closing time. A charge will be assessed at the rate of **\$1.00 per minute for late pickup, beginning the 1st minute following closing**. Charges are assessed when incurred, due upon receipt, and payable at University Housing. If the child has not been picked up one hour after closing and parents or emergency contacts cannot be located, FSU Police Department will be contacted for their assistance.

If you know that you are going to be late, please call the center to let the staff know. The late charges will still apply. The director will be apprised of families who are consistently late. The director will then contact the family for a conference to work out a solution.

Payment is late if not received by University Housing by the 10th of each month. After the 10th day a late fee of \$10.00 will be charged per occurrence.

FSU Police will be contacted for their assistance in the event that a child is left one hour beyond closing time and whose parents have not contacted the center. If no contact is made within that period of time, the staff, will take the child to the FSU Police Department located at the corner of Jefferson and Woodward. A note will be left on the door of the center to that effect. Parents are responsible for all late fees for the entire period that staff stay with the child. This action will be taken only as a last resort.

Absences

By enrolling your child in either of the FSU Child Development Centers you are agreeing to pay the monthly tuition fee for as long as your child is enrolled, irrespective of the actual number of hours your child uses the service.

No refunds, prorates or credit is given to accommodate individual family vacations, changes in family schedules, or absences due to illness or injury.

You must inform the director of the center if your child will be out for any period of time so that the teachers can plan center activities accordingly. Should the child not attend for a period exceeding one month without communication with the center director, enrollment will be cancelled. Tuition fees are assessed until enrollment is cancelled via the completion of the Withdrawal Notice form. The attendance policy is detailed in another portion of this handbook.

Guests

Children who are not currently enrolled such as siblings or alumni are welcome to visit the centers for short periods of time (defined as no more than 1 hour) in the company of their parents.

Babysitting

The teachers in our centers are professionals or are training to become professionals. As such, we expect all teachers, observers, interns and other student participants in our centers to abide by the Code of Ethical Conduct as set forth by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. This principle reads “We shall not use our relationship with a family for private advantage or personal gain, or enter into relationship with family members that might impair our effectiveness in working with children”.

We ask for your cooperation and support by refraining from asking any of our teaching staff or students who may be working in the center to provide care for your children at any time other than when they are in the centers. We understand the level of comfort that you feel with the teaching staff and how hard it is sometimes to find quality after hours care; but, we also know that you expect excellence and high quality from each of our centers and we expect it of ourselves. Your support helps us achieve those goals.

Pets

From time to time our centers may include animals as part of the curriculum. If your child has any allergies to pets, please indicate those on your enrollment/admission materials and talk with your director.

Bicycle Helmets

Centers that incorporate activities that include bicycle or tricycle riding will provide the helmets, one for each bicycle. If you would like to provide a helmet for your child, talk with the director of your child's center.

Picture Taking

Parents may not take pictures (still or video) of children in the centers without the express permission of the child's parent.

Transportation

FSU Child Development Programs do not provide transportation to and from the center nor are staff members permitted to provide transportation for children to and from the centers.

Religious Practice Policy

FSU Child Development Programs, as a public university, does not provide religious instruction or worship. The criteria and standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children are used as guidelines for selection of all educational materials. This includes but is not limited to the selection of children's books, music or other education materials purchased by or for use in centers.

Tuition and Payment Policies

Registration Fee

A \$10.00 non-refundable registration fee and the first month's tuition is due at the time of registration. Thereafter, the annual registration fee (\$10.00) is due September 1.

Your financial obligation begins when you accept the enrollment by completing and signing the enrollment/admission agreement. Your signature on the enrollment agreement **obligates you for one month's tuition fees** whether your child attends or not.

Sibling Discounts

A 15% discount will be given to the second child in a family attending any one of FSU Child Development Programs. A 25% discount will be given to the third in a family attending any one of FSU Child Development Programs. The discount is given on the rate for that center's fee schedule that the second and third sibling attends. No discounts apply if the first child is enrolled in the VPK program.

Payment

It is important to understand that the monthly tuition that you pay Florida State University is to reserve your child's space for participation in the center. The tuition is calculated on the basis of 44 weeks of service divided into 11 equal payments. When the fees are calculated no charges are made for the days that the University is closed (i.e. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day and the Friday after, Christmas or New Year's Day as well as the Fall, Spring and Summer breaks). No refunds, prorates or credit is given to accommodate individual family vacations, changes in family schedules, or absences due to illness or injury. In short, by enrolling your child you are agreeing to the monthly tuition fee for as long as your child is enrolled, irrespective of the actual number of hours you and your child use the service. Tuition is **automatically raised to the community rate when a parent is not enrolled as a degree-seeking student at Florida State University**. For example, parents who enroll in enrichment courses such as swimming, tennis, or chorus that are not part of a course of studies leading to a degree will be assessed the community rate.

Tuition is payable in advance, without demand or billing at the University Housing Office on or before the **first day of each calendar month**, except for the month of August. Tuition is late if not **received** in University Housing by the 10th of the month. After the tenth day of each month (except August), unpaid tuition fees are delinquent and an additional \$10 late fee will be charged. Payments can be made in person at the cashier's counter in University Housing, 942 Learning Way, by mail, or in the night deposit box (no cash) at the North end of the Askew Student Life Center (on the left at the third step from the top of the stairs).

The cashier's counter is open from 8:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. Monday through Friday. Checks, cash, money order or FSU card payments are accepted. Your check **must** have your child's name, the **student** parent's name and **student** parent's student ID number on the check itself in order for the correct account to be credited. Your cancelled check is your receipt. If you pay in person, you will be given a cashier's receipt. Returned checks incur a \$25.00 service charge. Both the returned check and the service charge will appear on FSU's accounts receivable system. The university will not honor checks for individuals who "have personally tendered a dishonored check".

Tuition rates are assessed according to parent status. To receive the full-time student rate, undergraduate parents must be registered for a **minimum of 12 hours**. For graduate student parents to receive the full-time student rate, they must be registered for a **minimum of 9 semester hours**. During the summer semester, if a student parent is not enrolled, to receive the full-time student rate during the summer semester, the parent must provide documentation of full-time enrollment in the previous Spring semester **and** full-time enrollment in the coming fall semester. This documentation must be submitted **prior to the beginning** of the summer semester. The part-time student rate is assessed to parents who are taking less than a full load of credits.

Late Charges

Unpaid, past due accounts, including any late fees, are placed on the University-wide accounts receivable system as a delinquent account for collection of the full amount due. This **may result in a registration and/or transcript block**. Parents will be asked to withdraw the child from the program if tuition is two months past due. Once the child has been withdrawn from the center as a result of failure to pay, parents must prepay the entire tuition for the semester to re-enroll their child.

Change in Tuition Rates

Each year the Board of Directors reviews the tuition fees. Parents should expect some level of increase each year to cover the costs of inflation. Any increase in tuition fees is effective September 1 of each year.

Partial Month Tuition Payments

If a child's enrollment date begins in the middle of a month, the first month's tuition is prorated on the basis of 1/22 of the monthly rate. Each month will be considered as 22 days for the purpose of tuition computations.

Special Arrangements for Tuition Payment

For parents who prefer to have tuition payments deducted from financial aid, you must complete the necessary paperwork in the University Housing, Business Office for the deductions to be made. This must be done **each semester**. Parents who encounter extreme financial hardship or are finding it difficult to pay the monthly tuition fee should contact the University Housing Business office immediately to discuss a payment plan.

Special Student Status

Parents who are enrolled as special students may receive student rates for two semesters or 12 hours whichever comes first. Community tuition rates will automatically be assessed until the degree-seeking status is obtained.

Eligibility for Student Tuition Rates

To be eligible for full or part-time student rates, a parent must be prepared to provide a copy of their Program of Study that documents that the courses required to pursue the chosen degree and must be prepared to provide documentation from the parent's academic department that there is reasonable progress toward the attainment of a degree. If documentation is not provided, the community tuition rate is assessed. In other words, just registering for a course at FSU does not qualify a parent to be eligible for the student tuition rate. The parent must be degree-seeking.

Health and Safety

Illness Policy

Should your child become ill while at the center, they will be removed from contact with other children and the staff will call you to take your child home. **It is expected that the child will be on his way home within an hour of calling the parents.** If the parents cannot be reached, the center director will call the emergency contacts listed on the release form. It is important that emergency contacts are local ones i.e. in Tallahassee or within less than an hour's drive. If you are new to Tallahassee and have not had a chance to make friends or have family nearby, as soon as you do have a local emergency contact, let your director know. It is a good idea to think about and have a plan for care on those days when your child is ill since he or she will not be able to be at the center. Let your child's teacher know if you have noted a change that may indicate the beginning signs of illness so the teacher can be especially watchful that day. You will be called if:

- Your child has a fever, 100 degrees or above
- Your child has 2 loose stools within the day
- Your child has a rash
- Your child is vomiting
- Your child has pink eye (conjunctivitis)
- Your child has lice
- Your child has any discharge from eyes, ears or nose
- Your child has a persistent cough
- Your child has a sore throat
- Your child has any other sign or symptom of illness

Your child may return to the center:

- 24 hours after fever is gone **without the use of fever reducers**
- 24 hours after first medication is administered for strep throat
- 24 hours after insecticidal shampoo has been applied and all lice, lice eggs and egg cases removed for lice.
- Eye(s) completely clear (no discharge) after pink eye
- No discharge, no fever and all sores scabbed over in chicken pox
- Five days after rash in measles
- No fever and 9 days after swelling began with mumps

FSU Child Development Programs reserves the right to request that any child who appears too ill to participate fully in the program or who may place other children at risk of exposure to illness to remain out of the school until fully recovered. Parents may be assessed the costs of one-to-one care for ill children who are ill and who have not picked up their child within one hour of contact.

Communicable Disease Policy

State law does not allow children to remain in a center if the child has a communicable disease or the symptoms of a communicable disease. Parents must notify the director of the center within 24 hours if the child has a suspected or known communicable disease. Parents of all the children will

be notified about any incidence of communicable diseases in the center, without divulging the child's name who contracted the illness. By the usual means of communication the parents will be informed about the nature of illness, its signs, symptoms and other precautionary/prevention/palliative measures that may be taken.

Medication

Staff may administer medication to your child provided the "Authorization for Medication" form has been completed by the parent. No medication nor medicinal herb can be administered unless this form has been completed. Prescription and non-prescription medication must be in the original container. Prescription medication must have a label stating the name of the physician, child's name, name of the medication, and medication directions. All prescription and non-prescription medication will be dispensed only according to the written directions on the prescription label or printed manufacturer's label. The dispensing of non-prescription medicines must be accompanied by a physician's note along with the correct dosage. Non-prescription medicines should not be placed in your child's backpacks or school bags and brought to the center.

Medication Authorization Forms

In order for the staff to administer medication to your child, you must complete the "Authorization for Medication" form. A form must be completed for each medication and each new series. It is important to indicate the dates when the medication is to start and when it is to finish. If your child receives medication on a regular basis or daily basis for an extended period of time, you will need to complete a Long Form Authorization for Medication.

First Aid

Scratches, minor cuts or insect bites will be treated with soap and water only. Band-aids will be used as necessary. If more serious treatment is needed parents will be notified. All staff are trained in CPR and First Aid.

Injury at the Center

If your child is injured at the center, an accident report will be completed by your child's teacher and a copy will be given to you for your signature. A signed copy will then be placed in your child's file. If the injury is serious, appropriate emergency care will be administered, emergency personnel summoned, if needed, and you will be contacted by phone.

Insurance

Parent's insurance is the primary coverage for your child. The centers carry accident insurance for accidents that occur on center grounds or while on field trips but should be considered supplemental to the family's insurance policy.

Emergency Procedures

In the rare event of a medical emergency, emergency personnel are summoned through the 911 system. Staff are not allowed to transport children when there is a medical emergency. FSU University Police are typically the first responders in any emergency situation on the University campus and coordinate the assistance of other non-university emergency personnel as needed.

Immunizations

Every child who participates in our child development centers is required to present and keep current a State of Florida Student Examination Form and Immunization Record on file. Both forms need to be the original forms signed by the physician.

Special Needs

For children with significant special needs, see the section “Guiding Children’s Behavior” Children with Special needs.

Diapering

The Infant Toddler Center follows accreditation and state licensing requirements for sanitary disposal of soiled diapers i.e. the soiled diapers are held in a closed container out of the reach of children and the diaper changing area is disinfected after every use.

Toilet Training

Children are toilet trained when they are ready to use the toilet on their own within their physiological and emotional time and needing little assistance from adults. A child is truly toilet trained when your child can tell you what they need to do not what they have already done. Children MUST be toilet trained to participate at the Educational Research Center for Child Development as licensing requirements do not allow participation of children who are not. When children are ready, staff in the Infant and Toddler Child Development Center provide the support and nurturance to help them master this important developmental milestone. For parents who have children in the Infant Toddler Center, please feel free to talk about your child’s toileting needs with the lead teacher or director.

Child Abuse Policy

All caregivers of children are required by Florida state law to report all suspected incidences of child neglect or abuse.

Children's Personal Belongings

Toys From Home

Except for sharing a special “treasure” at circle time, we ask that children not bring toys from home to the center. The toys are easily lost or broken and young children, developmentally, have not reached the stage where sharing is comfortable. So that we may teach children to cooperate and interact positively, please leave toys such as guns or knives that tend to promote aggressive behavior at home. Your child's teacher can recommend toys or treasures that would be appropriate for sharing.

Clothing

Comfortable, sturdy clothes that are easily taken off are the best clothes for participating in the centers. Sturdy shoes that are easily removed are the best choices. For safety's sake, children should wear shoes that are closed both on the toe and heel as well as fit snugly without binding the feet. Since children are active learners, “dressy” clothes are likely to get soiled or damaged so it is best to not wear them to school. Children should always have clothing appropriate for the weather, light clothing in the spring, summer and fall and heavier clothing during the short winter season.

All children should have an extra set of seasonal clothing including socks and underwear. All clothing should be marked with your child's name.

Lost and Found

Any personal belongings that cannot be identified will be placed in a Lost and Found box. If no one claims any of the items at the end of each semester, they will be discarded or donated to Goodwill Industries.

Napping Accoutrements

All children must have a small blanket or beach towel and/or a small pillow to use at nap time. Make sure the blanket and pillow have the child's name marked on them. All should be taken home at the end of each week for laundering. Large bed-sized pillows and blankets cannot be accommodated due the lack of storage as well as health and safety concerns.

Food and Nutrition

Food Provided by the Centers

The centers provide breakfast, lunch and snacks each day. The centers participate in the federal Child Care Food Program. Participation ensures that the meals provided meet or exceed the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) standards for good nutrition and that the centers receive reimbursements for a portion of the cost of food. The food application that you filled out with the loose enrollment materials helps determine how much the centers are reimbursed. The menus follow the United States Department of Agriculture guidelines for well-balanced and nutritious meals. The menus are posted in each center weekly on the bulletin boards in the classrooms and front offices as well as in the monthly newsletter, *Little Notes*. If your child has special dietary needs, the center must have a physician's note on file in order to provide accommodations.

Food from Home

Occasionally, if a child has a very limited range of tolerated foods, special arrangements may be made with the Director for meals to be provided from home. **The Center must have a physician's note on file in order to accommodate any special arrangements.** Meals provided from home must meet the USDA guidelines for nutritionally sound and well-balanced meals. If the food is provided from home, it must be provided consistently every day and must be labeled with the child's name and date. As the centers promote healthy eating practices, please do not send chips, snack food, sweet desserts or carbonated beverages to school with your children.

Food brought from home for sharing among the children must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers.

Communication Between Family and Centers

Good communication between families and centers is essential to maintain the vitality and the level of service that it is our intention to offer. There are many avenues for maintaining this connection:

- (1) One to one conversations with teachers/director at daily arrivals and departures.
- (2) Telephone conversations with teachers/directors at mutually convenient times.
- (3) Conference appointments at mutually convenient times with teachers/director to ensure plenty of time to talk over matters of interest or concern.
- (4) E-mail conversations when time constraints limit direct conversations.
- (5) Written notes/letters.

Official Notices

Changes in policies and procedures and official notices are communicated via the monthly newsletter and may be accessed at www.childcare.fsu.edu. Links to the site are sent each month via e-mail to the parent's e-mail of record. **Each parent is responsible for its contents as well as for notifying the central office in the Askew Student Life Center if the link is not received or the e-mail address is incorrect.**

Newsletter

A monthly newsletter is sent via e-mail link to all parents who have children enrolled in FSU Child Development Programs. The newsletter contains news about activities of the centers, upcoming events, parenting tips, recognitions etc. Parents are welcome to contribute to the newsletter. We especially encourage parents from other countries to share their traditions and celebrations. If you have something you would like to contribute, talk with the director of the center. They will give you the deadline for the next issue.

Take Home Folders/Cubbies

Each center has a designated place for parents to check every day for any communications about the day's activities. A good time to check this "special communication place" is when you are signing your child out at the end of the day. This way you will not miss any important communication.

Staff Mail Boxes

Every staff member in each of the centers has a mail box. If you would like to leave them a note, put it in their mail box or give it to the center director.

Bulletin Boards

Each center has bulletin boards where menus are posted, children's art work is displayed, parenting tips are displayed or other items of interest. Check them frequently to stay in tune with the happenings in your child's center.

Anti-Bias Policy

We encourage and support cultural diversity, gender equality, non-violence, and peaceful conflict resolution throughout every aspect of our programs. Our goal is to teach children to resist the bias that inundates much of today's popular culture. We believe that children can be empowered to reject negative stereotypes of race, gender, religion and physical capabilities with the help of their parents and teachers. We ask for your support and your feedback to help us ensure that we are living up to our highest standards.

Surveys to Assess Programs

Formal assessments are done each year the first week in April. All parents receive a program assessment survey via e-mail or hard copy if e-mail is not working. This is one way you tell us how we are doing. We invite your candid feedback and use it to help us get better at what we do. Also, each family receives an exit survey when their participation comes to a close. It is also sent via e-mail. Both surveys ask similar questions, one gives us data on a specific date every year and the other gives us feedback all year long. We welcome your feedback at any time.

Parents as Partners

It is only through a strong partnership between parents and teachers that we can maintain the quality early learning environment for your child. You are your child's first teacher and know your child best.

Parent participation is welcome in the classroom. If you are unsure about how you might contribute, talk with your child's lead teacher or the director. They will be more than happy to share ideas and ways to make your contribution. A more detailed description of our open door and access policy is located in an earlier portion of this handbook.

Parent meetings are held once a semester and everyone is encouraged to attend. Center directors try to schedule them at convenient times so that as many parents as possible can participate.

Occasionally, while volunteering in the classroom, you may have a concern about how something is done or about a particular child's behavior. It is best that you not intervene yourself; rather, discuss your concern with the lead teacher or director who will find the most appropriate solution.

Grievance Procedure

We have a multi-step process to assist parents with resolving any problem or concern.

- Step 1. If the problem is with an individual, talk it through with that person directly as soon as is practical.
- Step 2. If the problem is not resolved with the person directly, then discuss it with your child's lead teacher, if appropriate.
- Step 3. If the problem remains unresolved, talk with the Director of your center.
- Step 4. If the problem still is unresolved, prepare a written complaint and submit to the Associate Director who will respond within 30 days.

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