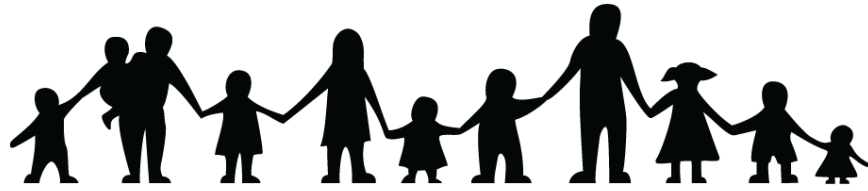


GROWING MINDS ARE THE KEY TO OUR FUTURE!



ASSOCIATED STUDENTS, INC. | SACRAMENTO STATE
CHILDREN'S CENTER

Parent Handbook for ASI State Funded Families

Associated Students Children's Center
6000 J Street
Sacramento, CA 95819-6037
(916) 278- 6216
Fax (916) 278-4875

<http://www.asi.csus.edu/programs/childrens-center/>

Days of Operation

Monday through Friday

Operating Hours

Fall, Winter & Spring Semesters 7am – 6pm

Revised May 2018



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WELCOME!

The Associated Students Children's Center welcomes your family to ours. We hope the Center becomes an extension of your family filled with warmth, comfort, security, and a love for children. The staff look forward to learning more about you and the dreams you hold for your child(ren). We strive to build strong, respectful, lasting relationships through partnerships, collaboration, and communication.

OUR HISTORY

The Children's Center was founded by student parents and started in 1971 to meet the needs of student parents on campus. It started with a small portable building on the outskirts of campus. With the growing demand for care, they added a second portable building. The demand for care continued to grow so the students funded and built the large 6-classroom building with a gorgeous atrium style interior in a grove of redwood trees to serve the growing population in 1988. Again, the demand for care continued so Sac State students funded a second building adding 3 more classrooms in 1992. We achieved national accreditation in 2006 by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), to deliver high quality child care services to our Sac State community.

TODAY

The Center is a student-service oriented child development program owned and operated by Associated Students, Inc. located on the Sacramento State campus. Our year round program serves Sac State students, faculty, and staff with students having priority. We serve children from 6 months of age through Kindergarten. We are funded by Associated Students, California Department of Education, and parent fees. Our meals are regulated by USDA and funded by the Child and Adult Food Program (CACFP).

Our program endeavors to be a nature-oriented place that feels like home. Children are free to play, explore, express their thoughts and feelings, discover their preferences and interests, and learn at their own pace. We view every routine, activity, and interaction as an opportunity for learning. The staff have planned/structured activities while embracing times when children's interest spark a teachable moment. The Center plans special events throughout the year to bring families and staff together.

The rest of this handbook will provide you with information about our program and administrative details that are important to our collaborative relationship. It will answer most of your questions about the day-to-day operations of the Center. Please read it carefully and refer to it as needed. We have posted it on our website at www.asi.csus.edu/children for easy access.

Again, from all of us at Associated Students we welcome you to the Children's Center and we hope you feel right at home.

Table of Contents

MISSION STATEMENT	6
CHILDREN CENTER'S PHILOSOPHY.....	6
NON-DISCRIMINATION AND AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY	6
ENROLLMENT	7
ENROLLMENT PRIORITIES	7
WAITING LIST PROCEDURE	7
SUBSIDY ENROLLMENT PROCESS	7
NOTICE OF ACTION AND PARENT RIGHT TO APPEAL	8
HOW TO QUALIFY FOR THE SUBSIDY PROGRAM	8
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	8
NEED REQUIREMENTS	9
FAMILY FEE ASSESSMENT PROCESS	9
PAYMENTS.....	10
CONTINUING SUBSIDIZED CHILD CARE	10
TERMINATION OF SUBSIDY SERVICES.....	10
PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN.....	10
FULL INCLUSION FOR CHILDREN.....	10
REGISTRATION MATERIALS - CONFIDENTIALITY	11
ORIENTATIONS TO THE CENTER	11
SIBLING ENROLLMENT	11
DROP-IN CHILD CARE	11
SCHEDULE CHANGES.....	11
FINALS WEEK, SPRING BREAK, WINTER SESSION.....	11
TRANSITIONING TO A NEW CLASSROOM.....	12
RECOMMENDED SCHEDULING FOR INFANT/TODDLER/TWO YEAR OLDS	12
GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE	12
DOCUMENTATION OF ATTENDENCE	12
AUTHORIZATION FOR THE PICK-UP OF CHILDREN.....	12
SIGNING IN AND OUT	12
ABSENCES	12
ABSENCE POLICY	13
LATE PICK-UP AND EARLY DROP OFF DURING OPERATING HOURS.....	13
LATE PICK UP AFTER CENTER CLOSURE	14
SUSPENSION POLICY	14
TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT	14
UNIFORM COMPLAINT PROCEDURE.....	15
EMERGENCIES, HEALTH AND SAFETY	15
CELL PHONE USE.....	15
EVACUATION POLICY	15

FIREARMS AND WEAPONS POLICY.....	16
ACCIDENT AND ILLNESS POLICY	16
UNUSUAL INCIDENT REPORTS.....	16
HEALTH/ILLNESS/WELLNESS.....	16
MEDICATIONS.....	17
SMOKING ON CENTER PREMISES.....	17
GETTING TO KNOW OUR CENTER	18
STAFFING.....	18
OPEN DOOR POLICY.....	18
GROUP CHILD CARE	18
COMMUNICATION.....	18
DAILY COMMUNICATION	18
WRITTEN INFORMATION.....	19
PARENT CONFERENCES.....	19
COMPLAINTS	19
UNIFORM COMPLAINT PROCEDURE.....	19
CHILDREN’S BELONGINGS.....	19
WHAT TO BRING FOR YOUR CHILD.....	19
CLOTHING	20
WHAT NOT TO BRING INTO THE PROGRAM.....	20
CUBBIES.....	20
NAME TAGS	20
ART FOLDERS.....	20
CHILDREN’S ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE FROM PROGRAM	20
ARRIVAL	20
DEPARTURE	21
PARENT INVOLVEMENT.....	21
INFORMAL INVOLVEMENT.....	21
FORMAL INVOLVEMENT	22
PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (PAC)	22
PARENT SUPPORT	22
YOUR CHILD’S DAY	22
NUTRITION	22
REST TIME	23
CAMPUS OUTINGS/FIELD TRIPS.....	23
SPECIAL EVENTS – CENTER WIDE.....	23
DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL GUIDANCE.....	23
A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT	23
ASSESSMENT	24
SOCIAL GUIDANCE.....	24

BITING	25
CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PROBLEM SOLVING	25
SWEARING	25
APOLOGIES.....	25
LABELING BEHAVIOR—NOT THE CHILD	25
SHARING AS A SOCIAL SKILL.....	26
TOILET LEARNING.....	26
BIRTHDAYS	26
HOLIDAY AND CELEBRATIONS POLICY	27
NONDISCRIMINATION / CIVIL RIGHTS STATEMENT	27

MISSION STATEMENT

The Associated Students Children's Center supports the academic and personal endeavors of the Sac State community through its commitment to serve the needs of families and promote educational experiences in the area of early childhood education. Priority enrollment goes to Sac State students.

The Children's Center is committed to:

- Affordable, dependable and convenient child care for Sac State student families.
- Student employment and internships, which provide experience and build knowledge in early care and education, administration and leadership.
- Involvement with the campus community, valuing our on-going collaborations with faculty, staff, student affairs, and a variety of campus departments and groups.
- An exemplary program, which models current principles and practices in Child Development.
- An environment, which celebrates diversity and respects individual needs and goals by providing an inclusive program.

CHILDREN CENTER'S PHILOSOPHY

The Children's Center is structured not as an institution but rather as an extension of the family—a support system existing in a home-oriented environment to meet a child's emotional, physical, intellectual, and social growth needs. We consider ourselves a family support service, dedicated to nurturing healthy people.

We believe children and adults learn best where they are honored and respected. In our program, each person is a learner, each a teacher, each a valued and unique individual. Our environment is designed to support the family and teachers through collaborative efforts and best practices aligned with today's current practices in early childhood education and care. The Children's Center refrains from involvement in any religious instruction and/or worship.

We value community involvement, welcome participation, and involvement from families, friends, and the campus community. The Children's Center strives to be an active part of ongoing events and activities around Sacramento State. Through our continuous involvement and collaborations, we believe our children and their families develop an awareness and better appreciation of our diverse community.

NON-DISCRIMINATION AND AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY

The Associated Students Children's Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. We are an equal opportunity employer and child care provider.

ENROLLMENT

The Children Center's regulating agencies are:

LICENSING AGENCY
River City Regional Office
Dept. of Social Services
Community Care Licensing, Div.
2525 Natomas Park Drive, Suite 250
Sacramento, CA 95833

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Early Education and Support Division
1430 N St. Suite 6308
Sacramento, CA 95814

The ASI Children's Center provides subsidized child care to eligible families through funding from the California Department of Education. The center has two subsidy contracts, a General Child Care Program (CTTR) and a State Preschool Program (CSPP). Children of Sacramento State student parents who qualify according to CDE requirements are eligible for subsidy.

ENROLLMENT PRIORITIES

We fill available openings in each contract/age group based on the following criteria:

- Siblings of currently enrolled subsidy children receive priority then;
- Child Protective Service/At Risk referrals;
- Rank level based on income, lowest income first;
- If income rankings are equal for more than one applicant, applicants with special needs child are admitted first, then by application date, earliest first;
- CSPP only: all eligible four year olds are accepted before eligible three year olds.

WAITING LIST PROCEDURE

Families that are interested in enrolling must complete a waiting list application. Every August 1 we open a new waiting list for the next calendar year. Applications are placed on the eligibility list based on the order stated above in the section *Enrollment Priorities*. Parents are responsible for informing the center of changes to their contact information. If we cannot reach you or you do not respond to us within the stated timelines, your application will become inactive and we will contact the next applicant on the list.

SUBSIDY ENROLLMENT PROCESS

An email will be sent to the next family on the waiting list to inquire if they are still interested in applying for subsidy assistance. Interested families will receive instructions for gathering and completing the necessary documents to verify their student status, verify their income, and complete an enrollment packet. If it appears that they may qualify for assistance, and rank next, they will be scheduled for an eligibility appointment. Center administration will assist them with the subsidy application during the appointment. The application must be signed and dated by the parent and authorized staff.

Documents you will be asked to bring to the appointment:

- Reliable documentation indicating the relationship of the child to the parent for all the children in the household;
- Proof of CA residency;
- Employer's name and contact information for all adults working in the household;
- Paycheck stubs for the last full month of employment for all adults working in the household;
- Documents showing any additional income received in the household.

Documents you will be asked to print at the appointment:

- Class schedule print outs (List view and weekly view for all parents enrolled in school);
- Indicate any study hours or work hours for which you will be requesting childcare;
- Financial Aid Award Summary for the current academic year (itemized list of grants/loans accepted);
- Financial Aid Budget Breakdown for the current academic year (estimate of the cost of tuition and books).

NOTICE OF ACTION AND PARENT RIGHT TO APPEAL

You will receive a Notice of Action at initial enrollment to approve or deny services. Notice of Actions will also be issued at recertification, to update your file, or when your family fee is delinquent. A Notice of Action may also inform you of pending termination of services. The NOA will provide the details of the pending action and instructions for your parental right to appeal the actions being taken. You must follow the instructions and timeline for the appeal process at the center first. If you do not agree with the program's decision, you may appeal at the CDE level. The parent appeal pamphlet can be found at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/parentappealinformation.asp>

HOW TO QUALIFY FOR THE SUBSIDY PROGRAM

Families are required to document that they have a need for child care and that the family is income eligible based on the subsidy guidelines. Families will need to disclose how many people are in the household and provide supporting documentation for their family size.

The number of children shall be documented by providing at least one of the following:

- Birth Certificate/record
- Child custody court order
- Adoption documents
- Foster Care placement records
- School or medical records
- County welfare department records
- Other reliable documentation indicating the relationship of the child to the parent

Families will also need to disclose the number of adults in the household. If you are the only parent signing the application, you will need to document the presence or absence of the second parent. The details of how to document this will be discussed at the eligibility meeting.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Families must be income eligible to qualify for subsidy assistance. The family's eligibility is determined by the total countable income of the individuals counted in the family size. Examples of countable income include:

- Gross wages or salaries, commissions, tips, overtime, bonuses, gambling, lottery winnings
- Public cash assistance
- Disability, unemployment, or workers compensation
- Child support or alimony payments received
- Portion of student grants or scholarships not identified for educational purposes as tuition, books, or supplies

NEED REQUIREMENTS

The parent's need for child care must to fall under one of the following categories:

Child Protective Services

If your need is based on being a CPS family, you will need to provide a written referral, dated within six months of application for services and include:

- Statement from local county welfare department, child welfare services worker, certifying that the child is receiving Child Protective Services, and that child care and development services are a necessary component of the CPS service plan.
- Probable duration of the CPS service plan.
- Waiver of family fee, if requested.
- Name, address, phone number, and signature of the county welfare staff.

Training Toward a Vocation Goal

Families are eligible to apply for assistance if at least one of the parents in the household is enrolled in classes at Sacramento State. The second parent can qualify based on any of the other needs listed. Child care can be approved to attend classes and for study time based on the number of units enrolled. A maximum of two hours per week of study time may be offered per academic unit enrolled. Any child care provided for hours outside of actual class time must be documented and approved.

Employment

Parents can request child care to cover their work schedules. We will require one full month of recent paycheck stubs and an employment verification form for each parent that is working. Self-employed parents can submit a log of work/clients/business hours or other reliable documentation to establish their work schedule.

Actively Seeking Employment

Parents actively seeking employment may be awarded up to 29.75 hours per week of child care. The parent will be asked to complete a Job Search Agreement signed under penalty of perjury.

Parental Incapacity

Parents who are incapacitated may be awarded up to 50 hours per week of child care. We will require a release signed by the incapacitated parent authorizing a legally qualified health professional to disclose information necessary to establish that the parent is incapacitated. The statement from a legally qualified health professional must include the following:

- Information that the parent is incapacitated, and that the parent is incapable of providing care and supervision for the child;
- The extent to which the parent is incapable of providing care and supervision;
- The days and hours per week that services are recommended;
- Name, business address, telephone number, professional license number, and signature of the health professional.

FAMILY FEE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The family monthly fee amount is only assessed at certification, recertification or for changes to income, certified need or family size. If the family income is below the amount specified on the current family fee chart, then no family fee is assessed. If the family income falls within the amounts on the family fee chart, the family is assessed a fee based on their family size and monthly income. Families will be charged a flat monthly part-time fee for less than 130 hours of approved child care per month. Families will be charged a flat monthly full-time fee for 130 hours or more of approved child care per month. The number of hours will be based on the child enrolled with the longest number of hours.

PAYMENTS

Fees are due in advance for each month of child care. The due date will be listed on your monthly invoice and posted on the office calendar. A receipt will be provided to you for each payment made. Statements for tax purposes will be provided upon request. If a family experiences temporary difficulty meeting their payment due date, they may request a payment plan to be approved by director. Fees are considered delinquent after seven days from the date they are due. If a family is delinquent paying their fees by seven calendar days from the due date, and if an approved payment plan is not in place, staff will issue a Notice of Action (NOA). The NOA will state that services will be terminated two weeks from the date of the notice unless all delinquent fees are paid before the end of the two-week period. Payments can be made at the Center by check, money order, debit, VISA, MasterCard or Discover. Adjustments to fees are not made for child absences.

A credit may be given for child care fees paid to other service providers when the Center is not able to meet all the family's certified need for child care. A receipt or cancelled check for the fees paid is required. The credit will be applied to the next billing period.

CONTINUING SUBSIDIZED CHILD CARE

Parents need to recertify (re-apply) for subsidy assistance annually. The family must document ongoing eligibility and need. Anyone who fails to re-certify will be terminated from the subsidized program. Continuation of subsidized care will also be based upon adequate academic progress of 2.0 GPA or the equivalent. Grades will be due at the end of the contract period. Families must abide by the center's policies, procedures, and requirements. If applicable, timely payment of fees or adherence to a fee payment plan is required. Families have an obligation to report increases in income that exceed the 85% threshold for ongoing income eligibility.

TERMINATION OF SUBSIDY SERVICES

A family will be terminated if they fail to meet the eligibility and/or need requirements of the subsidy program. Families can also be terminated for a violation of the program's policies and procedures. This includes anyone that knowingly misrepresents eligibility using incorrect or inaccurate information to obtain a benefit that they would otherwise not be entitled to receive.

PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN

The center offers several communities and three separate mixed-age groupings for children.

1. Three separate **Bambini** classrooms for children under two years of age.
2. Two separate **La Casita** classrooms for children ranging two to three years of age
3. Three and a half **Casa** classrooms for children ranging three years to Kindergarten.

Due to the adult to child ratio, children should be toileting independently in a Casa classroom. Administrators consider the availability of space, age of the child, and developmental level of the child when assigning a child to a classroom for first time or for re-enrollment. The director is responsible for determining child care schedules on a case-by-case basis. It is not guaranteed that all requests for care beyond class schedules will be honored.

FULL INCLUSION FOR CHILDREN

In accordance with the Americans with Disability Act and the center's philosophy of facilitating acceptance of each child's individuality and growth to the maximum extent possible, a full inclusion model is implemented. Therefore, children with unique needs such as medical, cognitive, and physical challenges are included as fully participating members. Additional services, such as physical therapy, are not offered by the Children's Center. However, Center staff will work with families to arrange for community support services to be delivered at the Center during the child's usual hours of attendance. The Center staff collaborate with parents and professionals in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the specific goals in the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individual Education Plan (IEP) for the family and child.

REGISTRATION MATERIALS - CONFIDENTIALITY

Once a space becomes available for your child(ren), you are required to pick up a registration packet. All documents such as the contract, health history, physician's report, Ages and Stages questionnaire, needs and service plans, immunization records, etc. in the registration packet must be returned by the established deadline prior to the child's first day of attendance. Families are responsible for completing registration forms in a timely manner to continue with child care services for the next academic session. Records regarding children and families are confidential and access is limited to individuals on a business related need to know basis. Release of confidential information to other agencies will be honored if made in writing by a parent.

ORIENTATIONS TO THE CENTER

The center highly encourages parents to attend the following orientations prior to starting care:

1. "Enrollment" meeting with the director to cover policies and procedures. (Children are not allowed in this meeting). The orientation is scheduled upon receipt of a registration packet.
2. "Meet the Teacher" meeting where families learn about the classroom and the teacher gathers information about the family and child. (Children are not allowed in this meeting).
3. Visiting for 5 hours (minimum) during Center operating hours. A family member and the child can visit as a way to ease the transition into our child care setting.
4. Family Visiting Day – The Friday before every semester begins. This is open house style from 9am – noon for the child, family, and friends.
5. Personal appointments – you may request a personal appointment with a staff member.

SIBLING ENROLLMENT

"Re-enrolling Families" have a priority in registering their additional child(ren) into the center. The operations manager maintains a sibling waitlist therefore families must notify the operations manager in writing if they plan to enroll another child from their family as soon as they become aware of the need. Although continuing families have priority over those on the wait list, a space and desired schedule is not guaranteed. There may be a higher demand for care than space available. The placement of a sibling is determined by the birth date, space availability and the schedule requested.

DROP-IN CHILD CARE

Drop-in child care is an additional service to help meet the occasional need for care outside of regularly contracted hours. Requests for drop-in care must be made in writing from the contracting parent, a minimum of 24 business hours in advance. (i.e. A request for care placed at 4:00 P.M. on Friday may not begin before 4:00 P.M. on Monday.) All drop-ins require pre-approval by the director or associate director, which is dependent upon space availability and staffing in classrooms. It is the parent's responsibility to check on the status of a drop-in request and not assume that it has been approved. Approved drop-ins will be covered by the subsidy contract.

SCHEDULE CHANGES

After being certified, your approved child care schedule will remain the same for 12 months. We are aware that class schedules and need for child care may change. Families may request a change in child care schedules by filling out a schedule change form. Approval of a schedule change is dependent upon space availability; therefore, it is the family's responsibility to check with the operations manager to see if their request was approved.

FINALS WEEK, SPRING BREAK, WINTER SESSION

The Children's Center provides subsidized child care during finals weeks, spring break, winter sessions. During these periods classroom configurations change in accordance with enrollment needs.

TRANSITIONING TO A NEW CLASSROOM

The center is organized with mixed-age groupings to limit the number of transitions a child makes between classrooms. Re-enrolling children eventually change to a new classroom, as they grow older. In collaboration with families, a child will visit the new classroom to give them time to adjust. Families will be provided with a “transition” handout that outlines what to expect from the new classroom. Most changes are made between academic semesters; however, a child may transition to a new classroom when space becomes available. Just prior to a new semester, families are invited back to the “Meet the Teacher” meeting and “Family Visiting Day” to ease the change into the new classroom.

RECOMMENDED SCHEDULING FOR INFANT/TODDLER/TWO YEAR OLDS

In an effort to enhance the “quality of experience” for our infants, toddlers and two year olds, we recommend schedules of no less than three hours per day, twice per week. Because families need more assistance, we recommend that you do not drop of your child between 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. We recommend that these same guidelines apply to late arrivals on a given day that your child is scheduled for an earlier entry. We have found these age groups to have the hardest time when being dropped off during lunch/nap transition. Individual needs will be respected and considered and can be discussed with program teachers and administrators.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

In the event a parent believes they have not been treated fairly, their personal rights have been violated, or seek a resolution for a concern; they may contact or file a written complaint with the center director, ASI human resources, and the ASI executive director.

DOCUMENTATION OF ATTENDANCE

AUTHORIZATION FOR THE PICK-UP OF CHILDREN

Children will not be released from the center’s care unless the adult removing the child from the center is listed on the child’s emergency card. They must establish identity with a proper photo I.D. Any parent may visit or pick-up the child unless court documents are on file. A parent must present a copy of court documents stating when the other parent may be in contact with the child. Under no circumstances will the staff refuse a parent from picking up his/her child, due to a prior request by the other parent, without legal documentation.

SIGNING IN AND OUT

Sign-in binders are kept for each program at the front desk reception counter. Sign-in sheets assist with emergency evacuations of the building and document adults entering the facility. If we discover that your child is not signed in, we will call you to return to the center. Additionally, we use the sign in sheet to relay written information to you. This will include your monthly billing statements, accident reports, illness reports, parent newsletters, etc.

Our daily sign-in and sign-out process is required by Community Care Licensing and is the source document used to claim reimbursement from the California Department of Education.

- On each day of attendance, the parent or other authorized adult must enter the real time of arrival and departure on the sign-in/out sheet and sign their full legal signature at each point.
- Not abiding by the above requirements may be cause for the program to end your services.

ABSENCES

We request that parents notify the Center if their child will be absent on a given day. This allows our office staff to document a child’s absence, maintain helpful information on illnesses, and assist the Director in awareness of space availability for drop-in attendance.

ABSENCE POLICY

Participation in the State Department of Education subsidized program requires thorough documenting of child attendance and absences. It is imperative that parents provide timely and accurate reporting of reasons for a child's absence. A parent is required to sign the attendance sheet daily and must offer a specific reason for the absence along with a full legal signature. Days of non-attendance can fall into one of three categories:

Excused Absences

- Days absent because of the illness or quarantine of the child/parent
- Doctor appointments, dentist appointments or other appointments for the health and benefit of the child (i.e. WIC appointments)
- Court ordered visitations (a copy of the court order must be in the child's personal file).
- Illness of a sibling or a domestic partner that requires your care and prevents you from bringing the child to school
- Family emergency where a sudden situation makes it difficult or unsafe for you to bring the child to the program
- Injury or accident which causes the child or parent to be incapacitated or hospitalized
- Death or serious illness in the family

Best Interest Days: Limited to 10 days for the 12 month contract period

- Days away from the center due to vacation
- Time spent with a guardian or relative that is not court ordered
- Cultural or religious celebrations
- Time away that is not related to the child or guardian's illness

Unexcused Absences: Limited to five days for the 12 month contract period

- Days of non-attendance, that are not listed above as excused
- Days with missing sign-in or sign-out times
- Failure to use a full legal signature on the sign-in sheet
- Failure to provide a reason for an absence on the sign-in sheet
- More than five unexcused absences per 12 month period will result in termination of subsidized care

LATE PICK-UP AND EARLY DROP OFF DURING OPERATING HOURS

Parents are expected to drop-off and pick-up their child according to the contracted schedule and write in the correct time on the sign-in sheet. We schedule staff based on your child's contracted hours so an early drop-off or late pick-up of your child creates liabilities in regards to capacity and adult/child ratios. It is imperative for you to adhere to your contracted child care schedule, allowing yourself enough travel time. We determine the drop-off time and pick-up time based on the Children's Center main clock located in the front office.

The following policy applies for each child when late pick-ups and early drop-offs occur during business hours:

- **First Offense:** The parent will receive a written notice from the operations manager.
- **Second Offense:** The parent will be required to meet with the operations manager.
- **Third Offense:** The family will receive a one-day suspension from care and the day will be counted as an unexcused absence.
- **Fourth Offense:** The parent will be referred to the Dean of Students. The family will receive a one-day suspension from care and the day will be counted as an unexcused absence.
- **Fifth Offense:** Termination of Services

Please use the drop-in system to request additional hours of care. Remember that all drop-ins need to be submitted at least 24 hours in advance and are subject to space availability and authorized approval.

LATE PICK UP AFTER CENTER CLOSURE

Entry into the classrooms is prohibited at closing to allow staff to leave the building. At closing time, staff will try to reach the child's parent(s). If we cannot contact a parent, we will contact individuals listed on the emergency to pick up your child. If no one is available and the parent(s) have not picked the child up within 30 minutes of closure, a director will be notified. If parent(s) and individuals listed on the emergency card have not responded, the campus police will be called to assist in taking the child to the Children's Receiving Home of Sacramento.

The following fees apply for each child when late pick-ups occur after center closure:

- A **\$25.00 fine** will be applied for the first minute after closing.
- A **\$1.00** fine per minute will be applied for every minute thereafter.
- Repeated offenses may be grounds for termination at the discretion of the director, associate director or executive director.

SUSPENSION POLICY

Suspension of a child from the Children's Center is an action, which provides an immediate removal of a child or parent from the classroom environment and center when behaviors or needs create concerns for safety, health, or welfare of children and/or staff. The purpose of suspension is to provide an immediate closure to an unresolved situation that is disruptive to the program and provides the opportunity for formal conferencing with director, teacher, parent(s), and additional professionals, as needed.

Suspension may be immediate with the length of time determined by the director. The length of suspension shall be contingent on the time needed to convene parents, staff, and support professionals to provide an agreed upon plan of action for successful return to the classroom and/or center. In general, the procedure shall follow:

1. A formal "Incident" report shall be written, documenting behavior and/or needs which pose a concern for the safety, health, or welfare of the children and/or staff.
2. Suspension will be determined by the director or site supervisor in consultation with teaching staff.
3. Parent(s) are notified immediately of the need for removal from the classroom/center.
4. A conference will be arranged as soon as possible with parent(s), teacher, director, and any additional support professionals, as needed.
5. During the conference, a plan of action, date, and conditions for the return to program will be determined.
6. A single or repeated incident of suspension may result in termination of enrollment.

TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT

If you choose to withdraw your child, a two week written notice must be provided to the director prior to the last day of attendance. Please ask for the Withdrawal Form at the front desk.

Enrollment may be terminated by the director for the following reasons:

1. Non-payment of child care fees.
2. Failure to comply with policies and procedures set forth in the Children's Center Parent Handbook.
3. Failure of child and/or family to work within program philosophy and/or guidelines established by Center staff.
4. Failure to submit recertification forms and other required forms by the established deadlines.

5. Behavior of child or parent is considered to be disruptive and/or dangerous to the health and safety of self, other children, or staff.
6. Repeatedly picking-up the child later than the specified child care contract.
7. Child's needs are unable to be met by the center's programming.
8. Violation of the center's Absence Policy.

The director shall meet with parent(s) to discuss problems that may lead to termination of enrollment. If a resolution cannot be reached, the director will give parents written notice terminating enrollment at least fourteen calendar days in advance of the effective date of termination. In the event of health/safety/welfare to others, immediate termination may be issued and child care fees will be refunded. Hearing and Grievance Procedures are available from the director upon request which describes parent's rights and responsibilities if their child's enrollment is terminated.

UNIFORM COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Should any person allege a violation of federal or state laws or regulations, which may include an allegation of unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying, they can contact the Associated Students Human Resource Manager in writing or contact them at (916) 278-5484 for assistance.

EMERGENCIES, HEALTH AND SAFETY

CELL PHONE USE

For the safety of children, using cell phones is strictly prohibited within the Center, the Bella Room, and the playgrounds. Please handle all phone calls before entering or after exiting the building.

EVACUATION POLICY

The center staff is trained by Sac State and local agencies to manage emergencies such as campus closures, fire, flood, incidents that require "sheltering in place", earthquakes, etc. Current emergency evacuation plan are posted in classrooms and the office, which meets with campus policy and state regulations. The plans will be followed during all emergency evacuations, including practice drills. Children have the opportunity to practice safety procedures through participation in our drills. Fire drills shall be generally conducted on a monthly basis. Staff will verify every child is present using the sign-in binders.

In the event of an earthquake, fire, or other disaster which requires evacuation of the Center:

- Staff will care for your child until your arrival. We have a number of people with first-aid certificates, and we will be working in unison with the University's Emergency Operations Committee.
- Our immediate evacuation spot is the open grassy area (Joe Serna Plaza) next to the University Union
- No child will be released from the center's care unless the adult is listed on the child's emergency card.
- Before departure, parent or authorized adult must sign the child out.
- Remember telephone lines will be overloaded, if operable. The Emergency Operation Committee will be coordinating communication with Sac State and the Children's Center.
- If secondary relocation is necessary for the staff and children, our location will be posted on the front door of the Children's Center.

The Children's Center has an emergency plan in place with Sac State and emergency personnel will be working together to provide safety and care for your child until your arrival.

FIREARMS AND WEAPONS POLICY

Firearms and weapons are strictly prohibited within the center and the playgrounds.

ACCIDENT AND ILLNESS POLICY

All head teachers, student supervisors, and administrators maintain certification in Adult/Child/Pediatric CPR and First Aid. Minor accidents and illnesses are brought to the parent's attention via a written report or courtesy call describing the incident and the method of treatment. If medical treatment is needed, the parent is contacted immediately. In life-threatening incidents, Campus Police and 911 assistance will be activated immediately. It may be necessary for medical attention to take priority over locating the parent.

UNUSUAL INCIDENT REPORTS

An unusual occurrence involving your child will be documented for your attention. The report will be attached to your child's sign-in sheet. An unusual event may include examples such as significant change in behavior, eating, sleeping, and/or play habits.

HEALTH/ILLNESS/WELLNESS

We believe in health and wellness in collaboration with parents as a way to manage illnesses. Adults and children are expected to wash their hands upon arrival. Your child will be taught to wash frequently throughout the day, including after toileting and before and after eating.

The teaching staff are required to greet and evaluate your child's health with your assistance. Families may not leave their child without checking-in with a classroom supervisor. Topics such as nutrition, wellness, and organized active play are imbedded in classroom curriculums.

Through thorough handwashing and sanitizing practices, we use best practices as a way to prevent your child from becoming sick. It is common for children to share illnesses and diseases. This is especially true with infants and toddlers as they teeth/mouth toys and/or become exposed to new viruses. When illnesses arise, it is important to avoid attending the center to get well. We expect your child to be well enough to participate in our daily scheduled program, which includes both indoor and outdoor activities. If your child is too ill to play indoors or outdoors, they are not well enough to attend. Colds are common so children may attend if they have a clear, runny nose and appear healthy and active. Children may attend if they have a condition that is not contagious and/or their physician provides a statement they can attend child care.

Current contagious illnesses will be posted on the large white board in the front lobby area. Handouts will be made available that outline the symptoms, mode of transmission, period of communicability and control measures.

We will call you to pick up your child if staff recognize one or more of the following symptoms:

- Unusual tiredness or irritability
- Infected skin patches
- Severe coughing
- Diarrhea
- Breathing trouble
- Unusual spots or rash
- Bleeding/oozing sores which cannot be completely covered
- Unusual spots or rash
- Elevated temperature (101°F)
- Vomiting
- Crying more than usual
- Headache
- Reddish, inflamed eyes
- Unusually dark, tea-colored urine
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing

(Recommendations are taken from the Sacramento Health Department, Child Health and Disability Prevention Program.)

The following conditions require exclusion from our program for the following period:

CHICKEN POX	Until all lesions are crusted.
CONJUNCTIVITIS (Pink Eye)	Until 24 hours after treatment started by physician or medical documentation.
GIARDIA	Medical release required. Children having diarrhea should not return until it has completely dissipated.
FEVER	Elevated fevers of 101°F or more require exclusion from child care and the child can return to care when the fever has dissipated without the use of fever reducing medications.
HEAD LICE	Pediculicide treatment required and nits (eggs) must be removed.
IMPETIGO	Until 24 hours after starting antibiotic therapy or medical release to care.
MEASLES	Medical release required and a report is made to the Sacramento Public Health Department.
MENINGITIS	Medical release required and a report is made to the Sacramento Public Health Department.
MUMPS	Medical release required.
PERTUSSIS (Whooping Cough)	Medical release required and a report is made to the Sacramento Public Health Department.
PIN WORMS	Until 24 hours after treatment started by a physician.
RINGWORM	Until 24 hours after topical treatment started by a physician.
SCABIES	Until 24 hours after treatment started and/or medical release.
STREPTOCOCCAL (Scarlet Fever, Strep Throat)	Until 24 hours after antibiotic treatment and/or medical release.
SALMONELLA & SHIGELLA	Diarrhea and body fluids cannot contaminate the environment or adults therefore children cannot attend care until it is completely resolved.
GASTROENTERITIS, VIRAL GASTROENTERITIS	Some conditions such as Salmonella will be reported to the Public Health Department.

MEDICATIONS

The center has a policy of administering medications prescribed by physicians only. Teachers administer prescribed medications out of the original prescription bottle with the drug name, the physician's name, date, child's name, dosage, and schedule of administration. To have staff administer medications, a medication permission slip must be completed and discussed with a classroom supervisor. If you feel your child is in need of over the counter medication, then he or she is probably too ill to attend. Please allow your child time to recuperate before returning to the center. If your child needs inhaled medications while at the center, arrangements must to be made in advance with your child's teacher to ensure that staff are able to administer correctly. A physician's statement is required and specific medical forms for inhaled medications must be completed and training must be provided to the staff administering the inhalants.

SMOKING ON CENTER PREMISES

Sac State is a no-smoking campus and smoking is prohibited within the center and the exterior grounds at all times.

GETTING TO KNOW OUR CENTER

STAFFING

All of our head teachers have a degree in Child Development, Early Childhood Education, or a closely related major and possess a Child Development Permit. The center employs part-time Sac State students. Many student employees are working towards their BA in Child Development while others are not. In addition to the head teachers, the center employs a group of qualified “student supervisors” who hold Child Development Permits and are in our leadership-training program. The head teachers and student supervisors lead mandatory student trainings on Monday night, two to three times each month.

The Children’s Center administrators possess degrees and director credentials and they are responsible for establishing and supervising the proper ratios of staff to children to be in full compliance with state regulations.

OPEN DOOR POLICY

The Children’s Center has an open door policy, which means families are welcome to come into the classroom to visit or check-in on their child at any time, any day of the week without informing staff ahead of time.

GROUP CHILD CARE

One of the most outstanding effects of group care experiences for children is its impact on their development of peer relationships. Learning to socialize and interact with others and exploring their own feelings about themselves and others is one of our goals. However, as with any learning experience, time and consistency are major factors. If subtle changes are apparent in your child’s daily behavior, i.e. clinginess, whining, separation problems, etc., this is to be expected. After a routine has been established, the positive aspects of group care will manifest itself in your child’s ability to relate to him/herself and others in a more competent manner.

Group care, along with all of the positive aspects, has some negative aspects as well. When children are interacting with peers, an illness is bound to occur. Contact between children allows germs to transmit easily. Although sanitation precautions are used, germs still pass between young children, so be prepared for bouts of illness.

COMMUNICATION

DAILY COMMUNICATION

Since children react to even “minor” changes in their home and school life, it is important for parents and teachers to “keep in touch” daily. Teachers will make a point to inform you of any concerns at school. Parents are encouraged to inform the teacher of such things as a death in the family, parent illness, birth of a sibling, change in family structure, or anything out of the ordinary routine. This will allow the staff to help your child.

Questioning is welcomed. No matter how self-conscious you may feel about asking, it is important for us to know how you feel about our program. Questions and/or suggestions that might better meet your and your child’s needs are valuable to the staff. We want you to feel comfortable expressing your questions, concerns, or interests.

Parents may also use our Parent Suggestion Box (located in the inner entry hall of the main building) if they feel more comfortable anonymously raising an issue, concern, or suggestion, which would generally benefit the whole center.

WRITTEN INFORMATION

Written information is placed on your child's sign-in/out sheet. It is the one place parents are required to check each time they enter or exit the center. Information will include monthly fee statements, newsletters, accident reports, illness reports, messages, etc. It is the parent's responsibility to read all information that is left on their child's sign-in sheet.

PARENT CONFERENCES

Parents wishing to discuss any concerns about their child should set up an appointment with their teacher and/or the director. It is important that parents and teachers communicate openly and effectively to model what we are hoping children learn in our program. You will be offered a formal Parent Conference each semester that provides you with information from the DRDP Developmental Profile that includes goals and ideas for supporting your child's development at home and school. We sometimes identify a potential developmental challenge for your child. In this case, we have contact information and resources both on campus and off. If you have a concern about your child's development, please do not hesitate to schedule a conference with program teachers and administrators. It is our goal to work in partnership with families.

COMPLAINTS

To resolve a problem or issue direct communication with the person involved is recommended. If the problem is not resolved then the director or associate director needs to be informed. You may contact either the ASI human resource manager or the ASI executive director if the Children's Center is unable to resolve your problem, issue, or concern.

UNIFORM COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

ASI Children's Center has a procedure for complaints about our program that may include such issues as: sufficient materials for each child, facilities that are clean and in good repair, sufficient number of regular teaching staff who are professionally prepared and properly credentialed, and personal rights or state or federal violations. The first step for addressing concerns is the center administrative staff. The director and associate director are available to hear any parent concerns and will try to resolve them at the center level. The ASI human resource manager or executive director may be contacted if a family chooses.

We strive to resolve the issue, but parents can also bring their concern to the California Department of Education, Child Development Division. The contact is Child Development Office at (916) 322-6233. Additional information about the provisions of this Uniform Complaint Procedure can be obtained on the CDE website <http://cde.ca.gov/ccpdiv>. You may also download a copy of the complaint form from the following web site: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/ce/wc/index.asp>.

CHILDREN'S BELONGINGS

WHAT TO BRING FOR YOUR CHILD

1. A full sized crib sheet and light blanket (families launder weekly).
2. A sufficient number of extra clothing (Include pants, shirts, socks, shoes, underwear)
3. Diapers for non-toileting children
4. Family photo (for cubby)

PLEASE LABEL ALL ITEMS CLEARLY WITH A PERMANENT INK PEN!

Soiled clothing will be placed in plastic bags and put in your child's cubby to be laundered and returned. Parents are required to launder their child's sheet and blanket at least once a week.

CLOTHING

Please remember the teachers provide a variety of experiences for the children throughout the year. Some of these experiences are outdoors; some are messy; some require easy body movement. To help your child enjoy these experiences fully, please dress him/her appropriately. Loose fitting clothing appropriate to the season and shoes that fit properly are necessary. For safety reasons we strongly discourage cowboy boots, slippers, or flip-flops. All sandals must have back straps. Playgrounds are treacherous for children wearing shoes that do not provide traction and grip. Open-toed sandals without socks may increase the likelihood of scraped or smashed toes, therefore socks are strongly recommended.

WHAT NOT TO BRING INTO THE PROGRAM

Please do not send your child to the center with:

1. Gum
2. Candy/treats
3. Money
4. Toys from home
5. Food from home (unless arrangements are made with your child's teacher due to food allergies)

We have plenty of things for your child to play with at the center. Possessions from home often cause friction between children.

CUBBIES

Cubbies are spaces for your child's belongings. Please bring a family picture that teachers will use when labeling your child's cubby. This helps your child to know which space belongs solely to him/her. A family picture can also provide a sense of connectedness to loved ones who are missed. Please remember to check your child's cubby daily for wet or soiled clothing or bedding.

NAME TAGS

Nametags facilitate a friendlier environment if adults call children by their name. Please make sure your child's nametag is on before you leave the center. When your child leaves the center, leave their nametag in the area designated by the teacher.

ART FOLDERS

Please check your child's art folder daily to take home current creations.

CHILDREN'S ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE FROM PROGRAM

ARRIVAL

When you and your child arrive, allow the teacher time to greet you. This allows the teacher to recognize your child as a special person. A warm, friendly arrival sets the tone for the rest of the day. Hand washing and diapering by the family is part of the arrival routine. Please wash your child's and your own hands when entering the program.

Sometimes when a parent and a child separate, the result is a crying child and a guilty, anxious parent. It has been our experience that once the child and the parent begin to trust the adults at the center, the separation transition is much smoother. Building trust takes time and lots of communication.

The first couple of weeks of school you may want to spend more time with your child in the center so that you both become familiar with the staff and daily routines. Or you may find that the longer you stay in the center, the more anxious your child becomes waiting for the inevitable good-bye. Separation routines should be discussed with the teacher to ensure a positive beginning experience. Each child has individual preferences, wants, and needs and our staff respect the rights and dignity of each child.

Remember that eventually your child will adjust to the routine of coming to school. It will take time, but our happiest moments are when your child enters the doorway happy and excited to start his/her day with us. With love, trust, and communication, it will happen!

How you handle the events surrounding your leaving will affect the adjustment that your child makes into our program. The following suggestions can help make separation easier:

1. Visit our program several times and stay for an hour or two with your child before leaving him/her there. Familiarity helps!
2. Devote the time before you go to helping your child to connect with a caregiver or engage in an activity with a caregiver.
3. Before you go, tell your child (even your infant) you will be leaving soon.
4. Always leave your child with a staff member, and make sure the two of them have a chance to get acquainted before you go.
5. Never sneak out! Always say goodbye directly to your child. Leaving without saying goodbye can result in anxiety in your child- that you may “disappear” at any given moment. Always say goodbye!
6. Do not try to discourage tears or your child’s sad feelings. Let him/her express feelings for as long as he/she needs to and at whatever intensity he/she needs to. Do not expect him/her to be “reasonable”.
7. Remain calm, reassuring, and stable yourself, whatever happens. Express sympathy for your child’s feelings, but do not allow his/her tears to change your mind about leaving. Once you say goodbye, you must follow through and leave.
8. A more relaxed departure is less upsetting for children than a rushed, abrupt one. The parent may say goodbye at the door and ask the child to wave at the window with the caregiver. (Other departure routines might include your child helping you get your coat, bag, or hat.)
9. Always tell your child that you will return. Saying, “I will come back later” as you leave, and “I came back” when you return teaches your child that you will not abandon them.

DEPARTURE

When you are picking up your child, please allow time to check in with the teacher and allow time for your child to complete an activity before going home. Remember to always tell the teacher when you and your child are leaving.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

INFORMAL INVOLVEMENT

A positive early childhood educational experience requires parent, teacher, and child to share together. Each of us is here to experience, learn, and support one another in our growth. Our program offers a sharing environment based on the premise that each of us has a unique gift to share—the gift of self. We hope you find a comfortable way to become an active participant in our center. The Parent Involvement form in the enrollment packet is for you to indicate your availability and talents. Some families assist with equipment repair, moving playground bark/sand, gardening, and sewing projects.

We have several special events throughout the year when families help set-up and clean up. Newsletters and door signs will announce the events and ways for you to become involved at whatever level is comfortable for you.

FORMAL INVOLVEMENT

Families wanting a more formal involvement fall under the criterion as a volunteer if they spend time with other children. In these cases, they must have a completed background check, submit immunization records, and complete a volunteer form, have a timesheet, and a nametag.

PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (PAC)

The Parent Advisory Council serves as the formal advisory group to the Children's Center Director and Associated Students Board of Directors. There are four (4) voting positions held by parents of the Children's Center. An election is held in the fall semesters as parents vote for their representatives.

PARENT SUPPORT

Raising young children can be stressful and we are here to be your support system. Achieving your academic and parenting goals are demanding. It is common for families to stop into the director's office to chat, cry, and seek support. Should you have concerns about your child's development, speak to your child's teacher and/or the center director. Group child care might contribute to behavioral challenges as it can be over stimulating for some children. It is common for our staff to host individual parent meetings to discuss concerns and develop action plans where families and center staff work together. On some occasions, we will recommend and refer you to seek outside professionals and specialists so we can gain a better understanding of your child's needs. It is common for speech therapists, behavioral therapists, and physical therapists to provide services to children while they are in our care.

YOUR CHILD'S DAY

NUTRITION

The Children's Center participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), which is set up to provide your child with well-balanced meals. The CACFP is a federal program administrated through the California Department of Education. The CACFP provides financial assistance to keep costs down while maintaining high nutritional standards. We follow strict guidelines as to what components and quantity we must offer to each child.

In accordance with the food program guidelines and our philosophy, we provide a morning breakfast from 8 a.m. – 9 a.m., a lunch from approximately 11:15 a.m. to noon, and afternoon snack from approximately 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. Times vary due to age groups so the schedule is posted in the classroom.

Infants 12 month of age and under eat on demand. For infants and toddlers, teachers and families collaborate on a feeding plan and update the needs and service plan as new foods are introduced. Nursing mothers are welcome to come in or store pumped milk. We have a Special Care Room available for you to use if you prefer privacy and a list of all Mother's Rooms on campus is also available. We provide formula, bottles, and dishware and make our puree infant food in house.

The center uses a four-week cycling menu with a variety of home-style foods (minimal commercial processing). Meals are planned with special attention selecting foods, which are low in sodium, sugar, and fat and rich in fiber and we are able to accommodate vegetarian/vegan diets. We offer cow's milk and a soymilk that meets USDA requirements. Menus are posted on the center's website and are available in hard copy upon request.

If your child has an allergy or certain food(s) restrictions, speak to your child's teacher immediately as a medical statement is required from your physician indicating an "allergy" and what to replace that item with. We will make every effort to accommodate your child's dietary needs. With your consent, this allergy information is openly posted in the classroom and kitchen to act as a visual reminder to prevent contact with problem foods.

REST TIME

Since the Children's Center offers flexible scheduling to families, we realize not all children will need a rest time during the scheduled naptime at the center. Generally, naptime falls between 12:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. We prefer that children are not picked up or dropped off during lunch and rest times. If you must come in during lunch or nap, please help your child with transition into or out of the program. Children need preparation for the "activity" they are going to enter when coming to the center, which may require more time to transition.

Infants and toddlers are accommodated any time they need to rest. We follow The American Academy of Pediatrics and American Public Health Association guidelines for child care centers: infants under 12 months are placed on their backs to sleep. When infants can easily turn over from their back to stomach or side, they shall be put down to sleep on their back, but allowed to adopt whatever position they prefer for sleep. You will receive an Infant Sleep Policy form to sign if this applies to your child.

Preschoolers are given an opportunity to rest after lunch. All children use mats and use individual bedding provided by their parents. Children who do not sleep may have a period of quiet resting and reading on their mat or participate in other activities. Mats are sanitized daily. Parents are required to launder their child's sheet and blanket at least once a week.

CAMPUS OUTINGS/FIELD TRIPS

The Children's Center sees the campus as a tremendous resource for our children to participate in age-appropriate events that enrich the children's awareness of culture, nature, and education. Whenever possible, our children participate in these campus outings. Our younger children also enjoy the opportunity to go on walks in our group wagons. Our extended community is Sac State and the children love being a part of it!

SPECIAL EVENTS – CENTER WIDE

The Children's Center hosts several special events throughout the year. All family members are welcome to attend special events. Some events are during business hours (i.e. Family Luncheon, Harvest Day, and Day on the Quad) while other are after the center is closed (i.e. Open House, Back to School Night, Art Gala). Special events during business hours are closed to the public as ONLY family members may attend (no friends or classmates) while the special events after business hours are open to the public and families are responsible for supervising their own children. Non-enrolled siblings may attend as long as they stay under their parents' supervision.

DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL GUIDANCE

A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The Children's Center philosophy focuses on the needs of the whole child. Our age appropriate integrated curriculum nurtures all areas of development (physical, social, emotional, and cognitive). Our curriculum encourages children to be active participants in the learning process. We believe learning that lasts is based on meaningful experiences, and these experiences are best directed by the children. Each family's unique beliefs, experiences and language are incorporated into the environment and curriculum as much as possible.

Each classroom has a unique daily schedule, which provides children with a predictable routine, allowing them opportunities to experience both spontaneous and planned events. To ensure growth for the child in all areas of development, planned activities are provided throughout the day. These activities include experiences in fine motor, gross motor, art, sensory play, language, nutrition, science, and fantasy. Varieties of activities are set-up for the children and they are encouraged to move freely into the learning area of their choice. In planning the daily routine, we are sensitive to children's needs for quiet/active time, indoor/outdoor time, large/small group time, and adult/peer interaction. Our goal is to provide a wide range of activities, which help integrate the child's various developing skills.

The educational opportunities offered through planned activities and arrangement of the classroom environment, coupled with the focus on social-emotional development through communication and play, provide the basic framework needed for future development and studies. An integrated curriculum is presented through the Project Approach based on children's expressed interests each semester, and includes adjustments along the way and adaptations to include all children. We also use the California Infant Toddler and Preschool Curriculum Framework that aligns with Desired Results Developmental Profiles. Our outdoor play space is expansive and we try to connect with the natural world as much as possible through gardening, compost projects and vermiculture too! In general, our Center avoids media based materials and supplies.

ASSESSMENT

As a program funded through the California Department of Education, we implement Desired Results, which is the required method of assessment. The DR system includes six Desired Results – four child Desired Results and two family Desired Results.

The Desired Results for Children and Families

- DR1: Children are personally and socially competent
- DR2: Children are effective learners
- DR3: Children show physical and motor competence
- DR4: Children are safe and healthy
- DR5: Families support their child's learning and development
- DR6: Families achieve their goals

The Desired Results Developmental Profile-Revised (DRDP-R) is a central component of the CDE's Desired Results system. DRDP-R is a system of assessment instruments based on teacher observation that measures children's developmental progress toward the Desired Results for children. We complete the developmental profile on each child each semester and share the information with parents in a scheduled Parent Conference. These findings also inform curriculum choices and goals for individual children. Additional components of the Desired Results system are annual Parent Surveys and Classroom Environmental Rating Scales.

SOCIAL GUIDANCE

We believe it is important for children to know the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Our emphasis is on children being sensitive to feelings and learning appropriate expression of these feelings. We help children develop this sensitivity by teaching them with words and actions to express their feelings. As role models for children, teachers never use corporal punishment. Intimidation, embarrassment, teasing, or provoking comparison of children are not acceptable forms of social guidance. When conflicts occur, children are brought together to resolve the problem. If they cannot communicate in the moment, they may need to be moved to a quiet area to regroup, calm down, and plan a solution.

Teachers also create an environment that predicts and limits the frequency of problematic situations. We accomplish this by trying to foresee behavioral conflicts, redirecting children into more appropriate activities, by promoting cooperative play, and by providing enough quiet and active play spaces.

Teachers and parents work together on an individualized plan of action. Program administrators may also convene and assist with parent conferences to create support strategies. If needed, administrators will involve outside professionals or refer families to available campus or community resources.

BITING

No behavior among small children elicits as strong a reaction from parents than biting. Parents and caregivers are often frustrated by this experience, as it can be both frightening and painful for the child involved. Children, just like adults, experience times of frustration, anger, and intimidation. Unlike older preschool children and adults, infants and toddlers do not have the “words” to express their feelings. A very quick and effective way for the young toddler to express anger or fright is through crying or pushing out, and biting. At the Children’s Center, we maintain a policy of firmly telling children who have bitten, “Stop biting hurts,” and remove them from the conflict. We attempt to help children find more appropriate, less harmful ways to express their feelings of anger, frustration, or intimidation. As adults, it is our role to model the type of behavior we expect of our toddlers. Patience, consistency, and a wealth of alternatives for the biting toddlers are essential in helping children express feelings in a healthy, acceptable manner.

Older preschool-aged children should no longer be biting, but using verbal communications to express feelings. If a child does begin to use biting as a means of problem-solving, teachers and parents will come together to discuss ways for each person to help the child. In the event that a bite breaks the skin, parents will be notified.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PROBLEM SOLVING

At all age levels we encourage children to solve problems. On a daily basis, children will be challenged to resolve conflicts with other children and the environment. Depending on the age group, a teacher will intervene at different times to ensure safety. By not constantly and prematurely interrupting, adults allow children to work through a situation and develop their own solution. Adults intervene only when it is apparent that guidance is needed. Children become empowered as they learn that they have the capacity to take care of their own situations and/or interactions.

SWEARING

Unfortunately, children learn quickly those words that shock adults. Children enjoy shocking adults and the power they derive from doing so, if the adult feeds into the situation. The adults in our program are told to remain calm and simply tell the child that those words are not to be used at school. Children are encouraged to tell children using swear words that they do not like hearing them. A simple sentence, “I don’t like that word and I wish you wouldn’t use it around me” is usually enough said to a child experimenting with “shocking” language.

APOLOGIES

Children, in learning to socialize, will encounter peer conflicts. Sometimes the result of these conflicts is the injury of a friend. Many people’s first reaction is to have a child say they are sorry. We believe that a child needs to understand other children’s feelings before he or she can use the abstract concept of being sorry. Insisting on an apology teaches a child how to please an adult rather than teaching the child an understanding of others.

LABELING BEHAVIOR—NOT THE CHILD

Another important practice at the center is to use objective words to describe children’s behaviors, “Nathan, you carefully put those blocks away” instead of “What a good boy for putting away the blocks.” When judgmental words are used it creates the notion that children are only as worthy as their actions.

This approach is especially important with young children who are developing their identity based on the opinions of others (most importantly the ones they love). Commenting directly on the child's action allows them to focus on the behavior rather than their value as a person. "Be good today" and "bad girl" are overwhelming expectations and generalizations that set children up for failure. No child is always "good" or "bad" during an entire day. For example, when leaving your child instead of saying "Be good today," simply say, "Goodbye, I love you and I'll see you this afternoon." This type of statement reassures the child of the parent's unconditional love, acceptance, and promised return.

SHARING AS A SOCIAL SKILL

Sharing, like apologies, is appropriate only when children are cognitively and emotionally ready to understand the social benefits of this interaction. Toddlers and young preschoolers, for the most part, are still very egocentric and cannot grasp the concept of sharing something that they want. We believe these children should not be forced to do so and the staff will encourage taking turns. We try to respect children's needs to have private space, individual time with materials, and some control over their play situations.

The staff's responsibility is to provide more than one of any toy or activity. Staff facilitate problem solving while verbalizing children's feelings and desires; teachers introduce simple language that children can eventually use in future situations. The center also believes that having adults who model sharing is one of the best ways to expose and demonstrate the different ways to share.

TOILET LEARNING

Toilet learning needs to begin with an interest from the child and/or family and it is common for children at 18 months of age to practice sitting on the toilet. Toilet learning is a collaborative process between staff and parents using a consistent method to learn and practice the new toileting skills. It is important that toileting be an encouraging process rather than pressuring a child into a process he/she is not yet willing to learn. A casual, relaxed approach to this aspect of child development lends itself to success.

Even before the self-toileting begins, the child is included in the caregiving process by getting their own diaper, helping to dress themselves, washing their own hands, etc. While diapers are being changed, caregivers talk to the children, giving them language they will use during the toileting process. We ask the child if he/she would like to sit on the toilet and respect their decision. Children in underpants are taken to the bathroom regularly. Wet or soiled underwear are dealt with in a very matter of fact way, while respectful of the child's feelings. The child helps get the dry pants and is reminded of where the toilet is. Toileting is a gradual process, which is impacted by the developmental issue of autonomy and a continued need for nurturing and security. During the toilet-learning process, children will have accidents. In order to ensure the utmost cleanliness of our environment, clothes that have been soiled with feces and/or urine will not be rinsed or washed by staff members. Soiled clothing will be placed in a sealed plastic bag and placed in your child's cubby. Please remember to check for wet or soiled clothing daily.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are important and we like to acknowledge the special day in a way that helps all the children to feel special. For this reason, we do not have birthday celebrations. Parents want to do something to celebrate the special day and we do not allow treats, trinkets, balloons, or gifts in the classrooms. If you would like to donate something special in honor of your child's birthday, we ask that it be an age appropriate book dedicated by your child to the center. This makes your child feel special every time the book is shared in the classroom. Please ask each teacher for more information about this, as well as what types of books would be appropriate.

HOLIDAY AND CELEBRATIONS POLICY

Our Beliefs: In keeping with our philosophy on welcoming all families, involvement with the campus community and creating an exemplary program that models current principles and practice in an environment that respects diversity and individual needs, we have created this Holiday and Celebrations Policy to guide us through the year.

In many ways, our program operates like a family. We have procedures and policies that we follow, knowing not everyone follows the same set of beliefs. We strive to create curriculum that is meaningful to children, supports their development, and reduces the effects of the media and commercialism. We look to nature to be our guide. What we practice “within” the Center may differ from what children are experiencing in their communities.

The Policy: Within the Children’s Center environment, we do not create or display typical commercialized holiday themed décor or projects. Not all holidays/celebrations are forbidden as we value learning about family traditions and cultures. Generally when planning curriculum, teachers do not teach holiday topics. If initiated by children and families, teachers are supportive of the child’s experiences and sometimes share those experiences with classmates. We strive to reduce children’s exposure to the media, sale of products, and commercialism as a rule.

In our campus community, we participate in many events realizing the children will be exposed to commercialism and holiday themed décor (as with their daily lives). At these times, we gather details and inform families of the proposed event/visit, always providing an alternative for those who choose not to participate.

NONDISCRIMINATION / CIVIL RIGHTS STATEMENT

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: How to File a Complaint, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Our Civil Rights coordinator is the ASI Human Resources Manager. He/she can be reached at (916) 278-5484.