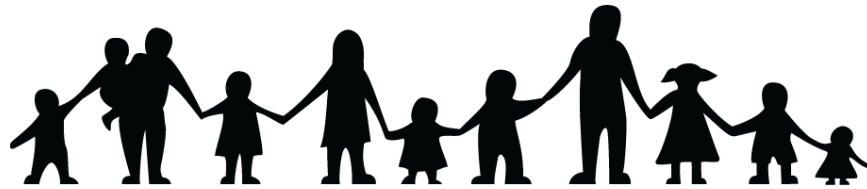


GROWING MINDS ARE THE KEY TO OUR FUTURE!



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

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# Parent Handbook

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  
Summer Session 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](http://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
GETTING ON THE WAITING LISTS .....	7
ENROLLMENT FROM THE WAITLIST .....	7
CONTRACTING FOR CHILD CARE .....	8
SUBSIDY.....	8
PARENT FEES FOR CHILD CARE .....	8
PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN.....	8
FULL INCLUSION FOR CHILDREN .....	9
REGISTRATION MATERIALS - CONFIDENTIALITY .....	9
ORIENTATIONS TO THE CENTER .....	9
RE-ENROLLMENT FOR CONTINUING CHILDREN .....	10
SIBLING ENROLLMENT .....	10
DROP-IN CHILD CARE .....	10
SCHEDULE CHANGES.....	10
FINALS WEEKS, SPRING BREAK, WINTER, AND SUMMER SESSIONS.....	10
TRANSITIONING TO A NEW CLASSROOM.....	11
RECOMMENDED SCHEDULING FOR INFANT/TODDLER/TWO YEAR OLDS .....	11
GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE .....	11
DOCUMENTATION OF ATTENDENCE .....	11
AUTHORIZATION FOR THE PICK-UP OF CHILDREN.....	11
SIGNING IN AND OUT .....	11
ABSENCES .....	11
LATE PICK-UP AND EARLY DROP OFF DURING OPERATING HOURS.....	12
LATE PICK UP AFTER CENTER CLOSURE .....	12
SUSPENSION POLICY .....	12
TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT .....	13
UNIFORM COMPLAINT PROCEDURE.....	13
EMERGENCIES, HEALTH AND SAFETY .....	14
CELL PHONE USE.....	14
EVACUATION POLICY .....	14
FIREARMS AND WEAPONS POLICY.....	14
ACCIDENT AND ILLNESS POLICY .....	14
UNUSUAL INCIDENT REPORTS.....	14
HEALTH/ILLNESS/WELLNESS.....	15

MEDICATIONS.....	16
SMOKING ON CENTER PREMISES.....	17
GETTING TO KNOW OUR CENTER .....	17
STAFFING.....	17
OPEN DOOR POLICY.....	17
GROUP CHILD CARE.....	17
COMMUNICATION.....	17
DAILY COMMUNICATION .....	17
WRITTEN INFORMATION.....	18
PARENT CONFERENCES.....	18
COMPLAINTS .....	18
UNIFORM COMPLAINT PROCEDURE.....	18
CHILDREN'S BELONGINGS.....	19
WHAT TO BRING FOR YOUR CHILD.....	19
CLOTHING .....	19
WHAT NOT TO BRING INTO THE PROGRAM.....	19
CUBBIES.....	19
NAME TAGS .....	19
ART FOLDERS.....	19
CHILDREN'S ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE FROM PROGRAM .....	20
ARRIVAL .....	20
DEPARTURE .....	21
PARENT INVOLVEMENT.....	21
INFORMAL INVOLVEMENT .....	21
FORMAL INVOLVEMENT .....	21
PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (PAC) .....	21
PARENT SUPPORT .....	21
YOUR CHILD'S DAY .....	22
NUTRITION .....	22
REST TIME .....	22
CAMPUS OUTINGS/FIELD TRIPS.....	23
SPECIAL EVENTS – CENTER WIDE.....	23
DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL GUIDANCE.....	23
A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT .....	23
ASSESSMENT .....	23
SOCIAL GUIDANCE.....	24
BITING .....	24
CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PROBLEM SOLVING .....	25

SWEARING .....	25
APOLOGIES.....	25
LABELING BEHAVIOR—NOT THE CHILD .....	25
SHARING AS A SOCIAL SKILL.....	25
TOILET LEARNING.....	26
BIRTHDAYS .....	26
HOLIDAY AND CELEBRATIONS POLICY .....	26
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

### **GETTING ON THE WAITING LISTS**

The center uses four separate waitlist applications for individual calendar years:

1. A waitlist for families who are eligible for subsidized child care (no waitlist fee).
2. A waitlist for incoming siblings of currently enrolled Sac State Students (no waitlist fee).
3. A waitlist for Sac State students who will pay for the child care (no waitlist fee).
4. A waitlist for faculty and staff who will pay for the child care (\$15.00 waitlist fee).

Waitlist applications are received starting August 1 through July 31 for the following calendar year (i.e. enrollment for fall/spring 2019, applications accepted August 1, 2018 – July 31, 2018). There is not a waitlist fee for Sac State students while faculty and staff pay a \$15.00 non-refundable fee.

Families wanting to enroll their child(ren) submit the appropriate waitlist form to the Center providing information such as; date placed on waiting list, parent/child's name, child's date of birth, phone number, email, address, Sac State Status, and the semester in which they plan to attend Sacramento State. If a child is not enrolled based on the current waitlist, the family must re-apply for the next academic year starting August 1 annually. Early waitlist applications are not accepted. Families are responsible for notifying the Children's Center of any changes in address, telephone number, e-mail, as well as changes to student or staff/faculty status.

### **ENROLLMENT FROM THE WAITLIST**

Eligible children are enrolled from the wait list based on classroom space availabilities according to six priority factors. The priorities are as follows:

1. Eligibility rankings for the California Department of Education subsidy.
2. Sac State Student Status.
3. Faculty/Staff Status.
4. Age of the child.
5. Date on which child is originally placed on the waiting list.
6. Schedule of requested care.

Alumni from Sacramento State or families from the community are not eligible for enrollment. When determining the status of a family, the guide is; "What activities do child care hours support"? An example is when a parent is a staff/faculty and they are enrolled in one or more courses/graduate school at Sac State. If most of the child care hours support work, then the parent is under the staff/faculty status. If they are working part-time on campus and the majority of the care supports courses, then the status of student would be appropriate. When child care spaces have been identified, families on the waitlists will be notified about possible enrollment and space availability during the months of January (for spring semester enrollment) and July (for fall semester enrollment). Should they accept a placement, the family will contract for care and begin the enrollment/orientation process.

Proof of Sac State status is required for initial and continuing enrollments.



## **CONTRACTING FOR CHILD CARE**

For the convenience of students and to serve as many families in the campus community as possible, the center's programming and children's schedules are built around flexible schedules using the academic calendar. In other words, child care schedules normally follow class schedules with some time allotted for studying and other campus activities (such as meetings of clubs and organizations, Associated Students events, convocations, study groups, part-time work, committee assignments, etc.). A reasonable guide for study time and other campus activities shall be one to two hours per unit of classes. Child care during the day and/or high demand times is not substituted for an evening class. However, study time during the late afternoon is considered reasonable for an evening class, and child care would be in order. Internships and student teaching are considered part of class scheduling depending on the number of hours in relation to the number of units enrolled or involved at Sac State during the day. Current fees and/or discounts are posted on our website and you can request a copy from our front office.

Families will contract for child care several times in an academic year. Priority for continuing enrollments are for fall and spring contract periods. Families are able to "opt out" of care for finals weeks, winter/spring breaks, and summers without losing priority enrollment for fall and spring sessions. Should a family need care for sessions such as summer/winter/breaks/finals week, they will indicate the need and contract for those sessions. Families are required to notify the center when there is a change of status such as moving from a student to a faculty/staff status. Families are not allowed to continue with child care if they lose the Sac State status such as graduating or working for an agency other than Sacramento State.

### **SUBSIDY**

The State Subsidized Program is open to Sac State student families that meet income requirements established by the California Department of Education. This program pays the child care fees for families demonstrating a financial need.

### **PARENT FEES FOR CHILD CARE**

Fees are assessed according to the status (i.e. student or faculty/staff). The fee schedule is available in the office of the Children's Center and on the center's website. The center collaborates with alternative payment agencies such as Child Action, Cal Works, Military, etc. It is common for a student to deposit monies from their student loan creating a credit on their account. The center will reimburse any remaining balance from that credit upon request.

Families are provided an invoice at the first of each month and payments are due within 10 business days upon receipt of the invoice. If care exceeds the contractual agreement or credits are applied, the changes will be reflected on the next billing statement. If payment is not received by the 10th day, a late charge of \$40.00 will be applied on the eleventh day. If the monthly fee is not paid in full by the first day of the following month, child care will be suspended. After three late payments within the academic year, a parent will lose priority re-enrollment. Delinquent child care fees are turned over to collections and future enrollment eligibility will be denied until the delinquent fees and service charges are paid in full.

### **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 from 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, pay the registration fee (located on fee chart), and attend all mandatory orientations. The center accepts payments in the form of check, money order, Discover, VISA, Master Card, and Debit; cash is not accepted. 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. 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**

There are three mandatory orientations prior to starting care.

1. Mandatory 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. Mandatory "Meet the Teacher" meeting where families learn about the classroom and the teacher gathers information about the family and child. The date and time is in the registration packet. (Children are not allowed in this meeting).
3. Mandatory five hours (minimum) of visiting during center operating hours with a family member and the child. These hours are tracked and serve as a way to ease the transition into our child care setting. (Includes children).

The center offers non-mandatory orientations such as:

1. Family Visiting Day – The Friday before every semester begins. It is open house style event from 9am – noon for the child, family, and friends.
2. Personal appointments – you may request a personal appointment with a staff member.
3. Family visiting during operating hours that exceeds five hours is highly encouraged.  
Open door policy—come as you please.

Once families complete the orientations and registrations, they can start attending the Children's Center. Families are responsible for completing registration forms in a timely manner to continue with child care services for the next academic session.

## RE-ENROLLMENT FOR CONTINUING CHILDREN

Priority child care is given to currently enrolled families for the next semester/session. The center will provide notification to currently enrolled families with registration requirements for the next session prior to enrolling new families from the waitlists. Child care fees must be current at the time a parent receives a re-enrollment packet and paid in full prior to starting the next contract period. Families are ineligible to re-enroll with priority if they have lost their status as a Sac State student, employee of Sac State; failed to pay child care fees; graduated; or failed to re-enroll by the established deadline as posted in the office.

## SIBLING ENROLLMENT

“Re-enrolling Student Families” have a priority in registering their additional child(ren) into the center and the center provides a 10% discount for the youngest child. The operations manager maintains a student sibling waitlist therefore student 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. The placement of a sibling is determined by all the factors listed below:

- Space availability and schedule requested
- Birth date

Re-enrolling faculty/staff families must place their additional child on the waitlist, as they do not have priority over newly enrolling student families.

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.

## DROP-IN CHILD CARE

For an additional fee, drop-in childcare is an additional service to help meet the occasional need (not more than three requests per month) 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.

Once a drop-in is approved, a charge shall be reflected in the following month’s invoice. **There are no refunds on approved drop-ins.** It is the parent’s responsibility to check on the status of a drop-in request and not assume that it has been approved.

## SCHEDULE CHANGES

We are aware that class schedules and need for child care may change, especially during the Sac State official add/drop period in the first two weeks of the fall/spring semesters. Families may request a change in child care schedules by filling out a schedule change request form. Approval of a requested schedule change is dependent upon space availability, therefore it is the family’s responsibility to check with the office to see if their request was approved by the director. Invoices will show billing for contracted hours until a schedule change is approved. There is not a schedule change fee until after the Sac State designated ADD/DROP period (first two weeks in the semester). After the campus add/drop period, there is a \$10.00 charge per approved schedule change.

## FINALS WEEKS, SPRING BREAK, WINTER, AND SUMMER SESSIONS

The Children’s Center provides child care during finals weeks, spring break, winter, and summer sessions. Each of these sessions are treated as separate contracting periods and require separate enrollment. 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 off 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**

All children must be signed-in and out daily using a full legal signature. Three cases of not signing-in your child can result in losing your child care. 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.

### **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 determining space availability for drop-in attendance. Please remember you are billed for days of contracted care even when your child is home due to illness or parent choice.

## **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 childcare 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 fees apply for each child when late pick-ups and early drop-offs occur during business hours:

- A **\$25.00 fine** will be applied for one minute to ten minutes of unauthorized care before or after the child's contracted hours of care.
- A **\$1.00** fine per minute will be applied for every minute after the tenth minute.
- Repeated offenses may be grounds for termination at the discretion of the director, associate director or executive director.

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 a parent cannot be contacted, individuals listed on the emergency card will be contacted 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 the 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 following procedures will apply:

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)/guardian 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)/guardian, 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. If a two week written notice is not provided, two weeks of child care fees will be assessed in lieu of notice. Pre-paid child care fees shall be reimbursed if a written notice is provided to the director at least two calendar weeks prior to the last day of attendance. The registration fee is non-refundable.

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

1. Loss of Sacramento State student, staff or faculty status.
2. Repeated late payment or non-payment of child care fees.
3. Failure to comply with policies and procedures set forth in the Children's Center Parent Handbook.
4. Failure of child and/or family to work within program philosophy and/or guidelines established by center staff.
5. Failure to submit re-enrollment and other required forms by the established deadlines.
6. Behavior of child or parent is considered to be disruptive and/or dangerous to the health and safety of self, other children, or staff.
7. Repeatedly picking-up the child later than the specified child care contract.
8. Child's needs are unable to be met by the center's programming.
9. Child's absence for 10 consecutive days without notification to the center.

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 not uncommon 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 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 that 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(ren)'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 voting positions held by parents of the Children’s Center. An election is held in the fall semester 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. A variety 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](mailto: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.