



FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

2015-2016

FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs

Family Handbook

NAEYC Standard 10.B.02

FSU UNIVERSITY HOUSING • FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs

157 Herlong Drive #1

Tallahassee, FL 32310-4174

Phone: (850) 644-7970

Email: FSUChildCare@admin.fsu.edu

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

Available in Alternative Format Upon Request



FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs

A Family Handbook:

Policies and Procedures for:

The FSU Children's Center

Infant and Toddler Child Development Center

This handbook supercedes Family Handbook 2012-2013

Revised 8/2015

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Welcome to the FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs.

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

History and Background

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

Beginning in the Fall semester of 2009 through the Spring and Summer semester s of 2010, the building that provided early education and care for preschool children for 50 years was renovated. Most recently known as the Alumni Village Child Development Center, the building at 169 Herlong Drive was transformed from a late 50's vintage building to a modern child care facility. On August 23, 2010 the “new” center opened as “The FSU Children’s Center” caring for 36 children, ages 2 and one half to 5 years of age. The building that housed the Educational Research Center for Child Development since 1980 was removed Fall semester, 2010.

The Infant and Toddler Child Development Center opened in September of 2002. In 2001 a grant award from the United States Office of Education provided the necessary financial resources to provide student parents with quality care for their infants and toddlers, age 6 weeks to 3 years of age. Another grant awarded by the United State Office of Education in October, 2009 provided support to expand the program from serving 22 children to 34 children as well as support for expanding the operating hours from 8:30 to 4:30 to 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The center has been continuously accredited by NAEYC since 2005.

Both centers provide high quality early education and care to 70 children and their families. Each center has a director and professional teachers all with Bachelors or advanced degrees. The assistant teachers are typically students at FSU, many pursuing advanced degrees, in a wide variety of majors and interests which enriches our centers.

In 2014 the program changed its name from FSU Child Development Programs to FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs to reflect the true nature of the program’s operation and to distinguish the program from the Child Development academic program in the College of Human Sciences.

The Organization

Mission Statement

NAEYC Standard 10.A.01

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

Philosophy

NAEYC Standard 10.A.01

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

Values

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

Vision Statement

We want to create a learning environment in our centers that is characterized by a high level of cooperation, collaboration and communication amongst all who participate such that children, parents and teachers flourish and thrive amidst a high degree of humility, humanity and who are sustained by the ability to see the lighter side of things so none take themselves too seriously. Children are masters at this. and humanity and with enough humor to lighten our way.

Goals for Your Children

NAEYC Standard 10.A.01

They will develop a positive view of themselves and others.

They will develop a love of learning.

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

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

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

Board

A Board of Directors oversees FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs. The Vice President for Student Affairs serves as chairman. The Board is composed of one parent representative from each of the centers, student government representatives, faculty representatives, community representatives and Programs staff. The Board is responsible for setting major policies, hiring selected staff and providing support and guidance to ensure the success of the programs. One parent representative is elected annually by each center. The parent must be in good standing with the program, have no grievance procedure pending, have no criminal record and be willing to serve for the good of both centers. The duties include attending all meetings of the board and voting. Candidates for election as parent representatives are nominated at the first parent meeting in the Fall

semester. Information about the candidates is published in the monthly newsletter. The election is held on two consecutive days following the announcement in the newsletter. Each family is entitled to one vote. The elected representative serves a one year term or until leaving the program or resigning. Should their child leave the center during their term they would no longer be eligible to serve on the board.

Staff

The Associate Director

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

Center Directors

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

The Teaching Staff

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

The Program Associate

The Program Associate is the first and primary contact for new parents. The Program Associate maintains the waitlist for the program and enrollment activities. The Program Associate assists the Associate Director with the overall management and administration of the program. The Program Associate is responsible for preparing all Human Resource and Payroll paperwork. The Program Associate prepares and distributes various types of communications to staff and parents. The Associate Director is an ex-officio member of the Board of Directors

Grants Administrator

The Grants Administrator is responsible for the overall administrations of various federal, state and local grants. The Grants Administrator assists the Associate Director with overall budget management, inventory control, financial tracking and purchasing. The Grants Administrator also assists the Associate Director with the overall assessment of the program.

Center Clerks

The center Clerks provide reception and support to the program. Clerks assist the center Directors with administrative functions. Clerks are trained to assist in the kitchen and classroom if needed.

Center Cooks

Center Cooks ensure that the program meets the nutritional and health and safety requirements for food service. Cooks ensure that food preparation, service and clean up follow state, accreditation and federal guidelines.

State Licensing

NAEYC Standard 10.B.04

All centers are licensed by the State of Florida through the Department of Children and Families. Annual unannounced inspections of the centers are conducted by the Department of Children and Families to ensure all

state standards, policies and procedures are met.

NAEYC Accreditation

The Infant and Toddler Child Development Center and the FSU Children's Centers are both accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

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

Admission and Withdrawal

Eligibility

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

Application

To apply for admission to our child care centers, a completed Enrollment Application form must be submitted to the FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs Office. When the completed application is received in our office, the child is placed on the waiting list. The Enrollment Application form is available on our website at www.childcare.fsu.edu.

Waiting List

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

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

Admission Procedures

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

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

It is the parent's responsibility to notify the FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs office of any changes in contact information. If parents cannot be reached due to invalid contact information, the child is removed from the waiting list. Currently enrolled children take first priority for space that becomes available at the next level of care. For example, children no longer eligible for infant and toddler care have first priority for spaces that open in the preschool.

Admission Forms

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

Withdrawal Procedures

A thirty day written notice must be given to avoid incurring tuition fees past the date you plan to withdraw your child. The notice may be submitted online at <http://childcare.fsu.edu/For-Parents> or on the **Withdrawal Form** available at the center or at FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs Office, 157 Herlong Drive #1. It **must** be signed and time/date stamped by a program staff member to be valid. Submitting the online form is considered signed. Other notifications such as verbal communication with a staff member will not be considered valid notices. Once a withdrawal form has been submitted, changes to an earlier date will not be accepted. **Failure to give the required 30 day notice will result in monetary charges for a full month's tuition irrespective of whether the child attends or not.** This allows the centers and families adequate time to prepare for the child's departure from the center and new families adequate time to enroll. You must inform the director of the center if your child will be out for a period exceeding one month. Should the child not attend for a period exceeding one month without communication with the center director, enrollment will be cancelled.

Termination from Centers

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

- (1) Tuition payments are two months behind and no payment plan has been arranged.
- (2) Lack of follow through on special arrangements for payment.
- (3) Failure to adhere to policies and procedures as communicated in the parent handbook.
- (4) The program is unable to meet the developmental needs of the child.
- (5) The child's behavior threatens the health and safety of him or herself, the other children or staff of the center.

Fees and Payment

Registration Fee

A \$20.00 non-refundable registration fee and the first month's tuition is due at the time of registration. Thereafter, the annual registration fee (\$20.00) is due September 1. Your financial obligation begins when you accept the enrollment by completing and signing the enrollment/admission agreement. Your signature on the enrollment agreement **obligates you for one month's tuition fees** whether your child attends or not.

Eligibility for Student Rates

To be eligible for student rates, a parent must be prepared to provide documentation from the University Registrar that verifies degree-seeking status **and** must be prepared to provide documentation from the parent's academic department that there is reasonable progress toward the attainment of a degree. If documentation is not provided, the community tuition rate will automatically be assessed. In other words, **just registering for a course at FSU does not qualify a parent to be eligible for the student tuition rate.** The parent **must be degree-seeking.** Parents who are enrolled as **special students may receive student rates for one semester or 6 hours whichever comes first.** Community tuition rates will automatically be assessed until the degree-seeking status is obtained.

Rates

Tuition rates are assessed according to parent status. To receive the full-time student rate, undergraduate parents must be registered for a **minimum of 12 hours.** For graduate student parents to receive the full-time student rate, they must be registered for a **minimum of 9 semester hours.** The part-time student rate is assessed to enrolled, degree-seeking parents who are taking less than a full load of credits. **It is important to note this policy is applicable to Fall, Spring and Summer semesters.**

Student Rate-Undergraduate parents must be registered for a minimum of 6 hours and graduate student parents must be registered for a minimum of 3 semester hours. During the summer semester, if a student parent is not enrolled, to receive the student rate during the summer semester, the parent must be registered at as student for the preceding spring semester and upcoming fall semester.

Pell Recipient/Eligible student (*under Infant and Toddler Center CCAMPIS Grant*)-To receive the Pell Grant student parent rates, the parent must be eligible to receive or be receiving Pell Grant funds.

Military Connected Family student (*under Infant and Toddler Center CCAMPIS Grant*)-To receive the Military connected student parent rate, the student must be in veteran or active duty status or have a spouse in veteran or active duty status.

Faculty/Staff Rate-Parents must be employed as an FSU faculty member, OPS, USPS or A&P staff member, FSU Visiting Scholar/Researcher /Post Doc.

Special student Rate-FSU employees enrolled as special students or as a student using the university tuition waiver will receive the Faculty/Staff rate. Parents who are enrolled as special students may receive student rates for one semester or 6 hours whichever comes first.

Changes in Family Schedule

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

Parent Status Grace Period

Students wishing to have their child remain in the program are eligible for a one semester grace period following graduation at the student rate. Community rates will be automatically assessed once the parent is no longer affiliated with the Florida State University. This policy applies to Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters.

Sibling Discounts

A 15% discount will be given to the second child in a family attending either center of FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs. A 25% discount will be given to the third in a family attending either center of FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs. The discount is given on the rate for that center's fee schedule that the second and third sibling attends.

If the first child is enrolled in VPK program, the second child discount will not apply. A 15% discount will be given to the third child in a family attending either center of FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs. The discount is given on the rate for that center's fee schedule that the third sibling attends. During the summer the discounts will revert to the regular discount rate for the second and third child.

Payment

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

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

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

Students receiving Financial Aid (Grants, Loans & Scholarships)

For students that receive financial aid of any kind it is important to understand how financial aid is disbursed through your Student Central account. When financial aid is paid out, the funds will first be used to pay off **any outstanding charges** owed on your student account (tuition, childcare charges, food services charges, parking tickets, etc). Once all outstanding charges are paid in full, any remaining financial aid funds are then disbursed to the student in the form of a financial aid refund. If a student does not wish to have childcare fees deducted from financial aid, it is the student's responsibility to pay those charges prior to financial aid being disbursed.

Late Charges/Past Due Payments

Unpaid, past due accounts, including any late fees, are placed on the University-wide accounts receivable system as a delinquent account for collection of the full amount due. This **may result in a registration and/or transcript block**. Parents will be asked to withdraw the child from the program if tuition is two months past

due. Once the child has been withdrawn from the center as a result of failure to pay, parents must prepay the entire tuition for the semester to re-enroll their child.

Change in Tuition Rates

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

Calculating Partial Month Tuition Payments

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

Parent of Record

To change Parent of Record (i.e. the parent who is held responsible for payment of tuition fees), **both** parents must sign a change in Parent of Record form at the FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs Office at 157 Herlong Drive. If both parents cannot be present the second signature must be notarized.

Special Arrangements for Tuition Payment

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

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten

- (1) Tuition associated with the 3.75 hours of daily VPK instruction is subsidized by the State of Florida. Parents are responsible for the parent portion of monthly tuition fees if applicable. Regular tuition rates and parent Portion rates can be viewed online at <http://childcare.fsu.edu/For-Parents/Tuition>
- (2) If a child is enrolled in the FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs but is not properly enrolled in the VPK program, the child will continue in the FSUCDP program as a regular fee paying student and the parents will be responsible for paying tuition fees at the current rate.
- (3) If a child is dismissed from the FSU Children's Center VPK program as a result of failure to adhere to the attendance policy as outlined above, the parent will be responsible for paying any amount not paid by VPK for the services provided at the current tuition rate for the FSU Children's Center.
- (4) Parents are responsible for paying tuition fees during enrollment in FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs not covered under the VPK program. Summer semesters are non-VPK semesters and parents are responsible for paying tuition according to the regular fee schedule beginning in **May**.
- (5) If a parent wishes to withdraw their child(ren) at the end of the VPK program, **parents MUST complete a Withdrawal Notice form, providing a written 30 day advance notice of the intent to withdraw**. Failure to provide the required 30 day notice may result in charges to the family beyond the intended participation period. Please review the FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs Family Handbooks for more details on the Withdrawal Policy.

School Readiness Subsidy

- (1) Parents are **responsible** for the full amount of the regular FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs tuition rate for their child.
- (2) It is important to understand that payments from ELC are based on the parent's ELC eligibility status, the number of days in the month and the number of days a child attends the center. Therefore a flat monthly tuition rate cannot be set by FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs.
- (3) Upon certification for participation in the School Readiness Program by the ELC, parents will receive a specified rate based on the center's tuition rate and the parent's eligibility status.

- (4) The ELC will issue a check for payment to FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs. This check will be applied to the parent's account as a subsidy payment.
- (5) Checks from the ELC are typically issued at the end of the month. Subsidy payments from the ELC are applied to next month's tuition.
 - a. Example: Tuition for October = \$670
 SR subsidy payment is received at the end of October=\$150
 Tuition for November= \$520 (based on October School Readiness payment)
- (6) Refunds to parents are only issued for money paid by the parent.
- (7) Under the School Readiness Provider contract, the FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs required to collect, and parents are required to pay, the daily Parent Fee rate. Failure to pay the Parent Fee will result in the parent being referred to the ELC for determination of continued enrollment in the School Readiness Program
- (8) Parents are responsible for paying tuition fees during enrollment in the FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs not covered under the School Readiness Program. The School Readiness program is available each semester for as long as the parent maintains their ELC eligibility.

The Programs

Infants and Toddlers

Ages 6 weeks to 2 and one-half years

The Infant and Toddler Child Development Center is located at 330 Pennell Circle on southwest campus. The Center serves 34 children ages 6 weeks to 2 and one-half years. A full-time director and 3 lead teachers, all professionally trained in either Early Childhood Education or Child Development, provide the leadership for this center. The several teaching assistants who help create the caring and nurturing environment are students at FSU who are pursuing undergraduate or graduate degrees. They receive specialized training to work with very young children by both external professionals and internal professional staff. The center is open 7:30 to 5:30 on the academic calendar i.e. when FSU classes are in session, the center is open. The curriculum, the toys, the daily schedule, the food as well as all aspects of your child's environment is planned to provide the best opportunities for maximum growth for your child. You will notice for example, if you have older children in one of the other centers, that the toys your children are provided are intentionally chosen for this age child...i.e. sturdy toys that have few pieces.

The Preschool Program

Ages 2 and one-half years to 5

The FSU Children's Center is a center for early learning which provides quality care and play-based education preschool age children is located at 169 Herlong Drive on southwest campus. The Children's Center serves up to 36 children ranging in ages 30 months to 5 years in two classrooms. A center director and two faculty instructional specialists provide leadership for the center. The education and care team also includes a number of assistant teachers are undergraduate or graduate students at FSU who receive specialized training to work with preschool children by both external professionals and internal professional staff.

The center follows the Florida State University academic calendar and is open 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM each day that FSU classes are in session. The daily schedule consists of large and small group activities structured group activities, outside play, multiple learning centers, family style meals and snacks, and time for rest.

Each day provides enriching opportunities, in and out of the classroom, for social, cognitive, physical and

emotional development in a safe, nurturing and supportive environment. The curriculum is child centered and driven by both teacher planned themes and the interests and needs of the children. Children have opportunities to talk with and listen to adults, talk and listen to other children, to hear stories, to listen to music, to exercise, to cook, to do art activities, and to sing. Special projects are planned such as walking “field trips” in and around the centers, cooking projects, special guests etc. The primary goals of the Children’s center are to help each child feel secure, to become “school-ready” to help them learn how to get along in a group and participate in the classroom community, while embracing and celebrating their unique individuality and to develop their unique talents and abilities.

Center and Classroom Placement

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

Typical Daily Schedules

Greeting/Arrival: Parents escort their child to their classroom and to their teacher. *Small Group Activities/Choice Time:* After arrival, children choose from a variety of centers and play areas in their classroom. *Large Group Time:* Children meet with their teachers who have planned a variety of activities such as music, movement, weather and other skill building activities to focus on the specific developmental needs of the group. *Outdoor Activities:* Twice each day children go outside except in extreme weather conditions. The children choose from a variety of activities including climbing, outdoor dramatic play, tricycle riding, sliding and other large motor games. *Departures:* Parents pick up their children from their classrooms and talk with their teachers about the day’s activities.

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

Infant & Toddler Child Development Center Daily Schedule

7:30 AM	Open
7:30-8:30 AM	Greet Children/Free Play
8:30-9:00 AM	Center time
9:00-9:30 AM	Diaper Change/Potty
9:30-10:00 AM	Breakfast
10:00-10:30 AM	Circle Time Stories/Songs
10:30-11:30 AM	Outside Time
11:30 AM -12:00 PM	Wash hands and clean up
12:00-12:30 PM	Lunch
12:30-12:45 PM	Diaper Change/Potty
12:45-2:45 PM	Nap Time
2:45-3:00 PM	Diaper Change/Potty
3:00-3:30 PM	Snack Time
3:45-4:00 PM	Teacher’s Choice
4:00-4:30 PM	Outside Time
4:30-5:00 PM	Diaper Change/Potty
5:00-5:30 PM	Clean Up/Free Play
5:30 PM	Close

The FSU Children's Center Daily Schedule
Peach Room (Younger Children's Classroom)

7:30 – 8:30 AM	Arrival/Choice Time/Small Group Activities
8:30 – 8:45 AM	Clean Up/Greetings/Music
8:45 – 9:00 AM	Bathroom/Wash Hands
9:00 – 9:20 AM	Breakfast
9:20 – 9:30 AM	Clean Up/Bathroom/Wash Hands
9:30 – 9:45 AM	Large Group Time/Calendar/Weather
9:45 – 10:35 AM	Outdoor Activities
10:35 – 10:45 AM	Bathroom/Wash Hands
10:45 – 11:00 AM	Large Group Time/Learning Theme
11:00 – 11:45 AM	Choice Time/Small Group Activities
11:45 AM – 12:00 PM	Clean Up/Bathroom/Wash Hands
12:00 – 12:30 PM	Lunch
12:30 – 12:45 PM	Bathroom/Wash Hands/Brush Teeth
12:45 – 1:00 PM	Story Time
1:00 – 2:30 PM	Naptime
2:30 – 2:45 PM	Bathroom/Wash Hands
2:45 – 3:15 PM	Snack
3:15 – 3:30 PM	Large Group Time/Music/Letter Bucket
3:30 – 4:15 PM	Outdoor Activities
4:15 – 4:25 PM	Bathroom/ Wash Hands
4:25 – 5:30 PM	Choice Time/Small Group Activities
5:30 PM	Close

Green Room (Older Children's Classroom)

7:30-8:25 AM	Arrival/Choice Time/ Small Group Activities
8:25 – 8:30 AM	Clean Up
8:30 – 8:55 AM	Large Group Time/Calendar/Weather/Theme
8:55 – 9:00 AM	Bathroom/Wash Hands
9:00 – 9:30 AM	Breakfast
9:30 – 9:40 AM	Clean Up/Bathroom/Wash Hands
9:40 – 10:00 AM	Large Group Time/Learning Theme
10:00 – 10:50 AM	Choice Time/Small Group Activities
10:50 – 11:00 AM	Clean Up/Bathroom
11:00– 11:15 AM	Music/Literacy
11:15 AM – 12:05 PM	Outdoor Activities
12:05 – 12:15 PM	Bathroom/Wash Hands
12:15 – 12:45 PM	Lunch
12:45 – 12:50 PM	Bathroom/Brush Teeth/Wash Hands
12:50 – 1:00 PM	Story Time
1:00 – 2:45 PM	Nap Time/Quiet Time
2:45 – 3:00 PM	Bathroom/Wash Hands
3:00 – 3:30 PM	Snack/Wash Hands
3:30 – 3:50 PM	Large Group Time/Daily Review
3:50 – 4:15 PM	Choice Time/Small Group Activities
4:15 – 5:00 PM	Outdoor Activities
5:00– 5:10 PM	Bathroom/Wash Hands
5:10 – 5:30 PM	Choice Time/Small Group Activities/Clean Up
5:30 PM	Close

Children With Special Needs

The centers will make every effort to include children with special needs. Staff will assess each child on a case by case basis in cooperation with the parents/guardians and other professionals as appropriate. Every effort will

be made to make reasonable accommodations and adaptations that are reasonably achievable. Accepting children with life threatening illnesses or disabilities will be made on a case by case basis by a review committee composed of parents'/guardians, physicians, public health representatives, therapists, center director and Associate Director. Periodic reviews by this committee will assess progress, risks (self and others), staff required to take care of the child's needs. If, after inclusion and a review of attempts at accommodation and adaptations, the center is unable to meet the needs of the children, the center reserves the right to request that the parents seek a program that does meet the needs. For children with special needs, only staff who need to know are informed of the child's condition. The parents/guardians will be responsible for any expenses needed for observation and/or testing.

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK)

In 2002 an amendment to the State Constitution was approved by voters. It reads: "Every four-year-old in Florida shall be provided by the State of Florida a high quality prekindergarten learning opportunity in the form of an early childhood development and education program which shall be voluntary, high quality, free and delivered according to professionally accepted standards." The VPK program facilitates the future educational success of children by enhancing pre-reading, pre-math and social skills. The first VPK class at FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs began in the spring semester of January of 2006. This State- of- Florida- sponsored program is administered locally by the Early Learning Coalition of the Big Bend.

The first five years of a child's life are most critical for brain growth and development. It is during these early years, "the learning years," that the foundation for future success and learning is based. Children develop essential school readiness skills such as the ability to be attentive and follow directions during these primary years. Children who participate in high-quality early childhood education programs develop better language skills, score higher on school-readiness tests, have more effective social skills and fewer behavioral problems once they enter school. Early education enhances what a child learns at home and instills a love of life-long learning.

Child must be 4 years old on or before September 1 of the school year to participate in VPK during that school year **and** reside in the State of Florida.

FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs provides a VPK Program that begins in fall semester and ends in spring semester. VPK instructional hours are 8:15 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Monday-Friday. Tuition associated with the 3.75 hours of daily VPK instruction is subsidized by the State of Florida. The total number of instruction hours is 540. Parents are responsible for the parent-portion of monthly tuition fees if applicable. **Non-VPK instructional days** include all days that the FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs program is closed including University holidays, semester breaks and spring break.

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

Application forms are available at <http://www.elcbigbend.org>. Parents will need to **submit documentation of Florida residency and proof of the child's date of birth to the Early Learning Coalition of the Big Bend**. The application form describes various documents that will be accepted as proof. It is important to note that parents must take this documentation **in person**. No faxes or forms sent in by mail will be accepted. If a child is eligible for the VPK program the parent will receive a Child Eligibility and Enrollment Certificate. The Early Learning Coalition of the Big Bend is located at the Northwood Centre, 1940 North Monroe Street, Suite #70, Tallahassee, Florida 32303, phone number is (850)385-0504. Office hours are Monday – Thursday 7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Parents must submit a Child Eligibility and Enrollment Certificate for each VPK eligible child to be officially enrolled in the VPK program. If a Certificate of Eligibility is not submitted to FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs, the child will not be enrolled in VPK. Children who are four, and eligible, but not enrolled in the VPK program must pay tuition fees according to the current regular fee schedule. It is the parent's responsibility to insure that all the necessary steps are completed to enroll their child in the VPK program.

Children requiring full time care and/or those currently enrolled in FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs will take first priority in the placement process. If there are more children currently enrolled and eligible for the VPK Program than there are spaces available, date of enrollment in FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs will determine the order in which placements are made. Placements filled from the waiting list will follow the priorities according to the current policies. FSU priority is given to currently enrolled FSU students. The next priority is given to FSU faculty and staff and other interested parents in the community.

It is important that each child attends every day and arrives on time to receive the maximum benefits and to ensure they are prepared to succeed in kindergarten. Although absences and late days do occasionally occur, to maintain a child's eligibility in the FSU Children's Center VPK program **regular and prompt attendance is required**. Frequent absences (more than 3 days per month) and recurrent tardiness (more than once per week) may result dismissal from the FSU Children's Center VPK program.

(1) Attendance:

- (a) A child **may not be absent more than 3 days per calendar month**
- (b) If the child is absent for more than three days (3) per calendar month, the parent must provide documentation justifying the excessive absence. Examples of an extraordinary circumstance that may require excessive absences include the following:
 1. Hospitalization of the child or parent with appropriate documentation;
 2. Illness requiring home-stay as documented;
 3. Death in the immediate family with appropriate documentation (i.e., obituary, death certificate);
 4. Court ordered visitation with appropriate documentation (i.e., court order); or
 5. Unforeseen documented military deployment or exercise of the parent(s).
(Florida Administrative Code 60BB-4.500)
- (c) Each day children must be **signed in and out, with the time recorded**.
- (d) The attendance sheet must have the **signature** of the person signing a child in and out. Initials are not permitted.
- (e) At the end of **each month** of participation, parents will be **required to verify**, by their signature, that their child attended the days indicated on the monthly attendance sheet.
- (f) Children must arrive in the VPK classroom no later than 8:15 AM daily.
- (g) To be eligible for the FSU Children's Center VPK program children **must attend during the instructional hours of 8:15 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** Parents who prefer not to bring their children during those hours will be ineligible for FSU's VPK program and will be asked to seek enrollment at another program that best fits their individual needs.

In addition to understanding FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs VPK policies, parents should understand their rights and responsibilities and the State of Florida VPK program. Parents may visit the Early Learning Coalition website at <http://www.elcbigbend.org>. or the Florida Office of Early Learning at <http://www.floridaearlylearning.com> for more information. It is important to note that the VPK statutes and rules may change periodically. As soon as FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs is notified of any changes in the rules and procedures, parents will be notified.

School Readiness

In 1999 the Florida Legislature passed the School Readiness Act (FS 411.01). In addition to consolidating early education programs in Florida, this act created a more efficient and unified delivery system to increase a family's ability to pay for high quality care and education for their children. The Florida School Readiness Program offers financial assistance to low-income families for early education and care so they can become financially self-sufficient and their young children can achieve education and personal success.

Participation in the Florida School Readiness Program offers many benefits to parents, children and families, which include:

- Prepares young children to start kindergarten ready to learn
- Helps working families afford quality early learning services.
- Keeps parents in the workforce and/or participating in educational activities.
- Helps families become financially independent.
- Recognizes parents as their child's first teacher.
- Provides parents information about child development and family well-being.

To qualify for the School Readiness Program parents need to meet three specific eligibility requirements:

- Parent(s)/guardian(s) must be working **or** participating in an educational activity such as attending college or trade school at least 20 hours per week.
- Gross income must be at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty level for family size.
- Families must pay a copayment for child care based on income and family size.

The School Readiness Program is a State of Florida sponsored and funded program, enrollment in FSU Child Development Programs does **not** automatically enroll children into the program. The parent must apply and be certified through the Early Learning Coalition of the Big Bend (ELC).

To enroll on the ELC's Wait List <https://spe.schoolreadiness.org/pe/> Families will receive a call from ELC staff to review the details of the application. If the information provided appears to meet the requirements of the program, an appointment will be scheduled to determine program eligibility. Once eligibility is confirmed, the family will select a child care center and service will begin immediately. More information is available online at <http://www.elcbigbend.org/Parents/School-Readiness-Waitlist>

The ELC requires periodic re-certification for families to continue to receive tuition assistance. It is the parent's responsibility to maintain their certification eligibility as required.

Regular attendance is required. **Payments by ELC will not be authorized for more than three (3) absences per calendar month except in the event of extraordinary circumstances.** The ELC is the final decision maker on approval for payment. Parent must complete an Extraordinary Absence Reimbursement Request Form and provide documentation justifying the absences

Examples of an extraordinary circumstance that may require excessive absences include the following:

1. Hospitalization of the child or parent with appropriate documentation;
2. Illness requiring home-stay as documented by physician;
3. Death in the immediate family with appropriate documentation (i.e., obituary, death certificate);
4. Court ordered visitation with appropriate documentation (i.e., court order); or
5. Unforeseen documented military deployment or exercise of the parent(s).

Curriculum

Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum

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

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

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

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

Character Education Curriculum

As it is our goal to facilitate children’s development in all areas, we include a character education component in our curriculum. The overall goal of this component of our curriculum is to provide instruction and promote the development of common/universal socially acceptable character traits as well as to build classroom community. The traits we emphasize are: Love, empathy, gentleness, respect, visualization/relaxation, self-control, friendship, conflict resolution, kindness, responsibility, cooperation, diversity awareness including acceptance, appreciation and celebration, and compassion. These traits are whole units from the *Kindness Curriculum: Introducing Young Children to Loving Values* by Judith Anne Rice which is the curriculum selection chosen

from the state-mandated pre-approved list. The major goals are to facilitate independence, promote the identification of feelings/emotions, facilitate the appropriate ways of expression of feelings/emotions, promote empathy, cooperation, caring and peace, facilitate self-control, facilitate bonding, attachment and friendship. In addition to the Kindness Curriculum, we integrate and supplement with *The Peaceful Classroom*, *Skill Streaming for Early Childhood*, *I Love You Rituals*, *Can Do Kids* and *The Cooperation Booklet*.

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

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

Screening and Assessment

Purpose

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

The Screening and Assessment Instruments

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

Screening and Assessment Schedule/Timeline

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

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

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

The *portfolio* for each child contains work samples, academic skills checklist, anecdotal records, photos etc. which identify and demonstrate strengths and accomplishments. Along with the other instruments, this insures

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

Administration of Screening and Assessment Instruments

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

Screening and Assessment Results

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

Those that will have access to screening and assessment results are:

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

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

used to inform parents and staff so that they can make decisions together on how best to meet the child's needs, provide an appropriate program, and ensure school success.

Referrals

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

Parents may choose (and are encouraged) to contact outside agencies/organizations for programs or services directly (i.e. without a referral if the organization does not require one). Staff are encouraged to help families who need assistance with negotiating health, mental health, educational services or other assessments needed for their children. Center directors maintain lists of resources that can be shared with any parent who would like information about organizations that provide early intervention or other kinds of help. Additional resources are included on page 44.

Referral Process

The referral process is outlined below:

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

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

Confidentiality

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

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

Parental Involvement

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

Parent Conferences

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

Holiday and Birthdays

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

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

Field Trips

The learning environment for our centers extends beyond the classroom walls and playground to the special resources in the larger FSU learning community. To take advantage of these "extras" the children may walk to the planetarium or to the FSU TV station or other interesting places that border the centers.

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

Special Events & Visitation

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

Operating Policies

Attendance Policy

It is very important that the families of the children enrolled in FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs understand the attendance policies and their responsibilities related to those policies. Failure to adhere to policies could result in unanticipated or extra fees on your behalf.

When the Program is Open

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

- FSU Infant & Toddler Child Development Center 7:30am-5:30pm (M-F)
- FSU Children's Center 7:30am-5:30pm (M-F)
- VPK hours 8:15 am-12:00 pm M-F (Fall/Spring Semester Only)

Absences and Tardies

By enrolling your child in either of the FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs' centers you are agreeing to pay the monthly tuition fee for as long as your child is enrolled, irrespective of the actual number of hours your child uses the service. **No refunds, prorates or credit is given to accommodate individual family vacations, changes in family schedules, or absences due to illness or injury.**

We request that every family inform the program of any known upcoming absences and/or tardies so that the teachers can plan center activities accordingly. Should the child not attend for a period exceeding one month without communication with the center director, enrollment will be cancelled. Tuition fees are assessed until enrollment is cancelled via the completion of the Withdrawal Notice form. The attendance policy is detailed in another portion of this handbook.

If your child's participation is, in any part, assisted financially by Federal or State of Florida funds, absences must be documented (excused) in writing and turned in to the program. See the VPK and School Readiness sections of this Handbook for examples of extraordinary circumstances/excusable absences.

Arrival and Departure Procedures

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

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

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

yourself is going to pick up your child, make sure they are on the authorization list for your child to be released and they bring a picture I.D. to show to the lead teacher. No child will be released to an unauthorized person.

University Holidays and Closings

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

Emergency Closings

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

Open Door Policy and Child Access

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Late Pick Up Policy

Parents are expected to pick up their child a few minutes **before** closing time. A charge will be assessed at the rate of **\$5.00 for any portion of the first five minutes beginning the minute the center closes at 5:30 pm and \$1.00 per minute thereafter.** Charges are assessed when incurred, due upon receipt, and payable at University Housing. If the child has not been picked up one hour after closing and parents or emergency contacts cannot be located, the FSU Police Department will be contacted for their assistance. This action will be taken only as a last resort. Parents are responsible for all late fees for the entire period that staff must stay with the child. The director will be apprised of families who are consistently late. The director will then contact the family for a conference to work out a solution.

Guests

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

Security and Access

Beginning fall semester of 2010, the University implemented a new security system for The FSU Children's Center and the Infant and Toddler Child Development Center. The new system uses a key pad which allows access only to those who have been issued access codes. This ensures that only those with legitimate need to be in the centers are allowed access.

Each family is issued one code after all paperwork is completed for enrollment and is verified in the FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs office at 157 Herlong Drive #1. The code consists of a four digit number assigned by FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs. To gain access, the parent enters a number on the key pad located on the front door of each center. There will be a clicking sound that unlocks the door allowing entrance into the center.

For Everyone's Security

- (1) Please do not share your number with others, even those who may infrequently drop off or pick up your Child.
- (2) The code will be deleted effective on the child's withdrawal date.
- (3) Parents need to notify the center well in advance, preferably by e-mail, of alternate plans for pick up.

- (4) In an emergency, if the parent cannot pick the child up, it is important to notify the center director as soon as possible so that alternative plans can be made.

Babysitting

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

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

Pets

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

Bicycle Helmets

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

Picture Taking

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

Transportation

FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs do not provide transportation to and from the center nor are staff members permitted to provide transportation for children to and from the centers.

Religious Practice Policy

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

Baby Walkers

FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs does not permit the use of baby walkers.

Toys From Home

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

Clothing

Comfortable, sturdy clothes that are easily taken off are the best choices for participating in the centers. Sturdy, close-toed shoes that are easily removed are the best choices for safe play. For safety's sake, children should wear shoes that are closed both on the toe and heel as well as fit snugly without binding the feet. Since children are active learners, "dressy" clothes are likely to get soiled or damaged so it is best to not wear them to school. Children should always have clothing appropriate for the weather, light clothing in the spring, summer and fall and heavier clothing during the short winter season. All children should have an extra set of seasonal clothing including socks and underwear. All clothing should be marked with your child's name.

Lost and Found

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

Use of Photos

From time to time we like to publicize the activities of our centers on our web site, the programs social media pages (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc), program displays, program advertising (newspaper, magazines, etc), brochures, or other University publications. It helps us share with others the excitement and pride we feel in the children's activities and learning. Parents are asked to provide consent for their child to be photographed by program staff with digital camera or videotape recording and to use his/her picture in connection in the exhibition and/or publicizing of FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs. Parents may opt to have their child's pictures used in the classroom only.

Release of Child from Center

Your child shall be not be released to any person (s) other than the authorized parent, legal caregiver and listed individuals on the enrollment forms. Any person (s) authorized to take a child from the center, other than the child's parent or legal caregiver, must present picture I.D. to the staff before a child is released. If parents or caregiver cannot be reached, the persons listed on the "authorization for pick up" will be called in case of illness, injury or emergency: (It is the parents' responsibility to keep the center current). **Please note that employees of FSUCDP may not be listed as persons authorized to pick up children from the centers.** If the child has not been picked up one hour after closing and parents or emergency contacts cannot be located, FSU Police Department will be contacted for their assistance

FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs as Teaching and Research sites

The second part of our mission is to "provide excellent service to the academic community". Part of the extension of the classroom is hands on experience in actual classroom settings which all our centers provide with close supervision. Our centers also participate in extensions of current knowledge about early childhood education through collaboration and cooperation with various FSU academic departments and their various research projects.

Guiding Children's Behavior

Supervision Policy

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

At The FSU Children's Center, for children 30 months to 60 months the ratio is 1 teacher to 9 children.

Teaching staff supervise by positioning themselves to see as many children as possible. Infants, toddlers/twos

are supervised by sight and sound at all times and are positioned so they can hear and see any sleeping children for whom they are responsible. For preschoolers the teachers supervise primarily by sight and may supervise by sound for short intervals as long as the teachers check frequently on children who are out of sight.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Guidance/Discipline Policy

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

Guidance/Discipline for Infants and Toddlers

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

Guidance/Discipline for Toddlers and Pre-School children

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

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

Persistent and Serious Behavior

Occasionally there will be a child whose behavior is excessively disruptive to the classroom environment or who is harmful to themselves or others. If a child becomes a threat to his/her own safety, other children's safety or staff safety, a teacher will gently hold the child until the child is able to gain control and feel safe and calm again. If a child has frequent episodes in which he or she is a threat to others' safety the teacher, director and the parents/guardian will work together to plan an intervention that will prevent/eliminate the negative behavior. If the behavior persists and the center is unable to meet the child's needs, the family will be asked to remove the child from the center. A request for withdrawal will be the last option after all other options have been exhausted.

Parents' Concern About Other Children's Behavior

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

Biting

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

asked to help plan additional interventions. Only after all options have been exhausted will a child who bites be asked to withdraw from participation.

Food and Nutrition

Food Provided by the Centers

F.A.C. 65C-22.005(1)(c)

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

Food from Home

F.A.C. 65C-22.005(1)(c)

NAEYC Standard 5.B.02

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

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

Food-Related Activities & Special Occasion Food Consumption

The centers in the FSU Childcare and Early Learning Programs provide food-related activities such as curriculum related cooking activities, gardening, center-wide and classroom celebrations. Parents are asked to provide permission for their child to participate in food related activities and special occasions wherein food is consumed. This permission includes advising the centers of food allergies, dietary restrictions and items that the child may not eat or handle.

Health and Safety

Allergy Information & Consent to Post

In compliance with health & safety regulations, parents are required to notify the centers of their child's allergies and food preferences. This information must be in writing, as well as your consent to post the information for all staff to see it in an effort to protect your child's health and culture. If the request is for medical reasons, the centers are required to have medical documentation in your child's file. Please advise the center of any food allergies, non-food allergies, and cultural food practices you want your child to follow in school (such as no pork).

Illness Policy

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

You will be called if:

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

Your child may return to the center:

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

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

Communicable Disease Policy

State law does not allow children to remain in a center if the child has a communicable disease or the symptoms of a communicable disease. Parents must notify the director of the center within 24 hours if the child has a suspected or known communicable disease. Parents of all the children will be notified about any incidence of communicable diseases in the center, without divulging the child's name who contracted the illness. By the usual means of communication the parents will be informed about the nature of illness, its signs, symptoms and other precautionary/prevention/palliative measures that may be taken.

Medication

NAEYC Standard 5.A.11.a-d

The administering of all medications, both non—prescribed (over the counter) and prescribed, must be accompanied by a physician’s note. Staff may administer medication to your child provided the “Authorization for Medication” form has been completed by the parent. No medication or medicinal herb can be administered unless this form has been completed. Prescription and non-prescription medication must be in the original container. Prescription medication must have a label stating the name of the physician, child’s name, name of the medication, and medication directions. All prescription and non-prescription medication will be dispensed only according to the written directions on the prescription label or printed manufacturer’s label. The dispensing of non-prescription medicines must be accompanied by a physician’s note along with the correct dosage. A physician’s order with specific medication directions is required for staff to administer as needed medication. Non-prescription medicines should not be placed in your child’s backpacks or school bags and brought to the center.

Medication Authorization Forms

NAEYC Standard 5.A.11.a-d

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

Sunscreen

NAEYC Standard 5.A.07.b

During the spring and summer months, the weather can be very hot and sunny and the children need sunscreen in order to prevent sun burn while having great fun on the playground. We will provide sunscreen for your child that provides protection for Ultraviolet Light B (UVB) and Ultraviolet Light A (UVA) with a sun protective factor (SPF) of 45. In order for the FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs to apply sunscreen on your child, when needed, parents must sign a consent form. If you have any concerns or question, feel free to talk with the director of your center.

Insect Repellent

NAEYC Standard 5.A.07.c

During certain times of the year mosquitoes can be a problem for outside activities and the children may need insect repellent to reduce the potential for bug bites while having fun and enjoying the playground. Per State Licensing and NAEYC accreditation standards, the application of insect repellent must contain DEET. We will provide insect repellent containing DEET for your child. The insect repellent will be only applied once per day on an as needed basis when recommended by the Florida Public Health authorities due to the high risk of insect-borne disease. Repellent will be applied only on children older than two months.

In order for your child to use insect repellent, you are required to provide consent. The public health authority advises that anyone with known allergies to personal insect repellents should not use these products. Parents should check the manufacturer’s recommendations before use. If you have any concerns regarding your child’s use of insect repellents, you should consider seeking medical advice prior to giving consent. If you have any concerns or questions, feel free to talk with the director of your center.

First Aid

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

Injury at the Center

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

Insurance

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

Emergency Procedures

In general, all emergencies are coordinated through Florida State University Police who are generally the first responders and coordinate all other emergency operations. There are emergency procedures and equipment in place to ensure the safety and well being of our children, families and staff. The following briefly outlines some of this information:

Emergency Procedure-Medical

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

Emergency Procedures...Loss of Power

In the event of a localized emergency such as the *loss of power*, the center director is authorized to close the center to protect the health and safety of children and staff.

Emergency Procedures-Fire Procedures

NAEYC Standard 10.B.08; 10.D.08

Fire drills are practiced monthly. Each classroom has a posted evacuation route, emergency procedures, smoke detectors and fire extinguishers. Our procedures for fire emergency include lining up, walking quietly to the designated meeting place, taking roll and entertaining children until the "all clear" signal is given. Teachers will turn off the lights and close all doors to contain fires. If there is a fire, the clerk will call 911.

Emergency Procedures-Tornado Procedures

NAEYC Standard 10.B.08; 10.D.08

In the event of a tornado, teachers will take all children to the most interior and central part of the centers, away from windows, doors and electrical panels. The children will squat with their hands over the backs of their necks and look at the floor if possible. Attendance will be taken at the safe place. If there is a tornado, the clerk will call 911.

Emergency Procedures-Hurricane Procedures

The University closes when a hurricane threatens the safety of students and their families. Access the official FSU Web site www.fsu.edu or call 644- 4636 for information about closing.

Emergency Procedures-Severe Thunder Storms

NAEYC Standard 10.B.08; 10.D.08

Children will be kept away from windows and doors during thunder storms. Children will play inside only.

Teachers will be on the alert for safety issues such as close lightening strikes that may cause a power outage or fires. If an emergency situation arises, the clerk will call 911.

Emergency Procedures-Intruder/Lock Down Procedures

NAEYC Standard 10.B.08; 10.D.08

The lockdown signal is given. Children will remain indoors. All windows and doors will remain locked. Only the director or a specifically appointed staff member has the permission to open doors. No one will be allowed into the building. If word is given that the intruder is on the facility premises, all children will be gathered to a central location away from the windows and doors and will be kept as quiet as possible. The clerk will call 911.

Family Reunification Destination

In the event that there is an emergency event that requires the complete evacuation of one of centers, the designated place of Family Reunification is at the Alumni Village Main Office, located at Building 157 Herlong Drive, Office #1, telephone number 644-1874.

Emergency Preparedness Drills Posted

Written records of emergency preparedness drills are posted in each center. It includes the type of drill, number of children and staff, and time taken are recorded. With the exception of fire drills all are done annually.

Evacuation Plans

NAEYC Standard 10.B.08; 10.D.08; FAC 65.22.002(7)(h)

Each classroom has posted evacuation and emergency procedures.

Emergency Preparedness Drills Posted

Written records of emergency preparedness drills are posted in each center. It includes the type of drill, number of children and staff, and time taken are recorded. With the exception of fire drills all are done annually.

Evacuation Plans

NAEYC Standard 10.B.08; 10.D.08; FAC 65.22.002(7)(h)

Each classroom has posted evacuation and emergency procedures.

Immunizations

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

Special Needs

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

Diapering

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

Toilet Training

Children are toilet trained when they are ready to use the toilet on their own within their physiological and emotional time and needing little assistance from adults. A child is truly toilet trained when your child can tell you what they need to do not what they have already done. Children MUST be toilet trained to participate at the

FSU Children's Center as licensing requirements do not allow participation of children who are not. When children are ready, staff in the Infant and Toddler Child Development Center provide the support and nurturance to help them master this important developmental milestone. For parents who have children in the Infant Toddler Center, please feel free to talk about your child's toileting needs with the lead teacher or director.

Child Abuse Policy

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

Smoke-Free Zone

NAEYC Standard 9.D.06; 10.D.01

All centers are designated as Breathe Easy Zones which means that no one may smoke in any center, playground or in any areas near the center (a minimum of 50 feet) such that children, parents, staff or other members of the community are exposed to second-hand smoke. The FSU policy regarding smoking can be found at http://deanofstudents.fsu.edu/policypdf/Smoking%20Policy_0910.pdf

Sleeping Infants

NAEYC Standard 5.A.12.a-c

To reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death (SIDS), infants must be placed on their backs to sleep. Other soft items such as pillows, quilts, soft toys are NOT allowed in the crib. Infant's head stays uncovered during sleep. When a blanket is used with infants, the infant is placed at the foot of the crib with a thin blanket tucked around the crib mattress and up only as far as the infant's chest. After being placed down to sleep on their backs, infants may then be permitted to sleep in any comfortable position to which they can easily turn to from their backs. Infants that arrive to the center asleep or that fall asleep while in the center in equipment not designed for sleeping (swings, strollers, high chairs, etc.) will be removed and placed in a crib.

Communication Between Family and Centers

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

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

Official Notices

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

Newsletter

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

Take Home Folders/Cubbies

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

Staff Mail Boxes

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

Bulletin Boards

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

Anti-Bias Policy

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

Surveys to Assess Programs

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

Parents as Partners

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

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

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

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

*Program Evaluation, Accountability,
Strategic Plan for Continuous Improvement*

Introduction

One key to the maintenance of a high quality program is ensuring that there is system in place to continuously monitor program effectiveness. FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs has such a system. Data is collected from each group that has an investment in the whole -- children, student parents, staff, board, faculty and participating FSU students--to determine whether or not we are fulfilling our mission, accomplishing our goals and objectives and, most importantly, assessing whether the children who participate in our centers are indeed receiving the highest quality care and learning environment that prepares them for success in life.

Several methods of data collection provides feedback/evidence. These methods include cross-sectional, longitudinal surveys, one on one interviews and parent meetings. Additional levels of accountability are provided by the oversight of the FSU Advisory Board, FSU University Housing and compliance with University Accountability Policies and Procedures.

Cross-sectional Surveys

Annually, in the Spring Semester, each participating family is sent via e-mail a 21- item **Parent Satisfaction Survey**. Twelve questions use a 5-item Likert scale, 1 question uses a yes/no format, 4 questions use a multiple choice format and 5 questions use an open-ended format which includes a comments section.

Annually, in the Spring Semester, each staff member is sent via e-mail a 45-item **Professional Satisfaction Survey**. The survey includes 2 questions identifying center of employment and length of employment, 39 items use a 5-item Likert Scale, and 4 questions use an open-ended format.

Annually, each faculty member who sends students to our centers is sent via e-mail a **Faculty Survey** assessing the quality of the laboratory experiences of their students. The 10-item survey includes 8 multiple choice items and 3 open-ended questions including a comments section.

Longitudinal Survey

Throughout the year, exit surveys are sent via e-mail to each participating family upon receiving their withdrawal notice. It is a ten-item survey with 2 multiple choice questions, 4 questions using a Likert scale and 4 open-ended questions.

Interviews

When initiating requests for laboratory experiences for their students, a meeting is scheduled with each faculty member to discuss the new request and to evaluate (if applicable) the previous experience of their students. The essential question discussed is whether or not our programs provided the experiences that the faculty member intended for the students and in what ways the experiences may be improved or modified. For theses and dissertation research projects, final results are discussed and reviewed.

Content

The emphasis of the data collection efforts focus on goal achievement with regard to children's learning and progress according to program goals and objectives, quality of care and education, quality of teachers, quality of communication with family, overall policies and procedures, benefits to parents, community awareness and community satisfaction.

The surveys are designed, collected, implemented and archived through an internet provider which the program has used since 2006.

Results Shared

The results of the surveys are downloaded into FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs survey data base. The results are shared with parents, board, community in the monthly newsletter, the "Little Noles" which is posted on FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs website as well as in monthly letters to staff from the director.

Accountability

This data along with e-mail comments/concerns and one-on-one conversations from parents, board members, community member, one-on-one conversations, is used in Director's annual performance accountability reviews, to plan the Directors next year's work and professional development; in FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs Directors staff meetings to plan for the next year's work and for continuing education and professional development; in preparing the Strategic Plan for the FSU Childcare & Early Learning Programs Advisory Board which includes parent representatives; for annual reports; and other University required accountability measures such as the preparation of annual report to the Vice President for Student Affairs.

Grievance Procedure

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

Step 1. If the problem is with an individual, talk it through with that person directly as soon as is practical.

Step 2. If the problem is not resolved with the person directly, then discuss it with your child's lead teacher, if appropriate.

Step 3. If the problem remains unresolved, talk with the Director of your center.

Step 4. If the problem still is unresolved, prepare a written complaint and submit to the Associate Director who will respond within 30 days.

Child and Family Support Services

NAEYC Standard 8.A.01

Local Resources Information

1. Florida Department of Children and Families <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/childcare/>
2. Florida Diagnostic Learner's Resources <http://www.fdlrs.leon.k12.fl.us/>
3. Pre-Kindergarten Early Intervention Program <http://www.fldoe.org/families/>
4. Capital Area Healthy Start Coalition <http://www.capitalareahealthystart.org>
5. Early Learning Coalition of the Big Bend Region <http://www.elcbigbend.org/>
6. FSU Center for Prevention and Early Intervention Policy <http://www.cpeip.fsu.edu/>
7. FSU Center for Autism & Related Disabilities (CARD) <http://autism.fsu.edu/>
8. FSU L.L. Schendel Speech and Hearing Clinic <http://speechandhearingclinic.fsu.edu/>
9. Whole Child Leon <http://www.wholechildleon.com/Get-Help/Resource-Guide>
10. Early Head Start for Leon County (Administered by Kids Incorporated)

<http://www.kidsincorporated.org/>

State Resources

1. Florida KidCare <http://www.floridakidcare.org/>

State Information Resources for Special Needs

1. Florida KidCare <http://www.floridakidcare.org/>
2. Family Network on Disabilities <http://www.fndfl.org/>
3. The Florida Association for the Deaf/Blind and Multi-Handicapped, Inc.
<http://www.fdlrscrown.org/Special%20Places%20Files/FADBMSp.asp>
4. Prader-Willi Syndrome Association <http://www.pwsausa.org/>

