

McHenry County College

Children's Learning Center

Parent Handbook

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PHILOSOPHY

The Children's Learning Center is dedicated to providing a sound early childhood program for children between the ages of 15 months and five years of age that meets their social, emotional, physical and intellectual needs in a safe, homelike and loving environment. The unique characteristics of each child are valued at our center. Each child's interests and developmental stages are nurtured by our well-trained and talented team of early childhood professionals. At the Children's Learning Center, we enjoy and appreciate children – their diversity, their challenges, and their successes. Our center is a place where all children are respected and loved.

We believe childhood should be a time of great joy, love and exploration. Based on our teachers' knowledge and the particular needs of what is meaningful for each child, curriculum emerges from the combination of teacher direction and children's interest. Our early childhood professionals plan and prepare a program that is developmentally appropriate and maintains a professional commitment to the National Association for the Education of Young Children's accreditation criteria. In a developmentally appropriate program, hands-on experiences and age-appropriate play, activities and materials provide the foundation for learning and early literacy. Unlike formal instruction that focuses exclusively on academic skills, our play-oriented activities offer choices to children in a learning environment that supports and fosters their freedom of expression, growing independence, and positive self-esteem.

Our childcare philosophy is based on flexibility and choice for children. The center respects and accommodates the individual developmental levels of the child; we do not expect children to mold themselves to fit a prescribed plan of development. Discipline is approached in a positive manner with the goal of helping children learn self-control and problem solving strategies.

GOALS

In accordance with the philosophy of the MCC-CLC, the goals are:

1. To promote the child's physical development, to help him/her become socially competent, to encourage emotional growth and to stimulate cognitive development.
2. To provide an environment where children can develop a sense of trust, autonomy and initiative.
3. To encourage curiosity, creative problem solving, and self help skills by providing a variety of developmentally appropriate learning experiences.
4. To provide a secure, supportive environment where each child's individual needs and abilities are considered. As we accomplish these goals, we are operating as a lab school for MCC Early Childhood Education students while meeting the needs of MCC students, faculty, and staff who require quality care for their children while on campus.

CENTER INFORMATION

The MCC Children's Learning Center is licensed by the Department of Children and Family Services and follows standards set forth by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. A copy of state licensing regulations is filed in the Director's office and may be seen upon request.

CENTER STAFF

Our center is staffed by an outstanding group of dedicated teachers and professional care givers. They are educated and trained in early childhood education, above and beyond what is required by the state of Illinois, and can provide the environment and activities appropriate for our children. Additionally, at least one staff member, usually more, is trained in CPR/First Aid.

Our staff believes that a cooperative relationship is essential between the Center and parents so that a quality program can be provided for all children. Staff will keep parents informed about their child's daily activities and developmental achievements.

All teachers at MCC CLC must have an enthusiasm for teaching young children, a foundation in child development, an appreciation for each child's individuality, and an ability to stimulate a child's natural curiosity. They must also be sensitive to each child's needs and responsively involved with children. We expect all staff members to perform all aspects of their job as completely and professionally as possible. Our staff receives ongoing in-service training and attends available workshops, courses and conferences.

DAILY PROGRAM

The MCC Children's Learning Center practices a developmentally appropriate approach to early education as advocated by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Our curriculum emphasizes learning as an interactive process. The teachers prepare the environment for children to learn through active exploration with other children and materials. Our goal for early education is to ensure that children acquire the foundations for healthy development and learning.

Our program is both age-appropriate and individually appropriate. Age-appropriate activities are based on knowledge of typical physical, emotional, social and cognitive development within a particular age span. We also recognize that each child is unique with an individual pattern, timing of growth, personality and family background.

Our teachers plan the curriculum for each class. We take each child's individual interests, needs and developmental levels into consideration as we plan our program. Opportunity for small group and individual play to help children learn these skills:

Gross Motor

- Building blocks
- Pounding materials
- Equipment to climb on, push and crawl through
- Materials to promote rolling, running, kicking, throwing, etc.
- Transportation toys for pedaling
- Aerobic exercise

Manipulative (Small Motor)

- Puzzles
- Sand and water play
- Models
- Materials to put together, take apart, string, lace, stack, etc.

Basic Concepts

- Games and materials stimulating children to acquire an understanding of such concepts as colors, shapes, sizes, opposites, letters, numbers
- Working with teacher in small groups and/or individually
- Computer activities

Art (open ended)

- Drawing, painting, pasting, cutting, marking and tearing, using all types and textures of materials
- Modeling with a variety of doughs

Language Arts

- Looking at books
- Using flannel characters to construct their own stories
- Listening to taped stories
- Using puppets to verbalize their own stories
- Listening to stories being read to children in small groups and/or individually
- Fingerplays, chants
- Use of a wide variety of "writing tools" for beginning understanding of written communication

Drama

- Home center
- Building blocks, small transportation toys and models
- Dress-up clothes
- Theatre and puppets
- Variety of props for play related to a specific concept or event

Music

- Listening to tapes, records
- Experimenting with a variety of instruments
- Small group and /or individual singing
- Movement to music with the use of a variety of props like streamers, scarves, etc.
- Rhythmic activities

Science

- Discovery experiences relate to animals, plants, weather, and the physical world
- A variety of props to use for experimentation with magnets, prism, magnifying glass, movement of objects and change of objects

All activities encourage children to get along with others, express feelings appropriately and solve their own problems.

Through all of the activities in the MCC-CLC, an attempt is made to create and develop in each child:

- A feeling of belonging, love and respect
- Friendliness and consideration for others
- Self-confidence, initiative and a positive self-image
- An inquiry approach to learning
- An opportunity to participate in large and small group activities
- An opportunity to develop skills in sharing, negotiating, cooperating and helping

In addition, children will experience large group activities which include the following:

- Games and exercises
- Story time and finger plays
- Music and movement
- Conversation time (related to concepts, current happenings, etc)

DAILY SCHEDULE

In keeping with the philosophy and goals of the MCC-CLC, a daily schedule has been developed to allow for center exploration time, large and small group activities and daily routines. To encourage curiosity, exploration and problem solving, some learning centers remain constant, while others are varied. The curriculum is play based, which encourages children to develop skills and obtain knowledge through exploring their environment. Within the following schedule, there may be some flexibility.

Center Exploration Time
Large Motor Activities (indoors and outdoors)
Snack
Small Group Time
Center Exploration Time
Large Group/Circle Time
Lunch
Outdoor Time
Rest Time
Center Exploration Time
Snack
Large Motor Activities (indoors and outdoors)
Large Group/Circle Time
Center Exploration and Dismissal

HOURS OF OPERATION

The MCC-CLC is open during the day, Monday through Friday. Hours sometimes differ per semester. The Center is not in operation during semester breaks or when the college is closed.

TUITION

Child care tuition due dates are posted in advance on the calendar for the semester. Preschool tuition is due on or before the fifteenth day of each month. Cash and credit card payments can be made in the Office of Registration, A258. Checks, made payable to MCC, can be paid in the Office of Registration or in the CLC Director's office, C115.

Cash payments will not be accepted in the CLC office.

Automatic payroll deduction can be used during the Fall and Spring semester by MCC employees. Those who are eligible can use pell grant funds for child care, as well. Either of these options must be arranged in advance with the Center Director.

Tuition is considered overdue on the day after your scheduled due date. A \$10 late fee will automatically be applied to your financial account. If no payment has been made after 10 days, your child's enrollment will be terminated. Re-enrollment will be subject to available space in the classroom once payment is made. When your child is admitted, specific hours and days are reserved for your child. No other child can take that time slot until you withdraw your child. Therefore, there is no reduction in fees when your child is absent from the center. Tuition is due regardless of vacations, illness, holidays, or inclement weather.

ARRIVAL AND PICKUP

When your child arrives at the Center, **attendance must be registered by signing in on the sign in/out sheets located near the door of each classroom.** Please help your child put away personal items and wash his/her hands. When you pick up your child, they must also be signed out on the same sheet. This procedure must be followed any time a child arrives or departs from the Center, as this is a DCFS requirement. Failure to sign in or out on any given day may result in a \$5 fee charged to your monthly tuition bill for each occurrence.

Children will be released only to those persons who are authorized on the daily release form. If the Center staff does not recognize the authorized person, ID will be requested. If your child is ever to leave with someone who is not on the daily release form, written notification, signed by the parent or guardian, is required. **Your child will not be released to this person otherwise.** Verbal consent is not preferred, as we cannot guarantee the identity of the person on the other end of the phone. All persons authorized to pick up your child must be at least 18 years of age.

LEGAL CUSTODY

If you are experiencing custody difficulties, we strongly urge you to keep the Center Director and staff fully advised of circumstances which might affect the Center and your child.

It is the responsibility of the parent to keep the authorized list of people allowed to pick up a child current and accurate. **Unless legal documentation is submitted to the contrary, parents share equal rights to drop off or pick up a child.**

If there is a change in legal custody and one parent is granted sole custody of your child, and the other parent is no longer authorized to have contact with your child, you must inform the Center of this fact and provide the Center Director with a copy of the court order confirming the custody. The copy will be placed in the child's file at the Center.

ABSENCE

If your child will be absent, please call the center office at 815.455.8555. Voicemail messages may be left when the Center is closed. If you know your child will be absent, please notify the office or your child's teacher. Your cooperation in notifying us of both planned and unplanned absences helps us to operate our Center more efficiently. This in turn helps keep down operating costs and tuition rates. **Tuition refunds are NOT given for absences.**

ADMISSION AND DISMISSAL

1. The parents or guardian will meet with the MCC-CLC Director to discuss admission and policies of the Center.
2. The parent/guardian will be responsible for submitting the following completed forms prior to the child starting in the center. **A child will not be admitted into the center without all information turned in and complete:**
 - health examination- within the past six months; including immunizations, TB test and exam
 - verification form – DCFS message to parents
 - enrollment information
 - enrollment contract
 - consent/daily release form
 - emergency information form
 - signed discipline policy
 - **Birth Certificate is required**
3. A child may be dismissed from the MCC-CLC if one or more of the following characteristics become a problem:
 - Inability to benefit from the type of care or program offered
Although we try to meet the needs of all of the children in the Children's Learning Center, not all children can be successful in the same environment. At that time, the teachers will work with the parents to determine the most beneficial situation for a particular child in order to ensure a positive learning experience.
 - Presence is detrimental to the group
Repeated instances of hurting other children that includes, but is not limited to, hitting, kicking and biting, make it difficult for us to ensure the safety of the other children in the group. Additionally, the same behaviors directed toward any teacher or student worker can result in disenrollment as well.
 - Parents do not keep up with fee payment
Tuition payments are due as posted. There is a brief grace period, as written in the contract, before past due payments are sent to collections. Re-enrollment after the child's name has been taken off of the roster is contingent upon available space in the center.

- Parents are uncooperative with staff, policies, or purposes of the center
Our policies and philosophies have been created in accordance with guidelines set forth by DCFS, NAEYC and the Early Childhood Education department at MCC. Please work with us to help to provide the best learning experience for your child.
4. Children are enrolled for the semester and must re-register at the beginning of each new semester. This does not apply to preschool children who enroll for the entire school year (August through May).
 5. The MCC-CLC is open to eligible children regardless of race, religion or ethnic background.
 6. Children with special needs will be served within the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

LATE PICK UP CHARGES

Children in the CLC are contracted to arrive and depart on different schedules. Because of all of the various comings and goings, we sometimes have a rather tight schedule of children enrolled in the classroom, causing us to fall out of compliance when children are dropped off early or picked up late. If you are in need of extra hours within the Center's operating hours, please arrange within 24 hours to allow the Center Director an opportunity to check availability. **Extra hours cannot be guaranteed, due to space limitations.** You will then be billed the normal hourly rate for the additional time. **This must be done in advance to count as extra hours.**

If extra hours have not been arranged and a child has not been picked up by the time scheduled, a late charge will be added to the next month's billing statement. If children are at the center past their scheduled time, parents and emergency contacts will be called. If children are still at the Center more than half an hour past closing, the police and the social services department may be contacted if all attempts to reach family and other contacts have failed.

Your child anticipates your arrival. A child can become worried and anxious if his classmates have all been picked up and his own parent has not yet appeared. In addition, staff who have put in a full day are inconvenienced and ready to leave, return to their families and carry out their personal plans for the evening. We strongly advise parents to abide by the contracted schedule times.

(Continued)

The fee for a first time late pick-up is \$1.00 for every minute, according to the clock in the classroom. This fee is doubled thereafter for every late pick-up within a monthly billing period (i.e. second time late in one billing period, the fee is \$2.00 for every minute). The doubling of the fee is only for one billing period and the fee will go back to \$1.00 per minute at the beginning of the next billing period. This fee applies to all programs. A late pick-up form is signed on the date of the late pick-up by the staff and parent. Enrollment will be terminated if a child is picked up late four times in one billing period, or seven times in three consecutive billing periods.

If a parents wishes to have a conversation with his/her child's teacher or other parents at the end of the day, he/she should arrive at least 15 minutes early in order to do so, rather than at the scheduled pick-up time.

ELIGIBILITY

The MCC-Children's Learning Center is for children whose parents meet one of the following criteria:

1. They are enrolled as a student at MCC.
2. They are employed at MCC.

Hours of attendance will be prearranged with **no drop in care provided**. Parents will contract with the Center for the hours needed. There will be a 2-hour minimum. Schedule changes will be accommodated, if possible, during the first week of classes and during the midterm week.

The above does not apply to the preschool room.

Children in the Green Room must be between 15 months and two years old. Children in the Red Room must be between two and six years old. Transition between the two classrooms will depend upon a variety of factors, including age, stage of development and individual needs of a particular child. Children will not be transitioned mid-semester. Children in the Three Year Old preschool program must be three by September first of that school year and potty trained. Children in the Four Year Old preschool program must be four by September first of that school year and potty trained. Children in the Five Year Old preschool program must turn five before December 31 of that school year and be potty trained.

ILLNESS

We understand that children occasionally get sick and that your child's illness is understandably a matter of great concern. However, if your child exhibits symptoms of short-term, contagious diseases which can be transmitted through casual contact (fever, vomiting, diarrhea, sore throat, frequent cough, heavy running nose, frequent sneezing, etc) during a 24-hour period prior to scheduled attendance at the Center, your child should be kept at home until the symptoms of illness have been absent for 24 hours or a note from the physician accompanies the child, stating that your child does not have a contagious condition and is able to participate fully in all activities at the Center. Children with vomiting, diarrhea, a temperature of 101 degrees oral or above are considered too ill to attend. A child sent home with a fever may not return until that child has had a temperature of less than 101 degrees oral for at least 24 hours, without medication given to reduce fever. When taking the temperature under the arm, as we do at the Center, an additional degree must be added to equal an oral temperature.

Should your child develop or display obvious symptoms of illness or display what would be considered abnormal behavior (such as refusal to eat, unusual fatigue, excessive irritability) while at the Center, a decision will be made by the Director or designee, that he or she may not be permitted to remain at the Center for the duration of the day. In such an instance, "early pick-up" is required to take place as soon as possible, and no later than one hour from the time that the staff person calls you to advise you of the need for early pick-up. During that time period, your child will be cared for by a staff member in a safe and comfortable area of the classroom away from the other children. Failure to pick up your child within one hour of notification will result in a doubled late fee. Staff will make repeated efforts to contact you, or your child's designated alternative emergency contact, in order to assure that notice of the need for pick-up is received. You can facilitate this effort by taking steps to assure that you can be reached in the event of an emergency. Please be prepared to follow the Director's decision regarding early pick-up. The Director and staff realize that keeping your child at home may be inconvenient; however, when every parent cooperates, the spread of illness is kept to a minimum.

It should be noted that any child with an undiagnosed or contagious skin or eye condition cannot attend the Center. You must notify the Center in the event that your child is diagnosed as having any communicable disease/infection (e.g. strep throat, scarlet fever, head lice, chicken pox, measles). A notice will be posted informing parents of any communicable disease and the infection period.

In order to return to the Center after an illness, your child must be well enough to eat meals and snacks, go outdoors, and be fully able to participate in all activities in the Center.

Our staff will call you when it seems that your child is developing a health problem. We hope that such early communication can facilitate the resolution of health problems as they occur and thereby prevent the spread of illness.

THE ABOVE DESCRIBED ILLNESS POLICIES WILL BE FIRMLY ENFORCED.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

If, in the opinion of the staff on site at the time, your child's injury/serious illness may warrant emergency treatment, 9-1-1, along with campus security, will be called. You will be notified immediately after the rescue squad has been called. The signed emergency card allows the center to have your child transported to the hospital emergency room and treated there.

For less serious injuries, at the discretion of the staff, you will be notified by phone or by Accident Report at the end of the day, depending on the degree of the injury. Although we make every effort to keep your child safe, children are most likely going to accumulate some bumps, bruises and scratches during the early years.

MEDICINE

Effective starting with the spring 2008 semester, the teachers will no longer be administering medication to children, nor will medication be stored in the center. The exception to this will be the administration of emergency medications, within the scope of our professional competency, which will be considered on a case-by-case basis. In these cases, a doctor's order must be faxed to the center at (815) 479-7715. An emergency medication is medication that is necessary to prevent significant life altering/threatening situations.

Parents are welcome to come and administer appropriate medication to their child as prescribed by a physician. Please talk with your child's teacher if you plan to do this so that we can make sure we are in the classroom when you stop by.

We will continue to administer sunscreen and diaper creams as per parent requests, however all prescription diaper creams must have a faxed doctor's order to accompany it in order for us to keep our policies consistent.

PHYSICALS

Your child must have a physical examination by a licensed physician prior to your child's first day of attendance at the Center. The completed health report is part of the pre-enrollment paperwork and must be submitted to the Center. You will need to submit updated physical inoculation and examination forms signed by a licensed physician at least every two years. Immunizations for younger children may need to be updated more frequently.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

The Center follows the McHenry County College inclement weather policy. The college uses radio and TV stations to announce closings and delayed openings. When the college is closed, the Children's Learning Center is closed.

If the emergency occurs overnight or in the early morning, radio stations will be notified prior to 6:15 a.m. and the College will remain closed throughout the day.

Please listen to the radio and TV stations listed below for announcements regarding closings. Please do not call the college unless it is absolutely necessary because there will not be full staff available to answer the phone whenever the weather is extremely poor.

The following is a list of radio and TV stations called by the College. The College has no control over when the first announcements are made or the frequency of the announcements made by various stations.

WMAQ – AM 670	WRMN – AM 1410	WZSR (STAR 105) – 105.5FM
WGN – AM 720	WMCW – AM 1600	WBBM/TV – Channel 2
WBBM – AM 780	WNIJ – 89.5 FM	WMAQ/TV – Channel 5
WLS – AM 890	WNIU – 90.5 FM	WGN/TV – Channel 9
WKRS – AM 1220	WJKL – 94.3 FM	WFLD/TV – Channel 32
	WXLC – 102.3 FM	CLTV NEWS – Cable

If you are interested in utilizing the e-mail notification feature of the Emergency Closing Center of the *Chicago Tribune* when weather conditions force school closures, you can register on the web site: <http://emergencyclosing.com>
MCC will utilize this service when the college has closed.

CLC EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The State Department of Children and Family Services require that we have a fire drill at least once a month. The children are comfortable with this procedure and it will be used in the event of other emergency evacuations.

1. One teacher blows a whistle to get the children's attention. The other teacher posts a sign on the door with directions for parents.
2. The children are directed to get their coats, depending on the weather, if there is time.
3. The children are directed to line up at the door that provides the least restrictive exit.
4. The teachers take the sign in sheet from the door and emergency cards with them.
5. The teachers and children proceed to the designated spot and do a head count and compare it to the sign in sheet to be sure that all children are accounted for.
6. If we cannot return to the building, the teachers and children will proceed to the soccer field. Teachers take another head count and double check the sign in sheet.

7. Maintenance will drive a van to the soccer field to shelter the children.
8. Parents who are on campus pick up children on the soccer field.
9. In the event that we cannot get back into the college after an evacuation, children whose parents are off campus will be taken to the **McHenry County College Shah Center, 4100 W. Shamrock Lane, McHenry**, by the Director or Teachers. Parents will be notified of the closing by phone and the CLC staff will remain with children until parents arrive to pick them up. With this in mind, we ask that all parents keep us updated on phone number changes. The phone number at University Center is (815) 455-8593.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Each enrolling parent is issued a copy of the MCC-CLC discipline policy as part of the enrollment paperwork required prior to starting at the center. The following is a copy of that information:

"Discipline is an inner control that balances responsibilities toward oneself and others. It is not a punishment that is done to someone else, but is a quality which grows within the individual. The role of the adult is to assist the child in developing inner discipline by creating a supportive environment. This involves an understanding of the social and emotional development process as it relates to the child and the adult. It includes the development of the adults who have enough self-understanding and self-acceptance to work in a supportive manner with young children as they really are. It requires a classroom environment that provides an appropriate room arrangement, an interesting curriculum, activities that support creative play, and enough trust and security that real problems emerge honestly and are confronted by people who have practiced creative problem solving."

(Creating Discipline in the Early Childhood Classroom by Nancy Leatzow, Carol Neuhauser, Liz Wilmes).

At the MCC-CLC, we understand that children need guidance in order to develop the skills necessary to make wise decisions. Children need some limits, directions and rules by which to abide. Young children cannot feel good about themselves while breaking rules and angering others. Disruptive behavior can be stopped by offering positive alternative activities. Discipline directed toward disruptive children will be geared to the development of self respect, healthy, interpersonal relationships and problem solving skills. As teachers, we must give regard to feelings and emotions of unique individuals and preserve an atmosphere of acceptance, tolerance and patience.

In the MCC-CLC, we will approach guidance in a positive, constructive manner. Our goal is to help children build an inner framework of self control so they can work, play and learn in a cooperative and enjoyable manner. Some of the ways we will use to achieve this atmosphere are as follows:

1. Set explicit, understandable limits and rules for personal and group conduct. The rules will be fair and appropriate for young children.
2. The teachers will be precise, consistent and fair in their expectations, requests and explanation of rules.
3. The teacher will use positive reinforcement terms. For example, instead of "don't run" say "let's walk." Using gerunds as gentle reminders is also appropriate. Instead of "be quiet and listen" or "quit talking" say "listening." Statements such as these will help turn negative behavior into acceptable activity.
4. We'll use the technique of "renewal time" instead of "time out." Renewal may be explained as being alone for a little while, playing quietly in a different area or sitting with the teacher for a few minutes. This is a chance for the whole self to be renewed, instead of a child being "out" for bad behavior. A positive alternative to misbehavior will be offered. The purpose is to get children into a cooperative condition rather than to punish them. After renewal time, everyone just starts over.
5. Children will be encouraged to solve their own problems whenever possible. For example: Unless a teacher is an eye witness, never take one child's side against another when you hear, "I had it first" or "He pushed me first." Try to avoid asking "who had it first?" This opens an opportunity to give negative reinforcement to both parties – the offender receives attention when he/she is reprimanded and the offended receives attention for tattling. It is preferable to encourage the children to talk to each other. If a solution cannot be reached, the teacher can suggest that both seek another activity for the time being.
6. The MCC-CLC teachers will attempt to prevent behavior problems by anticipating trouble. Appropriate arrangement of materials, offering a choice of activities, and being alert to the emotional environment can minimize stress and promote trust.
7. MCC-CLC teachers will help children clarify natural consequences for misbehavior, making sure the teacher's demeanor and body language do not seem punitive.
8. Realistic encouragement and specific compliments will be given, thus expanding the child's awareness of what has been accomplished and creating a feeling of competence.
9. Parents will be informed of the Guidance and Discipline Policy. If a child's behavior needs to be reported to the parent, the teacher will inform the parent when the child is picked up in a positive and confidential manner. Specifics on what the action of the child and the response action of the teacher was will be given to the parent. Requests for parent's input to aid the center or shed light on a child's behavior may be made.

BITING

Toddlers often bite out of frustration. Biting is a very common problem with younger children. Although biting is a natural behavior for young children, we do everything we can to prevent it.

When a biting incident occurs, we calm the child that has been bitten, clean the area thoroughly with soap and water and apply ice to the area. The parents of the bitten child are informed of the bite via the MCC-CLC Accident Report form and the parents of the child that did the biting are informed with a similar Incident Report form.

We talk to the child that did the biting and calmly but firmly explain that biting hurts and that biting is not allowed. We then explain that when we touch someone, it must be a gentle touch. The child's parents are informed of the incident. If the incident becomes habitual, we ask for a parent conference to work as a team to help the toddler stop biting.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENT INVOLVEMENT

In the belief that parents are a child's first teacher, we at the Children's Learning Center provide opportunities for our children's parents to be involved in our program. Listed below are some of the opportunities, along with a brief description.

1. Registration/Orientation – parents meet with the director and receive a description of how the program works, it's policies and requirements, all the necessary enrollment forms and, if possible, a short tour of the center.
2. Open House – children, parents and family are invited at the beginning of Fall and Spring semesters to come to the CLC to meet the teachers and see the classrooms before their first day of school.
3. Handbooks, newsletters – parents receive a parent handbook at the registration orientation. This handbook further explains the center's goals, philosophy, policies and schedule. Newsletters are distributed monthly informing the parents of monthly classroom activities, reminders of due dates, specific policies and dates that center is closed
4. Visitation, observation – parents are welcome to come to the center to visit or observe their children. The Children's Learning Center has plans "join us" times. The parents are invited to join the children at a special time to either have lunch or snack with us or to participate in a specific activity. We have observation windows in the offices that look into the Red and Green Rooms. Many parents take advantage of this opportunity to observe their children without their children knowing that they are being watched. Additionally, we always welcome parents into the classroom to help with activities. Whether it is to read a story, play an instrument or help out with a special project. We are glad to work with you to plan an appropriate time and activity.

- Center and child evaluations – each semester, parents are given an evaluation form and are asked to anonymously fill it out, giving their opinion of the center's performance concerning the staff, the equipment and the center's management. Each semester the teachers send home a skill's checklist which they have filled out on each child. Parent-Teacher Conferences are also offered at this time as an option for parents who are interested.

EVALUATION

Each semester the children will be carefully observed by the teachers resulting in a skills checklist which will be sent home. The teachers check only what they observe when the child is present at the Children's Learning Center. Consequently, some children's skills checklist will have more items checked than others. Not only the amount of time but also the time of day that the child is here, affects which skills are observable. For example, if a child is here 11:50-1:50, the child spends most of his/her time for lunch and rest. Large motor development skills and cognitive skills will be harder for the teachers to observe. If skills are not checked, this does not mean your child is not capable of performing those skills, it means that those specific skills were not observed by the teachers.

WHOLE LANGUAGE

Some parents have questioned whether the Children's Learning Center teaches numbers and the alphabet skills to the children. The philosophy of the CLC is to use the whole language approach when dealing with Math and Reading readiness. This approach incorporates these skills throughout the day by making use of free choice materials, within the planned activities, and at the child's request or need for individual attention. Examples of this approach are: the printed labels throughout the room which identify objects, and small motor materials available for the children during free choice time that stress counting, matching and sorting. The writing table with writing materials available, songs, finger plays, games and stories also are materials and methods which enhance Math and Reading Readiness. The CLC believes a child must progress at his/her own pace and does not believe worksheets are developmentally appropriate at this age.

The older children are encouraged to print their own name if they know how. You, as parents can help your child learn the correct way. It is important that the children learn the correct printing procedure from the start. Show them how proper names are printed with the first letter capitalized and the following letters in the lower case form. The proper formation of D'Nealian handwriting, which is utilized in most of the area public schools, is available upon request.

DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICE

The CLC strives to provide an environment that encourages problem solving and self directed activity. We recognize the importance of open ended, process centered, child centered activities. The teachers use open ended questions to facilitate divergent thinking, realizing young children will not always solve problems in the same way an adult will.

ANTI-BIAS CURRICULUM

An anti bias curriculum is a curriculum which presents materials, and activities of multi cultures. It stresses cultural similarities instead of differences. This approach will help children of different cultures see how they are the same. It will also help everyone feel accepted and part of the whole group, which is important in a child's development of self-esteem.

Different cultures may celebrate a variety of holidays or have a different approach to celebrations. In the CLC, we attempt to be sensitive to this diversity by keeping holidays and celebrations low key and not reinforcing commercialism.

For example, on Valentine's Day, we do not distribute commercially purchased valentines, but rather encourage the children to make cards for their friends and distribute them into mailboxes. We further the experience by arranging a field trip to the on-campus mail room and learn about how mail gets to where it needs to be.

Due to the number and variety of food allergies and intolerances, we ask that candy not be brought and distributed at school, even into cubbies during holiday times.

INSURANCE

The MCC-CLC is insured by Hartford Insurance Company for property and personal liability as required by the Department of Children and Family Services licensing standard. The specifics of our multi-peril policy are available upon request.

FOOD SERVICE

Mealtime and snacks are an important part of our daily curriculum. We believe these times should be enjoyable and educational experiences for each child. Food is served family style; the staff sit and eat with the children for lunch and snacks.

Our center will provide all beverages and two snacks per day that meet the nutritional standards of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Lunches are catered in from the College cafeteria and also abide by the appropriate health and nutrition guidelines. Please notify the staff and Center Director of any food allergies or intolerances so that appropriate substitutions can be made.

With this in mind, we ask that **no food** be brought into the center. Breakfast should be eaten before entering the classrooms. Lunches and snacks may only be brought from home if there is a severe allergy issue documented by a doctor's note.

OUTDOOR PLAY AND FIELD TRIPS

Regular outdoor play is a very important part of a child's growth, exploration and learning about their environment. We plan to follow the guidelines and accreditation criteria for outdoor play of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), as well as the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). All age groups play outdoors daily, if conditions permit, for children's health and safety. Please be sure to send your child in appropriate attire for the weather, including coats, hats, mittens, scarves, boots, etc. We also require that gym shoes or similar footwear be worn on the playground. Sandals and flip flops are not allowed, for safety reasons.

The MCC-CLC does not schedule off-campus field trips, but rather takes advantage of field trip opportunities that are available to us internally. A blanket consent form is included in your enrollment paperwork.

On-campus field trips may include, but are not limited to, the garden, the planetarium, the greenhouse, the mail room, the EMS area or the baseball fields. The teacher-child ratio is maintained on these field trips and teachers bring along walkie-talkies to call for help in the event of an emergency.

PARENT-STAFF EMPLOYMENT ARRANGEMENTS

MCC-CLC employees and student workers are hired to care for children at our Center. Any babysitting or child care arrangements made between you and a Center employee is a personal agreement between those two parties.

REST TIME

Children in the Red and Green Rooms will have a regular daily rest time. Children will have their own cot and a sheet and small blanket are provided. You are welcome to bring a special blanket or soft nap toy, as well.

Children who do not choose to nap will be given a choice of alternate activities.

NON-VIOLENCE

We do not allow gun play at the Center. Recognizing that gun play can be an important way for children to feel powerful, we provide many alternative opportunities for children to play out the important theme of powerful decision maker – without weapons. Our staff help define the limits of aggressive fantasy play to ensure that all children feel safe and comfortable. We create a play environment in which children have many real choices and can therefore exert control throughout their day.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

ALL clothing and personal items belonging to your child must be clearly labeled with your child's name. Our Center is well-supplied with a wide variety of toys and equipment. It is NOT necessary or desirable for toys to be brought from home. If a special blanket or soft toy is brought for use during rest time, it should be kept in the child's backpack until needed. Special days will be planned when children can enjoy Show-and-Tell events. For these occasions, it may be appropriate for your child to bring a toy to share.

- At NO time should your child bring a toy weapon or toy gun to the Center.
- Children are NOT to bring money, food, candy, balloons or gum to the Center.
- You are responsible for supplying all diapers and wipes for your young child. At least two changes of clothing must be at the Center for all children.
- Please watch for monthly newsletters and your child's mailbox for reminders of any needed supplies for seasonal changes, such as sunscreen, sun hats, and bathing suits in the summer and hat, mittens and warm outerwear in the winter.

CLC ENROLLMENT REMINDERS

1. We are licensed by the Department of Children and Family Services to take children ages 15 months through 6 years old. Children in the Red and Green rooms do not have to be potty trained.
2. CLC Red and Green rooms operate on "Flex-time." Arrival and departure times are at ten minutes to each hour. Please come at your contracted times. Early drop off or late pick up that is not prearranged as Extra Hours will result in the late pick up fee as outlined in the Parent Handbook.
3. You may request extra hours on an "as needed" basis. If we have room, your child may come. You will pay for the additional hours within seven days of the date of extra attendance. Please call in advance to find out if there is room. We can not accommodate drop in care.
4. Be sure to bring all enrollment forms on or before the first day and give them to the director or put them in her cubby.
5. A hot lunch is required by the Health Department. All children present at 12:00 will receive a hot lunch. Total semester hot lunch fees are added in with the tuition bill statement.
6. If your child is here during rest time, please have him/her bring a blanket (with name on it) and stuffed animal (optional).
7. If your child will be absent, please call the center, 455-8555, to let us know. The day that the child is absent is not deducted from your bill.
8. We ask that all children bring a complete change of clothing in their tote bag, which can be hung on the hook, along with their coat. The tote bag should go home each day.
9. Be sure to pay your bill on time. There is a \$10 late fee if the payment is not made by the due date. If the payment and late fee is not received by the 7th day, the child will be withdrawn. Re-enrollment is subject to space available once payment is made in full.
10. Parents may park in the back parking lot (three 15 minute drop off spaces are reserved for parents) and enter through the CLC play yard gate. This entrance is for parents with children attending the CLC only. Parents may use this entrance only when they are bringing their child or picking him/her up.
11. Classrooms are locked for security precautions. Your child's safety is very important to us.
12. Contract changes resulting in a reduction in total contracted hours of service fees are allowed only during the first week and 8th week of spring and fall semesters, and only during the first week of intersession and summer semester. Contract changes resulting in additional hours of service are allowed at any time, provided that there is space available.
13. Each child has a cubby for his/her art work, monthly newsletters and notes to the parents. Please check your child's cubby each day he or she attends the CLC.
14. Please have children keep gum, candy, and toys at home. These items cause unneeded confrontations at school.
15. By state law, any child exhibiting signs of illness, especially vomiting, diarrhea and fever, are not allowed in the classroom. Parents will be called to take their children home in these instances.
16. Be sure to sign your child's name and the time arriving and departing on the appropriate sign in/sign out sheet every day. The signature of the person picking up the child is required by DCFS.
17. In an effort to keep everyone healthy, all children must wash hands as soon as they take their coats off.