



Family Handbook

Revised 2/2016



Welcome

We warmly welcome you to *The Children's Center* at Red Rocks Community College. We hope that your family will enjoy *The Children's Center* and the friends that you meet here. This handbook describes our purpose and philosophy as well as the policies and procedures that make each day as safe, healthy, happy, and enriching for your child(ren) as possible. Please feel free to stop by the Director's office at any time if you have any questions or thoughts to share. We look forward to getting to know you and thank you for choosing to be with us.



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Philosophy and Purpose

We want the best for our family-learning, safety, love and joy!

Mission

Our mission is to:

- Support children as they learn about and discover their own uniqueness in a rich, caring, loving, environment where relationships between children, families, and staff are nurtured.
- Provide a demonstration/lab site for RRCC students and the community of high-quality child care practice.

Philosophy

We believe:

- **Children learn through play and discovery**

We provide for learning by assuring the environment is rich in appropriate materials that nurture exploration and growth in creativity, imagination, physical skills, language, literacy, math, science, the arts, dramatic play, and social skills.

- **In empowering the growth of each child**

- by using careful observation of children as the basis for communication and interactions with children, for planning based on the interests and uniqueness of each child, and to foster communication and connections with families;
- by assigning children to primary caregivers and ensuring continuity of care;
- through warm, attuned interactions between adults and children;
- through well-planned and thought-out daily schedules, transitions, activities and environments.

- **In building community with our families**

Building relationships provides a strong foundation for community, learning and personal growth. We nurture relationships by connecting with children, families and each other on informal, personal levels, and taking time for reflective practice. We know that each child, family and staff member is unique. We respect that uniqueness by listening carefully, communicating clearly, encouraging growth, exploration and risk-taking, and by being patient.

Staff

We believe that, in order to provide high quality child care, our teachers must be well educated and trained in the field of early childhood. The Children's Center staff participates in ongoing training and education. Each of our classroom teachers is strongly encouraged to become director qualified, which requires several more early childhood classes than are required by the State of Colorado Department of Human Services, Childcare Division for Early Childhood Teacher certification.

Primary Caregiving and Continuity of Care

There is ample research supporting primary teaching (caregiving) and continuity of care as a strong foundation for optimal development and learning. Primary care giving assigns a child and family to one teacher who has time to get to know the child, the child's family, family culture, temperament, cues, and personality so that the teacher can be responsive to the child's developmental needs. Primary care giving, combined with continuity of care (moving the primary group of children and their teacher to the next room together) create strong home-school partnerships, foster communication between teachers and families, help children create strong friendships, and pave the way for a responsive, child-centered curriculum. The National Research Council on Early Childhood states, "If there is a single critical component to quality, it rests on the relationship between the child and the teacher/caregiver, and in the ability of the adult to be responsive to the child." We support these relationships through assigning a primary teacher/caregiver to each child, and ensuring continuity of care for at least one year and longer whenever feasible. Following our primary care and continuity of care model, we transition from the Garden Room to the Sunlight Room and the Sunlight Room to the River Rock Room once a year. The first group in each room move to the older room (as a group) at the beginning of June, after a two week transitional period during which time the group and their caregiver visits the older classroom for longer and longer periods each day. The second group moves to the older room with the start of the fall semester in late August, and follows the same transitional period of two weeks. Because The Children's Center maintains a philosophy where the individual needs of each child are met, if it is determined by Center staff and parents collaboratively that an early or late transition would be best for an individual child, based on cognitive or social/emotional development, this decision will take priority over moving with the group.

Kindergarten-Bound Program

To meet the changing developmental needs of the children who will be attending kindergarten in the fall, The Children's Center has a "kindergarten summer program", from June – mid August. These older children participate in activities in a classroom designed to prepare them for the kindergarten experience. They will participate in a variety of enrichment activities such as computer learning, dance classes, more complex math and science activities, etc. There is an additional one-time fee, to cover the cost of the enrichment activities, charged to each kindergarten-bound family in June.

Ratios

The Children's Center strives to maintain ratios to meet the National Association for the Education of Young Children standards. We staff an assistant teacher for each age group, in addition to the primary caregivers, to help us achieve that goal.

Garden Room	1 ½ to 2 ½	1 caregiver/5 children	group size of 7
Sunlight Room	2 ½ to 3 ½	1 caregiver/7 children	group size of 14
River Rock Room	3 ½ to kdg	1 caregiver/10 children	group size of 20

College Training Site

A primary purpose of *The Children's Center* is to provide a place where college students can observe high-quality practice. Most of the students are here to observe the teachers, our teaching techniques, the environment, and the children in general. Students are always supervised. Occasionally, a student will work with one child over a period of time. In that case,

we will request your written permission before the observation starts. Photographs and videos of children in the center are a strong component of our training program. We ask parents to sign a permission form for release of these images for educational purposes.

Background Checks

All Center staff, student employees and practicum students from the ECE department completing observations receive complete CBI fingerprinting and Colorado Central Registry of Child Protection background checks.

General Information and Enrollment Procedures

The Children's Center provides care and education for children ages **18 months to kindergarten entry (6 years)**. Children, once placed in a primary care giving group, move with that group to the next room level. Thus, ages in each room vary, and yet comply with licensing regulations. Because we are part of Red Rocks Community College, students and faculty needing full time care receive priority status for care, after families on the waiting list who already have one child in care at the Center. We are also committed to providing care for children in families with low incomes, and we designate ten percent of our slots for families who receive Colorado Child Care Assistance funds.

Days and hours of operation

We are open Monday through Friday from 7:30am to 6:00pm, year round. We are closed Labor Day, Thanksgiving weekend, the week between Christmas and New Year's Day, Memorial Day, July 4th and the week before Red Rocks Community College and/or Jefferson County schools begin in August for staff training, cleaning, and repairs. The date of the August staff work week will be announced as soon as we are notified by the college, to provide adequate time for families to make other arrangements for care. The Center staff is required to attend two college staff development days, one in the fall and one in the spring. We are closed for those two days. All closure days are fee days, with the exception of the 2 full weeks we are closed (calculated into the month rate).

Drop Off/Pick Up

When children are dropped off, it is beneficial to both the family and child if a teacher is available to help the child settle in, chat with the family, and help the child say good-bye and for you to have ample time to ease your child through the separation process. Teachers plan early morning activities that do not require intense adult supervision, so they can spend time with individual families. After **8:45am**, however, teachers need to be completely engaged with children as this is a transition time for cleaning up, hand washing and serving breakfast. **Please arrive prior to 8:45 am to help reduce the challenges of this time of day.** If you arrive between 8:45 and 9:00, we ask that you remain in the main foyer, apply sunscreen, read to your child, and enter the classroom at 9:00. Breakfast will be served to your child at that time. It is natural for adults to want to visit with each other at drop off time, however, we ask that you help your child transition into the classroom and then connect with other parents in the front hallway, rather than in the busy classroom.

Out of respect for the learning environment in the morning and the rest time in the afternoon, the minimum hours of attendance are from 8:45 am to 3:15pm. Of course, children are welcomed to come prior to and leave later, however, these are our minimum hours. These hours enable teachers to be focused on children, without interruptions. To greet children continually throughout the morning, or engage in goodbyes during rest time would strongly impact the quality of the care and education each child receives. In addition, when children are

picked up before or during rest time, other children may become concerned because they do not see their parent, rest time is interrupted, etc. A minimum of two full days of attendance per week is required. Children may enroll for the following days:

**Monday, Wednesday, Friday
Tuesday and Thursday
Monday through Friday**

Other attendance days will be considered if space allows. Four days a week may be considered for RRCC students/staff only. RRCC students and staff are given priority enrollment, after families with another child already in the program. RRCC students and staff are able to enroll with atypical attendance patterns if space is available. Community children with the above attendance patterns will be given priority for acceptance into the program. A one month written notice (email acceptable) is required to request a change of your attendance child's days. Changes are preferred to occur on the first day of the month. Requests will be granted if space is available. It may be possible to enroll a child with attendance patterns that differ from above. However, in the event that the atypical pattern prevents a child with a typical pattern from enrollment, you may be asked to change to a typical pattern, or find other care. If space is available, days may be added, and an additional fee charged, but not substituted for your child's typical attendance days and only if there is no outstanding balance on your account.

Kindergarten-Bound Summer Attendance

Families of children who are bound for kindergarten in the fall must complete a summer commitment form in April. There are two options available. Fall kindergarten-bound children may withdraw on the last business day of May or the Friday prior to staff work week in August.

Initial tour, interview and visiting

A tour of the Center is required for all families who are interested in enrolling their child(ren) in *The Children's Center*. We believe the needs of children are best met when staff and families form a partnership. Once enrolled, the first step in creating that partnership is the initial interview. This interview is an opportunity for the teacher to become acquainted with the family before the child begins attending. Parents and caregivers partner right from the start, formulating some strategies for assuring that the child's first few days are as pleasant as possible. It is also an opportunity for families to ask questions, get to know the teacher better, understand the Center policies, and meet the Director. Families are encouraged to arrange for short visits in the classroom with their child prior to actual enrollment to assure the smoothest transition for everyone.

If it is determined or has already been determined that a child enrolling or enrolled in The Children's Center requires Individualized Educational Plans, The Center will collaborate with community service providers, families, school district personnel, etc. in order to design learning activities that enhance and meet the outcomes and goals of those plans.

Arrival, Departure, Security

Arrival Policies

You, or your designated representative who is at least 18 years old are required to **sign your child in each morning and sign each child out at departure, using a full signature**. In case of evacuation, the class sign-in/out sheets go with the teachers and you will be contacted from that list, so please leave a number where you can be reached **during that day**. If the drop off person neglects to sign in with a phone number, a parent will be contacted to return to the Center to do so. So that you can give your full attention to your child, cell phone use is not permitted in the Center.

Identifying where children are at all times

Your child should be supervised by you until you leave the classroom or assure that he/she is in the care of a teacher. Please walk into the classroom with your child and make sure your child is greeted before you leave. The staff is responsible for knowing where children are at all times. Another benefit of primary care giving is that teachers keep very close track of their group's whereabouts during the day. Counts of children are taken multiple times throughout the day, including at every transition, and recorded in an attendance log. Coded locks on classroom doors limit access to only those individuals who should be in the Center. Rooms are searched at the end of the day and sign-out rosters checked by classroom staff and the Director in charge before closing to assure that all children are accounted for.

Absences/Late Arrival

When your child is sick, not attending or will be late, please let us know. Since all children are expected to be here by 8:45am, teachers often take their children on trips around the college grounds after breakfast. If you arrive late and your child's group is not in the classroom or on the playground, we ask that you take your child to their group or remain with your child until the class returns. We are not staffed to provide care for individual children and another teacher may not be able to add another child to their group size. Children will not be accepted into the Center for any reason from lunch time forward.

Releasing children

Children are only released to adults who have been designated by the parent/guardian on the enrollment form. If someone other than an authorized individual will be picking up your child, we must have a written, signed note from the parent or guardian delivered to the front desk or the director in the morning. In emergencies, once we know you and recognize your voice, you may call the center and authorize someone not on the list to pick up your child. For your child's protection, persons not on the original list, or on the list and not known to the staff **will be asked to show identification before we release your child**. We cannot and will not keep a child from going with previously designated parent/guardians with only a parent request. We must have a copy of court orders documenting changes in custodial responsibilities.

Children who remain after closing time

When you arrive to take your child from the Center, please make sure one of your child's classroom teachers knows that you are taking your child. If a child remains at the Center past 6:00pm, your child will be with the Director on duty. A late charge of \$1.00 per minute will be assessed to your account. Please be respectful of our staff and your child by picking children up on time. If your child is at the Center more than 15 minutes after the Center closes, and we have not heard from you, your child will be taken to the RRCC Campus Police Department. The Police Department will determine further action.

Visitors

Visitors must sign in at the front desk and wear identification tags. Students often observe at the Center. Tours are frequently conducted for perspective families. These and all other visitors are always accompanied by a staff member.

Admission and Registration

Children are enrolled according to the following priority:

- 1. A child with a sibling currently enrolled in the program;**
- 2. All CCAMPIS student grant slots available will be filled;**
- 3. Non-CCAMPIS students/ RRCC Faculty/Staff;**
- 4. Private paying community families.**

The above priority enrollment will take into consideration The Children's Center's commitment to provide high quality child care and education to families in the community. The Center strives to maintain an enrollment ratio of:

- **50% students (minimum)**
- **33% community**
- **17% RRCC Faculty/Staff**

Student status is described as a child having at least one parent who is enrolled in classes at RRCC. If a student parent does not complete and pass their classes, they may be required to relinquish their child's slot the following semester to another RRCC student family who is waiting for a slot.

Admission Procedures

- **\$50.00 non-refundable** deposit per child is required to reserve space for your child; and is due as a registration fee every August thereafter. Families who enroll between June 1 and July 31 will not be charged the annual fee again until the following August.
- Family interview conducted
- Short visits to classroom prior to first day is recommended
- Records for child's file must be submitted on the first day of attendance, including:
 1. Current record of immunization (updated annually; if exemption is desired, a written statement signed by parent/guardian which states the reason for exemption and that the child is in good health must be submitted)
 2. Completed emergency contact card
 3. Enrollment application
 4. Signed Financial Agreement & Payment Policy Form
 5. Health Status Form signed by health care professional in the last 12 months (updated annually or whenever the director has reason to suspect that a child may have a condition potentially hazardous to others or finds that the child's general condition indicates the need for such examination)
 6. Health Care Plan (if child's health needs require)
 7. Signed permission forms
 8. USDA enrollment form
 9. Allergies & specific food requests

Fees

An itemized fee schedule is required to be posted in Policies & Procedures. Current fee information is posted at the front desk, included in each Enrollment Packet, listed on the payment website, Center website, and distributed when changes in fees occur. Tuition is due at the beginning of each month of care, calculated by weekly fee multiplied by 50 weeks per year (not including the 2 weeks that The Children's Center is closed each year). Tuition is charged for all other holidays, including New Year's Day, Memorial Day, July 4th (observed), Labor Day, Thanksgiving and the following Friday, and Christmas Day. Child care may be denied for any child for whom tuition is more than two weeks late. A late fee of \$35.00 will be assessed to all accounts not paid by the 10th of each month unless prior arrangements have been made with the director. In rare instances, payment plans may be set up between an individual and the RRCC cashier department. Full tuition is required whether your child attends each day or not. We cannot offer make up days if your child is unable to attend on a scheduled day. You may add and pay for additional days, if there are openings. Credit card payments are preferred and are made on the payment website at <https://commerce.cashnet.com/rrcccdcpay>. Checks should be made payable to The Children's Center and placed in the gray payment box outside the Center office. Cash payments must be made at the college cashier's office. A copy of the

deposit slip must be dropped in the gray payment box for any payments made at the cashier department so accounts can be properly credited. Receipts for checks and cash payments will be placed in your parent slot. There is a \$35.00 charge for insufficient funds. No credit card numbers will be held on file in the Center.

Two-week trial period

All children will be enrolled on a trial basis for the first two weeks. At the end of this period, or anytime thereafter, if there are any concerns about whether or not our program can meet the needs of the child, his or her family will be asked to meet with the primary teacher/caregiver and/or the director. We will make every effort to assure continued enrollment for a child who is having difficulties. Ultimately, however, we have to take into consideration the best interests of the child, our current staffing patterns, and all children who are enrolled. If The Children's Center determines that we are not able to meet the needs of a particular child, we will attempt to help the family find a program that will be better able to meet the needs of the child. If a family decides, for whatever reason, to discontinue enrollment in the first two weeks, two weeks advance notice is not required. Registration deposits will not be refunded. If a family decides, for whatever reason, to discontinue enrollment in the first two weeks, two weeks advance notice is not required. Registration deposits will not be refunded and care will be charged for the time the child was enrolled.

Vacations and withdrawal

One of the benefits to children and families enrolled in *The Children's Center* is that we are a small center. We hold to a very narrow financial margin in order to operate. If every family took one week of vacation every year and did not pay tuition for that week, we could not operate. Tuition is required whether your child attends or not. Full tuition is required for the first two weeks of an extended absence (such as vacation). If a child does not attend for longer than two consecutive weeks, the third and following consecutive weeks will be discounted at 50%. Please note that student parents who are using the CCAMPIS grant or families with another subsidy, will not receive a vacation/extended absence discount. Withdraw dates must occur on the last day of each month in writing (email is acceptable), with at least one month notice. RRCC students/staff must also give a one month notice, but can terminate care to coincide with the last day of the semester. If a one month notice is not given, parent/guardian are responsible for payment for one month from date of withdraw notice.

The Children's Center is a year round child care center, and maintains sometimes lengthy wait lists. If you choose to withdraw your child from care for the summer, we cannot hold the spot. Priority re-enrollment will be given to RRCC students/staff. You may put your child's name on the wait list for fall, but there are no guarantees care will be available at the end of the summer or for the days you request.

Discharge Policy

The Children's Center reserves the right to cancel enrollment of a child for any of the following reasons:

- ✓ Tuition is more than two weeks late.
- ✓ A family does not observe the policies and procedures described in this handbook, or the Financial Agreement and Payment Policies.
- ✓ We cannot meet the needs of a child with our current staff and staffing patterns.
- ✓ If a parent/guardian has a complaint about with The Children's Center staff or administration, it is expected that all parties conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner. The Children's Center will not tolerate any physical or verbal abuse directed at its employees. The Children's Center will also not tolerate any behavior by a parent/guardian that is disruptive in the classroom. Individuals behaving in this manner will be asked to find other care immediately.

Admission of Children With Special Needs

The Children's Center complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA mandates that equal access be given to all children with disabilities in childcare programs and that children with disabilities be fully integrated into regular activities. Childcare programs are required to make an individual assessment about whether it can meet the particular needs of the child without fundamentally changing the program. The Children's Center incorporates this mandate within its purpose, philosophy, and daily practice. The Children's Center staff works with families to include their child in our programs and activities. We agree to make reasonable accommodations for all children with documented disabilities. "Reasonable accommodations" is defined as the ability to provide services for a child without fundamentally changing the nature of a program. Enrollment is based on individual assessment of each child and the ability of the Center to meet the child's specific needs.

Health Care Plans

Upon enrollment of a child with special health care needs, the Center must obtain from the child's parent or guardian a copy of an existing individualized health care plan (HCP) for the child that can be reviewed, adopted, and implemented by the Center staff when providing child care services to the child. A HCP shall include the following and must be signed by the health care provider: medication schedule, nutrition and feeding instructions, medical equipment or adaptive devices, including instructions, medical emergency instructions and toileting and personal hygiene instructions. The child care health consultant must be contacted upon enrollment, or prior if possible, so staff can receive training and support as indicated by the HCP. The enrollment date of a child with a HCP may be delayed so that training and support can be implemented upon enrollment. If the child with special health care needs does not have an existing HCP, the HCP must be completed within 30 calendar days of enrollment.

The Center will collaborate with the family, community service providers, school personnel, medical personnel, etc. to design learning activities that aid in meeting the outcomes and goals of Individualized Family Service Plans, Individual Education Programs, and other individual plans to the extent that The Center is able to accommodate such plans. If the program is unable to accommodate the child's needs as defined by the child's health care provider or Individual Family Service Plan/Individual Education Plan without posing an undue burden as defined by federal law, the Center will work with the parent or legal guardian to find a suitable environment for the child.

PLEASE NOTE: Children with severe allergies requiring treatment with injectable epinephrine are requested to obtain the Epi-Pen™ auto injector for use at school. Licensed child care facilities are regulated by Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). The Epi-Pen™ auto injector is currently the only auto injector device available that meets OSHA standards for employee safety.

Factors determining safety of delegation of specific treatments(s):

- Health status of child
- Basis CPR/First Aid training of unlicensed staff
- Capacity of child care personnel to perform specific treatment(s) with training
- Capacity of professional nurse consultant to supervise specific treatment(s).
- Adequate environmental resources to provide specific treatment(s)
- Documentation of delegation, staff competency and ongoing supervision by the RN

Parents need to authorize, in writing, the implementation of the health care plan in child care and review the plan annually. Until the health plan is authorized in writing by the parent/guardian, child care personnel are instructed by the child care health consultant to follow the "Colorado

Emergency Care Guidelines” distributed by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. These Guidelines follow basic first aid and care procedures for the school and child care environment.

Copies of the health care plans will be kept in the child’s file and in a confidential location in the classroom. All staff and substitutes involved in the care of the child need to be made aware of the health care plan and actions needed. Review of the health care plan by the child care health consultant will be completed annually or when a significant change in the health condition occurs.

Children with Changing/Different Needs

The Children’s Center is committed to connecting families with community agencies that have resources available which could be helpful in a number of circumstances and for different needs, such as mental health, dental and vision screening, developmental concerns, etc. Staff will refer families to the director who will work closely with the family to get the services they need.

Occasionally, emergent circumstances occur that require certain accommodations in the classroom to meet the needs of children. For example, if a child has surgery, an injury that temporarily limits mobility, encounters a seizure, or any number of medical issues, often the needs of the child changes. Families requesting such accommodations will need to present their request to the Director. Because the Director must consult with the child care health consultant prior to providing care that requires accommodations, our Center may not be able to manage a child’s different needs for a specific period of time. The Director will consult with the health care consultant as soon as possible. Recommendations made by the child care health consultant will be reviewed with staff and a plan will be created. If we are unable to provide care for your child’s new/temporary needs, you will be notified in a timely fashion to support your efforts to secure alternate care for that specified period of time. Otherwise, you will be contacted and must agree to the plan for accommodations. The introduction of such accommodations will occur within 24 hours.

Family Partnerships

Young children benefit immensely when their parents have carefully selected a center for their child’s early care and education. Showing an interest in The Children’s Center, what your child does here, and the people who care for and educate your child provides a solid foundation for your child’s educational experience. The stronger the connection between home and The Center, the more secure your child will feel.

An interpreter will be provided for parents at family events and conferences if needed. An interpreter will be provided for children if 50% or more are bilingual-dominate second language in any classroom.

Gatherings

There are a variety of ways for families to participate more fully in The Children’s Center and become more acquainted with other families and staff. We have at least four gatherings throughout the year, including a Welcome New Families barbeque in the fall, Family Field Day in the summer, Winter Get Together and The Children’s Center Art and Documentation Exhibit in April to celebrate national “Week of the Young Child”. Individual classrooms also plan activities during the year so children can share their classrooms and favorite activities with their families.

Parents are invited at different times during the year to meet with the Center staff to dialogue about policies, procedures, classroom curriculum, etc. Committees are formed on an as-needed basis to discuss curriculum and child growth/development, help raise funds for many things that tuition does not cover, plan community-wide celebrations, staff appreciation, etc. Notices are posted in advance of all meetings, and all families are invited to attend and participate. If the need exists, an interpreter will be provided for family members.

Evaluations of the Center

Families have the opportunity to provide formal feedback regarding our program and staff through a survey/evaluation twice each year. Informal comments and questions are always welcomed by the director.

Quality Improvement Plan

Feedback from family surveys, informal conversations, Colorado Shines rating and staff meetings is compiled to create a Quality Improvement Plan for The Children's Center, updated annually. This plan is published in our newsletter at least once a year and a hard copy is available upon request.

Family Resources

Occasionally family forums are planned to explore a variety of issues relevant to families raising young children. Notices of forums are posted throughout the center. We have a family resource center in the foyer with materials that are available for check out. Hearing, vision & dental screening resources are provided.

Teacher-Family Communication/Conferences

Each day, teachers take time to talk to families at drop-off and pick up. Families or toddlers receive written communication about their child's day every day; Families of older children will receive written communication about the child at least every other week. Families are encouraged to drop by the center at any time – to read stories, observe, share a specific activity with a small group of children, etc. Bi-yearly conferences are conducted between teachers and families within 90 days of enrollment/at beginning of school year and in May. In addition, children enjoy a visit from their families occasionally for lunch. If you would like to come for lunch:

- A three day notice is recommended;
- Please limit your lunch visits to not more than once a month;
- If the demand exceeds supplies, you may be asked to choose another day.

Curriculum

Play is the best way for young children to learn. Children who are prematurely pushed into academic instruction display less creativity and enthusiasm for learning in later years. Children who memorize isolated facts early in life show no better long-term retention than their peers. However, **children who learn through play also develop social, emotional skills, and cognitive skills which are critical for long-term success.** Simply stated, our curriculum is the children's play. Our schedule, environment, activities, and materials foster child-directed, child-led play. Our teachers actively participate in the children's play, value children's play and extend children's ideas and play themes through close observation, conversations and documentation. We support purposeful and meaningful play by encouraging respect for the classroom environment and the materials, providing an organized environment, allowing time for play, and fostering focused exploration and learning.

Young children need to play; it is how they learn. Play provides the ideal medium for optimal development. Play is the process children use to learn.

- In play, children voluntarily elaborate and complicate the activity.
- In play, children learn that they can cause things to happen or change. Children begin to see that what they do has cause and effect, and they begin to assume responsibility for their behavior.
- Play stimulates cognitive development, language development, perceptual development, social and emotional development and helps to prepare children for kindergarten.
- Play follows a developmental progression.

Assessment

Children's growth and development will be assessed throughout the year by the primary caregiver, with additional observations and feedback from other staff. High Scope COR (Curriculum Observation Record) is used as the assessment tool in conjunction with the Colorado Early Learning and Development Guidelines. COR is a secure website. Staff is training in the use of the tool and gather information through daily observations, developmental checklists and information obtained from families. Results are shared during family conferences in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner.

Guidance Policy

As a college training site, we demonstrate the most appropriate guidance policies for students to observe and model. Our environments meet the developmental and ever-changing interests and needs of children so that they are fully engaged and active. Our schedules eliminate unnecessary transitions that stress children and cause disruptive behavior. We provide cozy, alone spaces in each room for children who need to get away from the group, and plenty of outdoor time for young children who want and need to use their large muscles and enjoy fresh air and sunshine.

We do not place expectations on children that they are not developmentally ready to meet. We do not require children to sit still for long periods of time and listen to an adult; we do not tell children that they "have to share"; nor do we expect them to stand in line. We do expect that they are **learning** to be respectful of each other, and the environment, that they are **learning** to take another's perspective, that they are **learning** to engage for increasing amounts of time on tasks and activities, and that they are **learning** to assume responsibility for their own actions.

Recognizing that young children are in the process of learning to be social creatures, we know that adults must first of all, and most importantly, model what we want to see in our children at all times. Children truly do learn to love and respect if they are loved and respected. We encourage relationships between adults and children, knowing that these are the models on which children develop relationships with other children. A hallmark of the care children receive here is the respectful attention our teachers give them throughout the day.

Our program honors each child's uniqueness. If there is a dominant second language in any classroom, The Children's Center will have at least one caregiver in that specific classroom. If needed, additional support will be supplied to families with a dominant second language through Red Rocks Community College student services, staff, other family members, etc.

Violence/Disruptive Behavior

A goal of *The Children's Center* is to create an environment for children that is free from violence. We are careful to model peaceful conflict resolution with each other and to teach children negotiating skills when appropriate. Our role is to help children modulate their extreme emotions and learn alternative ways of expressing emotion without harming others. This process takes place over time, and looks slightly different with different ages.

It is not unusual for a child who is having difficulty controlling his/her emotions to also be highly disruptive. When this occurs, teachers often end up spending considerable time with individual children while others receive only minimal attention. Chronic violence against other children will not be tolerated. If a child is chronically aggressive, a family conference will be set up to discuss what might be triggering the aggression and apply techniques to eliminate it. If that doesn't help, we will request that parents obtain outside intervention. If outside intervention is refused, or does not result in a positive change in the child, the Center may choose determine that our resources cannot support the child to be successful in our environment and help the family find other care.

Routines

Meals and snacks

We provide breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack. All meals are served family style, and children eat in their primary groups with their teacher. Children serve themselves, pour their beverage, and clean their plates and the table when the meal is over. Teachers always sit at the table and converse with children during meals, encouraging conversation, getting to know children better, and creating a calm, relaxed atmosphere.

Diapering and toileting

Personal care routines, like toileting and diapering, are usually handled by your child's primary caregiver. Decisions about toilet training are made by families in collaboration with the primary caregiver. **While in the Center, if you change your child or assist in his/her toileting, please keep their Center routines consistent and be sure both your child and you wash hands.** Families must provide diapers, wipes and any ointment required, or participate in a diaper program if it is offered by the Center, as well as provide a complete change of clothing in case of accidents or messy play activities. Cloth diapers are not permitted. Licensing does not permit Center staff to remove fecal matter from clothing or rollie pollies.

Outdoor Time

All children in care more than 5 hours must be provided with at least 60 minutes of daily gross motor activities. This will take place outdoors when weather permits. Because The Children's Center believes that fresh air and active play is important, when the weather is above 20 degrees and below 92 degrees, the children will go outside, unless the weather is determined to be too inclement. Therefore, it is important that all children are dressed appropriately for the weather predicted each day.

Field trips

Because we are part of the community college, we have a tremendous number of resources at our fingertips. We bring enrichment programs to the children, rather than transporting young children away from this site. The summer prior to a child's enrollment in kindergarten, the kindergarten-bound group may walk to the neighborhood Sixth Avenue West wading pool, always accompanied by two adults. If so, parents will sign a permission form for the children to leave the college campus.

Media Use

Music from many cultures, children's music, music for relaxation, classical music and some types of popular music are available to children. Relaxing music is played at nap time, including lullabies from many lands. There is an appropriate place in early childhood for technology such as computers. If they are used, it is because staff has determined that there is educational value that relates directly to a theme the children have initiated. For children two (2) years of age and older, television, recorded media, computer, tablet and media device time may only exceed thirty

(30) minutes per week for a special occasion. There is no restriction for children using personal adaptive equipment. On occasion, we have a G-rated "movie day" in the preschool room. No television or commercial radio is allowed in the Center at any time.

Birthdays and other celebrations

It is our intention to ensure that birthdays and other celebrations are meaningful and appropriate for children. Each classroom teaching team will develop a plan to help every child feel special on his/her birthday. All food used at the Center is provided by the kitchen to ensure safety for children with allergies. Please place all private party invitations in the parent slots in the hallway out of respect for all children.

Holidays and other celebrations are important times for many families. Some families celebrate different holidays, some do not. At *The Children's Center* you may see an environment with décor made by children who have created an atmosphere of their choice during the holidays. You may see card making materials in the writing center for children to create any time of the year. You may see children making masks or painting faces during fall. You will not see group or individual holiday projects designed and fostered by the teachers. As mentioned in our curriculum section, our activities develop from the children's interests. Most celebrations such as children's holiday parties meet the needs of adults, however may not be appropriate for young children, and in fact, may exclude children who cannot, for whatever reason, participate. Celebrations at the Center are a culmination of a project or interest, and are always fully integrated within the curriculum.

Children's personal belongings and toys

Limited cubby space is provided for children to store coats, gloves, a change of clothing and other personal belongings. This space is limited and cannot be used for more than one personal comfort object from home. **PLEASE LABEL ALL ITEMS, INCLUDING SHOES AND OUTDOOR CLOTHING WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME.** Children's soiled clothing is bagged and placed in a special area in each classroom. Please check daily to see if your child has any items that need to be taken home. If your child has soiled the rollee pollee/sheet, we ask that you launder and return it the next day. The health department does not allow staff to rinse fecal matter.

The Center provides a rollee pollee, fleece sleeping bag or cot sheets for rest time. Many children like to rest with their own stuffed animal. Please leave other toys at home. We have many toys and materials for the children to use during the day. If your child has something special she/he would like to share with teachers or friends, feel free to bring it to share, and be sure your child understands you will take it with you for safe keeping as you leave.

Health and Safety

The Children's Center operates in compliance with the Nurse Practice Act. Monthly nurse visits include training for staff on medications administration, universal precautions, general hygiene and safety, etc.

Hand washing

The best way to prevent the spread of disease is through hand washing.

Children must wash their hands:

- Upon entering and leaving the classroom
- After using the toilet or diapering
- After blowing their nose or contact with any bodily fluids

- Before and after meals and snacks
- After playground or outside time
- After handling pets
- When hands are noticeably soiled

Adults must wash their hands:

- Upon entering and leaving the classroom
- After helping a child toilet or changing a diaper
- After blowing their nose or helping a child blow a nose
- Before preparing food, serving food or eating
- After handling pets

Illness

It is your responsibility to notify the center if your child has a communicable disease such as: measles, mumps, meningitis, T.B., hepatitis, lice, ring worm, chicken pox, salmonella, hand, foot and mouth disease, etc. A child may be readmitted without a statement from a health practitioner only if the child has been absent for a period of time equal to the longest incubation period of the disease as specified by The Children's Hospital School Health Program guidelines. Children may attend the Center without immunizations.

Deciding whether to keep your child at home or whether Center staff should send a child home from child care can be difficult. It is important for parents and caregivers to discuss what symptoms they have observed and agree on a plan of action based on consensus about what symptoms require that children stay home.

There are three reasons to exclude children from our child care:

- 1) The child does not feel well enough to participate comfortably in usual activities.
- 2) The child requires more care than the program staff is able to provide without affecting the health and safety of the other children.
- 3) The illness is on the following list of symptoms or illness for which exclusion is recommended.

Children with the following symptoms or illnesses should be kept (excluded) home from care:

Symptom	Child Must Be At Home?
Diarrhea – frequent, loose or watery stools compared to child's normal pattern; not caused by diet or medication.	YES – if child looks or acts ill; if child has diarrhea with fever and behavior change; if child has diarrhea with vomiting; if child has diarrhea that is not contained in the diaper or toilet
Fever with behavior changes or illness Note: An unexplained temperature of 100 degrees or above is significant in infants 4 months of age or younger and requires immediate medical attention	YES – when fever is accompanied by behavior changes or other symptoms of illness such as rash, sore throat, vomiting, etc.
Flu Symptoms – Fever over 100 degrees with a cough or sore throat. Other flu symptoms can include fatigue, body aches, vomiting and diarrhea.	YES – for at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicine
Coughing – severe, uncontrolled coughing or wheezing, rapid or difficulty breathing Note: Children with asthma may be cared for	YES – medical treatment is necessary

in school with a written health care plan and authorization for medication/treatment	
Mild respiratory or cold symptoms stuffy nose, clear drainage, sneezing, mild cough	NO - may attend if able to participate in activities.
Rash <u>with</u> fever <u>Note:</u> Body rash <i>without</i> fever or behavior changes usually does not require exclusion from school; seek medical advice	YES – seek medical advice. Any rash that spreads quickly, has open weeping, and is not healing should be evaluated.
Fever <u>with</u> behavior changes or illness	YES – when fever is accompanied by behavior changes or other symptoms of illness such as rash, sore throat, vomiting, listlessness, diarrhea, etc.
Vomiting (2 or more episodes in past 24 hours)	YES – until vomiting resolves or a health care practitioner decides it is not contagious. Observe for other signs of illness and for dehydration.
ILLNESS	Child Must Be At Home?
Chicken Pox	YES – until blisters have dried and crusted (usually 6 days). If blister occurs after vaccination, refer to Health Dept. Guidelines.
Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye) pink color of eye and thick yellow/green discharge	YES until 24 hours after treatment If your health provider decides not to treat your child, a note is required to return to care
Croup (<i>See Coughing</i>) <u>Note:</u> May not need to be excluded unless child is not well enough to participate in usual activities	Seek medical advice
Fifth's Disease	NO – child is no longer contagious once rash appears
Hand Foot & Mouth Disease (Coxsackie virus)	NO – may attend if able to participate in usual activities, unless child has mouth sores and is drooling
Head lice or Scabies	YES – may return after treatment starts

Hepatitis A	YES –until 2 week after onset of illness or jaundice and when able to participate in usual activities
Herpes	YES – if area is oozing and cannot be covered, such as mouth sores
Impetigo	YES - for 24 hours after treatment
Ringworm	May return after treatment starts Keep area covered for the first 48 hours of treatment.
Roseola <u>Note:</u> A child with rash and no fever may return to school	YES - seek medical advice
RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus) <u>Note:</u> A child does not always need to be excluded unless he/she is not well enough to participate in usual activities	YES – seek medical advice. Once a child in the group has been infected, spread of illness is rapid.

Strep Throat	YES – for 24 hours after treatment and the child is able to participate in usual activities
Vaccine Preventable Diseases Measles, Mumps, Rubella (German Measles), Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	YES – until determined not infectious by the health care provider.
Yeast Infections Including thrush or candida diaper rash	NO - may attend if able to participate in activities. Follow good hand washing and hygiene practices.
Hepatitis A	YES –until 1 week after onset of illness or jaundice and when able to participate in activities.
Herpes	YES – if area is oozing and cannot be covered (mouth sores).

This information is based upon the guidelines from American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Childcare, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Communicable Disease Epidemiology Program, and Center For Disease Control.

PLEASE NOTE: Non-immunized children are admitted to the Center.

Medication policies

Staff who are designated by The Center director to administer medications must complete the 4 hour Department-approved medication administration training and have current first aid and universal precautions training prior to administering medication.

Prescription and non-prescription (over the counter) medication

- Can be administered only on written order or a prescription from a health-care practitioner **and** written parent/guardian permission.
- Written authorization and consent forms must be reauthorized annually.
- All medications of any kind (this includes topical preparations and prescriptions) must be checked in with the director on duty and parent/guardian must provide written authorization. Prescription medication must also include the written order of a person with prescriptive authority in order for the Center staff to administer the medication. Children must never have any type of medication on their person or in their cubby.
- All medication must be in the original container and labeled with the child's first and last name.
- Prescription medication must bear the original pharmacy label.

Emergency Medications

Emergency medications, such as inhalers and epinephrine must be stored in accordance with the child care health consultant's recommendation. Emergency medications are not required to be stored in a locked area. Emergency medications are stored in each classroom in an area that is easily accessible and identifiable to staff in that classroom, but out of reach of children. When away from the classroom, staff must carry emergency medications in a bag on their person.

Topical Preparations (diaper rash ointments)

- May be applied to children with written parental permission.
- Topical preparations cannot apply anything to broken skin or open wounds, such as severe diaper rash, without a written order from a health-care practitioner.

Sunscreen

- A written authorization to apply sunscreen is required upon enrollment.

- The Center will provide Rocky Mountain Sunscreen; if parent/guardian wishes to provide sunscreen for a child, it must be labeled with child's first and last name and given to classroom teacher, not left in child's cubby.
- Please apply sunscreen during sunscreen season on your child upon arrival at the Center. Staff will apply it again before afternoon outdoor time.
- Only children over four years of age may apply sunscreen to themselves and only under adult supervision.
- **Sunscreen must be kept out of reach of children at all times.**

Accidents, Emergencies and Injuries

If your child has an accident that results in an injury, is seriously injured or becomes ill, you will be notified immediately. If we believe the injury requires immediate medical attention, we will immediately notify campus police who will determine whether the child needs to be transported to a hospital or whether to stand by while we contact you. If we cannot contact you or your emergency contacts, we will assure that your child is taken to the hospital by emergency medical personnel following your instructions on the emergency form completed at enrollment. All minor injuries will be cleaned and treated, and written notification will be provided to you that day.

Should we ever have a lost child, staff will notify the proper authorities by phone immediately, followed by family members, and the appropriate written forms will be completed.

The Children's Center and Red Rocks Community College have detailed plans for emergencies and critical incidents. Should an emergency require evacuation, we will move to our emergency sites, listed in the Emergency Preparedness Plan. At this point, information about picking up your child would appear on the television. The staff and children practice fire drills monthly and other emergency drills several times a year.

Filing complaints

If you have concerns or complaints about anything at any time please contact the director. You may also file serious complaints at:

Division of Child Care
The Colorado Department of Human Services
1575 Sherman Street
Denver, CO 80203
303-866-5958

Child Abuse Reporting

We are required by state law to report any suspected abuse or neglect, or any observations of children being subjected to circumstances or conditions that reasonably result in abuse or neglect immediately to social services or a law enforcement agency.

If you suspect any child abuse has occurred at this facility, you must report it to Jefferson County Social Services at 303-271-1388 or the Lakewood Police Department at 303-987-7111.