



Montgomery County
Community College

***CHILDREN'S CENTER
PARENT HANDBOOK***

July, 2016



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MISSION STATEMENT

The Children's Center at Montgomery County Community College is a nurturing, child-centered learning environment where relationships are valued and diverse people feel respected and welcomed.

◆ The Children's Center provides quality early care and developmentally appropriate education for children ages 2 to 5 years. The classrooms are designed in a purposeful manner to support the mastery of skills and concepts while encouraging creative exploration. Learning emerges from children's needs and interests. Teachers use observation to assess each child's developmental progress and guide classroom planning. The Center's teaching practice follows the Creative Curriculum, which is informed by the educational philosophies of Montessori, Piaget, Vygotsky and others.

◆ Children at the Children's Center learn to be self confident, self-disciplined and independent. Friendships are nurtured in an environment where consistent guidance and structure provide a sense of security.

◆ The Children's Center is responsive to family needs. A variety of resources are provided for parents. The Center strives to make child care affordable through various forms of financial assistance. The home culture of each child is supported and differences are negotiated to best serve the child's development. For families who work or study on campus, quality care on-site offers a special kind of peace of mind.

◆ The Children's Center is an integral part of the college. The Center is a learning resource to MCCC students from many academic departments, especially the Education Department. The benefit is mutual, as the college offers a variety of special opportunities and programs to enrich the children.

◆ The Children's Center staff are nurturing, fun, encouraging, and sensitive to children's needs. They form a close-knit community where learning is a continuous endeavor.

OUR PROGRAM, PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

The MCCC Children's Center is a National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accredited Center. The Center offers an early care and education program, which combines the nurturing characteristics of a quality childcare environment with the enrichment found in a preschool setting.

We believe that children learn best when their natural curiosity is encouraged. Therefore, we provide significant amounts of "free choice" time for the children to choose activities of interest to them. Our teachers observe the children to identify and support each individual's developmental process. As children are ready, the teachers introduce concepts through hands-on experiences. The activities the children engage in at the Center establish the groundwork for later success in formal schooling. Children who attend a 5 day schedule benefit most from the enrichment provided by our program.

You will find, posted in the Center, specific information about the Creative Curriculum Goals and Objectives which guide our planning for the children in our care.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children Code of Ethics is posted at the Center. This document guides the professional actions of Center staff.

COMMUNICATION WITH STAFF

At the heart of our program are the relationships among all members of our staff and the children and families we serve. Close partnerships between parents and staff provide an important foundation and sense of security for the children in our care. Parents or guardians are welcome to visit the Center at any time.

We offer numerous ways to be in touch with us: Daily contact of the informal kind, phone conversations, e-mail messages, and notices found in the special parent communication files (please check these daily). Newsletters or Weekly Planning Forms are posted in each classroom. We schedule parent conferences at the end of fall and spring semesters. Teaching Strategies GOLD is the secure online assessment system used at the Center. Families are invited by e-mail to join GOLD and access the family resources offered as well as to communicate with the teachers. More information on this is presented at Back to School Night each fall. The Center provides translators whenever possible for family members who are English Language Learners.

We welcome your questions, concerns, and ideas. If you have concerns about your child's experience with us, please speak to your child's teacher. If you are not satisfied after speaking with the teacher, please speak with Debbie Ravacon. If your concern is still not addressed to your satisfaction, you may speak with Phil Needles, Vice President of Student Affairs. He can be reached at 215-641-6510.

YOU CAN HELP YOUR CHILD SUCCEED

Your child will have a most successful experience at the Children's Center if s/he has a regular meal and sleep schedule at home. A consistent, early bedtime and regular meal times with nutritious foods set the stage for learning. Appropriate, consistent, limits are also essential. Limits give your child a sense that the world is a predictable and safe place; limits help your child learn how to get along with others. Of course, your attention and affection are essential ingredients for your child's success.

WE CAN HELP YOU SUCCEED

The Children's Center staff is ready and willing to help you with the challenges you face as a parent and/or as a student. We have a lending library of parenting books, many free brochures, a bulletin board of resources and additional information in the office. As a staff, we have well over 100 years of combined experience working with young children as well as significant academic training.

Our staff also know how to access the extensive services available through MCCC and the neighboring community. If you are struggling with your courses or anything related to your studies or personal life, we can help you find the support you need in a professional and confidential manner.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Research demonstrates again and again that parent involvement enhances a child's learning and positive experience at school. You may choose to read to a small group of children, share a cooking project, play a musical instrument or just visit.

We urge you to attend **Back to School Night** in the fall and the **Open Houses** we offer each semester as well as the End of Semester **Sing-Alongs**.

Finally, please take advantage of the **Parent Conferences** at the end of the fall and spring semesters. These are valuable one-on-one information exchanges with your child's teachers.

DIVERSITY

The Children's Center is fortunate to serve a diverse population. Our staff are committed to welcoming families from all backgrounds. We encourage you to share information about your family culture with us so we can help your child feel at home. We also provide reasonable accommodations for children with special needs.

Children often comment or ask questions about differences between people. We feel it is very important to help children learn to appreciate diversity. Therefore, we will talk about such things as differences in language, ability, skin color, family composition or foods, when appropriate. For more information, please pick up the brochure, *Teaching Young Children to Resist Bias: What Parents Can Do*.

NEW CHILD SCREENING/SPECIAL NEEDS

The Children's Center staff will ask you to complete an Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) screening tool to gather some baseline developmental information about your child (for more information on this tool please visit www.brookespublishing.com). Center staff will share the results with you. If the ASQ or the observations of our professional staff indicate a need for further evaluation, we will work with you to facilitate this process. Staff may also use the ASQ or ASQ-SE (social-emotional) for screening the children.

If your child is diagnosed with special needs, please provide us with a copy of the IFSP/IEP within the first two weeks of attendance. When an IFSP/IEP meeting is scheduled, please ask to hold it at the Children's Center and include your child's teacher. The IFSP/IEP will be kept in your child's confidential, locked file and shared with staff on a Need-to-Know basis. This information is needed so that Center staff can effectively support your child's development.

Children receiving multiple services are best served in an Intermediate Unit classroom where all services are available on-site. Coordinating multiple schedules and managing the sharing of information is very challenging for the parent and for the teacher who has ten additional children in her care. Please discuss this with your child's teacher and/or the director.

CHILD ASSESSMENT

Children's Center staff collect naturalistic observation notes throughout your child's day. This data is entered into the password-protected Internet site of Teaching Strategies GOLD (for more information visit www.TeachingStrategies.com) and used to inform the child progress reports which are shared with you at Parent Conferences, at the end of the fall and spring semesters. Children's Center staff have been trained in the use of this system, through Teaching Strategies workshops and/or individual or small group sessions at the Center. Daily contact with your child's teachers allows for additional updates on your child's progress. Our teaching teams also use this data to set goals and plan appropriate activities for individual children and small groups. Parents or guardians receive an invitation to create a login for Teaching Strategies GOLD so that you can review the weekly plan, view or add photos or

observation notes, as well as to access the many resources/activity ideas available. The information you share, informally and formally, adds to the data gathered by staff to shape a strong understanding of your child's developmental level, interests, needs and special abilities.

The state of Pennsylvania, Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) has mandated the use of an assessment system in Early Childhood programs. The Children's Center has selected Teaching Strategies GOLD for this purpose. OCDEL also requires programs to submit assessment data into a secure online system known as PELICAN, which is used in aggregate for research purposes and to analyze child progress based on demographic indicators.

All child assessment data on hard copy is stored in locked files. Staff access to child files is limited to those who "need to know": Staff who work directly with your child and need the information to support your child's healthy development. Under state regulations, the PA Department of Human Services also has access to child files, to verify that records are complete at the time of inspection.

More information on Teaching Strategies GOLD is available at the website indicated above, including data on research and reliability.

CHILDREN'S RECORDS, CONFIDENTIALITY

Parents or legal guardians may contact the director to see their child's records at any time. Your child's records, including any assessment information, are stored in locked cabinets. Your child's records will be released to another child care program or school only with your signed consent.

Information about children and families, including incidents which you observe when visiting the Center, is confidential and protected by the Privacy Act. Please do not share any information about other children or families. Please do not ask Center staff to share information about other staff, children or families.

Please note that the Children's Center staff are required to share any significant family information with the Center Director. PA state regulations provide for the Department of Human Services to view child records at the time of inspection.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEO

The MCCC Children's Center takes many pictures of the children throughout the program year. Photos and videos are taken of the children and used for instructional, educational and promotional purposes. These photos and videos may be printed or appear in articles or advertisements such as brochures, websites, scrapbooks, bulletin boards, journal articles, e-mails or in Teaching Strategies GOLD (online child assessment system). Photos and videos may also be used in workshop presentations with other early childhood professionals. MCCC Student Teachers may use photographs of the children as part of their course assignments. Children's names will not be used publicly without specific written permission from the parent or legal guardian.

MOVING UP/MOVING ON

Children typically move from the toddler to the preschool group when they are around 3.5 years of age. These transitions occur at the beginning of a semester. Your child's teacher will facilitate a smooth transition within the Center by having him/her visit the new class and get to know the new teacher before moving up.

When your child is ready to move on to a new school, please speak with the teacher to plan a transition process which will help your child succeed. The Center offers a number of kindergarten transition activities, including a workshop for parents. Center staff help children prepare for kindergarten through a variety of activities conducted in the spring. If you would like your child's records sent on to the new school, please provide us with signed permission and instructions as to the documents requested.

MCCC STUDENTS AT THE CENTER

As a campus-based program, we provide lab experiences for many MCCC students. At any time you may see students observing, completing their student teaching semester or involved in other assignments. All student activities at the Center must first be approved by the director, as appropriate for the children enrolled.

ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL

Your child will get the most value from our program if he/she attends for the full morning (9-12 noon). Children in our preschool rooms must arrive by 9:30 am, in support of our efforts to prepare your child for kindergarten. Children may not be dropped off after 10:30 am unless prior arrangements have been made with Children's Center staff. Children in the Pre-K Counts program must follow the guidelines of that program.

At arrival and dismissal:

Please help your child enter the Center in a calm manner. Remind your child to walk, stay within sight of you (for safety) and use an indoor voice. If your child is eating, s/he must sit at a table to do so.

- For Drop Off and Pick up you may park at the Center for 15 minutes. Never block the dumpster or park along the inner circle.
- Take your child to wash his/her hands at arrival. Ask your child to "try" to use the toilet.
- Always sign your child in and out and write in the pick-up time.
- Ask your child to put away his/her belongings. Empty backpacks and empty pockets, only, please. No small trinkets, candy, gum, medicines or items labeled "Keep Out of Reach of Children" are permitted in children's cubbies.
- Make verbal and visual contact with a staff person, so we know your child has arrived or is departing. **Escort your child into the classroom. For your child's safety, do not leave your child unattended in the Center at any time.**
- Check your child's file and cubby for notices or items that need to be taken home.
- Please refrain from using a cell phone while at the Children's Center so that you may give your child your undivided attention at arrival and pick-up time.

For your child's safety:

When walking your child between the parking lot and the Center, hold your child's hand and observe caution around cars.

Use car seats and seat belts as required by law. See the Center's Family Bulletin Board for more information.

Please supervise your child by sight and sound at all times while on the MCCC campus.

We will not release children to anyone who appears to be intoxicated or otherwise unsafe.

We allow a fifteen-minute grace period before the hour and after the hour. More than fifteen minutes before the scheduled drop-off hour or after the scheduled pick-up hour will result in the full Emergency hour fee being charged to your account. Since closing time is 5 pm, late pick-up after 5:15 pm will result in a charge of \$1 per minute in addition to the emergency hour fee. Late pick-up charges will be added to your bill. At 5:30 pm the appropriate authorities will be contacted to supervise your child until you arrive. Repeated late pick-ups will result in termination of enrollment.

CHILD ABSENCES

We ask that you call the Center by 8:30 am when your child will be absent: 215-641-6618 and indicate the reason and any symptoms of illness. Please do not e-mail absence information because we don't get the messages early enough for our daily lunch count. The Center is charged for lunches ordered and not eaten. Families who repeatedly neglect to call in absences may be charged a fine.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

Children will be released only to persons authorized by the parent or guardian. We must have written, signed, authorization for any changes regarding pick-up of children (please indicate pick-up person on the sign-in sheet, also). If someone who is not listed as an authorized release person attempts to pick up the child (including grandparents and other family members), we will immediately contact the parent. A photo ID may be requested for pick up of children. Use of the designated family password as well as a photo ID plus verified verbal parent permission is acceptable in an emergency situation.

DAILY SCHEDULE: YELLOW AND PURPLE ROOMS

Subject to change

- 7:45-9:30 am Arrival, child directed learning activities.
- 9:30 am Outdoor play.
- 10:10 am Diapers/toileting, hand washing followed by snack.
- 10:30-11:30am Group time, exploration and discovery activities.
- 11:30-12 noon Outdoor play, noon dismissals
- 12:10-12:40 pm Lunch
- 12:45-2:30 pm Naptime.
- 2:30-3:15 pm Diapers/toileting, hand washing followed by snack.
- 3:15-5:00 pm Exploration and discovery activities/outdoor play.

DAILY SCHEDULE: RED, BLUE, GREEN ROOMS

Subject to change

- 7:45-9:20 am Arrival, learning centers

9:20 am	Circle time
9:35 am	Learning centers, choice time
10:20 am	Snack
10:45 am	Learning centers, choice time
11:10 am	Circle time
11:20	Outdoor play followed by noon dismissals.
12:15 pm	Lunch.
12:30	Quiet time: Stories and puzzles.
1:00	Quiet rest time/nap.
2:30	Nap clean up, toileting, hand washing
3:15	Snack
3:30-5:00	Exploration and discovery activities/outdoor play.

Daily schedules are posted in each classroom.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

General Information

The Children's Center maintains compliance with all PA Department of Human Services (DHS) regulations which establish safe practices for child day care programs.

PA state law requires an annual health screening assessment form, completed by your physician. This form must show a check-up within the past year with immunizations up-to-date. A child with immunization exemption may be excluded from the Center if an outbreak of a disease preventable by vaccine occurs. If the health form requirement is not met the Center reserves the right to terminate enrollment.

Our staff are trained in infant/child first aid. Complete first aid kits are available for each classroom group and are carried with us when we leave the Center. Staff carry cell phones for emergency use. Emergency call boxes are on both playgrounds and at the entrance to the Center, as well as elsewhere on campus. The Center has an AED at the Front Desk.

Children's Center staff are trained as mandated reporters for suspected child abuse or neglect. We are required by law to report any suspicions. See the Family Bulletin Board for more information. Please do not allow others to enter the Center as you come in. Each family must enter their own code and visitors must wait for a staff person to let them in.

Entrance to the Children's Center is limited to the main door, which is monitored by Center staff. Staff carefully supervise any visitor, other than parents and others who are known to staff, while at the Center.

Emergency Preparedness

We conduct regular fire drills as required by our regulations. If you are on the premises during a drill, please follow directions from the staff. Your cooperation can be of great assistance, especially if it is a true emergency. The Center is fully equipped with fire safety equipment and an alarm system. Emergency instructions, including a map of our exits are posted in each classroom and in the office.

Our Emergency Plan provides for response to all types of emergencies. Depending on the circumstance of the emergency, we will use one of the following protective actions:

- *Immediate evacuation* Students are evacuated to a safe area on the grounds of the facility in the event of a fire, etc.
- *In-place sheltering* Sudden occurrences, weather or hazardous materials related, may dictate that taking cover inside the building is the best immediate response.
- *Evacuation* Total evacuation of the facility may become necessary if there is a danger in the area. In this case, children will be taken to the relocation facility at the Goddard School, 450 DeKalb Pike, Blue Bell or to a location determined and communicated by MCCC Public Safety.
- *Intruder* The Center is equipped with “panic buttons” to contact MCCC Public Safety and to call 911. Staff practice “lockdown drills” with the children.
- *Modified Operation* May include cancellation/postponement or rescheduling of normal activities. These actions are normally taken in case of a winter storm or building problems (such as utility disruptions) that make it unsafe for children.

Please check the college website, www.mc3.edu, or listen to KYW 1060AM for announcements relating any of the emergency actions listed above. Sign up for text messages from MCCC by going to the website above.

We ask that you not call during an emergency. This will keep the main telephone line free to make emergency calls and relay information. Staff will contact families as soon as possible during an emergency. Our Emergency Contact Book goes with us on any outing and we will have access to the campus emergency phones, a college phone or a personal cell phone to call for help and/or to contact parents.

Should you have any questions regarding our emergency procedures please contact the MCCC Children’s Center Director at 215-641-6618.

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE BE ABLE TO CONTACT YOU IN AN EMERGENCY. PLEASE KEEP ALL TELEPHONE NUMBERS AND EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION UP-TO-DATE. You will be asked to review, sign and date your emergency contact information on a quarterly basis.

Keeping children well/Preventing the Spread of Germs

Please have your child wash his/her hands when arriving at the Center. We monitor handwashing after toileting and before eating. We teach children to cough or sneeze onto their arms or the floor, not their hands. We teach children to use tissues and dispose of them properly. Please reinforce these habits at home, also. Research finds that sufficient sleep strengthens the immune system by as much as 25%. Young children should be in bed by 8 pm with no TV, phones, tablets or other electronic devices. Singing or stroking your child’s head can be very helpful in promoting sleep.

Illness Policy

For the comfort and benefit of all our children, we ask that you keep your child at home if he/she is ill. Any child who is too ill to go outside or participate in activities is too ill to attend our program. Please contact the Center at 215-641-6618 to report your child's symptoms and/or diagnosis as soon as possible. Please inform us immediately if your child contracts a communicable illness, so that we may inform the other families.

A child may not be admitted with a communicable disease or communicable infestation (such as head lice). We will send home any child with a fever over 101 degrees and a second symptom such as: nausea, diarrhea, headache, inability to function as normal, etc. Children who have vomited or had diarrhea should be kept home. We will send home any child with a specific condition likely to expose other children to a communicable disease. The Center reserves the right to require a doctor's note, verifying that your child is free of disease and/or infestation, for attendance. Sick children awaiting pick-up will be isolated and supervised in the office to limit spread of germs. Children may return after 24 hours without a fever, vomiting or diarrhea. Also, 24 hours is required from the time of starting an antibiotic. Written permission from the doctor is also acceptable.

Special Health Needs, Allergies, Medications

Please notify us immediately of any special health needs, so that we can work with you and your health provider to establish a plan for your child's care.

To administer medication we must have the following:

- The medication must be in its original prescription container
- A parent's signed authorization to administer the medication
- A physician's signed statement with dosage and instructions for administration (the prescription is acceptable). Physicians cannot fax this information due to the privacy law.
- Current date and expiration date
- Possible side effects to watch for
- Special instructions or refrigeration needs

We are NOT permitted to administer over the counter medications (like Tylenol) without signed physician's instructions. Diaper ointments, chapstick, cough drops or vitamins, sunscreen and other items labeled "keep out of reach of children" must be kept at home. These items may not be left in a child's backpack, accessible to children. Please empty backpacks and pockets before dropping off your child. Ask your doctor for a medication schedule that can be administered at home when possible.

Sunscreen is considered a medication. We encourage parents to apply it before dropping off children to the Center. Hats are recommended, as well. From May 15th to October 15th we will apply sunscreen after nap for children staying until 5 pm, if you provide the sunscreen (labeled with your child's name) with a signed permission form. **IMPORTANT:** Give the labeled sunscreen to your child's teacher, as it must be kept out of reach of children.

Reporting Injuries

All minor injuries, such as scrapes and bruises, will be treated by washing with soap and water or applying an ice pack, if needed. We are not permitted to use ointments on wounds without specific instructions from a physician. An injury report form will be completed and placed in your child's mailbox to inform you of the incident.

In any emergency situations that arise, the parents or emergency contact person are contacted immediately. If necessary, we will contact Public Safety and arrange for the child to be transported to the nearest hospital emergency room, and a staff person will remain with your child until you arrive.

Unsafe Items Brought From Home

Please do not allow your child to bring unsafe items to the Center. Items from home (including hair barrettes, jewelry) that may pose a hazard (choking or otherwise) to other children will be placed out of reach of children and returned to you at pick-up time. We request that any backpacks brought to the Center be empty.

TOILET TRAINING

The Children's Center staff are happy to support your efforts to toilet train your child, when s/he shows signs of readiness, usually at three years of age. Please discuss this with your child's teachers. We discourage the use of pull-ups because they resemble underwear and can interfere with toilet training progress. A physician's statement and signature is required to support the use of cloth diapers due to health concerns. Center staff will coach your child to clean his/her bottom but will not do it for your child.

NUTRITION, SNACKS AND MEALS

We ask that foods from home meet nutritional guidelines, are labeled with the child's name and the date, are refrigerated as needed, and are appropriate for young children's chewing and swallowing abilities. Round, firm foods that might lodge in the throat of a child are not permitted. The following foods are choking hazards: whole or round sliced hot dogs, whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, thickly spread peanut butter, chunks of raw carrots or meat too large to swallow whole and hard candy. For toddlers, foods should be cut into pieces no larger than 1/2-inch square, according to each child's chewing and swallowing capability.

Please do not send your child to the Children's Center with candy or gum. If your child has special dietary needs, please speak with the teacher or director to make the necessary arrangements.

During lunchtime we will encourage your child to try all foods being served or provided by you and will offer feedback on how much s/he ate. We will not force or insist that your child eat. Children will eat and drink only when seated, to decrease the possibility of choking. Please see the posted menus for lunch and snacks. We serve nutritional meals which meet the requirements of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). During the Pre-K Counts program year, September to early June, we serve lunch in addition to morning and afternoon snack. Children bring lunchboxes during the summer months. Children and staff wash their hands and tables are cleaned and sanitized before eating. We maintain strict standards for food safety as required by CACFP. If your child's menu must be modified for health reasons we require a physician's written instructions. We are sorry but requests for diet modifications for cultural or religious reasons cannot be honored. You may choose to "opt out" and provide your child's snacks and lunches.

Children arriving before 8:30 am are permitted to bring a very simple breakfast, (eating at home is preferred). For example, a nutritious cereal bar and a banana/ apple are suitable choices. If children arrive after 8:30 am breakfast should be eaten at home.

BIRTHDAYS

We encourage you to contribute a nutritious snack for your child's birthday (such as muffins or plain cookies). Please arrange this a few days in advance with your child's teacher. Some children may have food allergies which need to be considered when planning snack.

Invitations to outside birthdays are welcome when all children in the group are being invited.

NAP TIME

Our nap time begins at 1:00 pm daily and lasts until approximately 2:30 pm. To protect our children's sensitive sleep cycles, we ask that you do not pick up your child during this time period. All toddlers participate in naptime and all preschoolers participate in a quiet rest time, so it works best for your child to stay on this schedule when s/he is not at the Children's Center. Predictable routines help a child feel secure and make settling into sleep much easier.

CLOTHING

Please label all clothing. We cannot be responsible for clothing that is not labeled. Help children select clothing that allows them to use their self-help skills. Large buttons and zippers, hats that pull on and don't tie, mittens rather than gloves, pants with elastic waistbands and shoes with zippers or Velcro fasteners are best for children under 5 years. Also remember that art and gross motor (especially playground) activities are tough on clothes, so plan accordingly.

PLEASE SEND ONE COMPLETE, LABELED, CHANGE OF CLOTHES. Change these seasonally, as needed. Remember to replace soiled clothes with a fresh set the next day.

DIAPERS AND DIAPER WIPES are to be provided by the parents or guardian.

We go outside everyday when the weather permits, so dress your child accordingly. For your child's safety, please do not send your child in sandals. Please send your child in shoes that will stay securely on his/her feet when climbing. Our playgrounds are sometimes muddy, so boots are recommended. When your child wears boots, shoes will be needed for indoor time. Remember to label everything! Hats to protect faces from sun exposure are recommended during the warmer months.

ITEMS LEFT BEHIND

When your child's enrollment at the Children's Center ends any articles left behind at the Center will be donated to charity.

FIELD TRIPS

The Children's Center enjoys many on-campus field trips and will host a variety of special events on campus throughout the year. In the past these have included a Whitpain Township fire safety program, presentations by students in the nursing and dental hygiene departments, children's theatre performances and a nature center program. We also enjoy on-campus field trips to the TV/Radio Station, the Cafeteria, and the Dental Hygiene Clinic. We may attend the Lively Arts Series programs for schools. Due to the irregular schedules of our children

and the difficulty of providing transportation with car seats, we do not take off campus field trips.

DISCIPLINE/GUIDANCE POLICIES

The term discipline is often misunderstood to mean punishment. It actually means “to teach.” We use positive guidance, redirection and the setting of clear limits that foster the child’s own ability to become self-regulated. We use modeling and encouragement. We speak to children in a respectful, calm but firm manner and explain clearly what is expected, as in: “Please walk.” Our staff encourage children to be fair, respect property, respect other people and learn to be responsible for their own actions. We teach the children to manage their emotions in a socially acceptable manner, to use words to communicate anger and frustration, to problem solve when conflicts arise.

We plan ahead to try and prevent problems by carefully structuring the environment and by preparing for transitions. Whenever possible we give children choices so they can practice making appropriate decisions. For children three years and older, we find the 1-2-3 approach to discipline to be very effective:

Step 1: Teacher states the rule or desired behavior.

Step 2: Teacher states the rule or desired behavior and the consequence if the child does not follow the direction.

Step 3: Teacher acknowledges the child’s cooperation or follows through on the consequence.

Because people differ in how they provide guidance, parents and teachers should determine jointly the best methods to achieve the goals identified for the child. Our staff will not use physical punishment or abusive language, as these approaches are harmful to children and teach them to respond in kind.

Teachers will intervene immediately when a child becomes physically aggressive, to protect all of the children and encourage more acceptable behavior. Teachers will help children identify positive, alternative ways of responding. Children who are emotionally distraught will be given a quiet place to calm down and regain control.

These procedures will be followed for acts of aggression: fighting, biting, hitting, spitting, pinching, etc.:

- Separation of the children involved.
- Immediate comfort for the individual who was hurt.
- Care of any injury sustained by the victim.
- Notification of the parents of the children involved. Due to laws regarding privacy rights, we are unable to disclose the name(s) of children, other than your own, who were involved in the incident.
- Review of the adequacy of staff supervision and appropriateness of the environment and activities. Corrective action will be taken, if necessary.

Physical restraint will not be used except as necessary to ensure a child’s safety or that of others, and then only for as long as is necessary to control the situation.

When challenging behaviors persist, Center staff will meet with parents to develop a plan of action. Center staff may request an evaluation by an Early Intervention agency.

TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT

In the very rare case that a child's enrollment is not in the best interests of the child or the classroom group, the teacher and director will meet with the parent or guardian to facilitate a change. In this event, parents will be given assistance and at least two weeks' notice to make alternative arrangements.

The Center reserves the right to terminate enrollment and enforce the withdrawal of any child at any time due to delinquent payments, ill health, consistent behavior problems absent a requested Early Intervention evaluation, parent dissatisfaction or inappropriate conduct, and any other problems in accordance with the Children's Center Handbook, MCCC Student Code of Conduct or as necessary as determined by the Center Director.

MCCC HOLIDAY CLOSINGS, BREAKS BETWEEN SEMESTERS

Please see the current Children's Center Calendar for up-to-date information.

MCCC is closed whenever the MCCC offices are closed, including the following days:

Labor Day

The day before the start of fall semester, for orientation and inservice

Thanksgiving Day and the Friday following

December 25 through January 1

Martin Luther King Day

Thursday and Friday of the MCCC Spring Break

Memorial Day

July 4th holiday

The final 2 weeks of the summer plus the Monday and Tuesday prior to the first day of the MCCC fall semester

Parent Conferences: The Center closes one day in late fall and one day in late spring. Child care is provided for conference times, only.

EMERGENCY/SNOW CLOSING

The Center closes whenever the college is closed. The closing number is 320 for radio announcements. When we are closing or opening late the information will be on our outgoing phone message at 215-641-6618. You may also check the college website: www.mc3.edu or call the main college switchboard at 215-641-6630. The fastest way to get emergency closing information is to sign up for text messaging through the MCCC website.

CELEBRATING HOLIDAYS

The MCCC Children's Center wishes to acknowledge holidays in ways that are sensitive to all of our families and appropriate for the children. Holidays will be treated as a small part of our curriculum, especially with toddlers who have limited understanding of the concept. We will emphasize the positive values associated with the holiday and will not address any religious aspects. We invite you to share information about your family's special holiday. Please speak with your child's teacher to arrange this.

Our goal is to provide a program that is sensitive to each family's culture. Please let us know if you feel there is more we could be doing to further this goal.

REGISTRATION AND RELATED FEES

Please review the back of your Registration Form for the most current information:

The Registration and insurance fees are non-refundable and must be paid at the time of enrollment to reserve a space for your child. Registration and insurance fees will be due at each enrollment period: Fall Semester, Spring Semester and Summer (excluding 12 month registrations, see below). The security deposit will be applied to your child's final two weeks of care.

*Lunch fees:

The Center provides a nutritious hot lunch from September to mid June. The Center is partially reimbursed for the food costs, based on family income. Families who do not qualify for free meals will be charged for lunch and snacks based on income.

12 month registrations (September to August):

One annual registration fee of \$30 is required. This option is available only for full time, full year schedules. Please refer to the Center calendar for closing dates. Insurance fees are due each semester. One week vacation, not charged, is available with 2 weeks prior written notice.

Sibling discount: One registration fee is due per family. For families enrolling 2 or more children in the Children's Center 15 hours (or more) per week (per child) there is a 10% discount on the weekly fees for the oldest child.

Payment of fees:

The Center requires all families to establish a Tuition Express Account – a payment processing system that allows secure, on-time tuition and fee payments to be made from either your bank account or credit card. This system also allows you to check your balance online. Payments by check are accepted at the Center. Use the drop box behind the reception desk. Cash is accepted at the Business Office in College Hall, only. Payments are due weekly by 1 pm Friday. Refer to your Registration Form for your weekly amount.

A late fee of \$10 per week will be applied to unpaid balances. The Children's Center reserves the right to terminate enrollment for unpaid balances over two weeks.

Late Pickup: Pick-ups more than 15 minutes past the scheduled time are subject to a \$15 late fee. After closing time a fee of \$15 plus \$1.00 per minute will be charged. If a child is left past 5:30 pm the appropriate authorities will be called to supervise your child.

Holidays/Emergency Closings/Child Illness or Absence: Full tuition is due for all weeks, including those in which inservice/holidays/emergency closings/illness/absence occurs. Other days may not be substituted. The Children's Center will close for inclement weather or other emergency conditions when MCCC closes. Credit or refunds are not given for illness or other unplanned child absences. Please refer to the Center calendar for closing dates.

Schedule changes: MCCC students will be permitted to change their schedules once during the first 2 weeks of the semester without additional charge. All other schedule changes will

be subject to a \$15 change fee. Schedule Change requests are due by 5 pm Thursday to be effective the following week.

Required Forms: PA state regulations require parents to provide a completed Emergency Contact Form and a Child Health Form with up-to-date immunizations signed by the doctor and updated annually. Please inquire about documentation required for children with serious medical concerns. The Center must be notified immediately of any changes to the Emergency Contact Information.

Scholarships/financial assistance, etc.:

- MCCC urges all students to apply for financial aid (215-641-6566, located in College Hall). Some financial aid may be used to help with the cost of child care. Please allow 2 weeks to arrange to use financial aid for Center tuition.
- PA child care subsidy for low income families: 800-281-1116, Child Care Information Services. There is often a waiting list of 6 months or more. Families using the subsidy system will pay any costs not covered by subsidy and will sign an agreement with the Center.
- Pre-K Counts: Children must be 3 years old by June 1, and the family must document income below 300% of the poverty level. The Center has 26 Pre-K Counts slots which are typically awarded annually in July. Please inquire for more information.
- Active Duty Military families may be able to access funding. Check with the director.