

2024 FAMILY HANDBOOK



Becky Gates
Children's Center
EDUCATION & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

1125 Hensel Drive
College Station, TX 77840
979.458.5437



Charlotte Sharp
Children's Center
EDUCATION & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

1411 Hensel Street
College Station, TX 77840
979.458.6836

Family Handbook is subject to change.
You will be notified of any changes or
updates to the Handbook.
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Table of Contents

Welcome	6
History	6
Vision & Mission Statements	7
Children’s Centers Vision	7
Children’s Centers Mission Statement	7
College of Education and Human Development	7
Texas A&M University	8
Aggie Core Values	8
Philosophy	9
Academic Connections	10
Internal	10
External	10
Our Team	11
Administrative	11
Classroom	11
Kitchen	12
Hours of Operation	12
Our Program	13
Licensing	13
Accreditation	13
Texas Rising Star	13
The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)	14
NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment	14
Inclusion Statement	15
Confidentiality Statement	15
Texas Penal Code	16
Enrollment	16
Affiliation	16
Waitlist Policy	16

Enrollment Policy	17
Classroom Assignments	17
Parent Orientation	18
Withdraw	18
Termination	18
Fees and Billing	18
Tuition/Billing	18
Late/Decline Fees	19
Student Discount & Graduate Student Scholarship (BGCC ONLY)	19
3rd Party Payments	20
Curriculum and Assessment	20
HighScope Curriculum	20
Preschool	20
Infant and Toddler	20
Letter Links	20
Project, Inquiry-based Approach	21
Studio Spaces	21
COR Advantage	21
Learn the Signs. Act Early.	22
Kaymbu and Daily Notes	22
Anti-Bias/Multicultural Education	22
Nutrition and Physical Education	23
Breastfeeding Policy	23
Children with Special Needs	23
English Language Learners	24
Wellness Policy	24
Nutrition & Physical Activity	24
Family Style Meal Service	25
Environments	26
Indoor	26
Outdoor	26

Risky Play	27
Schedules and Routines	27
Preschool	27
Infant/Toddler	29
Special Activities	31
Field trips	31
Special guests & enrichment activities	31
Pets & animals	32
Water play	32
Celebrations	32
Behavior Management	32
Positive Guidance	32
Problem Solving Approach to Social Conflict	33
Safety Plan	34
Referral Process	34
Dismissal	35
Arrivals and Departures	36
Parking	36
Signing in and out	36
Daily Health Checks	36
Security	36
Video surveillance	37
Saying Goodbye and Hello	37
Communication	37
Face-to-Face	37
Kaymbu	37
Daily Notes	37
Storyboards	38
Emails	38
Phone Calls	38
Family Communication Board	38
Newsletter	38

Conferences	39
Absences	39
Family Partnerships	39
Open Door Policy	39
Family Advisory Board (FAB)	39
Providing Feedback & Grievances	40
Health & Safety	40
Illness	40
Medication	41
Sun Safe Policy	43
Medical Emergencies	43
Immunizations	43
Vision and Hearing Screening	44
Accidents and Incidents	44
Emergency Plans and Drills	44
Water Outage	45
Supervision	45
Handwashing	45
Diapering & Toileting	46
Apparel	47
Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect	47
APPENDIX	48
Outside Food and Beverages	48
Other Activities	50
HighScope Preschool Curriculum	50
HighScope Infant-Toddler Curriculum	53

Welcome

Welcome to the Texas A&M Children's Centers! The Becky Gates (BGCC) and Charlotte Sharp (CSCC) Children's Centers are licensed through Texas Child Care Licensing (CCL), Texas Health & Human Services (HHS). BGCC is accredited through Cognia (agency of SACS) Early Learning, and both schools participate in Texas Rising Star, a quality rating and improvement system. BGCC & CSCC are located on the campus of Texas A&M University. The Children's Centers are auxiliaries and operate under the College of Education and Human Development. We are also supported by the University.

The Becky Gates Children's Center is located across from the Garden Apartments off Hensel Drive and is on the Aggie bus route. BGCC is licensed for 200 children ages 12 months – school age. BGCC has 12 classrooms plus the multipurpose room for summer school age for children of Texas A&M University students, staff, and faculty.

The Charlotte Sharp Children's Center is located off Hensel Street & Texas Ave. and is also located on the Aggie bus route. CSCC is licensed for over 200 children ages 12 months – school age. CSCC has 12 classrooms for children of Texas A&M University students, staff, and faculty as well as the local community.

The Children's Centers are open year-round, Monday - Friday, from 7:30 AM – 5:30 p.m. We follow the Texas A&M University staff holiday calendar in addition to our professional development, family conference days, and any other days listed on our contract. The Children's Centers contracts enrollment on a semester-to-semester basis (fall, spring, and summer).

History

After a 20-year effort to establish a child care center on campus the then named, Children's Center, was opened on August 31, 1998, with 149 children. In 2006, Texas A&M University's Children's Center received a \$1 million endowment generously donated by Arthur and Dorothy McFerrin. On May 26, 2006, the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents sanctioned the renaming of the center in honor of Becky Gates, the spouse of former University President Dr. Robert M. Gates, renowned for her lifelong dedication to the education of young children. Mrs. Gates originally became involved with the center after a tour of the facility and later served on its board. "When both parents have to work, good childcare becomes very important," she said. "I have a couple of children who are adults now, but if I hadn't had good childcare when they were young, it would have been much harder, if not impossible, for me to work in my profession."

On September 23, 2006, the Texas A&M University Children's Center was renamed the Becky Gates Children's Center as well as a groundbreaking for the 3,000 square-foot multipurpose building addition.

"The littlest Aggies need the best care." ~Becky Gates

On August 21, 2023, the Charlotte Sharp Children's Center officially became part of Texas A&M University. With the incorporation of this second facility, the collaboration between the Children's Centers and the Texas A&M University Institute for Early Childhood Development & Education offers students in the Texas A&M College of Education and Development a practical learning environment, while also granting children at the centers access to cutting-edge early childhood education best practices.

Vision & Mission Statements

Children's Centers Vision

A collaborative community shaping lifelong innovative learners.

Children's Centers Mission Statement

The mission of the Texas A&M Children's Centers is to cultivate a vibrant community of creative learners, driven by diversity and innovation by providing immersive experiences and supportive connections within nurturing surroundings to inspire fresh insights and discoveries.

1. For our children and families, our mission is to partner with families to nurture holistic growth and development, advance developmentally appropriate practices, and elevate inclusive active engagement for every child and family.
2. For our teachers, our mission is to promote high-quality early learning for each and every child by connecting best practices and research to foster a lifelong love for learning and a strong foundation for future success.
3. For our staff, our mission is to ensure that the work environment supports their growth, provides opportunities for leadership and meaningful work, and is a place where strengths and achievements are celebrated.
4. To our stakeholders and community, our mission is to be an integral component of a world-class academic institution contributing to pioneering advancements in early childhood development and education by partnering in leading-edge research and delivering top-tier clinical educational opportunities for Texas A&M students, the local community, and beyond.

College of Education and Human Development

Transform lives through leadership and innovation in Education and Human Development. We transform lives through leadership and innovation in education and human development. The transformational leaders of today and tomorrow start here.

The School of Education and Human Development is committed to enhancing opportunities in educational achievement and health outcomes, fostering innovation and development, and influencing policy and practice in the fields of education, health, sport, business, and government.

Our mission is bound by our commitment to students, faculty, staff, and external stakeholders as we take on challenges in all our affiliated fields of education, sport management, and kinesiology:

1. For our students, our mission is to ensure that learning experiences transform and prepare them for the challenges of tomorrow through meaningful learning experiences in and outside the classroom, student involvement in research, a rich and diverse learning environment, and robust opportunities to experience leadership.
2. For our faculty, our mission is to provide a supportive environment that allows them to ask the next generation of research questions, expand the impact of their work to relevant communities, mentor the next generation of leaders, and work collaboratively and cooperatively to address society's larger challenges.
3. For our staff, our mission is to ensure that the work environment supports their growth, provides opportunities for leadership and meaningful work, and becomes a place where strengths and achievements are celebrated.
4. To our external stakeholders, we pledge through our teaching, research, and service to use our collective wisdom to support communities in providing a superior education and quality of life.

Texas A&M University

Texas A&M University is dedicated to the discovery, development, communication, and application of knowledge in a wide range of academic and professional fields. Its mission of providing the highest quality undergraduate and graduate programs is inseparable from its mission of developing new understandings through research and creativity. It prepares students to assume roles in leadership, responsibility and service to society. Texas A&M assumes as its historic trust the maintenance of freedom of inquiry and an intellectual environment nurturing the human mind and spirit. It welcomes and seeks to serve persons of all racial, ethnic and geographic groups as it addresses the needs of an increasingly diverse population and a global economy. In the 21st century, Texas A&M University seeks to assume a place of preeminence among public universities while respecting its history and traditions.

Aggie Core Values

Howdy! We understand the importance of being an Aggie! We incorporate and teach many of the traditions throughout our program, especially the core values listed below.

Respect – We care, value, and treat others with compassion, empathy, civility, dignity, and fairness. We listen to understand and respect the opinions of others using positive social skills.

Excellence – We commit to excel in our core mission areas of teaching, research, and service. We will promote high-quality early learning through positive relationships and experiences utilizing research-based methodology.

Leadership – We lead by example. We are courageous and forward thinking about the challenges of tomorrow. We embrace change. Leaders do not lead by fiat but by collaboration and teamwork.

Loyalty – We are stronger and better together and all that we do represents the College and the University. We commit to building strong relationships with our children, families, and our community.

Integrity – We commit to establish and maintain trust with ourselves and others in all we do: teaching, leadership, communication, and center operations.

Selfless Service – We work to help others; we do so without expectations of personal reward or recognition.

Philosophy

The Texas A&M Children's Centers cultivate a rich community of diverse innovative learners by providing enriching experiences and building strong connections focusing on the holistic development of children to establish a lifelong love for learning. We believe young children learn best through active participatory play, recognizing it as the primary means through which children construct knowledge. Within this framework, active learning forms the foundation of interactions between adults and children, permeating the learning environment, daily routines, and assessment practices. By engaging all of a child's senses, active learning is facilitated through the provision of diverse and stimulating materials that children can freely manipulate. Moreover, children are empowered to set their own their own goals, select materials and activities, and choose play partners, fostering autonomy and agency. Communication, both verbal and nonverbal, is encouraged as children express their actions and understanding. Adults play a crucial role in supporting children's current cognitive levels while challenging them to progress further, through dialogue, participation in play, and problem-solving assistance. Central to this approach is the cultivation of position, authentic relationships within a supportive environment. Such an environment values shared control between adults and children, emphasizes children's strengths, fosters genuine connections between adults and children, promotes play, utilizes encouragement rather than praise, and adopts a problem-solving approach to social conflicts.

The Children's Centers employ a horizontal educational, scaffolding, approach, which is founded on the developmental principle of assessing children's current abilities and utilizing them as the foundation for instruction. Teachers facilitate numerous experiences

that enable children to apply and further develop recently acquired skills, while also offering opportunities for progression to new skill levels when children demonstrate readiness. The following is an example.

1. The teacher uses child development information to help her understand the sequence of development.
2. Nora's teacher recognizes that tearing comes before using scissors.
3. In order to help facilitate Nora's development, the teacher will support and build upon Nora's current abilities by giving her tearing opportunities. She will focus on what Nora can do. In this context she will also extend Nora's tearing by introducing scissors at the appropriate time.

Academic Connections

Internal

The Children's Centers serve as a learning site for Texas A&M students and faculty, as well as others in the community to support educational and professional goals. We work closely with Texas A&M University Institute for Early Childhood Development & Education and various academic departments to provide educational opportunities and experiences for students. This encompasses numerous forms of engagement such as observations, projects, and field experiences, which may include practicums, internships, student teaching, informal research, developmental assessments, active participation, group discussions, and various activities. Some of these activities may involve gathering work samples, taking photographs, recording videos, and transcribing children's verbal expressions.

All formal research conducted at the Children's Centers is reviewed and approved by a Research Review Committee comprised of faculty and administration.

If research falls under jurisdiction of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Human Subjects Research, we will notify families of the research and IRB approval number. We will obtain parent/guardian permission for activities that include photographs or videotaping, or anything we feel needs parental permission. We will not permit any activity that we feel will cause undue distress, physical or psychological harm. All participants will complete a background check prior to beginning any type of child interaction, as well as an orientation from an administrator.

External

To meet the needs and support of all our children we may need the expertise of an external entity. We work collaboratively with College Station ISD, Bryan ISD, and Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) to aid in the implementation of an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). A copy of an IFSP or an IEP will

be kept in the child's file. We also work collaboratively with private therapists and consultants. Services may be rendered at the Children's Centers.

Our Team

Administrative

The Children's Centers are led by an Executive Director providing leadership in the development and operations of the Texas A&M Children's Centers.

The Becky Gates and Charlotte Sharp Children's Centers are led by a Director responsible for the overall management of the center. This position is supported by an Administrative Coordinator II.

Director

The Director is responsible for the overall operation of the Children's Center as well as being a leader in the early childhood field.

Administrative Coordinator II

The Administrative Coordinator is responsible for supporting the director and managing the various business functions of the Children's Center.

Front Desk, Student Worker

We have several part time student workers to provide administrative support and assist with business functions of the Children's Center.

Classroom

The classroom team is led by Instructional Coaches. Classrooms are designed to have an Early Childhood Teacher, Early Childhood Assistant or Associate teacher, and Teaching Assistants (TAs) while other classrooms have an Early Childhood Teacher and TAs.

Instructional Coach

Coordinate Children's Centers early childhood teaching and education programs. This position provides technical support and services including coaching, training, mentoring, quality assurance, and teamwork.

Early Childhood Teacher

All our early childhood teachers have at least a CDA; most have obtained a degree of higher education. Their role is to provide developmentally appropriate learning environments for young children as well as develop and implement curriculum and assessments. The early childhood teacher provides a positive laboratory experience for college students.

Early Childhood Assistant/Associate Teacher

Their role is to assist the lead teacher with the development and implementation of the curriculum and assessments as well as mentor teaching assistants.

Early Childhood Teaching Assistant (Student Employee Position)

We have several part time teaching assistant/student employees. Their role is to support the daily operations in the classroom.

Kitchen

Cook

We have one full time cook at BGCC who plans and prepares nutritious meals and snacks in accordance with the Child and Adult Care Food Program and USDA.

Kitchen Assistant

Assists in the assembly and serving of meals and snacks in compliance with the Child and Adult Care Food Program and USDA at CSCC.

Student Worker

We have several part time student workers that provide support to the Cook, Kitchen Assistant, and kitchen operations.

Hours of Operation

The Children's Centers are open **year-round**, M-F from 7:30 AM – 5:30 PM.

We will be open except the following holidays as set forth by Texas A&M University

- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving and the day after
- Winter Break (see Texas A&M Holiday Calendar for specific dates)
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Spring Break (see Texas A&M Holiday Calendar for specific dates)
- Memorial Day
- Emancipation Day
- Independence Day

Professional development days, family conference days, and other closings related specifically to the Children's Centers will be listed on the semester contract. These dates may vary year-to-year.

If the Office of the President or Human Resources announces early release, the Children's Centers will close unless classes will be in session.

If Texas A&M University is closed due to inclement weather, the Children's Centers will be closed as well.

Our Program

Licensing

The Children's Centers are regulated by the Texas Department of Health and Human Services, Child Care Licensing Division. Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers is available at the following link:

http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/documents/Standards_and_Regulations/746_Centers.pdf

Copies of the most recent Licensing inspection report can be found in the front lobby display case.

Accreditation

The Children's Centers are currently working toward National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation. Achieving NAEYC Accreditation is a four-step process that involves self reflection and quality improvement in order to meet and maintaining accreditation over a five-year period. Programs are required to meet standards grouped into 10 areas: relationships with children, curriculum, teaching approaches, child assessment, nutrition and health, staff qualifications, relationship with children's families, relationship with the community, physical environment, and program leadership and management.

The Becky Gates Children's Center has met the criteria for educational quality established by the Cognia Accreditation Commission and has been awarded the Certificate of Accreditation by the NCA Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement, the Northwest Accreditation Commission, and the SACS Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement.

Cognia has 5 standards:

1. Purpose and Direction
2. Governance and Leadership
3. Teaching and Assessing for Learning
4. Resources and Support Systems
5. Using Results for Continuous Improvement

Within each Standard are Indicators and Criteria. The Standards are research-based and support an education process that is visionary; characterizing how early learning schools should operate to promote a culture of continuous learning that is fluid.

Texas Rising Star

Texas Rising Star is a quality-based child care rating and improvement system for early childhood programs participating in the Texas Workforce Commission's subsidized child care program. The Becky Gates Children's Center has met the highest-level criteria, a Four-

Star Certification. The Charlotte Sharp Children's Center is currently going through certification.

The 5 Categories are:

1. Director and Staff Qualifications and Training
2. Caregiver-Child Interactions
3. Curriculum
4. Nutrition and Indoor/Outdoor Activities
5. Parent Education and Involvement

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

The Children's Centers participates in the CACFP. It is a federal program that provides reimbursement for healthful meals and snacks served to children and adults. See Wellness Policy for more information about our meal service. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment

The Children's Centers adheres to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment.

https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/position-statements/Ethics%20Position%20Statement2011_09202013update.pdf

Statement of Commitment*

As an individual who works with young children, I commit myself to furthering the values of early childhood education as they are reflected in the ideals and principles of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct. To the best of my ability, I will

- Never harm children.
- Ensure that programs for young children are based on current knowledge and research of child development and early childhood education.
- Respect and support families in their task of nurturing children.
- Respect colleagues in early childhood care and education and support them in maintaining the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct.
- Serve as an advocate for children, their families, and their teachers in community and society.
- Stay informed of and maintain high standards of professional conduct.
- Engage in an ongoing process of self-reflection, realizing that personal characteristics, biases, and beliefs have an impact on children and families.
- Be open to new ideas and be willing to learn from the suggestions of others.
- Continue to learn, grow, and contribute as a professional.

- Honor the ideals and principles of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct.

* This Statement of Commitment is not part of the Code but is a personal acknowledgment of the individual's willingness to embrace the distinctive values and moral obligations of the field of early childhood care and education. It is recognition of the moral obligations that lead to an individual becoming part of the profession.

Inclusion Statement

Texas A&M University is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equality of opportunity and human dignity. To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, Texas A&M encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality, diversity, pluralism and the uniqueness of the individual within our state, nation and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees should be based on applicable law and individual merit.

Texas A&M University, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

It is the policy of Texas A&M University not to discriminate based on gender, age, disability, race, color, religion, marital status, veteran's status, national or ethnic origin, or sexual orientation. Harassment of a student in class, i.e., a pattern of behavior directed against a particular student with the intent of humiliating or intimidating that student will not be tolerated. The mere expression of one's ideas is not harassment and is fully protected by academic freedom, but personal harassment of individual students is not permitted.

Confidentiality Statement

Information exchanged between families, teachers, administrators, staff, and other professionals, if applicable, is considered private. Obtained information is only shared with those we believe are in "need-to-know" status.

Formal and informal assessments, child file contents, including all health and medical information, food program documents, etc. are considered confidential. Only permitted individuals with proper authority can access this protected information. Permitted individuals may include, but not limited to, BGCC employees; special educators; therapists; licensing, accrediting, grantors; local ISDs and state representatives.

A release of information or court order must be signed by the responsible parent/guardian before any information about a child or their family is disclosed.

Confidential information is locked in filing cabinets. Administration and front desk employees monitor access. All BGCC employees are informed of our confidentiality policy.

Photographs and videos are only shared when written permission is obtained. This form is maintained in the child's file.

Texas Penal Code

Under the Texas Penal Code any area within 1,000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to a harsher penalty.

Enrollment

Affiliation

Affiliation with Texas A&M University is not required to place a child on the waitlist; however, it is required for enrollment only at BGCC. Proof of enrollment and employment via UIN will be required once accepted. Affiliation will be verified every semester. Failure to maintain Texas A&M affiliation will result in disenrollment. CSCC is open to the community.

Waitlist Policy

The Children's Centers maintains a waitlist for all our age groups. By adding your child to the waitlist, you understand policies, procedures, and/or fees may change by the time your child is offered enrollment.

Complete one application per child. If applying for an unborn child, please put your expected date for the birthdate.

Bi-annually an email will be sent out to confirm your waitlist status and provide an opportunity to update contact information if applicable. It is very important your information is correct for when we contact you regarding enrollment.

You will be notified via email first and via phone secondly when a space for your child has become available. You will have 48 hours from the time of the email to accept the enrollment. If you decline the first time, you will be placed back on the waitlist with the decline date instead of the application date. If you decline for a second time, you will be removed from the waitlist. We log all communications regarding the waitlist. It is very important to notify us of any changes in email addresses or phone numbers.

The wait time to become enrolled averages around 1-1.5 years for BGCC. We encourage families to get on the waitlist as soon as possible.

How to Complete Waitlist Application

1. Take a tour of the Becky Gates Children's Center and/or Charlotte Sharp Children's Center.
2. Complete online application.
3. Pay \$50.00 non-refundable waitlist fee.

Waitlist Priority

1. Current Children's Center staff and siblings that are currently enrolled at the Children's Centers, and United States Military Veteran.
2. Affiliated students, faculty, and employees.
3. Nonaffiliated Texas A&M employees.
4. Community.

All prioritization is based off the date of your completed waitlist application submission.

Enrollment Policy

Once you have accepted enrollment, affiliation with Texas A&M will be verified for BGCC only. Parent/Guardian will complete the following:

- Contract (updated every semester)
- Admission form
 - You must list at least one emergency contact (cannot be parent/guardian)
 - You must list at least one local authorized pick-up (cannot be parents/guardians)
- Certificate of health and immunization records
 - Vision and hearing screening for children 4 years of age or older
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) enrollment form
- Appearance form
- Family Questionnaire
- Automated payment processing form (optional)
- Parent Rights form

To maintain continuous enrollment, you must sign a contract every semester. If you do not sign a contract by the posted due date, your child will not be enrolled the following semester and you will be asked to fill out a withdrawal form.

When you sign a semester contract, you are agreeing to pay for the entire designated time period. You may not break a contract mid-semester. If an unforeseeable event occurs and you cannot fulfill your contract notify administration immediately. You will be responsible for payment for the duration of the contract unless administration can enroll a child in your child's place. This is not a quick process, nor does it ensure we can find someone to complete your contract. You are responsible for payment until another family begins paying.

Classroom Assignments

Classroom assignments are determined by age and consultation with teachers. All relevant information is considered to make the best decision for placement.

New classroom assignments occur every August. Teachers begin building a relationship with their new children a few weeks before starting in their new classroom.

Parent Orientation

Every new parent/guardian will be given a virtual orientation to learn about our program before your child starts at the Children's Centers. Every fall semester, we have a large virtual family orientation before the start of our school year. We offer smaller sessions in the spring and summer semesters. New parents/guardians will be notified of orientation dates through the enrollment process.

Withdraw

Withdraw forms are available toward the end of each semester. Remember, you are enrolled and responsible for payment for the dates listed on the semester contract.

Termination

The Children's Centers reserves the right to terminate a contract. Below are a few examples of reasons we can terminate a contract. See Dismissal section for a more detailed list of behaviors that may lead to dismissal from the Children's Centers.

- Noncompliance with center policies and procedures.
- Fraudulent information provided to the center.
- Failure to complete and turn in required documentation or forms.
- Delinquent account.
- Other.

Fees and Billing

Tuition/Billing

Every semester parents/guardians must sign a contract for continued enrollment. You are responsible for full payment during the dates listed on the contract. Tuition is posted to your account on the first of every month. You have until the fifth day of the month to make payment (Bi-monthly plans are the fifth and twentieth). If you are signed up for automatic payments, they will be scheduled on the fifth day of every month. Tuition may be paid by check/money order, automatic payments (ACH/Credit Card), online through MyProcure, or TAMU payroll deduction. Automatic payments are processed on the fifth day each month. If the center is closed on the fifth day of the month, automatic payments will be processed the next business day. Automatic payments are not available for bi-monthly payment plans. We do not pro-rate tuition for unexpected closings, absences, etc.

A \$25.00 convenience fee is charged for automatic credit card payment enrollees as well as for each tuition payment made through the MyProcure online portal (includes credit card and debit card payments).

A \$50.00 material/supply fee per child, per semester is charged to your account and is due on or before the fifth day of September, January, and June. If a child is enrolled mid-semester, material/supply fee is paid with the first month's tuition.

If you do not have a student or employee ID card issued by Texas A&M University with building access capability, you will need to request a building access card. Access cards are \$25 per card.

Late/Decline Fees

A \$5.00 late payment fee is assessed for each day and for each type of payment received late (after the fifth of the month). Bi-monthly plans will be considered late after the fifth and/or twentieth of the month. For example, if tuition is received five days late, a \$25.00 late fee will be assessed to your account. If the due date falls on a day the center is not open (i.e., weekend or holiday) the due date will be the next business day.

A late pickup fee is assessed per child who is picked up past our closing time of 5:30 p.m., or time of early closing.

- Minute 0-5 late, \$10 fee will be assessed per child.
- For every 5-minute increment thereafter, an additional fee of \$5 will be assessed per child.
- After 15 minutes, UPD will be called, unless we have heard from parents.

A \$30.00 returned check/credit card decline fee is assessed for each notice of insufficient funds or decline of payment. We cannot accept another check as repayment of the initial returned check. We can accept a Cashier's Check or Money Order.

In the event of non-payment of tuition during the contracted period Texas A&M University has the authority to disclose information about the delinquent account to any credit bureau, collection agency, or attorney for the purpose of collection of any delinquent amount. Past due accounts will be subject to late payment fees as well as any additional fees incurred by Texas A&M University such as but not limited to court costs, attorney's fees, and reasonable costs for collection. All delinquent accounts will be referred to Texas A&M Debt Collections. If you are a student, any unpaid balances will be charged to your Texas A&M University account as well as class registration being blocked. Services will be terminated for accounts which are 2 months past due.

Student Discount & Graduate Student Scholarship (BGCC ONLY)

Verified Texas A&M University students will be eligible for a \$100-\$125 per month student discount based on qualifying tier. Student status will be verified after the drop/add date for the semester and must be maintained throughout semester to qualify. Once verified, your account will be credited. It is important to note, since you will not receive the discount until verification of student status, you will be responsible for paying the first month of every

semester in full. For example, since tuition is due at the beginning of the month, you will pay September tuition amount in full while waiting for student verification. Once verified (after drop/add date), your account will reflect both September and October discount.

There is an additional scholarship for graduate students, who qualify, awarded through The Association of Former Students (AFS). To qualify for the Becky Gates Children's Center Graduate Student Scholarship, your family income must be between 130% - 180% of the federal poverty guidelines. This information is listed on the Child and Adult Care Food Program Eligibility Form. Priority will go to those who qualify based on the 130% federal poverty guidelines. If you meet the income guidelines, submit a letter of need to the Business Coordinator at the beginning of the fall and/or spring semester. Your graduate student status will be verified. You must reapply every semester.

3rd Party Payments

We accept 3rd party payments through other organizations such as Workforce Solutions and Child Care Aware for military families. Talk to our Administrative Coordinator about any 3rd party payments you are expecting to receive.

Curriculum and Assessment

The Children's Centers utilize a variety of approaches to offer the best developmentally appropriate curriculum for our center. We apply emergent, research-based, and evidence-based curriculums focusing on the whole child.

HighScope Curriculum

Preschool.

See Appendix for *The Highscope Preschool Curriculum: What, How, and Why*

Infant and Toddler.

See Appendix for *The Highscope Infant-Toddler Curriculum: What, How, and Why*

Infants and toddlers will be assigned a primary teacher. A primary teacher forms a close, reliable, affectionate relationship that sustains children while away from home. When children have a secure attachment, it reduces the considerable stress on infants and toddlers. The primary teacher is not the exclusive caregiver for your child. Your child will have secondary caregivers who know your child well.

Letter Links

Letter links is a literacy learning tool that builds on children's natural interest in reading and writing their own names. Each child's name is paired with an image for a word that has the same first sound as his or her name – the name and image together are called a letter link.

Letter links are used throughout the day and throughout the classroom as children learn the alphabetic principle and develop phonological awareness and other literacy abilities.

Project, Inquiry-based Approach

A Project Approach, a specific kind of project-based learning which brings several advantages to any classroom and represents best practices in 21st-century education. It fits securely within both a long history of innovative teaching and learning practices—dating back, at least, to the 16th century—and within the framework of today’s growing body of research on what students need to find success and fulfillment in the current (and future) world.

Project, inquiry-based learning refers to a set of teaching strategies that enable teachers to guide students through in-depth studies of real-world topics. Projects have a complex but flexible framework within which teaching and learning are seen as interactive processes. When teachers implement the approach successfully, students feel highly motivated and actively involved in their own learning, leading them to produce high-quality work and to grow as individuals and collaborators.

A project, by definition, is an in-depth investigation of a real-world topic worthy of a student’s attention and effort. The study may be carried out with an entire class or with small groups of students—most often at the preschool, elementary, and middle school levels. Projects typically do not constitute the whole educational program; instead, teachers use them alongside systematic instruction and as a means of achieving curricular goals.

Retrieved from: <http://projectapproach.org/about/project-approach/>

Studio Spaces

Studio spaces, adapted from an *atelier*, are productive places for children to individually explore projects connected with experiences planned in the classrooms to extend learning. Children will have access to explore studio spaces with tools, techniques, and materials to study, analyze, and reflect on hypotheses (Gandini, 2015). The teacher’s role in the studio space is to be an organizer, interpreter, co-organizer, and collaborator (Gandini, 2015).

Reference: Gandini, L., Hill, L., Cadwell, L., & Schwall, C. (Eds.). (2015). *In the spirit of the studio: Learning from the atelier of Reggio Emilia*. Teachers College Press.

COR Advantage

COR Advantage is built on 36 items that are proven by research to best prepare children for school success. With the fewest items of any early childhood assessment, COR saves teachers time and keeps them focused on what matters most. Teachers use the valuable insight they put in the tool to create individualized lesson plans and detailed reports on child and classroom progress. The online tool’s in-the-moment support increases the

accuracy of teacher's scores, delivering consistent data administrators can rely on to meaningfully guide their program to the next level.

Criterion-referenced and research-based COR Advantage has been proven valid and reliable through rigorous validation studies. COR Advantage is aligned to the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, Common Core State Standards, and early learning state standards and can be used with any developmentally appropriate curriculum.

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

The Administration for Children and Families, Administration for Community Living, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Medicaid and Medicare, Health Resources and Services Administration, Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration at the Department of Health and Human Services as well as the Office of Special Education Programs at the Department of Education have partnered to launch Birth to Five: Watch Me Thrive!, a coordinated effort to encourage developmental and behavioral screening and support for children, families, and the providers who care for them.

Before family conferences, families will be given the appropriate age screening tool (Learn the Sign. Act Early) to complete and return. The screening tool is short and provides a quick snapshot of a child's health and developmental status and indicates whether further evaluation is needed to identify potential difficulties that might necessitate interventions or special education services.

For more information, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html>

Kaymbu and Daily Notes

Kaymbu's technology is designed to support collaborative partnerships, allowing teachers to share learning and updates from school, and families to share learning and updates from home. Through this technology, moments such as photos, videos, and notes can be shared as well as portfolios and storyboards. Teachers can share reminders or urgent messages with families by text, email, or the dedicated parent app.

Daily Notes are only used with our infant and toddler classrooms to log naps, meals, and more.

All communication sent to families, including learning moments, messages, storyboards, or full portfolios can be automatically translated into 100 different languages.

Anti-Bias/Multicultural Education

The Children's Centers have adopted the Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves (Derman-Sparks L. & Edwards, J., 2010) four core goals:

1. Each child will demonstrate self-awareness, confidence, family pride, and positive social identities.
2. Each child will express comfort and joy with human diversity; accurate language for human differences; and deep, caring human connections.
3. Each child will increasingly recognize unfairness, have language to describe unfairness, and understand that unfairness hurts.
4. Each child will demonstrate empowerment and the skills to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and/or discriminatory actions.

Nutrition and Physical Education

See Wellness Policy

Breastfeeding Policy

We welcome breastfeeding mothers. We have a designated lactation room located in each center. At BGCC, the lactation room is in the multipurpose building if the mother prefers a private location. At CSCC, the lactation room is located in the front office. Lactation rooms are equipped with comfortable seating, electrical outlets, and flat surfaces for a breast pump, as well as access to a sink, refrigerator, and microwave. Breastfeeding resources are located in the lactation room in addition to the main entrance.

Children with Special Needs

The Children's Centers are inclusive programs. Children with a wide range of abilities benefit from sharing classrooms together. All children are encouraged to participate to their fullest potential.

If your child has an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) serving birth through age 2 or an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) serving ages three and above, please provide us with a copy that will be placed in the child's file. This will enable our staff to better meet the individual needs of the child and work with the education team to aid in reaching benchmarks and goals.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a law that makes available a free appropriate public education to eligible children with disabilities throughout the nation and ensures special education and related services to those children.

The IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities.

Infants and toddlers, birth through age 2, with disabilities and their families receive early intervention services under IDEA Part C. Children and youth ages 3 through 21 receive special education and related services under IDEA Part B.

For more information visit <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/>

English Language Learners

The Children's Centers wants to make communication as easy as possible for children. We encourage children to use whatever language they speak. The classroom environments will reflect the languages of the classroom community. Classroom teachers will use pictures and familiar objects whenever possible to communicate with children who currently do not speak English. We encourage families to continue to speak the child's first language at home; over time they will learn English.

Wellness Policy

Everyone has a role in helping to create and support healthy eating patterns in multiple settings nationwide. Over 30% of children are overweight or obese and those numbers have persisted for more than two decades¹.

We help our young children learn how to make healthy choices among foods, beverages, and physical activity as part of their daily lives. This lays the groundwork for a lifetime of healthful eating². We work with our families to promote healthy habits for life.

Teachers model our wellness policy by consuming the same foods as children. Teachers lead and participate in active play in both indoor and outdoor settings.

To achieve these goals, we have adopted the following policies.

Nutrition & Physical Activity

The Children's Centers rotates two, six-week seasonal menus, updated annually including family feedback. We offer a variety of fruits and vegetables, lean proteins, whole grains, and culturally diverse foods. We use locally sourced items when available. 1% milk is served to children two years of age or older; children under two are served whole milk. Water is available at all meals, in classrooms, and outside at all times. We do not serve pork, peanut products, juice, processed meats, high sugar items (more than 6g sugar per serving), flavored milk, or fried/baked pre-fried food items. Vegetarian, protein-based options are available for families who request a vegetarian diet in writing.

Children will be provided at least 90 minutes of active playtime each day including 45 minutes of structured physical activity (age-appropriate activities guided by the teacher) and at least 45 minutes of unstructured physical activity (active/free play). Inactive time is limited to less than 15 consecutive minutes excluding nap/rest time. Screen time of

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. *2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. 8th Edition. December 2015. Available at <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/>.

² Nemours. *Nemours Child Care Wellness Policy Workbook: Creating an Environment for Preschoolers to Develop Healthy Habits for Life*. January 2012.

educational/movement material is limited to no more than 30 minutes per day. Children under the age of two are not exposed to screen time.

- Teachers participate in orientation and professional development activities two or more times per year to effectively teach children about nutrition.
- Nutrition education will be provided to children through formal and informal means such as meal time discussions about the taste, smell, and texture of foods as well as the benefits of eating healthy foods.
- Nutrition education opportunities will be offered to families at least twice per year.
- Children are never forced, bribed, or rushed to eat.
- Food, beverages, active play, and screen time are not restricted nor used as a reward or punishment.

Family Style Meal Service

The Children's Centers provide a healthy breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack daily. We participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. "USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."

The CACFP provides nutritious meals to children and helps them develop good eating habits which they will retain in later years. Both nutritional goals can be effectively pursued through family-style meal service.

Family style meal service, where teachers and children sit together, allows children to serve themselves from common platters of food with assistance from the teachers. Each child is equipped with child-sized eating and serving utensils and is encouraged to take some amount of each required component. This allows children to make choices in selecting the size of the servings. Children are taught to eat appropriately for age and developmental ability³.

Serving family style is a great way to teach children independence while also developing many skills. Children can learn and practice many social skills, such as taking turns, passing food to others, saying please and thank you, and helping set the table. They will be able to replicate these skills at home. Family style also helps the picky eater. Children often want to try new foods when they see other children and adults eating them. When children sit together and serve themselves, a child may see others accepting foods and want to try the foods as well. It often takes ten or more times of sampling a food before a child learns to like it⁴.

Families are encouraged to volunteer/participate in mealtimes.

³ Child and Adult Care Food Program. *Administrative Handbook*. September 2015.

⁴ National Food Service Management Institute. *Mealtime Memo for Child care*. No. 8. 2006.

Please see APPENDIX for information about outside food (food bought from home or store)

Environments

Indoor

The classrooms contain several well-defined interest areas including but not limited to the following:

- Art Area
- Block Area
- Book and Writing Area
- House Area
- Music and Movement Area
- Sand and Water Area
- Toy Area
- Woodworking Area

Our environments are enriched with materials that are real, reflect children's interests, developmentally appropriate, open-ended, support different types of play, reflect unbiased diversity and cultures, stored in an organized manner, reflect community, and are innovative.

Outdoor

Children will have the opportunity to go outdoors twice daily, weather permitting.

Our outdoor classrooms have plenty of space for children to actively and physically play, exploring nature and testing the capabilities of their bodies. Children have many opportunities for social play, and abundantly learn while outside.

Outside areas may include but not limited to:

- Nature Art Area
- Open Area for large-motor activities
- Climbing/Crawling Area
- Messy Materials Area
- Building Area
- Music and Movement Area
- Garden Area
- Gathering Area
- Sand and Water Area
- Dirt-Digging Area
- Wheeled-Toy Area

- Swings or other dynamic equipment

According to Nature Explore (2018), children & adults in nature:

- Increases critical thinking and problem solving.
- Increases science and math.
- Increases language and literacy.
- Increases visual-spatial thinking.
- Increases construction and engineering.
- Gardening and health teach individuals how to take care of things and develop healthier eating habits.
- Outdoor classrooms increase environmental stewardship.
- Outdoor classrooms help develop emotional intelligence and heal from trauma.
- Spending time outdoors makes you happier, relaxed, less impulsive, increased focus, more creative and increased desirable behavior.

Risky Play

Risky play allows children to take healthy risks and test the capabilities of their bodies with adult guidance/supervision. Risky play develops the prefrontal cortex and aids in the development of decision making, processing feelings, executive functioning, and self-regulation effectively making connections and learning (Keeler, 2020). Children who engage in risky play are climbing, jumping, running, tumbling, balancing, hanging/swinging, and cycling sometimes at high speeds as well as engaging with a variety of tools such as sticks.

Reference: Keeler, Rusty. (2020). *Adventures in risky play: What is your yes?* Exchange Press.

Schedules and Routines

Daily schedules and routines are predictable yet flexible and provide structure. The preschool and toddler schedules vary based on the developmental levels of those age groups. The Children's Centers model our schedules and routines based on the HighScope Curriculum.

Preschool.

Greeting Time/Message Board:

Teaching staff welcome children to the classroom and help them enter into the program day. Message board is a time to share announcements, discuss things that are happening in the classroom that day, and whole-group problem solving.

Large-group Time:

Adults and children get together to play games, tell and reenact stories, sing songs, do finger plays, dance, play musical instruments, exercise, or reenact special events. Large-group time brings children and adults together for brief periods to exchange

information and do things as a group. This experience builds a sense of “we” and “us.”

Small-group Time:

The teacher meets with 6-10 children to work on an activity planned and introduced by the teacher. Small-group time builds on children's strengths, introduces children to materials and experiences they might otherwise miss, and provides adults with an intimate setting in which to observe and learn about individual children on a daily basis.

*Planning Time:

Children indicate what they plan to do during work time. The planning process involves a variety of mental tasks. Children establish a problem or goal; they imagine and anticipate actions; they express personal intentions and interests; they shape their intentions into purposes; they deliberate; and make ongoing modifications. It is important for adults to encourage children to express their intentions before carrying them out.

*Work Time:

Children work with any of the materials in any of the interest areas, starting with their plan. During work time children initiate, work on, modify, complete, and change their plans; children play in a variety of social contexts; children engage in different types of play; children problem solve; and children carry on conversations. Adults observe, participate, converse, encourage problem solving, learn from, and support children's play.

*Cleanup Time:

Children are expected to return materials and equipment to their storage space and find space to display personal creations. Cleanup time brings work time to an end. During cleanup time children problem solve and play put-away games. Adults maintain realistic expectations.

*Recall Time:

Children are encouraged to talk about the children they played with, what they built or pretended to be, or the problems they encountered during work time. During recall time children remember and reflect on actions and experiences; children associate plans, actions, and outcomes; children talk with others about personally meaningful experiences; children form and then talk about mental images; and children expand consciousness beyond the present. Adults provide materials and experiences to maintain children's interest at recall time. Adults converse with children about their work-time experiences such as contributing and supporting children's co-narratives and conflicting viewpoints and noting connections between children's recall narratives and plans.

**Planning time, work time, and recall time happen in a sequence and as a unit is called plan-do-review time or plan-work-review time.*

Outside Time:

Children are physically active, they pretend, invent, make, build with others and by themselves, and solve problems independently or with the assistance of other children and adults. Outside time is a healthy and unconstrained time for children. Children have contact with nature and have opportunities for social play. Adults participate in children's play; converse with children; encourage children's problem solving; and observe nature with children.

Eating/Resting:

Meals and snacks are times for children and adults to enjoy healthy food in a supportive social setting. Children and adults sit, eat together, and engage in social interactions in a relaxed setting. Resting is a time for sleeping, or quiet, solitary, on-you-own-mat-play.

Transitions:

Transition times are crucial events for children who often react strongly to them. To make transition times easier for children, adults will establish a consistent daily routine; keep the number of transitions between activities, places, and caregivers to a minimum; start new activities right away; limit wait times; plan enjoyable ways for children to move from place to place; alert children to transitions, and offer appropriate choices to individual children before a transition.

Infant/Toddler.

Arrival and departure:

Children and adults experience warm welcomes and goodbyes enlarging the scope of trust. This time is also used to exchange information and child observations with the family.

Choice Time:

Choice time is a sustained block of time when children can investigate; explore materials and actions; and interact with their peers and caregivers. A great deal of learning occurs during choice time. Toddlers engage in increasingly complex exploration and play as well as growing in awareness of themselves and others. As children are ready (they can form mental images) teachers plan and recall with individual toddlers to help them start the transition to the preschool plan-work-review. Adults observe children; tailor their actions and responses to follow children's leads and ideas; engage in communication give and take with children; support children's interactions with peers; use a problem-solving approach to

children's social conflicts; offer older toddlers opportunities to plan and recall; and encourage toddlers to put materials away after choice time.

Outside Time:

Outside time allows infants and toddlers to extend their exploration and play to an outdoor setting. Outside time is rich in sensory-motor experiences for constructing new knowledge. Time spent outdoors in all seasons positively affects the way children eat, sleep, and feel. During outside time, children observe, explore, and play on their own or with others at their own pace and level of interest and development. Adults provide loose materials for children's comfort and play and observe nature with children during outside time.

Whole Group with Music and Movement:

Group times are caregiver-initiated parts of the day that include opportunities for children to engage in active learning. During whole group with music and movement children will be singing and moving, exploring movement, building a repertoire of songs and rhymes, and experiencing a steady beat. Adults will plan and provide active group experiences; respect children's choices and ideas about using the materials; comment briefly and specifically on what children are doing; interpret children's actions and communications for other children.

Group Time with Materials:

Group times are caregiver-initiated parts of the day that include opportunities for children to engage in active learning. During group time with materials, children will be introduced to new materials, master familiar materials, or extend their knowledge by trying out slight variations on what they already know. Adults will plan and provide active group experiences; respect children's choices and ideas about using the materials; comment briefly and specifically on what children are doing; interpret children's actions and communications for other children.

Mealtimes:

Mealtimes are a relaxed and social time for children. Children are involved in mealtime conversations and like to explore new foods in a supportive setting. Adults join toddlers at the table and include older toddlers in mealtime setup and cleanup.

Bodily Care Routines:

Bodily care occurs frequently and fairly regularly throughout the day. Through the gentle, one-to-one interactions involved in bodily care, children have an opportunity to build trusting relationships with caregivers and gain a sense of security in their classroom. Toddlers begin to sense how their own bodies can bend and move during bodily care routines. This is a nurturing time of day that increases self-help skills. Adults fit bodily care around the child's exploration and play; focus on the

child at hand during the care routine; give the child choices about parts of the routine; and encourage the child to do things for her- or himself.

Naptime:

During naptime children sleep and rest which are necessary for children's growth and development. Sleep reenergizes children physically and emotionally. Adults can help children settle down for nap; provide quiet alternatives for non-sleepers; and provide for children's various styles of waking up.

Transitions:

Transitions vary from child to child. Some children handle transitions more easily than others, any shift in tempo or focus can be stressful on bodies and minds already deeply engrossed with everything around them. To aid in transitions, adults minimize the number of transitions; create an overall daily schedule that is predictable yet flexible; and incorporate active learning, including adult support, into each event and caregiving routine.

Special Activities

Field trips.

Field trips greatly enhance our program by providing children with hands-on real experiences. Field trips are planned based on curriculum content, children's interests and developmentally appropriateness. Families will be notified at least 48 hours in advance of a field trip and sign a permission form. When children are away from the facility, safety is our top priority. During a field trip, attendance is taken at minimum prior to leaving, upon arrival, before leaving, and upon return. At a minimum two staff will be present per classroom (ratios vary depending on ages and group size of children). Every classroom has a bag equipped with emergency equipment, including a first aid kit that goes with the classroom. At least one staff person per classroom will carry a cell phone and all staff are CPR and First Aid Certified including AED.

Children who are at least four year of age and weigh 40 pounds or more may use the AggieSpirit Bus for field trips around campus. All of the above applies.

Special guests & enrichment activities.

Special guests and enrichment activities enhance the children's learning. During our project investigations many guests will be invited into the classroom to teach the children about their chosen project topic. Special guests may also include new experiences for children such as music, dance, magic, and theatre to name a few.

Pets & animals.

Some classrooms may have a classroom pet or have a visitor/field trip that involves animals. Families will be notified of classroom pets or any animals the children will have access to. All animals and pets must be current on their vaccinations or have a statement of health provided by a veterinarian. All children and staff must wash hands before and after touching an animal or pet. Children must not have contact with chickens, ducks, and reptiles, such as snakes, turtles, lizards, iguanas, and amphibians, such as frogs and toads while at the Children's Centers.

Water play.

Children will have daily access to water both indoors and outdoors in their learning environments. Water used for daily play will be fresh and dumped at mid-day and at the end of each day.

Splash days in the summer may include wading pools and sprinklers. Wading pools will be drained, sanitized, and stored out of children's reach after each use. Sprinklers are not used on hard, slippery surfaces.

Celebrations.

There are many celebrations throughout the year. Celebrations are planned around what is celebrated by the classroom community culture. The teachers use the information provided on the *Family Questionnaire* form at the beginning of the school year or at time of enrollment to plan celebrations. Celebrations with food must comply with the wellness policy unless administration declares an exception for a learning opportunity.

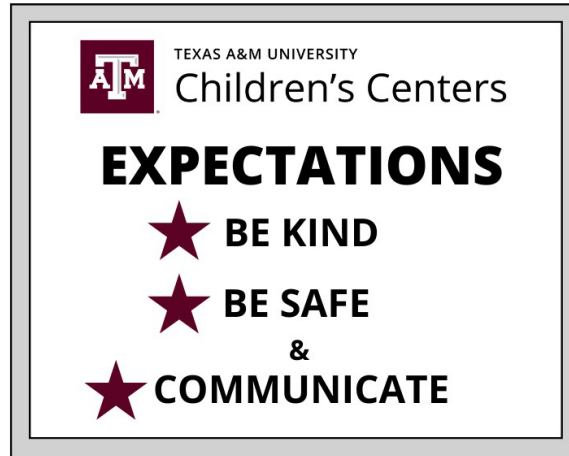
Celebrations also include holidays. Every classroom will celebrate their community culture special holidays listed on the *Family Questionnaire* form. Parents/guardians will be notified of celebrations in advance.

We are happy to share birthday celebration invites with the whole class. Due to safety and allergy concerns, candles (or anything with fire) or balloons cannot be used in any celebrations at the Children's Centers.

Behavior Management

Positive Guidance

One of our jobs as early childhood educators is to help guide children's behavior. The Children's Centers have the following center-wide expectations.



Based on the center-wide expectations, classrooms develop rules at the beginning of the school year. The children, if applicable, help create these rules. Children are taught the expectations and rules by classroom staff. Typically, children will have to be reminded of the expectations and rules. That is the first step in responding to challenging behavior is to restate the expectation or rule. If the child complies, they continue with their classroom engagement. If the child is having trouble complying, the classroom staff will reteach the skill the child is having difficulty complying with such as modeling walking feet inside, showing the child gentle or soft hands, etc. If the child continues to struggle complying with the expectations, classroom staff will redirect the child to another activity.

Expectations are stated clearly and positive. Classroom staff are trained to avoid using negative words such as, "no," "stop," and "don't." Children typically hear the last word in a sentence or phrase; "no hitting" and "stop running!" The child is hearing hitting and running so the behavior continues. If the child happens to stop with a negative statement, they are often confused on what they can do. Therefore, instead we state what we want the child to do; "nice touches please" and "walking feet."

Classroom staff are also trained on encouragement instead of praise. We want children to be intrinsically motivated instead of extrinsically motivated. This means we avoid using praise such as, "good job" and "that's pretty." Instead, we use specific descriptions to encourage children; "you stacked 12 blocks to make a tall tower" and "I see you used yellow and green paint on your painting."

Problem Solving Approach to Social Conflict

The Children's Centers have adopted the HighScope problem-solving approach to social conflict. As a normal occurrence, conflicts will arise in an early childhood classroom. Children need to develop these skills rather than be punished. Below are the six steps staff follow when a conflict arises:

Steps in Resolving Conflicts with Young Children

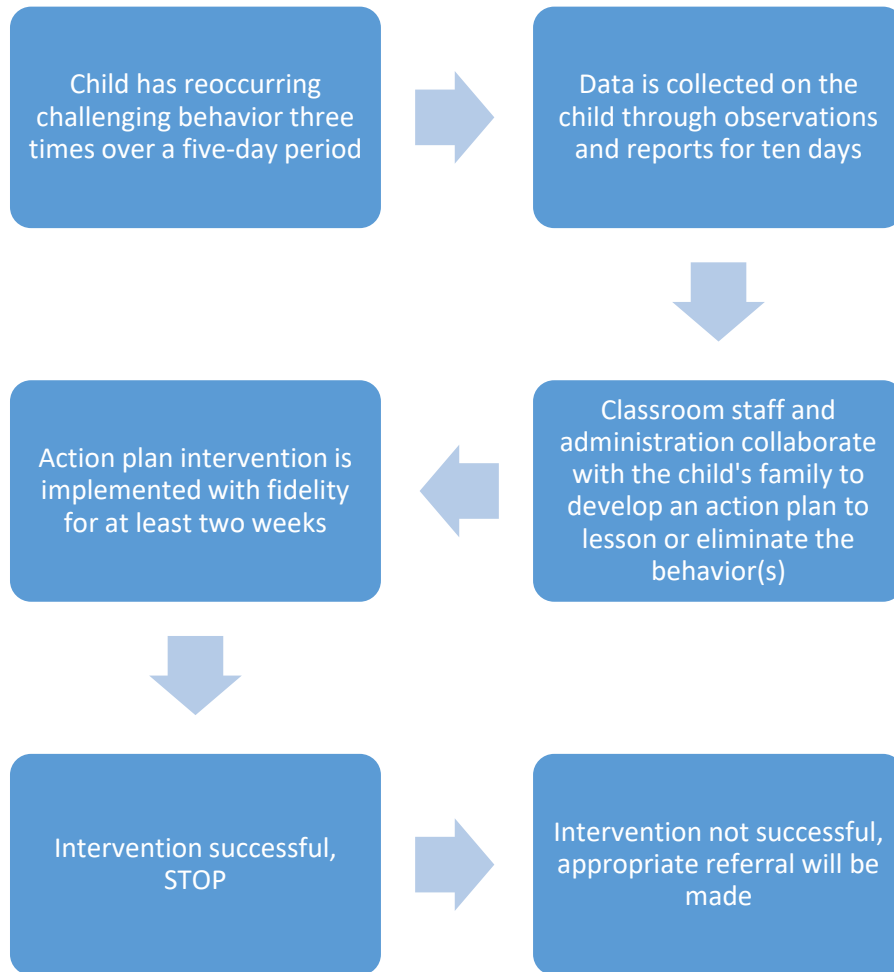
- 1. Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions.**
- 2. Acknowledge children's feelings.**
- 3. Gather information.**
- 4. Restate the problem.**
- 5. Ask for ideas for solutions and choose one together.**
- 6. Be prepared to give follow-up support.**

Safety Plan

Although we have plans in place to guide children's behaviors, sometimes the child is not responsive to the above techniques. If a child is having an emotional response to a situation, we will place the child in a safe place in the classroom and give them time to calm down. After the child is calm, we will engage in the problem-solving approach. If a child is displaying destructive behavior, we will remove any potential harmful materials away from the child and move the other children to a safe place in the classroom or have them exit the classroom with staff. At this point, administration will be called to aid in the situation. We will wait for the child to calm before engaging with the child. Parents/guardians will be notified of the situation.

Referral Process

If a child has a recurring challenging behavior, we will start the referral process which is outlined below.



Dismissal

The Children's Centers makes every attempt to meet the needs of all our children and families. That may not always be possible. Below are some but not all examples of dismissal from the program:

- Noncompliance with Children's Centers and Texas A&M policies, regulations, and rules.
- Fraudulent information provided to the Children's Centers.
- Failure to provide requested documentation.
- A child unable to adjust to the classroom setting after referral process.
- Failure to pay.
- Failure to meet the needs of a family after attempts are made.
- Cannot meet the needs of a family after applicable attempts are made.
- Behavior action plan unsuccessful.
- Disruptive behavior from a child or family that has the potential to compromise the emotional or physical wellbeing of children or staff.
- Other

Arrivals and Departures

Parking

Parking is available in the front of the building for patrons at both Children's Centers. The side lot, at BGCC, is reserved for those with lot 90 permits. Please drive slowly and remain alert as many children are being loaded and unloaded. Please reserve the closest spaces for families with multiple children.

Signing in and out

It is mandatory you sign your child in and out every day at the Procure kiosk. The two kiosks are in the main entryway. You may register at the front desk if you have not done so. If there is a glitch in the system and you are unable to sign in or out your child, please notify the front desk immediately as they will be able to perform this task for you. If our systems are down, sign your child in or out on the designated clipboard. Once the system is back up and running those times will be entered. You will receive an email warning if you continue to forget to sign in or out your child.

The Children's Centers will only release children to authorized persons listed in the child's file. The authorized person will have to bring in photo identification. A copy will be made of the identification and will be placed in the child's file.

We cannot legally prevent a parent or legal guardian from picking up or having access to their child without proper court documentation. We must have documentation on file of any custodial arrangements made through a court of law. It is your responsibility to give us documentation as well as provide documentation of any changes to the court order. We will not make deviations from court orders. University Police Department will be notified of failure to comply with court orders.

Daily Health Checks

A daily health check will be performed on your child before you leave during drop off. You must be present during this quick process. During a health check, the teacher is taking a visual or physical assessment of a child to identify potential concerns about a child's health, including signs or symptoms of illness and injury, in response to changes in the child's behavior since the last date of attendance. The teacher will document the health check.

Security

The Children's Centers are secure buildings. Only authorized personnel and families have access to the building. It is mandatory you use your authorized card to swipe/tap in the building. If you are not associated with Texas A&M University, you may purchase an access card at the front desk. This ensures only authorized individuals gain access to the building and keeps a record of who is in the building at any given time. This is imperative during an emergency. You will receive a warning if you forget your card. Please do not hold open

doors for other patrons; everyone entering the building must swipe/tap their authorized identification card.

Video surveillance

Security cameras are located throughout the Children's Centers campuses and record 24-hours a day.

Saying Goodbye and Hello

Separating from our family can be very difficult for a child and reuniting with our families can be a joyous occasion. During both times it is important for your child to have your undivided attention. Having a well-established routine will make difficult drop-offs easier over time. Please refrain from bringing toys from home as this will cause a more difficult separation. Children may bring a lovey or book from home to help with the morning transition. Avoid being on your cell phone during goodbyes and hellos. Be sure to include handwashing into your routines and, if you have time, plan on reading a book to your child before leaving.

Communication

Face-to-Face

Face-to-face communication is the best way to exchange information with the teacher about your child. This short exchange works best during drop-offs and pick-ups. If you need extended time with your child's teacher, please schedule a time to meet with them at a convenient time for both parties.

Kaymbu

Kaymbu is our communication technology allowing teachers to share photos, videos, notes, emails, portfolios, and weekly storyboards. Reminders or urgent messages can be shared with families by text, email, or the dedicated parent app.

Daily Notes

Notes about your toddler's day will be given daily. Notes will include information about your child's day such as diapering, meals, and naps. Preschoolers do not receive daily notes since they are able to communicate information about their day. If you have special concerns about your child, please talk with your child's teacher to make accommodations.

Storyboards

Families will receive a weekly storyboard at the end of each week highlighting learning for that week. Included in storyboards are pictures, videos, learning, reminders, family extension activities, and upcoming activities.

Emails

Classroom teachers will use Kaymbu or email to contact you about any classroom updates, reminders, or to share child specific information with you.

Administration uses email to notify parents of missing documents, warnings, changes to the menu, newsletter, fees, surveys, events, and changes to the program to name a few.

If you are not receiving emails, please make sure we have the correct email on file. Email addresses will be kept confidential in bulk mailings.

Phone Calls

The Children's Centers will contact parents/guardians with the phone numbers listed in their file for emergencies, illnesses, major injuries and incidents, and if the child is not picked up by closing to name a few. Notify the front desk of any updates to phone numbers. If we cannot reach you by phone in an emergency, we will contact the persons you listed as the emergency contact in your child's file.

Family Communication Board

Every classroom has a family communication board located near the entry of the classroom. This board contains the following important information:

- Teaching assistant information
- Lesson plans
- Question of the day/week or conversation prompt
- Menu
- Emergency evacuation information
- Other important information

Newsletter

Families will be emailed a newsletter monthly. Newsletters contain but not limited to the following information:

- Updates from administration
- Upcoming events & closures
- Healthy recipe
- Parenting article

Conferences

The Children's Centers will hold in-person family conferences during the fall and spring semesters. Progress reports will be sent to families in the fall and summer semesters. Your child's developmental profile will be shared during conferences and progress reports as well as pictures, videos, and your child's work.

Four reporting periods:

1. October/November
2. January/February
3. April/May
4. July/August

Absences

If your child will be absent notify your child's teacher or the front desk. We will call you if your child is absent without notification for more than two days.

Family Partnerships

Open Door Policy

Families are welcome and encouraged to come and go throughout the school day. We especially encourage active participation in your child's classroom as an expert, during special events, field trips, and volunteering during work time. Talk to your child's teacher if you would like to volunteer.

Family Advisory Board (FAB)

The Family Advisory Board is comprised of at least eight parents representing the diversity of the children's centers, a representative of the teaching staff, and children's centers and college administration. The FAB term of service is one-year minimum with four meetings per year to discuss and make decisions on topics related to the goals listed below.

Mission: The Family Advisory Board, representing all Children's Centers families, seeks to provide world class practice for child care, create positive family experience for all families, act as a sounding board for family concerns, and provide advice to Children's Centers administration when requested.

Goals:

- Support the mission of the Children's Centers.
- Promote a relationship in which family members and professionals work together to ensure the best services to children and families.
- Facilitate open communication for families.
- Respect confidentiality.
- Maintain realistic expectations.

- Work to enhance the Children’s Centers experience for all children and professionals.

If you are interested in serving on the Family Advisory Board, please notify the Director.

Providing Feedback & Grievances

If you have a concern regarding your child talk to your child’s classroom teacher. If you are unable to satisfactorily come up with a solution you may take up your concern with the Instructional Coach, or administration team.

If you have a concern regarding the center, please discuss your concerns with Children’s Center administration. If you are unable to come up with a solution, the Children’s Centers are overseen by the Dean of the College of Education and Human Development

Feedback is always welcome as we strive for continuous improvement. Feedback may be given directly to your child’s teacher, administration, or beyond. You are welcome to phone, email, or ask for a face-to-face meeting.

Health & Safety

Illness

The Children’s Centers are only equipped to provide care for well children. If your child is unable to participate fully and comfortably during activities, including outdoor play, or meets one of the conditions for exclusion, your child may not attend our program until they have met the condition for returning.

	Condition for Exclusion	Conditions for Returning
	Axillary temperature of 100°F or higher and behavior change or other signs and symptoms	Free of fever for 24 hours (without using fever-reducing medicine)
	Acute change in behavior including lethargy/lack of responsiveness, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, uncontrolled coughing, noticeable (spreading) rash, or other sign or symptoms of illness	Symptom free or physician’s written approval for return
	Breathing – labored, rapid, wheezing	Symptom free or physician’s written approval for return

	Uncontrolled diarrhea, that is increased number of stools, increased stool water, and/or decreased form that is not contained by the diaper until diarrhea stops; blood or mucus in the stools not explained by dietary changed, medication, or hard stools	Free of diarrhea for 24 hours
	Vomiting illness, upset stomach two episodes in a 24-hour period	Free of upset stomach and vomiting for 24 hours and able to eat solid foods or until a health care provider the illness to be non-communicable or child in danger of dehydration.
	Abdominal pain that continues for more than two hours or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs or symptoms of illness	Symptom free of physician’s written approval for return
	Purulent conjunctivitis (red or pink conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge)	Physician’s written approval for return or 24 hours after treatment has started
	Rash with a fever or behavior change	Physician’s written approval for return
	Untreated scabies, head lice, or other infestation	After treatment and free of lice and nits
	Mouth sores with drooling	Physician’s written approval for return
	Untreated Tuberculosis	Physician’s written approval for return
	Known contagious diseases while still in the communicable stage (chicken pox, streptococcal pharyngitis, rubella, pertussis mumps, measles, hepatitis A)	Physician’s written approval for return
	Other	Explain

If your child becomes ill while in care, the parents/guardians will be notified to come and pick up the child. If a parent/guardian cannot be reached, we will contact the persons listed as the emergency contact. You have 30 minutes to pick up your child. Upon pick-up you will need to sign the Illness Report Form.

Medication

If your child needs medication administered while at the center:

1. Fill out Authorization for Dispensing Medication located at the front desk.
2. Prescription medication must be:

- a. In its original container with pharmacy label
 - b. Name of the child for whom it was prescribed
 - c. Date the prescription was filled
 - d. Name of healthcare professional who prescribed medication
 - e. Medication expiration date and storage information
 - f. Instructions on administration.
3. Over-the-counter (OTC) medications must be accompanied with a health care professional's statement that includes the following:
 - a. Child's first and last name
 - b. Name of medication
 - c. Time medication should be given and how often
 - d. Criteria for the administration of the medication
 - e. How much medication to give
 - f. Manner in which the medication shall be administered (oral, topical, etc.)
 - g. Medical conditions or possible allergic reactions
 - h. Length of time the authorization is valid.
4. Medication will not be given:
 - a. Medication is not in its original container
 - b. Medication is past the expiration date
 - c. Medication does not have written authorization
 - d. Without the written instructions provided by the physician or other health care professional legally authorized to prescribe medication
 - e. In any manner not authorized by the medical care professional
 - f. For non-medical reasons, such as to induce sleep.
5. Receipt, storage, and disposal:
 - a. All medications brought into the center will be given to the front desk for review and approval
 - b. Medications will be stored in a locked container inaccessible to children
 - c. Medications will be stored at the temperature recommended for type of medication
 - d. The Children's Centers are not responsible for disposal of medication; all medication will be returned to you to dispose of properly.
6. Medications for allergies:
 - a. In addition to the above, an allergy action plan must be filled out and signed by a health care professional.
7. Exceptions:
 - a. Epi-pens will be kept out of reach of children and follow the child it is prescribed for

- b. BGCC maintains and will administer unassigned epinephrine auto-injectors to use when a child in care has an emergency anaphylaxis reaction. CSCC does not currently maintain an unassigned epinephrine auto-injector.
- c. Non-prescription diaper creams, sunscreen, and bug spray are exempt from the above authorization (make sure to label with your child’s name).

Sun Safe Policy

We encourage parents/guardians to provide hats with wide brims that protect the face, neck and ears, for your child to wear whenever they are outside. We also encourage parents/guardians to provide articles of sun-protective clothing, when temperatures are reasonable, for your child to wear whenever they are outside.

Sunscreen will be applied by staff to child’s exposed skin, except eyelids, following manufacturer’s instructions before exposure to the sun and every two hours while in the sun. Children will be encouraged to use available areas of shade for outdoor play activities.

Adapted from the California Early Childhood Sun Protection Curriculum (1998-revised), California Department of Health Services.

Medical Emergencies

For an illness or injury that requires the immediate attention of a health-care professional, the following procedure is followed:

1. Contact emergency medical services
2. Administer first-aid treatment or CPR if needed
3. Contact the child’s parent or guardian
4. Contact the physician or other health-care professional identified in the child’s record if directed to do so by EMS personnel

Immunizations

2024 - 2025 Texas Minimum State Vaccine Requirements for Childcare and Pre-k Facilities

This chart summarizes the vaccine requirements incorporated in the Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Title 25 Health Services, §§97.61-97.72. This chart is not intended as a substitute for consulting the TAC, which has other provisions and details. The Department of State Health Services (DSHS) is granted authority to set immunization requirements for childcare facilities by the Human Resources Code, Chapter 42.

A child shall show acceptable evidence of vaccination prior to entry, attendance, or transfer to a childcare facility in Texas.

Age at which child must have vaccines to be in compliance:	Minimum Number of Doses Required of Each Vaccine							
	Diphtheria / Tetanus / Pertussis (DTaP)	Polio	Hepatitis B (HepB) ¹	Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) ²	Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) ³	Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) ^{1,4}	Varicella ^{1,4,5}	Hepatitis A (HepA) ^{1,4}
Zero through two months								
By three months	One dose	One dose	One dose	One dose	One dose			
By five months	Two doses	Two doses	Two doses	Two doses	Two doses			
By seven months	Three doses	Two doses	Two doses	Two doses	Three doses			
By 16 months	Three doses	Two doses	Two doses	Three doses	Four doses	One dose	One dose	
By 19 months	Four doses	Three doses	Three doses	Three doses	Four doses	One dose	One dose	
By 25 months	Four doses	Three doses	Three doses	Three doses	Four doses	One dose	One dose	One dose
By 43 months	Four doses	Three doses	Three doses	Three doses	Four doses	One dose	One dose	Two doses

Please refer to the following for more information:

Department of Family and Protective Services:

www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/documents/Standards_and_Regulations/746_Centers.pdf

Texas Health and Human Services Immunization Unit School and Child-Care Immunization Requirements: (<http://dshs.texas.gov/immunize/>)

Vision and Hearing Screening

As part of [Health and Safety Code, Chapter 36](#), the Vision and Hearing Screening Program requires that all children enrolled for the first time in a Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) licensed child care center in Texas must be screened or have a professional examination for possible vision or hearing problems. Children who are 4 years old by September 1 of the current school year must be screened within the first 120 days of admission. Parents/guardians must provide the results to the center. The center is required to report results to the Child Health Reporting System by June 30 of each year.

<http://www.dshs.texas.gov/vhs/vision-require.aspx>

<http://www.dshs.texas.gov/vhs/require.shtm>

Accidents and Incidents

If your child is injured or involved in an incident while at the Children’s Centers an Incident Report Form will be filled out and a parent/guardian will sign upon pick-up or your earliest convenience. The parent/guardian will receive a phone call regarding moderate to severe injuries or incidents, including any injury above the child’s shoulders.

Emergency Plans and Drills

The Children’s Centers have emergency preparedness plans including detailed information. The plan informs staff of the steps to be taken, how to ensure the safety of toddlers with limited mobility, emergency information, kits, supplies, notification, and reunification. The Children’s Centers perform the following drills:

Drill	How Often
Fire	Monthly
Tornado	Quarterly
Stay Safe	Quarterly

During a fire drill the alarms will sound. Children and staff will exit the building and wait for the all clear. During a tornado drill a message to take cover will be announced over the intercom or verbally shared. Children and staff will go to their designated area and cover their heads. The children will resume normal activities when given the all clear message.

During a stay safe drill, a silent notification system will alert the building at BGCC while at CSCC staff will be notified via messaging system.

In the event we have to evacuate the building and move to a secondary location parents will be notified once we are securely at our destination of the Garden Apartments Community Center.

Water Outage

Preparation of all food must stop immediately if the supply of hot water is inadequate. If the water supply to the building and classrooms is interrupted, the center will close due to Health Department regulations. The decision will be made by administrators and TAMU officials.

Supervision

Children are supervised by sight and sound at all times while at the Children's Centers. We maintain a lower teacher to child ratio and group size than minimum standards.

Handwashing

Proper handwashing reduces the risk of transmission of infectious diseases to themselves and to others. Classroom staff teach children the proper hand washing procedure and assist and monitor to ensure it is done properly.

Hand Washing Procedure:

1. Turn on the faucet
2. Wet hands
3. Apply soap
4. Rub hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds (about the length of time it takes you to sing your ABCs), be sure to include between fingers, under nails, wrists, and the back of your hands
5. Rinse hands in running water
6. Grab a paper towel and dry hands (keep water running if it does not shut off automatically)
7. Turn off faucet using a paper towel (if not hands free)
8. Open door using paper towel, if applicable, and throw the paper towel away in a hands-free, lined trash can

When Children Wash Hands:

- Upon arrival in the classroom
- After diapering or toileting
- After blowing or wiping their nose
- After coughing or sneezing in hands

- Before and after meals and snacks
- Before and after playing in water or sensory items (including sand)
- After handling pets/animals
- After playing outside
- Before going home (**parent/guardian complete this step**)

In addition to the above, staff will wash hands:

- After diapering/toileting
- After handling bodily fluids
- After blowing or wiping a child's nose
- Before preparing or serving food
- Before and after administering medication
- After handling garbage
- After removing gloves
- After cleaning

Diapering & Toileting

Parents/guardians will provide disposable/cloth diapers and cleaning wipes. Children will be checked at least every two hours when awake to see if soiled. All staff are trained and follow best practices when changing a diaper.

Children are not required to be independently toilet trained to be in any classroom. All children develop readiness at different times. When you feel your child is ready to start toilet training, set up a meeting with your child's teacher.

Readiness Signs:

- Does your child remain dry for several hours during the day and through the night/nap?
- Are bowel movements regular and/or predictable?
- Does your child know when they are wet?
- Can your child undress and dress with limited help?
- Does your child ask to use the toilet?
- Are there any major changes occurring at home?

If your child isn't showing readiness signs, they might not be ready to toilet train quite yet and you will want to reassess in a couple of months. Once the decision is made to start toilet training bring lots of extra clothes, underwear, socks, and easy to clean shoes. It is important for the child have consistency with toilet training from home to school.

Toilet training should never be a stressful process. We will never bribe or force a child to sit on the toilet. We will never make a child feel shameful if an accident occurs. Accidents are part of the learning process.

Apparel

Children should wear comfortable clothing that washes easily. Clothing should be easy for children to get on and off independently for successful bathroom trips and on the occasion they have to change themselves. Children must wear shoes that contain an ankle strap; close-toe shoes are preferred. Make sure to always have an extra set of clothing available for accidents.

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

The Children's Centers staff are mandated reporters. Mandated reporters are required to report child abuse or neglect as follows:

According to the Law

Texas has both civil and criminal laws to protect children from abuse and neglect. If you suspect that a child is being abused or neglected, the law requires that you report it. [Texas Family Code Section 261.101 (a)]

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) is the agency to call if the suspected abuse or neglect involves a person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child or someone who lives in the home with the child. Child Protective Services (CPS), a division of DFPS, is responsible for conducting civil investigations of alleged abuse or neglect by caregivers or household members. You may also report suspected abuse or neglect to any local or state law enforcement agency. Law enforcement agencies are responsible for criminal investigations, which focuses on figuring out who committed a crime. The CPS investigation is a civil court matter that focuses on the welfare of the child and family.

You are protected by law from liability when you make a report or provide information in good faith during a CPS investigation. However, you are not protected from civil or criminal liability if you report your own abuse or neglect of a child or intentionally file a false report against someone else. (Texas Family Code, Section 261.106).

Failure to report suspected child abuse and neglect is a criminal offense (Texas Family Code, Section 261.109).

To report to DFPS, call the 24-hour, toll-free abuse hotline at 1-800-252-5400 from anywhere in the United States to report abuse or neglect that happened in Texas. The important thing is to call and report what you suspect. You will be given a call ID number to prove that you made the call. You can call back and use the call ID number to give additional information about the same case. Anonymous callers are welcome, but they will not be given a call ID number. The identity of the reporter is confidential and is not revealed to anyone but law enforcement, unless disclosure is ordered by a court (Texas Family Code Section 261.201).

APPENDIX

Outside Food and Beverages

Foods brought from home must meet the Child and Adult Care Food Program meal patterns listed below:

Breakfast	Lunch	Snack (only 2 components required)
Milk	Milk	Milk
Vegetable, fruit, or both	Meat/Meat Alternate	Meat/Meat Alternate
Grain	Vegetable	Vegetable
	Fruit	Fruit
	Grain	Grain

Cereals and yogurt must contain no more than 6 grams of sugar

- Families must clearly label all food brought from home including the child’s full name, date, and type of food.
- Outside foods are stored at appropriate temperatures until they are eaten.
- Outside foods for one child are not shared with other children.
- Foods labeled with “Contains: Peanuts/Tree Nuts,” “may contain peanuts/tree nuts” or “made in a factory with peanuts/tree nuts” **may not** be brought into the center.
- Foods that do not meet the program’s standards for nutrition and food safety are returned home and the center will provide a substitute.

Outside Food **Examples:**

Meat	Meat Alternate	Vegetable	Fruit	Grain
Chicken	Yogurt	Any Fresh, Frozen, Canned, or Prepackaged Vegetable	Any Fresh, Frozen, Canned (in light or 100% juice), or Prepackaged Fruit	Grains with less than 6g of sugar per serving
Turkey	Real Cheese			Whole Grain Breads
Eggs	Cottage Cheese			Corn/Rice Chex

Tuna	Sunbutter (Nut Free)			Cheerios, Kix, Life, Dora, & Rice Cereals
Beef	Beans & Legumes			Frosted Mini Wheats
	Tofu			Any Rice
				Any Pasta

Outside Food **Non Examples (does not follow policy – keep at home):**

Meat	Meat Alternate	Vegetable	Fruit	Grain
Chicken Nuggets	Velveeta	French Fries	Packaged in Heavy Syrup	Any item over 6g of sugar
Hot Dog	Canned or Jarred Cheeses	Tater Tots		Cookie items
Pepperoni, Salami, and Bologna	Yogurt with more than 6 grams of sugar	Breaded & Fried Vegetables		Sweet Pastries like donuts and pop tarts
Breaded Fish Sticks				

Sample Meals Brought From Home:

Breakfast: Cheerios, packaged diced pears in 100% fruit juice, and milk

Lunch: Turkey and cheese sandwich on whole grain bread/tortilla, petite carrots sticks, banana, and milk

Snack: Goldfish crackers and milk

Breakfast: Bagel with cream cheese, fresh blueberries, and milk

Lunch: Macaroni and cheese, broccoli florets, sliced grapes, and milk

Snack: Yogurt (less than 6g of sugar per serving), granola, and water

Breakfast: Whole grain pancake/waffle with no sugar added applesauce and milk

Lunch: Lunchable (turkey, cheese, and whole grain crackers), apple slices, cherry tomatoes, and milk

Snack: Cheese stick, whole grain cracker, and water

Other Activities

Celebrations, including birthdays, are hosted with activities or nutritious foods such as fruits, vegetables, and other healthy snacks. Please see chart below for healthy alternatives and food options:

Non Food	Food
Scavenger hunt	Vegetable tray
Arts & crafts	Fruit tray
Games (especially outdoor games)	Fruit cups packed in 100% juice
Party take-home bags with pencils, bubbles, stickers, tattoos, chalk, and etc.	Cheese
Read a book	Whole grain waffles topped with fruit
Create “Celebrate Me” book	Whole grain bread sticks, bagels, or soft pretzels
Special birthday crown and sash	Vegetable pizza on whole grain crust
Dance party	Turkey or chicken roll-ups
	Yogurt parfait
	Cereal mix with less than 6g sugar per serving

HighScope Preschool Curriculum

How We Teach

In a HighScope preschool program, teachers ignite children’s interest in learning by creating an environment that encourages them to explore learning materials and interact with adults and peers. We focus on supporting early learners as they make decisions, build academic skills, develop socially and emotionally, and become part of a classroom community.

Active learning is at the center of the HighScope Curriculum. It’s the foundation of young children gaining knowledge through their natural play and interactions with the environment, events, and other people.



Adult-Child Interaction

Teachers act as partners, working alongside children and communicating with them both verbally and nonverbally to encourage learning. Key strategies for adult-child interactions are sharing control with children, communicating as a partner with children, scaffolding children's play, using encouragement instead of praise, and taking a problem-solving approach to supporting children in resolving conflicts.

Learning Environment

To create a predictable and active learning environment, teachers arrange and equip the classroom with diverse, open-ended materials that reflect children's home, culture, and language. The room is organized and labeled to promote independence and encourage children to carry out their intentions.

Daily Routine

A consistent framework for the day provides a balanced variety of experiences and learning opportunities. Children engage in both individual and social play, participate in small- and large-group activities, assist with cleanup, socialize during meals, develop self-care skills, and exercise their small and large muscles. The most important segment of the daily routine is the plan-do-review sequence, in which children make decisions about what they will do, carry out their ideas, and reflect upon their activities with adults and other children. These higher-level thinking skills are linked to the development of executive functions, which are needed to be successful in school and life.

Assessment

Ongoing child assessment is also an underlying component of the HighScope Curriculum. Objective anecdotal observations of children collected throughout children's natural play allow teachers to assess child progress and plan meaningful learning experiences.

What We Teach

The HighScope Preschool Curriculum is based on more than 50 years of research on early childhood development and has been validated by direct evaluation of the curriculum. Our framework for understanding and supporting children's learning from ages 3–5 years is based on 58 key developmental indicators (KDIs), which are aligned with national and state early learning standards, Common Core State Standards, and the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework.

In the HighScope Preschool Curriculum, learning is focused on the following eight content areas:

- Approaches to Learning
- Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development and Health
- Language, Literacy, and Communication
- Mathematics
- Creative Arts
- Science and Technology
- Social Studies

Preschool Curriculum Content

Learning in these eight areas is guided by 58 key developmental indicators (KDIs). Each KDI identifies an important learning goal for young children. We recognize that the normal pace of children's development and learning varies widely across these eight categories and the KDIs reflect that continuum of widely held expectations. Our curriculum is designed to help teachers appropriately scaffold learning for every child across all areas.

The HighScope key developmental indicators

- Provide teachers with a child development “filter” for observing and choosing appropriate interactions and activities
- Help teachers interpret what young children say and do along a developmental continuum
- Enable teachers to maintain reasonable expectations for young children
- Reinforce children's play as the primary mechanism for learning
- Allow teachers to be more knowledgeable and intentional in their daily planning for individual children and the class

HighScope Infant-Toddler Curriculum

How We Teach

Your youngest learners need to feel safe and supported so they can learn with their whole body and all of their senses. In a HighScope infant and toddler program, teachers focus on developing supportive, trusting relationships with the children in their care. We create rich environments that encourage very young children to explore and discover the world around them, helping them to engage in experiences designed to support their optimal development in all domains.

At HighScope we value and respect parents as their children's first teachers. That's why we encourage teachers to partner with parents in learning everything they can about their infants and toddlers to better care for their needs and plan for their development. As a result, our programs create a strong three-way bond between child, parent, and caregiver.

Active learning is at the center of the HighScope Curriculum. It's the foundation where young children gain knowledge through their natural play and interactions with the environment, events, and other people.



Adult-Child Interaction

Nurturing, responsive teachers practice primary caregiving and continuity of care by scaffolding the individual needs and temperaments of infants and toddlers. Key strategies for adult-child interactions are touching, holding, playing alongside infants and toddlers at their level and pace, communicating in give-and-take exchanges verbally and nonverbally, respecting children's choices and encouraging their efforts, acknowledging children's strong emotions, and involving toddlers in resolving conflicts.

Learning Environment

The physical space is safe, flexible, and child oriented to provide comfort and accommodate the changing developmental needs and interests of the earliest learners. The space is organized into play and care areas that serve the needs of infants and toddlers and stocked with a variety of sensory-motor materials that infants and toddlers can reach, explore, and play with in their own way at their own pace. With nurturing and responsive caregivers as a home base, infants and toddlers are free to move about, explore materials, exercise creativity, and solve problems.

Schedules and Routines

A consistent yet flexible routine that accommodates individual children’s natural rhythms and temperaments gives infants and toddlers a sense of security and stability that creates trust between the child and teacher and builds independence as children engage with their environment and the people around them. Each routine is built around daily events and caregiving routines that value infants’ and toddlers’ active learning.

Observation

Ongoing child and program assessment is an underlying component of the HighScope Curriculum. Objective observations of children allow teachers to intentionally plan to build on individual and group interests and scaffold development by supporting what children know while gently extending their learning.

What We Teach

Grounded in current child development theory and research, the HighScope Infant-Toddler Curriculum is evidence-based. Our framework for understanding and supporting infants’ and toddlers’ learning from birth to age three is based on 42 key developmental indicators (KDIs) which align with national and state early learning guidelines and the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework.

In the HighScope Infant-Toddler Curriculum, learning is focused on these six content areas:

- Approaches to Learning
- Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development and Health
- Communication, Language, and Literacy
- Cognitive Development
- Creative Arts

Infant-Toddler Curriculum Content

Early learning and development in these six content areas is guided by 42 key developmental indicators (KDIs) — the skills and behaviors at each stage of development that pave the way for school and adult success. Each KDI is connected to and reinforced by scaffolding strategies to help teachers appropriately support and gently extend children’s learning.

The HighScope key developmental indicators

- Provide teachers with a child development “filter” for observing and choosing appropriate interactions and activities
- Help teachers interpret what young children say and do along a developmental continuum

- Enable teachers to maintain reasonable expectations for young children
- Reinforce children's play as the primary mechanism for learning
- Allow teachers to be more knowledgeable and intentional in their daily planning for individual children and the class