



Family Handbook
Enrollment Policies & Procedures



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Michelle Alignay Zamora, Director
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Dear Families:

Welcome to the SDSU Children’s Center. We are honored that you have chosen our Center as your “partner” in the care and education of your child. We welcome the opportunity to collaborate with you to provide a quality learning experience for your child and all those connected with our Center over time.

Our staff is dedicated to building strong relationships with families in order to foster collaborative connections between school and home. The Center maintains an “open door policy” at all times. You are encouraged to visit and actively participate in your child’s learning. We know that parents are a child’s first and most important teachers. We invite you to become an active member of our Community while your child is here with us.

Our Center welcomes all children regardless of ability or disability. We are committed to working with families to support the growth and development of their child. All eligible families and their children will be served without regard to race, color, sex, age, disability, religion, or national origin. Our program refrains from religious instruction or worship.

This manual is designed to provide easy access to information about our policies and procedures. It reflects our policies as well as those of agencies who provide oversight to our Center.

We look forward to working with you as we move forward this year. Feel free to ask questions or provide feedback at any time. My door is always open to you.

Welcome to the SDSU Children’s Center family!

Warm regards,

Michelle Zamora
Director

PART I

ENROLLMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

VISION/MISSION/STATEMENT/PHILOSOPHY 5

PROGRAMS OFFERED 5

CHILD CARE SUBSIDY 6

FULL INCLUSION FOR CHILDREN WITH CHALLENGING CONDITIONS 7

FULL COST PROGRAM 7

ENROLLMENT AND PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN..... 7

ENROLLMENT OF CHILDREN FROM WAITING POOL 7

ENROLLMENT PROCESS 8

SCHEDULED HOURS/OPERATION..... 10

HOLIDAYS AND CLOSURE DATES 11

ENROLLMENT POLICIES..... 11

FINANCIAL INFORMATION 12

 MONTHLY BILLING 12

 PAYMENTS 12

 REGISTRATION FEES 13

 EXTRA DAY REQUEST..... 13

 LATE PICK-UP FEES 13

 LATE PAYMENTS..... 14

 EXTENDED PAYMENT AGREEMENT 14

 ABSENCES..... 15

 VACATION 15

 CHANGES TO SCHEDULE..... 15

 WITHDRAWALS 16

ORIENTATION TO YOUR CHILD’S PROGRAM 16

VISITING DAY FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN 16

TRANSITIONING TO A NEW CLASSROOM OR PROGRAM..... 16

DROP OFF SCHEDULING 17

CONTRACTING FOR CHILD CARE SCHEDULES..... 17

CHILD CARE CONTRACT FEES 17

SIBLING ENROLLMENT..... 17

ADDITIONAL DAY REQUEST 17

SCHEDULE CHANGES..... 18

WINTER INTERSESSION AND SUMMER SESSION 18

DOCUMENTING YOUR CHILD’S ATTENDANCE 18

ESTABLISHING AUTHORIZATION FOR PICK-UP OF CHILD(REN) 18

SIGNING IN AND OUT 18

ABSENCES 19

SUBSIDY PROGRAM ABSENCES.....	19
TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT	18
EMERGENCIES, HEALTH AND SAFETY.....	21
EVACUATION POLICY	21
ACCIDENT AND ILLNESS POLICY	21
UNUSUAL INCIDENT REPORTS.....	22
ILLNESS	22
MEDICATIONS	24
SMOKING ON CENTER PREMISES	24
CELL PHONE USE	24

MISSION STATEMENT

SDSU Children's Center Vision, Mission & Philosophy

Vision:

To be recognized as a model program that fosters growth and promotes lifelong learning across the age span. Our work is strengthened through partnerships with children, families, students, faculty, staff and the SDSU Community we serve.

Mission:

Provide quality care and education to children, families, students, staff and the SDSU community.

Philosophy:

At the SDSU Children's Center, we believe young children have an innate desire to explore the world with eagerness and curiosity. We recognize that childhood must remain a journey, not a race, and to that end, we provide an environment filled with love and laughter, challenge and success. Our work is grounded on the theoretical principles of early childhood scholars and is informed by emerging research. We value play, celebrate and embrace cultural diversity, engage in respectful and responsive interactions, and create strong partnerships with children, families, and our community.

In practice you will see:

Every family is included in all aspects of the program and supported in their role as their child's first and most important teacher regardless of family structure; socioeconomic, racial, religious, or cultural backgrounds; gender; ability; or preferred language.

Child initiated, project-based curriculum that capitalizes on children's individual needs and interests while encouraging growth and development across all learning domains.

Teachers making informed decisions in their daily practice utilizing formal and informal tools to build curriculum. These include:

- input by families' regarding their children's development and needs
- anecdotal observations
- reflection and documentation of past experiences
- California Learning Foundations (Foundations)
- Program for Infant Toddler Caregivers (PITC)
- California Desired Results for Children and Families Assessment Tools (DRDP)

A commitment to continuity of care. Wherever possible, communities of children, families and teachers annually move together from one classroom to another.

An early education lab where faculty engage in research and University students integrate education theory and practice through hands-on experience and direct observation.

We are licensed by the California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division. Community Care Licensing, a division of the Department of Social Services, has the right to interview any family, staff or child affiliated with the Children's Center. In addition we are responsible to the California Department of Education, Child Development Division, for funds received to provide free or reduced cost services to student parent families who meet income ceilings. Contact information for the Children Center's regulating agencies:

**Department of Social Services
Mission Valley Regional Office
7575 Metropolitan Drive, Suite 110
San Diego, CA 92108-4421**

**California Department of Education
Child Development Division
1430 N Street, Suite 6308
Sacramento, CA 95814**

PROGRAMS OFFERED

CHILD CARE SUBSIDY

Funding through the California Department of Education, Child Development Division Subsidy for childcare fees is offered to SDSU student parent families that meet income requirements established by the California Department of Education (CDE).

This program is only available to SDSU students demonstrating both a need for services as well as eligibility based on income. Participation and subsidies are assessed based on family size and gross monthly income with the lowest income receiving first priority for acceptance.

The Family Fee Schedule, policy established by the California Department of Education, determines child care fee payment.

Siblings, according to CDE policy, are also given preference for subsidized child care. Funded family contracted child care fees may be fully or partially subsidized by the California Department of Education.

In accordance with Child Development Division policy, regular fees may be charged for child care used/requested outside of the child care contract for subsidized care unless otherwise approved and within allowable hours. The fee schedule shall be made available in the administrative office of the Children's Center and is posted on the Center's website: www.childcare.sdsu.edu

According to the contractual guidelines designed by the CDE, each semester eligible students must demonstrate a serious intent to achieve their academic career goals in a timely and organized fashion. To this end each student must submit within specified time lines the following:

- A class schedule from SDSU Web Portal.
- Statement of occupational goal.
- Expected date for completion of educational goal.
- Evidence of satisfactory academic progress (grade reports).

Failure to submit required eligibility paperwork and/or evidence of academic involvement and progress within specified time lines may result in termination of subsidized child care contract. Families intending to continue their subsidy assistance must attend a mandatory recertification meeting each semester.

While the Center does not create policies or determine eligibility for the funded program offered through the California Department of Education, it is our responsibility to enforce the established guidelines and intent of this program.

FULL INCLUSION FOR CHILDREN WITH CHALLENGING CONDITIONS

In accordance with the Center's philosophy of accepting each child's individuality and supporting growth to the extent possible, a full inclusion model is implemented. Therefore children with cognitive and/or physical challenges are included as fully participating members. Additional services, such as physical or developmental therapy, are not offered by the Children's Center. However, Center staff will work with parents to arrange for community support services to be delivered at the Center during the child's usual hours of attendance.

When invited by families to do so, the Center staff participates with parents and professionals in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the specific goals in the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individual Education Plan (IEP) for the family and child.

FULL COST PROGRAM

The Full Cost Program is open to all currently enrolled SDSU students, currently employed staff and faculty (including grandparents) of children between 6 months and Pre-Kindergarten age, as well as alumni and community families as space is available.

Fees are assessed according to the status (i.e. student/staff/faculty/alumni/community) on a monthly basis according to the child's weekly schedule.

There is no sliding fee according to income for the full cost program. The fee schedule is available in the administrative office of the Children's Center and is posted on the Center's Website.

Space is assigned on a priority basis with siblings of enrolled children receiving first priority; SDSU student families second priority; SDSU staff and faculty (including grandchildren of staff and faculty) receiving third priority; and SDSU Alumni and Community families being offered space only when affiliated families cannot be found for an open space.

ENROLLMENT AND PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN

Enrollment Supervisors consider the following criteria when enrolling and assigning a child to a classroom either for first-time enrollment or re-enrollment:

- (1) parental assessment of the developmental level of the child;
- (2) staff's assessment of the developmental level of the child;
- (3) age of the child; and
- (4) availability of space.
- (5) type of spot i.e. year round; academic year student; funded student

ENROLLMENT OF CHILDREN FROM WAITING POOL

Families wanting to enroll their child(ren) in the Children's Center are placed in the waiting pool that is maintained in the Children's Center office. Information on the waiting pool includes: date of application, parent's name, child's date of birth, phone number, email, and funding priority number (if applicable). Comments may added to include name of any siblings and their birthdates; when a family wishes to enroll; and ongoing communication between supervising teachers and families regarding enrollment openings overtime.

As a program offered to the campus by Associated Students, the Children's Center has a "Student First" policy. SDSU Students have priority on the waiting pool.

Eligible children are enrolled from the waiting pool according to these factors:

Full Cost Program:

- (1) Age of child.
- (2) Sibling in a family currently enrolled.
- (3) Parent status (Fee Paying Student or Staff/Faculty or SDSU Alumni or Community)
- (4) Date on which child is originally placed on the waiting pool.

Funded Program:

- (1) age of child
- (2) Sibling in a family currently receiving funding with a child already enrolled.
- (3) Lowest priority number for the next opening in the classroom. Priority numbers are based on guidelines set by the California Department of Education for subsidized child care and only SDSU students are eligible.
- (4) Date of application to the waiting pool if the priority is exactly the same.

Most enrollment occurs in January (for Spring Semester enrollment) and June through July (for Fall Semester enrollment). Additional openings may occur during the year and families will be contacted based on openings in a specific classroom using the factors listed above.

Families are responsible for notifying The Children's Center of any changes in address, telephone number, or changes to student or staff/faculty status. Families applying for funding must update their financial status if any changes occur after their application is on file. Once contacted for an opening, you will need to verify your income from all sources at your certification meeting. Your waiting pool income needs to be accurate. The lowest priority receives funding first. Please provide us with all updates to your income while on our waiting pool to avoid any issue with your priority number.

ENROLLMENT PROCESS

Steps:

- Each family is expected to attend a tour of the Center. No appointment is needed. Children are welcome. Tours are offered the 1st Wednesday of each month at 9 am and the 2nd Thursday of the month at 5 pm.
- Parking permits are required in all University lots including the one in front of our Center. Permits are available for purchase in yellow kiosk at the northwest corner of Parking Structure 3, just above and to the southwest of our Center.
- Families wishing to be added to our waiting pool should complete and submit an application after attending a Center tour.
- SDSU student families with low incomes may apply for funding by submitting their application along with income verification, no check needed.
- All other applicants need to submit a non-refundable Waiting Pool fee by check or money order for \$30 made payable to *Associated Students* with their application.
- Applications to our Waiting Pool can be found on our web site and are accepted year round.
- Enrollment Supervisors contact families from the Waiting Pool to notify them when an opening is available for their child and requested program.
- Openings are offered based on age of the child; affiliation to the University; funding priority; and date of application. Families have 72 hours to reply or the Supervisor will move on to the next family on the waiting pool.
- Once a family accepts the opening, they schedule their child to visit the classroom. Enrollment Supervisors will review paperwork required for enrollment at that time. Children are expected to attend and visit the classroom with their families to meet the teachers and see the classroom.
- Families applying for funding have an additional step prior to scheduling an enrollment meeting with the Enrollment Supervisor. They must schedule a meeting to complete an application for funding verifying both need and eligibility prior to being formally accepted for a place in the classroom. Meetings can be scheduled at the Front Desk and all paperwork must be certified before families can continue to the next steps of enrolling their child. Wherever possible, children do not attend this meeting as there is much paperwork to complete and information to share which can be challenging when children are in attendance.

- Families then schedule a one-hour enrollment meeting to submit completed paperwork; discuss the transition plan and mutual expectations. **Children do not attend this meeting** in order to allow parent and teacher time to complete the orientation without interruptions.
- All paperwork must be completed prior to the enrollment meeting. If unable to complete the paperwork, you may call the Front Desk (619-594-7941) to reschedule your meeting with the teacher or for funding. Failure to complete paperwork in a timely manner may result in loss of space.

After all paperwork is submitted and approved a start date will be set. We encourage families to visit the Center and classroom several times prior to their child's first day of enrollment.

The Classroom teaching team works with each family to create a transition plan that provides for a respectful and comfortable period of separation, adjusting attendance days and times accordingly.

SCHEDULED HOURS/OPERATION

The Center is open Monday through Friday.

Three schedules are available and must be selected at enrollment

1. Monday through Friday
2. Mondays- Wednesdays and Fridays
3. Tuesdays and Thursdays

We offer full-day enrollment only, no partial days are scheduled. We do not offer one day, part-day or drop in, or mildly ill options. Occasional extra days are allowed when space is available and will be explained in detail below.

Enrollment may be different for families receiving funding. Please see *Funded Family Addendum* in back for specific guidelines pertaining to funded families.

When selecting a schedule, please consider drop off no later than 9 am each morning to allow time for you and your child to talk with the teacher before the morning gathering circle and the child's working day begins. Children must arrive by 8:30 am if they are to have breakfast.

We also encourage pick-up after 2:30 pm to allow your child to experience a full nap period and the opportunity to have snack with their peers before leaving.

Hours the Center is open varies based on your child's age:

Families are encouraged to schedule their child for an average of no more than 9 hours a day in the Center whenever possible. Longer days can be very challenging for children, especially, those under three. You can discuss hours of enrollment with your Cottage Supervisor at any time.

Infants: 8:00 am – 4:00 pm

Infants are identified as children who are at least 6 months but not yet 18+ months of age.

Toddlers: 7:30 am – 5:30 pm

Toddlers are identified as children who are enrolled in the Toddler Cottage and are 18+ months of age.

Transition & Preschoolers/Pre-Ks: 7:30 am 5:30 pm

Transition & Preschool are identified as children who are enrolled in the Transition or Preschool cottage and are 24+ months of age

Note: there may be some crossover in birthdates between cottages from one year to next.

The Center is open year-round for students, faculty, staff, alumni and community families. In addition, SDSU student parent families may choose an Academic Year Only Option. All other families are considered Year Round.

The Academic Year Option (SDSU student families only), begins the first day of classes and continues on school days through the last day of final examinations during the Fall and Spring Semesters. Most academic year children do not attend during winter break, spring break, or summer session unless requested and both space and funding are available.

Schedule contracts for Academic Year Families are effective beginning the first day of each academic semester through the end of finals week. Academic Year schedules will remain the same for finals week as they were for other weeks in that month (Dec. or May) allowing for adjustments to class schedules for finals, mandatory group work and alternative class times exams.

Current Holidays and closure dates can be found on our web site. Holidays and Closure Days match the University Calendar:

- Labor Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving and the day after
- Martin Luther King Holiday Cesar
- Chavez Holiday
- Memorial Day
- July 4th Holiday

In addition to current holidays, the Center is closed:

- Up to two-weeks during Winter Break, typically the weeks that includes Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

- One Friday in July and one in August each to allow for classroom prepare for the new academic year.

ENROLLMENT POLICIES

Enrollment continues from one semester/year to the next without new applications for most families. Funded Families will need to re-certify their need and eligibility each semester. See *Funded Family Addendum* in back of this manual for specifics related to funding.

All families will be asked to sign a new class schedule for their child annually at the beginning of the Fall Semester.

Additional enrollment forms updated annually include: Food Program, Emergency Information, Immunizations (If applicable), & Billing Agreement. These forms can be found on our web site and will also be e-mailed to all families through our Cottage email list serve when it is time to update them.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Monthly Billing:

Fees are calculated based on the total number of days of annual operation, times the daily rate, divided by 12, to create 12 equal monthly payments.

Holidays, Winter Break, Staff Development and weekend days were deducted to arrive at the total days of operation each fiscal year.

As we are closed for two weeks each December, there are often questions about how fees are calculated.

There are months when the days we are open would mean your monthly fee could be \$36 or even \$80 more per month than the average fee for each month.

Creating a monthly average makes the billing and budgeting process smoother for both the Center and more predictable for our families.

Payments:

Most families elect to set up an automatic payment from their bank each month to pay fees. This is the most efficient process for monthly billing.

Payments will be deducted from your account on the 16th of each month. Forms to set up this payment are available at the Front Desk.

If you wish to pay by check or money order, your payment can left at the Front Desk or be mailed by the due date on your invoice. Mail all checks to:

Associated Students
San Diego State University
5500Campanile Drive
San Diego, CA 92182-7800

Any fees must be paid in full prior to service. The first month you enroll in the Center, you must pay in advance either by check here at the Center or in person with cash or credit card at the Viejas Arena Box Office.

The Viejas Arena Box Office is located on campus just off 55th Street, near Montezuma Road. Please call the Box office for their current hours (619)-594-0429, as their hours do vary during summer and/or during Winter Break.

Subsidized families have different rules regarding payments as required by the State Department of Education, Child Development Division. Please see *Funded Family Addendum* in back for specific guidelines pertaining to funded families.

Registration Fees:

An annual registration fee for Year Round families of \$90 per child, maximum of \$180 per family, will be charged each October. Funded families will not pay registration fees for the semesters they are funded. The fee covers expenses for insurance, emergency preparation and classroom materials.

The fee is prorated if enrolling after Oct. 1st and for summer sessions (\$15 x 2+ \$30). Funded families do not pay registration fees unless they are enrolled during a period when no subsidy is available to them. This may occasionally happen when funding is exhausted during the academic year leaving no additional funds for summer school enrollment.

Extra Day Requests:

Extra days are available as space permits. Please complete the "Request for Additional Days" form to be found in the file by the Sign-In/Out computer.

Talk with your Cottage Supervising Teacher to ensure there is an opening for your child and then complete the paper work. Return your form to the hanging file outside your cottage for your Cottage Supervisor to approve prior to your child attending.

Extra days for non-funded families will be billed during the following billing cycle. Fees will be charged at the rates below for each extra day added:

Infants \$98 Toddlers \$74 Transition \$68 Preschool \$61

Late Pick Up Fees:

Late pick-up fees will be billed as follows:

Infant children not picked up by 4:00 pm or children in other age groups after 5:30 pm, the family will be billed \$6 at 4:01/5:30 pm and an additional \$1 for every minute thereafter. These fees will be added to the family bill in the next billing cycle.

The 5:30 pm time is determined by the Children's Center's Front Access Doors being locked. **Entry into classrooms after 5:20 P.M. is prohibited.**

Families who consistently pick up after hours may be asked to pick up earlier to avoid having our staff extend their already very long day with children. Chronic late pick up may result in termination of care.

Fifteen minutes past closing time, staff will try to reach the child's parent(s). If a parent may not be contacted, individuals listed on the emergency card will be contacted to pick up your child. If no one is available and the parent(s) have not picked the child up within one hour of closure, the Director or Assistant Director will be notified. If parent(s) and individuals listed on the emergency card have not responded to pick-up the child, the SDSU Police will be called to assist us in ensuring the safety of the children after the Center is closed.

Thank you for picking up your child on time.

Late Payment:

Bills will be placed in your mail file by the first of each month and are due upon receipt. Payment made on or after the 16th day of the month is considered late and will be charged a late fee of \$25.00 plus a \$10 fee for any check or ACH returned for insufficient funds.

If you elect to have automatic payment withdrawal, that payment will be taken out of your account on the 16th of the month or the next banking business day if that date falls during the weekend or holiday in any month.

If the bank notifies us that your account has insufficient funds at the time of either automatic withdrawal or check deposit, your account will be assessed a penalty fee passed on to us from your bank at their current rate. Current rate is \$10 but this fee will change as required to keep the Center free of additional charges due to payments failing to clear your bank. Any fee will be added to the next billing cycle. More information on fee payments is available in the Funding Policies and Procedures Manual.

Extended Payment Agreements:

Although balances are expected to be paid in full by the monthly due date, we realize that there are times when unique circumstances may require you to request an extended payment agreement. This special arrangement must be made in advance of any monthly due date.

All requests must be made in writing (please place your request in a sealed envelope addressed to the Office Supervisor). When turning in your request, please make an appointment at the Front Desk to review your request with the Office Supervisor.

All agreements must also be approved by the Center Director. To continue care beyond the end of the month with an unpaid balance, you must have an approved "Extended Payment Agreement" on file. There will be an additional fee of \$25 per month until the account is current again.

Absences:

There will be no compensation for absences; you may not exchange a missed day for another unscheduled day of attendance in any week. There are in-direct costs involved in planning for your child to attend on any given day that cannot be recouped if the child does not attend.

Vacation:

After your child in the Year Round Program has attended the Center for twelve (12) consecutive months, you will be eligible to request a week of vacation credit that mirrors your child's schedule. All requests must be submitted prior to the days you will be out of the Center. "Vacation Request" forms can be found in the hanging file by the sign-in/out computer. Families may request a vacation credit only once each fiscal year (July 1-June 30) on or after the anniversary of your child's enrollment date. The credit will be reflected in the next billing cycle after receipt of your written request.

Vacation days do not roll over from one year to the next.

Families enrolled in the Academic Year schedule and/or receiving funding are not eligible for vacation credit.

Changes to Schedules:

To request a change in your child's weekly schedule, complete a "*Request for Permanent Change in Schedule*" form to be found by the sign-in/out computer.

Return the form to the hanging file outside your cottage for your Cottage Supervisor to review.

Approval is based on availability and will be granted on a first in, first approved basis for the next opening that becomes available.

Reducing days in your child's schedule requires a request be submitted the first of the month to be effective the first of the following month.

You will be responsible for childcare fees for the full calendar month based on your original schedule until the month the change becomes effective.

If you are a student parent enrolled in the Academic Year Program, please be aware we may not be able to modify your schedule from one semester to the next.

Notify your Cottage Supervising Teacher as soon as you know you want to modify your schedule from one semester to the next.

Withdrawals:

To withdraw your child, please complete and submit a “Notification of Withdrawal” form to the front desk for your Cottage Supervisor to review. Requests must be submitted by the first of the each month to be effective the last day of that month. Drops mid-month will not be prorated. Families responsible for childcare fees for the full month whether or not your child attends.

Drops mid-month will not be prorated. You will be responsible for childcare fees for the full month whether or not your child attends. Summer drops for Kindergarten bound children do vary. Check the annual Intent to Enroll form that comes out each April for exact dates.

ORIENTATION TO YOUR CHILD’S PROGRAM

Newly enrolling parents, and parents of children who are changing classroom placement, are **required** to attend an orientation with their child(ren)’s Master Teacher. The majority of information provided during orientation will be regarding policies, procedures, and information relevant to each particular classroom. **Please note this is a PARENT(S) ONLY meeting.**

VISITING DAYS FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Both newly enrolling families and returning families are encouraged to visit the Center over the summer between semesters or for a period of time before a new child begins in the classroom. All children are asked to visit their new classroom a minimum of two times prior to beginning school. More days is always supported. Visiting days can be arranged through the Enrollment Supervisor with the support of the Classroom Master Teacher.

TRANSITIONING TO A NEW CLASSROOM OR PROGRAM

We try to limit the number of transitions your child makes between classrooms by multi-year looping programs and mixed age groupings, however your child will change at least annually to a new classroom as he/she ages. In preparation for the change, and in collaboration with families, we will begin to have your child visit the classroom they will be transitioning to, often in a small group with peers who also are transitioning. If your child is leaving our program, please be sure to let the teacher know your time frame so that he/she can help your child with that transition as well. You will be provided with a handout that outlines the plan for your child and what to expect in the new classroom.

DROP OFF SCHEDULING

In an effort to enhance the “quality of experience” for our children and ensure an opportunity for children to develop a sense of attachment and routine in the group setting, we recommend a consistent drop off schedule each day wherever possible. We recommend that children be dropped off before 8:30 am if you wish them to join us for breakfast and no later than 9 a.m., on other days to allow our teaching team to properly greet both you and your child to begin each day. Your child’s transition into his/her program can be better supported by staff before the busy transition to small groups and primary group activities get started each morning. Individual needs will be respected and considered and can be discussed with Cottage Supervisors, Master Teachers and Administrators. In addition, we encourage attendance for our youngest children, those under 3 years of age, of no more than nine (9) hours per day wherever possible.

CHILD CARE CONTRACT FEES

It is the policy of the Children’s Center to collect monthly parent fees as calculated per the contract for each child.

Fees are due within ten (10) days upon receipt of the invoice. If payment is not received in ten (10) academic days, a late charge of \$25 will be applied on the eleventh day. If the fee is not received within this period care may be terminated immediately by the Director. The late charge is not applicable to families on the subsidy program.

After three (3) late payments within the academic year, a parent will lose their priority enrollment status and will be placed on the wait pool for the next contract period.

In the event that child care fees become delinquent and are assigned to collections, future enrollment eligibility for the family will be denied until the delinquent fees are paid in full including collection service fees.

Credits for any period will appear as an adjustment on the next statement.

Child care fees must be current at the time a parent receives a re-enrollment packet and paid in full prior to starting the next contract period.

SIBLING ENROLLMENT

“Re-enrolling Families” have a priority in registering their additional children into the Center. The placement of a sibling is determined by **all** the factors listed below:

- ❖ Space availability and schedule requested
- ❖ Birth date (with priority given to the oldest child on the “sibling list”)

Although continuing families have priority over those on the wait list, a space and desired schedule is *not guaranteed*. There may be a higher demand for sibling care than space available. **Parents should submit a waiting pool application if they plan to enroll another child from their family as soon after the sibling is born.**

SCHEDULE CHANGES

We are aware that class schedules may change during the SDSU designated add/drop period of each semester. You may **request** a change in your schedule by filling out a schedule change request form. Accommodation of your requested schedule change is dependent upon space availability in your child's program. Your requested change is not in effect until you have received the Cottage Supervisors approval of your request. If you are a funded family, you will need to document your need for a change of schedule with the Center Admin staff in addition to your teacher's approval. Please note that you will be billed for your **contracted hours** until a schedule change is **approved**. Please check with the Administrative Office Staff on the status of your request

SUMMER SESSION

Although Faculty/Staff/Alumni and Community families continue enrollment though the summer months, SDSU students enrolled in the academic year program are not automatically enrolled for either summer class sessions. Whenever space in the classrooms will permit, the Children's Center will provide child care for SDSU student families during the summer session. Each of these sessions are treated as separate contracting periods and require separate enrollment. ***SUBSIDY DURING SUMMER SESSIONS IS DEPENDENT UPON AVAILABLE FUNDS.***

ESTABLISHING AUTHORIZATION FOR PICK-UP OF CHILD(REN)

No child will be released from the Center's care unless the adult is listed on the child's emergency card/form and can establish identity with a proper photo I.D.

With proper identification, please understand that **either parent may visit or pick-up the child at any time unless court documents are on file**. A parent must present a copy of the **court document** stating when the other parent may not be in contact with the child(ren). A copy must also be taken by the parent to the SDSU Police for their records. Under no circumstances will the staff refuse a parent from picking up his/her child, due to a prior request by the other parent, without **legal documentation**.

DOCUMENTING YOUR CHILD'S ATTENDANCE

SIGNING IN AND OUT

Sign-in binders are kept in notebooks on top of the children's cubbies in each classroom. Sign-in sheets are generated monthly for each child enrolled in the Center. It is important that you always sign your child in and out (even when you are in a hurry). Signing your child in and out will assist the staff in an emergency evacuation of the building. **It is important to use full signatures, not initials**. Our policy is for teaching staff to take the sign-in book with them during an emergency evacuation (i.e. fire/earthquake drill). Staff will verify every child who is signed in has been safely evacuated from the building. If we discover that your child is not signed in, we will call you to return to the center. **Three cases of not signing in your child in may result in termination of childcare.**

Since you will stop at your child(ren)'s sign in book / sheets each day of attendance, we may use the sign in book/sheets to relay written information to you. Additional information that is important for you to review may be placed in your parent file at the front of the center. This may include accident reports, illness reports, invitations to Center events, etc.

ABSENCES

We request that parents notify the Center if their child will be absent on a given day. This allows our office staff to document a child's absence, maintain helpful information on illnesses, and assist the Cottage Supervisors in awareness of space availability for extra- day attendance. **Please remember you are billed for days of contracted care even when your child is home due to illness or parent choice.**

SUBSIDY PROGRAM ABSENCES

Participation in the State Department of Education subsidized program requires thorough documenting of child attendance and absence in the Associated Students SDSU Children's Center. It is imperative that parents provide timely and accurate reporting of reasons for a child's absence. A guardian is required to sign the attendance sheet daily and must offer a specific reason for the absence along with a full signature.

Excused absences are defined as days absent because of the illness or quarantine of the child, illness or quarantine of their guardian, **court ordered visitations** (a copy of the court order must be in the child's personal file), or a family emergency. **Family emergency** is defined as an injury or accident which causes the child or parent to be incapacitated or hospitalized, a death or serious illness in the family, emotional incapacity, and devastation caused by violence or natural disaster.

"In The Best Interest of the Child"

Excused absences **"in the best interest of the child"** shall be limited to **ten (10) days during the academic year (July 1-June 30)**. "Best interest days" are defined as days away from the Children's Center due to vacation, time spent with a guardian or relative that is not court ordered, and time away that is not related to the child or guardian's illness.

More than three (3) unexcused absences per academic year (July 1- June 30) will result in termination of subsidized care. Reasons for ALL absences MUST be indicated on a schedule variance form for each absence or variance from contracted schedule.

TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT

If you choose to withdraw your child at any time, a written notice must be provided to the Enrollment Supervisor the first of the month to be effective the last day of that month. Withdrawal Forms are available near the sign in computer at the front desk.

If written notice is not provided by the first of any month, the month notice will begin on the first day of the following month. Child care fees will be assessed in lieu of notice. The registration fees are non-refundable.

Enrollment may be terminated by the Director for the following reasons:

- 1) Repeated late payment or non-payment of child care fees.
- 2) Failure to comply with policies and procedures set forth in the Children's Center Family Handbook.
- 3) Failure of child and/or family to work within program philosophy and/or guidelines established by Center staff.
- 4) Failure to submit re-enrollment and other required forms by the established deadlines.
- 5) Child's behavior is considered to be dangerous to the health and safety of self, other children, or staff.
- 6) Repeatedly picking-up the child later than the specified child care contract or after closing.
- 7) Child's needs are unable to be met by the Center's programming.
- 8) Child's absence for more than ten (10) days of enrollment period without the office being notified of the nature of the absence within the first ten (10) days of absenteeism.

The Director shall meet with parents to discuss problems that may lead to termination of enrollment. If a resolution cannot be reached, the Director will give parents written notice terminating enrollment at least fourteen calendar days in advance of the effective date of termination. Hearing and Grievance Procedures are available from the Director upon request which describes parent's rights and responsibilities if their child's enrollment is terminated.

EMERGENCIES, HEALTH AND SAFETY

Evacuation Policy

The Director shall post a current emergency evacuation plan, which meets with campus policy and State regulations. This plan will be followed during all emergency evacuations, including practice drills. Children have the opportunity to practice safety procedures through participation in our drills. Evacuation drills shall be generally conducted on a monthly basis. In the event of an earthquake, fire, or other disaster which requires evacuation of the Center:

We will care for your child (ren) until your arrival. We have a number of people with first-aid and CPR certification, and we will be working in unison with the University's Emergency Operations Committee.

Our immediate evacuation spot is the east side of the parking lot in front of our Center.

No child will be released from the Center's care unless the adult is listed on the child's emergency card.

Before departure, parent or authorized adult must sign the child(ren) out.

Remember telephone lines will be overloaded, if operable. The University Emergency Operations Committee will be coordinating communication between the University and the Children's Center.

If secondary relocation is necessary for the staff and children, our location will be posted on the front door of the Children's Center. Usual secondary evacuation will be the northwest corner of Parking Structure 3 just above our building. This location may change based on the situation at hand.

Above all, the Children's Center staff and University emergency personnel will be working together to provide safety and care for your child(ren) until your arrival.

Accident and Illnesses Policy

Accidents and illnesses are brought to the parent's attention via phone calls. Individual accidents and illnesses will be reported directly to each parent along with the method of treatment. In life-threatening incidents, Campus Police and 911 assistance will be activated immediately. It is the policy of the Center to attempt to locate parents in the event that their child requires medical treatment or observation. It should be understood that medical attention may take priority over locating the contact person as indicated on the child's emergency card.

ACCIDENTS & UNUSUAL INCIDENT REPORTS

Any unusual occurrence involving your child will be documented for your attention. The report will be attached to your child's sign-in sheet. An unusual event may include examples such as significant change in eating, sleeping or play habits.

ILLNESS

Although we try our best to prevent your child(ren) from becoming sick, it is not uncommon for children in child care to share illnesses and diseases. This is especially true with infants and toddlers. It is **important** that if your child becomes too ill to be in group care that he/she stays home to rest and get well. **Please call to notify the front office staff when your child is absent.** We expect that your child is well enough to participate in our daily scheduled program, which includes both indoor and outdoor activities. **Please do not bring your child if he/she is too ill to go outside.** Children may attend if they have a clear, runny nose and appear healthy and active. Children may also attend if a physician is treating poison oak, allergy, asthma, or eczema.

Illnesses that we are currently experiencing will be posted on the windows as you enter the classroom. Handouts will be made available through the cottage list serve as well as through the front desk, which outline the symptoms, mode of transmission, and period of communicability and control measures.

The following illnesses **will require exclusion** from our program for the following period of time:

CHICKEN POX	Until all lesions are crusted.
GIARDIA	Medical release required. Children having diarrhea should not return until it has completely dissipated for at least 24 hours.
MEASLES Hard, 10 day)	Medical release required. Immediately advise parents of other (Rubeola, children to consult their physicians, particularly children under 18 months of age. Immune serum globulin may be required.
MENINGITIS	Medical release required. Immediately advise parents of other children to contact their physicians.
MUMPS	Medical release required.
PERTUSSIS (Whooping Cough)	Exclude for three (3) weeks. Notify parents of other children to contact their physicians.
PIN WORMS	Until 24 hours after treatment has been started by a physician.
SCABIES	Until 24 hours after treatment started. Itching may persist for several days after treatment but should not be regarded as a sign of reinfestation. A second treatment may be required.

STAPHYLOCOCCAL INFECTIONS	Medical release required. All lesions must be covered. SKIN
STREPTOCOCCAL	Medical release required at least until 24 hours after antibiotic (Scarlet Fever, Strep Throat) treatment started.
SALMONELLA & GASTROENTERITIS	Medical release required. Children in diapers having diarrhea SHIGELLA should not return until diarrhea is completely gone for at least 24 hours.
VIRAL GASTROENTERITIS	Until all symptoms have disappeared.

We will call you to pick up your child with in an hour if staff recognizes one or more of the following symptoms:

- Diarrhea
- Unusually dark, tea-colored urine
- Breathing trouble
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Headache
- Unusual spots or rash
- Vomiting
- Reddish, inflamed eyes
- Loss of appetite
- Infected skin patches
- Crying more than usual
- Severe coughing or cough producing
- Dark yellow or green discharges from the sputum eyes, ears, nose, throat, vagina, or rectum
- Elevated temperature (100^oF)
- unusual tiredness or irritability
- Bleeding sores which cannot be
- Gray or white stool completely covered

You will be informed at pick up time if your child has any of the following symptoms:

- 5th Disease (consult pediatrician for advice)
- Conjunctivitis without fever (consult pediatrician for advice)
- Impetigo (child may return with treatment and if sores can be covered)
- Head Lice (child may return with treatment if all nits are removed)
- Ringworm (child may return with treatment and if all sores can be covered)
- Thrush (consult pediatrician for advice)

(Recommendations are taken from the San Diego Health Department, Child Health and Disability Prevention Program, as well as “Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards; Guidelines for Early Childhood Education Programs” by the American Academy of Pediatricians.)

Hand washing continues to be the best strategy for control of communicable illness. We ask that you wash your child's hands and your own as you arrive for the day. Your child will be taught to wash frequently throughout the day, including after toileting and before and after eating, as they return from outside, following sensory table or water play activities, are all required hand washing times within the Center. Our routine includes using liquid soap and running water, washing the fronts and backs of hands, between fingers and under fingernails, rinsing well, drying hands with a paper towel and avoiding touching the faucet with just washed hands by using the paper towel to turn off the water. Proper hand washing should take at least 10 seconds.

MEDICATIONS

Children receiving medications must have written consent from parents permitting teaching staff to give prescription medication. The teachers can only give medications out of the original prescription bottle with the drug name, the physician's name, date, child's name, dosage, and schedule of administration. We will give over the counter medications ONLY if you have a physician's prescription, current date, child's name, dosage, and schedule of administration are clearly defined by your child's doctor. In addition a written consent form is needed for sunscreens and diaper ointments. The medication permission slip must be filled out when you drop your child off. The staff will only give PRESCRIPTION medicines that are CLEARLY marked, have a RECENT issue day, and your CHILD'S NAME. Forms for medication are at the sign in computer.

If you feel your child is in need of over the counter medication, then he or she is probably too ill to attend. Please allow your child time to recuperate before returning to the Center. Children need to be well enough to participate in ALL classroom activities, both indoors and out.

If your child needs an inhaler or nebulizer while at the Center, arrangements need to be made in advance with your child's teacher to ensure that staffs are able to administer correctly. A physician's statement is required. Forms are at the sign in computer.

SMOKING ON CENTER PREMISES

Smoking shall be prohibited within the Center and its exterior grounds at all times. SDSU is a smoke-free campus.

CELL PHONE USE

Cell Phone use is **strictly prohibited** within any classroom in the Center, the gallery entrance hallway, any side play yard or our big back yard on the Northside of the Center called Memory Park. Please handle all phone calls before entering or after exiting the building. We ask families to be present for their children.



Family Handbook Part Two

Getting to Know Our Center

GETTING TO KNOW OUR CENTER

STAFFING	26
ENTERING OUR PROGRAM – WHAT TO EXPECT	26
SOURCES OF COMMUNICATION	26
DAILY COMMUNICATION	26
WRITTEN INFORMATION	26
PARENT CONFERENCES	27
COMPLAINTS	27
UNIFORM COMPLAINT PROCEDURES.....	27
CHILDREN’S BELONGINGS	28
WHAT TO BRING FOR YOUR CHILD	28
CLOTHING/SHOES	28
WHAT NOT TO BRING INTO PROGRAM	28
CUBBIES	29
ART FOLDERS	29
CHILDREN’S ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE FROM PROGRAM	30
ARRIVAL	30
DEPARTURE	31
PARENT INVOLVEMENT.....	31
INFORMAL INVOLVEMENT	31
ORGANIZED INVOLVEMENT ..	32
NUTRITION	32
NAP TIME	32
CAMPUS OUTINGS	33
DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL GUIDANCE	33
A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT	33
ASSESSMENT.....	35
SOCIAL GUIDANCE.....	36
BITING	36
CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PROBLEM SOLVING	37
SWEARING	37
APOLOGIES	37
LABELING BEHAVIOR – NOT THE CHILD	37
SHARING AS A SOCIAL SKILL	38
TOILET LEARNING	38
BIRTHDAYS, HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS.....	39
NONDISCRIMINATION /CIVIL RIGHTS STATEMENT	40

STAFFING

The full time teaching staff at the SDSU Children's Center have degrees in Child Development, Early Childhood Education, or Human Development. All teachers possess a Child Development Permit issued through the CA Teaching Credentialing Office. The student staff who work under the teachers' supervision are SDSU students. A number of our students who are earning their BA in Child Development and have teacher qualifications are working as Associate Teachers, which provides them with additional supervisory responsibilities and training.

The Children's Center Cottage Supervisors and Master Teachers are responsible for establishing and supervising the proper ratios of staff to children to be in full compliance with State regulations.

ENTERING OUR PROGRAM – WHAT TO EXPECT

One of the most outstanding effects of group care experiences for children is its impact on their development of peer relationships. Learning to socialize and interact with others and exploring their own feelings about themselves and others is one of our goals. However, as with any learning experience, time and consistency are major factors. If subtle changes are apparent in your child's daily behavior, i.e., clinginess, whining, separation problems, etc., this is to be expected. After a routine has been established, the positive aspects of group care will manifest itself in your child's ability to relate to him/herself and others in a more competent manner.

Group care, along with all of the positive aspects, has some negative aspects as well. When children are interacting with peers, an illness is bound to occur. Because of contacts between children, germs are easily transmitted. Although sanitation precautions are used, germs still pass between young children, so be prepared for bouts of illness.

SOURCES OF COMMUNICATION

DAILY COMMUNICATION

Since children react to even "minor" changes in their home and school life, it is important for parents and teachers to "keep in touch" daily. Teachers will make a point to inform you of any concerns at school. Parents are encouraged to inform the teacher of such things as a death in the family, parent illness, birth of a sibling, change in family structure, or anything out of the ordinary routine. This will allow the staff to help your child.

Questioning is welcomed. No matter how self-conscious you may feel about asking, it is important for us to know how you feel about our program. Questions and/or suggestions that might better meet your and your child's needs are valuable to the staff. We want you to feel comfortable expressing your questions, concerns, or interests.

WRITTEN INFORMATION

Written information is placed in your parent mail file located at the front of the Center. Occasionally a teacher or the admin office will leave information for you on your child(ren)'s sign-in/out sheet. We ask that you check your parent mail file daily. Information will include monthly fee statements, newsletters, accident reports, illness reports, messages, etc. It is the parent's responsibility to read all information that is left either on their child's sign-in sheet or in the parent mail file daily.

PARENT CONFERENCES

Parents wishing to discuss any concerns about their child should set up an appointment with the teacher. Our philosophy states the desire for children to feel comfortable expressing their needs and feelings. It is equally important that parents and teachers communicate openly and effectively to model what we are hoping children learn in our program. You will be offered a formal Parent Conference 60 days from date of enrollment and at least every 6 months thereafter that provides you with information from the Desired Results Developmental Profile and includes goals and ideas for supporting your child's development at home and school.

Additional conferences can be arranged as needed or by request. We sometimes identify a potential developmental challenge for your child. In this case, we have contact information and resources both on campus and off. If you have a concern about your child's development, please do not hesitate to schedule a conference with program teachers and administrators. It is our goal to work in partnership with families.

COMPLAINTS

To resolve a problem or issue direct communication with the person involved is recommended. If the problem is not resolved then the Director or Assistant Director needs to be informed. The Human Resources Director of Associated Students may be called if the Children's Center is unable to resolve your problem, issue, or concern. If needed, Community Care Licensing and California Department of Education, Child Development Division information is listed in the "Enrollment" section of your Parent Handbook, Page 5.

Uniform Complaint Procedure

The Associated Students SDSU Children's Center has a procedure for complaints about our program that may include such issues as: sufficient materials for each child, facilities that are clean and in good repair, sufficient number of regular teaching staff who are professionally prepared and properly credentialed.

The first step for addressing concerns is the center administrative staff. The Director and Assistant Director are available to hear any parent concerns and will try to resolve them at the center level. If a family feels that they need to speak to supervisory staff above the center level, Associated Students Human Resources Director may be contacted. Again, we hope the issue can be resolved, but parents can also bring their concern to the California Department of Education, Child Development Division. The contact is Child development Office at (916) 322-6233. Additional information about the **Uniform Complaint Procedure** can be found in the Funded Family Orientation Manual Addendum. You may also download a copy of the complaint form from the following web site:

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/ce/wc/index.asp>.

CHILDREN'S BELONGINGS

WHAT TO BRING FOR YOUR CHILD

Please bring:

1. A full sized crib sheet and small light blanket
2. A sufficient number of extra clothing
(Include pants, shirts, socks, shoes, underwear)
3. Family photo. A family picture can also provide a sense of connectedness to loved ones who are missed.
4. Family Book (the Teaching Staff will help you with the format for this)

PLEASE LABEL ALL ITEMS CLEARLY WITH A PERMANENT INK PEN!

Soiled clothing will be placed in plastic bags and put in your child's cubby to be laundered and returned. Our licensing requirements do not allow us to "rinse" or clean soiled clothing. **Parents are required to launder their child's sheet and blanket at least once a week.**

CLOTHING

Please remember the teachers provide a variety of experiences for the children throughout the year. Many of these experiences are outdoors; some are messy; some require easy body movement. To help your child enjoy these experiences fully, please dress him/her appropriately. Loose fitting clothing appropriate to the season and shoes that fit properly are necessary. Children need protective, comfortable and appropriate footwear to explore their environment. We want children to be free to safely run, climb, ride wheel toys, and engage in other active play. Rubber soled, close toe and heel shoes are the best choice. Flip flops, platform or heeled shoes, slip on shoes, and fancy dress shoes prevent safe play and are not appropriate for our very physical activities. **Toddlers, Transition, and Preschool children must wear appropriate footwear, and Infants must have socks to wear outside.** Children will have many opportunities throughout the day to be safely barefoot as well.

WHAT NOT TO BRING INTO THE PROGRAM

Please do not send your child to the Center with:

1. Gum
2. Candy/Treats
3. Money
4. Toys from home
5. Food from home (unless arrangements are made with your child's teacher due to food allergies)

We have plenty of things for your child to play with at the Center. Possessions from home often cause friction between children. Each classroom has its own policy regarding sharing items from home on special days. Teachers will let you know if, when, and what is appropriate for your child to bring on these days.

CUBBIES

Cubbies are spaces for your child's belongings. Your child's cubby will have their name and perhaps a photo. This helps your child to easily know which space belongs solely to him/her. Please remember to check your child's cubby daily for wet or soiled clothing or bedding.

ART FOLDERS

Please check your child's art folder daily to take home current creations.

CHILDREN'S ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE FROM PROGRAM

ARRIVAL

When you and your child arrive, allow the teacher time to greet you. This allows the teacher to recognize your child as a special person. Even on the busiest days, please be sure a teacher acknowledges that your child has joined the group. A warm, friendly arrival sets the tone for the rest of the day.

Hand washing is part of the arrival routine. Please wash your child's and your own hands when entering the program.

Sometimes when a parent and a child separate, the result is a crying child and a guilty, anxious parent. It has been our experience that once the child and the parent begin to trust the adults at the Center, the separation transition is much smoother. Building trust takes time and lots of communication.

The first couple of weeks of school you may want to spend more time with your child in the Center so that you both become familiar with the staff and daily routines. Or you may find that the longer you stay in the Center, the more anxious your child becomes waiting for the inevitable good-bye. Separation routines should be discussed with the teacher to ensure a positive beginning experience. Each child has individual preferences, wants, and needs and our staff respects the rights and dignity of each child. Establishing a predictable goodbye routine can help the child regulate the day more successfully.

Remember that eventually your child will adjust to the routine of coming to school. It will take time, but our happiest moments are when your child enters the doorway happy and excited to start his/her day with us. With love, trust, and communication—it will happen!

How you handle the events surrounding your leaving will affect the adjustment that your child makes into our program. The following suggestions can help make separation easier:

1. Visit our program several times and stay for an hour or two with your child before leaving him/her with us. Familiarity helps!
2. Devote the time before you go to helping your child connect with a caregiver or engage in an activity with a caregiver.
3. Before you go, tell your child (even your infant) you will be leaving soon, and that you will be back.

4. Always leave your child with a staff member, and make sure the two of them have a chance to get acquainted before you go.
5. **Never sneak out!** Always say goodbye directly to your child. Leaving without saying Goodbye may leave children feeling like they cannot trust adults. We have a lovely goodbye song sung in all of the classrooms to assist with this important transition.
• **Always say goodbye!**
6. Don't try to discourage tears or your child's sad feelings. Let him/her express feelings for as long as he/she needs to and at whatever intensity he/she needs to. Don't expect him/her to be "reasonable". Time and consistency will help your child know you will return, and that you are happy with where you have chosen to have him/her cared for.
7. Remain calm, reassuring, and stable yourself, whatever happens. Express sympathy for your child's feelings, but don't allow his/her tears to change your mind about leaving. Once you say goodbye, you must follow through and leave.
8. A more relaxed departure is less upsetting for children than a rushed, abrupt one. The parent may say goodbye at the door and ask the child to wave at the window with the caregiver. (Other departure routines might include your child helping you get your coat, bag, or hat.)
9. Always tell your child that you will return. Saying "I will come back later" as you leave, and "I came back" when you return teaches your child that you will not abandon them.

DEPARTURE

When you are picking up your child, please allow time to put away any materials that the teacher asks the child to put away before going home. **Remember to always tell the teacher when you and your child are leaving.** It is important for the teacher to see each parent to exchange greetings and information concerning your child(ren)'s day.

**PLEASE REMEMBER, PARENTS ARE WELCOME
TO CALL THE CLASSROOM AND VISIT THE CENTER AT ANY TIME!**

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

INFORMAL INVOLVEMENT

A positive early childhood educational experience requires parent, teacher, and child to share together. Each of us is here to experience, learn, and support one another in our growth. Our program offers a sharing environment based on the premise that each of us has a unique gift to share—the gift of self. We hope you find a comfortable way to become an active participant in our Center. The Parent Involvement form is available at enrollment for you to indicate your availability and talents. We have several events throughout the year that we ask for parent help with. Emails through our Center listserv and door signs will announce the events and ways for you to become involved at whatever level is comfortable for you.

ORGANIZED INVOLVEMENT

Children's Center Board

The CC Board serves as the formal advisory group to the Children's Center Director and Associated Students Executive Committee. Membership includes center parents; faculty or staff of the University; and SDSU students appointed by the Associated Students Executive Board. Meetings are held five or six times a semester here at the Center. There are no formal meetings during the summer. The Center invites all families to participate as a Board Member. There are leadership opportunities including Board Chair which must be an SDSU student parent according to Associated Students By-Laws. The Board reviews the annual Center Budget; reviews policy affecting the Center; provides a forum for parents to express their ideas and opinions; and supports fundraising and parent outreach activities. Recruiting members begins at the beginning of the year each Fall but families may join the board at any time either as a visitor or join throughout the year.

NUTRITION

Young children master many skills during their early childhood years and learning to eat a variety of nutritious foods is an important one. The Children's Center participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, which is set up to provide your child with well balanced meals. In accordance with the Food Program guidelines and our philosophy, we provide a morning meal, lunch, and afternoon snack. Your child's teacher will tell you the times that meals are scheduled. There are slightly different meal times in each classroom. Please note that infants always eat on demand. Additionally, for infants, please talk with your teacher for specific guidelines on types of formula we provide and use of breast milk. Teachers and parents will work together on a feeding plan and update it as new foods are introduced.

Nursing mothers are welcome to come at any time. The naproom is always available for your use if you prefer privacy. An additional Mother's Room is available at the new Aztec Student Union on campus. Please let us know how we can help make nursing/pumping convenient for you.

The Center uses a four week cycling menu to provide children with a variety of foods. Meals are planned with special attention to selecting foods, which are low in sodium, sugar, and fat and rich in fiber. Our menus include several meatless options and we do not serve pork or red meat. Menus are posted in the hallway near the Kitchen, on the Center's website, and are also available in hard copy upon request.

If your child has an allergy or certain food(s) restrictions, please have your physician complete an "allergy form". We will make every effort to accommodate your special requests for your child's dietary needs following guidelines set by the Child and Adult Care Food Program Guidelines. With your consent, this allergy information is openly posted in the classroom and kitchen to act as a visual reminder to prevent contact with problem foods.

The Child Care Food Program is a Federal program administrated through the California Department of Education. The CCFP provides financial assistance to child care centers so that they can provide nutritious meals. It is available to all eligible children without discrimination. (See full non-discrimination statement at back of manual for details on this policy)

NAP TIME

Generally, naptime falls between 12:00 – 2:30 p.m. Although we prefer that children are not picked up or dropped off during lunch and rest, human schedules do not always conform to our program schedule. If you must come in during lunch or nap, please help your child with transition into the program. Lunch is a busy time and rest is a quiet time. Children need preparation for the “activity” they are going to enter when coming to the Center, which may require more time to transition, on your part, during this quieter time.

Infants and toddlers are accommodated at any time they need to rest. We follow The American Academy of Pediatrics and American Public Health Association guidelines for child care centers: infants under 12 months are placed on their backs to sleep. When infants can easily turn over from their back to stomach or side, they shall be put down to sleep on their back, but allowed to adopt whatever position they prefer for sleep.

Preschoolers are given an opportunity to rest after lunch. All children use mats and use individual bedding provided by their parents. As required by our licensing agency, children who do not sleep will have a period of quiet resting and reading on their mat or participate in other activities.

Mats are sanitized on a daily basis by staff. **Parents are required to launder their child’s sheet and blanket at least once a week.**

CAMPUS OUTINGS

The Children’s Center sees the campus as a tremendous resource for our children to participate in age-appropriate events which enrich the children’s awareness of culture, nature, and education. Whenever possible, our older children participate in these campus outings. Our extended community is the university, and the children love being a part of it! We encourage families to join us on all campus outings.

DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL GUIDANCE

A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The Children’s Center philosophy focuses on the needs of the whole child. Our age appropriate integrated curriculum nurtures all areas of development (physical, social, emotional, and cognitive). Our curriculum encourages children to be active participants in the learning process. We believe learning that lasts is based on meaningful experiences, and these experiences are best directed by the children. Each family’s unique beliefs, experiences and language are incorporated into the environment and curriculum as much as possible.

Each classroom has a unique daily schedule, which provides children with a predictable routine, allowing them opportunities to experience both spontaneous and planned events. To ensure growth for the child in all areas of development, planned activities are provided throughout the day. These activities include experiences in fine motor, gross motor, creative art, sensory play, science and nature, language and fantasy. A variety of activities are set-up for the children and they are encouraged to move freely into the learning area of their choice. In planning the daily routine, we are

sensitive to children's needs for quiet/active time, indoor/outdoor time, large/small group time, and adult/peer interaction. Our goal is to provide a wide range of activities, which help integrate the child's various developing skills.

The educational opportunities offered through planned activities and arrangement of the classroom environment, coupled with the focus on social-emotional development through communication and play, provide the basic framework needed for future development and studies. An integrated curriculum is presented through the Project Approach based on children's expressed interests as they arise, and always include adjustments and adaptations along the way to include all children. The outdoor play space is as important as the inside spaces and we try to connect with the natural world as much as possible through gardening, nature trails, and use of natural elements, sand, water, dirt, and mud too!

Children are provided activities in the following areas:

- 1. Dramatic Play:** Family Life and the block areas are just a few places where children mimic grown-ups as their way of learning about the world around them. Dramatic play allows for acting out emotions and ideas, and opens up creative exploration.
- 2. Music:** Exposure to classical, rock, country, folk, blues, and world music, as well as traditional children's music and singing, classical instruments, cultural instruments, finger plays, coordination and creative movement supports development of vocabulary, memory, and vocal skills.
- 3. Art:** Experiences are provided with paint, crayons, glue, ink, chalk, scissors, shapes, sizes, colors and textures to support self-expression and appreciation for the arts. Remember- creative art **should** be messy!
- 4. Nature and Science:** Care of plants and animals, materials to touch and explore, textures, scales to weigh, magnets, magnifying glasses, mirrors, playdough, sandbox, measurements, experiments, cooking, and nature walks all support your child's connection to the world they live in.
- 5. Multi-Cultural Awareness:** Our program delights in the fact that our children, families and staff are from every part of the world. Daily shared experiences with customs, songs, foods, artifacts, language, dance, stories, and traditions from the cultures of our families, our country and from around the world enrich everyone's understanding.
- 6. Language and Literacy:** Family, cultural and community perspectives are integrated with exposure to language, sequencing of events, contextual cues, use of imagination and problem-solving, creating stories and books, exposure to letters, numbers, and symbols throughout the daily program is critical to support language and literacy development. Early use of crayons, chalk, pencils, markers, finger paint, and tracing support your child's development of future writing skills.

7. **Math:** Shapes, colors, sizes, quantities, comparisons, numbers, counting, matching, sorting, sequencing, table games, dice, and dominoes are all experiences that support your child’s understanding of mathematical concepts.

8. **Gross Motor:** Using the large muscles of the body—running, jumping, hopping, sliding, climbing, riding tricycles, balancing on borders and beams, dancing, crawling, rolling, rocking, kicking/throwing balls, playing games such as “Follow the Leader”, “Simon Says” and “Duck, Duck, Goose” support large muscle development and helps your child understand how to use his/her body.

9. **Fine Motor:** The use of fine manipulative toys such as rhythm sticks, musical instruments, fingerplays, puzzles, crayons, paint brushes, Legos, scissors, snaps, buttons, zippers, small blocks, and stringing beads increases eye-hand coordination and development of fine motor motions and judgment.

ASSESSMENT

As a program funded through the California Department of Education, we implement *Desired Results* which is the required method of assessment. The DR system includes six Desired Results – four child Desired Results and two family Desired Results.

The Desired Results for Children and Families

DR1: Children are personally and socially competent

DR2: Children are effective learners

DR3: Children show physical and motor competence

DR4: Children are safe and healthy

DR5: Families support their child’s learning and development

DR6: Families achieve their goals

The Desired Results Developmental Profile-Revised (DRDP 2015) is a central component of the CDE’s *Desired Results* system. DRDP 2015 is a system of assessment instruments based on teacher observation that measures children’s developmental progress toward the Desired Results for children. We complete the developmental profile on each child each semester and share the information with parents in a scheduled Parent Conference. These findings also inform curriculum choices and goals for groups and individual children. Additional components of the *Desired Results* system are annual Parent Surveys and Classroom Environmental Rating Scales.

SOCIAL GUIDANCE

We believe it is important for children to know the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Our emphasis is on children being sensitive to feelings and learning appropriate expression of these feelings. We help children develop this sensitivity by teaching them with words and actions to express their feelings. As role models for children, teachers never use corporal punishment. Intimidation, embarrassment, teasing, or provoking comparison of children are not acceptable forms of social guidance. When conflicts occur, children are brought together to resolve the problem. If they cannot communicate at the moment, they may need to be moved to a quiet area to regroup, calm down, and plan a solution.

Teachers also create an environment, which predicts and limits the frequency of problematic situations. We accomplish this by trying to foresee behavioral conflicts, redirecting children into more appropriate activities, by promoting cooperative play, and by providing enough quiet and active play spaces.

When classroom efforts do not help a child resolve an on-going behavior issue, teachers and parents will work together to develop an individualized plan of action. All of the Teaching Staff, including the Director and Assistant Director may assist with parent conferences to create support strategies. If needed, we may involve outside professionals or refer families to available campus or community resources.

BITING

No behavior among small children elicits as strong a reaction from parents than biting. Parents and caregivers are often frustrated by this experience as it can be both frightening and painful for the child involved. Children, just like adults, experience times of frustration, anger, and intimidation. Unlike older preschool children and adults, infants and toddlers do not have the “words” to express their feelings. A very quick and effective way for the young toddler to express anger or fright is through crying or pushing out, and biting. At the Children’s Center, we maintain a policy of firmly telling children who have bitten, “Stop! Biting hurts,” and removing them from the conflict situation. We attempt to help children find more appropriate, less harmful ways to express their feelings of anger, frustration, or intimidation. As adults, it is our role to model the type of behavior we expect of our children. Patience, consistency, and a wealth of alternatives for the biting children are essential in helping children express feelings in a healthy, acceptable manner.

By preschool, children should no longer be biting, as they can use verbal communication to express feelings. If a child does begin to use biting as a means of problem-solving, teachers and parents will come together to discuss ways for each person to help the child. In the event that a bite breaks the skin, parents will be notified.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PROBLEM SOLVING

At all age levels we encourage children to solve problems. On a daily basis children will be challenged to resolve conflicts with other children and the environment. Depending on the age group, a teacher will intervene at different times to ensure safety. By not constantly and prematurely interrupting, adults allow children to work through a situation and develop their own solution. Adults intervene only when it is apparent that guidance is needed. Children become empowered as they learn that they have the capacity to take care of their own situations and/or interactions.

SWEARING

Unfortunately, children learn quickly that some words will shock adults. Children enjoy shocking adults and the power they derive from doing so, if the adult feeds into the situation. The adults in our program are told to remain calm and simply tell the child that those words are not to be used at school. Children are encouraged to tell children using swear words that they do not like hearing them. A simple sentence, "I don't like that word and I wish you wouldn't use it around me" is usually enough said to a child experimenting with "shocking" language.

APOLOGIES

Children, in learning to socialize, will encounter peer conflicts. Sometimes the result of these conflicts is the injury of a friend. Many people's first reaction is to have a child say they are sorry. We believe that a child needs to understand other children's feelings before he or she can use the abstract concept of being sorry. Insisting on an apology teaches a child how to please an adult rather than teaching the child an understanding of others.

When a conflict arises between non-verbal children, we start the understanding process by modeling appropriate behavior and talking about how the other child feels. As children acquire language, we encourage them to use their words to express their feelings. The adult facilitates the process further by suggesting ways the aggressive child can help the upset child. For example, a child who has pushed another child on a cement walkway will be asked to help that child back up. A child who inflicts an injury on another child may be asked to hold the ice pack for them. Logical consequences help children learn what is expected of them. There is a point (usually later in preschool) when a child understands being sorry. It is then that we encourage apologies to be used.

LABELING BEHAVIOR—NOT THE CHILD

Another important practice at the Center is to use objective words to describe children's behaviors, "Nathan, you carefully put those blocks away" instead of "What a good boy for putting away the blocks." When judgmental words are used it creates the notion that children are only as worthy as their actions.

This approach is especially important with young children who are developing their self-esteem based on the opinions of others (most importantly the one they love). Commenting directly on the child's action allows them to focus on the behavior rather than their value as a person. "Be good today" and "bad girl" are overwhelming expectations and generalizations that set children up for failure. No child is always "good" or "bad" during an entire day. For example, when leaving your

child instead of saying “Be good today,” simply say, “Goodbye, I love you and I’ll see you this afternoon.” This type of statement reassures the child of the parent’s unconditional love, acceptance, and promised return.

SHARING AS A SOCIAL SKILL

Sharing, like apologies, is appropriate only when children are cognitively and emotionally ready to understand the social benefits of this interaction. Toddlers and young preschoolers, for the most part, are still very egocentric and cannot grasp the concept of sharing something that they want. We believe these children should not be forced to do so. We try to respect children’s needs to have private space, individual time with materials, and some control over their play situations.

The staff’s responsibility is to provide more than one of any toy or activity. Staff facilitates problem solving while verbalizing children’s feelings and desires; teachers introduce simple language that children can eventually use in future situations. The Center also believes that having adults who model sharing is one of the best ways to expose and demonstrate the different ways to share.

TOILET LEARNING

Before children can attempt bowel or bladder control, certain muscles and parts of the nervous system must mature to a point where they can be consciously controlled. Children must also be cognitively and verbally mature enough to understand and follow toileting instructions. A casual, relaxed approach to this aspect of child development lends itself to success without trauma to child or parent.

Toilet learning needs to begin with an interest from the child or family. When a child expresses an interest in learning about toileting, staff and parents discuss a consistent method of developing toileting skills. It is important that toileting be an encouraging process rather than pressuring a child into a process he/she is not yet willing to learn.

Our Toilet Learning Policy reflects our general philosophy of respect for each child and their family. We encourage active participation by the child in caregiving routines and respect for individual pace and style. Even before the self-toileting begins, the child is included in the caregiving process by getting their own diaper, helping to dress themselves, washing their own hands, etc. While diapers are being changed, caregivers talk to the children, giving them language they will use during the toileting process. We ask the child if he/she would like to sit on the toilet and respect their decision. Children in underpants are taken to the bathroom regularly. Wet or soiled underwear are dealt with in a very matter of fact way, while respectful of the child’s feelings. The child helps get the dry pants and is reminded of where the toilet is. The process of self-toileting is a gradual one, which is impacted by the developmental issue of autonomy and a continued need for nurturing and security. The greatest tool a parent or teacher has in this process is the child’s own strong desire to begin self-toileting.

During the toilet-learning process, children will have accidents. In order to ensure the utmost cleanliness of our toileting areas, clothes that have been soiled with feces and/or urine **will not be rinsed or washed** by staff members. Soiled clothing will be placed in a sealed plastic bag and placed in your child’s cubby. Please remember to check for wet or soiled clothing daily.

Children will be assisted with hand washing until they are developmentally able to complete the task independently. Parents can support this at home by following our hand washing routine which includes: using liquid soap and running water, rubbing hands for at least 10 seconds, including backs of hands and between fingers and under fingernails, rinsing well, drying hands with a paper towel and avoiding touching the faucet with just-washed hands by using the paper towel to turn off water. While we know most families do not use paper towels at home, you can model this when using public restrooms.

BIRTHDAYS, HOLIDAY AND CELEBRATIONS POLICY

We like to acknowledge when children are having birthdays. Each classroom teacher does this in his/her own way. Please communicate your family and cultural traditions with your child's teacher. The Center has a Celebration Policy and a Form for you to complete should you wish to celebrate special days in your child's or within your family with us here at school. You can discuss your ideas with the Cottage Supervising Teacher and together make a plan of action. Forms can be found near the sign-in computer.

Our Beliefs:

In keeping with our philosophy on welcoming all families, involvement with the campus community and creating an exemplary program that models current principles and practice in an environment which respects diversity and individual needs, we have created this Holiday and Celebrations policy to guide us through the year.

In many ways our program operates like a family. We have procedures and policies that we follow, knowing not everyone follows the same set of beliefs. We strive to create curriculum that is meaningful to children, supports their development, and reduces the effects of the media and commercialism. We look to nature to be our guide. What we practice "within" the Center may differ from what children are experiencing in their communities.

The Policy:

Within the Children's Center environment we do not create or display typical commercialized holiday themed décor or projects. All holidays/celebrations are not forbidden as we value learning about family traditions and cultures. As a general rule when planning curriculum, Teachers do not teach holiday topics. If initiated by children and families, teachers are supportive of the child's experiences and sometimes share those experiences with classmates. We strive to reduce children's exposure to the media, sale of products, and commercialism as a general rule.

In our campus community, we participate in many events realizing the children will be exposed to commercialism and holiday themed décor (as with their daily lives). At these times, we gather details and inform families of the proposed event/visit, always providing an alternative for those who chose not to participate.

NONDISCRIMINATION /CIVIL RIGHTS STATEMENT

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Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by mail:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary of Civil Rights
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