

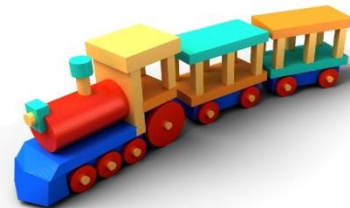


**Middle Tennessee State University**

**Child Development Center**

**Family Handbook**

**2018-2019**



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
<b>Welcome Letter to Families</b>	4
<b>Child Philosophy Statement</b>	5
<b>Statement of Purpose</b>	5
<b>Policy Statements</b>	6
<b>I. General Policies</b>	
A. Application and Enrollment	6
1. Application	6
2. Enrollment	6
3. Admission requirements	7
4. Tuition	9
B. Daily Concerns	9
1. Parking	9
2. Daily arrival and departure	10
3. Absences	11
4. Birthdays	11
5. Clothing	11
6. Snow days	12
7. Toys	12
8. Insurance	12
9. Snacks	12
10. Fire and Natural Disasters	13
11. Medical Emergencies	13
12. Emergency Situations	13
13. Discipline/Guidance Policy	14
14. Open Door Policy	15
15. Incidences @ School/Communication	15
16. Nap Policy	16
<b>II. Health Policies</b>	
A. Health Forms	16
B. Symptoms of Illness	17
C. When to Contact the School	18
D. Outside Play	18
E. Emergency Information	18
F. Medications	18
<b>III. Promoting Children’s Development</b>	
A. Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum	19
B. Environment/Schedule	19
C. Field Trips	19

D. The Teacher's Role	19
E. University Students' Involvement	20
F. Visual Media Activities	20
IV. Parent Involvement	
A. Parents in the Classroom	21
B. Lines of Communication	21
C. Observation Booth	22
D. Lending Libraries	23
E. Conferences	23
F. Assessments	23
G. Transitioning Children Due to Staff Turnover	24
H. Pre-visit and Phase In	24
I. Parent Surveys	24
J. Special Events	24
K. CDC Advisory Committee	24
V. Procedures for child abuse investigations involving childcare agencies	25
VI. Grievance Policy	25
VII. Challenging Behavior Policy	26

Dear CDC Families,

Welcome to Middle Tennessee State University's Child Development Center located in the Fairview Building at the corner of Fairview and Greenland Drives. We are part of the Early Learning Programs in the College of Education at MTSU. The Child Development Center consists of two programs: the Infant-Toddler Program for children 1 to 3 years of age, and the Preschool Program for children 3 to 5 years of age. In both programs, you will find a developmentally appropriate curriculum designed to meet the needs of the age level served and individual needs of the children in that program. Our curriculum focus is play and project based learning. We strongly believe that this is the best practice for teaching young children.

We are proud of our teachers and our programs. The purpose of our center is to not only support your child's development but also to support you, the families. Children are very special people, and we thank you so much for your willingness to share your children with us. We welcome your suggestions and participation, and want you to feel you can visit the programs at any time. We have an open door policy for our families.

Staff: Our teachers are Mrs. Melissa Johnston and Ms. Wendy Williams. Both ladies have many years of experience in the early childhood field. Please read their bios on our web-site ([www.mtsu.edu/cdc](http://www.mtsu.edu/cdc)). Each teacher works very hard to find new ideas to enhance your child's learning experience in our program. We are so grateful for them! Mrs. Connie Casha is the Director of the Early Learning Programs here at MTSU. She often is here offering a helping hand, or just observing. You will enjoy getting to know her. We are in the process of hiring a new director. After a total of 15 years at the center, Mrs. Beverly Marzee Woodward is retiring. She has taught the toddler and preschool classes as well as been the Director for 5 years. She will definitely miss this wonderful place for families, practicum students and staff. Her last date on-site is July 31<sup>st</sup>. Mrs. Casha is in the process of finding an awesome new director.

A very warm welcome is extended to new families, along with a big welcome back to returning families. We wish the coming year to be an enjoyable and productive one for children, families, MTSU students, and CDC staff alike.

Due to changes in DHS (Department of Human Services) and NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) regulations, we have made some changes to our Family Handbook. Please carefully read each section. You will sign a document saying that you have read this handbook. As part of our relationship with you and the state/national entities, standards set forth in this handbook will be followed.

Thank you once again for joining our family. We look forward to working with you,

The CDC Family

## **CHILD PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT**

The Child Development Center's programs are based on the philosophy that children develop best when teachers and caregivers emphasize the total development of the child. We believe that children are active learners and unique individuals. They learn in developmental sequence, progressing at their own pace. Our program welcomes diversity though cultural, racial, gender, ability, and socioeconomic inclusion; these differences enrich the environment for all children. We are all best served in integrated settings where attitudes of understanding and acceptance can be fostered. Our programs are structured to stimulate the acquisition [by all children] of competencies in communicative, cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills.

## **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The Child Development Center exists for three purposes: The children and their families, MTSU Early Childhood Education students, and faculty teaching and research.

First, the Child Development Center strives to promote the growth and development of each individual child to his or her fullest potential. At the same time, we encourage families to: observe their child from the observation booth; be actively involved with their child in doing school-to-home activities, and discuss concerns with the lead teacher or director as a way of fostering each child's development. The CDC staff will contact parents for a conference at the beginning and end of each semester, and other times if needed. When the CDC staff and families work together, children benefit.

Secondly, we exist as a training center for students in Early Childhood Education and related disciplines. The center provides students with practical experiences that allow them to learn about child growth and development as well as planning, implementing and evaluating activities and curriculums. Students also prepare lessons and each child's progress report under the supervision of the lead teacher, and participate in parent-teacher conferences. Parents will be asked to sign a document stating they understand we are a lab school and work very hard to keep all information about their child confidential.

Thirdly, we strive to provide faculty with developmentally appropriate labs that will enhance their teaching endeavors and allow them to investigate a variety of research areas. The child's welfare is of utmost concern. We will make every effort to minimize any disruptions to the children, their families, and the program. Parents will always be informed of any research programs within the labs and participation is voluntary.

## POLICY STATEMENTS

### I. General Policies

#### A. Application and Enrollment

**1. Application** to the Child Development Center is made by requesting a form from the director of the Child Development Center (615-898-2198) or completing the form online at [www.mtsu.edu/cdc](http://www.mtsu.edu/cdc). The completed paper form can be mailed, emailed, or returned in person. The form can be emailed to: MTSU Child Development Center, PO Box 532, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, TN 37132. Upon receipt of the completed application form, the child's name will be added to the waiting list. Parents interested in enrolling their children are encouraged to review the program with the director and to visit the center. The Child Development Center is located in the Fairview Building on the MTSU Campus at 820 Fairview Avenue.

**2. Enrollment** is determined by eligibility based on balancing age, gender, cultural background and special needs within each program. Eligible children are selected by order of application date when positions become available. The director will determine enrollment and organization of the labs striving for a balance (when possible) of age, gender, and a variety of cultural and special needs. All children must complete a pre-visit to the center prior to attending the classes offered.

**a. Infant-Toddler Program:** Children in this program must be between 12 and 35 months at the time they enter the program. There are four sessions. Children will be placed in the appropriate age group. The youngest group in the Infant/toddler Classroom is composed of six children and the other three sessions are composed of eight children each. Exact ages in each group will depend on applicants, but children of similar age are grouped together.

Children whose first or second birthday falls on or before August 15 are eligible for Infant-Toddler Program enrollment in the fall semester. Children who turn three prior to August 15 are not eligible to return to the Infant-Toddler Program in the fall (unless special circumstances exist), but are eligible for the Preschool Program as space permits. (See c.3.)

**b. Preschool Program:** Children in this program are three and four years old. There are two sessions that consists of mixed aged grouping of children with some being placed in the morning and others in the afternoon. Children whose third or fourth birthday falls on or before August 15 are eligible for enrollment in the fall semester. Children who turn five prior to August 15, may attend but will sign a waiver stating that they realize that this does not substitute for Kindergarten. We will allow children who are 5 with special circumstances to attend. (See c.3.) **All children entering the preschool classroom must be toilet**

**trained prior to entrance.** We do not have the facility to change diapers or pull ups.

c. **Final enrollment** of the child will depend on the following factors:

1. The center will strive to provide an inclusive population in the classroom (see I.A.2. above).
2. Under special circumstances, a child may be kept in the program beyond typical age eligibility. Such a decision is made with parents and others involved with the child's particular needs. This situation is rare, and determination will be made on a case-by-case basis.
3. Children who have previously attended the Infant-Toddler and Preschool programs are given priority for the next semester in that program unless they are no longer eligible. Children of age to transition from Infant-Toddler to Preschool program will be prioritized based on date of original application. Criteria related to diversity will also be considered. Due to space considerations, there is not an "automatic" transition from the Infant-Toddler to the Preschool program. However, children from the Infant-Toddler program are placed in preschool before children on the waiting list are placed.
4. Parents will be notified by the director when there is an opening for their child. Children to be enrolled in accepted for the fall semester classes, which begin in September, are generally selected in May and June. Otherwise, openings are filled as they occur. In November, a note is sent home asking for parents to let the director know if child is returning for the spring semester. Unless there are unusual circumstances, all children enrolled in the Fall are eligible to return in the spring. Intent to Return forms are sent out again in April for the following fall semester.

### **3. Admission requirements**

- a. **Parents are expected** to attend a parent orientation group meeting after enrollment is completed. This meeting is held in late August or early September. Policies and program information is discussed at that time. If a parent cannot attend this meeting, an individual conference or visit must be made. Make an appointment by calling the director at 615- 898-2198. A spring Parent Orientation meeting is held if there are new children attending that semester.
- b. A non-refundable enrollment fee of \$25 must be paid when the child is accepted into the program and is paid yearly.

c. The parents must complete necessary forms for the child, including but not limited to enrollment forms, confidentiality, flu, vaccination, permission slips, etc. The child's pediatrician must complete a health and physical form prior to the child's entrance. All children younger than 30 months must have a physical completed. **ALL FORMS MUST BE COMPLETED.** This is required by the Tennessee Department of Human Services. Children born in a foreign country may be required to get a TB skin test prior to entrance to our program. This is determined by the country the child was born. This, too, is a Department of Human Services rule and is noted on the application.

d. Families must be willing to cooperate with departmental educational programs. This will involve the child's regular attendance in the lab, parent conferences with staff members, and other similar activities.

e. We ask that the family be willing to cooperate with MTSU faculty on research endeavors. Participation in each research project by the child and the family is voluntary, but research may be ongoing in the classroom (though it is not intended to be disruptive in any way). You will be informed of any research projects, and allowed to decide if your child will or will not participate.

f. The family must arrange satisfactory transportation for the child. This means the child will arrive at school and sign in within a few minutes of the starting time, and be picked up within a few minutes of the ending time. **We do not have personnel or facilities to care for children before or after their session time.** Families unable to manage our session times may be asked to find another facility, which allows them more flexibility in drop off and pick up times. **There is a late fee for all families who do not pick up their children on time. It is \$1 a minute and should be paid within a week.**

*If a child is being dropped off and picked up by another person on a regular basis, this must be listed on the child's emergency card and kept in our files. All person's picking up children for the first time, will be asked to show a picture identification. We will verify his/her name against the list of approved names supplied by the child's parents.*

g. Disenrollment:

I. A child may no longer be enrolled if the parents decide at the end of the semester they no longer wish their child to be in the program. Intent to Return forms are sent out before the end of the semester and parents may notify us of their intent.

II, A child may no longer be enrolled in the program if they are of age to begin kindergarten.

III. A child may no longer be enrolled in the program if their immunization records are not kept up to date in a timely manner.



IV. Children's files are kept for one year after the child is no longer in our facility. Your child's personal information can be viewed by the director, or his or her classroom teacher only. On request select portions of the file may be viewed under supervision by the practicum student assigned to that child.

V. A child may be disenrolled if both family and center staff agree that the program can not meet the needs of the child.

**4. Tuition:** The tuition for each of the labs will be paid in August for the fall semester and in January for the spring semester. Payment may be made in the form of cash or check. Cash must be delivered in person to the director. Checks should be made out to MTSU Child Development Center and dropped off in person to the director or mailed to MTSU Child Development Center, PO Box 532, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, TN 37132. **(Please do not give tuition money or checks to your child's teacher--their attention must be on the children)**. A non-refundable enrollment fee is required when the child is accepted into the program and is paid yearly. Families with more than one child enrolled in the program will receive a sibling tuition discount of fifty dollars. MTSU students will receive a 13% discount off their tuition. See the director for more information. Please note: Parents may pay monthly if needed. Please see the director to make arrangements.

**Tuition is:**

Preschool: \$400 a semester plus an annual \$25 non-refundable enrollment fee

Infant/Toddler: \$250 a semester then include a yearly \$25 non-refundable enrollment fee.

MTSU Students Discount:

Preschool: \$348 a semester plus an annual \$25 non-refundable enrollment fee

Infant/Toddler: \$217.50 a semester plus an annual \$25 non-refundable enrollment fee.

**B. Daily Concerns**

**1. Parking:** Parents may park in the spots marked Child Development Center for 15-20 minutes at drop off and pick up. A day pass is available from the director for an occasional visit to the Observation Booth. If you choose, you may purchase a parking pass from MTSU Parking and Transportation Office, located off Main St. (1403 East Main Street) just past the "formal" entrance to MTSU. Turn left into the drive (you will see a sign by the street indicating "Parking Services"), and park behind the tan building. The door to the office is marked on the building. A temporary permit for one semester only will be good for the hours your child is enrolled in our center. This permit allows you to park in the Fairview lot and cost \$25.

**2. Daily arrival and departure: Preschool Parents:** Please use the portico on the Fairview Avenue side of the Fairview building for dropping off your child. **Always** transfer your child directly to CDC staff or a practicum student. Let us know your child is present by printing and signing your name on the **Sign-in sheet** as well as the time you are dropping off your child or picking them up on the clipboard (**This is a DHS required practice**). If you will be bringing your child to the classroom, please park in the lot and bring your child inside through the door on the Crestland Dr. end of the building. If you are late, please use the Crestland Dr. entrance, as the Fairview portico door will be locked for the safety and security of the children. Parents will then be buzzed into the school by the director through the CDC door.

**Infant-Toddler Parents:** Park in the Crestland Street side of the building in the assigned Child Development Center parking spaces. Enter the building using the covered door entrance nearest the parking lot. You will receive a security card to gain access into the CDC hallway. Do not share this card with anyone who does not regularly drop off or pick up your child. There is a security buzzer to let others into the center. Once you are inside the secure area you will take your child to the classroom and transfer your child directly to CDC staff or a practicum student. Let us know your child is present by printing and signing your name on the **Sign-in sheet** as well as the time you are dropping off your child or picking them up in the notebook. (**This is a DHS required practice**) Transfer at the Fairview portico door is not provided for the Infant-Toddler program. Due to the placement of a security door, you will be admitted by a staff member or pre-service teacher.

Please note:

If someone other than your child's regular means of transportation will be picking up the child, please sign the red communication notebook. If this is a last minute arrangement, call the director at 615-898-2198. It is our policy to release a child only to a person designated by the parents on the Emergency Form. Anyone from the list picking up the child for the first time will be asked to show a photo ID.

a. **Infant-Toddler Program:** Morning groups attend the center from 9:00-11:30 on Monday and Wednesday, or Tuesday and Thursday morning. Afternoon groups attend 1:00-3:30 pm either on Monday/Wednesday afternoon or Tuesday/Thursday afternoon depending on their classroom assignment. Children will be admitted and dismissed at their specified class times. **Children are dismissed directly from the classroom into the hallway to a parent or caregiver.**

b. **Preschool Program:** The morning group attends from 8:45- 11:45 am, Monday through Thursday. Children should **arrive no earlier than 8:40am**; children may be **picked up from 11:40-11:45 from the playground gate**. The afternoon group attends Preschool from 1:00-4:00 pm, Monday through Thursday. The afternoon children will be **admitted no earlier than 12:55 pm**;

children may be **picked up from 3:55-4:00 pm**. The playground gates are locked daily at 4:00 pm. Children are usually dismissed at the gate near the Fairview door. If it is inclement weather, parents will be let in the building and children are dismissed directly to them in the hallway outside their classroom.

**We ask that you please limit the number of times that a child is released early or arrives late.** We are trying to keep disruptions to a minimal number for the children in our program.

**3. Absences:** Please call the director (615-898-2198) if your child cannot attend school or you are running late. This will help us know the numbers of children for the daily activities. Refer to the health policies for suggestions on attendance when sick (See II. B & C). If your call goes to voicemail, please leave your child's name and classroom in the message.

**4. Birthdays:** These are special days the children enjoy sharing with their school friends. Elaborate celebrations at school are discouraged, but parents are encouraged to join us at snack time and provide special refreshments. These items must be store bought and pre-packaged thus meeting FDA requirements. Remember that **healthy snacks are required**. If fruit is sent, grapes must be quartered. No nuts, popcorn or hard pretzels can be served. You may wish to do a special activity with your child's class such as read a book, play a game, or sing a few songs. Please schedule bringing snacks or doing activities with your child's teacher one week in advance. If you are planning an event at your home or other location and wish to distribute invitations to other children, you must invite every child.

**5. Clothing:** Each day your child will need to **wear washable play clothes and shoes suitable for vigorous activity**. (Flip-flops are not acceptable, as children's feet are more likely to be injured in this type shoe.) Send an extra set of clothing for your child in case of a bathroom accident or spill. Please, put the clothes in a Ziploc bag and label each article with your child's name. Be sure to include underwear, socks, and outerwear appropriate for the current weather season.

**For children still in diapers**, the parent must provide the disposable diapers for the child. If a child is in cloth diapers for medical reasons, the parent will need to present documentation. The cloth diaper must have an absorbent inner lining and must have waterproof outer material that is worn to contain urine and feces. Cloth diapers that are soiled will be sent home that day for cleaning and will be placed in a plastic bag before sending the diaper home. We will change diapers routinely each day but we will also change diapers as the need arises. **Children in the Preschool classroom MUST BE POTTY TRAINED.** We do not have facilities for changing diapers in the preschool room, so this is very important. Accidents do occur and we will assist your child with cleaning up and changing clothes.

**Toilet training:** We do help families with their child's toilet training efforts. Per the Department of Human Service guidelines, the child must be comfortable with the process and must be able to communicate their need to use the toilet. The child may not sit on the toilet for more than 5 minutes (unless they feel the need to do so due to bowel movements) and will be diapered and changed as needed. We do not use toilet seats or chairs for health reasons.

**Daily outdoor play** is a vital part of our curriculum. We are a Gold Sneaker Facility (see handout). Our facility has an enhanced policy for physical activity and nutrition. We expect your child to be prepared to participate by having the **appropriate clothing for the weather** (hats, coats, boots, mittens, etc.) Please label all outerwear. If possible, an extra jacket, hat and shoes should remain in your child's cubbie.

6. **Snow days:** If the University is closed, our center will be closed. Parents are asked to use their discretion regarding driving safely, if our center is open. **In case of snow, the director will use Remind 101 to inform families whether we are open or not. You can usually find out about closings by calling 615- 898-2198 and listening to the voice message. If the Child Development Center is closed, the message will inform you by 8:00 am. Otherwise, we are in session.** Please do not call the Elementary and Special Education main office or the College of Education. This creates an overload on the telephones, teachers and secretaries. We appreciate your cooperation in following these guidelines.

7. **Toys:** Please prohibit your child from bringing his/her own toys to the center unless requested for a special activity (such as Preschool Special Person or as a transition object). It is very difficult for a child if his or her "special" toy gets damaged or lost, and sharing is often problematic for young ones. We have a wide variety of age appropriate toys for all of the children to enjoy. If a child in the Infant-Toddler room needs a transitional object (blanket, stuffed animal, etc.) for comfort, we are glad to permit it in the classroom. Note: Please do not send in toy weapons or valuable merchandise.

8. **Insurance:** Each child is enrolled in a group insurance policy covering the child while in attendance in the program or on field trips. This is with the State of Tennessee. See the director if additional information is needed.

9. **Snacks:** Snacks are planned each day. Due to the lack of kitchen facilities, our snacks are usually prepackaged snacks served with milk, water, or juice. We do use a licensed dietician's services to plan menu options. **Please inform your child's teacher of any food allergies or special dietary needs.** Make sure your child's teacher knows what foods your child cannot safely eat. If you choose to send your child with a snack, **it must be healthy and in a container that is clearly labeled with the child's name and dated.** Grapes must be quartered and we ask that nuts not be sent to school.

**10. Fire and Natural Disasters** Special consideration has been given to safety procedures to follow in the event of fire or a natural disaster. Fire drills are completed monthly. Children are moved to the farthest area of the playground. In case of tornado, children will be moved across the hallway to the office area, in the hallway, or to the basement area under Creative and Visual Services' Offices. Any child who is identified with special needs will have a care provider assigned to him/her at the beginning of the semester. They are responsible for helping that child get to the safest area for that situation. Families will be notified by the end of the day if any drills or actual emergencies occurred.

**11. Medical Emergencies:** Immediate attention will be given to any accident or illness, which might occur at school. All staff members have been trained in CPR & First Aid. Owie reports will be sent home describing non-emergency events. If there is any doubt about what should be done, the parent will be called. If emergency care is needed, the following will occur:

- a. 911 will be called; an ambulance would transport the child to the St. Thomas Rutherford. In the event of a severe emergency, the child would be life-flighted to Vanderbilt Pediatric. (Saint Thomas Rutherford emergency number is 615-396-4100.)
- b. the parent will be called.
- c. if the parent cannot be reached, other persons listed on the emergency form will be called
- d. if no one can be reached, the child's physician will be called.

**Note:** Parents are always responsible for keeping all forms up-to-date in case of changes in work and home telephone numbers or any other information that could help us locate you in case of an emergency.

**12. Emergency Situations:** The MTSU Campus Police or Murfreesboro City Police will contact us in the event that there is a potential threat to the safety and welfare of the children and staff. Specific procedures are followed in these situations.

- a) If the children are in their classroom, the teacher will lock the classroom doors, both front and back while the teacher assistant and/or MTSU students calmly move the children to an area of safety within the classroom. The Center will remain in the lock - down state until given official notice that the threat to children's safety is gone.

b) If the children are on the playground, the teacher and teacher assistant will calmly move the children into the classroom farthest away from the threat, locking each door behind them and ensuring that the classroom door is locked as well. The Center will remain in the lock-down state until given official notice that the danger has passed.

c) During this time, the Director will be in contact with the appropriate authorities regarding the situation.

d) When the threat of danger has been cleared, families and staff will be allowed to enter and exit the building.

e) If appropriate, families may be contacted and asked to remove children as soon as the immediate danger has ended.

f) Any child who is identified with special needs will have a care provider assigned to him/her at the beginning of the semester. They are responsible for helping that child get in the safest area for that situation.

g) Parents will be notified at pick up on the day of the potential threat.

**13. Discipline/guidance policy:** We believe in showing respect to young children. We do not use humiliation, ridicule, verbal abuse, or physical punishment to discipline your child. Our goal is to help your child learn self-control, and self-management skills. Each classroom has an area that a child may choose to go when he or she feels they need an opportunity to calm down or just to be alone. It can be overwhelming to be in a classroom with many different personalities. It is our hope children will feel better, if they choose to use this area to manage their feelings.

We will do the following things in order to accomplish this goal:

a. Create a warm, nurturing environment

b. Model appropriate behavior

c. Set appropriate & reasonable limits based on developmental level

d. Have a routine

e. Use positive words by telling children what they can do rather than what they cannot do

f. Use logical and natural consequences

- g. Listen to and watch children to interpret verbal & nonverbal language
- h. Distract, divert, or redirect children when possible
- i. Give children limited choices when possible
- j. Be as flexible as possible

Due to our licensing and accreditation requirements as well as best practices, only the classroom teacher, teacher's assistant or practicum students (under supervision of the classroom teacher) may correct the behavior of children during the school session. **A parent cannot spank his/her own child in the classroom since our guidelines do not allow corporal punishment; the child would have to be removed from our center.** However, if a parent wished to request their child cease an activity or behavior, that would be fine, and within our guidelines.) **Parents may not reprimand or discipline children who are not "theirs."**

**14. Open Door Policy** – Families are encouraged to email, call, write or talk to program staff members so that we can collaboratively work together to better meet the needs of their child. We will then put into practice the parent's suggestions in our daily classroom functions. Our goal is to help the children happily learn and grow in our facility as well as make contact with the families every day.

### **15. Incidences at School/Communication**

Sometimes an incidence happens between two children. You as the parent may ask "What do I do when my child tells me about an incident at school and I'm not sure how to respond?"

As a parent, you want your child to share with you when something happens that is upsetting or concerning to them. Your child also wants to know that you will do all that you can to support and protect them. Focusing on open communication and developing a feeling of trust can help you stay focused on the child, and the good that will come from this exchange of information. Here are some strategies that may help you in these challenging moments.

Stay calm and think about the message you want your child to receive from your response:

Stay calm and in control. Children watch how we respond and imitate our responses when they are faced with challenging issues. Some take away messages you want your child to hear are:

- I care about you and am glad you shared your concerns
- I will help you deal with this situation
- Listen and let your child know you respect their feelings
- Let your child know you heard them by repeating what they said and asking them to share how that made them feel

Reassure the Child

- Let your child know that you will protect them and the teacher will protect them as well.
- Role play with the child some strategies for dealing with the situation
- Let the child know that they can always come to you to talk about it.

Next steps

Let the teacher know when your child has expressed concerns about school happenings. This may require a conference or call rather than during drop off and pick up. We want to acknowledge the child's feelings and let you, as the parent, know that we are concerned and want to make sure your child has a good experience. Children develop at their own rate and we strive to be aware and meet the individual needs of every child. While we maintain confidentiality of every child, we can use the information you share to improve upon and meet the needs of every child.

Should you feel the issue is not resolved after speaking with the teacher, reach out to the director for additional assistance.

**16. Nap Policy:** We do not take naps at the CDC. If a child should fall asleep, we will encourage them to rest. They will be placed on their back on a mat and will be checked every 15 minutes.

## II. Health Policies

**A. Health Forms:** Each child is required to have the series of immunizations recommended by the Tennessee Department of Human Services. Prior to starting school, the **health form** [required by DHS] provided by the **child's physician listing immunizations and an initial physical (for those under 30 months) upon entrance to the program must be in your child's folder. This form must be signed by your family physician or medical provider.** Health forms are kept under lock and key and may be reviewed by the child's teacher, director, child's



parents, and regulatory agency. Forms are reviewed quarterly to make sure the child is up-to-date on shots, etc.

**B. Symptoms of Illness:** Parents should check their child for physical symptoms before bringing the child to school. Any of the following should be mentioned to the lead teacher:

- |                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. clear nasal discharge      | 4. minor rash  |
| 2. listlessness, irritability | 5. lack of appetite                                  |
| 3. occasional minor cough     | 6. any other behavior that seems out of the ordinary |

We are trying to do all we can to prevent the spread of communicable diseases, so we require **ill children to remain at home**. Also remember that a child who feels sick wants his mother or other primary caregiver, and is likely to be miserable at school. Medication is not administered at the CDC unless it is emergency medication. \*If a child shows any symptoms on the following list, he/she should be kept at home until free of symptoms or cleared by a physician:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. ear ache  | 6. deep, frequent cough                   |
| 2. fever (100 or over)   | 7. sore throat with difficulty swallowing |
| 3. digestive disturbance, including stomach ache, diarrhea, and vomiting | 8. swollen neck glands                    |
| 4. cold symptoms   | 9. headache                               |
| 5. greenish or yellowish nasal discharge                                 | 10. serious skin rash or eruptions        |

\*Each child will be checked with a Wellness Check (state guidelines) upon arrival; and if any of the above symptoms appear, the child will not be allowed to come to school that day. If at school the above symptoms appear, the child will rest in the office of the director, so that other individuals will not be exposed, and parents will be contacted immediately to pick up the sick child. Please note that children must be fever free for 24 hours without medication before they can return to school. If a child has chicken pox or impetigo, the child must be treated by a licensed health care professional before returning to school. We will inform parents if any contagious illness is present in their child's classroom.

### **C. When to Contact the School**

1. Parents are requested to phone after 8:00 A.M. if they have any questions about bringing their child, or if the child is to be kept at home that day. It is appropriate to leave a message at 615-898-2198. Include the child's name and teacher's name if leaving a message.
2. Parents should immediately report to the lead teacher the child's exposure to, or contraction of, a communicable disease (e.g., pinkeye, scarlet fever, ringworm). The teacher will inform all parents if an exposure occurs in their child's group. Please call the director at 615- 898-2198.

**D. Outside Play:** If a child is well enough to come to school, he or she is considered well enough to go outdoors. Children should wear clothing each day suitable for outdoor play, bringing jackets, hats, mittens, etc. if needed. (See I.B.5) Sunscreen with an **S.P.F. 15 or higher** should be applied by parents before children arrive at the program, if you feel it is necessary for outside play. Also, insect repellent containing DEET must be applied before arrival each day if necessary for your child, or when recommended by public health authorities. If we are to apply sunscreen or mosquito repellent at school, you are asked to complete a sunscreen non-medication form or a non-prescription medication form for insect repellent, which is in the director's office.

**E. Emergency Information:** Please let the teacher know a number where you can be reached, if no one is to be at home while the child is at school. This will help the teacher locate you in the event of an illness or an emergency.

**F. Medications:** Please administer any needed medication to your child before coming to the center and inform your child's teacher that the medication has been administered. Since children are at the CDC 2½ or 3 hours maximum, we do not administer medication. The exceptions are medication for diaper rash (you will need to bring tube in original package labeled with your child's name) or an epi pen in case of an allergic reaction. We will also administer Benadryl if there is an allergic reaction. We need medication forms filled out as well as a plan of action in case there is a problem. These medicines must be in their original container, are in date, and labeled with the child's name. The action plan is signed by the doctor.

1. Emergency medications are administered when the child shows the symptoms requiring the medication. Parents must complete the required paperwork for the medication, which is found in the Director's office. Please make sure the amount of medication prescribed, the symptoms (or Action Plan) and doctor's signature are on the paperwork. Emergency medications such as an Epi Pen or Benadryl are located in the room in the teacher's backpack hanging high above the children's reach. Other medicines will be stored in a lock box in the director's office.

2. At the beginning of each semester we create an Allergy/Medication Attention/Dietary Restrictions list to help all staff remember what needs to be done to keep your child safe. We post these lists in the director's office, snack room, teacher's offices, and in each classroom. You will be asked to please give your consent to post your child's name on the list. (NAEYC)

### III. Promoting Children's Development:

The M.T.S.U. Child Development Center is designed to promote the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of the child through a developmentally appropriate, nurturing environment. We strongly believe that children learn best through play and by doing activities that are of an interest to them. We work with families to find out what each child enjoys learning about using project based learning.

**A. Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum:** Each child is a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of growth. Therefore, the curriculum and adult interactions with the children must be responsive to individual differences. Teacher observation and assessment of children and their interests lead to the formation of goals and objectives for the children. Skills and concepts appropriate to each child's stage of development are introduced. The classrooms are prepared weekly with centers and activities related to concepts. Hands on, concrete experiences are incorporated into familiar and meaningful lessons for the children, thereby providing relevant learning. We use the Revised Tennessee Early Developmental Standards and Teaching Strategies' Creative Curriculum to define skills appropriate for each age group. Teachers create lessons/activities using a variety of resources and their creativity, but use the TNELDS and Creative Curriculum as their guides.

As part of our curriculum, we are required by the state of Tennessee to use the Keeping Kids Safe Curriculum. It teaches children about their feelings, friendships and personal safety using pictures, puppets, and stories representing issues that young children face. This curriculum is for children 3 to 5 years of age. Parents must sign paperwork at the beginning of the semester stating that their child may participate in this program.

**B. Environment/Schedule:** Learning takes place as young children touch, manipulate, and experiment with materials and each other. Your child's experiences at the center will provide him/her with a variety of developmentally appropriate materials in a child centered, challenging environment. Children are encouraged to initiate their own activities, learn at their own pace, and develop a positive self-image. **Our policy is that all children must be within sight and sound at all times as they work and play.**

**C. Field Trips:** Because young children learn best through experience, special visitors may be included as part of the curriculum. We are fortunate to have a bevy of talented people right here on campus. We take numerous "in house" field trips to give the children these wonderful opportunities in a safe environment. Due to our short day we have found these types of "in

house” field trips to be the best. Should a field trip be planned, parents will need to provide their child’s transportation and asked to sign a permission form.

**D. The Teacher’s Role:** Teachers of young children serve as guides and facilitators, preparing the environment to provide stimulating and challenging materials and activities for play to occur. As in any good classroom, teachers are also learners, observing children to see what is understood, and offering additional challenges to push further thinking. Effective teachers constantly monitor and adjust activities during the course of a lesson or an activity. It is our desire to meet the children where they are in their learning needs and challenge them to think and problem solve.

**E. University Students’ Involvement in the CDC Setting:** The MTSU Child Development Center is a lab school where students observe children and document their growth. University students in the practicum courses plan activities to enhance development in social, emotional, physical, and cognitive skills across the curriculum areas of: math, science, language, writing, social studies, art, music, movement, and dramatic play. Students’ plans must be approved by the lead teachers prior to implementing the plans with the children. Each practicum student will teach a variety of different activities supervised by the classroom teacher. The practicum students and lead teachers work as a team. Students enrolled in Early Childhood Education/ Human Development courses observe children enrolled in the Child Development Center. These students observe via the observation booths or from the Big Room. Human Development students are observing behaviors relevant to class discussions on development. Due to the nature of our courses, students are given priority in the observation booths, but you are welcome to use those facilities when there is a seat available, or you may stand. (We do ask for quiet, as students are trying to hear the children’s language development. We also ask that you avoid wearing perfume or scented products when in the observation booth.)

If you have concerns about a practicum student or observation student, please bring it to the attention of the classroom teacher or director. Do not confront the student directly, as staff are the ones with the responsibility for handling issues involving college students. Please remember that we are a training program, and our college students are still learning. (See Grievance Policy) Please sign the form enclosed in your packet that states you understand we are a lab school.

**F. Visual Media Activities:** Two purposes of the Child Development Center are to provide practicum students “hands on” experiences with children and to provide faculty with labs for research purposes. In conjunction with these purposes videos are made of the students working with young children. These videos or pictures are used primarily for evaluation of the college students’ interactions with the children. Videos and photographs may also be used as teaching aids in the college classroom. If children are videoed or photographed as a part of a research study, parents will be informed in advance and participation is completely voluntary for both child and parent. Parents will be asked to sign an additional form granting permission for each research project. Children pictures are also featured on our web page and social media

postings. No names are shared on public sites. The center requests that parents sign a release allowing children to be photographed or videoed.

We do use web cams in the classroom for parents to observe their child in the school environment using “live time”. All parents are screened using the Sex Offender Registry before they are given a pass code to utilize. Only the custodial parent (s) is granted web cam permission. Please do not share your user name or password with others due to our privacy rules. A violation of this permission may result in loss of access to the live video. There is no taping during this time and therefore no video footage for later review.

#### **IV. Parent Involvement**

**A. Parents in the Classroom:** As early childhood professionals, we realize that parents are children’s first and most important teachers. Therefore, you are an important aspect of our program. We would like to invite you to be involved in the Child Development Center at MTSU in a variety of ways. We have an open door policy, so please share your talents.

1. Parents with children in the **Preschool may be interested in working with the class on a special presentation or project** (e.g., your native customs, gardening, cake decorating, etc.). Each month the teachers will provide ways that parents can be involved in the classroom and extend the learning of the child. Your participation in such activities is encouraged and appreciated. Please see your child’s teacher with ideas. Parents are always invited to observe from the booth.
2. Parents with children in the Infant-Toddler Program are welcome to stay at the center and observe their child from the observation booth. This will help you to better understand your child in relation to others and hopefully will give you some creative ideas for infants, toddlers, and twos. Teachers will share ideas of how parents can participate each month in classroom activities. We do however try to minimize the number of adults in the classroom as young children may be intimidated if there are too many “big people” around. Infant/toddler parents are asked to make contact with the teacher and share how their child is doing that day.

**B. Lines of Communication:** Effective communication involves the joint effort of the director and teachers with the parents and children. We use many techniques to communicate information at the center. Several of these are listed below. We do appreciate any suggestions you may have in strengthening our lines of communication or program as a whole.

1. Parent Orientations inform new parents of policies and information about the program, and returning parents of any changes. A group meeting will be held at the beginning of the fall semester. Individual appointments will be arranged for those who cannot attend.

2. This Family Handbook defines our program philosophy; outlines major policies, gives parent and school responsibilities, and more. All parents, old and new are provided with the current revision of the handbook by looking at our web-site.

3. The CDC Director sends out monthly newsletters that provide information on scheduling updates, meetings, special event notices, new items in the classrooms or playground, and covers topics related to parenting. The Director also will send out emails from time to time reminding parents of upcoming information.

4. "My Days" notes are sent home to infant toddler parents every day the child attends the program. The "My Day" note will inform parents about the child's day with information about diapering, temperament, snack intake and interests as they relate to their child. Typically these are sent home daily and can be found in the child's cubby. The preschool teacher will share information weekly about the child's development.

5. The Parent Bulletin Boards provide information relevant to the labs and parenting. These are located outside the Infant-Toddler and Preschool classrooms.

6. Weekly calendars are sent out by teachers who share daily activity plans and provide updates and notices. These are posted on classroom bulletin boards and sent home in children's cubbies on a weekly basis. We will also share educational articles that will enhance parenting practices.

7. "Owie" and Accident Reports describe how your child got hurt and what we did about the injury (e.g., applied ice). These are sent home when a child has any minor incidents, bumps, or scrapes. Any major accident will warrant a phone call. Reports will be sent by the end of the day when the incident occurred.

8. Remind 101 Text will be utilized to help keep parents informed about what their child is doing at school and any information that is happening at the center. Parents will be added to the list for texts once they have signed the Remind 101 authorization form

Other notes inform parents of special activities or events (e.g. Open House, Family Night, pictures, etc.). These are placed in children's cubbies or sent out as an email notice.

Before sharing any information about your child with other relevant providers, agencies, or other programs, the staff of the CDC will obtain a written consent form from the family. Any screening or test results requiring further assessment may be forwarded to a professional or specialist on request by the parent. All confidential information will be kept in a locked cabinet until access is required.

**C. Observation Booths:** The observation booth is located between the Infant-Toddler

and Preschool classrooms. The observation booth is primarily for Human Development students to do assigned observations. When space permits, the observation booth offers excellent opportunities for parents to gain new perspectives into their developing child. Laughter and chairs bumping together are easily heard in the classroom. Although the children are aware of the booth's existence, please keep conversation and movement inside the booths to a minimum. Also, Human Development students need to be able to hear the children, so please avoid talking in the booth.

**\*PLEASE keep food or drink out of the observation booth and children off the counters. Banging on the observation windows can seem funny but it is alarming to the children in the classroom. Smearing the observation windows with food or sticky fingers makes a yucky mess. Please take all cell phones calls out of the booth.** This is a working environment and unexpected things have occurred that were unpleasant.

The sound system for each classroom allows one to hear the noise of the whole room via earphones. Please treat the equipment with care.

**Note: We ask that parents do not take pictures from the Observation Booth.** Not all children have signed the permission form to be photographed. We have this rule to protect all children.

**D. Lending Library:** *A book bag may be needed for your child to transport books, art work, etc. home each day.* Books for parents of both labs are available for checkout from the classroom teachers. These may be checked out on a weekly basis. The parent books are located in the hallway outside the Observation Booth. Please ask the director for assistance as needed.

We have several different games and books available for the children to check out, too. The games that are outside each classroom are best used with the ages represented in that room. We ask that parents help teach their child to be responsible by returning the books and games promptly and to keep up with all materials that are checked out.

**E. Conferences:** Your child's teacher will be available to conference with you by appointment throughout the semester. Please call the teacher in order to schedule a time convenient for everyone (Infant-Toddler: 898-2895; Preschool: 898-2092). Parents are encouraged to attend teacher-led conferences. Regular conference times will be planned at the end of each semester to discuss your child's progress and any other important topics. Practicum students will participate in these conferences to prepare them for future parent-teacher interactions.

We will make contact with parents at least three times in a formal conference. At the beginning of the semester, your child's teacher or teaching assistant will call you with a list of questions they will need answered. Please share information about your child's interests, approaches to learning, their developmental needs as well as the goals and concerns you may have. This information will help the teachers and their assistants to intentionally plan for the children and the classroom.

**F. Assessments:** Assessment procedures have been put into place and are an important component of the Child Development Center's weekly planning. We utilize the information gained to help us determine how to best work with your child. If the teachers feel there is a developmental delay or special need, we will provide documentation of assessments explanation of concern, suggestions for next steps, and information for resources of diagnostic evaluations that will provide further assessments.

From time to time the Ages and Stages assessment tool will be sent home with child. We ask parents to complete and return ASAP. This is an excellent screening tool that we utilize the first 3 months the child is enrolled in the program.

### **G. Transitioning Children Due to Staff Turnover**

When the program has staff turnover, one of two things must happen. The staff member must give a month's notice and a temporary replacement (after training and background check are done) will be put in the room or the director will work in the room with a temporary office replacement. The job will be posted as soon as the position becomes available and is approved by the Provost and or President. We will try everything possible to make sure there are very few transitions issues with the children. The director maintains a close relationship with families and children so that he or she can step in and help where needed.

**H. Pre-visit and Phase in Days:** All children new to the program are required to come for a pre-visit before the child attends for the first time. A visit is also suggested for returning children especially those moving up to preschool. This visit is important for your child's comfort level, and also meets DHS and NAEYC standards. Phase in Days, your child's pre-visit, are set up by the teacher one week prior to the first regularly scheduled day of school. Children will come as a small group with their parents to meet the teacher. The parents are required to stay the first 30 minutes of the phase in day. Parents are then asked to leave and the teachers will work with the children learning about their classroom. The parents may pick their child up at the regular dismissal time. Your child's teacher will send letters out prior to the beginning of school to inform parents when their phase in day is.

**I. Parent Surveys:** One or more surveys will be conducted throughout the school year. These surveys will help in securing ideas for improvements to the program, etc. Please return any survey to the director unless specified otherwise. Research surveys may be distributed by faculty from the Department of Elementary and Special Education; these surveys are completed on a voluntary basis and will be explained in further detail when necessary.

**J. Special Events:** Throughout the year special events held for families in the Child Development Center will be conducted. Typically these special events will occur in the large playroom (room 111) that we have labeled as the "Big Room". Families and friends can enjoy an informal evening of conversation with other parents, practicum students and CDC staff. Activities are provided for CDC children and their siblings. These events are wonderful opportunities for families to share a "night out" together. We hope you will attend.



**K. CDC Advisory Board:** Parents volunteer to be on this committee. We will meet twice a year, or more if needed. This committee decides on the annual fundraisers, how money collected will be spent, special events for the year, and strategic planning for the future, etc. People from the community will be asked to serve on this board. Issues and concerns of parents will be brought to this group. Some years this group is more active than others, but is always needed and required by DHS and NAEYC.

#### **V. Procedures for Child Abuse Investigations Involving Child Care Agencies**

**A.** All staff and lab students working with CDC children have a legal obligation to report cases of suspected child sexual abuse. As parents, you also have an obligation to report such suspicions. Tennessee state law requires the person suspecting any abuse must report it.

**B.** In Murfreesboro/Rutherford County, suspected abuse is reported to the Department of Children's Services: (615) 217-8900. In many phone books there is an entry, "Child Abuse," but not in our local phone book. You may also call the Tennessee Abuse Hotline at 1-877-237-0004. Once a call is made, an investigation will follow.

**C.** At the appropriate time, or if childcare personnel are suspected perpetrators of abuse, parents will be consulted. The child's best interest is the first consideration.

**D.** We have very "open" classrooms, with observation booths in use and no "hidden places" thanks to the layout of the space and mirrors in the Infant-Toddler room. All staff and practicum students must meet the Tennessee Department of Human Services background check requirements. We have an obligation to see that your children are in a safe environment when attending our center, and we take that obligation very seriously.

#### **VI. Grievance Policy**

The MTSU Child Development Center staff is committed to providing quality services to children and families enrolled in our program. In the event that you find any procedure, policy or action of a staff member, or of MTSU practicum student questionable or objectionable, please be aware of the procedures to follow to address the issue:

A. Talk to the staff person most directly related to the concern or problem. Often problems arise due to misunderstanding, and can be resolved easily by open communication.

B. If you feel your grievance or problem has not been met to your satisfaction, contact the Director for further guidance at 615- 898-2198.

C. If you are not satisfied with the decision of the Director and you wish to take your complaint outside the CDC the following avenues are available:

- Director of the Early Learning Programs on campus, Mrs. Connie Casha, 615-898-5506.
- Dean of the College of Education, Dr. Lana Seivers at 615-898-2874. (to set up an appointment)
- TN Department of Human Services, 1177-B Old Fort Parkway, 615-848-5153 ext. 204 for Judy Andrews, our program evaluator.

It is important that you know your input and opinions are of value to us. We want you to be aware of your rights and procedures for handling issues should they arise.

### **VII. Challenging Behavior Policy**

The MTSU Child Development Center staff understands that young children are developing important social and emotional skills. They are committed to teaching children appropriate ways to interact with others and the environment, and communicate their needs and feelings. Children are respected. In order to facilitate healthy social and emotional development, a warm and nurturing environment is created. Routines with appropriate and reasonable limits are established. Adults model appropriate behavior and use positive words to tell children what they can do. When challenging behaviors exist, children are distracted, redirected, or provided logical and natural consequences. Children are given choices when possible and taught strategies to communicate their needs and desires. When children exhibit severely challenging behaviors, teachers and parents develop a plan for addressing those behaviors. Should teachers and/or parents feel a plan is necessary; the following steps will be followed in accordance with the Department of Education requirements:

1. Teachers will meet with director to come up with an action plan that best meets the needs of the child.
2. Teachers, director of program and director of Early Learning Programs, and parents will meet to go over the plan and make revisions based on collaborative input.
3. Parents will sign off on plan, and determine a date to meet again to reevaluate plan.
4. Teachers will collect data to determine if strategies outlined in the plan are effectively addressing the issue. Parents will inform staff of any changes that could cause a change in the child's behavior or any changes in behavior at home.
5. At date of re-evaluation, the team will decide if the plan needs any revisions. If so, revisions will be made and a follow-up meeting will be scheduled. If progress is being made, the plan will be continued.
6. If it is determined that the Child Developmental Center cannot meet the child's developmental or educational needs and ensure the safety and development of the other children, the family and staff will discuss alternative options for care that better meet the child's developmental and educational needs.