



Middle Tennessee State University

Child Development Center

Family Handbook

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Child Philosophy Statement	4
Statement of Purpose	4
Policy Statements	5
I. General Policies	5
A. Application and Enrollment	5
1. Application	5
2. Enrollment	5
a. Infant-Toddler Program	5
b. Preschool	5
c. Final Enrollment	6
3. Admission requirements	6
4. Tuition	7-8
5. Disenrollment	8
B. Daily Concerns	9
1. After hours number	9
2. Parking	9
3. Daily arrival and departure	9
a. Infant-Toddler Program	9
b. Preschool	10
4. Absences	10
5. Birthdays	10
6. Clothing	10
7. Diapering	11
8. Toilet Training	11
9. Daily Outdoor Play	11
10. CDC Closures	11
11. Toys	11
12. Insurance	12
13. Emergency policy	12
14. Classroom Environment policy	13
15. Biting	13
16. Open door Policy	13
17. Conflict Resolution	14
18. Napping of Tired Child	14
19. No Smoking	14
II. Health Policies	14
A. Health Forms	14
B. Symptoms of Illness	15
C. When to Contact the School	15

D. Outside Play	15
E. Emergency Information	15
F. Medicine	16
III. Promoting Children's Development	16
A. Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum	16
B. Environment/Schedule	17
C. Field Trips	17
D. Teacher's Role	17
E. College Student Involvement	17
F. Visual Media Activities	18
G. Sample Schedules and Themes	18
1. Infant-Toddler Program	18
2. Preschool	19
IV. Parent Involvement	20
A. Parents inside classroom	20
B. Line of Communication	21
C. Volunteering at the CDC	22
D. Observation Booths	22
E. Lending Library	23
F. Conferences	23
G. Transitioning Children Due to Staff Turnover	23
H. Pre-attendance School Visit	23
I. Parent Surveys	23
J. Special Events	24
K. Parent Advisory Committee	24
V. Procedures for child abuse investigations involving childcare agencies	24
VI. Grievance Policy	24
VI. Child Guidance/Challenging Behavior Policy	25

CHILD PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

The Child Development Center 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 through 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 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 each child's progress report under the supervision of the lead teacher, and participate in parent-teacher conferences.

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

Hours of operation: Monday- Friday from 8:00-4:00. Children attend Monday-Thursday from 8:45-4:00 depending on their assigned schedule.

A. Application and Enrollment

1. Application to the Child Development Center is made by completing the form online at www.mtsu.edu/cdc . 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 labs when children are present. The Child Development Center is located at the Fairview Building on the MTSU Campus at 820 Fairview Avenue.

2. Enrollment is determined by eligibility based on active military preference, balancing age of classrooms and placement on the waitlist.

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. Infant/toddler Classroom is composed of six children. 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 those going to kindergarten the following year in the morning and the younger children 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 potty 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. The center will strive to provide an inclusive program including children with special needs.

3. 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.

4. Children who have been attending the Infant-Toddler and Preschool programs are given priority for the next semester in that program unless they are no longer eligible, or are requested to leave by staff. Children of age to transition from Infant-Toddler to Preschool program will be prioritized based on date of original application. 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. All children entering the preschool program must be potty trained.

5. Parents will be notified via telephone or email by the director when there is an opening for their child. Children to be enrolled in Fall semester classes, which begin early September, are generally selected in April and May. Otherwise, openings are filled as they occur. Unless there are unusual circumstances, all children enrolled in Fall are eligible to return in Spring. Intent to Return forms are sent out 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 information will be discussed at that time. If a parent cannot attend this meeting, an individual conference or visit must be made. Appointments are made by calling the director at 615- 898-2198.

b. The parents must complete necessary forms for the child, including but not limited to enrollment forms, immunization and physical examination records, permission slips, etc. Routine health exams must be completed each new school year. **NO CHILD WILL BE ALLOWED TO BEGIN AT OUR CENTER UNTIL ALL FORMS ARE COMPLETE.** This is required by the Tennessee

Department of Human Services and DOE. 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 in. This is a Department of Human Service/DOEs rule.

c. 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.

d. 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.

e. 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.**

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.

f. Children's files are kept for one year after the child is no longer in our facility.

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 materials fee is required and is paid each semester. Families with more than one child enrolled in the program will receive a sibling tuition discount. Current MTSU Students will receive at 13% tuition discount. See the director for more information.

Tuition is:

Preschool: \$400 a semester then include a yearly \$25 non-refundable materials fee

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

MTSU Students Discount:

Preschool: \$348 a semester then include a yearly \$25 non-refundable materials fee

Infant/Toddler: \$217.50 a semester then include a yearly \$25 non-refundable materials fee

5. Disenrollment:

- A. A child may no longer be enrolled if the parents decides 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 spring semester and parents may notify of their intent to return for the fall.
- B. If a parent wishes to disenroll their child(ren) from the program during the semester, we ask for a two week notice. Tuition will be prorated for the remainder of the semester.
- C. A child may no longer be enrolled in the program if they are of age to begin kindergarten.
 - a. Children over the age of 7 as of August 15th
- D. Withdraw from program may also come from failure to meet the following items of the program and at that time a family will be asked to withdraw from the program. Future re-enrollment or enrollment of other children will depend on the leadership teams decision
 - a. Failure to pay tuition
 - b. Failure to pick up child on time on a consistent basis
 - i. Warning will be given for failure to pick up on time with late pick up fee of \$1.00 a minute charged per child
 - c. Failure to cooperate with the programming, policies and procedures of the center
 - d. A child may no longer be enrolled in the program if their immunization records are not kept up to date in a timely manner.

- e. A child may be no longer enrolled if their behavior is considered challenging and a plan has been put into place to work with the child but it does not work.

B. Daily Concerns

1. After hours number: Please call the center at 615-898-2198 and leave a message if trying to reach the center after hours. The director will be notified of any messages via email and will handle concerns on a need to basis.

2. 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. A temporary permit for one semester only is good for the hours your child is enrolled in our center. This permit allows you to park in the Fairview lot and cost \$25.

For safety of all children, please do not leave your vehicle idling in the parking lot or u-shape driveway. We also ask that you never leave a child unattended in your vehicle when dropping off inside the building.

3. Daily arrival and departure: **All Parents:** Please use the portico on the Fairview Ave. side of the Fairview building for dropping off and picking up your child. **Always** transfer your child directly to CDC staff or a practicum student. Let us know your child is present by signing in on the **Tadpoles App** via the Ipad. 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. You will then be buzzed into the school by the Director who will admit you into the locked door.

If someone other than your child's regular means of transportation will be picking up the child, please indicate on the Tadpoles App. If this must be a last-minute arrangement, call the director at 615-898-2198. It is our policy to discharge a child only to a person designated by the parents on the Emergency Form. Anyone unfamiliar to staff will be asked for I.D. All children by law **must leave in a car seat appropriate for their height and weight according to the state law and no children will be released to an individual who appears to be impaired in some way.**

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 1:15-3:45 pm either on Monday/Wednesday afternoon or Tuesday/Thursday afternoon depending on their age. Children will be admitted and dismissed at

their specified laboratory time. **Children are dismissed directly from the classroom into the hallway to a parent or caregiver.**

- a. **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 will be locked daily at 4:00. Children are usually dismissed at the gate near the Fairview door. If it is inclement weather, the preschool teacher will walk children to their car from the Fairview Ave. Portico.
- b. **Late drop off and early pick up:** Please limit these times that children are dropped off late or picked up early. The program hours are short and we try to accomplish a lot of activities in that amount of time. If you will be dropping off late or picking up early, please notify the director as soon as possible so arrangements can be made.

All parents must sign their child into the Center, and sign out when child is picked up. There is a \$1 a minute **late fee** for all families who do not pick up their child on time. **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.

4. Absences: Please call the lab teacher or director (615-898-2198) if your child cannot attend school or mark your child absent on the Tadpoles App. This will help us to know about numbers of children for the daily activities. Refer to the health policies for suggestions on attendance when sick (See II. B & C).

5. Birthdays: These are special days the children enjoy sharing with their school friends. Elaborate celebrations at school are discouraged, but parents are permitted to provide a store bought celebration snack. 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 or hard pretzels can be served. Please schedule with your child's teacher one week in advance.

6. 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 of 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.

7. **For children still in diapers**, the parent must provide the disposable diapers and wipes 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.

8. 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.

9. Daily outdoor play is a vital part of our curriculum. 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 child's cubby.

10. CDC Closures: The center may need to open late or close early due to staffing and inclement weather or if the University is closed, our center will be closed. All other times, we will make the decision based on the advisement of the University, Rutherford County, the State of Tennessee and our management team. Parents are asked to use their discretion regarding all safety issues if our center is open and they chose to bring their child. **In case of closure, the director will email or use the Tadpoles App concerning if we are open or not.**

11. Toys: Please prohibit your child from bringing his/her own toys to the center unless requested for a special activity. 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.

12. 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 and Hartford. See the director if additional information is needed.

13. Emergency policy: Special consideration has been given to safety procedures in the event of fire or a natural disaster. Fire drills are done monthly. 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. Other emergencies will require we follow MTSU directions. 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. Incident 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.

14. Classroom environment policy: We believe in showing respect to young children. We do not use humiliation, ridicule, verbal abuse, sarcasm or physical punishment to discipline your child. Our goal is to help your child learn self-control, and self-management skills. We will do the following things in order to accomplish this goal and follow the pyramid model framework:

a. Build relationships by creating 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. Provide choices to promote independence
- j. Be as flexible as possible
- k. <https://challengingbehavior.org/pyramid-model/overview/basics/>

15. Biting: Young children experiment with biting and other aggressive behaviors for several reasons, most of which are developmentally appropriate. Teething, sensory exploration, experimenting with cause and effect, imitating, emerging autonomy, need for attention, holding on or letting go and expressing feelings such as frustration, anger, tension, anxiety, or excitement can be reasons for such behavior. The following outlines our procedure for dealing with biting incidents:

1. Immediate attention/ first aid will be given to the child who has been bitten. Ice will be put on the bite, or if the skin is broken the bite will be washed with soap and water.
2. The biting incident will be reported on the standard incident report form and both families will be informed personally and privately the same day. The names of the children are kept confidential.
3. When ongoing biting is experienced in a classroom, a plan will be developed in collaboration with the family outlining specific strategies to address the behavior.
4. After the plan is developed a letter will be sent home informing all families of the behavior and strategies that are in place to address the behavior.
5. The teacher and administrators will be available to answer any questions, discuss any concerns or share current resources on biting.
6. Aligning with the mission of our program, staff will support both the child and family through this phase of development.

16. Open Door Policy – Families are welcome to come to the center at any time when their child is in the program. We offer observation booths to observe your child in the classroom. While in the observation booth we ask that you do not

take any pictures or videos and you keep a quiet voice to not disrupt the classroom.

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.

17. Conflict resolution between families and staff- If a situation is to arise when a family does not agree with a staff member, families are encouraged to first speak to the staff member. If families do not feel comfortable speaking to the staff member or they already have, they may contact the center director for assistance with working out the situation. If they director is not able to meet the needs of the family and staff, both parties are able to contact the Early Learning Programs Director for assistance with the matter. Both the center director and Early Learning Programs Director will work on mediation between the two parties.

18. If a child should fall asleep while in our program, they will be placed on their back on a mat and will be checked every 15 minutes.

19. MTSU Child Development Center is a Smoking Free Facility. No smoking or vaping is permitted on the premises.

II. Health Policies

A. Health Forms: Each child is required to have the series of immunizations recommended by the Tennessee Department of Human Services and DOE. Prior to starting school, the **health form** provided by the **child's physician listing immunizations and an initial physical upon entrance to the program must be in your child's folder. This form must be signed by your family physician or medical provider.** Forms are reviewed quarterly to make sure the child is up-to-date on shots, etc.

B. Please take all precautions and follow all guidelines to ensure a healthy childcare environment. ALL STAFF and CHILDREN with ANY signs of illness will be asked to stay at home including, but not limited to:

- a. Fever 100.1 or higher
- b. Cough
- c. Sore throat
- d. Rash
- e. Green mucus

- f. Eye infection
- g. Diarrhea (bowl movement not contained in a diaper)
 - *After 2 episodes of diarrhea, a guardian will be notified. After 3 episodes of diarrhea a child will be sent home from care*
- h. Vomiting (at least 2 episodes of projectile vomiting and a child will be sent home from care)
- i. [CDC COVID 19 Symptoms](#): Any child who exhibits symptoms will be separated from others until a parent can arrive.

If a child becomes **ill while at school**:

- An adult on the emergency list will be called to come as soon as possible to pick the child up. Office staff and Director can help make these calls for you.
- All instances of a child being sent home for illness will first be assessed by the leadership team.

*Each child will be checked with a Wellness Check (state guidelines) at drop off; 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 be sent to the office of the director, where other individuals will not be exposed, and parents are contacted immediately to pick up the sick child.

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.

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.

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. Medicine: 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 labeled with your child's name) or an epi pen in case of an allergic reaction (you would need to supply the epi pen and instructions). 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.

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. All medication is kept in a secured medical lock box out of reach of children.

II. Promoting Children's Development:

The MTSU Child Development Center is designed to promote the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of the child through a developmentally appropriate, nurturing environment.

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 children will 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 a calendar of concepts which are familiar and meaningful to the children, thereby providing relevant learning. (We use the Revised Tennessee Early Developmental Standards as a basis. These were revised August 2012, by the Tennessee Board of Education. We also use Creative Curriculum as a basis for our curriculum, but do many alterations and additions to the suggested activities.)

As part of our curriculum, we are required by the state of Tennessee to use a personal safety curriculum for children 3-5 years of age, our center uses the Second Step Curriculum. It teaches children about their feelings, friendships and personal safety. 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 experience 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.**

C. Field Trips: Because young children learn best through experience, special visitors may be included as part of the curriculum. Due to our short day and the stringent guidelines regarding transportation, field trips are very rare. Should one be planned, parents will be informed and asked to sign a permission form.

D. Teacher's Role: Teachers of young children serve as guides and facilitators, preparing the environment to provide stimulating and challenging materials and activities. As in any good classroom, teachers are also learners, observing children to see what is understood, and offering additional challenges to push thinking further. Effective teachers constantly monitor and adjust activities during the course of a lesson or an activity.

Due to our licensing and accreditation requirements, only the classroom teacher or practicum students (under supervision of the classroom teacher) may discipline or reprimand children during the school session. A parent may reprimand or discipline his/her own child in the classroom, but only if within our guidelines (i.e. **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 if a parent wished to use spanking.** However, if a parent wished to request a 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."**

If you are concerned about the behavior of a child in one of our programs, please discuss it with the child's teacher and feel free to bring the matter to the attention of the director. We want all children to find the CDC a positive place.

E. College Students' Involvement in the CDC Setting: College students in the practicum courses plan activities to enhance development in social, emotional, physical, and cognitive skills across the curriculum: math, science, language, social studies, art, music, movement, and dramatic play. Students' plans must be approved by the lead teachers prior to using the plans with the children. Each practicum student will teach a variety of different activities supervised by

the classroom teacher. The student teachers and lead teachers work as a team. As part of the team, student teachers participate in contributing to class books, preparing bulletin boards, participating in parent-teacher conferences, and attending workshops/seminars. 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 and a class project.

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 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)

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, the center requests that parents sign a release allowing children to be photographed or videotaped. These videos or pictures are used primarily for evaluation of the college students' interactions with the children. Tapes and photographs may also be used as teaching aids in the college classroom. If children are taped 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.

G. Sample Schedules and Themes: These are samples and actual classes may differ.

1. Infant-Toddler Program

Daily Schedule

Center Time

Clean-up

Small group activity

Music and Movement

Wash hands/clean up

Outdoor Play

Discovery Time/Book time

b. Sample concepts for fall

All about me

Colors

Shapes
Alphabet
Number
Transportation
Fall Fun
Opposites (Big & Little; Push & Pull)
Forrest

Sample concepts for spring:

Snow
Community Helpers
Spring fun
Plants
Caterpillars to Butterflies

2. Preschool Program

Daily schedule (Exact time spent on each activity may vary)

Exploration
Large Group
Centers
Small Group/ Centers
Music and Movement
Outside

Fall concepts

Getting to Know You
Alphabet
Numbers
Shapes
Colors
Community Helpers

Spring concepts

Artic
Pond
Spring animals
Space
Ocean
Transportation

IV. Parent Involvement

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.

A. Parents Inside the classroom

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.). Your participation in such activities is encouraged and appreciated. Please see your child's teacher with ideas. Due to the number of adults already in the classroom, we request parents leave the classroom (you are welcome to use the observation booth) unless needed by your child or assisting with a special project.

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. If you want to participate in the lab for a special occasion, your child's teacher will arrange a schedule of participation with you on an individual basis. Since we have so many adults already in the classroom, our policy is that a parent may be in the classroom if needed by the child, but if your child is doing well, please step out. Children can be intimidated if there are too many "big people" around.

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 Advisory meetings are held throughout the year to discuss what is happening in the classrooms and at the center. All parents are encouraged to attend these meetings and share their ideas at that time. We ask that children do not attend these meetings since we do not have someone to watch the children and we may discuss matters that are not appropriate for young children to hear.

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 on-line.

3. The CDC Newsletter/Calendar provides information on scheduling updates, meetings, special event notices, new items in the classrooms or playground, and covers a topics related to parenting. The Director also will send out notifications on the Tadpoles App from time to time reminding parents of upcoming information. All children receive a daily report of what was on the lesson plan for the day and any other information needed to be shared.

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

5. Weekly Lesson Plans preview daily activity plans and provide updates and notices. These are posted on bulletin boards in each classroom.

6. Incident Reports describe how your child got hurt and what we did about the injury (e.g., applied ice). These are sent home about minor incidents, bumps, scrapes. Any major accident will warrant a phone call!

7. Other notes inform parents of special activities or events (e.g. Open House, Family Night, pictures, etc.). These are placed in children's cubbies and sent via the Tadpoles App.

8. Before sharing 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.

9. 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.

10. Please share with your child's teacher information about your child's interests, approaches to learning, and the child's developmental needs. We want to learn what your concerns and goals for your child are, so please share that with the teachers.

C. Volunteering at the CDC- We often have opportunities throughout the school year that we need families involved in the program through volunteering. When we ask for volunteers, please understand that volunteer opportunities are open to all and volunteers will be selected in unbiased ways. Paperwork for the university is completed before volunteer work begins. Please read your classroom newsletter or the director's email for information about volunteer opportunities.

D. Observation Booths: 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 do not bring food or drink into the observation booths. Also, please do not allow young children or infants sit or stand on the counters or bang on the observation windows. We do not permit cell phones in the booth or taking pictures of the children in the classroom.**

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

E. Lending Library: In the hallway is a "little free library" where children are encouraged to check out books. They can either keep the book or return it and select another book.

Books for parents of both classrooms are also available for checkout from the classroom teachers. These may be checked out on a weekly basis. Please ask the director for assistance as needed.

We ask that you help teach your child to be responsible by returning the books promptly.

F. 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). Both parents are encouraged to attend 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.

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-attendance school visit: All parents of new children will be contacted by their child's teacher and requested to bring the child for a visit before the child attends for the first time. A visit is also suggested for returning children—please check with your child's teacher about a good time to meet. A visit is intended to be short, we request you stay with your child as we will not yet be set up to care for your child. This visit is important for your child's comfort level, and also to meet DHS/DOE and NAEYC standards. Meet and Greet Days are set up by the teacher prior to the first day of school so that children may come as a group with their parent to meet the teacher.

I. Parent Surveys: One or more surveys will be conducted throughout the school year. These surveys may 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: The four special events are held for families in the Child Development Center throughout the year. Make-n-take days takes place during the Fall and spring semester and Family Nights/Potlucks takes place during both semesters. On these special nights, we use the large "Big Room" in the Fairview building for friends and family to 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. Parent Advisory Board: Parents volunteer to be on this committee. We will meet twice a year, or more if needed. 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/DOE and NAEYC.

V. Procedures for Child Abuse Investigations Involving Child Care Agencies

A. Teachers have a legal obligation to report cases of suspected child abuse. As parents, you also have an obligation to report such suspicions. Tennessee state law now says that the person suspecting the 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/DOE 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 you may reach out to the Director of the Early Learning Programs: 615-898-5506

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.

Child Guidance

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.

We adhere to the behavior management and guidance requirements of the Department of Human Services. They are as follows:

- Caregivers must consider children's attention spans and skills so that developmentally inappropriate behavior is not expected.
- Discipline must be reasonable, appropriate, and in terms the children can understand.
- Praise and encouragement of good behavior must be used instead of focusing upon unacceptable behavior only.
- Punishment that is shaming, humiliating, frightening or injurious to children is abusive and must not be used.
- Punishment must not be related to food, rest or toileting.
- Spanking or any other type of corporal punishment is prohibited. ("Corporal punishment" is the infliction of bodily pain as a penalty for behavior disapproved by the punisher).

When challenging behaviors exist, children are distracted, redirected, or provided with 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 Human Services requirements:

1. Teachers will meet with the director to discuss concerns of a child's behaviors. The Behavior Specialist on the Pyramid Model Leadership Team will be notified and kept informed about the concerns and plans to be developed.
2. Teachers will collect data using the Behavior Incident Report (BIR) forms.
3. Teachers and director will meet to discuss data.
4. Teachers, director, and parents will meet to go over data from observations and discuss a plan on how to work on behaviors. The director may suggest additional resources to the family to support the needs of the child and family outside of the classroom.
5. Parents will sign off on plan and determine a date to meet again to reevaluate plan.
6. Teachers will continue to 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.
7. At the 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.
8. Teachers, director, and parents will continue to have follow up meetings to discuss behavior plan.
9. If the behavior is not resolved and the child's behavior is impacting the safety and/or learning of other children enrolled, the director will request the family to withdraw the child from the program.