Welcome to WIU Infant and Preschool Center! We have an outstanding program for young children and we are happy that you have chosen to be a part of it. As a student employee, you are a valuable member of our school community. By reading this handbook you will become acquainted with the center and our philosophy. It will also provide information you will need to meet your responsibilities as a student employee.

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History, Personnel and Organization

The WIU Infant and Preschool Center was established in 1977. Operated by the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, it serves as a lab-training site for college students. Approximately 500 students per semester utilize the center for observation and direct contact with the children.

The center has a Faculty Director who serves as a liaison between the chairperson of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and the center employees. The center’s staff consists of a Director, a Head Teacher in the Infant & Toddler room, a Head Teacher in the Preschool room, and three teachers. The center also employs a secretary and cook. Teaching staff and student employees are assigned to the room that best suits their abilities and experience.

The center is comprised of two rooms. The infant and toddler room is in Horrabin 15 and has twelve infant and toddlers that range in age from six weeks through two years. There are three full time teachers in this room. The preschool room is in Horrabin 17 and has twenty children ranging in age from three years to kindergarten. There are three full time teachers in the preschool room.

Center Beliefs and their Rationales

All parents and children will be treated with respect, dignity, and courtesy at all times.

Parents and their children are our clients. Each family comes to us with a wide variety of experiences and beliefs. We must respect their ideas and do all we can to meet their needs. All children have special, unique qualities that must be respected. Our job is to help them be comfortable with themselves and their environment.

Children’s, as well as adults’, rights to privacy must be respected. It is important to keep all information learned about specific children and families completely confidential.

We must all work together daily and must treat our coworkers fairly, honestly, and respectfully. The atmosphere of the classroom is determined, in part, by the attitudes and behaviors of the adults who work there. When tensions arise, they must be dealt with as quickly and discretely as possible. Any questions that arise should be directed to and addressed by center staff.

Our working environment is our home-away-from-home and we must work to keep it clean and pleasant. Every precaution should be taken to minimize the spread of germs by keeping toys, equipment, and furniture clean. Children learn to respect others' property as they learn to care for their environment in developmentally appropriate ways.
Terms and Conditions of Employment

Personnel Records
Tax forms must be signed in the Payroll Office in Sherman Hall, immediately upon being hired.

Fingerprint check must be obtained at a Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) approved facility before employment begins. The center secretary will provide you with information as to when and where the fingerprinting will take place.

The following documents are to be submitted before the starting date of employment:
- Proof of physical examination obtained within the past 60 days (expense of examination to be paid by employee). This must be updated every two years.
- Negative result of tuberculin skin test, by the Mantoux Method, (expense to be paid by employee).
- Copy of official university transcript (updated yearly; may be downloaded from STARS).
- Three completed reference forms, provided by the center.
- Department of Children and Family Services employment forms completed (including personal information, child abuse form, background inquiry, etc.).
- Complete DCFS Mandated Reporter online training and print certificate of completion to put in personnel file. (https://www.dcfstraining.org/manrep/index.jsp)

Confidentiality
It is important to keep all information you learn about specific children and families completely confidential. You should discuss any of your observations or experiences with the Director and Lead Teachers privately. Violation of confidentiality may be grounds for dismissal.

If a parent asks you a question, you are to refer her or him to the appropriate person. If you notice something about a child that you think parents should know, tell a teacher and she or he will communicate that information to parents.

Termination of Employment
The center director must be notified at least one week in advance should you decide to resign.

If your work is unsatisfactory or if other conditions make continued employment inadvisable, there will be a three-step process followed. First, you will be given verbal instructions by the director as to the changes that need to be made. Second, a written reprimand will be given to you. If these attempts fail, your employment will be terminated.

Responsibilities
Student employees are required to attend a mandatory meeting held at the beginning of the Fall semester and at various other times throughout the year.

The teachers and the children in the center rely on your presence in the classroom. If you are unable to work at your appointed time, please call the center as soon as possible, 298 - 1250. It
is your responsibility to find a replacement for your shift, if possible. A list of the other student workers will be available to you.

What to Wear

As employees of a university laboratory-training site, professional dress is expected. Dress has an impact on the impression we make to parents and visitors. If parents are to feel comfortable leaving their children in our care, we must be sensitive to appearances. Those who work with young children need to dress in a way that facilitates active engagement in a variety of activities. Getting down on the floor, bending and reaching, and working with messy materials are daily occurrences. Because of this, we encourage staff to dress in comfortable clothing that is easily cleaned.

Acceptable casual clothing:
- jeans in good condition, without holes or fraying hems
- shorts which come to within about four inches of the top of the knee and are in good condition
- T-shirts in good condition, not too tight or cropped, with no inappropriate words or symbols.

Unacceptable clothing:
- shorts shorter than described above
- revealing clothing of any kind, including halter-tops, spaghetti straps, low cut tank tops or other tops (staff should pay attention to how they look when bending over, since it is very often necessary in the classroom)
- revealing underwear that shows above the waistline of pants, e.g., thongs
- any clothing which exposes the midriff
- sweat pants
- excessively short skirts
- clothing with cigarette or alcohol advertisements

In addition to the above restrictions, staff members are required to keep fingernails trimmed and jewelry on hands to a minimum for sanitary purposes. Tattoos should be covered while at work, and pierced body jewelry, other than earrings should be removed or covered. Outdoor play occurs almost daily and student employees should be prepared to go outside with the children. We need to model appropriate outdoor clothing; so boots, if needed, hats/hoods, gloves/mittens, and a heavy coat are expected
 Procedures for Reporting Child Abuse

Who Reports
As student employees, you are under the supervision of the staff. We are required by law to report child abuse and neglect. We need only suspect child abuse or neglect to make a report. If for any reason you feel that a child is being abused or neglected, you must immediately report the instance to the teacher with whom you are working. The teacher may ask you to make a written report of what you saw or heard from the child, which will be kept on file. The center staff will determine if a call to DCFS should be made. Illinois Department of Children and Family Services is responsible for determining if the abuse report is unfounded or indicated. All persons who are mandated to report suspected abuse and neglect are presumed to be acting in good faith. Thus, they are immune from legal liability as a result of a report.

The Procedures We Follow
A written report is made which includes specific details, date, time, and the name of the teacher making the observation. This information is kept private but can be shared with the caseworker that takes the call. We must also send written confirmation of the call to the appropriate DCFS field office within 48 hours.

Help Available
We have many family and individual counselors at our disposal, within the university and community, and we will do what we can to help the family in crisis by making referrals to the appropriate agencies.

At all times, if you have questions or concerns, ask a teacher, the director or the faculty director.

Job Expectations and Requirements

UPON YOUR ARRIVAL TO WORK, IMMEDIATELY WASH YOUR HANDS, WITH SOAP, FOLLOWING POSTED PROCEDURES. Before you leave, for your health, wash your hands again.

Absences
- For pre-arranged absences due to course work, conferences or study groups, please email or speak to the Director about the absence in advance.
- Plan ahead and find someone to cover your shift during your absence.
- In cases of emergency, call and send an e-mail to the center about your absence.
Children’s Arrivals and Departures

- Be aware of families’ individual needs and routines. You may be able to help by assisting the children with hanging up coats and putting away belongings in their lockers, washing their hands or engaging them in an activity.
- Give each child and family member a warm and sincere welcome; this helps children to begin the day feeling secure. **Remember you can never be too considerate or polite to parents!**

Visitors

- Let parents, official visitors, and student observers know they are welcome at the center. Show them how to operate the observation booth microphone controls if they aren’t familiar with the procedure.
- Draw the teacher’s attention to all classroom or playground visitors. The teachers will know to who each child is to be released.

Toileting

- As you assist children who need help, you must wear latex gloves. Children must flush the stool and wash hands after toileting. In case of accidents, children’s extra clothes are in their locker. A collection of extra clothes is available if the child does not have any extra. Soiled clothes are placed in plastic bags and placed in the child’s locker to be taken home. Please let the teacher know they are there, so that they can be sent home. A discreet note should be placed on the child’s locker to inform the parent of soiled clothes. Wash your hands after assisting a child with toileting or change of clothes.
- Diapers are changed as often as needed. **You must follow posted diapering procedures.** You will need to record each change on the daily charts. You must wear gloves when changing diapers or soiled clothes. Always wash hands and sanitize the changing pad after each diaper change.

Children’s Hygiene

- Upon arrival, children must wash their hands with soap, before they begin their play. In the infant and toddler room the child’s hands may be washed with a washcloth. In the infant/toddler room, at the end of the day, make sure children have dry diapers and have hands and faces washed.
- After touching and playing with the center’s pets, playing in the water table, and after playing in sand or soil, teachers and children must wash their hands with soap and water.
- Help children keep their noses wiped. Wash your hands and the child’s immediately after wiping the child’s nose.
- Keep children’s shoes tied. Help to keep children looking tidy, e.g. pants up, zippers zipped, faces clean, hair combed.

Medication

Only the designated teacher may administer medication.
Active Involvement

- When children are making choices among the centers and materials available in the classroom, gym, or on the playground, you are to be monitoring the area to insure children’s safety. You are responsible, at all times, for children under your supervision.
- **You should be involved** with individual or small groups of children in ways that support their play and exploration, while not dominating or controlling it. Keep in mind that children learn from trial and error. When things don’t go as they planned, they will learn by trying again.
- Respect individual characteristics and abilities of each child as you respond to his or her needs, desires, and messages. Be aware of the various types of communication that children use to relay a message (verbal as well as body language). You are there for the children, and there is no place for favoritism. Rarely is it appropriate for you to be standing and doing nothing.

The center has few rules, but the rules in place are necessary for the safety of the children.

**In the classroom**
- We walk inside. Running is for outdoors or in the gym.
- We use inside voices in the building.
- Children are not allowed to stand on chairs, tables, shelves, etc.
- Only one child is allowed in the bathroom at a time.
- Rules are expressed in positive statements, for example, “feet belong on the floor,” “chairs are for sitting in,”

**On the playground**
The safety of the children is your first priority; they require all your attention. Talking with other students is to be reserved until after work. Children need to be closely supervised, at all times while on the playground. There is the potential for major accidents to occur if proper safety precautions are not taken. Place yourselves where the children are playing and continue to assess the areas of the playground where you are most needed. Around the swings, pay close attention to the infants and toddlers, as they have not learned to avoid the moving swings. Children’s judgment is not always the best and we must help them build good judgment. A rule of thumb is that if it looks dangerous to you, it probably should be stopped. If you are not familiar with a certain child, ask his/her teachers about his/her abilities on the playground (e.g., is this child able to go down the slide on his/her own?).
- Children are not permitted to stand on swings, walk up slides, jump off high places or stand on bike seats.
- Children are required to check with a teacher before going inside for a drink or to use the restrooms so that teachers always know where children are. If there are several adults outside, one should accompany the child inside.
- Children are not allowed to throw rocks or put them on the slide.
- Children are allowed to dig in the rock areas and the sandbox, only. Holes dug indiscriminately are hidden places where children and adults can turn an ankle.
- Sand belongs in the sandbox and rocks in the rock areas. The sandbox must be covered when not in use.
Wheeled riding toys are to be kept on the sidewalks.

**Injuries**

*Report any injury to the head teacher immediately.* Any time a child is injured or hurt, an accident report must be completed on the forms located in each room. These are kept on file and the teacher informs parents.

**Time Cards**

You will be paid Bi-weekly. You are responsible for filling out your time card on STARS by Friday at 5:00 p.m. each pay period. Please make this a priority! We want you to get paid for the hours you work here at the center. As you leave for the day, you may utilize the computer in the center to record your hours. This is especially important before Breaks.

**BIOS/Picture**

Please fill out the information form, sharing your BIO with us so we can post on our website for our families. Don’t forget to let us take your picture so we can post it as well. Thanks.
Lunch and Snacks

- Children must wash their hands before and after they eat, at the sink if they are able or with an individual washcloth.
- Tables and high chairs must be cleaned with a sanitizing solution of disinfectant and water before the children sit down to eat and after they eat.
- Children are encouraged to take some of everything and try it. The children may get second helpings of food even if they have not tried everything on their plate. Removal of food or refusal of food may not be used as a source of punishment.
- Students sit with the children at the tables or help the teacher as needed. Parent’s pay for their child’s food and students should not eat unless a teacher offers. Help make mealtime a pleasant time for the children. Avoid constant negative correction.

In the Infant and Toddler Room:

- Food is put on the plates before the children sit down at the table to avoid unnecessary waiting.
- The children are encouraged to feed themselves, whether by spoon or with their fingers, but if they need help, it should be given.
- Keep in mind that infants’ and toddlers’ communication skills are emerging. Offer more food to each child periodically. Respond to children’s verbal and nonverbal cues.
- Teachers or student workers pick up children’s plates, cups, and spoons, when children are finished. The older children wash their hands and face at the sink and the younger children are washed with a cloth.
- Infants each have individual feeding schedules. Please check with the teachers before offering a bottle or food. Immediately record consumption on an infant’s daily chart.
- All formula and baby food is labeled with the child’s name. You must be sure children consume only their own food. Before discarding left over baby food or formula, please check with the teachers.

In the Preschool Room:

- Children may help to clean the tables before snack and lunch. Children are encouraged to pass out napkins, cups, etc.
- Snack is put out on the table and the children may serve themselves whenever they feel hungry. It is left out about half an hour and each child is given ample time to come and eat if they choose.
- Lunch is served family style and children serve themselves to the extent that they are able.
- Mealtime is an excellent time for learning. Discuss kinds of foods, where they come from, how they are prepared, different tastes, textures, and colors. Also, make it a time to learn more about each other.
- Appropriate table manners should be demonstrated and the children should be encouraged to do the same. (Food should be kept on their plates, they must not bother children sitting next to them, they should use their spoon or fork, etc.)
- If a spill occurs during the meal, encourage children to get paper towels or a sponge and clean it up, with your assistance as needed.
Nap Time

- The children are taken to the restroom or diapers changed immediately before naptime. One adult is needed in the restroom area to assist the children in hand washing, etc. Following the use of the restroom, children go directly to their cots and remove their shoes and socks. Offer assistance if needed. In compliance with state regulations, the cots have been arranged far enough apart to avoid spread of germs and to avoid conversation and play during naptime.

- Children bring blankets, pillow and stuffed toys from home to sleep with. Hard plastic toys, trucks, and action figures are not considered appropriate sleep toys.

- Some children will want to talk to you during naptime. Let them know that it is time to rest and you would like to listen to what they have to say after naptime. Children should be encouraged to quiet themselves down and go to sleep on their own. Some children may need to have backs rubbed.

- Infants are on their own individual schedules. We attempt to keep these consistent with what they have at home. Check with the teachers regarding this.

- Cribs are sanitized and sheets changed twice a week, or more often if needed. Cots are sanitized and sheets changed once a week, or more often if needed. Each crib and cot is clearly marked with the child’s name. No two children may share a cot or crib unless the sheets are changed and the bed is sanitized between uses.

- Once the children are asleep or quieted, teachers may assign tasks for you to complete, but these tasks are secondary to children’s needs. You must be responsive to the children’s needs during this time, as this is time for the center staff to confer and plan.

Cleaning

A custodian cleans our rooms nightly, but we need to provide day-to-day straightening up and cleaning. It is everyone’s responsibility to share in the cleaning and maintenance of the classrooms. If you notice things such as no paper towels or toilet paper, light bulbs burned out, or areas that have not been cleaned, please notify the director/assistant director as soon as possible. The teachers in each classroom may assign certain maintenance duties to you.

Visits by the Health Department, Fire Marshall, and the Department of Children and Family Services officials are unannounced. We need to assure that our center is clean, safe, and meets regulations at all times. The infant and toddler room needs extra cleaning by staff because at this younger age children are very oral and put everything in their mouths. This chewing is to be expected as a normal part of their development. If the item the child has chosen to chew on is inappropriate, replace it with something that is appropriate. **Toys that have been in a child’s mouth should be placed in a designated tub to be sanitized at a convenient time, at least twice a day.** All toys and equipment in the room must be wiped down or washed with bleach water solution at least twice a week.
**Phone Calls**

The telephone in the office is for center business. You are not to make or receive calls on it. Do not answer it unless a staff member asks you to do so. Answer it by saying, “Hello. This is the WIU Infant and Preschool Center. How may I help you?” Write down any messages immediately and include date, time, and your name.

**While you are working at the center, personal cell phones must be turned off and put in the locker, your purse or book bags.** Please talk to the teachers in case of emergency.

Our knowledge of child development helps us to understand that we have a significant influence on children’s behavior. Children use us as models for their speech, for their nurturing behaviors, and for interpersonal skills. We may not feel they are listening, as their attention may be focused elsewhere, but they maintain close watch on our interactions with adults and other children. Children are influenced by the sound of our voices, by what we say, by our facial expression or body language, and even the clothes we wear.

**Strategies for Promoting Positive Behaviors**

There are an infinite number of ways to promote positive behavior in the classroom. Remember that the teachers you are working with are highly qualified and experienced. They are following well thought out and developmentally appropriate practices. Please follow their lead; consistency is extremely important. It is imperative that everyone who comes in contact with the children in the center knows and follows the same rules and procedures. Classroom rules are posted in each of the classrooms. This consistency among caregivers provides security to the children and helps them feel comfortable in the center environment.

For children of any age, prevention of problem behaviors is the best approach. This requires all adults to be alert to potential problems and make adjustments in the environment as needed. On rare occasions, a child may need to be removed from the group (“time-out”). **Use of time-out is limited to the teachers. Student employees are not permitted to give a child time-out.** If redirection and explanations have not solved a problem, seek the assistance of a teacher. Physical punishment of children is never allowed. Calling children names, belittling them, grabbing, pulling, or any use of intimidation will not be tolerated. Study after study has shown that spanking, yelling, nagging and empty threats do not change a child’s behavior. Any of these behaviors are grounds for immediate termination of employment.

**Guidance**

**Anticipate what is normal for this stage of development:** remain current on everything you can about the age level with which you work. Our expectations for the child must be age, developmentally, and culturally appropriate.
Reduce opportunities for problem behaviors: provide duplicates of toys to reduce fighting over toys, minimize situations that you know may cause friction between children. Many times misbehavior occurs when children are bored and cannot focus on something to do. Our job is to be watchful for this and help children get involved in something before a problem occurs.

Remember that young children cannot delay gratification of needs in the way that adults often do: physical and emotional needs are primary for young children and need to be responded to promptly.

Avoid overtiring or over stimulating children or placing them in fear-producing circumstances: be alert to causes and signs of undue stress in children’s behavior and report your observations to the classroom teacher.

Do not expect children to move quickly from one activity to another without a transition or adjustment period: watch for the teacher’s lead and help this time to be as stress-free as possible.

Permit age-appropriate choices: offer only when you are prepared to give a choice. This means that directions should not be worded as questions and that directions should not be followed by “okay?”

Model expected behavior for children: you must be willing to follow the same rules as the children.

Make your expectations for children’s behavior clear: keep rules clear, short, simple and few in numbers.

Children need to be made aware of consequences for violating rules or other misbehavior: make sure the consequence used relates to the misbehavior.

Provide positive feedback for children’s appropriate behavior: by expressing acceptance, and respect, and by providing comfort to all children, regardless of gender, race, religion, language, cultural or socioeconomic background, or developmental difference, we are encouraging the development of self-esteem.

Even with the best of planning, misbehavior does occur. When it occurs, these strategies are usually effective:

- Distracting the child or redirecting behavior is the first approach to misbehavior.
- Consistency and follow-through are two important elements in effective behavior management.
- When talking to a child, get up, walk over to the child, get down on his/her eye level, and speak in a quiet, firm voice stating the desired behavior. Statements should be made in a positive manner avoiding negative words.
• If a child is misusing a toy or throwing it across the room, sit with the child and show him/her how to properly play with the toy while talking about its proper use. Avoid mentioning how it was being misused.
• Offer a choice only when the child really has a choice. Avoid the use of the word, “Okay?” to finish a phrase when having the child to do something. Using the word okay implies the child has a choice.

BITING
A problem that inevitably occurs, especially with younger children, is biting. This behavior is developmentally appropriate but we must take quick action when it occurs. Biting generally occurs between 15 months and 30 months, before the child gains verbal skills. There are several possible reasons for biting. They include:
- Teething
- Communication
- Exploration
- Invasion of space
- Frustration
- Attention

When biting occurs, these steps must be taken:
• all attention is focused on the victim
• if the child is verbal, tell the victim to tell the aggressor “it hurts”
• calm the victim
• wash the wound
• apply ice for 5 minutes and ignore the biter during this time.
• remove the biter from the area
• tell the biter very firmly “no biting”

It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to inform the parents of the incident. Be sure that the teacher is told immediately when the biting occurs.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER
Western Illinois University is an AA/EO employer and has a strong institutional commitment to diversity. In that spirit, we are particularly interested in receiving applications from a broad spectrum of people including women, minorities, and persons with disabilities.
Student Workers
Time Card Calculator!!!!

1) Go to: www.timecardcalculator.net
2) Change preference to 24-hour clock (military)

3) Update settings
4) Enter hours (9:30=0930, 3:30=0330)
5) Use decimal hours
**Student Employee Time Reporting!!!**

1) Go to: http://wiu.edu/vpas/stars/
2) Click launch stars
3) Enter in WIU number and password
4) Click on the Menu Selections down arrow
5) Scroll down to Student Employee Time Reporting

6) Enter decimal hours in the blank spaces (ex: 3.4, 5.7)

(Refer to the Student Workers Time Card Calculator sheet if unsure of hours)

7) Once all hours are entered should look similar to this:

8) CONFIRM before you leave from work by Friday at 5!!!!