

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

INFANT AND PRESCHOOL CENTER

PARENT HANDBOOK



HORRABIN HALL 15 - 17

(309) 298-1250

REVISED 2015



Dear Parents:

Welcome to WIU Infant and Preschool Center! We have an outstanding program for young children and we hope you and your child will enjoy your time with us. In this handbook you will find our philosophy and goal statements, a basic overview of our program, and general information concerning policies and regulations. We hope that you feel free to discuss any concerns you may have or ask any questions about our program. Any ideas or suggestions of ways we can better serve you and your child are always welcome. You are encouraged to visit your child at the center or to just enjoy watching from our observation booth. We take very seriously the trust you have placed in us to care for your child.

Sara Simonson, Chairperson
Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Sherri Moon
Director

Boh Young Lee
Faculty Director

Sandy Pendell
Lead Teacher/Infant Room

Kelly Morck
Lead Teacher/Preschool Room

April Carson
Teacher/Infant Room

Shirley Adams
Teacher/Preschool Room

Susan Vaughn
Teacher/Infant Room

Table of Contents

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY	1
Center History	4
Goals of the Center.....	4
Center Personnel.....	5
ADMISSION AND WITHDRAWAL	5
Waiting List	5
Enrollment	6
Withdrawal	6
Referral for Special Services.....	6
SCHOOL HOURS AND ATTENDANCE.....	6
Hours of Operation.....	6
Arrival and Pickup Procedures.....	7
Late Pickup.....	7
Parking	8
Tuition and Funding.....	8
Birth Certificate	9
Health Requirements and Emergency Policies.....	9
Medical Examinations	11
Medicines.....	11
Sunscreen.....	11
Accidents.....	12
Weather Alerts.....	12
Fire and Disaster Drills.....	12
Possible Threat on the University Campus	12
Insect/Pest Control Procedures	13
Power Outage.....	13
Appropriate Clothing.....	13
Outdoor Clothing.....	14
Special Events	14
Field Trips	14
Birthdays	14
Research and Case Studies, Etc.	14
Sharing Day	15
Special Celebrations	15
Meals.....	15
Snacks and Meals-Infant and Toddler Room	16
Diapers and Toilet Training	16
Naps.....	16
Guidance.....	17
Curriculum Philosophy	18
Infant and Toddler Group.....	19

Preschool Group	19
Parent Involvement.....	20
Communication With Teachers	20
Visits.....	20
Observations	20
Parent Conferences.....	21
Assessment.....	21
Newsletters	21
Family Social Events	22
Participation.....	22
Parent Library.....	22
Parent Discussion Groups.....	22
Procedures for Child Care Centers Reporting Abuse.....	22
Who Reports?	22
The Procedures We Follow	23
Help Available	23
Concluding Comments.....	23

Center History

The College of Applied Sciences and College of Education established the WIU Infant and Preschool Center in the fall of 1977 as a lab-training site. In 1990, the College of Education took over the full administration of the center. An average of 600 college students utilize the center for observation or hands-on experiences with the children each semester. These students come from many departments and disciplines across the university.

The center is licensed by the Department of Children and Family Services to serve children, six weeks to six years of age. We accept any children within the specified age range, including children with special needs.

Goals of the Center

The WIU Infant and Preschool Center strives to maintain a program that is geared to the optimal development of the growing child. The goals of the center are to aid the children to:

- develop and maintain positive feelings about themselves and about their own abilities to create and to learn;
- develop their awareness of the world around them through sensory experiences—opportunities to see, hear, taste, smell—that are prerequisites for developing concepts and solving problems;
- develop and improve language through listening, speaking, and dramatic play activities, which form the basis for reading, writing, and other communication skills;
- develop an ability to express, both verbally and nonverbally, feelings such as joy, happiness, fear, and anger in acceptable ways;
- develop maximum physical growth and health through motor activities and proper nutrition;
- develop an awareness of their strengths and limitations; cope with success, failure, and change;
- develop effective ways of coping with stress in their lives;
- develop and support the dispositions of persistence, focused participation, hypothesis testing, risk taking, and self-regulation through a curriculum that encourages choice and active participation;
- develop the capacity to see themselves as a part of humanity who show respect and concern for rights and property of others;
- develop an appreciation for life, through interactions with others and by caring for pets and plants in the classroom.

We strive to meet these goals through children's involvement with caring adults, varied materials, and engaging experiences.

Center Personnel

We have an exemplary staff caring for your children. The director and lead teachers hold master's degrees in early childhood education. Members of the teaching staff are assigned to the room where they have the greatest expertise. Our program also has an excellent cook and an efficient chief clerk.

A faculty director (a member of the Early Childhood faculty), other Early Childhood faculty in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, and the chairperson of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction all serve as an advisory board for our center.

Serving as a lab site for the university, we have a high number of students working with or observing the children. Center administrators closely monitor these students to ensure they follow center policies and procedures.

All teaching staff members attend a minimum of 15 hours of conferences and in-service training per year. This ongoing professional development contributes to the high quality of our program. All staff members are certified in C.P.R. and First Aid and take recertification training annually.

ADMISSION AND WITHDRAWAL

Registration for the center is handled in the office located in the preschool room (HH 17A). Parents are encouraged to come and observe the program with their child prior to admission. Each family will be given a personal tour of the center.

Waiting List

Our center does have a waiting list. For a family to be placed on the list, we must have a completed enrollment form for each child. These forms are dated when they are returned. When an opening occurs, the family is called for final enrollment processing. Preference is given to those wanting to enroll full time. Families with siblings previously enrolled in our program will be given preference over those on the waiting list. If several openings are available at different age levels, and there is a family with children in each of these levels, they will be called before others who have been on the list longer. Once a family has been called and told of the opening, they have a specified time to respond as to whether they want to enroll their child/children.

We require that a \$50 deposit per child be made upon verification of enrollment to hold your child's spot in the center each session. If your plans change and your child does not attend, the money will be refunded, if two weeks' written notification is given prior to the enrollment date. If two weeks' written notification is not given, the deposit will be forfeited.

Enrollment

Enrollment is open to anyone in the community. There is no preference given to university employees or students.

Upon enrollment, the center must have an updated enrollment form, signed consent forms, signed tuition contracts, and signed DCFS forms, Physical examination/immunization records need to be on file prior to the first day of attendance. A birth certificate needs to be on file the first day of attendance. Children will be required to receive an updated physical exam every two years.

Withdrawal

Two weeks' notice must be given to the center, in writing, when a child is to be withdrawn from the program. If this notice is not given, the parents are liable for two weeks' tuition, to be paid before the child's last day.

Any child who, after attempts have been made to meet the child's individual needs, demonstrates an inability to benefit from the type of care offered by the facility, or whose presence is detrimental to the group, shall be discharged from the facility. The child's teacher, center director, and the faculty director will make this decision after careful study of the child's situation. Parents will be given two weeks to find an alternate care facility.

Referral for Special Services

No two children are alike-- each one is unique. Most of the differences are nothing to worry about; but for some children, these differences can be warning signals of special needs. The earlier a delay or disability is identified, the better chance the child has for reaching his or her potential with the help of intervention services. In order to facilitate early identification of children with special needs, **the law requires childcare providers to make referrals within two working days after they identify a child with a possible disability or developmental delay.** If a disability or developmental delay is identified, early intervention services are the first step in helping the child. The center staff will meet with the parent(s) and provide a link to local services that will help them form a plan for their child.

SCHOOL HOURS AND ATTENDANCE

Hours of Operation

The center's hours are from 7:45 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The center operates on the university academic calendar. The children attend whenever the college classes are in session. Therefore, the children do not attend on holidays observed by the University; break periods or days the university is closed by storms, natural disasters or special occurrences. Unexpected closings will be announced on WKAI and WIUM radio stations.

Arrival and Pickup Procedures

Children may arrive any time after 7:45 a.m. Each child must be brought all the way into his/her room each day. We cannot be responsible for a child dropped off at the building entrance. The state requires that the person bringing and picking up your child sign in and out each day. There is a notebook or clipboard placed close to the door for this purpose. Infant and toddler parents are asked to complete a very short information sheet each morning. If your child will not be attending on any particular day, please call the center to let your child's teacher know (309-298-1250).

Children must be picked up by 5:00 p.m. We will not release a child to a person not authorized by a parent or guardian. If someone else is going to pick up your child, we must have a written statement from you telling the person's name and the date. If for some reason the center staff have questions concerning the person who comes to pick up your child, we may ask to see a driver's license or any picture identification. A call may be made to the parents to verify the identity or authorization of another person picking up your child. This is all done for the safety of your child.

Late Pickup

The **Illinois Department of Children and Family Services require** that all licensed day cares have a policy regarding the consequences if a child is not picked up from the day care at the agreed upon time. The following are the guidelines for such an occurrence.

Late fees: A \$1.00 late fee will be charged for every minute after 5:00 p.m. when the child is still in the day care center.

After 5 minutes if the parent(s) have not contacted the center with further instructions, the center will then immediately try to contact the parent(s). The center will try to call each parent 2 separate times in the next 10 minutes.

If there is no contact made, the center will then immediately try to contact the emergency contacts listed by the parents 3 separate times within the next 10 minutes.

If the center by 5:30 has had no response from any of the above-mentioned persons, the center will call WIU Public Safety to pick up your child and a note will be placed on the center door telling your child's location. The parent(s) will then be responsible to retrieve the child from the authority.

This in no way will reflect on the child and the matter should only be discussed among adults.

The center will be responsible for the child until the outside authority, parent or the emergency contact arrive.

Emergency Contacts: It is the responsibility of the parent(s) to keep this list up to date. These names and numbers will need to be revised any time there is any change.

If your child is picked up after 5:00 p.m., a late charge of \$1.00 per minute must be paid to the teacher who waited with your child. **This extra charge must be paid within 24 hours or your child will not be allowed to return until it is paid.** Habitual lateness of 30+ minutes after 5:00 p.m., three times a semester constitutes grounds for expulsion from the center.

Parking

Fifteen minute parking will be available at posted parking spaces in the parking lot across from the library for families enrolled in the center. Upon enrollment, families will be given a laminated parking sign that is to be placed on the dashboard during the time the car is parked in this area. We are not responsible for tickets received when parking elsewhere.

Tuition and Funding

The WIU Infant and Preschool Center is a not-for-profit program. The university provides our rooms, insurance, janitorial and maintenance services at a nominal charge. The Department of Curriculum and Instruction provides a small percentage of our total income (approximately 10%). Parents' tuition fees make up the other 90% of our total income.

The following procedures regarding tuition and enrollment are necessary to maintain the fiscal soundness of the center.

- Parents must sign a tuition payment contract prior to the end of the first week of enrollment. A parent information sheet that must be completed accompanies this contract.
- Fees for each child are due weekly, and are to be paid on Monday or Friday of that week of childcare services, unless prior arrangements have been made.
- Tuition for each child is due for the number of days for which he/she is enrolled, rather than for the number he/she actually attends; i.e., a reduction in fees will not be made for days you keep your child home voluntarily or due to illness. **Parents are responsible for tuition payment for the full semester session.** Tuition for Labor Day week, Fall Break, Martin Luther King's birthday week and Lincoln's birthday week will be for the full week. This includes weather related closures and other unforeseen University closures.
- If payment is not made for a period of two weeks, unless the center director has approved prior arrangements, the child will automatically be dropped from the center roster; a reminder will be sent at the beginning of the second week.
- If a child is absent with no explanation for a period of greater than two weeks, the child's name will be dropped from the roster.

Fees are collected in the center's office located in Room 17 of Horrabin Hall. Payment must be made by check, bank draft or money order. A written receipt will be given for each payment. We ask that you not pay in cash due to security issues.

The center holds agreements with the Department of Human Services and with the Department of Children and Family Services for funding by special application with these agencies. **Parents are liable for payment until these contracts are approved.**

If a child with special needs is enrolled in the center and she/he requires additional personnel to help with her/his care, an added cost may be assessed to the parents.

A supply fee of \$30 per school year and will be assessed for each child to help pay for supplies such as paper, crayons, craft materials, bibs, diaper wipes, etc. This is due the first week of enrollment.

Birth Certificate

The State of Illinois and the department of Children and Family Services require all parents enrolling a child or children into a licensed day care facility to provide the facility with an original certified copy of the child's birth certificate.

We will provide a written notice to the parent or guardian of any child to be *enrolled for the first time that within 30 days of enrollment the parent or guardian must provide a certified copy of the child's birth certificate or other reliable proof of identity and age of the child.* If a certified copy of the birth certificate is not available, the parent or guardian must submit a passport, visa or other governmental documentation as proof of the child's identity and age and an affidavit or notarized letter explaining the inability to produce a certified copy of the birth certificate.

The Center is required by law to notify the Illinois State Police or local law enforcement agency if the parent or guardian fails to submit proof of the child's identity within the 30 day time frame. The Center will *notify the parent or guardian in writing that the Illinois State Police or local law enforcement* has been notified as required by law, advising the parent or guardian that he or she *has 10 additional days to comply* by submitting the required documentation.

The Center will *report* to the Illinois State Police or local law enforcement agency *any affidavit received which appears inaccurate or suspicious in form or content; we will flag the record* of a child enrolled at the day care who is reported by the Illinois State Police as a missing person, and *shall immediately report to the Illinois State Police any request concerning flagged records or knowledge as to the whereabouts of any missing child.* [325 ILCS 50/5]

Health Requirements and Emergency Policies

The health and safety of each child in the center is of primary importance.

- If your child is exhibiting signs of not feeling well, please alert the staff

upon arrival so that we can closely monitor your child's condition.

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services regulations for early childhood programs states the following:

"Children shall be screened upon arrival daily for any obvious signs of illness. If any symptoms of illness are present, the childcare staff shall determine whether they are able to care for the child safely, based on the apparent degree of illness, other children present and facilities available for the ill child.

1. Children with diarrhea and those with a rash and/or combined with fever (oral temperature of 101 F or higher or under the arm temperature or forehead temperature of 100 F or higher) shall not be admitted to the day care center while those symptoms persist, and shall be removed as soon as possible should these symptoms develop while the child is in care.

2. Children need not be excluded for a minor illness unless any of the following exists, in which case exclusion from the day care center is required:

- Illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities;
- Illness that calls for greater care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children;
- Rash combined with fever over 101F (oral);
- Unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, or other signs of possible severe illness;
- Diarrhea;
- Vomiting two or more times in the previous 24 hours, unless the vomiting is determined to be due to a non-communicable condition and the child is not in danger of dehydration;
- Mouth sores associated with the child's inability to control his or her saliva, until the child's physician or the local health department states that the child is noninfectious;
- Rash with fever or behavior change, unless a physician has determined the illness to be non-communicable;
- Purulent conjunctivitis, until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated;
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated;
- Strep throat (streptococcal pharyngitis), until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated and until the child has been without a fever for 24 hours;
- Head lice, until the morning after the first treatment;
- Scabies, until the morning after the first treatment;
- Chicken pox (varicella), until at least six days after onset of rash;
- Whooping cough (pertussis), until five days of antibiotic treatment have been completed;
- Mumps, until nine days after onset of parotid gland swelling;
- Measles, until four days after disappearance of the rash;
- Symptoms which may be indicative of one of the serious communicable diseases identified in the Illinois Department of Public Health Control of Communicable Diseases Code (77 Ill. Adm. Code 690)."

- A doctor's permit will be required for readmission after a contagious disease.
- If your child should be exposed to or contract a communicable disease, please inform us so that the incubation period may be determined.
- If your child has any allergies or physical or emotional conditions that require special attention, please give us a written notice explaining the difficulties so we will be aware of them. This notice will be kept on file.

Medical Examinations

- The state requires us to have medical exam forms on file for each child and staff member. These must be updated every two years. **The center must have a current exam form on file within one month of a child's enrollment or the child will be unable to attend.**
- Medical examination forms are available in the center's office.
- When booster shots are received, please bring us verification so that we can keep our records current.
- The state requires that all families provide proof of receiving the HIB vaccine. TB test. and Chickenpox vaccine and of having been tested for lead poisoning prior to enrollment.

Medicines

Center staff is allowed to administer non-prescription and prescription medicine if it is necessary for your child to be given medication at school. Both prescription and non-prescription medications can only be accepted in their original containers. Prescription medications must be labeled with the full pharmacy label. Non-prescription medication must be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name. The container must be in such condition that the name of the medication and the directions for use is clearly readable. Doses to be given must correspond to the prescribed dosage for the age/ weight of the child unless accompanied by a doctors' signed note.

The parent must fill out and sign a medication form, available in each room, before the medication can be given. All medicines are kept in a locked box in each room and must be labeled with the child's name and the dosage to be given. A record is kept in each room of the medicines given with the time of day it is given, the child's name, the dosage, the prescription number, and who administered the medicine.

Sunscreen

Parents are responsible for applying sunscreen before/at arrival in the morning. Teachers will apply sunscreen again in the afternoon before going outside. Parents must fill out a sunscreen form before sunscreen can be applied. Parents will need to provide sunscreen that is labeled with the child's name.

Accidents

The center staff and students take all possible precautions to prevent accidents and injuries. However, in the event one should occur, the parents/guardians/legal custodians will be contacted immediately. Written notification will be given of a minor injury.

It is vital for center staff to have parents' schedules and phone numbers so they can be reached. These must be updated each semester.

If a parent cannot be reached and the accident is serious, the child's doctor will be called and his/her advice followed. If the doctor is not available, the child will be taken to the emergency room at McDonough District Hospital. We ask parents upon enrollment to fill out the emergency consent forms at McDonough District Hospital in the event of an accident.

THE CENTER'S STAFF AND WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY CANNOT ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY IN THE EVENT THAT AN ACCIDENT OR INJURY SHOULD OCCUR.

Weather Alerts

The Western Illinois University Emergency Alert System (WEAS) enables the delivery of voice, text, and e-mail messages to members of our campus community in the event of an emergency.

We have a weather radio installed in the office of the Preschool to alert us of any weather related watches and/or warnings.

Fire and Disaster Drills

The center staff and children practice fire drills once a month and tornado evacuation techniques once a semester so that if these emergencies should occur, we would all know what to do immediately. Instructions for evacuation are posted in each room, along with designated pick up locations.

In case the fire alarm is sounded in the building the children will exit through the playground doors and proceed to the north fence of the playground. When it is determined that there is actually a fire, the children will be moved to a designated building and parents will be called for pickup.

When tornado sirens are activated the children will be moved to a tornado safe area of Horrabin Hall, remaining there until an all clear has been given. Parent will be called if needed.

Possible Threat on the University Campus

When the center is notified by WIU officials that there is a possible threat on campus, such as a threat of violence to occur or there is an actual incident happening on campus, the center staff will immediately lock the doors to the hallway and check to make sure all the children are safe and accounted for. If the children and staff are on the playground they will be brought inside immediately and the doors to the playground closed. If they are in the gym when notification is

given they will be moved into the Military Science weight room adjacent to the gym. They will remain there until they are told to move the children elsewhere by WIU officials. As soon as possible, a Military Science officer will assume security for the center either in the classroom or in the weight room area. In the case of a possible threat, this officer will stand by the exit door and will only allow those people in or out who have approval to come in or exit. In the case of a threat given, the parents will be allowed to pick up their children at their own risk and college students will be allowed to exit at their own risk. In the case of an actual incident happening on campus, in close proximity to the center, the doors will be locked and **no one** will be granted access in or out. Once the center is informed by WIU officials that all is safe, the doors will be unlocked and parents and students will then have access to pick up their child/children and all will be allowed to leave the center.

Insect/Pest Control Procedures

Illinois law requires licensed childcare centers to use Integrated Pest Management and notify all parents, guardians, and staff prior to Indoor and outdoor applications of pesticides or herbicides. The center will notify parents in writing at least two business days before a pesticide application, which will include the date of application, name of pesticide, the name of the company applying the pesticide and for the control of what pest. The children will not be present at the time of the application.

Power Outage

In the event of a power outage, the following procedure will be followed:

- If the power outage is expected to last longer than 2 hours, parents will be called to pick up their children.
- Perishable food will be taken home with staff.
- If the power outage is not expected to last very long and weather conditions are favorable, the children either will play outside or be taken to brighter parts of the building, such as the gym.

Appropriate Clothing

Opportunities will be provided each day to work with paints, clay, glue, markers, etc., so please dress your child in washable clothing. We use washable paint and markers, but accidents do happen. Children feel more at ease and freer to participate if they don't have to worry about staying clean.

Please bring and leave a complete change of clothes, clearly labeled with the child's initials or name. Children who are toilet training may need many changes of clothes. Feeding times can be messy, things can get spilled, and children fall in mud, or sit in a puddle. All of these things require a change of clothes.

Outdoor Clothing

Outdoor play will be offered every day, weather permitting, so please dress your child appropriately. Boots, a heavy coat, hat and mittens or gloves are required for wintertime play. Our rule of thumb is if it is 32 degrees F or above, the children in the infant and toddler room will go out for some fresh air. If it is 25 degrees F or above, the preschoolers will go outside. Of course, this all depends upon wind chill conditions and other such factors.

It is important for children to wear sunscreen when outdoors. We ask that you put sunscreen on your child before bringing them to school and we will reapply the sunscreen (SPF35) before

afternoon play outside. If your child needs a special type of sunscreen please bring a clearly marked bottle to keep at school.

No open-toed or open-heeled shoes (i.e., sandals, jellies) are to be worn by the children, in order to protect their toes and feet during active play. Children are discouraged from wearing cowboy boots and snow boots inside. They can be somewhat clumsy and hard for the children to walk or climb in.

Please try to mark all clothing with a permanent marker or name tags. This helps the staff sort through clothes when changing the child or when picking up mittens, hats, and coats after outside play.

Special Events

Field Trips

When weather permits, short field trips will be arranged to provide your child with additional learning experiences. You will be informed of each excursion at least two days in advance. Your permission form must be signed and on file. Parents may be asked to volunteer to accompany staff and children on these trips.

Birthdays

We celebrate birthdays at snack or lunchtime. You may send special nutritional treats if you wish. Please notify us ahead of time so we can make necessary menu changes. **The state requires that these special treats be purchased (not homemade) and in their original sealed packages.**

Research and Case Studies, Etc.

The center serves as a laboratory-training site for college students from a variety of disciplines. There will be times your child may be involved in research studies, case studies, photographs, or videotaping. This is to be expected and encouraged. Your permission form must be signed and on file. You will be informed before these studies take place as to the professionals and students involved.

Sharing Day

Once a week, on a designated day, your child may bring toys or something he/she wants to share from home. Your child's teacher will inform you of the sharing day in his/her room. We cannot be responsible for lost or broken items. **We do not permit children to bring toy weapons of any kind.**

Animals may be brought in to share if parents have received prior approval from the child's teacher. Animals **MUST** be healthy and have had their proper shots. Animals will **NOT** be allowed to stay at the center for the duration of the day.

Children may bring and share a favorite book any day. Please be sure your child's name is in the book so it is not misplaced.

If you have a videotape of a children's program or movie you wish to share with the center, please consult with a teacher before bringing it. Because we want children to be actively involved in hands-on learning experiences, we limit the amount of time spent watching videos. In general, videos will not be shown more than once a week. Short videos are more suitable than longer ones, such as feature films. Also, what may be suitable for a child to view at home may not be suitable for showing at the center. Teachers will use their judgment as to suitability of any suggested video.

Special Celebrations

At different times during the year certain holidays or events will be celebrated at the center. For example, at Halloween the preschool room has a trick or treat parade through Horrabin Hall, visiting various offices. If holidays or events celebrated, fall on weekends; notification will be given as to the day we will celebrate.

Meals

We provide both a morning and an afternoon snack each day and a nutritious well-balanced meal for lunch. Our snack and lunch menus conform to USDA and state regulations for day care centers. The center has an eight-week cycle of menus and snacks. The week's menu will always be posted on Monday for the coming week. If you would like a personal copy for home, please see our website.

Children are not allowed to bring sack lunches from home, except on special picnic days. If you and your child want to bring something special as a treat (i.e., muffins, crackers, etc.), please consult with your child's teacher so our menu can be adjusted. **These must be in their original sealed packages.**

Children are never forced to eat, although they are encouraged to try things on their plate. Second helpings of food and drink are allowed. During meal times, children are encouraged to engage in polite table conversation and use developmentally appropriate table manners. Children are encouraged to help set the table and clean up afterwards.

If your child has dietary restrictions, please speak to your child's teacher.

Snacks and Meals-Infant and Toddler Room

A flexible feeding schedule for infants will be coordinated with the parents' schedules at home and allowances made for nursing infants. Space is provided for nursing mothers to be with their infants. A child's formula or milk is to be brought in bottles and labeled for each day's use. All children, less than one year of age, who are drinking from a bottle will be held while they drink. Until the child is able to eat table food, all food is to be brought in by the parents,

labeled with specific instructions on preparation, and dated. Once the child is eating table food, the center will provide the food.

Each child will receive help and guidance during feeding times. Children will be allowed and encouraged to feed themselves when it is developmentally appropriate.

Diapers and Toilet Training

Parents must provide disposable diapers for children who are not toilet trained. You will be notified when your child's supply is low. Commercial diaper wipes are used when the children are changed. If you have special creams, lotions, powders, or sunscreen that you wish to be used, please bring a labeled supply. A medical permit must be filled out by the parent for this to be administered.

There are many ideas about toilet training and about the easiest, fastest method to use. Most children between the ages of 2 and 3 begin to show signs of readiness (sometimes before 2). Staff and parents will maintain communication about these signs and a joint decision will be reached as to the method used and the time to begin. Each child has her/his own biological time clock and we will be alert to that. Specifics will be discussed between each child's parent(s) and the staff.

Naps

State regulations require a nap period for children less than six years of age, who remain five or more hours. This nap period for the group should not exceed two hours. Children staying for naptime may bring a stuffed animal to sleep with. Due to limited storage space, each child should bring a small blanket (and small pillow, if desired) because our rooms do get cool when the lights are off. All of these items must be labeled with the child's name or initials. These must be kept in their lockers until naptime each day.

Older children, who do not take naps, will lie quietly on their cots for a short time of rest and then be allowed a quiet activity.

Guidance

As part of the curriculum, teachers plan for the children's independence by offering stimulating, motivating activities that encourage individual choices and by allowing children to move at their own pace and interest level. Through opportunities to work independently and as part of a group, children will develop prosocial skills.

Our teachers promote prosocial behaviors and the development of children's consciences and self control by providing opportunities for helping, cooperating, negotiating and talking with the

person involved to solve interpersonal conflicts. By setting clear limits in a positive manner and involving the children in the establishment of classroom and playground rules, we are allowing children to have the opportunity to see alternatives and logical consequences for behavior.

Logical consequences for the child's actions and behavior are discussed with the child when misbehavior occurs. Children are treated with respect by stating the behavior that is expected. If the misbehavior continues, the child will be given the choice of following the expected behavior or sitting out an activity.

When conflicts occur between children, teachers provide techniques for the children to use that will help them be aware of feelings and the possible intentions of others. Teachers may need to help children find appropriate words to express what they are feeling.

We expect children to observe the rights of other children and to respect the property of others. If after several reminders, a child continues to behave in an unacceptable way, he/she may be placed in an area in the classroom where he/she can have some quiet time to regain self-control. If needed, the teacher may sit with the child to help her/him to regain self-control.

When a child's behavior is frequently disruptive and/or harmful to other children, the director or assistant director will meet with parents to establish a mutually agreed-upon behavior management plan. A behavior management plan will be agreed upon by the child, (when developmentally appropriate), the teacher, and the parents, with logical consequences for misbehavior. Parents and teachers will remain in close contact about the situation. If misbehavior continues to occur, our next step would be the development of a clinical behavior management plan to meet the needs of the specific child. This will be developed with the teachers, the parents and a professional clinician.

Any child who, after attempts have been made to meet the child's individual needs, demonstrates an inability to benefit from the type of care offered by the facility, or whose presence is detrimental to the group, shall be discharged from the facility. The child's teacher, center director, and the faculty director will make this decision after careful study of the child's situation. Parents will be given two weeks to find an alternative facility.

Upon the child's enrollment, the parent(s) will be given a copy of this guidance and discipline policy. The parent must sign a section on the enrollment form stating that the policy has been read and agreed to.

Curriculum Philosophy

Our curriculum is designed to be appropriate for the age span of the children within the group with attention being given to children's individual needs, interests, and developmental levels. The development of positive self-esteem and a positive attitude toward learning are a primary emphasis.

We view learning as an interactive process between the child and her/his environment. The curriculum is designed to provide for children's exploration and manipulation of the environment through meaningful interaction with adults, other children, and materials.

The teachers' knowledge of child development will aid them in observing and recording each child's needs, interests, and developmental progress. Materials and experiences are then planned to meet these needs and stimulate learning in all developmental areas-physical, social, emotional, and intellectual - using an integrated approach.

Learning activities and materials are concrete, real and/or representational, and relevant to the lives of young children. As children develop understanding and skills, the teachers will provide a variety of activities and materials of increasing difficulty, complexity, and challenge. Child-initiated, child-directed, and teacher supported play is an essential component of our program.

Multicultural and nonsexist experiences, materials, and equipment are provided for children of all ages.

Daily learning experiences include the following:

- **ART:** Use of various art media such as play dough, finger paints, water colors, crayons, and easel paints assist the child in self-expression, creativity, and in the development of fine motor coordination.
- **DRAMATIC PLAY:** Dramatic play gives each child the opportunity to better understand family and community roles.
- **MUSIC:** Ample time is allowed for singing, movement, and experimentation instruments and rhythm. Listening to music serves as a way to relax the child and provide smooth transitions to other activities. Children are exposed to a variety of music throughout the day.
- **LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE ARTS EXPERIENCES:** Books are readily available to all children. Children are frequently read to individually or in small groups. In addition, special time is set aside for puppets, stories with various media such as flannel boards, videos, and story tapes. Children are encouraged to dictate stories as well as to

experience many print-related activities, as they gain an understanding of the alphabetic system of our language and the relationship between letters, sounds, and words.

- **LARGE AND SMALL MUSCLE ACTIVITIES:** Physical exercise and the development of motor skills is experienced daily. A variety of equipment is used. Small muscles are developed through various manipulative materials
- **MATHEMATICS:** Number concepts, measurement, geometry, patterns, and relationships are introduced through hands-on experiences and daily living routines. Children have many opportunities to count compare and classify throughout the day. Problem solving, reasoning, and communication are emphasized.
- **SCIENCE:** Children are curious about the world around them. By building on this natural interest we can take advantage of events in our classroom as well as outdoors. By taking field trips and providing science projects, we allow opportunities for experimenting, observing, classifying, ordering, measuring, predicting, collecting, and problem solving. Classroom pets are an important element of the science curriculum.
- **SOCIALIZATION:** Small group experiences help children learn how to get along with others. Emphasis is put on assisting the children in the expression of feelings, needs, and ideas. As children grow in social and communication skills, teachers encourage them to solve problems through discussion and negotiations.

Infant and Toddler Group

Very young children learn about their environment through their senses (seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching), through their own actions, and through their social interactions with adults and peers. The staff develops warm, positive relationships with each child, helping her/him feel safe and emotionally secure. The development of a trusting relationship with the staff is critical to the very young child's sense of self and is the foundation for the development of independence. Infants and toddlers learn through their own experiences, trial and error, repetition, imitation and identification. Our staff provides experiences that help children gain confidence in their own abilities, thus helping develop positive self-esteem. Relationships with people are emphasized.

Children this age are mastering and building on their vocabulary. Through their experiences with simple books, pictures, music, puzzles, and tactile experiences, as well as active play such as jumping, running, and dancing, they increase their language as they are learning about themselves and the world around them.

Adults provide a balance of quiet and active experiences for children throughout the program day.

Preschool Group

This room is organized into interest areas where children may become involved in dramatic play, play with blocks and wheeled toys, using small manipulatives such as puzzles, Legos, or board games, listening to book tapes, being creative with items such as paint, markers, crayons, etc., or exploring science concepts. Opportunities for gross motor activities, either outdoors or

in the gymnasium, are provided daily. Children are exposed to a print-rich environment that stimulates language and literacy skills. Cooking experiences are done almost weekly, allowing children to taste a variety of foods and exposing them to basic math concepts, such as measuring and counting. Problem-solving skills are developed daily through child-initiated, teacher-supported activities. Occasional field trips are taken away from the building to help the children develop a better understanding of the world and community around them. The goal of the field trips is to expose them to new experiences, cultures, and information beyond the classroom.

Parent Involvement

Parents have both the right and the responsibility to share in decisions about their children's care and education. During the early years, children are largely dependent on their families for identity, security, care, and a general sense of well-being. Communication between families and teachers helps build mutual understanding and provides consistency for children. Mutual sharing of information and insights about the individual child's needs and developmental strides help both the family and the program. Teachers encourage parents to observe and participate in their child's education.

Communication With Teachers

Parents and teachers have the opportunity to exchange information regarding the children twice daily, during arrival and departure. This is important to provide continuity between the child's family environment and the center environment. The staff is available and happy to answer questions, discuss important information, or help with problems parents may be experiencing. Since arrival and departure times are sometimes hectic, we can arrange for more in-depth discussion at a time that is more relaxed. The staff welcomes parents' comments and suggestions.

Visits

All parents are welcome to visit their children any time during the day. This helps parents and children feel more secure with the center and the staff. Visitation is especially encouraged for very young children. If separation is a problem, and you feel uncomfortable coming in your child's room, the observation booth provides a good solution. We have several parents every year who bring their lunch and eat with their child or eat their lunch while observing in the booth.

Observations

The center has an observation booth located between the preschool room and the infant/toddler room. Parents, friends and students are welcome to observe at any time. The special one-way glass allows anyone to watch unobserved by the children or staff, as long as the observation room remains dark and the lights remain on in the room being observed. Microphones are set in the ceilings of each room with speakers in the booth to allow those in

the booth to hear what is being said in the room. The controls for the microphones are on the south wall. We encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity.

Parent Conferences

The staff observes and monitors your child's developmental progress throughout the year. Parents and/or teachers may request a conference at any time; however, we do encourage you to attend at least two conferences each year. Appointments for all conferences will be arranged at a time suitable to the parent and at a time the teacher has no other responsibilities. Conferences are held for the purpose of discussing your child's development and learning. The first conference will include an informal sharing of your expectations for your child in our

program. At following conferences, we will share with you developmental information about your child that has been observed by our staff, as we continue to learn more about your child through information and insights you share with us.

We also ask for parents to evaluate the program, (i.e., what they like, what they would like added, and any concerns they may have), by completing questionnaires provided at the end of each semester.

We want you to feel free to come and talk with us at any time throughout the year when you may have a concern.



You can contact Sherri at:

SR-Moon@wiu.edu

Assessment

Center staff engages in assessment of the children throughout the year. The Infant & Toddler and Preschool Rooms uses the Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment System. Teachers will provide you with information relating to this assessment at the first parent teacher conference and throughout the year.

Newsletters

Parents receive weekly newsletters from the child's teachers. These newsletters contain information concerning the day-to-day events and activities ongoing in the classroom. In addition, a monthly newsletter is distributed. These monthly newsletters contain short informative articles and tips for parents, as well as news pertaining to all children in the center. Parents are welcome to submit ideas for the newsletters.

Family Social Events

We hold several events throughout the year to give our families an opportunity to meet informally and to come to know the families of their children's friends, as well as the staff's families. This allows everyone the chance to get better acquainted. These events may include, but are not limited to, an open house before school opens for the fall session, a family potluck in the fall, a family event in December, and a brown bag lunch the last week of school. Some of our family nights are planned and implemented by early childhood methods classes. This provides the college students with valuable experience, as well as offering families a night of unique learning activities. We usually have a large number of families participating in these events. We encourage parents to offer ideas for other events.

Participation

We frequently need volunteers to help with field trips or special events. In addition, we encourage parents to share with the children a special skill, hobby or information about their culture or their job. Please let your child's teacher know of ways you would like to volunteer your time. All parent participation is valued and appreciated.

Parent Library

The center has a resource library housed in the observation booth. We have books, magazines, videotapes and pamphlets available for check out. These cover a wide variety of parenting topics. A list of materials available for checkout can be obtained from the office. To check out an item, simply ask your child's teacher. Our staff will be happy to show you to the Parent Library or answer any questions about it.

Parent Discussion Groups

Discussion group meetings are offered periodically. These are planned and facilitated by staff and Early Childhood Education faculty with suggestions from parents as to the topics. Meetings are offered at various times so that all parents have the opportunity to participate. The number of meetings will depend upon parent interest and participation.

Procedures for Child Care Centers Reporting Abuse

Who Reports?

Daycare teachers and directors are required by law to report child abuse and neglect. They need only suspect child abuse or neglect to make a report. 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

If one of our staff suspects child abuse or neglect, 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 parent. A call is made to the Illinois Child Abuse Hot Line. The observation is shared with the caseworker that takes the call. We also must send written confirmation of the call to the appropriate DCFS field office within 48 hours.

Help Available

If you are experiencing difficulty with parenting or other family responsibilities, the center staff is knowledgeable about available resources. We will do what we can to help your family by making referrals to the appropriate agencies.

Concluding Comments

We hope this booklet will be of use to you, both as an initial orientation to our program and for future use. Parents are encouraged to keep in close contact with their child's teachers and discuss questions, concerns, or suggestions they may have. The WIU Infant and Preschool Center is committed to providing the highest quality of care for each child through close collaboration with his or her family.

