

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT CHICAGO

UIC Children's Center (MC 525)
1919 West Taylor Street, Room 116
Chicago, Illinois 60612-7248

Dear Parent,

All of us at the Children's Center are pleased that you have enrolled your child in our program. We want you to feel welcome and a part of the Center. Our hope is that this handbook will serve as a resource. Hardcopies of the handbook are available in each classroom to reference as well as on the Center's website. If you would like a hand copy of your own, please talk with the assistant director.

You may find our policies and procedures similar to those you've experienced in other early childhood education programs, and there may also be some differences. Our primary goal is to provide quality early childhood education services to UIC families. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the information provided in the handbook, please do not hesitate to talk with your child's teachers, the assistant director, or me.

We look forward to getting to know your family and working together.

Sincerely,

Kim

Kim Kull, M.Ed.
Director

Melinda

Melinda Young, M.Ed.
Assistant Director

UIC CHILDREN'S CENTER
PARENT HANDBOOK

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ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Campus Address: Applied Health Sciences Building (AHSB), Room 128, MC 525

Street/US Mail: 1919 W. Taylor Street, Room 116
Chicago, IL 60612-7248

Telephones:

Director	312-413-5328
Assistant Director	312-413-5326
Classrooms	312-413-5327

Fax: 312-413-5329

Email: uicchildcenter@uic.edu

Website: childrenscenter.uic.edu

All three of the classrooms are equipped with telephones. When calling the classrooms please identify yourself and ask for your child's teachers and your call will be transferred. There is voicemail on the office telephones. When you need to speak to someone immediately, please call the classroom number.

All staff may also be contacted via email. Email addresses are located on the Center's website. While administrative staff will reply to email as quickly as possible, please allow 24 hours for classroom teachers to respond.

MISSION, VISION, & VALUES

The mission of the Children's Center is to:

1. Provide high quality early childhood education and childcare to the preschool children of UIC students, faculty, and staff in an on campus location.
2. Provide opportunities for observation, practicum, and internship experiences for students in early childhood education and other related professions that support young children and their families.
3. Serve as a resource for faculty & students who wish to conduct research with and for the benefit of young children and their families.

The UIC Children's Center strives to promote each child's intellectual, emotional, academic, and physical growth in an atmosphere that is filled with discovery, exploration, excitement, and hands-on learning. Staff members implement early childhood learning experiences that build a solid foundation and enthusiasm for life-long learning. The Children's Center provides a setting in which every child can learn in a climate where all feel supported, respected, appreciated, and safe.

The Children's Center is committed to:

- Quality early childhood education and care
- Communication and teamwork
- On-going evaluation and program improvement
- Staff development
- Diversity

HISTORY OF THE CHILDREN'S CENTER

Our original program was opened on January 16, 1972, on the east side of campus, through the combined efforts of the members of a student organization (Circle Women's Liberation Union) and interested faculty and staff who wanted low-cost, on-campus child care for students, faculty, and staff.

In 1974, the University assumed full responsibility for Circle Children's Center (the original name) following the awarding of an honorary degree to Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget. The Center was assigned to the College of Education, and the University provided space, as well as an operating subsidy, so that the Center could continue its sliding fee scale based on family income and other financial resources. In 1981, the Center was transferred to Campus Auxiliary Services.

In 1984, through the efforts of the Chancellor's Committee on the Status of Women, the Center expanded its services to the west side of campus. Our second site was opened on September 17.

In 2012, financial and operational challenges made it necessary to consolidate the two sites. Today the Children's Center operates out of the west site location.

UIC Children's Center is under the immediate supervision of Campus Auxiliary Services, a division of Student Affairs. UIC Children's Center is sponsored by the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois and is under the immediate supervision of the Director of Campus Auxiliary Services and the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

UIC CHILDREN'S CENTER

The Children's Center is licensed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, as well as accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. In 2015, the Center was recognized as a Gold Circle of Quality center by ExceleRate Illinois, the statewide early childhood quality rating and improvement system. This system has been designed to rate the quality of early learning programs and to set a research based standard for early learning and development providers. There are tiered Circles of Quality in ExceleRate and the higher the awarded tier (Bronze-Gold), the more the program has made meaningful improvements. More information about ExceleRate can be found at ExceleRateIllinois.com

The Children's Center is made up of 3 classrooms. 2 of our classrooms are mixed aged three- and four-year-old groups, with a maximum enrollment of 16 children per classroom, staffed by a minimum of 2 full time co-teachers. The third classroom is a mixed aged four- and five-year-old group, with a maximum enrollment of 18 children, staff by a minimum of 2 full time co-teachers. Mixed-aged groupings more naturally encourage older children to help younger ones and give younger children ideas and models.

THE CHILDREN'S CENTER STAFF

The Children's Center staff is made up of 8 teachers, 3 teaching assistants, and 2 administrators who all have a minimum of a bachelor's degree with specialized training in early childhood education or child development. A minimum of one teacher per classroom is certified by The Illinois State Board of Education to teach early childhood education, and all staff are credentialed by the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Bureau of Child Care and Development. Both members of the administrative team hold Illinois Director Credentials awarded by the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Bureau of Child Care and Development.

The Center director administers the program, creates Children's Center policies and procedures, hires the professional staff, and is responsible for the financial operations. The Center director approves and monitors all research activities. The Center director reports to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Director of Campus Auxiliary Services.

The assistant director is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the program, including supervision of the teaching staff, enrollment of children, hiring student employees, and scheduling classroom observers and practicum students.

The early morning teacher opens the early morning room and provides care for children needing to arrive before the classrooms open. The early morning teacher then works in all three classrooms on a rotating basis, substituting for absent teachers as necessary.

The late room teacher provides care for children needing to stay at the Center after the classrooms close at 5:15 pm. The late room teacher works in all three classrooms, substituting for absent teachers as necessary.

Each classroom has co-teachers who work as a team. Together they plan activities for children, the classroom arrangement, the daily schedule, and how they will work with children individually and as a group. Teachers meet periodically with parents as a group and individually and are the primary source of information about classroom activities and events.

Each classroom is assigned a teaching assistant. Teaching assistants are current graduate students from the UIC College of Education pursuing their Master's degree in Early Childhood Education. Teaching assistants support classroom co-teachers in all areas of curriculum and care of children, and are qualified to substitute in a teacher's absence.

Additionally, each classroom is assigned a teacher's aide who offers additional classroom support throughout the afternoon. This position is filled by UIC students who are interested in working with young children. Aides are supervised and mentored by the classroom teachers in the rooms to which they are assigned.

The Children's Center employs a food service aide who serves family-style lunches to each classroom, removes the serving dishes and utensils after lunch, and cleans the kitchen.

Occasionally the Children's Center has practicum students from UIC and local colleges and universities, as well as volunteers seeking classroom experience with children ages three through six. Parents are notified when there are practicum students and volunteers assigned to their child's classroom.

All adults interacting with children in classrooms must first complete a background check prior to working in the classrooms. Administrative and teaching staff all hold current Pediatric CPR and First Aide certification and have been trained as mandated reporters.

SITE HOURS & STAFF SCHEDULES

The Children's Center is located in the Applied Health Sciences Building, 1919 W. Taylor Street, the hours are from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm. Generally, the Center director, assistant director, or both are on-site between 8:00 am and 5:00 pm. In the event that both directors are off-site, a teacher will be designated to assume decision-making responsibilities, and his/her name will be posted on the assistant director's door. All of the teachers at the Children's Center are director-qualified per DCFS licensing regulations.

The classrooms are open from 8:15 am to 5:15 pm. Parents who need child care before or after the regular classroom hours must register at the end of each semester to use either the early morning room or the late room. The number of children in each classroom is carefully monitored to ensure proper staffing and teacher-child ratios. While teachers try to accommodate emergencies, advance planning is necessary for most requests. Teachers work on the following schedule:

Early morning room teacher	6:45 am to 2:45 pm
Three classroom teachers	8:15 am to 4:15 pm
Three classroom teachers	9:30 am to 5:30 pm
Three teaching assistants	9:00am to 1:00pm
Late room teacher	10:15 am to 6:00 pm

DAILY SCHEDULE

The schedule below is posted in each classroom and is a combination of child initiated and teacher-led activities. Exact meal and rest times vary by classroom.

- 7:00 Center opens. All children meet in Orange Room supervised by the morning float teacher.
- 8:15 1st classroom teacher arrives. Children engage in center-based activities of their choice.
- 9:00 Teaching Assistant arrives and joins classroom activities.
- 9:30 2nd classroom teacher arrives. Children continue center-based choices, including morning snack. In addition, teacher leads small- group activities.

****ALL CHILDREN MUST ARRIVE NO LATER THAN 9:30****

- 10:20 Children clean up and are encouraged to use the bathroom.
- 10:30 Group Time begins. The teachers and children meet together for calendar, songs, whole group read-aloud, and discussions about topics relevant to the classroom community.
- 11:00 Outdoor Play
- 11:30 Family-Style Lunch
- 12:15 Children are encouraged to use the bathroom. Naptime begins.
- 1:00 Teachers Assistants leave/Teacher's Aides arrive
- 1:30 Teachers leave the classrooms to plan, prepare classroom activities, participate in weekly supervision meetings, & professional development training.
- 2:45 Naptime ends. Teachers return to the classroom. Afternoon snack is served. Children engage in center-based activities of their choice.
- 4:15 Children are encouraged to use the bathroom. Weather permitting, outdoor play begins. 1st teacher goes home.
- 4:45 Children return from the playground. Group read-aloud.
- 5:15 Classrooms close. Remaining children come together supervised by the afternoon float. 2nd teachers leaves at 5:30.
- 6:00 Center closes

All children are expected to arrive at the Center by 9:30 am. We ask that when at all possible, medical appointments are scheduled so that children do not arrive in the middle of the morning. Because activities are scheduled, play groups are formed, and the morning is generally a busy time, we appreciate a telephone call if parents anticipate arriving after 9:30. While we can accommodate occasional late arrivals, they are disruptive to the classroom and difficult for the late child. **Children will not be accepted into the classroom if they arrive later than 9:30 on a continual basis.** When such a pattern develops, teachers will give parents a verbal warning, after which the child will not be accepted into the classroom for that day.

Outdoor play is scheduled everyday throughout the school year. Exceptions to daily outdoor play are made only when local health officials are reporting dangerous wind chills or heat indexes. The Children's Center has a private playground that includes climbing equipment, swings, a sandbox, path for bike riding, and a large open space for running. All 3 classrooms enjoy the playground together, and children are free to independently explore the area and equipment.

Winter activities may include sledding down one of our hills or other weather appropriate activities. During the winter months we ask that you send children with weather-appropriate clothing, including snow pants, boots, hats, and gloves. While we do have a limited supply of extra clothing, children prefer to wear their own. Please plan to keep boots at school until late Spring as our playgroup can get muddy.

In the summer months, staff add water activities such as sprinklers, art activities, as well as quiet activities in a shady area. The Children's Center also plants a garden, and has been nurturing Illinois prairie plants in our butterfly garden. Children enjoy picnic lunch outside twice a week in the summer months.

When the weather is too extreme to go outside teachers plan addition movement activities indoors. Special equipment such as tumbling mats, scooters, obstacle course materials are set up in the classroom on the hallway.

Based on our staffing plan, all children must go outside daily with their class. Parents who do not want their child to participate in outdoor activities must make other arrangements for their child during this time.

LATE CHILD PICK-UP POLICY

Children are expected to be picked up each day at the time agreed upon with the assistant director and never later than 6:00 pm. If a parent hasn't arrived by 6:00 pm, staff will attempt to first contact the legal guardians and then the Emergency Contact individuals the parent listed on the child's Release Authorization Form. Those

individuals authorized for a child's release, will be asked to come to the Center to assume responsibility and physical custody of the child. After **ONE HOUR** if no one on the emergency list is reached or a custodial parent(s) hasn't arrived to pick up a child, University Police and the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) will be contacted. **Parents who develop a pattern of arriving at the Center after the 6:00 closing time will be given a verbal warning and ultimately written notice of withdrawal from the program.**

OUR CURRICULUM

The Children's Center curriculum practices are historically rooted to the teachings of Jean Piaget and Constructivist principles. Integral to this philosophy is the idea that young children think differently than older children and adults. Teachers encourage children to think and solve problems in their own way, rather than to memorize specific information and solve problems in an adult manner. A constructivist approach not only trusts, but encourages children to be active participants in their own learning.

The Center's emphasis is on children's learning through play rather than relying solely on teacher-directed, specific academic activities. As an integral component of any developmental curriculum, play is essential for children to learn. Through play, children have the opportunity to explore the world around them and pursue their own ideas. Teachers carefully plan the classroom environment, choose materials, and develop activities based on their formal educational training and in conjunction with observations of children's interests, current abilities, and individual cultural influences.

Play is also a valuable tool for social and emotional development. We stress the development of each child's curiosity, confidence, independence, and resourcefulness both in and out of the classroom. Through play, children have opportunities to work collaboratively with others, share their ideas, and begin to develop self-esteem, self-regulation, and empathy towards others; all skills necessary to become productive members of society.

Our goal is to create learning environments where children have the opportunity to use language, literacy, and mathematics in meaningful, authentic ways. Teachers develop a daily schedule that is predictable yet flexible and responsive to the individual needs of the children. The classroom is set up with interest areas that include: the writing center, library, big/small blocks, dramatic play, science center, art center, and an area for games & manipulatives. Curriculum includes both indoor and outdoor experiences, and activities are planned for large & small groups as well as one-on-one interactions between children and adults. Activities that incorporate art, cooking, work with graphs and calendars, journal writing, and solving simple arithmetic problems that occur in the environment, are just a few of the activities children engage in on a daily basis that help them develop the fundamental building blocks necessary for further school success.

Teachers develop daily lesson plans that incorporate the preschool learning benchmarks identified in the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards (IELDS). The learning standards and accompanying performance descriptors support curriculum development across all cognitive and intellectual domains. A link to the IELDS can be found on the parent resource page of the Center's website. Lesson plans are created using Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment System, and are posted in each classroom. Data derived from all forms of assessment are used to determine future classroom curriculum, and supports both individual and group goals.

ASSESSMENT METHODS AND MATERIALS

The Children's Center assessment plan integrates the three influences on our curriculum: developmentally appropriate practice, a constructivist approach, and the Illinois State Board of Education's Early Learning and Development Standards. The purpose of assessment is to provide consistent documentation of what takes place in each classroom.

Documentation is meant to show evidence of the growth of individual children in all curriculum areas, as well as track the progress made toward achieving the Benchmarks of the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards.

Upon enrollment, and yearly thereafter, the UIC Children's Center assess all children using the Early Screening Inventory-Revised (ESI-R) and the Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social-Emotional (ASQ:SE). The information gained from both screening tools along with observations by classroom teachers are used to identify children who may benefit from a more extensive developmental evaluation. Both assessments will occur within the first 45 day of enrollment and yearly thereafter. Results (and further actions if necessary) will be discussed with parents no later than the first parent-teacher conference.

Throughout the school year assessment data will be gathered in the following ways:

Observation Notes/Child Portfolios

- ✓ Observation notes and artifacts are collected to create individual electronic portfolios using Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment System.
- ✓ Observations are systematic recordings of each child's actions, words, or behaviors; and are aligned with specific domain benchmark
- ✓ Observations may include (but not limited to) writing samples, drawings, artwork, photos
- ✓ Artifacts emphasize what a child CAN do and provide a more holistic, comprehensive view of a child

- ✓ Considering what has been observed, teachers plan what they will do to foster each child's individual growth

Formalized Assessment

- ✓ Online assessment checkpoints are completed three times annually using the Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment System.

Communicating Assessment Information with Families

- ✓ Teachers meet with parents for a minimum of two conferences each year.
- ✓ Portfolio data will be reviewed with parents during conferences and at a parents request.
- ✓ Parents and teachers will jointly set and revisit goals for children during conferences. Goal setting materials will be signed by teachers and parents, shared with parents, and become part of the child's Children's Center file. (Minimum of 2 per school year)
- ✓ Parents have access to information about their own child only.

INCLUSION OF DIVERSE LEARNERS

The Center supports the inclusion of children with Special Needs (a generally recognized and persistent physical, cognitive, or emotional disability) whenever feasible for the child and the Center. In such cases, an appropriate statement (IFSP or IEP) from the child's physician or professional referring agency must be submitted prior to the time of enrollment. Center staff may obtain the assistance of qualified consultants prior to enrollment to determine our ability to provide the services required for the child.

Parents are expected to make arrangements for children who require specialized staff or consultants to help them fully participate in the program. All arrangements need to be discussed with staff and approved by the director. Parents are financially responsible for any additional services. Any support staff who enter the program will be expected to work cooperatively with the Children's Center staff.

In accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) all children will receive a developmental screening within the first 45 days of enrollment and yearly thereafter (**See Assessment Methods and Materials Pg. 12**). Vision and Hearing Screening will also be offered during the school year. Should a child score in the refer range, Center staff have developmental concerns, or a vision/hearing issue detected, staff will provide the parent/legal guardian with information on how to obtain a diagnostic evaluation from the child's local school district.

Diagnostic information will be required for continued enrollment in the program. The Center may also obtain the assistance of a qualified consultant to help develop appropriate program plans, to assess the feasibility of continued care at the Center, and

to coordinate services with other agencies. In the event that the Center's program and staff can no longer adequately meet the individual needs of the child, as outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the director will set a date for termination of Center services and will offer the parent(s) information about alternative resources.

ATTENDANCE AND REPORTING ABSENCES

Signing Children In and Out

Each day parents are asked to sign their child in and out on the classroom attendance sheet located in each classroom. In the morning, please write your child's name and the time of arrival. At the end of the day, please indicate the time and the name of the person who picked up the child. Information on the attendance sheets is needed for Center records and for reports to the Illinois State Board of Education regarding our food service program.

Release of Children

If you plan for someone else to pick up your child, for your child's protection, the Center must have this information from you in writing. Upon enrollment, parents are asked to provide the Center with a list of persons who have their approval to pick up their child. This authorizes the Center to release the child to any person listed. Parents are asked to notify center staff when someone other than a legal guardian will pick up their child.

In an emergency, should parents want someone other than a listed person to pick up their child, the parent must provide written authorization in the form of a signed note or email. Notification includes the child's name, the date requested for pick-up, and the name of the person whom we are requested to release the child. Only the director or assistant director may approve a verbal release of authorization. The person picking-up must be prepared to show a driver's license or other picture identification to the teacher or administrator before we may release the child.

Under the laws of the state of Illinois, both parents have the right to pick up their child unless a court document restricts that right. The enrolling parent who chooses not to include the child's other parent on the authorized pick-up list must provide an official court document (e.g., current restraining order, sole custody decree, or divorce decree stating sole custody). Absent that document, Center staff may release the child to either parent, provided that parent documents his paternity/her maternity of the child.

To assure the safety of our staff and children, Center staff members will not become involved in or referee custody and visitation difficulties between parents of any child left in our care. Should a dispute arise on Center premises, a staff member will call the UIC Police to intervene. Staff members will make every attempt to work with both the

parents and the child(ren) to ensure a smooth transition between home and school. However, if the situation becomes administratively disruptive to the Center, the child will be withdrawn from the program.

It is always helpful for you to introduce your child's teachers and/or the administrators to other persons who may occasionally pick up your child. We also ask that you talk with your child about any different arrangements made for pick up in order to prepare your child for a change in the daily routine and to ease the departure from the Center.

Reporting Absences and Changes in Your Child's Schedule

Because consistency in daily routines is so important to young children, parents and teachers need to communicate openly and frequently about the schedule that works best for them, their child, and the classroom.

All parents are expected to adhere to the daily schedule agreed upon at the time of enrollment. We ask parents to inform teachers of changes in their child's normal routine, particularly if it affects their day at the Center. This may include planned or unexpected absences and earlier or later arrival or pick-up times. A brief call to the teachers, or an email to an administrator, will help us prepare your child for the change, make adequate staffing plans, and/or inform other children that your child will be absent. It is especially important that you let us know if your child will have a longer day at the Center. A child anticipates his/her parent's arrival and can become worried or anxious if not picked up at the usual time.

PROGRAM WITHDRAWAL

When a parent decides to withdraw a child from the program, we appreciate as much advance notice as possible. Keep in mind that the Children's Center requires a minimum of two weeks notice be given to the director or assistant director. Advance notice allows the teachers to prepare the children for this important change, and for budgetary reasons, gives the center time to enroll another child into the program. **Parents who do not provide the Center with the minimum notice must pay fees for a two-week period after notice is given, even if the child no longer attends.**

There are instances in which the Center director must decide that a child's participation in the program is not appropriate. This could be due to a child's continued disruptive behavior, inability to adjust to the program, seriously past-due fees, or chronic lateness. The child will then be withdrawn from the program, with two weeks notice when possible.

SEPARATION

Learning to be away from a parent or other caregiver for short periods of time is a major developmental task for three- to five-year-old children. Each child's methods and ability to cope with brief separations are different. At the Children's Center, teachers make every effort to help each child become a part of the classroom, but the parent is the key person in the transition from home to school.

Parents of newly enrolling children (or other persons with a close relationship to the child) are asked to remain at the Center during the first few days. Some children need their parent for only one or two mornings; others need a longer time before they are able to stay without the parent present. Parents and teachers will make a progress plan for each day during the period of initial separation and adjustment to the classroom.

Some children seem to handle the beginning of their school experience with ease and later have difficulty in entering the classroom and letting their parents leave. By working closely together, parents and teachers can develop strategies for helping children separate and feel confidence in themselves and their teachers.

Naptime is another time when young children experience feelings of separation. As they rest quietly on their cots, children are away from their parents, their class friends, and their teachers for a short time. During this quiet time, children often think about their parents and home, and separation feelings may resurface.

Young children also experience separation as they leave their classroom and the Center each day. Some children say goodbye cheerfully, while others need help with ending their day and preparing to leave. Children often need time to finish what they are doing. A child may also need his/her parent to wait, just as the child has waited for the parent's return.

Please talk with your child's teachers should you or your child feel uncomfortable with your reunion at the end of the day. Together you can make plans that, hopefully, will ease the transition at the end of the day. And please don't feel embarrassed if your child seems unhappy when you arrive. Almost all young children experience a range of feelings when reuniting with their parent, including sadness and anger.

Parents are encouraged to talk with their child's teachers about separation experiences and issues, including their own feelings of being away from their child. These discussions often lead to good classroom adjustments and experiences for both children and adults.

TRANSITIONING BETWEEN CLASSROOMS

A child is transitioned from one of our younger classrooms to our older classroom when there is an opening in the older classroom **and** a child who has reached the minimum age demonstrates physical, social-emotional, and cognitive abilities to be successful with the change. Typically, this transition happens at the beginning of the school year or semester. Before a move is made, families are consulted for feedback. When both families and staff agree to the move, a transition plan will be established and shared with parents/guardians. The plan will include a schedule for visiting the new classroom and a designated first day.

DAILY CONTACT

Parents and teachers have brief daily contacts as children are brought to and picked up from the classrooms each day. These are important times, as valuable information is exchanged about the day's events.

We strongly believe in maintaining open lines of communication, and your child's teachers want to hear from you. Please inform us of any events in your child's life that may affect his or her behavior, such as serious illness or death in the family (including pets), an expected new baby, separation of parents, visiting grandparents, travel plans, etc. We may be able to help your child during such times, as well as understand what s/he may be going through.

Unfortunately, arrival and departure times may not be adequate for lengthy and/or private conversations with your child's teachers. Parents who wish to speak with their child's teachers during the day should keep in mind that teachers are in their classrooms with the children most of the day. The optimal time to reach the teachers by telephone is between 1:30 and 2:45, during the children's nap/rest time. Teachers are able to speak briefly by telephone at other times. Parents may communicate with teaching staff via email, please allow 24 hours for classroom teachers to respond.

Staff may also phone or email parents to let them know about happenings throughout your child's day. Parents and teachers who work together create a community in which children feel valued and significant.

COMMUNICATING GENERAL INFORMATION

While we like to speak to parents directly about most issues, at times it is quicker and simpler to post a general notice. Please check the following resources regularly:

Hallway Bulletin Board- In the main hallway there is a bulletin board for posting notices to parents about the Center, the University, and general parent/child information. You will find the menu, a variety of articles and forms, including licensing information, bulletins about contagious illnesses, information on campus assistance to parents, and other resources available to you (community events, parenting tips, articles, books, etc.). If you would like to post something on the hallway board, please ask the assistant director.

Classroom Doors- Teachers use the classroom door to post highlights from the day, special events, classroom newsletters, & sign-up sheets for events like parent meetings and parent teacher conferences.

Classroom Bulletin Board- Each classroom has a bulletin board where they post the classroom's schedule, weekly lesson plan, & current menu. In addition, you can also find a copy of the Center Parent Handbook for your reference. Please ask your child's teachers to point out the parent bulletin board in the classroom.

Monthly Newsletters- Each month parents will receive 2 electronic newsletters. The Center newsletter, written by the assistant director, includes center wide events, dates to remember, and timely parent resources. Additionally, parents will receive a classroom newsletter written by their classroom teaching team. This newsletter includes information & pictures pertaining to the current topic the group is studying, suggestions to support a home/school connection, classroom community events, & relevant reminders.

Friday Emails – Each Friday afternoon, teachers email families with highlights from the current week, share the lesson plan for the upcoming week, and classroom specific reminders.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time twice during each school year. Conferences are typically scheduled between 1:30 and 3:00. For off-campus parents who wish to participate and cannot make it we are happy to include them via conference call or video call (eg. Facetime or Skype). Additional conferences may be scheduled at the request of either parents or teachers. During conferences, parents and teachers have more time and privacy for relaying information and concerns.

Conferences offer an opportunity for parents and teachers to exchange information. Often parents want to know what their child is like in the classroom, and teachers get a more complete picture of each child from the parents' observations and experiences. During conferences, teachers will attempt to make your child's experiences and discoveries visible through photographs and work samples. Parents and teachers will also jointly set and revisit goals for their child. Goal setting & conference summary materials will be signed by teachers and parents, shared with parents, and will become part of a child's Children's Center file.

When teachers or administrators have concerns about a child, they will discuss their concerns with that child's parent(s) and together develop a plan for addressing those concerns. Sometimes the plan may be simply to wait and see. Other times a new strategy may be tried in the classroom, at home, or both places. Additionally, teachers may recommend an evaluation by a competent professional who is knowledgeable about the growth and development of young children. By working together, parents and teachers can help children cope better with both developmental tasks and life's events.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Parents and extended family members are welcome to visit at any time their child is at the Center. Sometimes, however, unexpected visits can be difficult for a child or the group of children. We encourage parents to let teachers know when they would like to spend time in their child's classroom to observe, to have lunch or snack, or to volunteer by reading stories, carrying out an activity with the children, or helping on a field trip.

The UIC Children's Center Parent Partnership is an advisory group open to all parents who would like to participate. The purpose of the Parent Partnership is to: establish a reciprocal support and communication system between home and school; discuss the needs of young children and how they can best be met; provide opportunities for parents and staff to share information and problem-solve; and discuss curriculum goals and Center accomplishments. Meetings are held 1-2 times per school year.

Several times throughout the school year, you will be invited to attend special events. Some may be Center-wide, such as potluck dinners or picnics, and others may be classroom-related, such as curriculum meetings, sing-a-longs, children's art shows, or story dramatizations. Occasionally we offer parent support and/or education groups to address common parental concerns such as discipline, nutrition, or health issues. We want parents to participate as often as they are able or interested, but we also understand that the lives of working and/or studying parents are busy and complex! Our goal is to include parents in whatever ways work best for each family.

At the end of each school year, or upon withdrawal from the program, all parents are asked to assist us in evaluating and assessing our program by completing a

comprehensive questionnaire. Your fulfillment of this request not only gives you a voice in expressing your level of satisfaction with your child's school, but it also enables us to maintain our accreditation and strive for continuous improvement. Goals for the following school year are established based on data received from the questionnaire. We appreciate your serious consideration in evaluating the service we have provided you over the course of the year.

TUITION

The Center's operating budget is based upon fees paid by the parents of enrolled children, a University subsidy, participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and other grants and contracts.

Weekly tuition is based on 5 full days and is determined by enrollment, not the number of days or hours attended. The Children's Center does not offer a part-time tuition rate. Tuition is charged for 48 weeks unless an optional week is used (see below) or early withdrawal is requested (**See Program Withdrawal Pg. 15**). Weekly tuition is determined at enrollment and reviewed prior to the fall semester each year. Parents are required to sign an annual tuition agreement which states the weekly fee to be paid, the agreed upon payment schedule (weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, or semester), and withdrawal policies.

Tuition rates are assessed on a sliding scaled based upon a family's gross income before taxes including other financial resources. In order to verify household income and determine a family's tuition all families must submit one of the following:

- Most recent 1040/W-2 for each household member
- 2 current paystubs issued within previous 30 days
- Additional proof of income will be accepted with the director's approval

Tuition may also be re-evaluated at any time there is a change in the family's income and financial resources. Any deviation from the Center's tuition scale requires the Center director's approval.

All tuition and fee payments are made through the University of Illinois QuikPay system. Tuition must be paid using a major credit card or eCheck. The link to the QuikPay system is located on the Center's website. Following payment the QuikPay system will generate a reference number and email which serves as a receipt of payment. The director keeps the Center's fee records, and will give updated tuition payment information to parents as requested.

Parents who are unable to pay their tuition on the plan agreed upon in the service agreement should speak to the director to establish a temporary plan for payment. Children will not be allowed to continue in the program into the next semester or

summer session if tuition is in arrears. Space in the program will not be held for a child whose parent(s) have not paid past-due tuition. Parents who are behind in their payments will receive a written reminder. Those who fail to respond will be given a two-week notice that their child will be withdrawn from the program for failure to pay tuition. Because tuition is an obligation to the University of Illinois, payroll deductions and financial aid funds can be secured by the Bursar's Office. An encumbrance will be placed on the academic records of those parents who are or have been UIC students.

Upon the initial decision to enroll a child (and by the end of each spring semester thereafter), parents are asked to pay a deposit of the annual registration fee and the first week's tuition. This **non-refundable** deposit reserves a child's place in the program and lets the administration know how many places will be available for new children. Space will not be held for a child without this deposit. Please discuss your questions about the deposit with either the director or assistant director.

OPTIONAL WEEK

Parents may request one week as "optional" throughout the school year (August-July). During the optional week a child does not attend the program, and tuition fees will not be charged for that week. If the child attends any days during that week, the full weekly tuition will be charged. In order to request an optional week, a written request (center form or email) must be submitted in advance. Keep in mind an optional week is for planned absences (example spring break), and must be taken from a Monday through the following Friday.

CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Children's Center accepts families participating in the Illinois Department of Human Services Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). Parents are responsible for the initial application, change of provider, and redetermination process, as well as submitting any required documents to *Action for Children*. 50% of the assigned weekly tuition will be collected until the subsidy is approved **in writing**. Upon approval parents will be responsible to pay their monthly co-payment according to the procedures outlined above. There is a minimum amount that the Children's Center must collect each month based on a family's assessed weekly tuition. Any shortfall must be made up by the parent out-of-pocket. If at any point a parent is dropped from the CCAP program, s/he will be responsible for fees based upon the agreed tuition amount. Information regarding the CCAP program can be found on the Children's Center website on the Family Resources page.

FOOD SERVICE AT THE CHILDREN'S CENTER

Daily lunches as well as morning and afternoon snacks are catered by the contractor providing dining services at the University. Food is delivered daily. Weekly menus are posted on the hallway bulletin board, in each classroom, and on the Center's website; substitutions are sometimes made. Lunch includes an entree, vegetable, salad (or another vegetable), bread, fruit, and 1% milk. The Center serves a variety of foods with the **EXCLUSION** of: pork, preserved meats (such as hot dogs), whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, or foods with added sugar. Additional safety precautions are taken to reduce choking by also not serving nut spreads by the spoonful or chunks of raw carrots.

Morning snack is offered beginning at 9:30 am and afternoon snack is offered beginning at 3:00 pm. For children attending the Late Room there is a light snack offered as well.

Lunch is served between 11:30-12:00 depending on the classroom, and served family-style. Children serve themselves and select the amount of food they want to eat. Teachers eat with the children, assisting them as needed and encouraging them to taste new foods. Mealtimes are both for nutrition and conversation, with the goal of having a relaxed enjoyable eating experience. Children are not required to eat more than they want. Food is never used as a reward or punishment at the Center.

Please discuss any food allergies or other food restrictions your child may have with the assistant director and classroom teachers. Food substitutions for personal reasons must be documented in writing. Food substitutions related to medical conditions must be documented and signed by a doctor using a *Medical (or other) Exception Statement for Food Substitution* form available from the assistant director. In order to protect children with food allergies from contact with the problem food, we ask parents to give consent to post information about the child's food allergy and possible allergic reactions as a visual reminder to all those who interact with the child during the day.

The Children's Center participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, a U.S. Department of Agriculture program administered by the Illinois State Board of Education. In the operation of child feeding programs, no child will be discriminated against because of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any United States Department of Agriculture-related activity should write immediately to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250.

As a participant in the Child and Adult Food Care Program we are required to serve a protein for lunch, as well as 1% milk. Daily meals are planned with a non-animal protein substitution listed on the menu. Additionally, we try to plan one or two meals per week without animal protein (e.g., grilled cheese, bean burritos). All non-dairy milk substitutes must be nutritionally equivalent to milk and provided by the parent. Please talk with the assistant director for more details.

Parents are welcome to join their child's class for lunch. Please let your child's teachers know in advance when you would like to have lunch with the group.

If you have any concerns about your child's eating habits, please share them with the teachers. And don't be surprised if your child eats a previously disliked food at the Center. Sometimes it helps if a friend tastes and likes it!

COOKING ACTIVITIES AND SPECIAL SNACKS

The Children's Center strives to provide nutritious meals and snacks to the children, including classroom cooking activities. Teachers provide a variety of recipes for the children to use in preparing food for their classmates to enjoy. These recipes contain no added sugar or reduced amounts of sugar. It is important for young children to learn that special treats can be good tasting, good for them, and fun to prepare!

Parents who wish to bring a special snack for the class should keep in mind that the food should contain no added sugar. Examples of nutritious snacks include fresh fruit and vegetables or dried fruit (such as raisins). Foods which reflect the family's culture are particularly appreciated and help us learn more about one another's cultures.

The exception to the Center's no-added-sugar policy is on a child's birthday when parents are asked to bring a small packaged, store-bought birthday cake or cupcakes to be enjoyed by the birthday child and his/her classmates. You are invited to join the class for afternoon snack when your child's birthday is observed. Please talk with your child's teachers about your schedule and plans (See **Observing Birthdays and Holidays, p. 28**).

CHILDREN'S CENTER POLICY STATEMENTS

The Center has established a number of policies concerning program and classroom practices. The Center director has developed these policies, often with the assistance of the Children's Center Parent Partnership, and in keeping with University and state licensing regulations.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

The purpose of all discipline at the Center is to help children develop self-control and become responsible for their own behavior. We are committed to helping children become part of their group by learning to express feelings appropriately, to consider other people's feelings, and to negotiate their own conflicts and differences.

We use non-punitive methods of discipline which are directly related to the child's behavior and encourage his/her participation. We ask the child to think about the problematic behavior and to find ways to remedy the situation. This approach depends upon cooperation and negotiation and requires the adult to maintain a non-punitive attitude.

The following actions are strictly prohibited at the Children's Center:

- ✓ Corporal punishment, including hitting, spanking, swatting, beating, shaking, pinching, and other measures intended to induce physical pain or fear;
- ✓ Threatened or actual withdrawal of food, rest, or use of the bathroom;
- ✓ Abusive and profane language;
- ✓ Any form of public or private humiliation, including threats of physical punishment;
- ✓ Any form of emotional abuse, including shaming, rejecting, terrorizing, or isolating a child. *(Section 407.270 IL Dept. of Children & Family Services Licensing Standards for Daycare Centers)*

If a staff member, parent, or any other adult engages in any of the above-mentioned prohibited practices while at the Center, the director will take necessary steps to ensure that there is no reoccurrence of the practice.

Teachers observe all children and document any problem behavior to help ascertain any patterns or precipitating factors. Teachers will communicate behavior concerns to parents as soon as they are observed, as well as the actions taken to rectify the situation.

Should a child exhibit disruptive and unsafe behavior on a continual basis that is not resolved through appropriate behavior management strategies, teachers will discuss the situation with a supervisor and parents to develop a plan of action in working with the child.

Staff will keep parent(s) informed of progress in resolving the problem. If staff members feel that additional assistance is needed, they may **with parental permission** consult community resource persons and/or refer the child for an evaluation. If the results of an outside evaluation suggest the need for accommodations for special needs, the program will provide these or other appropriate accommodations as long as they do not place undue hardship on the program, as outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

All reasonable attempts will be made to work with the child and the family to resolve the behavior problem. If parent(s) refuse to work with the staff in resolving the problem and/or the child's placement in the classroom compromises the health, safety, and/or well-being of other children or staff members, enrollment will be terminated. In this case, parent(s) will be given two weeks written notice of withdrawal except where such

notice is not reasonable because of safety concerns. Staff will try to assist the parent(s) in selecting an alternate program. Written documentation of all of the above steps will be provided to the parent(s) upon request and placed in the child's file.

TOILETING ROUTINES

In order to be enrolled at UIC Children's Center, youngsters must be toilet trained. Each child is expected to use the children's restroom for his/her classroom, with doors remaining open at all times. Children should not use the adult bathroom. Children may use the toilet as needed, but are reminded by their teachers to do so before and after playground time, lunch, and nap/rest time.

Children may go unescorted to the bathroom. A teacher will supervise when several children are waiting, or when an adult is otherwise needed. Children are discouraged from playing in the bathroom or remaining there after hand-washing routines are completed.

Children are expected to lower their own clothing in order to use the toilet. The teacher will assist when necessary, especially with buttons, snaps, zippers, belts, etc. Likewise, children are expected to clean themselves afterwards and to wash their hands before returning to the classroom.

Parents are asked to dress their children in clothing which is easy for a young child to manage unassisted and to keep a complete change of clothing at the Center in case of toileting "accidents" or other soiling occurrences. In those instances, children are expected to change their own clothing in the children's restroom, with the teacher providing assistance only when needed and with the child's permission.

When a child requests to use the toilet during playground time, a teacher will accompany him/her to the children's restroom and wait for the child before returning to the playground.

Teachers will assist a child who has specific toileting problems, such as diarrhea, by first encouraging the child to clean his/her own body as much as possible and then asking the child if he/she needs the teacher's help. This is in order to give the child as much control as possible over the cleaning procedure. If the situation requires contact of a personal nature, the teacher will ask the assistant director or another staff member to be present. The teacher will inform the child's parent without delay that such assistance has been provided. When it is necessary for a teacher to assist a child in any unusual circumstance, the teacher will follow up by calling a parent and completing an accident/incident report and submitting it to the assistant director. Center staff will discuss particular toileting problems with the assistant director and the child's parent. **A child who is not toilet trained may not remain in the program.**

All adults (including parents, staff, and visitors) must use the adult bathroom and not those assigned to children. Additional adult bathrooms are located just outside of the Children's Center in the main building; staff will be happy to show you where.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL PROCEDURES

Children's Center staff members take care to ensure each child's safety and well-being while at the Center, but children may become ill or injured. In the event of a medical emergency, Children's Center staff will follow these procedures:

1. Assess the immediate situation and determine if the child is ill or injured, the extent of the injury, and whether first aid is needed to assure breathing, control bleeding, and limit further injury.
2. Determine a course of action, including notifying the parent and contacting University Police for paramedic services (if needed) to transport the child (accompanied by a parent or teacher) to the UIC Hospital emergency room. All parents are required to sign an emergency medical authorization allowing staff to obtain emergency medical treatment in the parent's absence.
3. Staff may use the following procedures with a child:
 - a. Wash a minor cut, scrape, or puncture with soap and water and apply a bandage.
 - b. Apply ice to a bump to reduce swelling and bruising.
 - c. Ask a child to sit or lie quietly until the parent arrives. An adult will remain with the child until the parent arrives.
 - d. Use first aid, such as the Heimlich maneuver, mouth-to-mouth breathing, and application of pressure at the point of bleeding. Disposable gloves will be used if a child is bleeding; a microshield will be used for mouth-to-mouth breathing.
 - e. Administer prescription medication when authorized in writing by the parent; for example, for an asthma attack.

Parents will always be informed by teachers immediately (by telephone) if the illness or injury is serious, or at the end of the day for a minor injury. Parents are expected to come to the Center without delay if requested by staff. Emergency contacts may also be called when a parent cannot be located.

Parents are required to carry health care insurance for their child(ren). The Center is not responsible for medical costs due to illness or injuries that occur at the Center. The administrative staff has available information regarding State of Illinois health care

assistance for families. Children without medical insurance must be withdrawn from the Center.

CHILDREN WHO ARE ILL

The Children's Center strives to provide a healthful environment for enrolled children, parents, staff, and visitors. Children and staff (including volunteers) must present a current medical report upon joining the Center and every two years thereafter.

Medical documentation must be provided on an Illinois Department of Children and Family Services form given at the time of enrollment. The form must be signed by a medical doctor and show that the child has had an exam as well as a TB skin test & lead test within six months of enrollment. An up-to date immunization record is also required. Additional reports from a health care provider may be necessary in order to return to the Center following a contagious disease, serious injury, or extended illness.

Due to staffing limitations, the Center is unable to care for a child who is ill or has a fever and is, therefore, unable to participate in the daily program. Because young children who are ill need parental comfort and care, when a child becomes ill while at the Center, the parent(s) or person designated by the parent will be contacted and requested to pick up the child. **Parents should not bring an ill child to the Center as staff will be unable to accept him/her that day.** Should a child become ill while at school staff will provide a space (classroom or administrator's office), supervision (teacher or administrator) , and comfort until a parent/guardian arrives.

Many childhood diseases are contagious and easily spread in group care. When someone at the Center has a contagious disease (other than a cold), a notice will be emailed and posted to advise parents of the occurrence of the disease and its usual symptoms. Parents should bring written authorization from a health care provider upon the child's return to the Center following a contagious disease or extended illness.

Children's Center staff may not give a child non-prescription drugs. This includes sunscreen, bug spray, hand lotion, and lip balm. Staff may administer medication prescribed by a doctor for that particular child, with written authorization from the parent. This is done by means of a form (available from the teachers or assistant director) that calls for specific information and instructions on how and when the medication is to be given. The prescription label must be affixed to the original container for the medication. In the case of sunscreen, bug spray, hand lotion, and lip balm, authorization must come from a health care provider on an official prescription pad or stationery and clearly labeled with the child's name. Notes may be faxed to the Center. All medications, non-prescription as well as prescription, should be given to the teacher for appropriate storage. **Please do not leave medication of any type in your child's backpack or cubby.**

Parents are encouraged to discuss specific health concerns or problems with their child's teachers or the assistant director. When consulting with their health care provider for advice on a particular illness or disease, it is important for parents to inform him/her that their child is enrolled in group care.

The best way to reduce the transmission of infectious disease is to practice proper hand washing procedures. Children are taught hand washing techniques and are monitored and/or assisted by the teachers. All children and adults are asked to wash their hands upon arrival into the classroom each day, before eating, after using the toilet, after handling bodily fluids (e.g., blowing or wiping a nose, coughing on a hand, touching any mucus, blood, or vomit), before and after water table play, before preparing and/or serving food, before administering medication, and after cleaning and/or handling garbage.

OBSERVING BIRTHDAYS AND HOLIDAYS

Each child's birthday is recognized by Children's Center staff as a special day for that youngster, as well as for his/her classmates and teachers. The birthday celebration, however, is purposefully kept simple and child-centered. The birthday child's parent(s) is asked to bring either a simple packaged, store-bought birthday cake or cupcakes to be shared with the classroom group during afternoon snack. His/her parent(s) are also invited to take part by joining the children and teachers for snack.

Because birthdays, as well as other special days, are observed in a low-keyed manner at the Center, parents are asked to **not** bring ice cream, gum, nuts, balloons, party favors, decorations, or gifts. The child's birthday observance at the Center is not intended to take the place of each family's special observance at home.

The same low-keyed, child-centered approach is also taken during observances of holidays. The cultural and ethnic aspects of holidays, rather than the religious, are emphasized as Center staff plan activities for the classrooms. We tend to "observe" rather than "celebrate" holidays, in order to keep the activities educationally oriented and appropriate to the children's developmental levels. Too often special holiday activities for young children seem geared more to the adults' needs and expectations than to those of the children. The result is frequently an overwhelmed, confused child.

The Center's approach to holidays and birthdays should not be construed as simply ignoring or not observing such occasions. Much social knowledge is learned and a sense of community develops among the children through such observances. And they can be just plain fun!

It is Center policy that families and staff do **not** exchange gifts at the Center. The purpose of this policy is to avoid the problems that inevitably occur in a group setting

when gifts are exchanged, such as competition and expectations for favored treatment. Families wishing to express their thanks to Center staff are encouraged to do so verbally or in writing, rather than through material gifts. Occasionally a child may wish to give his/her teacher(s) a gift. Parents are asked to suggest to their child that he/she draw a picture or make some other token of affection or appreciation for the teacher(s).

While gifts to the Center are not solicited from parents, those who wish to make a monetary or material donation to the Children's Center should discuss their interest with the Center director, who is responsible for determining if the contribution can be accepted on behalf of the Center. All contributions accepted will be acknowledged and processed according to the University's gift-reporting procedures.

PHOTOGRAPHS, VIDEO RECORDINGS, TECHNOLOGY AND INTERACTIVE MEDIA

Throughout the year, the UIC Children's Center will photograph or videotape your child participating in Center activities. Photographs and video recordings are used in classrooms to document participation in learning experiences, preparation of child portfolios, observational processes, developmental assessment strategies, and similar purposes. Additionally, photographs may be printed or appear in promotional materials such as brochures, our website, or display boards. Photographs may also be shared in publications such as a Center newsletter and occasionally other UIC related publications. Children's names will not be used publicly without specific written permission from a parent or legal guardian. Upon enrollment parents will be asked to specify permission as to where/how the Children's Center may use photographs and video images of their child.

Recordings made in classrooms are also used as a professional development tool. By reviewing specifically recorded portions of the day, teachers and their supervisors can reflect on teaching styles/strategies, and in turn improve teaching practices. Additionally, early childhood practicum students may need to record their interactions with children to complete coursework. Parents will be asked to give separate written permission for such recordings. All use of video equipment and related recordings are coordinated by the assistant director.

We ask that parents **not** take photographs or record while in the classroom. While we understand that some parents enjoy recording their child at school, other parents specifically request that their child **not** be recorded or photographed by anyone other than a staff member. If you would like to take a picture of a special occasion (such as your child's birthday celebration), please discuss it beforehand with a teacher. With the

teacher's permission, a parent may take a picture of the child with his/her teacher(s) and/or parent(s), as long as no other children are in the photograph.

When used intentionally and appropriately, technology & its related applications can be effective tools to support learning and development. When considering the use of technology in the classroom, the Children's Center follows the guidelines presented in the position statement: Technology and Interactive Media as Tools in Early Childhood Programs, written jointly by the National Association for the Education of Young Children & the Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children's media. At no time does our curriculum support children passively watching commercial television or movies. Teachers will use classroom I-pads to support research on a given classroom topic, and children in the oldest classroom work in pairs to take turns on the classroom desktop. CD players and digital cameras are also classroom tools that allow children to experience interacting with technology. The full position statement can be found at http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/PS_technology_WEB.pdf

RESEARCH GUIDELINES

UIC Children's Center, the early childhood education program at the University of Illinois at Chicago, recognizes the value of and supports ethical research with and for the benefit of young children. The Center has served and continues to serve as a research site. The following guidelines are to be adhered to in considering research proposals and in monitoring research carried out at the Center.

Research at UIC Children's Center may be done not only by UIC faculty and students, but also by researchers from other recognized institutions.

Research carried out at the Center must meet the Research Guidelines of UIC Children's Center and those of the UIC Institutional Review Board--Protection of Human Subjects. The Center is a small one and may be unable to accommodate simultaneous multiple research. Preference will be given to research which directly benefits the Center.

Parents of children at the Center will be advised of all research done at the Center. Public notice of research focused on the total classroom will be given by means of a bulletin board notice at the Center, the Center's newsletter, etc. Individual notices and signed parental permission forms are required when individual children are to be interviewed and/or tested. No exceptions will be made regarding the need for individual written permission for participation in the aforementioned research activities. Parental authorization in writing is required for the use of video recording or a child's picture, including still photographs, moving pictures, and videotapes.

The child must be willing to participate in the individual interview, observation, and/or test. No coercion, directly or indirectly, shall be applied to the child, and he/she may withdraw from the research activity at any time.

Research activities must not disrupt the classroom schedule or activities. During the research there must be no activity or attitude that could be harmful to the child, physically or emotionally, as in his/her sense of well-being and self-esteem. The Center director ultimately is responsible for monitoring all research in progress at the Center and for determining whether the research activity or the researcher's attitude toward the child is considered harmful.

Identifying information, such as the child's name, may not be used by the researcher. Research data shall be coded or names otherwise disguised. No individual test scores and/or results are to be given to the Center's staff, but summarized results of the findings, without identifying information, are expected upon completion of the research activities at the Center.

The Center's records are not open to the researcher. All information about the child and/or the family must be obtained from his/her parent(s). Necessary information may be obtained by questionnaires and/or interviews with the child's parent(s).

UIC Children's Center is to receive a citation or other appropriate acknowledgment for published research findings from research activities completed at the Center.

CELL PHONE FREE ENVIRONMENT

Our classrooms are a cell phone-free environment for all adults, including staff, students and parents. We ask parents not to use cell phones at arrival or departure times in order to maximize opportunities for parent-child and staff-parent communication. This allows Staff to share critical daily information about children without the distraction or interruption of cell phones. You are welcome to use your cell phone in conference room. Please do not use your cell phone in the hallways or classrooms. Your cooperation with our cell-phone free policy is GREATLY appreciated by staff and your child.

CHILD CARE OFF-CAMPUS

Our teachers are experienced professionals who provide high quality confidential services to families. Standards of ethics in Early Childhood Education suggest that teachers should refrain from privately providing child care or "babysitting" for families currently enrolled. We ask that you not seek out paid staff members for the purpose of providing child care in your home or on campus.

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT

UIC Children's Center has a contract agreement with an outside pest management service to provide a monthly integrated pest management program that adheres to the principles of IPM as defined by the Illinois Department of Public Health. A binder containing documents related to service, MSDS sheets, and IPM recommendations can be found in the assistant director's office. All extermination and routine maintenance services are done before or after Center hours of operation and not in the presence of children.

RELEASE OF INFORMATION ABOUT ENROLLED CHILDREN

All information regarding children and families of the Children's Center is regarded as confidential and the property of the Center and the families involved. Students, researchers, or other visitors who conduct observations or studies at the Children's Center are not provided with personal information about children or families. Staff of the Children's Center will provide information about a child enrolled in the program only to that child's parent or legal guardian. Parents who anticipate needing information released to schools, physicians, social-service agencies, etc., should notify the assistant director well in advance, when possible. Written authorization from the parent or legal guardian is required before the Center will release any information to third parties.

Under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), records related to children and their families are to be shared with other staff or University officials only if that person has a legitimate educational interest (i.e., on a "need to know" basis only). Requests from third parties, including outside agencies, must be evaluated by the Center director. If necessary and appropriate, University counsel will be consulted before any disclosure is made. Information will not be released over the telephone to a child's relative or a parent whom we have not met. In most cases, information cannot be disclosed to any third party without the written consent of the child's parent or legal guardian.

As required by the Illinois Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, teachers and directors must report suspected child abuse or neglect and provide information to representatives of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services if they suspect that a child is being abused or neglected or if contacted during an investigation of such a report. These reports are always handled confidentially within the Children's Center program.

As a way to support friendships outside of the Children's Center, a yearly Family Roster is created and shared with families of the children participating in our program. Parents/guardians are asked for permission to participate and what specific contact information (cell phone number and/or email) they would like included in the directory. Participation is voluntary.

CENTER FORMS

Enrollment Forms (signed by parent/guardian and kept in child's file):

- **Certificate of Child Health Examination-** form used for a child's initial physical required for enrollment in the program. It will be returned every two years for an updated physical exam.
- **Child Information Form-**form completed by a family to help Center staff learn more about a child development and family's expectations.
- **Emergency Medical Care-**form used to authorize emergency medical treatment in the absence of a parent/guardian.
- **Child Release Authorization-** List of authorize individuals that may pick-up a child in addition to a parent/guardian. Emergency contact information is also provided.
- **Consent Form-**Parental consent regarding receipt of parent handbook, walking field-trips, participation in the family roster, & photo/video consent.
- **Consent for Developmental Screenings-**guidelines related to yearly developmental screenings used at the Children's Center.
- **Discipline Policy-**outlines the purpose, guidelines, strictly prohibited behaviors, and procedures related to discipline at the Children's Center. Parents are asked to sign this form indicating that they have read, understood, and agree to follow the Center's policy. (See **Discipline Policy**, p. 23).
- **Service Agreement-**outlines terms related to tuition, fees, optional week, & withdrawal policies. Signed at initial enrollment and at the beginning of the fall semester thereafter. A copy of the service agreement is given to parents upon completion.

Other regularly used forms:

- **Optional Week Request Form-** Located on hallway bulletin board. Alternately, optional week requests may be emailed to the director or assistant director. (See **Optional Week**, p. 21)
- **Authorization to Administer Prescribed Medication-** must be completed by the parent when a child is to be given prescribed medicine while at the Center.

Parent is asked complete each time their child needs a new medication or needs a new series of a previous medication. Teachers may not administer any medication unless a physician prescribes it and this form is completed. **This includes over-the-counter medications, lotions, bug spray, lip balm, etc.** This form is also used to record the dates and times the medication was given to your child. Teachers have the form available in the classroom.

- **Child and Adult Care Food Program Parent Application-** must be given to all parents of enrolled children. The Assistant Director will give you the CACFP parent application and letter at enrollment and annually each July. You will also be asked to update your application at any time there is a change in your household income.
- **Extended Care Registration Form-** Each semester parents whose work/school schedule necessitate that their child attend the Early Morning Room (7:00am-8:15) or the Late Room (5:15-6:00) are asked to register. Accurate registration is necessary to ensure proper child: teacher ratios.

THINGS TO KEEP (and not to keep) AT THE CENTER

To help your child feel more comfortable while at the Center, we ask you to bring a few things to keep in his/her cubby. Each child will need a full change of clothes, including a shirt, pants or shorts, underwear, and socks. Children get wet through water play, painting, spills, or bathroom accidents, and they often feel better when they can change into their own dry clothes. Younger children, or those newly enrolling, may need two sets of clothing. We encourage you to mark each item with your child's name. Please check your child's extra set of clothing periodically to assure that the clothing still fits and is appropriate for the current season.

While we provide a cot, cot sheet, and small blanket for your child's use at nap/rest time, many children like to have a soft toy, like a stuffed animal, to rest with on their cots. For reasons of sanitation and storage, we ask that your child NOT bring his or her own blanket or pillow.

Because things from home can be a source of comfort and reassurance to children, they may also bring other toys to play with at the Center. However, you will want to help your child think about the kinds of things he/she may bring. Toy guns, weapons, or toys containing weapons of any kind should not be brought to the Center. Because toys can easily be broken or lost, your child should not bring a treasured or expensive toy, game, or book. The Children's Center cannot be responsible for lost or stolen items. We ask that you also help your child regulate how many items from home they have at school. We recommend only one "home toy" at a time.

While children are not required to share their things from home, it is often difficult for classmates who may want to play with those items. Therefore, the teachers may ask your child to keep the toy in his/her cubby if the use of the toy causes conflicts with other children. Some children use toys as a means of entering into a playgroup or getting attention. Books are especially easy for children to allow others to look at and enjoy. Please feel free to talk to your child's teachers when you are unsure about toys or other possessions that your child may wish to bring to the Center.

We ask that you **not** allow your child to bring the following items to the Center: candy, gum, soft drinks, money, medications, or weapons (real or toy). Because we encourage children to create their own artwork and problems to be solved, we ask that coloring books, workbooks, etc., not be brought to the Center. We also ask that you not bring pacifiers, diapers or pull-ups, bottles, or sippy-cups to the Center. Remember, your child is about to transition out of toddlerhood and into the wonderful world of preschool!

PARENT RESOURCE LIBRARY The Children's Center has also developed a Parent Resource Library located directly outside of the assistant director's office. The library contains books on a variety of child-development topics, as well as family-related issues. Parents are welcome to check out books by following the checkout procedures posted in the library. Our Parent Resource Library also contains a variety of pamphlets and articles that you are welcome to take. If you are looking for a specific topic and do not see it, talk with the assistant director or your child's teachers. We will do our best to help get you the information.

FIELDTRIPS

As the weather warms up in the spring, classrooms begin to plan short morning fieldtrips. Trips are planned utilizing the rich opportunities here on campus (e.g., UIC Police Station, cafeteria) and in the surrounding neighborhood (e.g., parks, libraries). The Children's Center does not take trips that require us to travel a great distance from campus and all trips are walking field trips. In addition, children always enjoy visiting their parent's workplace. If you are interested in having your child's class come for a visit, talk with your child's teacher, who will help to plan the trip with you.

As part of the enrollment paperwork, parents are asked to give permission for their child to participate in walking fieldtrips. Parents are notified in advance of fieldtrips and are always welcome to join the class on trips.

PARKING

The designated place for parents to park is in our driveway at the west end of the building. **Our driveway is only accessible when you are driving NORTH on Damen.**

The driveway is for drop-off and pick-up only. Parents are not authorized to park for longer periods of time and those who do so risk a parking ticket from the UIC Police or Parking Enforcement staff.

If you chose to park in the circular drive in the front of the building on Taylor Street, please be advised that this is **NOT** our designated drop-off area and you are at risk of receiving a parking ticket from the City of Chicago Police.

NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

University of Illinois
Official Notice

NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The commitment of the University to the most fundamental principles of academic freedom, equality of opportunity, and human dignity requires that decisions involving students and employees be based on individual merit and be free from invidious discrimination in all its forms.

It is the policy of the University of Illinois not to engage in discrimination or harassment against any person because of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, disability, sexual orientation including gender identity, unfavorable discharge from the military, or status as a protected veteran and will comply with all federal and state nondiscrimination, equal opportunity and affirmative action laws, orders, and regulations. This nondiscrimination policy applies to admissions, employment, access to and treatment in the University programs and activities.

University complaint and grievance procedures provide employees and students with the means for the resolution of complaints that allege a violation of this Statement. Members of the public should direct their inquiries or complaints to the appropriate equal opportunity office.

For additional information or assistance with the equal opportunity, affirmative action, and harassment policies and procedures of the University of Illinois at Chicago, please contact:

Office for Access & Equity (M/C 602)
717 Marshfield Avenue Building
809 South Marshfield Avenue
Chicago, IL 60612-7207
(312) 996-8670

PUBLIC FORMAL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO

I. INTRODUCTION

These procedures have been implemented to address complaints of discrimination on the basis of age and/or disability in any activity, policy, rule, standard, or method of administration that is related to the operation of University's programs.

II. ELIGIBILITY

These procedures may be used by any member of the public who alleges age (Under the Age Discrimination Act) or disability (Under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act) discrimination on the basis of class. However, anyone who wishes to challenge a decision made about them by an agent of the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) in the course of their employment or enrollment at UIC must utilize the UIC Academic Grievance Procedures.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. GRIEVANCE: A written statement submitted by a Grievant identifying the activity, policy, rule, standard, or method of administration he/she claims to be discriminatory on the basis of age and/or disability and explaining the manner in which that activity, policy, rule, standard, or method of administration discriminates. All Grievances must be signed by the Grievant and must outline the Grievant's allegations in as much detail as possible.
- B. GRIEVANT: Any member of the public who submits a Grievance.
- C. GRIEVANCE OFFICER: The assigned investigator of the UIC Office for Access and Equity can be contacted at the address below:
Office for Access and Equity, MC 602
809 S. Marshfield Avenue, Room 718
Chicago, IL 60612-7207
(312) 996-8670 Fax (312) 413-0055
www.uic.edu/depts/oe
- D. APPEALS OFFICER: The Associate Chancellor for Access and Equity or his/her designee.
- E. DAYS: Any reference to "days" herein shall refer to business days (excluding weekends and federal holidays).
- F. RECORD: The complete record of a Grievance will consist of the original Grievance and any supporting information or documentation submitted with that Grievance, the Grievance Officer's findings, the Appeal (if any), and any additional information or documentation submitted with

the Appeal, the Appeal Officer's findings, and any communications and notices relative to the Grievance. The Record will be maintained for at least five (5) years following the final decision.

III. GRIEVANCE PROCESS

- A. FILING OF THE GRIEVANCE: The Grievant must file his/her Grievance with the Grievance Officer no later than ten (10) days after he/she becomes aware of the offending activity, policy, standard, or method of administration.
- B. INVESTIGATION: The Grievance Officer shall conduct an appropriate investigation of the issues raised in the Grievance. The Grievant shall be given an opportunity to submit any relevant evidence he/she may have to support the Grievance. Within fourteen days (14) of submission of the Grievance, the Grievance Officer shall issue his/her findings. In the event the Grievance Officer finds evidence of discrimination in the activity, policy, standard, or method of administration, he/she shall make recommendations for change(s) and shall coordinate the efforts for change(s) with the department/unit/college whose activity, policy, standard, or method of administration is at issue. Furthermore, in the event that the individual was adversely affected by a decision made pursuant to a discriminatory process, policy, activity, standard, or method of administration, the individual will be given the opportunity for the decision to be reconsidered according to the revised process, policy, etc. In those cases where the Grievance Officer finds no evidence of discrimination, he/she shall send written notice of that finding to the Grievant within that 14-day time period. Said notice shall inform the Grievant of his/her right to appeal the finding to the Appeals Officer within five (5) days of receipt of the notice.
- C. APPEAL: An appeal of the Grievance Officer's findings must be in writing and must state the basis for the appeal, providing any additional evidence or information that may support the Grievant's claim of discrimination. The Appeals Officer shall review the Grievance Officer's record and any information/evidence submitted with the Appeal and shall issue findings within ten (10) days of receipt of the appeal. In the event the Appeals Officer finds evidence of discrimination in the activity, policy, standard or method of administration, he/she shall make recommendations for changes. In those cases where the Appeals Officer finds no evidence of discrimination, he/she shall send written notice of that finding to the Grievant within that 10-day time period. There shall be no further levels of review or appeal beyond the Appeals Officer.
- D. DEVIATION FROM THE PROCESS: Upon proof of extenuating circumstances, the Chancellor (and only the Chancellor) may approve a deviation from these procedures (e.g., extension of a deadline).

(Effective date of policy is September 1, 2005)

Parent Handbook, revised December 2015, March 2017