



**NORTHWEST FLORIDA
STATE COLLEGE**

**THE MARY LOU O'CONNOR
CHILD DEVELOPMENT
& EDUCATION CENTER**

Florida License No. CO10K0018



Accredited by NAEYC's
National Academy
of Early Childhood Programs



MARY LOU O'CONNOR
CHILD DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION CENTER
AT
NORTHWEST FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE

"A Florida Gold Seal Child Care Program"



**Licensed by the
Florida Department of Children & Families**



**Accredited by the
National Academy of Early Childhood Programs**



Northwest Florida State College is dedicated to the concepts of equity and equal opportunity. It is the specific intention of the College not to discriminate on the basis of age, color, ethnicity, disability, marital status, national origin, race, pregnancy, religion, genetic information, or gender, in its employment practices or in the admission and treatment of students in its programs or activities. Materiales de la Universidad son disponibles en Española llamando a la Oficina de Admisiones de Northwest Florida State College al 850-729-5205.

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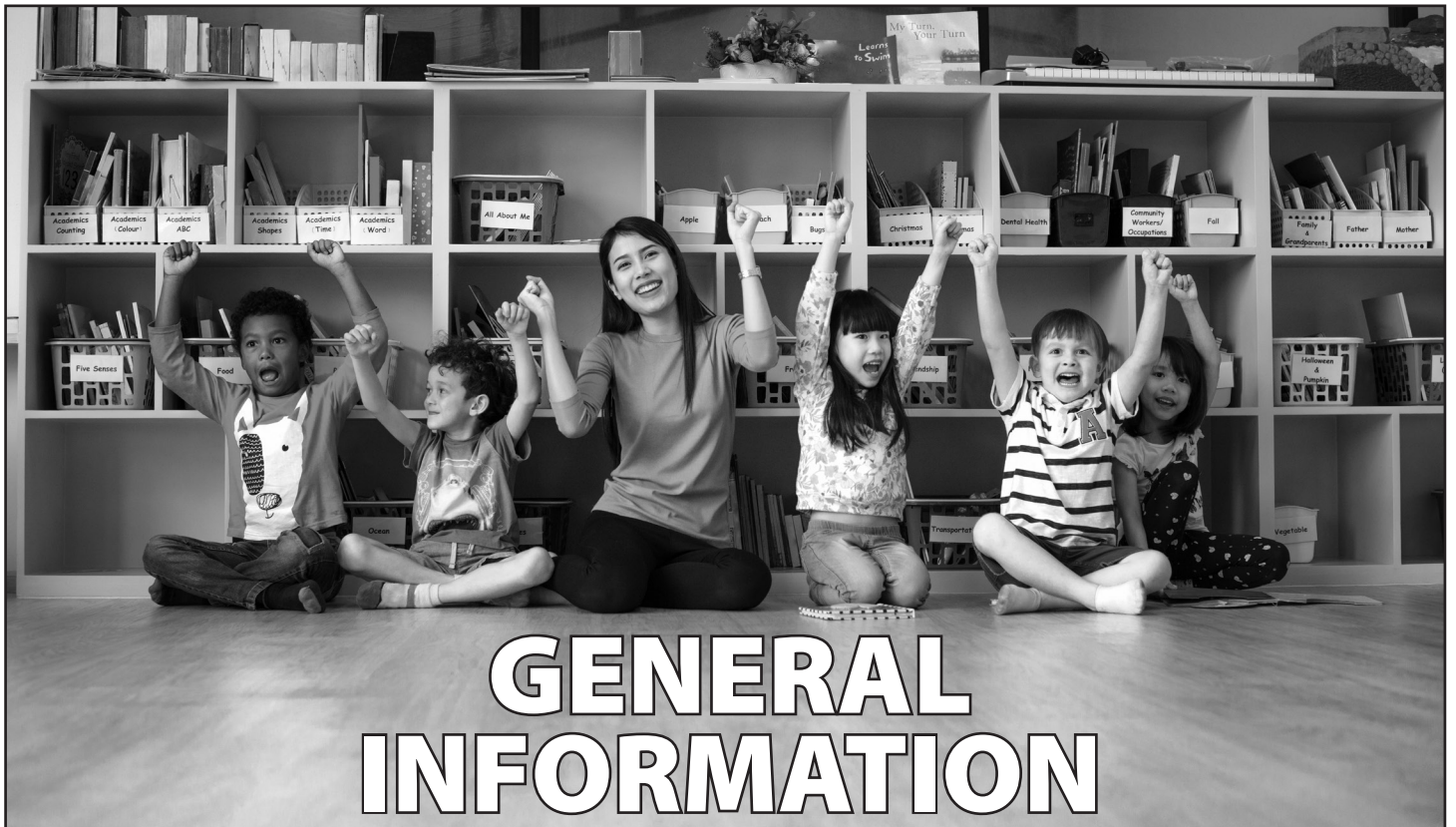
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NORTHWEST FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE

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Dear Families,

Welcome to the Child Development Education Center (CDEC) at Northwest Florida State College. We encourage you to take an active part in your child's development through participation in CDEC activities.

In comparison to other child care centers in our area, the CDEC has a unique mission. Over the past decade, colleges have played a major role in the child care movement. The need for quality care and the academic value of on-campus centers have been recognized as an important service to colleges and the surrounding communities. The CDEC is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Our priority is to serve NWF State College employees and students first and then community members on a space available basis. The CDEC, also, serves as a learning laboratory for early childhood education students.

The CDEC participates in Florida's voluntary prekindergarten (VPK) program. VPK is available free of charge to children who will be 4 years-old by September 1, 2023. The CDEC has been approved as a certified provider of VPK for the school year 2023-24.

Please familiarize yourself with policies and procedures by reading this Family Handbook thoroughly. Keep it in a convenient place so that you can refer to it as needed.

Welcome to NWF State College's Child Development and Education Center.

Sincerely,

Keicah Rouse
Director
Phone: (850) 729-5343
Email: rousek@nwfsc.edu

NWF State College Fort Walton Beach Campus • (850) 863-6500
Chautauqua Center, DeFuniak Springs • (850) 200-4100 Hurlburt Center, Hurlburt Field • (850) 200-4190
Robert L. F. Sikes Education Center, Crestview • (850) 200-4141 South Walton Center, Santa Rosa Beach • (850) 200-4160
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MISSION OF THE CDEC

The mission of the Child Development and Education Center is:

- To supply quality care and education for young children, ages 2 and a half to 5 years.
- To provide parents who are Northwest Florida State College students, staff, and faculty (and community members on a space available basis) with quality, accessible child care and education for their children.
- To ensure a quality training site for child development/early childhood education students.



PHILOSOPHY OF THE CDEC

All children deserve a good beginning in life. The staff of the Child Development & Education Center believes that it must work to meet the needs of the whole child; respect and recognize individual differences in children and their families; and provide a safe, physical and psychological environment where children are accepted, nurtured and listened to. Parents and the CDEC staff are partners in providing care and education for young children. Thus, mutual respect and open communication must exist among the parents, staff, and administration of the CDEC. All people associated with the CDEC – children, students, parents, and staff – are lifelong learners, ever changing and growing in knowledge and understanding.

DAYS OF OPERATION 2023-2024 • CDEC

We follow the calendar adopted by Northwest Florida State College. Below are the days that we will be closed during the school year.

AUGUST 2023

(19 CDEC DAYS) (0 VPK DAYS)

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	1 CDEC CLOSED	2 FOR CLEANING &	3 TRAINING	4
7 CDEC REOPENS	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

SEPTEMBER 2023

(20 CDEC DAYS) (17 VPK DAYS)

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
				1
4 CDEC CLOSED FOR LABOR DAY	5	6	7 VPK BEGINS	9
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

OCTOBER 2023

(22 CDEC DAYS) (21 VPK DAYS)

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
2	3	4	5	6
9 CDEC OPEN – NO VPK Teacher Workday	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31 COSTUME PARADE			

DAYS OF OPERATION 2023-2024 • CDEC, CONTINUED

NOVEMBER 2023

(18 CDEC DAYS) (16 VPK DAYS)

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10 CDEC & COLLEGE CLOSED FOR VETERANS DAY
13	14	15	16	17
20 NO VPK	21 NO VPK	22	23	24
		CDEC & College Closed Nov. 22 – 24		
27	28	29	30	

DECEMBER 2023

(10 CDEC DAYS) (10 VPK DAYS)

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15 CDEC CLOSED Teacher Workday
	CDEC & College Closed Dec. 19 – Jan. 1			

JANUARY 2024

(21 CDEC DAYS) (17 VPK DAYS)

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1 CDEC CLOSED	2	3	4	5
8 VPK RETURNS	9	10	11	12
15 CDEC & COLLEGE CLOSED - MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

DAYS OF OPERATION 2023-2024 • CDEC, CONTINUED

FEBRUARY 2024

(20 CDEC DAYS) (20 VPK DAYS)

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19 CDEC CLOSED Teacher Workday	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	

MARCH 2024

(16 CDEC DAYS) (15 VPK DAYS)

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18 CDEC & College Closed for Spring Break March 18 – 22	19	20	21	22
25 CDEC OPEN No VPK – VPK Teacher Workday	26	27	28	29

APRIL 2024

(22 CDEC DAYS) (22 VPK DAYS)

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30			

DAYS OF OPERATION 2023-2024 • CDEC, CONTINUED

MAY 2024

(22 CDEC DAYS) (7 VPK DAYS)

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
		1	2	3
6	7	8 VPK Celebration 6:00 pm	9 Water Play Day Last Day of VPK	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27 CDEC & COLLEGE CLOSED FOR MEMORIAL DAY	28	29	30	31

JUNE 2024

(20 CDEC DAYS)

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28

JULY 2024

(22 CDEC DAYS)

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1	2	3	4 CDEC & COLLEGE CLOSED FOR JULY 4th	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

AUGUST 2024

✱ WE WILL NOT BE CLOSING THIS YEAR
FOR CLEANING & TRAINING! ✱

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

PROCEDURES FOR EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

If there are any questionable weather conditions or another local emergency and you have not yet brought your child to the CDEC, it is recommended that you listen to local radio and television stations concerning any closings. If you hear an announcement that Northwest Florida State College is closed, that includes the CDEC. Whenever there is advance notice and it is possible, phone calls will be made to CDEC families to notify them of the closing.

If there are questionable weather conditions or another local emergency and your child is at the CDEC, you will be notified by phone that the CDEC is closing and that you will need to pick up your child right away. It is extremely important that you notify the CDEC office of any phone number changes at work and/or home. On the rare occasions that the CDEC has had to close in the middle of the day due to emergency conditions, there have been parents who could not be reached. This often causes stress and worry in the child who sees all of his/her friends leaving.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Hours of operation are 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. We ask for your child to be signed out by 5:15 p.m. to ensure prompt closing of the facility.

ATTENDANCE OPTIONS

At the time of enrollment, parents will select one of three attendance options:

- Monday-Friday (5 days per week)
- Monday, Wednesday & Friday (3 days per week)
- Thursday, Thursday (2 days per week)

Parents who enroll their child in the VPK program will choose from these options:

- Full Day child care & education program with the VPK program provided for 3.75 hours each morning. The parent will not pay for the VPK part of the day. The parent will pay the annual registration fee and the Before and After VPK daily fee.
- 3.75 hours Monday - Friday. VPK is funded by the state so the parent will not be charged any fees.

In order to maintain the proper adult/child ratio, the CDEC will not be able to adjust a child's schedule from the original agreement unless the change is permanent, space is available, & 2 weeks' notice is provided.

CHILD CARE FEES

An annual enrollment fee is due at the time of enrollment and on the first day of the Fall semester thereafter. Child care fees are subject to change with a two week notice.

BILLING

Parents will be billed on a monthly basis at the beginning of each month. Parent may pay **weekly, bi-weekly,** or **monthly.** Parents must pay for child care at least one week in advance. Parents who have questions about the status of their account may contact the department's staff assistant or the director.

WEEKLY METHOD PAYMENT

Payment for the following week must be paid by Friday of the current week. All payments made at the CDEC must be made by check or money order. The parent may pay by cash at the business office.

Amount due

Parents are not charged for days the CDEC is closed. **Parents are charged for all remaining days even when the child is absent or on vacation** because the CDEC operating expenses do not change.

Failure to Pay

If a parent fails to pay by Friday, the child may be withdrawn from the program at the close of the day. The next parent on the waiting list will be notified of an opening available beginning the following week.

LATE PICK UP AT CLOSING

The CDEC closes promptly at 5:30 PM. If you have an emergency and will arrive later than that time, contact the Center immediately. In the event that children are picked up after 5:30 PM, a late charge will be assessed and is due upon the parent's arrival. Time will be determined by the clock in the CDEC. Parents will be charged \$10.00 for the first 10 minutes or a fraction thereof. Then the charge will be \$5.00 for every five minutes after that. At 5:30 PM, the teachers remaining will begin to notify emergency contacts immediately. A parent who repeatedly picks up his/her child late risks withdrawal from the CDEC.

LATE PICK UP FROM VPK ONLY CLASS

The VPK program ends promptly at 12:15 PM. A parent who repeatedly picks up his/her child late risks withdrawal from the VPK program at the CDEC.

ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

1. Child must be between the ages of 2 and a half and 5 years old.
2. Child must be independently toilet trained. (Able to handle own clothing and take care of personal hygiene.)
3. Child must have an official Dept. of Children & Families health certificate issued within the last year.
4. Child must have an up-to-date Dept. of Children & Families immunization record.
5. Priority of placement is given to NWF State College students, staff, and faculty.

SUPPLIES*

Your child will need the following everyday:

1. A nutritious lunch that includes food from each of the following groups: meat/meat substitute, fruit/vegetable, and bread/cereal. The CDEC will provide milk so you will not need to provide a beverage. Label the outside of your child's lunch box and all containers that must be returned with your child's name. The CDEC supplies napkins and silverware.
2. A complete change of clothes including socks with each item clearly labeled with your child's name. These items should be placed in a clear one-gallon zip-lock bag with your child's name on the bag. When your child uses the change of clothes, please remember to return a new set the following day.

continued

Supplies, *continued*

3. A small blanket marked with your child's name for rest time. A small pillow and cuddly are optional. Pillows/blankets that are too large are prohibited.
4. Sunscreen with UVB or UVA protection of SPF15 or higher and insect repellent with the container(s) labeled with your child's name. **(Prefer Babyganics, non aerosol pump)**

Please do not send the following items:

- candy
- toys or books (unless the teachers request them for a specific activity)
- pacifier
- backpack/bookbag
- jewelry – toy rings, bracelets, etc. (They are choking hazards.)

*** VPK children need to bring only items #1 and #2 listed above.**

SIBLINGS OF CDEC CHILDREN

It is often necessary for parents bringing and picking up their child enrolled in the CDEC to have older and younger siblings with them. Please keep all of your children – the ones who have entered the CDEC with you and the child you are picking up – under your supervision and control at all times. Because we have a regular daily schedule of activities, the CDEC children are often confused when they see siblings using materials or wandering into areas of the classroom that the teachers have already closed and cleaned for the day.

Do not leave children unattended in your car.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE CDEC

Withdrawal By Parent

If you wish to withdraw your child from the CDEC, two weeks' written notice is required. A two weeks tuition charge will be assessed if prior notice is not given. This written notice must be turned in at the office.

Withdrawal by the Center

The center reserves the right to terminate a child's enrollment. Notice will be given to the parent. If the Director feels it appropriate, the child may remain in the Center for up to ten days to enable the parent to make alternate arrangements.

QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

When families have questions or concerns about classroom happenings, they should discuss this concern with the child's teacher. If the problem or concern is still an issue, the family member is directed to contact the CDEC director. If a solution has not been found, the concern should be directed to Britini Valkenaar, supervisor of the director.

If the concern is about program policies or procedures, the family member should contact the director. If in meeting together a solution cannot be found, the family member will be directed to Britini Valkenaar.



ATTENDANCE

Please notify the CDEC as soon as possible if your child is unable to attend due to illness, vacation or another emergency. You will not receive a reduction in payment for days missed. The only time that no charge will be made is when the CDEC is closed. If you choose to go on vacation at a time other than when the school is closed and you wish to maintain your child's enrollment at the center, the weekly fee will be applied and must be paid.

If your child is receiving funding to attend the CDEC through state subsidizes, VPK, Child Care Aware etc.) and accrues absences that will result in loss of funding for the CDEC, the CDEC reserves the right to withdraw your child from the program. Excessive absences from VPK may have an adverse effect on a child's readiness for kindergarten. Florida VPK only children must be in attendance each day – Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM – 12:15 PM.

EXCLUSION DUE TO ILLNESS

Do not send your child to the center if any of these symptoms are present:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| ■ Fever (100.0°F or higher) | ■ Unexplained Pain | ■ Unexplained Rash, |
| ■ Chills | ■ Earache | ■ Red and Watery Eyes |
| ■ Sore Throat | ■ Diarrhea | ■ Vomiting |
| ■ Cough | ■ Blisters (unexplained) | ■ Listlessness |

If a child becomes ill while at the CDEC, the child will be isolated from the other children and kept comfortable. The parents will be notified to pick up their child immediately. The child may return to school after being fever free for 36 hours (without the use of medication) and symptom free if the symptoms are indicative of a contagious illness.

Please notify the director if your child has been diagnosed with any communicable disease such as chicken pox, strep or Covid-19. All other parents will be notified.

OUTDOOR PLAY

Outside play is an important part of a child's day. It is a time for children to build motor skills, have opportunities for social interactions, enhance self-esteem, and to build cognitive and language skills. Children need fresh air every day. With the exception of extreme temperatures, rain, and bitter wind chill factors, outside time is an integral part of our daily schedule. Children well enough to attend the program are well enough to play outside. Children become unhealthy when they spend too much time enclosed indoors in dry air caused by heating systems.

Further, we do not have enough staff to permit one staff member to stay inside with one child. Safety and adequate supervision of the children while playing outside are our first priorities. Parents are responsible for providing appropriate outdoor clothing for their children. Staff will monitor children and give reminders to keep coats, hats, and mittens on while outside.

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

All medications must be authorized, in writing, by a doctor. This includes prescription and over-the-counter medications. No medication will be given by verbal consent. All medications must be in their original containers, indicating the child's name, type & date of prescription, time to be administered, and amount of dosage. If the medication is liquid, please send a measuring spoon for administering the liquid medication.

Continued

Medication Administration, *continued*

CDEC Staff will not administer over-the-counter medication not authorized for your child's specific age group. Put your child's name on the container of all over-the-counter medications. Do not ask us to alter these rules. A CDEC staff member will help you with the proper paperwork for administering medication. All medications are stored in a locked cabinet.

Medication will only be administered by a staff member who has specific training and a performance evaluation related to the five right practices of medication administration:

- Right Child
- Right Medication
- Right Dose
- Right Time
- Right Method

Staff members will document all of the above.

If the child requires an epi-pen, it must be readily available at all times. It will be stored in a basket clearly labeled with the child's name and placed out of reach of all children on the parents' mailboxes.

HAND WASHING

Hand washing is one of the greatest prevention practices for decreasing the spread of disease. All CDEC staff, intern students, volunteers, and children will wash their hands every morning when they enter the classroom. All CDEC staff, intern students, volunteers, and children will also wash their hands before and after eating, before and after giving medication, before and after playing in water that is used by more than one person, after toileting, after handling bodily fluids (blowing/wiping nose, coughing on a hand, or touching mucus, blood, or vomit), and after playing in sandboxes. Staff will wash their hands before preparing or serving food, after assisting a child with toileting and after handling garbage or cleaning. Staff wear gloves when contamination with blood or other body fluids may occur. When gloves are worn, hands are still washed before and after.

Children will be given instruction on the procedures for effective hand washing including turning off the faucet with a paper towel. The following hand washing procedures are followed by adults and children:

- Using liquid soap and running water
- Rubbing hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds including the back of hands, wrists, between fingers under and around any jewelry, and under fingernails
- Rinsing well
- Drying hands with a paper towel
- Avoid touching the faucet with just-washed hands by using a paper towel to turn off the water

WATER PLAY

Water play is a frequent activity in the CDEC. No child is permitted to drink the water. Children with sores on their hands are excluded from communal water play. Fresh water is used. Water is changed before a new group participates in water play.

TOOTH BRUSHING

All children who attend a full day will brush their teeth after lunch. The CDEC provides toothbrushes that are replaced on a regular schedule. They are stored in a storage system that allows for ventilation for them to dry. The CDEC accepts donations of bathroom cups and toothpaste and will notify families when supplies are low.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Parents will receive notice at least one month in advance when a child's next immunization is due. The parent must provide a new Florida School Immunization Record by the due date for the child to attend the CDEC.

When a child has a religious exemption for immunizations, it is important that the parent be aware of any communicable diseases that are present in the CDEC. In the event that the communicable disease is one that is vaccine preventable, the child will be excluded from attendance if it is determined by the health department to be reasonable and/or necessary.

HEALTH EXAM

Upon enrollment, a Florida Health Exam Form must be provided. A health exam form expires after two years. Parents will be provided with a one month notice. The new health exam form must be provided by the due date in order for the child to attend the CDEC.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

Emergency drills for fire, tornadoes, and lockdowns for intruders are held at varying times and are documented. The children are given verbal instructions at the beginning of the year and have the opportunity to practice the procedures before an actual drill is held.

FIRST AID

A complete first aid kit is maintained in the CDEC at all times. In addition to the First Aid Kit in the CDEC, one is maintained on the playground. A First Aid Kit is taken on all campus walks/field trips. At least one teacher present in each classroom is certified in Pediatric First Aid and CPR.

INCIDENT/ACCIDENT REPORTS

Incident or accident reports are completed whenever first aid is given or any unexpected event has occurred which jeopardizes the safety of a child or children.

EMERGENCY TREATMENT

In case of a "life threatening situation", 911 will be called and immediate decisions will be made by EMS personnel. Next, the parent will be notified. If any other type of accident occurs requiring treatment, the parent will be notified to pick up the child.

If you are a Northwest Florida State College student, provide the CDEC with an up-to-date class schedule every semester so that we will be able to locate you quickly in an emergency. Please make sure that you write the semester on the schedule. This will be filed in your child's records.

SIGN IN/SIGN OUT

You are required to sign your child in and out daily. Please notify the staff that you will be picking up your child when you arrive. If we are outside, we may not see you wave to your child and know that he/she has left. Additionally, if your child's class is already outside when you drop off your child, please walk your child outside to join the rest of the class and make verbal and/or eye contact with your child's teachers to notify them of your child's arrival.

PERSONS AUTHORIZED TO PICK-UP CHILDREN

Only those persons listed on the child's enrollment form are authorized to pick-up the child. The only exception will be when we are notified in writing if someone other than those listed will pick up the child. This written notification must be handed to a staff member by an authorized parent or guardian and not by the person (who may not be known by staff) who has been sent to pick up the child. Any person arriving to pick up a child with whom the staff is not familiar, will be asked to show a picture identification before the child will be released. Anyone picking up a child from the CDEC must be at least 16 years of old.

It is imperative that the director be made aware of any legal custody dispute. However without appropriate documentation (e.g. copy of custody papers, court order, restraining order, etc.), we will not be able to prohibit a parent from removing his/her child from the CDEC.

DOOR ACCESS CARD

Each family will be issued one door access card to use for entrance into the CDEC. Please use the door card for **your entrance only!** Upon request, a second card can be issued to the family if needed. The door access card remains the property of the CDEC. If lost, a replacement fee will be charged. At the time of withdrawal from the CDEC, the parent will return the card(s) or pay the replacement fee. The purpose of the door lock system is to provide for the safety of the children in our care. Please let the director know immediately if the card is lost so the code can be canceled.

PARKING AT THE CDEC

Please do not leave vehicles with engines running in the drive while in the CDEC. This poses a serious safety risk for our children.

Upon arrival, do not leave younger children and infants in the car while you bring your child who attends the CDEC into the center. Leaving a child unsupervised in a vehicle for even a short time is considered child neglect according to Florida law. All staff members of the CDEC are mandated by law to report suspected abuse and neglect.

POLICY ON SMOKING

Smoking is prohibited on or near the premises of the Child Development & Education Center. Please do not discard cigarette remains in the driveway or on the grounds.

As of January 1, 2019, use of tobacco, including electronic devices, is strictly prohibited on all college-owned or controlled property, including parking lots.

FOOD SERVICE

Morning and Afternoon Snack

The CDEC provides a snack in the morning and afternoon for those children who are in the center at serving times. The menu for the month will be included in the monthly newsletter and posted in the classroom.

Children must finish eating any food from home before entering the CDEC in the morning. It is not appropriate or sensitive to other children for a child to enter the classroom in the morning while still consuming food.

Lunch

It is the responsibility of the parents to give a nutritious lunch. The CDEC will provide milk and water. The parent must provide at least three items in each lunch. These items include: (1) meat/meat substitute, (2) fruit/vegetable and (3) food from the bread/cereal group. **Keep in mind that when your child is eating in a group environment, all children are influenced by what other children are eating.** To encourage good nutrition for all our children, parents are expected to follow these requirements.

*Parents will be notified when lunch is not within the requirements listed above.

Suggestions for Lunch

Fruits: bananas, apples, oranges, grapes, raisins, fruit cups.

Vegetables: celery sticks, carrot sticks, cucumber slices, broccoli, cauliflower

Grains: whole wheat bread, bagels, oatmeal or peanut butter cookies, graham crackers, vanilla wafers, wheat crackers, granola bars.

Protein Sources: ham, chicken, tuna salad, turkey slices, peanut butter, hard boiled eggs, yogurt, pudding with real milk.

Do not send: Lunch from fast food restaurants, chips, candy, cakes, cupcakes, and other items high in sugar or salt content.

We caution parents to read the nutrition facts on each food item you purchase for your child's lunch. Many prepackaged foods are extremely high in sodium. For example, the packages that include crackers, meat, cheese, etc. provide well over half of your child's daily allowance for sodium.

FOOD RESTRICTIONS FOR CHILDREN UNDER 4 YEARS OF AGE

No children under the age of four years old will be served the following foods even when they are brought from home. These foods present choking hazards to young children: hot dogs (whole or sliced into rounds, can be served if cut lengthwise), whole grapes (must be sliced in half), nuts, popcorn, raw peas and hard pretzels, spoonfuls of peanut butter, chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole.

Food Allergies

We operate under the rules and regulations of the Department of Children and Families Licensing Office. Therefore, snacks and meals must meet the requirements of each of these agencies. If your child has a food allergy, we will need documentation from a physician. Kool-aid, soft drinks, and other sugary drinks are not acceptable and will not be served even when brought from home. If a note from a physician is not provided, we are required to offer your child milk at lunch and milk or 100% fruit juice at snack time.

Food Service, continued

Food for Celebrations/Special Events

The CDEC does not accept food from home to be served to groups of children. This is a college-wide policy. It is also a recommended practice by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). All food served to groups of children will be provided by the CDEC.

REST TIME

Your child will need a small blanket labeled with his/her name with a permanent marker. You will need to take home your child's blanket weekly to launder it and then return it the following week. The CDEC provides a thick rest time mat for each child. Soothing music is played at the beginning of rest time. All children are encouraged to rest quietly so as not to disturb those who are sleeping. Your child may bring a small cuddly (stuffed animal) if he/she wishes. All children must rest quietly on a mat to allow those who sleep not to be disturbed. Once rest time is underway, children who are "non-sleepers" are provided with a quiet activity on their mat.

Only stuffed animals and not toys are permitted. A small pillow is also accepted. Due to limited storage space and rest time space, blankets, pillows, and cuddlies that are large are not acceptable. Each of these items must be taken home at the end of each week and laundered.

APPROPRIATE DRESS

Have your child dress in comfortable play clothes that he/she will be able to manage with little help in the bathroom. Your child will be involved in a number of messy activities-painting, play dough, sand and water play, etc. Make sure your child is dressed appropriately for the weather. We have two outdoor times scheduled daily unless the weather prohibits outdoor play.

Children will run, ride trikes, climb, and play actively at the CDEC. All children must wear shoes that allow the child to participate in active play. We will not be able to store extra shoes or help children change shoes when going outside and returning indoors. Each child should come to school wearing the shoes he/she will wear for the day.



PROGRAM GOALS

Social/Emotional Development

Social/emotional development during the preschool years is about socialization-the process by which children learn the values and behaviors accepted by society. It is also about becoming a competent and confident person.

There are three goals for social/emotional development:

- 1) Achieving a sense of self: knowing oneself and relating to other people-both children and adults.
- 2) Taking responsibility for self and others: following rules and routines, respecting others, and taking initiative.
- 3) Behaving in a pro-social way: showing empathy and getting along in the world, for example, by sharing and taking turns.

Physical Development

Physical development includes children's gross (large muscle) and fine (small muscle) motor skills. Physical development is sometimes taken for granted in the early childhood classroom because it is often assumed that it happens automatically. Not only is this assumption untrue, but teachers need to remember that physical development is just as important to learning as every other area of development.

There are two goals for physical development:

- 1) Achieving gross motor control: moving the large muscles in the body, especially the arms and legs, consciously and deliberately. Gross motor control includes balance and stability; movements such as running, jumping, hopping, galloping, and skipping; and physical manipulations such as throwing, kicking, and catching.
- 2) Achieving fine motor control: using and coordinating the small muscles in the hands and wrists with dexterity. As these fine muscles develop, children are able to perform self-help skills and manipulate small objects such as scissors and writing tools. The achievement of fine motor skills generally lags behind gross motor development.

Cognitive Development

Cognitive development refers to the mind and how it works. It involves how children think, how they see their world, and how they use what they learn.

There are three goals for cognitive development:

- 1) Learning and problem solving: being purposeful about acquiring and using information, resources, and materials. As children observe events around them, ask questions, make predictions, and test possible solutions, learning reaches beyond just acquiring facts. Persistence and knowing how to apply knowledge expand their learning even further.
- 2) Thinking logically: gathering and making sense of the information by comparing, contrasting, sorting, classifying, counting, measuring, and recognizing patterns. As children use logical thinking, they organize their world conceptually and gain a better understanding of how it works.
- 3) Representing and thinking symbolically: using objects in a unique way, for instance, a cup to represent a telephone, or a broom to represent a horse; pretending, for instance, to be mommy or a firefighter; portraying the world through charts or pictures, for instance, making a graph to show changes in the weather over time or a drawing to show what happened to a character in a story. Representations and symbols free children from the world of literal meanings and allow them to use materials and their imagination to explore abstract ideas.

PROGRAM GOAL, continued

Language Development

Language development includes understanding and communicating through words, spoken and written. Children are born with the capacity to communicate with others verbally and non-verbally. By the time they reach preschool, their ability to communicate thoughts and feelings through spoken language takes on new importance. Language becomes the principal tool for establishing and maintaining relationships with adults and other children.

Because words represent objects and ideas, language development is closely related to cognitive development. With frequent language experiences between the ages of 3 and 5, children's vocabulary can grow dramatically. The richer a child's vocabulary, the more likely that the child will become a good reader. Language and literacy skills go hand in hand. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing develop interdependently in children.

There are two goals for language development:

- 1) Listening and speaking: using spoken language to communicate with others, enlarging one's vocabulary, expressing oneself, understanding the oral speech of others, participating in a conversation, and using language to solve problems.
- 2) Reading and writing: making sense of written language, understanding the purpose of print and how it works, gaining knowledge of the alphabet, and writing letters and words.

CURRICULUM APPROACH

Creative Curriculum is the curriculum framework used in the CDEC. You can read more information about this approach at www.teachingstrategies.com.

DAILY SCHEDULE

The time of the activities included in the daily schedule may change 3-4 times a year due to weather changes. In the summer outdoor time is scheduled during the cooler part of the day and in the winter outdoor time is scheduled during the warmer part of the day. However, the activities scheduled are consistent and include:

Greeting Time - Morning	The morning greeting song is sung. It is noted who is here for the day and what activities are planned for the day.
Morning Snack	The CDEC provides parents with a menu each month. Emphasis is on self-help skills (hand washing & eating), and socialization skills.
Circle Time - Morning	Early literacy activities, songs, fingerplays, movement activities, and stories.
Outdoor Time - Morning	The outdoor area is considered an extension of the classroom. A variety of activities that promote physical, social, and cognitive skills are provided.
Small Group - Morning	The classes are divided in groups for activities that allow the children to interact and have more support with an adult staff member while working on activities that promote learning in the areas of language, literacy, creativity, math, and science.

DAILY SCHEDULE, continued

Work Time - Morning	During this time, the children choose in which areas they will work (Science/math, language/books, art area, music, manipulatives & table toys, computers, blocks, and dramatic play)
Lunch	The CDEC encourages parents to provide a healthy lunch and the CDEC provides the milk.
Quiet Time	All children rest quietly on mats. Those who do not sleep are provided with a quiet alternative such as looking at books.
Afternoon Snack	The CDEC provides parents with a menu each month. Emphasis is on self help (hand washing and eating) and socialization skills.
Outdoor Time - Afternoon	The outdoor area is considered an extension of the classroom. A variety of activities that promote physical, social, and cognitive skills are provided.
Circle Time - Afternoon	Early literacy activities, songs, fingerplays, movement activities, and stories.
Work Time - Afternoon	During this time, the children choose in which work areas they will work (Science/math, language/books, creative area, music, manipulatives & table toys, computers, blocks, and dramatic play.)

A typical day for children enrolled in the 3.75 hour only VPK program will include:

Greeting Circle	The morning greeting song is sung. Activities include early literacy activities, songs, fingerplays, movement activities, and stories. Plans for the day are discussed.
Work Time	During this time, the children choose in which areas they will work (Science/math, language/books, art, music, table toys & games, computers, blocks, and dramatic play). The teacher moves about and interacts with the children as they work.
Outdoor Time	The outdoor area is considered an extension of the classroom. A variety of activities that promote physical, social, and cognitive skills are provided.
Lunch	The CDEC encourages parents to provide a healthy lunch and the CDEC provides the milk and water.
Closing Circle	During the closing the circle, the day's activities will be summarized and the children will make preparations to leave.

DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN

The CDEC uses the “Gold Online” as the primary assessment tool for tracking the development of each child enrolled in the CDEC. Assessing individual and group progress is the key to planning programs that respond to the needs, interests, and abilities of children in the classroom. All children enrolled in VPK will also be assessed 3 times a year using the VPK Assessment Tool.

With ongoing assessment, teachers can focus on all aspects of a child’s development. You can read more about this tool at www.teachingstrategies.com. If English is your child’s second language, you will be asked to complete a home language survey to provide the teaching staff with information to help support your child’s language development and learning. All areas of development including cognitive skills, language, social-emotional development, approaches to learning, health, and physical development are included in the assessment process. A written summary report on your child’s developmental progress will be provided three times a year. In general, these reports will be provided in October, January, and May.

The teaching staff creates and maintains a developmental portfolio for every child enrolled in the CDEC. The portfolio is used to document the developmental progress made by each child. It may include anecdotal notes made while the teacher watches the child work and play in the CDEC, drawings and writing samples, rating scales, skills checklists, etc. The portfolio is shared with the parents at the conferences held twice a year. However, if you would like to see your child’s portfolio at another time, you simply need to ask. At the end of the school year, the portfolio will be given to you.

Parents are encouraged to participate in the assessment process. Every parent is sent an invitation to subscribe (at no cost to the parent) to the online GOLD assessment site. The parent may do an assessment of the child and this is then available to the teaching staff. The parent can also view the assessment reports completed by the teaching staff. Appropriate home activities are also available at this site based on the child’s current developmental level.

The purposes of the CDEC assessment process includes:

- To note when a child may have a developmental delay and to arrange for developmental screening if indicated
- To identify each child’s needs and interests
- To describe each child’s developmental progress and learning
- To improve curriculum and to adapt teaching practices and the environment
- To plan program improvement
- To obtain information about each child in order to effectively communicate with families.

All teaching staff participating in the assessment process have received training on the assessment process through college courses, in-service training, and/or in-house training.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information about the child obtained through observation and assessment will be used exclusively for the purpose of planning an appropriate program for the child and to share with parents/legal guardians. The child’s developmental portfolio will be maintained in a locked cabinet and be available only to the teachers and administrators working directly with the child and legal guardians upon request.

DISCIPLINE/GUIDANCE

A child may not engage in any activity that may cause harm to himself, others, or the CDEC facility. If a child behaves in an inappropriate manner, he will be redirected and given acceptable alternatives. If a child persists in inappropriate behavior, he will be removed from the group or activity to stop the inappropriate behavior before it reaches aggressive proportions. Removal from the “scene of action” often stops the behavior and takes away any reinforcers (attention from other children) that may encourage or strengthen the inappropriate behavior. It also allows the child to regain composure with dignity. For the brief time a child is removed from the group, he/she is expected to remain quiet and not become involved in any activity.

These procedures will be followed.

- (1) If a child engages in inappropriate behavior, the child will be asked what he/she should do instead or will be provided with an acceptable solution to the problem.
- (2) If the behavior continues, then the child will be removed from the group until he regains control and can act appropriately.
- (3) If this action is not effective and the same behavior is repeated, then the child will be removed from the center to the director’s office. Parents will be counseled if inappropriate behavior becomes disruptive and hinders the operation of the center.
- (4) In extreme cases the parent may be contacted and asked to pick up their child.

Teaching staff never use physical punishment such as shaking or hitting and do not engage in psychological abuse or coercion. Teaching staff never use threats or derogatory remarks and neither withhold nor threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline.

The use of physical punishment is not permitted in the CDEC by anyone including the parent. If you feel the need to use physical punishment on your own child, you will first need to sign your child out and leave the CDEC premises. No child will be humiliated, shamed, frightened or subjected to verbal or physical abuse by an employee or by parents or any other person on the premises or while on a field trip.

Because we are preparing children to become problem solvers, we begin teaching conflict resolution skills to even our youngest children. It is inevitable that young children will find themselves in conflict with another child over a toy, game, or activity. Because we want children to use thinking skills to resolve conflicts, we use the following steps when 2 or more children are in conflict.

- (1) Approach calmly.
- (2) Acknowledge feelings.
- (3) Gather information.
- (4) Restate the problem.
- (5) Ask for solutions and choose one together.
- (6) Be prepared to give follow-up support.

For children with persistent, serious, challenging behaviors, teachers, family of the child, the director, and other professionals work as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child’s inclusion and success. The focus will be not only on reducing the challenging behavior, but also on teaching the child social, communication, and regulation skills. Teaching staff respond to a child’s challenging behavior, including physical aggression, in a manner that provides for the safety of the child, provides for the safety of others in the classroom, is calm, is respectful to the child, and provides the child with information on acceptable behavior. If teaching staff are unable to maintain the safety of the child or the other children in the classroom, a plan will be developed with the family to assist in a transition to a setting more appropriate for the child.

EXPULSION POLICY

Unfortunately, there may be specific circumstances that force us to consider a child's expulsion from our program either on a short term or permanent basis. We want you to know that we will do everything possible to work with the child and his/her family to take corrective actions, and that we will use expulsion only as a last resort. The following are reasons we may have to expel a child from NWFSC Child Development and Education Center:

- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or him/herself.
- Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time.
- Uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts.
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children.
- Excessive biting/hitting/kicking/throwing/spitting.

NWFSC CDEC Corrective Actions Prior to Expulsion:

- The child will be guided to appropriate behavior by the teachers.
- The director will intervene and try to guide behavior, perhaps bringing the child into the office for additional one on one guidance.
- If the child continues to exhibit behavior that is not safe, the teacher, director and parents will meet to discuss possible solutions. The inclusion specialist from the ELC will be called upon if the family desires external support.
- A journal may be started as a means of communication regarding daily behavior-both appropriate and inappropriate.
- If the family of the child is willing to help guide the child's behavior, the CDEC will support the child as long as the child is not an immediate threat to himself, staff or other children.

If after an established period of time, and depending on the risk to all children's welfare and safety, the behavior does not improve. The parent will be asked to remove the child from the center. The parent will be given at least one week's notice to find another center to provide care for this child.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Refrain from allowing your child to bring personal toys and books. They are the frequent cause of conflict and we will not guarantee that they will not be broken or lost. Do **NOT** ask the teacher to tell the child he/she cannot bring the toy. **YOU** are the parent and the child must learn to comply when **YOU** set a limit or say no.

Please mark all personal belongings with your child's name: lunch boxes, reusable containers (lids and bottoms) in your child's lunch box, change of clothes, rest time blanket, rest time cuddly, jackets, and coats.

BIRTHDAYS

A child with a birthday will be presented with a birthday crown. The CDEC will also provide a small birthday treat (usually popsicles) as dessert for lunch on the child's birthday. We cannot accept food from home for birthday treats.

HOLIDAYS/SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS

We will have some special celebrations throughout the year – Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, etc. If you do not wish your child to participate in these activities, please notify the director in writing. We do not accept food from home to be served to groups of children.

FIELD TRIPS

To provide various learning experiences for the children enrolled in the CDEC, we will sometimes take walking field trips and nature walks on campus. While many of these trips are prearranged (children's theater productions, children's concerts, dental assisting program, etc.), some are spontaneous. These trips are restricted to the college campus. An adequate number of staff members will accompany the children to provide safe, appropriate supervision.

When a class is on a walking field trip, the staff take the following items: class roll indicating who is present at the time they left, cell phone in order to communicate with the staff assistant or other staff member in case of emergency, First Aid kit and emergency contact information.

TRANSITIONS

Transitions to a new group or school can be very exciting and sometimes a little scary. We strive to make every move a pleasant experience for all. Because the CDEC is a small program, the children can get acquainted with the teachers in another class long before they move.

The biggest transition for CDEC children is usually when they leave to attend kindergarten. During the spring before the children leave our program, we provide a transition curriculum in which the children discuss the changes they will experience and become familiar with some of the procedures commonly followed in elementary schools. We also provide our families with information about orientations and school visits that are offered by area schools in the spring so that they and their children can participate in these important activities.



FAMILY PARTICIPATION

We welcome parents and other family members to share their interests, talents, and occupations with the classes. Do you play a saxophone? Do you have a collection or hobby you think the preschool children would find interesting? Do you like to read to young children? Please complete the “Time and Talents” survey in your registration packet. Children love to see the important people in their lives at school.

Family Newsletters/Notes

Check your parent box daily. We use the box to distribute newsletters and notes. In order to keep up with what is happening at the CDEC, read your newsletters. A monthly newsletter is distributed at the beginning of each month. Notes are provided as needed.

Every family is given a form concerning the online website of Teaching Strategies at the time of registration. The CDEC subscribes to this website and children’s assessment information is stored here. Also, we have the ability to send out newsletters to all parents and family members who accept the invitation that is sent to you via email. This is a quick way for us to provide you with timely information about upcoming events, reminders, information about illnesses among the children in the CDEC, photos of class activities, and other information. Make sure you complete this form and accept our invitation so you can receive this information.

Family/Child Activities

Family members are encouraged to come and visit at the Center anytime. Keep in mind that the staff cannot engage in long conversations with you as their first and foremost responsibility is to the children. Family members are always welcome to join their child for lunch.

We will have several family activities throughout the year including Howdy Night, Halloween Parade, End-of-the-Year Program, and lap sits. These activities are announced in the monthly newsletters and are a great opportunity for you to become acquainted with other CDEC families.

Family/Teacher Conferences

At least two conferences are scheduled with family members during the year to discuss the child’s progress. You will have the opportunity to sign up for a time to meet with your child’s teachers. If you have any concerns or wish to have a conference at another time, please contact the director.

Family Meetings

The family orientation meeting is scheduled at the beginning of the school year to help family members become acquainted with the program, policies, and the teaching staff. After school has been in session a few weeks, a family meeting will be held to describe the curriculum and how children are assessed. Family members will be introduced to the website where they can participate in the assessment of their child’s development. Other meetings will be held during the year with programs focused on topics of interest for families with young children.

Family Participation in Program Evaluation

You will be called on at least once a year to participate in evaluating the effectiveness of the CDEC by completing a survey. When results from all sources have been collected, they will be shared with all CDEC families in writing and at a family meeting. We urge each family to participate in this important process.



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