

Center for Early Education and Care



UMass Amherst

**FAMILY HANDBOOK
2017-2018**

Center for Early Education and Care University of Massachusetts Amherst

Family Handbook

USING THIS HANDBOOK

Welcome to the Center for Early Education and Care! This handbook is designed to ensure that your family has a rewarding experience with the program. In the handbook we have tried to anticipate many of your questions about the program.

Our goal is to provide the highest quality care and education for children and to ensure that parents are valued and respected. To accomplish this we depend on parents to be responsible and active child care consumers. We expect parents to read this handbook, follow the policies and procedures outlined, provide us with all the necessary information, and be open and honest with us regarding your feedback about the program. We welcome your comments, questions, concerns, and suggestions about your child's experience and the program. We understand that nothing is more important than your child's early education and care experience.

Given the nature of an ever-changing quality early education and care program, this handbook is a "living" document. As Center for Early Education and Care grows, improves, and responds to the needs of our child, parent, and campus customers the policies and procedures of the program may change. You will be notified of formal policy or procedure changes during the year via all-Center e-mail updates.

CEEC Family Handbook

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**Center for Early Education and Care
University of Massachusetts Amherst
Family Handbook**

I. ABOUT THE CENTER

I. ABOUT THE CENTER FOR EARLY EDUCATION AND CARE

A. Mission and Values

The Center for Early Education and Care is an innovative, high quality, developmentally appropriate early childhood program enabling a richly diverse population of University families to fulfill their academic and work responsibilities while offering unique educational, research and employment opportunities for University students and faculty.

The teaching and administrative staff of CEEC are experienced early childhood professionals who provide a caring and educational program embodying the following values:

- **Child and Family Centered**

We support each child's development, build relationships with families, and develop the program to meet family needs.

- **Diversity**

We are inclusive of all individuals and families.

- **Respect**

We interact in a civil manner which invites and welcomes varying perspectives and experiences.

- **Nurture**

We create a safe and welcoming environment which offers support and affection for children, families, and staff.

- **Developmental Learning**

We assess the learning stages of children, families, and staff to provide age and skill appropriate curriculum and resources to promote growth and development.

- **Community**

We intentionally build individual and collective relationships among children, staff, and families within the classrooms, the Center, and the University.

B. Statement of Non-Discrimination

The Center for Early Education and Care strives to develop an appreciation for the richness of diversity which encompasses CEEC families and to provide an inclusive environment which reflects the diversity of the campus community and the world in which we live. Consistent with University policy, CEEC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, age, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, disability, military status, or genetic information, and any other class of individual protected from discrimination under state or federal law in any aspect of the access to, admission to, or treatment of children and families in its programs and activities, or in employment and application for employment.

C. History of the Center for Early Education and Care

The University of Massachusetts Amherst has been a leader in addressing child care issues at a number of times in its history. In 1943, a child care center was established on campus to meet the needs of University families impacted by the second world war efforts. This program closed soon after World War II, as the demand for out-of-home child care for University families diminished.

In the early 1970's, the need for child care re-emerged, and again the University took a leadership role. At a time when few models of campus child care existed across the country, the University supported the development of a Child Care Office within the division of Student Affairs. The role of this office was to coordinate the variety of child care programs that had emerged through grassroots efforts on the campus

Through the 1980's, as space and financial constraints caused some of these programs to close, child care services were relocated and consolidated into one program. The Center for Early Education and Care (CEEC), now located on Clubhouse Drive, offers programming for toddler and preschool age children.

The Center for Early Education and Care continued to offer early care and education program for families of the University through the 1990's. In 1999, the University provided funding to construct a modular building on Clubhouse Drive (the Toddler House) and to offer two additional classrooms for flexible-schedule enrollment.

The Center for Early Education and Care is licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) and maintains accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

The Center for Early Education and Care has provided quality child care services to the University community for over three decades. This tradition of model services is one that we take great pride in and look forward to continuing for many more generations of University families.

C. Location and Phone Numbers

The Center for Early Education and Care classrooms are located on Clubhouse Drive on the campus of University of Massachusetts Amherst. The Farley, Bowditch, and Toddler House buildings are located between the McGuirk Football Stadium and the Softball Complex. Each classroom has its own phone that can be called.

The CEEC office is located in the Toddler House at 21 Clubhouse Drive, University of Massachusetts Amherst, 01003. The office phone number is (413) 545 - 1566.

D. Hours of Operation

CEEC Office

The CEEC Office is open Monday through Friday, 8:00am to 5:00 pm.

Classrooms

Classrooms are open Monday - Friday, 7:30am to 5:30 pm. During the first two weeks of the Fall semester when student staff are being hired and trained and during Spring Break, the Center closes at 4:15pm.

E. Annual Calendar

The CEEC full-day classrooms operate year-round and the flexible-schedule classrooms are open during the academic year. CEEC follows the University holiday and emergency closing schedule. The classrooms are closed during one week in May, one week in August, and three afternoons during the year for professional development and facility maintenance activities. The Center is closed the week between the Christmas and New Years holidays for winter recess.

Families are not charged tuition for the closed weeks. Please refer to the current CEEC Program Calendar for specific dates for the current year.

F. Teacher/Child Ratios and Group Size

A Supervising Teacher and Teacher make up the professional teaching team of each classroom. Professional staffing is supplemented by undergraduate Assistant Teachers. Our planned teacher/child ratios for the preschool classroom are three (3) teachers for up to twenty (20) children. Our planned teacher/child ratios for the toddler classroom are three (3) teachers for up to nine (9) children. These planned teacher/child ratios exceed the state licensing requirements of two (2) adults for up to twenty (20) preschoolers or nine (9) toddlers.

G. Program Staff Classroom Teachers

The key to quality early childhood care and education is a professional staff, trained and experienced in early childhood education with an ability to create nurturing relationships with children and partnerships with parents. At CEEC, staff establish communication with parents as part of the essential partnership with families that is critical to providing nurturing care for children.

Supervising Teachers and Teachers

Supervising Teachers and Teachers make up the professional staff of each CEEC classroom. They are the CEEC staff parents see each day when dropping-off and picking-up their children. Professional staff provide a warm, nurturing environment that meets the needs of each child in the classroom. They develop and implement curriculum and supervise the student Assistant Teachers in the classroom.

Supervising Teachers and Teachers hold a minimum of a Bachelor degree in Early Childhood Education or a related field. Teachers have at least one year prior experience teaching in an early childhood classroom and Supervising Teachers have a minimum of one year supervisory experience.

Classroom teachers are hired after a comprehensive search process which ensures that they are well-suited to the job. The hiring process for these positions includes an interview, an extended classroom demonstration, professional reference checks, and a background record check.

Assistant Teachers

University undergraduate students working as Assistant Teachers form a vital part of our teaching teams. Many undergraduate Assistant Teachers come to us with prior child care experience and many include Education as part of their academic studies. Undergraduate Assistant Teachers usually work 8 - 12 hours per week in a classroom. The hiring process for these positions includes an interview, visit in a classroom, and a background record check. Assistant Teachers attend a day-long orientation and training session each semester, maintain current First Aid certification, receive on-going supervision from the professional teachers in the classroom where they work, and are rehired each semester based on performance evaluations.

The Resource Team

CEEC's Resource Team is comprised of three Teachers which report to the Assistant Director. The Resource Team oversee the Morning Extended-Day and the Afternoon Preschool Extended-Day programs (toddler teachers provide the Afternoon Toddler Extended-Day) in addition to providing vital support to all of the CEEC classrooms. The Resource Team provides

coverage when classroom teaching teams are off-the-floor for their weekly planning meeting and when classroom teachers are absent due to vacation or illness. With a staff of 12 full-time classroom teachers and over 40 part-time undergraduate assistants, having a team of teachers who are familiar with the children in each of the classrooms not only enables the Center to maintain our low teacher:child ratios when a teacher is absent, this is done with minimal disruption for children who are comfortable with these teachers that they know.

Administrative Team

There are a number of other people involved with CEEC that you may not see every day but who play important roles in the support of the programming that happens in your child's classroom. It is the efforts of the talented classroom teachers working together with the Administrative Team which creates the high quality early childhood program offered by Center for Early Education and Care.

Director: Maryanne Baskin (office in Bowditch Lodge)

The Director administers Center for Early Education and Care to ensure high quality, cost-effective early education and care services for the campus community. She oversees the administrative and teaching staff in providing high quality early care and education services that meet state licensing and national accreditation standards. The Director oversees long and short range planning of program and staff development, budget revenues and expenditures, enrollment management, and research activities in the program. In addition, the Director serves as liaison to Student Affairs and Campus Life, School of Education, Human Resources, and other University departments, and to early education organizations in the local community and state.

Interim Assistant Director: Maria Piepergerdes (office in Farley Lodge)

The Assistant Director is responsible for the daily on-site administration of the child care classrooms and is the member of the Administrative Team which is most often seen in the classrooms. She coordinates appropriate classroom staffing, supervises curriculum development, and oversees professional development activities in accordance with state licensing and national accreditation standards, including the training of undergraduate assistant teachers. The Assistant Director reviews the toddler developmental screenings completed by parents at the time of enrollment and conducts developmental screenings of each preschool age child. She assists parents and teachers in identifying and securing additional services for children as needed. The Assistant Director serves as Director in the Director's absence.

Manager of Personnel and Enrollment Services: Penny Gagnon (office in Toddler House)

The Manager of Personnel and Enrollment Services oversees personnel functions for CEEC and the Office of Family Resources and administers the weekly classroom staff scheduling and hires and schedules undergraduate assistant teachers. The enrollment services aspect of her work includes managing the CEEC enrollment waiting list, coordinating enrollment offers and schedules, and aiding parents in seeking tuition assistance. She also oversees the daily operation of the CEEC office to ensure the provision of customer friendly information and services for families and CEEC staff.

Office Supervisor: Teresa Houle (office in Toddler House)

The Office Supervisor is responsible for reception tasks in the CEEC main office and provides information about the program to visitors. She maintains the database and paper files of child enrollment and health records to ensure compliance with state licensing requirements and notifies parents when updated information is needed. She determines each family's tuition payment and conducts the monthly parent and agency billing and collections. In addition, she

supports the Center's e-mail and Newsletter communications, assists teachers with computer technologies, and facilitates departmental purchasing.

H. State Licensure

The Center for Early Education and Care maintains licensure with the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). The EEC regulations for Large Group and School Age Child Care outline the minimum requirements a program must meet in order to provide care for more than 11 children on a regular basis. Every two years CEEC must renew its license to operate with this state department. The licensing renewal process involves an on-site inspection of facilities, observations of classroom curriculum and interactions with children, a review of program policies and procedures, and an inspection of child and personnel file documentation.

The EEC child care licensing regulations may be found on the EEC website at:
<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/eec/licensing/regulations/2010-reg-family-group-school-age-child-care-programs.pdf>

Parents may contact EEC for information regarding a child care program's regulatory compliance history. The CEEC Program Number is 290857.
Region 1 - Western Regional Office: 95 Liberty Street, Suite 1124, Springfield, MA 01103
Phone: 413-788-8401.

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II. CURRICULUM

“Well-developed projects engage children’s minds and emotions and become adventures that teachers and children embark on together. “ Judy Helm Harris (2000)

II. CURRICULUM

A. Curriculum Overview

Children enrolling in the CEEC program come from diverse backgrounds and bring their individual personalities and experiences. Because all children share a curiosity and openness to learning about their world, the CEEC program focuses on the process of learning. Our goal is to provide opportunities for success, allowing children space and time to explore, create, and learn at their own pace, using their own style. In planning and implementing the daily program in each classroom, our overall goals are to:

- ◆ allow each child to develop his/her individual self and talents;
- ◆ provide meaningful experiences while promoting all aspects of development: emotional, social, physical, cognitive, and aesthetic;
- ◆ provide an environment that celebrates diversity.

Teachers organize the physical space into learning centers designed to foster creative thinking and independent choice making. Teachers observe and talk with children to assess their interests, developmental skills, and areas for growth. Teachers then select an area or topic for exploration, which encourage children to listen, touch, explore feelings, play, and construct with materials. Ice, Wind, Monarch Butterflies, Measuring Tools, Keys, Ramps, What Lives in the Dirt? Our Homes, and Our Families have all been the subjects of in-depth Project investigations in our classrooms. Murals, drawings, and dramatic performances may be created with the children as a way to demonstrate and summarize the exploration and learning activities.

In the classroom you will see children, individually and in small and large groups, working and talking about their activities. These activities may involve listening to a story with several other children, working alone on a series of puzzles, settling down for a nap with quiet music, or outdoor play. There are social times for eating and playing games; solitary and group art projects; small manipulatives and large blocks for building; and crayons, markers and pencils for drawing and practicing with letters. Throughout our classrooms we seek to challenge children to think creatively and, as age permits, analytically. Our approach to curriculum is to join with children's interests at their developmental level and then to encourage and provide for further exploration, enjoyment, and creativity.

B. Project Approach Curriculum

At the Center for Early Education and Care (CEEC) we work with children at the stage in their lives when curiosity abounds and everything is of interest to them. The world is a source of constant inquiry and discovery for them. Their minds and bodies are incredibly active and they have a natural disposition to learn. It is our responsibility to engage them in purposeful activity that leads to meaningful learning.

Play is the medium through which children learn best in their early years. The play provided at CEEC is play with a purpose. Activities are provided each day to promote the development of important skills such as communication, self-awareness, socialization, independence, hypothesizing, reasoning, problem-solving, imagination, creativity, physical coordination, and much more! We support children with learning opportunities in which they may discover content knowledge and develop skills in the context of open-ended play and in-depth investigations.

The curriculum at CEEC is rooted in our deep convictions that:

- ◆ Children learn best through active, engaged, hands-on activity.
- ◆ Children are motivated to learn when the content of what they are learning is of interest to them.

- ◆ Children gain a deeper and better understanding of the world as they revisit their ideas and learning experiences over time.
- ◆ Children's lives provide the context for the topics we use for Projects because this is what has meaning for them.

Based on these convictions CEEC has chosen to provide meaningful curriculum through *The Project Approach*. This is a method of teaching in which an in-depth study of a topic is conducted by a group of children guided by their teachers. The topic is selected and studied over a period of time and includes gaining both content knowledge as well as problem-solving and thinking skills.

The Project Approach is conducted a bit differently with preschoolers and toddlers, due to the different developmental abilities and questions of these age groups.

The Project Approach with Preschoolers

During a project with preschoolers there are three phases of work:

Phase One: Exploration

- Children and teachers identify a potential topic
- Children's prior knowledge of the topic is gathered and recorded
- Teachers help the children create a list of questions for further investigation
- Teachers and children co-create a "web" of their knowledge and questions.
- Children contribute many of their own plans about how to investigate the topic

Phase Two: Investigation

- Resources are collected for in-depth investigation of the topic. These may include books, tools, videos, and other artifacts.
- Walking field trips and/or visits by local experts are arranged and conducted.
- New questions emerge.
- Children are encouraged to record and represent what they have learned through one, two, and three dimensional media.

Phase Three: The Culmination

- Teachers guide children to reflect on what they have learned
- Children and teachers revisit their earlier web to reflect on what they have learned.
- Children and teachers find a way to share their learning with a larger community (parents, the campus, the local community).

Preschoolers use a variety of resources to find answers to their questions. They conduct in-depth investigations as they think through what they already know, identify questions, make "field notes" and observational drawings, and record what they have learned. Children engage in problem solving as teachers provide support by structuring problems and assisting in finding solutions and resources to further the investigation. Teachers provide resources but not all the answers.

The teachers document the children's investigation by observing what the children are doing, collecting samples of their work, and analyzing their work. They reflect on what has been done in order to determine what comes next. Much of this process is displayed through documentation panels for the children to revisit, for parents to learn more about the investigation, and for teachers to track the progress of the Project's process.

Family members may be asked to participate in a variety of ways to support the Project work: provide artifacts on the topic for the children to explore and use in the classroom, assist with a walking fieldtrip, visit the classroom as an “expert” on the Project topic to answer the children’s questions, share a Project related activity at home and report back to the group, and participate in a culmination event. The possibilities are endless!

The Project Approach with Toddlers

You may be wondering ...”Do they expect toddlers to do all this?” This is a good question for, as you know, toddlers do not yet possess the verbal and social skills to engage in whole group conversation to create a list of information that they already know about a topic and what questions they want to find out about a topic. However, have you ever seen a toddler who is *not* engaged in active exploration and investigation?

Using the Project Approach with toddler necessitates that teachers to guide the investigation more by closely observing the children’s play to identify what their interests are, noticing what questions the children have, and providing resources to expand and extend the children’s investigation. Toddler teachers “hear” the verbal and non-verbal language that toddlers speak for the toddler’s play is her/his language. When toddlers return repeatedly to an activity in the classroom, for example, exploring how things fit into different sized spaces or watching the PVRTA bus drive by, they communicate their interest in learning more about a topic. These topics are worthy of in-depth investigation with the assistance of teachers.

While there are significant differences between conducting the Project Approach with preschoolers, toddler projects have many characteristics in common with preschool projects. Some of these include:

- ◆ Teachers observe and listen to the children to identify an interest.
- ◆ Teachers supply resources and provocations to extend the children’s play and investigations.
- ◆ Toddlers learn new words and concepts and begin to apply those words to new situations.
- ◆ Toddlers form hypotheses and test their theories repeatedly: such as when a toddler attempts to put an object through a tube and then applies what s/he has learned to other objects.
- ◆ Toddlers build a repertoire of learning strategies which teachers challenge by introducing new materials and resources.
- ◆ Toddlers recognize themselves in documentation (with great delight) and recall and sometimes discuss experiences.
- ◆ Toddlers use paper, crayons, markers, paint, play-dough, and paper mache to “represent” their thinking and their process of exploring.
- ◆ Teachers use documentation to communicate about the toddler’s growth and to provide insight into the growth in quality of thinking.

D. Daily Schedules

Specific classroom schedules vary from room to room, from season to season, and from day to day, as needed. We are always flexible to individual's and the group's needs and to the spontaneity of the children's interests and energy. Each classroom's Daily Schedule and the Daily Curriculum Summary are posted on the Parent Information Board of the classroom.

Sample Toddler Daily Schedule

8:15-9:25	Arrivals and Free Play
9:25-9:45	Snack Together
9:45-10:45	Project Activity, Free Play, and Diapers/Toileting
10:45-11:45	Outdoor Explorations (playground/ walking field trips) (Inclement weather: Classroom Swap with Large Motor Activities)
11:45-12:00	Circle Time (songs, dancing, games and stories)
12:00-12:30	Lunch Together
12:30-1:00	Free Play and Diapers/Toileting
1:00-2:30	Naptime
2:30-3:15	Free Play and Diapers/Toileting
3:15-3:45	Snack Together
3:45-4:15	Outdoor or Indoor Free Play and Pick-ups
4:15-5:30	Toddler Extended-Day Program
5:30	Center Closes

Preschool Daily Schedule

8:15-10:00	Arrival and wash hands Free Choice Activities including snack and toileting of younger children
10:00–10:20	Morning Meeting: Introduce and develop Project activities, Second Step curriculum, musical-movement activities
10:20–10:50	Project activities, free play, toileting and sunscreen/insect repellent application
10:50-11:00	Clean-up
11:00-12:00	Outdoor Activities (indoor if inclement weather)
12:00–12:40	Lunch together
12:40–1:00	Clean up lunch, tooth brushing, toileting, books on circle rug

1:00–1:15	Yoga & Story group (children may choose quiet time on cots)
1:15–2:45	Naptime (Provide quiet activities to children on cots at 2:15)
2:45–3:15	Cots put away, toileting, free choice activities until about 4:00
3:15 – 4:15	Group activities (indoors or outdoors), snack Clean up & Transition to Extended Day at 4:15
5:30	Center closes

E. Diversity and Inclusiveness

The Center for Early Education and Care strives to develop an appreciation for the richness of diversity which encompasses CEEC families and to provide an inclusive environment which reflects the diversity of the campus community and the world in which we live. Consistent with University policy, CEEC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, age, marital status, national origin, mental or physical disability, political belief or affiliation, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or genetic information.

The early childhood professionals at CEEC understand that at an early age children absorb our society's biases of gender, age, race, language and physical characteristics. We strive to support children as they explore, celebrate, and understand their differences and shared similarities. Our approach acknowledges that children and adults can be empowered to stand up for their rights and the rights of others and to recognize and question social injustice. We challenge the children and ourselves to:

- explore issues of fairness as seen from a child's perspective;
- see conflict as a challenge in problem-solving;
- be open to differing perspectives, ideas, attitudes and behaviors;
- monitor our words and actions for unconscious bias or prejudice;
- recognize and demonstrate respect for diversity among people

The professional staff of CEEC are diverse in ethnicity, religion, gender, family constellations, sexual orientation, and other life experiences. CEEC staff regularly participate in trainings about multi-culturalism, anti-bias curriculum, and culturally sensitive practices in order to deepen our understanding and skills to enhance our work with the diverse children and their families of our program.

We are fortunate to have access to a diverse pool of UMass Amherst students and we try to employ students of different races, ethnicities and backgrounds, particularly those which mirror the children in the Center. We attempt to hire students who speak other languages in addition to English, particularly those languages which are spoken in the homes of families of the Center.

CEEC staff are constantly broadening the multi-cultural materials at the Center. We continue to be on the look-out for books, puzzles, dolls, games, puppets, musical instruments, dress-up clothes, etc. which portray a wide scope of ethnicity, race, ability, family constellation, etc. We welcome suggestions and advice from parents in this endeavor.

The teachers work hard to develop a curriculum of inclusion – in which all children and parents of the classroom see themselves reflected. Parent participation in classroom activities greatly

supports these efforts. When parents join the classroom to share a story, song, dance, ritual, or food which reflects their family or heritage the children learn about “alike and different” in the most meaningful way possible - in relation to a person they know. The personal context allows young children, who are concrete, not yet abstract thinkers, to come to understand similarities and differences between people through direct contact and experience. Please consider sharing some aspect of your family culture with the children and families of your classroom.

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III. CLASSROOM POLICIES AND PRACTICES

III. CLASSROOM POLICIES AND PRACTICES

A. Arrival and Departure

Each child's arrival and departure time is determined by the contracted enrollment schedule. Although teachers are in the classroom earlier and later than the opening and closing times they are busy with classroom related tasks and are not authorized to care for children. Please note that we *cannot* make special arrangements for your child to be in the classroom earlier or later than the program's hours of operation. If there is an occasion when you arrive early, you may wait with your child in the cubby area until his/her contracted time begins.

1. Arrival

Upon arriving to the classroom, parents assist their child in hanging outdoor clothes in the child's cubby and then washing hands at the classroom's sink. When entering the classroom parents note the time and place their initials on the *Sign-In/Out Chart* and then join their child in choosing an activity. Parents speak with the teacher and help their child engage in an activity. Specific drop-off routines may be arranged with the classroom teacher depending on a child's developmental needs and prior experience with parent departures.

Teachers will wait for the parent to cue her/him as to when the family's goodbye routine/ritual is over and the parent is ready for the teacher to assist. Once you have said goodbye, please do not hesitate in leaving. Expressing your confidence in your child's ability to master the separation routine is important to their success.

It is important that information is exchanged between parents and teachers that might help facilitate the child's transition from home to classroom. However, morning drop-off can be a busy time in the classroom. Teachers may be greeting many families at once while also maintaining activities for children in the classroom and children often one-on-one assistance transitioning into the classroom. If you need to have an uninterrupted discussion with a teacher please arrange a time to call on the phone later in the day or schedule a parent/teacher conference.

Parents write important daily messages in the *Notes section of the Sign-In/Out Chart*, in addition to speaking with a teacher. For example, if you will be at a different emergency phone number for the day, expect to pick-up earlier than usual, or plan to have someone else pick-up your child, write this information on the *Notes section of the Sign-In/Out Chart*. This provides a reference for all of the classroom staff.

2. Departure

When parents arrive to pick-up their child, they say hello to a teacher and note the time and their initials on the *Sign In/Out Chart*. Please arrive 10-15 minutes prior to your child's scheduled pick-up time if you would like to engage in a transitional activity with your child or if you need to speak with a teacher.

To ensure each child's safety, we will only release a child to those persons authorized on the *Emergency Contact & Alternate Pick-up Information* form. Parents tell the teachers at drop-off time *and* write the person's name and expected time of arrival in the *Note section of the Sign-In/Out chart*. Please inform the alternate pick-up person that s/he will be asked to show a photo identification to verify that they are the person you have authorized.

CEEC staff must be sure that all children are in safe hands as we release them to parents, guardians, or care-givers at pick-up time. On rare occasions teachers are faced with the

delicate situation of wondering if the person picking up the child is in some way impaired and therefore unsafe for the child to be with. When this occurs the teacher and/or director engages the person picking-up the child to assess if s/he is functioning well enough to transport the child home. If there is concern that the child may not be safe, the director (or teacher in charge) suggests an alternate pick-up arrangement and hopefully the adult agrees to a plan that keeps the child's safety in mind. When the pick-up person is not agreeable to an alternative arrangement, a staff member immediately contacts UMass Police Department.

3. Safety Practices During Drop-off and Pick-up

Sign-in/Out:

Parents must sign their child in and out of the classroom each day. It is critical that the child's attendance is noted on the Sign-In/Out chart as this count of children is used during emergency evacuations.

Parents must speak directly to their child's teacher at drop-off and pick-up times in order to confirm that the child has arrived to or is departing from the group.

Supervision:

Children must be visually supervised at all times at the Center. Do not allow your child to leave the building or playground before you do.

It is not safe for children to walk alone along the sidewalk beside the parking area at any time. This sidewalk is adjacent to a dangerous parking area and roadway. Please teach your child to hold your hand while walking along the sidewalk to ensure their safety while traveling to/from your car.

Doors:

Classroom and building doors and gates remain closed in order that teachers may safely supervise children in the classroom. Children are directed to wait for a teacher or parent to open the door/gate for them. Do not encourage or allow your child to open the classroom door or gate.

Fence Gates:

Please gently close fence gates when you walk through them as they do not always close on their own. Do not encourage or allow your child to unlatch the gates. Children are directed to wait for a teacher or parent to open the gates for them. Do not encourage or allow your child to climb or swing on the gates as this action pulls them out of alignment and then the latches do not work properly.

B. Children's Clothing

The CEEC curriculum provides a wide variety of hands-on and "messy" exploratory activities each day. Although children wear smocks for these activities, their clothes may still get stained or dirty. Please consider this when dressing your child for the Center.

Outdoor play is a part of each day's schedule. It is important that children have appropriate clothing at the Center for each season.

ALL SEASONS: At least one extra set of clothing which includes the following: shirt, pants or leggings, sweatshirt or sweater, socks, and underwear.

- FALL/SPRING: Warm jacket or sweater, and boots on rainy or muddy days.
**Please remove strings from jackets and coats to prevent strangulation injuries!*
- WINTER: Hat, mittens attached to cuffs, warm coat (strings removed), snow pants (or a one-piece snowsuit), insulated waterproof boots, and a pair of shoes or non-slip slippers for indoor use.
- SUMMER: Bathing suit, towel, water shoes or extra pair of sneakers to wear during outdoor water play. Sneakers are the preferred footwear for safe outdoor play. Only well fitting sandals with an ankle strap may be worn. Flip flops and Crocs may *NOT* be worn at the Center as they easily cause tripping and slipping injuries.

PLEASE LABEL ALL CLOTHING! We do our best to try to keep track of children's clothing, but wet clothes, children's desire to trade, hide, and discard clothes and the sheer number of garments to keep track of makes the job difficult. You are more likely to have missing clothing returned if it is labeled with your child's name or initials. Your classroom teachers have an indelible marker available for your use.

CHOKING HAZARD WARNING: Hair Decorations

Hair bows, hair beads, and pony tail bands all come with the warning not for use in children under age three years due to the choking risk these very small items present. If you choose to use these items and they become a choking hazard in your child's classroom because they will not stay in your child's hair, your child will not leave them in her/his hair, or make your child a target for removal of these items by other children, it may be necessary for us to remove the items from your child's hair and they will be placed in cubby until pick-up time.

C. Toys From Home

As a general rule, children should *not* bring toys from home to the classroom. Toys from home tend to draw children away from classroom participation, create feelings of competition among the children, and may be misplaced or lost. Exceptions are items that are appropriate to share with the class, such as a playground ball or a book for Circle Time. We understand that bringing a "piece of home" to the classroom is often important to children. If your child needs to have a special toy or object from home please be sure to label it with your child's name and inform the teacher at drop-off. Once the child has settled into the classroom these objects are generally placed in the cubby until pick-up time. Please speak with your child's teacher if your child is having difficulty separating and you feel an item from home will help ease your child's transition.

D. Snacks and Lunch

Morning and Afternoon Snacks

The program provides a morning and an afternoon snack. Snack menus are posted in the kitchens and classrooms each week. CEEC provides milk and/or water at lunch and snack. Snacks are planned to include at least two of the following food groups:

- grains, cereal or bread;
- protein: cheese, hummus, yogurt, etc.
- fruits or vegetables ;
- milk or milk products.

Snacks are served in a monitored self-serve style, giving children an opportunity to develop social and self-help skills. Parents are encouraged to share snack menu suggestions and recipes with the teachers. Parents are always welcome to join their child for lunch.

Lunch

Parents provide a nutritious lunch meal for their child each day. Refrigeration is usually available however, we are unable to heat or cook a child's lunch. Thermoses and lunchboxes with cold packs are recommended for hot or cold lunches.

Because desserts are often what children are most often interested in eating first (and because these are usually less nutritious than other food in the meal), we ask that you consider sending fresh fruit for dessert.

Please pre-cut foods into child mouth-sized pieces for serving at lunch and label your child's lunchbox and food containers with her/his first name or initials.

In order to prevent choking accidents the following foods may not be served at the Center:

- hot dog or sausage rounds
- large chunks of meat or fish with bones
- raw carrot rounds or large pieces of raw hard vegetables
- whole grapes, olives, cherry tomatoes, or cherries
- Whole pieces of canned fruit
- Large, round, and/or sharp nuts and seeds
- Spoonfuls of nut butters
- Large hard pretzels
- Large hard and/or sharp potato or corn chips
- Hard candy or lollipops
- Popcorn
- Any size marshmallows
- Chewing gum

Beverages must be packed in non-breakable containers for everyone's safety. A handout is available in the office offering additional information and suggestions regarding children's lunches.

E. Sleep/Rest/Quiet Activity Time

Children at CEEC expend a great deal of physical, cognitive, and emotional energy as they engage in many their many play and learning activities each day. Periods of rest are essential for children's healthy physical development and for their enjoyment of their day. Each child in the classroom will have different sleep needs based on their age, development, and home sleep schedules.

The Center for Early Education and Care follows the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) regulations regarding sleep, rest, and quiet activity for children who attend child care for more than four hours. These regulations include:

- The length of the sleep, rest, or quiet activity period is appropriate to the needs of the children.
- When children choose not to sleep or awaken early, they are offered quiet activities for the remainder of the sleep/quiet activity period.
- A separate individually marked cot, sheet, and blanket are provided by the Center for each child. Sheets and blankets are laundered weekly, and as needed.
- There is a distance of at least three feet between children's faces while resting/napping.
- There is adequate lighting to allow for proper supervision of children and for quiet activities by children who do not sleep.

In addition to the EEC regulations, CEEC classrooms maintain the following practices:

- Sleep/Rest/Quiet Activity Time generally lasts for 1½ - 2 hours from approximately 1:00pm to 2:30/3:00pm. Generally, napping children begin to awake between 2:30 – 3:00pm. Children who remain asleep are usually awoken by 3:30pm in order that they may have a relaxed bathroom turn and snack before the 4:15pm pick-up.
- Each classroom has a transition plan from lunch, tooth brushing, and toileting to Sleep/Rest/Quiet Activity Time that includes a "wind down time" (i.e. story books, etc.). During Sleep/Rest/Quiet Activity Time children rest on their cots, soft music is played to set a calm tone in the classroom, and teachers offer a soothing touch to help children relax. Such soothing touch is limited to the child's head, arms, back, and feet.
- Children may bring a soft doll/animal or "blankie" for Sleep/Rest/Quiet Activity Time if needed. If this special object is significant for supporting the child's evening sleep routine at home it is suggested that the family have an identical item as a back-up in case this is left in the classroom overnight. Fabric items from home are placed in the child's cubby at the end of the week to be taken home for laundering. Please DO NOT provide a full-size pillow for naptime as these do not fit in the stack of cots.
- Some older preschool children may no longer need a daily afternoon sleep period, but do still need a time to rest during the full-day schedule. After approximately 30 minutes, children who are awake are given a quiet activity to do on their cot (i.e. books, puzzles) or may be provided with a quiet activity away from the napping children (drawing/writing materials at the art table).
- Non-nappers are expected to rest on their cot with minimum noise while napping children settle to sleep. Non-nappers may bring an individualized activity from home to use quietly during the beginning of the Sleep/Rest/Quiet Activity Time.
- Parents are encouraged to speak with teachers about the individual sleep/rest needs of their child. Parents and teachers meet to discuss and develop a plan the daily Sleep/Rest/Quiet Activity Time to meet the needs of the child, the family, and the classroom.

F. Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are important milestones in the life of a young child and her/his family. They are also important events in the CEEC classroom community. Just as each family has a special birthday tradition, each CEEC classroom has a unique birthday celebration ritual which is provided for every child. This way, the classroom's celebration of each child's birthday is a familiar and predictable community event for all of the children in the group.

As your child's birthday approaches a classroom teacher will describe to you the classroom's birthday ritual and talk with you about how you may participate. Celebrations are planned to accommodate your child's enrollment schedule and parents are invited to join the birthday celebration if it fits your schedule.

Knowing that most children will have a family celebration as well, we keep the classroom celebrations simple. The classroom birthday rituals usually involve a special snack made by the children (preschool) or brought in by the parent (toddler) and a birthday Circle Time activity (i.e. a birthday song, sharing a group-made card for the birthday child, lighting a special candle, etc.).

The emphasis and group participation in birthday celebrations is different in toddler and preschool classrooms due to the children's ages and interests.

Birthday snacks, whether made by the children or provided by the parent, are special low-sugar foods (i.e. fresh fruit salad, healthy muffins). The teachers are aware of any food allergies and plan birthday snacks that every child in the group can eat.

Parents MAY NOT bring gift bags, toys, candy, or balloons to share with children of the group. These items are unsafe for children in a classroom setting because they present a choking hazard. If gift bags, toys, candy, or balloons are brought to the classroom or put into children's cubbies they will be returned to the parent.

Parents may place invitations to at-home parties in the Parent Mailboxes (*not the children's cubbies!*) after checking with a teacher. Feel free to call the CEEC office if you need a copy of your child's class list for children's home mailing addresses.

G. Sharing Family Traditions

Throughout the year, traditions represent markers to both children and adults. Seasonal changes, milestones in growth and development, birthdays, transitioning to another classroom, and departing from the Center are all part of our celebrations. We focus on the spirit of the seasons and events, for example family time, sharing, caring, and other values that give meaning to holiday traditions. We de-emphasize materialism and commercialization in order to avoid superficial stereotypes and minimize differences in economic status.

The families and staff of CEEC represent many cultures and religions and thus celebrate many different holidays in their homes. We are sensitive to and respectful of the variety of beliefs and traditions of the families and staff in our Center and so we do not "teach" or "celebrate" religious or secular holidays with the children as part of the regular curriculum. Instead teachers invite families to share seasonal and cultural traditions that have personal meaning to them.

We do not "ban" holidays from the program. Children talk with one another about their holiday celebrations, bring in books or artifacts from home, and incorporate their celebrations and traditions into their play. It is very common to see children making masks and playing hiding games during the Halloween season and cutting, decorating, and sharing paper hearts during the Valentine's Day season. This part of the curriculum comes naturally from the children and their families, and is not lead by the teachers. In this way, we respect diversity and topics of great importance to the children.

The culture of CEEC includes acceptance and learning about the diversity that our children and families bring. Our goal is to ensure that children learn about various cultural traditions in developmentally appropriate and educational ways. At the toddler and preschool ages children are concrete learners needing first hand experiences to gain understanding of their world. When a family comes into the classroom and shares their unique holiday tradition the children learn that this is how one family celebrates a holiday. They recognize what is familiar to them and are exposed to new ideas and customs.

Parents are invited to join their child's classroom to share their family's traditions, stories, pictures, songs, games, music, dance, and/or foods to help the children develop an understanding of their family culture and traditions. Parent participation in this way transforms our classrooms into small communities of parents and teachers sharing in the care of enrolled children. Please speak with your child's teachers to share your ideas, feedback, and

suggestions for sharing in your family's traditions with the children.

H. Physical Activity and Outdoor Play

Regular outdoor play is a very important part of a child's growth, exploration and learning about their environment. We follow the guidelines and criteria for physical activity set by the state's licensing regulations and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation criteria which indicate that all children must be provided with at least one hour of physical activity each day in order to promote good health and development.

In cold weather, children go outdoors if the wind chill is 15°F or above if conditions permit. The length of time outside will be limited and gauged by the comfort of the children and their ability to communicate this. All children should come with appropriate outerwear (coats, hats, mittens/gloves) to protect them in these conditions. Snow pants and boots should be supplied by the parent on days when there is snow on the ground.

Children will remain inside when the heat index (air temperature and relative humidity) is 90°F or above. When outdoors in warmer temperatures children are encouraged to drink water often, to rest or lower their activity level as needed, and to play in the shade. Water play is available during warm/hot weather. Teachers notify parents when sprinklers and the water table are available in the play yard. During the summer parents provide a labeled bathing suit, sun hat (for toddlers), water shoes, and a towel.

In warm/sunny/hot weather, sunscreen application is mandatory. Sun hats are recommended for toddlers to wear to protect them from the sun in summer. During the late spring and summer months we apply sunscreen to all children unless the parent/guardian signs a release form asking that we do not apply sunscreen. The Center provides a combined sunscreen/insect repellent product and families may provide their own product(s) for these uses.

Children must wear foot wear that allows them to run, climb and take walks with ease. Sneakers are the footwear of choice for active children as they protect and support the whole foot when playing indoors and outdoors. Flip-flops and crocs are not safe and may not be worn at CEEC. Children may wear sandals with heel straps and covered toes. "Water shoes" may be worn for outside water play as they are lightweight, the soles have grips to prevent slipping, and the elastic top keeps the shoe on the foot while running through the sprinkler.

I. Walking Field Trips

Children, accompanied by classroom teachers, go on frequent walks to the frog pond and fields behind the soccer and softball fields, the football stadium and stone sun wheel, various campus buildings, the Jones Library in downtown Amherst, etc. Teachers notify parents of off-site outings in advance in order that the children arrive to the classroom in time to go with the group that day.

Parents are welcome to participate in off-site outings that are scheduled in advance. Sometimes teachers decide to take advantage of good weather and/or a special event nearby. When a spontaneous trip occurs teachers leave directions on the classroom door so that parents dropping-off late or picking-up early can find the group.

J. Academic Observations and Research in the Classroom

Because we are an on-campus department, CEEC often participates in academic observation and research activities carried out by students and faculty. We feel this participation offers great value to increasing the collective knowledge regarding children and their development and to the

professional training of students who will pursue careers in early childhood education and related fields. Over the years CEEC has served as an observation site and research activities have been conducted by undergraduate and graduate students from the School of Education, Departments of Psychology Communication Disorders, Exercise Science, School of Management, and the School of Nursing, and other departments.

Parents sign an Informed Consent agreement at the time of enrollment giving permission for their child to be observed. Observations in the classroom do not involve any intentional interaction between the observer and children. Children are not identified by name in the student's observational reports.

When research activities involve interactions with the children parents are asked for permission for their child to participate in the specific interactive research project. The classroom teachers and/or Director supervise researchers working with children.

Past projects have included observations of child's speech, social, cognitive, and physical skills and research activities on children's concept of time and language acquisition. Generally these academic projects involve preschool children, occasionally toddlers. Sometimes children's activities area audio or video taped.

Please speak with Director if you are interested in conducting an academic project at CEEC.

K. Classrooms are Cell Phone Free Zones

The CEEC classrooms are cell phone-free environments. This policy maximizes opportunities for parent-child and staff-parent communication during drop-off and pick-up times. You are welcome to use your phone in the Toddler House hallway, and on the Bowditch and Farley Lodge porches. Your polite cooperation is greatly appreciated.

L. Use of Media Images

CEEC uses photographs, digital film, and audio recording of children and adults participating in Center activities to document children's learning, share classroom and Center-wide information with enrolled families, promote the Center to prospective families, train other early childhood professionals, and support University academic coursework and research. These activities facilitate the awareness of and support for the CEEC program from individuals both on- and off-campus. Parents provide consent for the use of media images of their child at the time of enrollment.

Parents may photograph or videotape their child's classroom activities for personal home viewing only. In order to protect the privacy of CEEC children and families parents DO NOT share, distribute, or post images of other CEEC children via telephone, e-mail, online social networking websites (Face Book, My Space etc.), or any other website under any circumstances.

M. Behavior Guidance

CEEC's approach to behavior guidance is based on the acceptance of a wide range of children's feelings and the encouragement of self control. Respect for each other and the environment are emphasized through the development of social skills such as turn-taking, helping, and cooperation. Children are encouraged, individually and as a group, to generate possible solutions to conflicts, to predict various outcomes, and to choose alternative behaviors. We seek to balance the needs of the child for autonomy and individual attention with the needs of the group for consistent expectations which embrace a sense of fairness.

Underlying all classroom management and child guidance practices at CEEC is an awareness of child development principles and a commitment to safety and respect for children. We demonstrate this by:

- Holding appropriate expectations for children's developing ability to experience empathy and to accept responsibility for their own behavior;
- Setting non-arbitrary limits that serve to promote children's safety and social competence;
- Evaluating the environment and curriculum to ensure that they are challenging and stimulating, yet, predictable and nurturing;
- Being flexible in our classroom management techniques in order to accommodate and value the diversity of cultures, personalities, learning styles, and developmental levels; and
- Reflecting upon and responding to children's individuality by documenting behaviors of concern and strategizing with the child's parents.

Behavioral problems that result in injury to other children or adults and/or that require excessive one-on-one staffing to prevent frequent disruptions of the group routines are addressed as outlined in the CEEC Process of Referral of Children for Additional Services. Parents are encouraged to discuss any questions regarding classroom and behavior management with their child's teachers, Assistant Director, and/or Director.

Please note that in accordance with licensing regulations the following practices are strictly prohibited:

- spanking or other corporal punishment of children;
- subjecting children to cruel or severe punishment such as humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, neglect, or abusive treatment including any type of physical hitting inflicted in any manner upon the body, shaking, threats, or derogatory remarks;
- depriving children of outdoor time, meals or snacks; force feeding children or otherwise making them eat against their will, or in any way using food as a consequence;
- disciplining a child for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet; forcing a child to remain in soiled clothing or to remain on the toilet, or using any other unusual or excessive practices for toileting;
- confining a child to a swing, high chair, crib, playpen or any other piece of equipment for an extended period of time in lieu of supervision; and
- excessive time-out. Time-out may not exceed one minute for each year of the child's age and must take place within an educator's view.

Behavioral problems that result in injury to other children or adults, or that require excessive one-on-one staffing to prevent frequent disruptions of the group routines, and/or that result in physical restraint of the child are responded to with a Referral of Children for Additional Services process (see below).

N. Referral of Children for Additional Services

1. Identification of Children for Additional Services

The goal of Center for Early Education and Care is to provide early intervention services related to learning disabilities, physical disabilities, mental health issues, and/or developmental delays in the most supportive and least restrictive environment. Center for Early Education and Care teachers are well versed in child development and recognize that a wide range of behavioral profiles are considered typical.

When a teacher has concerns about a child's development or behaviors s/he gathers objective information about the child in all areas of development. The teacher's role is to identify children who appear outside the expected range of variation in developmental growth; to communicate this information and reasons for the concern to the child's parents; and to document the behaviors and interventions used.

A description of the child's behaviors is shared with the parents in a parent/teacher conference. Teachers keep parents informed of the child's experience in the classroom and urge parents to share any pertinent information with their child's teachers.

2. Classroom Accommodations

The teacher and parent confer to plan possible changes in classroom routines and/or expectations in order to meet the identified needs of the child. Parallel strategies for home and the classroom are planned and implemented by parents and teachers.

3. Referral for Additional Services

If the behavior of concern continues, the teachers meet with the Director to review the child's progress to date, the classroom environment, and teaching strategies. If an assessment evaluation is indicated, the parent is given a written *Recommendation for Referral* that outlines the classroom accommodations that have been made, the reasons for the referral, and a list of agencies that may be contacted for additional services.

4. Next Steps in the Referral Process

- a. The child's teacher is designated as the CEEC liaison to the parent and referral agency. The parent signs the *Dissemination of Information* form which gives permission for the teacher to talk with the referral agency and/or to share copies of the child's developmental assessment with this agency.
- b. The teacher communicates with the parents and the identified agency, maintains the child's file, and updates the Director. Licensing criteria requires the child care program to follow-up on the referral for diagnostic evaluation by contacting the agency or person who evaluated the child.
- c. Based on the evaluation information and recommendations, additional teaching and classroom strategies and/or environmental accommodations are planned for the classroom and home. Arrangements for therapeutic services to be provided in the classroom are welcomed.

5. Parental Responsibility

It is the parent's responsibility to share pertinent information with their child's teacher, to follow through on the referral recommendation, and to request additional conferences with the teachers as they feel this is needed.

6. Termination

If a referral is indicated and the parent fails to follow-up on a recommendation for referral, the program may be unable to provide the developmental program that will lead to the child's success. Therefore, parental cooperation is essential in contacting the referral agency that has the expertise to consult with parents and CEEC staff about an appropriate education plan for the child. In unusual cases, parental failure to follow through on a child's referral may result in termination of enrollment with Center for Early Education and Care.

Center for Early Education and Care is committed to meeting the needs of all children however, the CEEC program is designed to serve children who are able to function successfully in a group

care setting. If, in the judgment of the program, a child is not able to function in a group setting, or the program is not able to meet the needs of a particular child, the program may require the family to withdraw the child. We believe strongly in working through challenges that a child or family may be having with the program. Termination from the program is a rarely used last resort when we have exhausted all possibilities of meeting the child or family's needs in conjunction with the needs of the program.

**Center for Early Education and Care
University of Massachusetts Amherst
Family Handbook**

IV. PARENTS IN THE PROGRAM

IV. PARENTS IN THE PROGRAM

CEEC is committed to promoting meaningful active parent participation in the program. Parents are encouraged to visit their child's classroom and are welcome to participate at any time. On-going verbal and written communication with parents about their child and family is important for the teachers in creating a program for the children.

A. Parent-Teacher Communication

1. Primary Teacher

Each family is assigned a primary teacher within the teaching team. This teacher meets with the parents when the child is enrolled to learn information the family wishes to share about their child's interests and approaches to learning, and about their family's structure, preferred child-rearing practices, cultural background, and goals for their child. The Primary Teacher is the parent's primary source of information about their child's experience in the classroom. This teacher writes the child's twice annual developmental assessment and holds parent/teacher conferences with the family. Both professional teachers interact with all of the children in the group and communicate with parents at drop-off and pick-up times.

2. Drop-off and Pick-up Times

Daily communication with your child's teachers about your child's health and well-being will help keep them informed and better able to provide the best possible care for your child. However, drop-off and pick-up times can sometimes be very busy. Teachers may be greeting many families at once while also maintaining activities for children in the classroom. It may be challenging to have uninterrupted conversation at these times. If you need time for discussion with a teacher feel free to arrange a time to talk on the phone later in the day or ask to schedule a parent/teacher conference.

Information about the activities of the children's day are included in the *Daily Curriculum Summary* that is posted on the Parent Information Board. Teachers may also send notes in the parent mailboxes or use e-mail. ***Please check your Parent Mailbox daily!***

3. Daily Written Communications

Each classroom has a Notes section on the Sign-in/out chart where parents may record information for teachers. These Notes serves as a major communication link for staff assigned to the classroom. Important items to write down are any changes in the usual pick-up time or the pick-up person, changes in your location or phone number for the day, if your child hasn't slept well or had a "difficult" morning, or any changes in your home situation (i.e. one parent is away on business). Please write this information in the *Notes* section of the form even if you have verbally communicated it to a teacher, to ensure that it is passed along to other teachers during the day.

In the toddler classrooms parents also complete a *Daily Experience* form to record information about the child's previous night's sleep, that mornings breakfast, the child's mood, and any special instructions or changes for the day. Please record this information even if you verbally communicate this to a teacher in order to ensure that it is passed along to other teachers during the day. During the day the teachers record information about the child's eating, toileting, and napping experiences and the child's favorite activities that day.

4. Telephone Calls

Parents may call the classroom anytime to leave a brief message. Please call your child's classroom directly rather than leaving messages in the office that your child is out sick for the day, or that you will be picking-up earlier than usual. Messages regarding a change in who will

pick up a child should only be given to the Supervising Teacher or Teacher, *not* with an undergraduate Assistant Teacher.

Please keep in mind that Nap/Rest Time (1:30 - 2:30pm) is a better time to call the classroom for lengthier conversations with teachers. Voice-mail may be on during parts of the day so that teachers and children are not interrupted in their activities (i.e. Circle Time or Project Groups).

5. Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/Teacher conferences are an excellent way to remain active in your child's early education. Teachers may contact you to schedule a conference to discuss your child's transition into the classroom, to ask questions about the information on the *Family Intake Questionnaire*, or to share their observations on your child's behavior in the program.

Each semester, teachers complete a developmental assessment on each child. Your child's portfolio is shared with you and you are offered an opportunity to meet with your child's teacher to discuss it. At this conference you will discuss the growth and development of your child, peer interactions, play interests, etc. This is a time for you to discuss any concerns about your child in depth with the teacher and to share your insights and perceptions of your child.

Although formal conferences are held twice a year, you may request a conference with your child's teacher at any time. Arrangements are made for such meetings to take place during Center hours of operation. In addition, arrangements can be made to provide a translator to support your family's participation in conferences with teachers.

B. Parents in the Classroom

Our classroom community is a place for children and their families. Our doors are always open to parents to come in and learn about the classroom and program, to get to know other children and parents, and to spend time with your own child. Parents may participate in a variety of ways. The following is a list of possibilities:

- ◆ Spontaneous visits to play or eat lunch with the children.
- ◆ Plan a special activity for the class (i.e. read a story, sing songs/play instruments, share an interest, hobby, or cooking project).
- ◆ Share information or objects to help children and teachers learn about the home life and culture of your family.
- ◆ Introduce the children to the kind of work you do or a hobby that you have. Do you have access to equipment or materials that would be of interest to the children? For example, parents have shared microscopes, insect collections, seashells, gardening tools, tie-dying clothes, and bee keeping.

If you are interested but feel uncertain, teachers can help you prepare a special project or plan an experience that would be developmentally appropriate for the children. The children enjoy and benefit from interactions with a variety of adults who have a broad range of interests and experiences to share. Family involvement in the classroom enriches both the curriculum and the warmth of our classroom atmosphere. It can also help families to learn more about and better understand the goals of the program and classroom.

C. Family Gatherings

Each semester families are invited to attend a classroom Family Gathering. This event might be a potluck supper followed by a parent meeting while children are cared for in another room by Assistant Teachers, or it may be a Saturday morning outing to a nearby attraction (a farm,

museum, local hike, etc.). The Family Gathering provides an opportunity for families to get to know one another, for teachers to provide parents with information about the curriculum, and for parents to ask questions and share ideas about the classroom program.

D. Parent Questions and Concerns

The staff of CEEC are committed to providing a high quality program that meets each child's and family's needs to the greatest extent possible in a group care setting. Along with the pieces we put in place for regular communication from the staff, we want parents to feel they can communicate with us easily when they have concerns about their children, their child's participation in the program, or other matters appropriate for parent input. It is very helpful for parents to communicate with teachers about anything going on at home that might have an effect on their child, whether it is something like interrupted sleep patterns or whether their child has had a particularly happy or difficult morning. It is also very helpful for us to know about more complex matters such as changes in family circumstances. We keep family information confidential while supporting the child through changing situations.

We ask that parents be sensitive to the teachers' needs to be with the children during morning drop-off and pick-up transition times. Calling the classroom at naptime or arranging a time to speak with the teacher is appropriate if an in-depth conversation is needed. Arrangements are made for such meetings and/or phone calls to take place during Center hours of operation.

When a parent has a concern about something in the classroom, we ask the parent to speak to the teacher first. This helps keep an open dialogue between the parent and teacher and gives the teacher a chance to hear the parent's concerns directly, and explain the program and/or provide more information directly to the parent. If a parent feels the need for further conversation, speaking with the Assistant Director is the appropriate step after talking with teachers. The Assistant Director works closely with the teachers is familiar with the activities of each classroom. The Director is also always available for conversation. The Dean of Students is available to hear parent concerns after these CEEC avenues have been pursued.

We are always interested in learning more about better ways to provide care for the child you have entrusted to our care. We take this responsibility very seriously. Please let us know how we are doing. If there is something you do not understand or are concerned about please tell us right away. We cannot always make changes to accommodate everyone, but we are willing to try. It is always easier to address small problems as they arise than to let them grow into bigger issues. If you are pleased with the program and services you receive at the Center, let us know this too, and tell other campus families and officials as well!

A Note on Email

Parents often want to have email exchanges with teachers or administrators. For simple matter-of-fact exchanges of information this can be an effective means of communication. However, please be aware that the busy classroom schedule does not always enable teachers to check e-mail every day. For more complex matters it is best to speak on the phone, or better yet, meet in person, even if only briefly. In the interest of privacy, it is understood that emails will not be passed on to other individuals without the direct permission from the person who wrote the email. We will respect parents this way and ask that parents honor this request from staff.

Confidentiality

CEEC staff are sensitive to the need to maintain confidentiality of child and family information. We ask that parents also respect the privacy, not only of their child(ren), but of all other children and families of the Center. We encourage open, honest, informal and frequent communication

among staff and parents. However convenient, cubby areas, classrooms, and the playground are not appropriate places for conversations about sensitive matters. A child's teacher or an administrator will suggest a follow-up phone call or meeting to discuss concerns raised initially in regular conversation that would be more appropriately addressed privately.

E. Family Feedback Survey

Each year CEEC conducts an on-line Family Feedback Survey. Parents complete a survey which provides CEEC teachers and administrators information about their experience in the program which is used in setting short and long-term goals for individual classrooms and the overall program. When many parents complete the survey we receive a comprehensive picture of parents' thoughts about and wishes for the CEEC program. For example, it was through this process that CEEC learned of the increase in the need for an early morning drop-off option. In response to these parent suggestions CEEC now offers a Morning Extended-Day classroom which enables students and faculty to participate in early morning classes and staff to hold a schedule early morning work schedule.

F. Sensitive Issues

1. Divorced or Separated Parents

CEEC tries to be aware of and sensitive to the families we serve. If divorced or separated parents are sharing custody and there is some way the program can help make this easier, or avoid making the situation more difficult, please let us know. We can include both parents in all-Center e-mails and other notices and will conduct separate or joint parent/teacher conferences as requested. Please note we can not presume one parent has more or less rights than the child's other parent without a legal document (i.e. copy of custody settlement or restraining order).

2. Parent Behavior in the Center

All adults in the Center, including parents, are expected to behave in a pleasant, friendly, and respectful manner towards children, teaching and administrative staff, parents, and visitors. It is expected that there will be no physical discipline of children and no verbal threats toward or humiliation or harassment of children, staff members, or parents in the program.

If a parent or other adult displays disruptive behavior which affects the safety of the program, such as verbal abuse/harassment of staff or children or physical abuse of their child, the adult will be asked to leave the premises. In an instance in which a parent (or other adult) is deemed verbally or physically hostile or abusive, exhibits erratic behavior, or is considered to pose a potential threat to others CEEC staff may contact UMass Public Safety to assist in addressing the situation as necessary. Incidences of such behaviors are addressed by the Director and may be grounds for termination of enrollment.

3. Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect

The Center for Early Education and Care is committed to the prevention of child abuse and neglect. Our abuse prevention practices include the following:

- ◆ As per child care licensing regulations, before a full-time or part-time staff member may be alone with children they must complete a comprehensive Background Record Check which includes review of state and federal criminal records, sexual offender records, and record of child abuse and/or neglect allegations. Background record checks are conducted on all staff every two years. All staff receive training on identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect during orientation and periodically throughout their employment.

- ◆ Concepts of personal safety are integrated into every day activities and discussions with children to address the right to privacy, differences in personal touches, assertiveness skills, verbalizing about unwanted touches, and using anatomically correct names for body parts.
- ◆ Written classroom policies and procedures regarding adult/child interactions, maintaining teacher/child ratios, consistent child behavior and classroom management expectations, and reporting suspected child abuse to the Department of Children and Families.

As professionals in regular contact with children and families, CEEC teachers and administrators are considered “mandated reporters” under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 119, Section 51A. This means that if a staff member has cause to suspect that a child is suffering physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse inflicted upon her/him which causes harm or risk of harm to the child’s health or welfare the staff member must report these concerns to the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

Teachers bring their observations and documentation to the attention of the Director or Assistant Director. The Director/Assistant Director is present when the teacher telephones DCF to make a report. The reporting teacher and Director/Assistant Director consult with DCF to determine if the child’s parent(s) may be notified of the need to make a report of suspicion of abuse/neglect to DCF.

In the case of an abuse allegation regarding a CEEC staff member, the Director meets with the individual making the assertion to collect information and document the allegation. The Director reports the allegation to the Department of Children and Families (DCF), the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), and the Dean of Students. The staff person is immediately removed from classroom responsibilities until all investigations are completed.

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V. HEALTH CARE GUIDELINES

V. HEALTH CARE GUIDELINES

The following is a summary of important information from the CEEC Health Care Policy document. A copy of the full Health Care Policy is available upon request from the office.

A. Children's Health Records

At the time of enrollment all children are required to have had a physical exam within one year of beginning enrollment and all immunizations and lead screenings are up to date according to the Department of Public Health schedule. A record of a physical is required every year and immunizations are to be kept up to date thereafter. The Office Supervisor tracks immunization and physical records and notifies parents of health information updates needed for their child's file.

If the child is under-immunized the parent must provide a written statement signed by the child's health care provider indicating that the immunization is medically contraindicated or a written statement signed by the parent indicating that immunization conflicts with her/his sincere religious beliefs.

When one or more cases of a vaccine-preventable communicable disease occurs in the Center, the under-immunized child is considered a "susceptible" and will be excluded from care in accordance with the Vaccine Preventable Disease Exclusion Guidelines provided by the state Department of Public Health (http://www.mass.gov/Eeohhs2/docs/dph/cdc/immunization/guidelines_vaccine_exclusions_schol.pdf)

B. Injury Prevention

- ◆ All CEEC staff monitor indoor and outdoor environments for safety hazards throughout each day and report hazards to the office.
- ◆ Hot liquids, foods, and appliances (hot plates, electric frying pans, irons, etc.) that are or become hot enough to burn a child are kept out of reach of children at all times.
- ◆ Strings, laces, jewelry that could become entangled or wedged in equipment and which present a strangulation hazard are removed from children's clothing.
- ◆ Sneakers are the footwear of choice for active children as they protect and support the whole foot when playing indoors and outdoors. Flip-flops and crocs are not safe and may not be worn at CEEC. Children may wear sandals with heel straps and covered toes. "Water shoes" may be worn for outside water play as they are lightweight, the soles have grips to prevent slipping, and the elastic top keeps the shoe on the foot while running through the sprinkler.
- ◆ Smoking and drinking alcoholic beverages at the Center is prohibited. The use of any substance that may impair a staff member's alertness, judgment, or ability to care for children during child care hours is prohibited.
- ◆ Equipment and toy purchases are carefully examined and all donated materials are checked for safety and health concerns. When materials or equipment are recalled by the Consumer Product Safety Commission they are removed from the Center.
- ◆ To prevent exposure to adverse weather conditions, the administrator who opens the office each day is responsible upon arrival each day for monitoring local health condition warnings (i.e. very cold or very hot apparent temperatures, air pollution warnings) and notifies the

classrooms of any necessary restrictions for that day's outdoor activities (i.e. reduced or no outdoor play due to extreme cold or heat, outdoor play before a certain time when extreme heat is expected, etc.)

- ◆ Sunscreen and insect repellent are applied to children as needed to prevent injury from sun and insects.
- ◆ Teachers complete an Injury/Illness Form whenever a child experiences an injury or illness at the Center. A copy of the Injury/Illness Form is placed in the parent's mailbox by pick-up time. A copy of this form is placed in the child's file and the incident is included on the Illness or Injury log.

C. Infection Illnesses

It is common for young children to have 6 - 10 upper respiratory and gastrointestinal illnesses a year. Most children, over time, build up a strong immune system and are then better able to fight off viral and bacterial infections. Illness of children in group child care settings is a difficult problem for parents and staff. It is inconvenient for the parent who has to leave school or work and difficult for staff trying to care for the ill child. Everyone shares a concern for the child's well-being and everyone can get frustrated under the circumstances. Parents are strongly encouraged to arrange back-up child care for the inevitable days when their child will be too ill to attend the program.

The Center is concerned with the health of each child and with the health of the group of children in our care. When a child is ill, parents are asked to not send the child to the classroom in order that s/he may recover more quickly and so that the spread of illnesses may be contained. If at drop-off time it appears that a child is not well enough to be at the Center, teachers will ask the parent to take the child home.

During the day when it becomes apparent that a child is ill a teacher assesses the child's health condition and confers with the Director/Assistant Director to determine if the child may remain in care. Parents are notified by the classroom teacher or administrator when the child's condition warrants exclusion from care. In such instances it is expected that a parent will pick-up their child within thirty (30) minutes of being notified by the Center. The child will remain in the classroom or in an administrator's office, isolated from the group, until picked up. If parents cannot be reached, those listed as emergency contacts are called.

Conditions Requiring Temporary Exclusion

The Center uses three key criteria for determining when a child must be excluded from care due to illness:

- ◆ The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities as determined by the staff of the program.
- ◆ The illness results in a greater need for care than the staff of the program determine they can provide without compromising their ability to care for the other children in the group.
- ◆ The child has any of the following conditions, unless a health professional determines the child's condition does not require exclusion:
 - a. The child appears to be severely ill: this could include lethargy/lack of responsiveness, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing, or having a quickly spreading rash.
 - b. Fever *and* behavior change or other symptoms (e.g., sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea,

extreme lethargy). Fever is indicated by a temperature reading above 102 via temporal artery (forehead) or rectal (not used at CEEC), above 101 degree orally, or above 100 degree auxiliary (i.e. arm pit).

- c. Diarrhea - defined by more watery stools or decreased form of stool that is not associated with changes of diet. Exclusion is required for all diapered children whose stool is not contained in the diaper, and toilet-trained children if the diarrhea is causing "accident." In addition, diapered children with diarrhea should be excluded if the stool frequency exceeds 2 or more stools above normal for that child because this may challenge the teachers ability to maintain sanitary diapering changing techniques. Readmission after diarrhea can occur when diapered children have their stool contained by the diaper (even if the stools remain loose) and when toilet-trained children do not have toileting accidents. Special circumstances that require specific exclusion criteria include E coli, shigella infection, and salmonella. In outbreaks of these conditions occur we consult with our Health Care Consultant to determine if stool tests are required.
- d. Blood or mucus in the stools not explained by dietary change, medications, or hard stools.
- e. Vomiting 2 or more times in the previous 24 hours, When the child has been vomit-free for 24 hours and is able to eat a meal without incident, the child may return to child care.
- f. Abdominal pain that continues for more than 2 hours or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs or symptoms.
- g. Mouth sores with drooling unless the child's physician states that the child is noninfectious.
- h. Rash with fever or behavioral changes, until a physician has determined that the illness is not a communicable disease.
- i. Tuberculosis, until the child's physician states that the child is on appropriate treatment and can return.
- j. Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment has been started.
- k. Streptococcal pharyngitis (i.e. strep throat or other streptococcal infection), until 24 hours after treatment has started.
- l. Head lice or nits, until after the first treatment (note: exclusion is not necessary before the end of the program day).
- m. Scabies, until after treatment has been given.
- n. Chickenpox (Varicella) until all lesions have dried or crusted (usually 6 days after onset of rash).
- o. Persistent abdominal pain (continues for more than 2 hours) or intermittent abdominal pain associated with fever, dehydration, or other signs or symptoms of illness.
- p. Rubella, until after 6 days after the rash appears.
- q. Pertussis (whooping cough), until after 5 days of appropriate antibiotic treatment.

- r. Mumps, until 5 days after onset of parotid gland swelling.
- s. Measles, until 4 days after onset of rash.
- t. Pinkeye (bacterial conjunctivitis). Pink or red conjunctiva (whites of the eyes) with white or yellow eye mucus drainage (signs of bacterial infection), often with matted eyelids after sleep or eye pain. Children should be excluded for at least 24 hours after the first treatment of antibiotics.
- u. Hepatitis A virus infection, until 1 week after onset of illness or jaundice or as directed by the health department (if the child's symptoms are mild).
- v. Any child determined by the local health department to be contributing to the transmission of illness during an outbreak.

Conditions That Do Not Require Exclusion to Control the Spread of Disease to Others

The following conditions *do not* require exclusion from the Center unless:

- ◆ The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities as determined by the staff.
 - ◆ The illness results in a greater need for care than the staff of the program determine they can provide without compromising their ability to care for the other children in the group.
 - ◆ A health professional determines the child's condition require exclusion.
- a. Common colds, runny noses (regardless of color or consistency of nasal discharge), and coughs.
 - b. Water eye discharge without fever, eye pain, or eyelid redness.
 - c. Yellow or white eye drainage that is not associated with pink or red conjunctiva (i.e. the whites of the eyes).
 - d. Fever without any signs of symptoms of illness. Fever is an indication of the body's response to something, but is neither a disease nor a serious problem by itself. Body temperature can be elevated by overheating caused by overdressing or a hot environment, reactions to medications, and response to infection. If the child is behaving normally but has a fever, the child should be monitored, but does not need to be excluded for fever alone.
 - e. Rash without fever and behavioral changes.
 - f. Lice or nits without lice (exclusion for treatment may be delayed until the end of the day).
 - g. Ringworm (exclusion for treatment may be delayed until the end of the day).
 - h. Thrush (i.e. white spots or patches in the mouth).
 - i. Fifth disease (slapped cheek disease, parvovirus B19).
 - j. Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), without an infection or illness that would otherwise require exclusion. Known MRSA carriers or colonized individuals should not be excluded.

- k. Cytomegalovirus infection.
- l. Chronic hepatitis B virus infection.
- m. Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection. Exclusion of an HIV-infected child whose immunologic deficiency poses a risk from exposure of the HIV-infected child to other children's infections should be determined on a case-by-case basis by health professionals.
- n. Children with chronic infectious conditions that can be accommodated in the program according to the legal requirements of federal law in the Americans with Disabilities Act (e.g. HIV infections). The act requires child care programs make reasonable accommodations for children with disabilities and/or chronic illnesses, considering each child individually.

Information regarding exclusion from care is adapted from Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools: A Quick Reference Guide (third edition), American Academy of Pediatrics (2013).

Illness Exposure Notification

Parents are notified via e-mail (written copy provided for families without e-mail access) and posting on the Sign-In/Out clipboard of any cases of infectious illness/diseases that their child may have been exposed to. Children with a contagious illness are sent home until they are no longer contagious. Parents are asked to inform the Center if their child contracts a contagious disease. Reportable diseases (e.g. giardia, measles, etc.) are reported to the local Board of Health. (The complete list of reportable diseases is found on the Massachusetts DPH website: http://www.mass.gov/Eeohhs2/docs/dph/cdc/reporting/rprtbdiseases_lboh.pdf).

D. Care of Mildly Ill Children

Children who are mildly ill may remain in the program if they are not contagious and they can participate in the daily program, including outside time. Staff members monitor the child's mood and at nap time, such children will be allowed to sleep as long as they naturally do until outdoor time. If the child's condition worsens, s/he will be cared for in a quiet area of the classroom while the teacher contacts the parent to pick-up the child.

E. Administration of Medicine

All medication must be given to a teacher along with full instructions. Never leave medication in your child's lunchbox or cubby. Please bring a measuring utensil with the medication if needed.

Teachers may administer prescription or non-prescription medication to a child only with the written order of a physician, which indicates that the medication is for the specific child and includes instructions for administration (this may be covered by the prescription label).

No medication, whether prescription or non-prescription, is administered to a child without written parental authorization. Parents complete the *Authorization for Medication* form and review this with a teacher who verifies that all conditions of packaging, consent, and documentation are met. This form is stored with the medication and is used to record each dose given. No staff member may administer the first dose of any medication to a child, except under extraordinary circumstances and with parental consent.

Medication is labeled with the child's name and is kept in a locked medication box out of the reach of children. Each time a medication is administered, the staff member documents the following on the Medication Administration Log: the child's name, the medication, the dosage,

the date and time, the method of administration, and the name of who administered the medication. Unused and/or expired medication is returned to the parent.

F. Special Care Plan

The *Family Intake Form* and *Emergency Contact & Alternate Pick-up Information* forms are completed by a parent at the time of enrollment. These forms contain information about any allergy or medical condition a child may have. The parent(s) of a child with a noted allergy or other medical condition is provided with a *Special Care Plan* form. This form is completed and signed by both the child's parent and physician. The Special Care Plan form is reviewed by the Director or Assistant Director in order to determine that the Center is able to meet the child's special care needs. The Special Care Plan is then reviewed with the classroom teachers to develop special care procedures needed for the child while in attendance.

G. Medical and Emergency Procedures.

In case of simple injury, (abrasion, skinned knees, etc.), the teachers perform routine hygienic measures, such as washing wounds and applying bandages. All professional staff are trained in First Aid skills. The parent is informed when they arrive to pick-up their child about these incidents and the actions that were taken.

In the case of a medical emergency, the parent is called and is responsible for obtaining the necessary medical treatment. If, in the judgment of the program staff, circumstances require immediate or professional care 911 Services are called. The program staff responds as necessary until emergency services arrive.

In the event emergency treatment is required, the parent has signed the *Informed Consent* form at the time of enrollment which gives permission for the child to be taken to a nearby medical facility for treatment by a qualified physician. When staffing allows, a familiar adult will accompany and remain with the child until the parent arrives. Program staff may not transport a child to an emergency facility. Parents are responsible for any costs incurred from treatment of an injury or illness occurring within the program.

Please be sure that we can reach you in an emergency by writing a note in the Note section of the Sign-in/out chart when you are not at your usual phone number on a given day. Please be sure to stop by the office to update your child's Emergency Contact and Alternate Pick-up form whenever there is a change to your phone number and/or home address. The office staff will update this information in the classroom and office locations. Please be sure the your emergency contact person is local and available at the phone numbers you have listed. This person must be willing and able to pick-up your child during medical emergencies or sudden illness.

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VI. CENTERWIDE PROCEDURES

VI. PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A. Parking

Parking for CEEC is located on Stadium Drive, directly in front of the classroom buildings. The University Parking Office requires a portable 15-minute parking permit to park along Stadium Drive during child drop-off and pick-up. An application form for this free permit is completed at the time of enrollment and each August, and is available from the CEEC office.

For everyone's safety, especially the children's, when using the parking area in front of the Center families must:

- ◆ Drive very slowly in front of the Center. The speed limit is 15 mile per hour. This is very slow!
- ◆ Children must be attended in cars at all times. Never leave children under the age of 12 years unattended in a car.
- ◆ Turn off the car engine when parking in front of the Center. Never leave a car engine running while you are in the Center - for any reason.
- ◆ Park only in the designated parking spaces. Do not park in front of the driveway gates as these entrances must be kept available for emergency and delivery vehicles at all times. Do not park in the handicap accessible space and side loading area without a handicap parking pass. This area must be available for drivers with handicap parking passes at all time.
- ◆ When the designated parking spaces are all filled park along the grass on the same side of the street as the Center. Do not park along the greenway across from the Center as your car may be hit by another car backing out of a designated parking space.

B. Emergency and Inclement Weather Closings

During campus emergency and inclement weather closings CEEC follows the operating hours of the University. For example, if the University delays opening until 10:00am, then CEEC opens at 10:00 am. If the University closes early, CEEC closes at that same time.

- The UMass Weather Hotline phone number is 545-3630. In addition, University closings are broadcast on many local radio and television stations and are posted on the UMass website (www.umass.edu). We encourage you to check often as there is no specific time for an announcement to be made.
- Delayed Opening: When the program is open during inclement weather and there is not a sufficient number of teachers in the classroom to meet the required teacher/child ratios, parents stay in the classroom with their child until enough teachers arrive.
- Early Closing: The University implements a staggered departure procedure when the campus closes early during the day. The purpose of this procedure is to help reduce traffic congestion in the local region when the University closes early. This staggered departure procedure also helps reduce parking/traffic congestion in front of CEEC on these days.

CEEC staff do not follow the employee alphabetical departure procedure. Instead, we stagger the departure of CEEC staff as the number of children in attendance decreases, not by the first letter of our last names. We maintain appropriate teacher:child ratios until the last child is picked-up from the Center.

- When you are off-campus during an inclement weather day, please be certain that you can be reached by telephone and/or provide us with an authorized emergency contact who will be available to pick-up your child in case of an early closing.

C. Emergency Evacuation Procedures

The classrooms practice evacuation drills monthly in order that in the event of an actual emergency staff and children are well prepared. Every three months the Fire Department from the Town of Amherst performs a fire safety inspection of the Center. Our drills are conducted by Environmental Health and Safety staff and are scheduled at different times of the day so we may practice evacuating from different classroom situations. The drills are scheduled in advance and in the event of inclement weather the drill is rescheduled for another day.

Not all evacuation alarms are scheduled, however. The alarm will sound as an alert to dusty detectors or an electrical malfunction in the alarm system. Regardless of the reason, all sounded alarms result in an evacuation. If an evacuation results from a condition which results in a determination by health and safety officials that we may not return to the building, parents will be informed by telephone and e-mail that it is necessary to pick-up their children.

If you are in the Center during an evacuation please stay calm, follow the teacher's guidance and directions, and exit the building with your child's group. If you arrive to the Center during an evacuation please park your car away from the emergency vehicles, join your child's group gathered in their meeting place in one of the other buildings, or wait in your car. Above all, we must account for all children during and after the evacuation and keep the parking area clear for emergency vehicles. Please do not leave the program until your child's group has returned to the classroom and you have signed-out your child. Your cooperation is an essential ingredient in this effort.

D. Late Pick-Up

We believe that the child's reunion with their parent at the end of the day is an important part of the daily routine at the Center. Thus, we encourage parents to arrive at least ten minutes before the pick-up time to allow for a leisurely reunion with your child before leaving the Center. Please sign your child out on the Sign-In/Out list and let your child's teacher know when you are leaving the classroom or play yard with your child.

Please telephone the classroom if you believe you will be late to pick up your child. This information lets teachers know that you are safe and they may then reassure your child that you are on your way. A late fee is charged for all late pick-ups, whether you have called in advance or not.

All children must be picked up by their contracted pick-up schedule. Parents who pick up a child late during the Center's hours of operation (i.e. after the 4:15 pick-up time) are charged for late pick-up. A family with more than one child enrolled at the Center will be charged separately for each child who is picked up late.

Please be reminded that the classrooms close at 5:30 pm each day. At this time all children and parents are expected to have left the building and play yards. Staff have completed their workday and must be finished with their job responsibilities.

- ◆ Upon the first occurrence of a late pick-up of ten minutes or less, the parent receives a "grace" (no fee is charged). The parent is charged a fee for each subsequent late pick-up. The late pick-up fee charge is added to the family's next tuition bill.
- ◆ Families are charged a \$5.00 fee when their child is picked-up one (1) to ten (10) minutes after the contracted pick-up time. An additional \$1.00 is charged for each additional minute

the child remains at the Center.

- ◆ CEEC clocks are set to the time displayed on the atomic clocks located in each building.
- ◆ After each of the third and fourth late pick-up occurrences, the parent receives a reminder notice about the Late Pick-Up Policy from the CEEC Enrollment Assistant. After the fifth late pick-up occurrence, the CEEC Director sends a letter to the family alerting them to the fact that six late pick-up occurrences in a 12-month period are considered excessive and may be grounds for termination from the program.

The following procedure is followed when a child is at the Center beyond the contracted pick-up time:

1. At the end of the contracted pick-up time the parent begins accumulating a late pick-up fee.
2. After five (5) minutes a staff member telephones the parent's home and work numbers. After fifteen (15) minutes a staff member telephones the contact person(s) listed on the child's Emergency & Release form. Please be sure that individuals listed on this form are aware that they may be called in such circumstances and that they have reliable transportation.
3. After thirty (30) minutes, if a parent has not arrived or been reached and no one on the Emergency & Release form has been reached, the UMass Public Safety and Amherst police department are called for help in locating the parents and advise on further action. Our first concern is the safety and health of the family members.

The CEEC staff appreciate your cooperation in this matter. If you have any questions about this policy please call the CEEC office.

E. Postings in the Classroom and Notes in Parent Mailboxes

The Parent Mailboxes of the CEEC classrooms are provided by the University and maintained by CEEC for the purpose of providing official communication from CEEC and the University to parents. The Parent Mailboxes may only be used for these purposes.

If you have a flyer or note you would like to post on the Parent Information Board or in the Parent Mailboxes of your child's classroom please give it to your child's teacher. The teacher will determine if it is appropriate for classroom distribution.

If you have a flyer you would like to post on *all* the classroom Parent Information Boards and/or be placed in all the Parent Mailboxes/cubbies of the Center, please submit this to the Director at least two (2) days in advance of when you would like it posted or distributed. The Director will determine if the material is appropriate for all-center distribution. In some cases the CEEC office will copy the material for distribution, in other cases the parent will provide enough copies for full-center distribution.

Information about local child and family oriented activities is welcome. Advertisements for products and services are not usually circulated within CEEC.

F. Children's Records

The program maintains an office file for each child which includes the following:

- a. *Child's Enrollment Sheet* which lists parent addresses, transportation plan, and identifying child information
- b. *Emergency and Release* form includes all authorization and consent as well as

- c. emergency pick-up persons
Parent Schedule form indicating where the child's parent(s) can be found during the program's hours of operation
- d. *Family Intake Questionnaire* form providing family and child information for the teachers
- e. *Physician Examination* form which must be updated yearly
- f. *Immunization Record* which must be on file on the first day of the child's attendance and updated as immunizations are given
- g. Record of developmental screenings conducted (Ages and Stages Questionnaire completed by toddler parents at time of enrollment, Early SI-R completed by Assistant Director within three months of preschool enrollment or the child's third birthday)
- h. Copies of child's assessments written every six months
- i. Copies of annual Enrollment Contract, Informed Consent, and Sunscreen/Insect Repellant authorization.
- j. Copies of medication authorizations, billing records, and correspondence.

1. Changes in Information

Parents are required to notify the program in writing of any changes in address, work or home phone numbers. Please share this information with the office as well as the classroom teachers so that the CEEC database can be updated.

It is important that parents keep the Center apprised of changes in contact numbers - home, work, and cell - as well as changes of home address or email addresses. We will also need updated emergency contact numbers, changes in designated pick-up people, or pertinent medical or educational information. Please provide changes and updates to these types of changes to office staff, not the classroom teachers, in order to ensure that the update of information is made to all of the child's office and classroom records.

2. Parent Schedules

Even in the best-run programs, accidents can happen. Your child will need the comfort and security of your presence should s/he become ill or injured. Therefore, *Parent Schedule* forms must be kept up to date in order for us to provide greater safety and security for your child. On any given day, if you will not be available according to the *Parent Schedule* on file, you must write your schedule and a phone number in the *Parent Notebook*. If the change will exist for a week or more, please write out the new schedule and give it to your child's teacher.

3. Confidentiality and Distribution of Records

Information contained in a child's record is confidential. CEEC does not release information in a child's record to anyone not directly related to implementing the program unless the child's parent provides written consent to do so. Appropriate state officials (i.e. child care licenser, department of Public Health auditor) may inspect children's file at any time. Parents are notified if their child's records are subpoenaed.

The child's parent shall, upon request, have access to his or her child's record within two (2) business days of the request. A written log is maintained in each child's file indicating any persons to whom information contained in a child's record has been released and the parent's written consent.

4. Amending the Child's Record

Parents have the right to add information, comments, data, or any other relevant materials to the child's record. Parents also have the right to request deletion or amendment of any information contained in a child's record. If you believe that adding information is not sufficient to explain,

clarify or correct objectionable material in your child's record, parents have the right to a conference with the Director to make their objections known. If you have a conference with the Director, the Director must inform you in writing within one week of the decision regarding your objections.

5. Transfer of Records

When a child is no longer enrolled in CEEC, upon written request from the parent, CEEC will provide a copy of the child's record to the parent, or any other person the parent indicates with written permission (i.e. child's kindergarten teacher).

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VII. ENROLLMENT

VII. ENROLLMENT

A. Statement of Non-Discrimination

The Center for Early Education and Care strives to develop an appreciation for the richness of diversity which encompasses CEEC families and to provide an inclusive environment which reflects the diversity of the campus community and the world in which we live. Consistent with University policy, CEEC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, age, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, disability, military status, or genetic information, and any other class of individual protected from discrimination under state or federal law in any aspect of the access to, admission to, or treatment of children and families in its programs and activities, or in employment and application for employment.

In addition, when enrolling children in the program, toilet training status is *not* an eligibility requirement for enrollment.

B. Eligibility and Priority

Enrollment is offered on a space available basis, in the order of date of application according to the enrollment priorities listed below. Families may apply for enrollment and be placed on the waiting list with a confirmed pregnancy. Need for tuition assistance is verified at the time of enrollment based on household size and income. When program enrollment is filled, applicants for enrollment are placed on a waiting list.

There are four categories of affiliation that are considered for enrollment eligibility. The child's parent or legal guardian, or spouse/domestic partner of the parent or legal guardian must be a member of one of the following affiliation categories:

1. University affiliated (full-time undergraduate student, graduate student, or employee)
2. UMass Amherst Alumni
3. Five-College and US Fish and Wildlife affiliated
4. The Community-at-Large

Within the above affiliation categories enrollment is prioritized in the following order:

1. Sibling of currently enrolled children
2. Previously enrolled child whose parent/guardian is on leave from University work or study, returning within six (6) months
3. University undergraduate student, graduate student, and employees (Low-income students receive first priority in the flexible-schedule classrooms)
4. UMass/Amherst Alumni
5. Five-College students and employees and US Fish and Wildlife employees
6. Community-at-Large

Flexible-Schedule Enrollment Priorities

In addition to the eligibility and priority policy outlined above, families enrolling in the flexible-schedule classrooms are eligible for varying amounts of care per week based on the family's study and/or work service need.

Flexible-schedule offers of enrollment are made in order of the date of application in the following manner:

1. At least one parent of the household must be at least a half-time student at the University. Single student parents and two parent families receive enrollment priority.
2. The family must meet the low-income criteria (see Flexible-Schedule section of *CEEC Sliding Fee Scale Determination* chart).

3. The family's service need is designated into one of three Enrollment Schedule Tiers which specifies the maximum hours of care they may schedule per week: Tier 1 (up to 30 hours per week), Tier 2 (up to 21 hours of care per week), and Tier 3 (up to 12 hours of care per week).
4. The family then selects the enrollment schedule they wish to receive.
5. Each semester enrollment schedule priority is given first to families who qualify for Tier 1, then Tier 2, and then Tier 3. Every effort will be made to give each family their requested enrollment schedule, however, there is no guarantee that each family will receive the enrollment schedule they request.

C. Enrollment Schedule Options

Center for Early Education and Care offers a variety of full-day or part-day and full-week or part-week enrollment options. Parents select an enrollment schedule that best meets their child care needs in the full-day and flexible-schedule classrooms.

1. Full-Day Classrooms

The full-day classrooms are open year round with the following enrollment schedule options:

- ◆ 3, 4, or 5 Core Days (8:15am – 4:15pm) (there are a limited number of 3- and 4-day spaces)
- ◆ Any number and combination of Extended AM (7:30 – 8:15am) and Extended PM (4:15pm – 5:30pm).

2. Flexible-Schedule Classrooms

The flexible-schedule classrooms are open during the academic year (September – May) and offer the following enrollment schedule options:

Minimum enrollment of three (3) hours per day, nine (9) hours per week. Children may be enrolled for up to 12, 21, or 30 hours per week as determined by the family's service need eligibility. Parents reserve flexible-schedule enrollment in any combination of hours using the drop-off and pick-up times listed on the Enrollment Application.

3. Reserved Care

Parents reserve a schedule of services at the time of enrollment and re-enrollment. Changes to the Reserved Care schedule may be requested during the University's Fall and Spring course Add/Drop periods. The enrollment schedule in place at the end of the Add/Drop period is in effect for the remainder of the semester. Changes to Reserved Care schedules are made on a space available basis and cannot always be accommodated.

Families requesting a permanent enrollment schedule change after the Add-Drop period are assessed a \$10.00 Schedule Change Fee. Parents contact the Office Manager with requests to change the Reserved Care schedule. Enrollment schedule changes go into effect the first full week after the new schedule has been confirmed. Changes to the Enrollment Agreement may not be made during the final three (3) weeks of the semester and/or each summer session. The Reserved Care schedule may not be exchanged for other days or hours of care.

4. Additional Care

Additional Care may be purchased to supplement the schedule on the Enrollment Agreement on a space available basis. The purpose of Additional Care is to accommodate families if they have the need for more care on an occasional basis. Fees for Additional Care are based on the contracted tuition rate and are charged to the next month's bill. For more information and to schedule Additional Care visit the CEEC office. Reserved Care may not be exchanged for other days or hours of care.

Additional Care may be scheduled up to ten working days in advance and *no later than 9:30am on the day of the care needed*. This is provided on a space available basis. Parents may leave a voice mail request the night before the need but may not have a child stay for Additional Care until the Office Manager returns the call to confirm there is space. Parents must sign the Additional Care Form in the office *prior* to their child attending these additional hours.

D. Enrollment Process

When enrollment is offered, both child and parents will be invited to visit the classroom where there is an opening. Parents will receive an informational packet which contains the following:

- Curriculum information
- Classroom daily schedule and routine
- Family information form
- Program calendar
- Tuition and subsidy information

A copy of the latest edition of the program's Family Handbook will be emailed in order that families can review additional Center policies and procedures. If access to a computer is not available, a paper copy will be provided.

Parents will be given two (2) business days to provide CEEC with their enrollment decision. Parents may decline an offer of enrollment one time and still remain on the waiting list.

Upon acceptance of an offer of enrollment, the parent(s) will meet with the Manager of Personnel and Enrollment Services to sign the Offer/Acceptance Letter and pay the deposit. At that time, parents are given a packet of enrollment forms for their child. The Manager of Personnel and Enrollment Services reviews each form with the family. All completed enrollment forms must be submitted prior to the child's first day of attendance.

A deposit is required to secure a child's initial enrollment. The deposit will be held for forty-eight (48) hours in case of a change in a family's enrollment decision. The deposit will be credited towards the family's last month's bill. If a family gives less than four weeks written notice when withdrawing from the program, the deposit will be forfeited.

F. Transition Week

Beginning enrollment in an early childhood program can be an exciting and intense experience for both children and parents. Moving from the intimate world of home to the "big" world of a child care classroom is a significant change for children and parents. For the child there are new children and adults to meet and different routines for their day. For the parent there are new adults and children to meet and different home/work/school routines for their day too.

All children begin their attendance with a Transition Week. An attendance schedule of gradually longer days is designed to assist you and your child in becoming familiar with the new surroundings and experiences. Beginning attendance with a shorter schedule helps alleviate the anxiety many children experience during the transition into a new child care setting. For a full-day full-time child the Transition Week schedule usually lasts five days. For part-week children the Transition Week schedule may be modified. Teachers and parents discuss the child's prior home and child care experiences to plan the Transition Week schedule and

adjustments are made as needed during the first week of enrollment.

G. Transitions from One Classroom to Another

Children move to a new classroom based on age, developmental readiness, and the availability of an enrollment space. Because children may have to wait for an opening or move up a little earlier than expected to take advantage of an opening, the Center makes sure that the classroom works for children at each end of the age range. Individualized learning and care make this possible. Your child will never be “too young” or “too old” for her/his classroom.

When an opening is available in another classroom, the current teacher discusses the possible move with the child’s parent. Throughout the transition process, teachers and parents collaborate to make it go smoothly for the child. Generally, children transition to a new classroom during the summer months or at the start of the new academic year, when enrollment openings become available. Whenever possible children transition to a new group together with one or more children from their current classroom in order to maintain continuity of relationships among children. Whenever possible, a child will follow her/his older sibling to a preschool group in order to maintain continuity of relationships between teachers and families.

Before a child moves, s/he will spend time visiting the new classroom. A teacher from the current classroom brings the child to the new classroom. Prior to, or during the child’s first week in the new classroom, the primary teacher from the new room meets with the parents(s) to exchange information and to discuss the child and the new classroom. Parents may be asked to update the *Family Intake Questionnaire* form that was filled out when the child first began enrollment in the Center.

G. Withdrawal from the Program

CEEC’s enrollment plans depend upon accurate information from parents. Parents are required to give at least four (4) weeks written notice when a child will be leaving the program. If four weeks written notice is not received by the office the enrollment deposit is forfeited.

H. Suspension and Termination from the Program

CEEC serves children who are able to function successfully in a group care setting. If, in the judgment of the program, a child is not able to function in a group setting, or the program is not able to meet the needs of a particular child, the program may ask the family to withdraw the child. We believe strongly in working through challenges that a child or family may be having with the program. Termination from the program is a rarely used last resort when we have exhausted all possibilities of meeting the child or family’s needs in conjunction with the needs of the program.

A child’s enrollment in the Center for Early Education and Care may be suspended or terminated with advance written notice to the parents for the following reasons:

- Non-compliance with the policies of the Center for Early Education and Care of the state Department of Early Education and Care licensing regulations (i.e. failure to submit required documentation of annual physical and/or immunization records, permission forms, emergency cards, etc.).
- Non-payment of child care fees. Following the CEEC Late Payment Policy, a Termination of Services Notice will be sent via center personnel at around the 10th of the month effective on or about the 24th of the month. At the third Termination of Services Notice the family will be required to enroll in the Payroll Deduction Program or remove

their child from the Center for Early Education and Care.

- Excessive late pick-up (six or more within a year).
- Inappropriate behavior by the child's parent(s). There may be no physical discipline of children and no verbal threats toward or humiliation of children, staff members, or parents in the program. Disruptive behavior which affects the safety of the program, such as verbal abuse/harassment of staff or children or physical abuse of their child. Incidences of such behaviors may be grounds for termination of enrollment.
- Loss of University affiliated status. The child may remain enrolled for the remainder of the enrollment period and one additional enrollment period. Requests for extensions are reviewed on a case by case basis by the Director.
- Failure to follow through on a Recommendation for Referral. Termination would occur only after a written recommendation is given to the parents, a parent/teacher conference is offered and scheduled, and a second written request asking the parent to follow-up on obtaining further diagnostic services has been sent.
- The child has a disability or special need which requires specific accommodations that present an undue burden to the program. CEEC provides the parent(s) with written notification of termination of enrollment. In the event of termination of services the parent receives a listing of child care Resource and Referral services and any relevant educational or social services in the community.
 - *NOTE: Behavioral problems that result in danger to other children or to adults and/or that require excessive one-on-one staffing to prevent frequent disruptions of the group routines and/or behaviors that result in frequent, physical supportive holding of the child is responded to by following the CEEC's procedure for Referral of Children for Additional Services.

**Center for Early Education and Care
University of Massachusetts Amherst
Family Handbook**

VIII. TUITION AND FEES

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A. Tuition

Tuition rates are in effect for one calendar year from the first Monday in July. Anticipated new tuition rates are publicized each spring when currently enrolled families are offered re-enrollment for the coming academic year. Tuition rates for full-day classrooms are based on a 49-week year and tuition rates for flexible-schedule classrooms are based on 17-week semesters. Parents are charged tuition regardless of the child's actual attendance.

Tuition includes snacks, enrichment activities, field trip fees, and summer insect repellent and sunscreen. Tuition is based on the age group in which a child is enrolled, not on the child's birth date.

1. Flexible-Schedule Tuition

Low-income undergraduate and graduate students receive enrollment priority in CEEC's flexible-schedule classrooms and receive a significantly subsidized tuition fees as per the current GEO contract. Effective August 29, 2005, the Flexible-Schedule Subsidy tuition rates are \$1.00 and \$2.00 per hour for income eligible families (see the *CEEC Tuition Rate Determination Chart*). However, please note, income eligible flexible-schedule families are not billed for their regular scheduled hours of enrollment. Instead, CEEC bills the GEO/University Health and Welfare fund for the full cost of these services.

All flexible-schedule families, including those receiving the Flexible-Schedule Subsidy tuition rate, are responsible for paying all other fees incurred during enrollment, such as late pick-up fees, schedule change fees, additional care fees, etc. These fees are billed directly to the family on a monthly basis.

Flexible-schedule families are eligible for up to 12, 21 or 30 hours of weekly care based on their student and/or work service need. Flexible-schedule enrollment and schedule eligibility is determined at the time of enrollment or re-enrollment based on verification documentation provided by the parent(s). Each flexible-schedule parent or guardian of the household must document their student and/or work status for the enrollment semester (see *Flexible-Schedule Enrollment Eligibility Information*). If complete documentation is not available the family is assigned the tuition rate and/or flex Enrollment Schedule Tier that matches the documentation provided.

2. Flexible-Schedule Tuition Subsidy Attendance Policy

In order to meet the needs of families and children for access to the flexible-schedule classrooms it is necessary to make the best possible use of these child care resources. CEEC makes every effort to insure that each flexible-schedule slot is maximized at all times. Whenever a child is withdrawn from a flexible-schedule classroom CEEC moves quickly to make that slot available to another family who is waiting for these services.

The Flexible-Schedule Tuition Subsidy Attendance Policy allows for children's absence due to illness, emergencies, and a maximum of two weeks vacation per year. These are considered explained absences. All other absences are considered unexplained. Excessive absence (six or more explained in one month or three unexplained absences in a semester) will result in a reassessment of the need for the Flexible-Schedule Tuition Subsidy.

If excessive absence results in a determination that you no longer need flexible-schedule child care or that these services are being misused, your University Subsidized Tuition Subsidy will be

terminated. At such time you will be given two (2) weeks notice of termination of this subsidy and of these child care services. Your flexible-schedule child care services will end two weeks after the date of the notification. You may contact the CEEC office before this date to explain your child's absence and/or to request a review of the termination decision.

B. Tuition Assistance

The University subsidizes the operation costs of the Center for Early Education and Care (CEEC) program in order to provide campus families with an affordable high quality early care and education program. University families pay market rate tuition fees while receiving higher than market quality of early care and education services.

There are several types of assistance available to support University families in their payment of child care tuition at the Center for Early Education and Care. A brief description of each program, eligibility criteria, and application process is offered below. For more information specific to your family speak with Penny Gagnon of the CEEC office (577-4740).

GRADUATE STUDENT ASSISTANCE

Flexible-Schedule Tuition Subsidy

The University provides funds to CEEC to offset the operating costs of the flexible-schedule classrooms in order to offer low-income student families a significantly subsidized tuition rate. Fee rates are assigned at the time of enrollment and re-enrollment based on documentation of household size and income which is provided by parents. The \$1.00 and \$2.00 per hour tuition fees for these services are not billed to subsidy eligible parents but are currently paid by the GEO/Administration Health and Welfare Trust Fund which provides benefits for UMass graduate student employees.

Annual Income & Household Size



Hourly Rate*	2 person	3 person	4 person	5 person
2.00	< \$26,232	< \$29,712	< \$37,560	< \$42,600
1.00	< \$18,480	< \$20,100	< \$22,800	< \$25,800

* The Flexible-Schedule Subsidy income eligibility levels are based on Mass. EEC child care assistance sliding fee scale. Annual Gross Income as per federal 1040 Income Tax Form.

Graduate Student Senate Child Care Tuition Assistance

The UMass Graduate Student Senate (GSS) provides child care tuition assistance to student families using licensed child care. Students who pay the student activity fees are eligible to receive assistance child care tuition assistance each semester in an amount that will vary according to the number of families that apply and the funds available.

For more information and to receive an application, contact:
 Graduate Student Senate Office (413) 545-2896
 919 Campus Center <http://www.umassgss.org/childcare>

GEO/Administration Health and Welfare Trust Fund Child Care Tuition Assistance

The GEO/Administration Health and Welfare Trust Fund reimburses eligible graduate employees for their child care tuition costs. Families may use on- or off-campus child care services that are licensed by the state of Massachusetts. The basic eligibility requirements are as follows:

- Applicants must be GEO-eligible, according to the guidelines for dental & vision and health insurance, available at <http://www.hwtrust.geouaw.org/eligibility>
- Applicants must use state licensed early childhood hood or school age services and must provide a receipt for tuition payments made.

Visit this program's website for a detailed description of eligibility requirements and application time lines: www.hwtrust.geouaw.org

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT ASSISTANCE

Child Care Tuition Assistance Program (CCTA)

The Child Care Tuition Assistance Program provides eligible undergraduate student parents with tuition assistance for licensed child care for children under the age of six years and out-of-school care for children through 6th grade. Undergraduate student parents that are enrolled in the University for 6 or more credits per semester and that have a financial need, which is verified by the Financial Aid Office, are eligible to apply. Applications are due by August 1 for Fall semester funding and by December 15 for Spring semester funds.

For more information and to receive an application, contact:

Office of Family Resources (413) 545-0865
428 Student Union <http://www.umass.edu/ofr/childcare.php>

POST-DOCTORAL EMPLOYEES

GEO/Administration Health and Welfare Trust Fund Child Care Tuition Assistance

The GEO/Administration Health & Welfare Trust Fund has an annual pool of funds to distribute to eligible post-doctoral families to help defray the costs of on- or off-campus child care services.

Eligibility criteria include: one individual of the family must be a UMass post-doctoral employee, the household annual income is less than \$50,000, and child care services used must be licensed by the state of Massachusetts.

Visit this program's website for a detailed description of eligibility requirements and application time lines: <http://www.hwtrust.geouaw.org/main#!eligibility>

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT AND STAFF ASSISTANCE

Department of Early Education and Care Child Care Tuition Vouchers

The Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) subsidizes child care fees of low to moderate income families throughout the state. In order to qualify, each parent living in the home must have a service need and meet income criteria. Families that receive Transitional Assistance for Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) that are working or attending a college or training program usually meet the eligibility criteria.

EEC Service Need Criteria include: each parent of the household is working 30 or more hours/week, and/or seeking paid employment, and/or enrolled full-time in high school, vocational training, or undergraduate study, and/or incapacitated, and/or the child is disabled.

EEC Income Need Criteria states that the household's gross monthly income must be at or below \$2,962 for a family of two, \$3,659 for a family of three, \$4,356 for a family of four, \$5,053 for a family of five, \$5,750 for a family of six.

EEC child care vouchers are administered by Resource and Referral agencies throughout the state. The agency in Western Massachusetts is:

New England Farm Workers' Council (413) 272-2207

FACULTY AND STAFF ASSISTANCE

Dependent Care Assistance Program (DCAP)

The Dependent Care Assistance Program is available to all University employees as a way to reduce dependent care costs. The DCAP program allows an employee to pay up to \$5,000 each year of dependent care expenses through payroll deduction with pre-tax income. As a result of the salary dollars being removed from taxable income, an employee may fall into a lower tax bracket and/or lower the percentage of income s/he pays for taxes. Open enrollment for this program occurs in December to start the following calendar year.

For more information about the DCAP:

http://www.umass.edu/humres/benefits_dependent_care_assistance_program.htm

Beth Ives, Human Resources, (413) 545-6115

CEEC Sibling Discount

CEEC families are eligible for a sibling discount if more than one child from the same family is enrolled in the Center. The parent pays full tuition for the youngest child and receives a 10% discount for each additional child.

C. Payment of Tuition

1. Check or Cash Payment

Each family's monthly tuition payment is computed for the entire year and divided into equal payments (monthly or bi-weekly for payroll deduction). Parents pay tuition by check, cash, or money order on a monthly basis due the first day of each month.

Bills are sent to parents in advance of the payment date via their Parent Mailboxes in their child's classroom. An alternative payment schedule or payment plan may be arranged by contacting the Office Supervisor in the CEEC office.

Parents make check or cash payments at the University Bursar's Office in person or by mail.

- *In person:* the Bursar's Office is located on the second floor of Whitmore and is open 9:00 am through 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday, or as posted. Save the stamped receipt as proof of payment, especially if you pay in cash.
- *By mail:* Bursar's Office, 225 Whitmore Administration Building, University of Massachusetts, Box 38270, Amherst, MA 01003-8270. Enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope so that the stamped receipt may be returned to you as proof of payment.

2. Payroll Deduction Payment

Parents receiving a University paycheck are encouraged to pay child care tuition via weekly payroll deduction. A payroll deduction form is completed at the time of enrollment. Changes to the payroll deduction amount are processed by the Enrollment Assistant.

D. Late Payment Fee

Payment of tuition is due on the first day of each month. A \$25.00 Late Payment Fee is assessed for payments received ten days after the due date. Two late payments during a semester may result in administrative withdrawal from the University and/or withdrawal from the program.

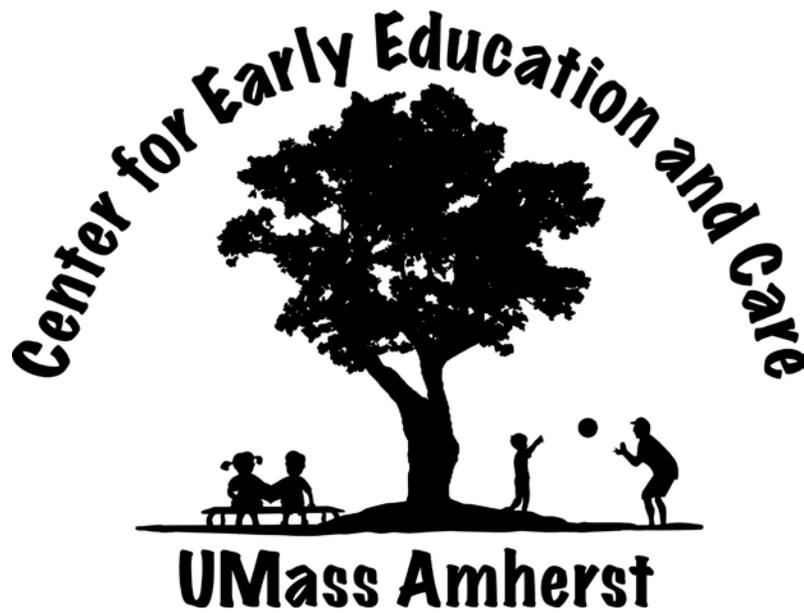
- A new period of enrollment may not begin until payment of the previous period of enrollment is made.
- An Administrative Withdrawal from the University is instituted for all student parents

- ending a semester with unpaid fees.
- Credit Bureau Notification is initiated in the case of all other parents who have unpaid tuition or fees when they withdraw their child from the program. Parents are liable for collection or associated costs that may be incurred.

E. Schedule Change Fee

Parents may request one change to their child's enrollment schedule during the University's Add-Drop period of each semester. These requests are fulfilled on a space available basis in the order that they are received. Schedule changes that are requested during the Add/Drop period go into effect the first full week *after* the new schedule has been confirmed.

Families requesting an enrollment schedule change after the Add-Drop period are charged a \$10.00 Schedule Change Fee, which is added to the next month's bill.



CEEC PHONE NUMBERS

Administrative Team

Director	545 - 6907
Assistant Director	545 - 0967
Manager of Personnel & Enrollment Services	545 - 1566
Office Supervisor	577 - 4740
Fax	545 - 0944

Preschool Classrooms

Maple Hill (full-day preschool)	545 - 6783
Copper Beech (full-day preschool)	545 - 6901
Walnut Grove (flexible-schedule preschool)	545 - 6902

Toddler Classrooms

River Birch (full-day toddler)	577 - 3761
Oak (full-day toddler)	577 - 3763
Snowbell (flexible-schedule toddler)	577 - 3762

Thank you for reviewing the CEEC Family Handbook. If you have any questions or comments about any of this information, please share them with your child's teacher or an administrator.

Welcome to Center for Early Education and Care!