

UMassAmherst

Center for Early Education and Care

FAMILY HANDBOOK

2024

USING THIS HANDBOOK

Welcome to the Center for Early Education and Care! Our goal is to provide the highest quality care and education for children. 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 the Center for Early Education and Care grows, improves, and responds to the needs of our child, parent, and campus, 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 Email updates.

CEEC Family Handbook

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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. 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 Lodge, Bowditch Lodge, and the Toddler House buildings are located between the McGuirk Football Stadium and the Softball Complex. Each classroom has its own telephone number.

The CEEC main 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. Current Hours of Operation

CEEC Office

The CEEC Office is open Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Classrooms

Currently classrooms are open Monday - Friday, 8:15 am to 4:15 pm.

E. Program Calendar

The CEEC calendar can be found on our website: www.umass.edu/ceec. CEEC follows the University holiday and closing schedule as closely as possible. Please refer to the current CEEC Program Calendar for specific dates for the current year. Dates and details are subject to change.

F. 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.

Supervising Teachers and Teachers

Supervising Teachers and Teachers make up the professional staff of each CEEC classroom. 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 Teacher in the classroom.

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. Assistant Teachers attend orientation sessions each semester and complete Department of Early Education and Care required on-line training including a background record check.

Administrative Team

Director: Maryanne Baskin (office in Bowditch Lodge)

The Director administers the Center for Early Education and Care to ensure high quality, cost-effective early education and care services for the campus community.

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 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 and manages the CEEC enrollment.

Office Supervisor: Teresa Wozniak (office in Toddler House)

The Office Supervisor is responsible for maintaining the database of child enrollment and conducts parent and agency billing and collections.

G. 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 eleven 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.

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: 1141 Main Street, Suite 230, Springfield, MA 01103

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 their 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 encourages 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 a 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.

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 in order 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?

In using the Project Approach with toddlers, teachers guide the investigation 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 PVTA 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 they have 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.

C. Daily Schedules

Specific classroom schedules vary from room to room, from season to season, and from day to day, as needed. We are flexible to individual and the group needs and to the spontaneity of the children's interests and energy.

Sample Toddler Daily Schedule

8:15-9:45	Arrivals and Free Play
9:45 -10:00	Snack
10:00 -10:30	Project Activity, Free Play, and Diapers/Toileting
10:30-12:15	Outdoor Explorations (playground/ walking field trips) (or classroom activities if inclement weather)
12:15-12:30	Circle Time (songs, dancing, and games)
12:30-1:15	Lunch
1:15-1:30	Diapers/Toileting
1:30 -3:30	Rest time
3:00- 3:45	Diapers/Toileting
3:30- 4:15	Free Play in the classroom and Pick Up Time

Sample Preschool Daily Schedule

8:15-9:30	Arrival and Free Play
9:45- 10:15	Snack and Toileting
10:15–10:30	Morning Meeting: Book Reading, Classroom Jobs, Second Step Curriculum, Music & Movement activities
10:30-11:45	Outdoor Activities (or indoor small groups if inclement weather)
11:45-12:30	Small Group Activities
12:30–1:00	Lunch Time
1:00- 1:30	Clean Up, Toileting, and Book Reading
1:30-3:30	Rest Time (quiet activities for children who are not sleeping)
3:30- 4:15	Cots Away, Toileting, and Table Activities or Outdoor Play until Pick Up Time

D. Diversity and Inclusion

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

III. CLASSROOM POLICIES AND PRACTICES

A. Arrival and Departure Procedures

1. Arrival

- Prior to arrival, parents should observe their child to ensure they are symptom free of illness.
- Families park their vehicles in front of the program and walk their child to their classrooms.
- Parents/Guardians will enter their building, put their child's belongings in their cubbies and then say goodbye to their child at the gate (or the half door) to the classroom area. We call this gate/door area our **Hello and Goodbye Zone**. A Staff Member will greet parents at the gate/door, conduct a visual health screening of the child, and welcome the child in.

2. Departure

- Pick-up will occur at the **Hello and Goodbye Zone** area of each classroom.
- Parents/Guardians will enter the building, grab their child's belongings from their cubbies and Teachers will send their child out of the gate/door to greet their parent.

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 also 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.

WINTER: Hat, mittens, 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.

PLEASE LABEL ALL CLOTHING! We do our best to try to keep track of children's clothing, but you are more likely to have missing clothing returned if it is labeled with your child's name or initials.

C. Toys From Home

In general, we ask that parents *do not allow children to bring in toys from home*. Toys from home can be lost or broken at school and a child may not be willing to share a special toy. An exception would be a small, soft toy that would be used by a child to cuddle with at nap time.

Mealtimes

SNACK

CEEC provides a morning snack between 9:30 and 10:30 each morning. Snacks are planned to include at least two of the following food groups: grains (crackers, bagels or cereal), fruits (fresh or canned) and dairy (cheese or milk) and either milk or water are served. Currently children are not serving themselves. Each child has their own serving of food placed on the table for them by one of the teachers.

LUNCH

Parents are asked to provide a nutritious lunch meal for their child each day. 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 limit dessert type food or 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 their initials.

To prevent choking, the following foods are not served in CEEC classrooms:

- Whole/round sliced hot dog or sausage(need to be cut into 1/4 pieces)
- Whole string cheese sticks (need to be cut into 1/4 pieces)
- Large chunks of meat or cheese that cannot be swallowed whole
- Fish with bones
- Spoonfuls of nut butters
- Raw carrot rounds
- Long pieces of celery
- Whole grapes, olives, cherry tomatoes(need to be cut in half lengthwise)
- Whole cherries with pits
- Large, round, and/or sharp nuts & seeds
- Large hard pretzels
- Large hard and/or sharp potato or corn chips
- Hard candy or lollipops
- Popcorn
- Any size marshmallows
- Chewing gum

If a parent sends in food that has the potential to cause choking, on the first occurrence, teachers will either cut it up or assist the child in safely eating it. However, if after notifying parents, the food continues to be sent in, the teachers will not serve it.

D. Rest Time

Children at CEEC expend a great deal of physical, cognitive, and emotional energy as they engage in 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.
- Children's cots are socially distanced as much as possible 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:

- Rest Time generally lasts for 1½ - 2 hours from approximately 1:30pm to 3:00/3:30pm. Generally, napping children begin to awaken between 2:45 – 3:30pm. Children who remain asleep are usually awoken by 3:30 pm in order that they may have a relaxed bathroom turn before their pick-up time.
- Each classroom has a transition plan from lunch and toileting to Rest Time that includes a "wind down time" (i.e. story books, etc.). During Rest Time, children are asked to rest on their cots while soft music is played to set a calm tone in the classroom. Teachers offer a soothing touch to help children relax which is limited to the child's head, arms, back, and feet.
- Children may bring a soft animal or "blankie" for rest time if needed. It is preferred that any soft item brought to school for nap time, will not be brought back and forth from home to school. Please send in only small sized items because nap items are stored in a shoe box size container.
- Some older preschool children may no longer need a daily afternoon nap, but are still asked to rest quietly on their cots as other children fall asleep. After approximately 30 minutes, children who are awake are given a quiet activity to do on their cot (i.e. books, puzzles, notebook and pencils) or may be provided with a quiet activity away from the napping children (drawing/writing materials at the art table). Children who do not regularly sleep, may bring an individual activity from home to use quietly at their cot.
- Parents are encouraged to speak with teachers about the individual sleep/rest needs of their child.

E. Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are important milestones in the life of young children and their families. 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 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.

Knowing that most children will have a family celebration as well, we keep the classroom celebrations simple. The classroom birthday rituals usually involve a healthy but special snack and the sharing of a birthday song or a group-made card for the birthday child.

Please check with your child's teachers if your child's birthday is approaching. Often teachers will ask parents to bring in assorted fruit and then cut and prepare a fruit salad with the classroom children to celebrate a birthday. Teachers also take food allergies and family preferences into consideration. 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 and will be returned to the parent.

F. Family Language Policy

We know that many languages are spoken in the homes of CEEC families in addition to English. We recognize that language is an integral element of cultural identity and we support each family's goals regarding the maintenance of home languages while learning English. Our teachers are active in supporting home language development, even in classrooms where all of the children speak English, by becoming familiar with home language words and phrases and through the use of classroom materials in other languages such as books and music.

G. Family Traditions

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 variety of beliefs and traditions to the families and staff in our Center so we do not teach or celebrate religious or secular holidays with the children as part of our regular curriculum. Instead teachers may invite families to share seasonal and cultural traditions that have personal meaning to them.

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.

In warm weather, 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.

In summer, parents are asked to sunscreen their children at home before arriving, but teachers are prepared to reapply sunscreen if necessary. Sun hats are also recommended, especially for toddlers, to protect them from the sun. Parents are asked to supply their own sunscreen and insect spray for their child and sign a permission form allowing teachers to apply it.

Ticks are present in our outdoor environment and teachers occasionally conduct quick tick checks. However, families are encouraged to conduct more thorough checks at the end of the day during bath/bed time. Should a teacher find an embedded tick on a child, the parent will be called to remove the tick and/or bring the child to the doctor for medical attention. Staff will not remove embedded ticks.

Children must wear footwear 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. Only well-fitting sandals with an ankle strap are suitable for school use. "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 walks in fields behind the soccer and softball fields, the football stadium, and the stone sun wheel. Teachers notify parents of off-site outings in advance, in order that the children arrive at the classroom in time to go with the group that day.

J. Academic Observation and Research

CEEC has a history of active participation in University research studies. Academic observations and research may be allowed in classrooms under certain circumstances. Parents will always be asked for permission before their child's direct participation in a research study is allowed.

K. Classrooms are Cell Phone Free Zones

We try our best to make CEEC classrooms cell phone-free environments. Occasionally, teachers will use classroom iPads to show videos relevant to curriculum ideas but no personal use of devices is allowed.

L. Use of Media Images

CEEC uses photos of children mainly to document children's learning, share classroom updates among enrolled families, or promote the program to prospective families. Parents provide consent for the use of media images of their child at the time of enrollment.

In order to protect the privacy of all children, parents are asked NOT TO TAKE photos, videos, or recordings of CEEC children(with the exception of their own child) and are *prohibited from sharing or posting images* of other CEEC children via phone, e-mail, social networking websites (Facebook, Instagram, etc.), or any other website under any circumstances.

Sometimes the use of child images (photo or video) may be used to train other early childhood professionals or support University academic coursework and research. These activities facilitate awareness and support for the CEEC from individuals both on- and off-campus. When this need arises, parents will be asked specifically to grant permission for their child to participate or not.

M. Behavior Guidance

The 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 guidance 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.

N. Referral of Children for Additional Services

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 they gather 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.

Classroom Accommodations

The teacher, parent and Assistant Director meet to collaboratively 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 often implemented. A *Child Success Plan* is created to address challenges and document strategies for school and home implementation.

Referral for Additional Services

If the behavior of concern continues, the teachers meet with the Assistant 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 to be contacted for additional services.

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 a *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 Assistant 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 the 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 the Center for Early Education and Care.

The 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.

IV. PARENTS IN THE PROGRAM

The CEEC is committed to promoting meaningful, active parent participation in the program. On-going 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, 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.

2. Drop-off and Pick-up

Parents will have access to CEEC buildings via their UCard. Parents who are not affiliated with UMass directly can be issued a Door Badge. CEEC will pay for the initial fee for this card. In the

event a card is lost the parent is responsible for the replacement fee which will be assessed by the UCard Office at the current rate.

In the toddler classroom, parents are asked to complete a *Daily Experience* form to record information about the child's previous night's sleep, that morning's breakfast, the child's mood, and any special instructions or changes for the day. Likewise, during the child's day at the program, the teachers will record information about the child's eating, toileting, and napping experiences and the child's favorite activities for the day and send it home in their belongings.

Preschool teachers will post *Daily Curriculum* to give parents some details on their child's day including whether the child slept at nap time, what food was offered at snack time, and favorite activities from the day.

3. Telephone Calls

Parents may call the classroom anytime to leave a brief message for your child's teachers regarding an absence, an early pick up, or to let teachers know there is a change in the person who will be picking up your child. Voicemail may be on during parts of the day so that teachers and children are not interrupted in their activities but messages will be checked often during the day.

4. Screenings, Assessments and Parent/Teacher Conferences

CEEC asks parents to complete **Ages and Stages Questionnaires** for their toddlers upon entry into the program. The Assistant Director reviews them, shares the results with Supervising Teachers and highlights any concerns indicated by the parents or as evident in the scores of the developmental areas. Teachers follow up with parents regarding any concerns and, if necessary, a referral for an Early Intervention evaluation is made.

The Assistant Director conducts the **Early Screening Inventory** with children age 3 and over after they enroll. The ESI results are shared with Supervising Teachers and specific areas of the screening are discussed. If there are concerns, parents are notified and the ESI is conducted again in 6 months.

Parent/Teacher conferences are an excellent way to remain active in a child's early education. Teachers offer an **Intake Meeting** when a child is newly enrolled in a classroom to discuss the child's growth and development, review parents' goals for their child, and discuss the transition into the new classroom. This is a time for parents to discuss any concerns they might have in detail with the teacher and for teachers to share insights and perceptions of the child. Notes are taken on the discussion and shared among the teaching team.

Formal conferences are held twice a year, although parents may request a conference with their child's teacher at any time. When a child begins at the program, the child is assigned a primary teacher who begins collecting documentation of the child's work. Every six months, the primary teacher completes a **Portfolio** for the child which includes a narrative **Summary Report** describing strengths and areas for growth covering seven development areas. Each Summary Report will list at least 2-3 goals for the developing child which will be created in consultation

with the parent. If a child has an IEP from the public schools or an IFSP from early intervention services, the parents can expect at least a short one page summary report every 3 months.

The Portfolio also includes 5-7 evidence based **Work Samples** demonstrating each child's current abilities using anecdotes, photos or artwork to show how MA State Learning Standards for Infant /Toddler or Preschool have been met. Parents are invited to meet for a conference to discuss progress reports and parent input and is noted and filed with the reports. Arrangements can be made to provide a translator to support a family's participation in conferences with teachers if needed.

Teachers use all of these tools to inform their practice and will make adjustments to curriculum and classrooms based on screenings, parent input during parent conferences, and skill levels exemplified in Portfolio assessments.

B. 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.

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 and is familiar with the activities of each classroom. The Director is also always available for conversation.

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!

Confidentiality

The 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 own child(ren), but of all other children and families at the Center. 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. We encourage open, honest, informal, and frequent communication among staff and parents. However convenient, the playground or pick up area is not an appropriate place for conversations about sensitive matters. A child's teacher or an administrator may suggest a follow-up phone call or meeting to discuss concerns raised initially in regular conversation that would be more appropriately addressed privately.

C. Family Feedback Survey

Each year CEEC conducts an online 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

D. 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 will 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 program, including parents, are expected to behave in a pleasant, friendly, and respectful manner towards children, teachers 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, the 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 everyday 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, the 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 UMass Student Affairs & Campus Life. The staff person is immediately removed from classroom responsibilities until all investigations are completed.

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 their sincere religious beliefs.

When one or more cases of a vaccine-preventable communicable disease occurs in the Center, the under-immunized child is considered “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_school.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. Children may wear sandals with a heel strap that fits securely. “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, vaping 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, an administrator will monitoring local health condition warnings (i.e. very cold or very hot apparent temperatures, air pollution warnings) and will notify 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 (with written parent permission) to prevent injury from sun and insects.
- ◆ Teachers complete an Injury Report whenever a child experiences an injury or receives some form of First Aid such as a band aid or an ice pack at the Center. The Injury Report is completed by the classroom teacher, reviewed and signed by an Administrator and then signed by the parent. A copy of this form is placed in the child’s file and the incident is included on the Injury log.

C. Infectious Illnesses

Illness of children in group care is a difficult problem for parents and staff. It can be difficult for the parent who has to leave school or work and difficult for the staff trying to care for the ill child. Parents are strongly encouraged to have a backup care plan for the inevitable days when their child may be ill.

A child may be excluded from the program if they have a cough, sore throat, difficulty breathing, a fever of 100.4 or above, gastrointestinal distress including nausea, vomiting or diarrhea, new loss of smell or taste or muscle aches. Other symptoms such as fatigue, headache, a runny nose or congestion or other signs of illness may be cause for exclusion, depending on current public health guidance and the child's behavior.

During the day, teachers will assess children's health and confer with the Director or Assistant Director if a child seems unwell. Parents will be notified if the child seems unwell and, in such instances, it is expected that a parent will pick up their child within thirty (30) minutes of being notified by the Center. Sometimes, the child may be isolated from the group and accompanied by a teacher until picked up. If parents cannot be reached, those adults listed as emergency contacts are called.

Conditions Requiring Temporary Exclusion

CEEC considers three criteria for determining when a child must be excluded from care due to illness:

Does the illness prevent the child from participating comfortably in activities as determined by the staff of the program?

Does the illness result in a greater need for care than the staff of the program can provide without compromising their ability to care for the other children in the group?

Does the child have any of the following conditions, unless a health professional determines the child's condition does not require exclusion:

- a. Due to changing guidelines, when a child or family test positive for Covid-19, we will consult with the CDC, Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, and the UMass Department of Public Health to determine current requirements for quarantine and mask wearing.
- b. Mouth sores with drooling unless the child's physician states that the child is noninfectious.
- c. Rash with fever or behavioral changes, until a physician has determined that the illness is not a communicable disease.
- d. Tuberculosis, until the child's physician states that the child is on appropriate treatment and can return.

- e. Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment has been started.
- f. Streptococcal pharyngitis (i.e. strep throat or other streptococcal infection), until 24 hours after treatment has started.
- g. Head lice or nits, until after the first treatment (note: exclusion is not necessary before the end of the program day).
- h. Scabies, until after treatment has been given.
- i. Chickenpox (Varicella) until all lesions have dried or crusted (usually 6 days after onset of rash).
- j. Persistent abdominal pain (continues for more than 2 hours) or intermittent abdominal pain associated with fever, dehydration, or other symptoms of illness.
- k. Rubella, until 6 days after the rash appears.
- l. Pertussis (whooping cough), until after 5 days of appropriate antibiotic treatment.
- m. Mumps, until 5 days after onset of parotid gland swelling.
- n. Measles, until 4 days after onset of rash.
- o. 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.
- p. 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).
- q. Any child determined by the local health department to be contributing to the transmission of illness during an outbreak.

Specific Conditions that May or May Not Require Exclusion (depending on the recommendation of the Health Care Consultant)

- a.. Rash without fever or behavioral changes.
- b. Lice or nits without lice (exclusion for treatment may be delayed until the end of the day).
- c. Ringworm (exclusion for treatment may be delayed until the end of the day).
- d. Thrush (i.e. white spots or patches in the mouth).
- e. Fifth disease (slapped cheek disease, parvovirus B19).

- f. 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.
- g. 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.
- h. 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.

Illness Exposure Notification

CEEC will follow the directives from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and UMass Public Health promotion to determine when and if parents will be notified of any COVID19 risk at the program.

For all other contagious illnesses that a child may have been exposed to, parents are notified via email. Parents are asked to inform the Center if their child contracts a contagious disease. Reportable diseases such as giardia, measles, etc. are reported to the local Board of Health.

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 labeled medical bag located in the classroom backpack. 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. Individual Health Care Plan

Parents of a child with a noted allergy or other medical condition are provided with an *Individual Health Care Plan*. This form is completed and signed by both the child's parent and physician. This form is also reviewed by the Director or Assistant Director in order to determine that the Center is able to meet the child's special care needs. It is then reviewed with the classroom teachers to develop special procedures needed for the child while in attendance. Individual

Health Care Plans must be renewed annually.

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.

Teachers complete an Injury Report whenever a child experiences an injury at the Center. The Injury Form is completed by the classroom teacher, reviewed and signed by an Administrator and then signed by the parent. A copy of this form is placed in the child's file and the incident is included on the Injury log.

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 *Enrollment Agreement & 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.

VI. CENTERWIDE PROCEDURES

A. Parking

Parking for CEEC is located on Stadium Drive, directly in front of the classroom buildings and is a designated 15 minute parking zone specifically for the drop off and pick up convenience of our families.

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

- ◆ Drive very slowly in front of the Center. The speed limit is 15 miles 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 times.
- ◆ Do not place your young child on or allow children to climb on the hood or top of your car in the parking lot for risk of injury to the child.

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 10:00 am, then CEEC will open at 10:00 am. If the University closes early, CEEC will close at the 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).
- You may sign up to receive text alerts and notifications from the University regarding campus emergencies and inclement weather. *To register, text "UMass Alert" to 78015.* This is available even to parents who are not affiliated with UMass.
- When you are off-campus during an inclement weather day, please be certain that you can be reached by phone 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.

Shelter-In-Place

In the event of an emergency due to severe weather (i.e. hurricane, tornado), hazardous material release, or an active threat (violent person) the CEEC staff are notified by the UMass Alert System via phone, e-mail, text message, outdoor sirens, and the UMass website. CEEC administrators regularly monitor UMass information for updates and instructions and notify classroom teachers of how to proceed.

When instructed to Shelter in Place, teachers bring preschool children in the Bowditch and Farley Lodges to the lower level of the buildings in an area away from windows. If time and conditions allow, staff bring Oak, Snowbell, and River Birch children to the lower level of Bowditch Lodge. If this is not possible, teachers bring children to the office, pantry, and/or adult bathroom areas located in the center of the Toddler House building away from exterior windows.

CEEC administrators conduct a sweep of each classroom and building to ensure that all individuals are moved to the safe locations. Administrators monitor campus safety messages as possible during the emergency situation. Staff and children remain in the safe location until notified by University officials that it is safe to return to regular routines. When parents are in the Center during a shelter in place event they are asked to calmly follow the teacher's guidance and directions.

D. Late Pick-Up

A child's reunion with their parent at the end of the day is an important part of the daily routine for your child. Please call 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.

Currently all children must be picked up by 4:15 pm.

- ◆ Upon the first two occurrences 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 assigned pick-up time. An additional \$1.00 is charged for each additional minute the child remains at the Center.
- ◆ After the fourth, and subsequent, late pick-up occurrence, the parent receives a reminder notice about the Late Pick-Up Policy from the CEEC Office Staff, 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 assigned pick-up time:

1. At the end of the assigned 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.

F. Children's Records

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

- a. *Child's Cover Sheet* which lists parent addresses, and identifying child information
- b. *Emergency and Release* form includes all authorization and consent as well as emergency pick-up persons
- d. *Developmental History and Background Information* form providing family and child information for the teachers and transportation plan
- 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, Permission to Apply Sunscreen/Insect Repellent, Media Consent, and Hand Sanitizer Consent
- j. Copies of medication authorizations, billing records, and correspondence.

Changes in Information

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

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 in writing or by email to office staff in order to ensure that the update of information is made to all of the child's records.

2. Confidentiality and Distribution of Records

Information contained in a child's record is confidential. The 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 licensor, department of Public Health auditor) may inspect children's files 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.

3. 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.

4. 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) within a reasonable amount of time.

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, the 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. 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. 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 categories listed in order of priority:

1. University affiliated (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
4. UMass/Amherst Alumni
5. Five-College students and employees and US Fish and Wildlife employees
6. Community-at-Large

Student Parent Families

Single student parents and two student parent families receive enrollment priority if they meet income eligibility. Offers of enrollment are made in order of the date of application. For current income guidelines to determine eligibility, please contact the Manager of Personnel and Enrollment.

C. Enrollment Options

The Center for Early Education and Care has recently reduced total enrollment and maintains priority for families who are interested in full time care and student parent families who qualify.

D. Enrollment Process

When enrollment is offered, both child and parents will be invited to visit the classroom where there is an opening.

A copy of the latest edition of the program's Family Handbook is available on the program website for families to review Center policies and procedures. 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 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. After a child's enrollment begins, the deposit will be credited towards the family's last month's bill. Once given, the deposit will be held for forty-eight (48) hours in case of a change in the family's enrollment decision. If the family changes their mind regarding enrolling their child after the 48 hour period, the deposit is forfeited. When withdrawing from the program, a family needs to provide four weeks or more of written notice, otherwise the deposit will be forfeited.

Every semester, Student Parent families are asked to indicate their intention to re-enroll their child for the following semester. Notification of withdrawal from the program must be submitted in writing four (4) weeks prior to the end of the semester.

E. 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 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 ease you and your child into becoming familiar with the new surroundings and experiences. Beginning attendance with a shorter schedule helps alleviate the anxiety many children experience during the transition to a new child care setting.

F. Transitions from One Classroom to Another

Children move to a new classroom based on age, developmental readiness, and the availability of enrollment spaces. The program regularly transitions children from the toddler age group to the preschool age group when spots become available. The program will also be transitioning some children to our new mixed age group classroom of older toddlers/younger preschoolers when openings arise. Whenever possible, children transition to a new group together with one or more children from their current classroom. We have found it often helps to see a familiar face as children make the transition.

When an opening is available in another classroom, the current teacher discusses the 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 a new semester, such as September and January, when enrollment openings become available. Whenever possible, a child will follow their older sibling to a preschool group in order to maintain continuity of relationships between teachers and families.

G. Withdrawal from the Program

The 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 calendar 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.
- 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 CEEC is unable to meet. 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.

VIII. TUITION AND FEES

A. Tuition

Tuition rates are in effect for the fiscal year from the first Monday in July. Tuition is based on a 49-week year (closed 3 weeks of the year) and tuition for student-parent families are currently based on the academic year of 36 weeks. Parents are charged tuition based on a child's enrollment, regardless of the child's actual attendance. Tuition is also based on the age group in which a child is enrolled.

1. Student Parent Family Tuition

The University subsidizes tuition for undergraduate and graduate students who qualify according to income guidelines. Currently student parent families who qualify for at least 30 hours of care per week are given priority for these subsidized slots.

It is the family's responsibility to notify the Center for Early Education and Care in writing of any changes in their household size, household income, University affiliation, or study/work needs that may impact their enrollment status or tuition rate.

2. Student Parent Family Attendance Policy

CEEC makes every effort to ensure that each Student Parent family slot is maximized. The Student Parent Family Attendance Policy allows for children's absence due to illness, emergencies, and 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) may result in a reassessment of the need for the tuition subsidy.

If excessive absence results in a determination that you no longer need child care or that these services are being misused, your University Subsidized Tuition 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 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.

3. Tuition Adjustments Due to Quarantine

If circumstances make it necessary for a classroom to close due to COVID 19, the program will adjust the family's tuition accordingly. If a child or family is required to quarantine, the regular tuition will not be adjusted.

B. Tuition Assistance

In addition to our Student Parent family slots, there are several types of assistance available to support University families in their payment of child care tuition. A brief description is offered below. For more information specific to your family, please speak with the Manager of Personnel and Enrollment.

Graduate Student Senate Child Care Tuition Assistance

All graduate students may apply for child care tuition assistance through GSS. Please contact GSS with any questions at gss-vice@grad.umass.edu. If you are a GEO member, you may apply for funding from both GSS and GEO. For the most up-to-date information please contact GSS directly.

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 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 AND GRADUATE STUDENT ASSISTANCE

Student Parent Program (SPP) and CCAMPIS

Student Parent Programs (SPP) offers child care subsidies to income eligible undergraduate and graduate students (including in-state undergraduate students enrolled in the University Without Walls degree completion program) through our CCAMPIS Program and our SPP Child Care Subsidy Funds.

For more information please visit the Student Parent Programs website <https://www.umass.edu/ofr/childcare-tuition-assistance>

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. More information on

eligibility can be found on the EEC website
<https://www.mass.gov/guides/early-education-and-care-financial-assistance-for-families>

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 they pay for taxes. Open enrollment for this program occurs in December to start the following calendar year.

CEEC Sibling Discount

CEEC families are eligible for a sibling discount if more than one child from the same family is enrolled at the Center and the family does not qualify for subsidies. The family will be asked to pay full tuition for the youngest child and receive a 10% discount for each additional child.

C. Payment of Tuition

1. Check or Cash Payment

Parents are charged a weekly fee and billed on a monthly basis via invoices. Tuition can be paid by check, cash, or money order. Bills are sent home to parents in advance of the payment due date in their child's belongings. If necessary, an alternative payment schedule or payment plan may be arranged by contacting the Office Supervisor in the CEEC office.

Parents can pay by check through the mail or by check/cash by going in person to the Bursar's office.

- *By mail:* Bursar's Office, 215 Whitmore Administration Building, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003-8270
- *In person:* the Bursar's Office is at 215 Whitmore and their current hours are limited to 11:00-4:00 Wednesdays and Thursdays. (Save the stamped receipt as proof of payment, especially if you pay in cash.)

2. Payroll Deduction Payment

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

D. Late Payment Fee

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.

CEEC PHONE NUMBERS

Administrative Team

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

Preschool Classrooms

Maple Hill	545 - 6783
Copper Beech	545 - 6901

Toddler House Classrooms

Oak	577 - 3763
Snowbell	577 - 3762
River Birch	577 - 3761

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 the Center for Early Education and Care!

