

2015/2016

Family Policy Handbook



Dolores Doré Eccles
Center
for
Early Care and Education

PROGRAM FOUNDATION

Program Philosophy

Our teachers, staff, and families support children's growth and learning through the provision of intentionally planned and developmentally appropriate environments that build on children's natural tendency for play, promotes curiosity, wonder, and exploration, and provides challenges for mastering new skills.

Our curriculum encompasses the entire day and is demonstrated in our indoor and outdoor environments, the daily schedules, and the types of materials and activities offered. The children's daily experiences reflect intentional efforts to provide each child with opportunities to explore and build language, literacy, science, math, physical, creative, cognitive, and social skills.

Our community is created with a shared commitment to children and extends beyond the center doors to include families and the wider USU community. We work in partnership with families to meet their individual needs as they balance school, work, and family. Our program provides opportunities for students and faculty to learn more about early childhood care and education through research and training.

Program Purpose

Our purpose is to provide and maintain a high-quality inclusive early care and education program for young children of Utah State University students, staff, faculty, and community families.

Our objectives are to:

- Provide an emotionally positive, healthy, and nurturing environment for all children in our care.
- Provide developmentally appropriate activities and experiences that enhance each child's social, emotional, cognitive, language, and physical development.
- Create a diverse and stimulating learning atmosphere to meet the individual needs of children with respect to cultural, cognitive, and physical ability differences.
- Maintain affirming and mutually supportive working partnerships with families.
- Improve services to families with ongoing professional development opportunities for staff members.
- Provide training opportunities to university students earning academic credit in early childhood education and other related fields.
- Assist the early childhood research community by supporting research opportunities within the center.

Learning Experiences and Environment

Our low teacher-to-child ratios (1:8 in Senior Preschool, 1:6 in Junior Preschool, and 1:3 for Infants/Toddlers), and ongoing personal interactions are key factors in our ability to meet the individual needs of children and build on their strengths. Throughout the day children are presented with meaningful opportunities to develop life and executive functioning skills such as social interactions, turn taking, decision making, and resolving conflicts constructively. The curriculum and environment encourages children's active involvement in the learning process through hands-on and interactive activities and experiences in individual, small, and large group settings. Throughout the daily curriculum, children's emerging interests in writing, reading, scientific inquiry, and numbers are strongly supported and encouraged.

Program Curriculum

Here at the DDE Center the term "curriculum" refers to all aspects of the children's daily experiences, including routines and interactions. Each classroom provides unique experiences and schedules that are developmentally appropriate for the current children in the class. Lead teachers, assistant teachers, and student teachers work together to plan diverse learning opportunities to support children's individual needs and interests. Teachers also take into account general developmental knowledge and apply this to the materials and activities they plan. The curriculum plans and classroom environments are based on the materials of *The Creative Curriculum* from Teaching Strategies (For more information on Creative Curriculum <http://www.creativecurriculum.net/>). *The Creative Curriculum* provides a road map that allows teachers to design classroom experiences that meet the individual needs of each child while supporting the following objectives for development and learning within their daily experiences.

- Social-Emotional
- Physical
- Language
- Cognitive
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Science and Technology
- Social Studies
- The Arts

The curriculum is also designed to be anti-biased, supporting multicultural, inclusive, and non-gender or aged stereotyped perspectives. Children and teachers are encouraged to celebrate differences and respect diversity within daily experiences and special events.

The hallmarks of our curriculum:

- Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP), which combines knowledge of child development and knowledge of individual children, is used in planning.
- Emphasis is placed on the process of learning and exploring.
- Children’s interests and abilities provide the foundation when preparing learning experiences.
- Diversity and inclusiveness are a part of each child’s daily experience.
- Play is the primary experience used to promote social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development

PROGRAM STAFF

Teaching Staff

The DDE Center teaching staff is comprised of nurturing and experienced teachers. Each classroom has a full time lead teacher and an assistant teacher who have a minimum of a bachelor’s degree in early childhood education or a closely related field. The DDE Center also has several teaching assistants, most of whom are local students pursuing degrees in early childhood care and education. All teaching staff must pass an initial criminal background check and participate in orientation training. Teaching staff are also first aid and CPR certified and receive ongoing training throughout the year on health, safety, child development, and current evidence-based teaching strategies. Teaching staff also participate in annual reflective performance reviews to establish and work towards professional development goals.

Practicum and Student Employees

Each semester the DDE Center has the opportunity to host practicum students, level II student teachers, and work study students. These students add to our program in a variety of ways as they work to develop their skills and knowledge to enter the field of early childhood education and care. All student teachers and student employees must pass a criminal background check and participate in orientation training. Practicum students, level II student teachers and student employees are closely supervised and mentored by classroom lead teachers and the program administrator.

Food Program Teachers

Snacks and lunch are viewed as part of our daily curriculum as they are times for children to engage in social conversations and gain healthy eating habits. Each food program teacher has passed a criminal background check, is first aid and CPR certified, and has their Utah Food Handlers Permit. Many of these teachers are also students in the dietetics, food service, or early childhood education programs.

Administration

The DDE Center administrative staff is comprised of a program administrator, staff assistant and executive director. The program administrator oversees the day-to-day operations of the center, enrollment, and teaching staff. The program administrator meets all center director qualifications as outlined by state child care licensing and NAEYC director qualifications. The executive director oversees research, continuous program improvement, and provides program oversight and guidance as a faculty member in the Department of Family, Consumer, and Human Development at USU.

Program Information

Enrollment

The DDE Center serves faculty, staff, student, and community families. We offer Monday through Friday, Monday/Wednesday/Friday, or Tuesday/Thursday options. Center spots are often in demand and many families may experience a wait from the time they register to when their child can actually be enrolled. This wait time varies based on the demand for the given classroom, the family's desired schedule, and movement between classrooms. We use the following policies in enrollment decisions.

- The DDE Center is a year round early care and education program and enrollment is based on a year round schedule. If a family chooses to withdraw for any portion of the year their spot will be given to another child. Their spot will **not** be guaranteed for a future point in time. Families may ask to be placed back on the wait list.
- Spots are filled to maximize enrollment capacity.
- The DDE Center maintains a continuous enrollment. Spots may be offered to families on the wait list at any time of the year. If a family does not wish to enroll at the time a spot becomes available, they may chose to remain on the wait list but they will be placed at the bottom of the wait list.
- When a spot becomes available, priority is given to siblings of children currently enrolled and children currently enrolled but needing to add additional time or days.

Logistics

Operating Days and Hours

Monday-Friday - 7:45 a.m. to 5:15 p.m.

Morning half-day - 7:45 to 12:30

Afternoon half-day - 12:30 to 5:15

All Utah State University holidays are observed. Holiday closures include Labor Day, the Thanksgiving holiday, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Pioneer Day. We are closed the week between Christmas and New

Year's Day and annually schedule up to six closure days for training, cleaning, and vacation. Scheduled closure days are noted on the annual calendar.

Attendance and Absences

Teachers make plans with the expectation that children will be attending on their enrolled days. If a child is going to be absent we appreciate a quick phone call or email letting us know that he/she will be absent. Each child is guaranteed the spot he/she has enrolled for, and for this reason we do not offer credit for absences

Parking

There are a limited number of parking spaces reserved for parents in front of the building. These spaces are for drop-off and pick-up only. Please pull into a designated space and turn off engines when dropping off and picking up. The turnaround area directly in front of the entrance is not available for parking. The parking lot is monitored by USU Parking and for this reason we ask that you sign in your vehicle when picking up and dropping off.

Late Pick-up

If a parent is unable to be at the Center by the end of the child's session, he/she should call. A parent who has not picked up their child by 12:30 p.m. or 5:15 p.m. (depending on their enrollment schedule) will be assessed the late pick-up fee.

Classrooms

The DDE Center serves children ranging in age from 6 weeks to 6 years and offers a summer day camp for school age children. Each classroom provides developmentally appropriate curriculum, materials, and equipment. Each of the lead teachers has included a description of their classrooms below. Some of the activities children participate in may be messy, such as water table, art, and outside play. Please make sure children are dressed appropriately. Children need to have an extra set of clothes in case of accidents or spills.

- **Infant/Toddler Classroom** (6 Weeks to 24 Months) – The first two years of life are a time of great change and development. The Infant/Toddler classroom strives to provide parents and children with a loving and flexible care environment, designed to meet their own specific needs. Materials and experiences in the classroom such as feeding, diapering, art, sensory, and large motor activities are all intended to meet the children's developmental level and encourage further growth. Teachers interact and communicate with parents to encourage continuity and quality of care for each individual child.
- **Junior Preschool Classroom** (2 and 3 year olds) – Junior Preschool provides a transition from toddlerhood to the preschool years. Much of the day is spent in play and gaining

self help skills. Children typically work on potty training, dressing themselves, and serving themselves. Daily experiences include a sensory table, art materials, dramatic play, books and reading, math and manipulatives, science, large and small motor activities, and semi structured group times both in the classroom and outside. Two and three year olds developing sense of independence and initiative are encouraged through the provision of choices during most of the day.

- **Senior Preschool Classroom** (3 ½ to 6 year olds) – Each day consists of choice time, morning and afternoon snacks, lunch, large and small groups, and outside time. All developmental areas are integrated into this study, offering authentic opportunities to learn and grow. Children frequently participate in science experiments, cooking experiences, field trips, and have classroom visitors, along with a variety of classroom materials. Teacher observations of children are used, in part, to help with future planning to ensure that children’s individual needs are met. Teachers work to establish an open line of communication with all families and value their role in teaching children.
- **Kindergarten Care** (Children attending Kindergarten in the morning) – Kindergarten Care is designed to provide a supportive and enriching experience beyond the kindergarten classroom. Morning kindergarten children join us at the DDE Center for outside and self-selected play, lunch, homework, and a variety of activities to extend kindergarten learning. Activities may include science experiments, food experiences, movement, art, language and reading, math games, and campus field trips. Kindergarten Care is available on public school early release and in-service days.
- **Day Camp (Summer Only)** (School Age children) – Day camp is offered through the summer months for school-age children. Children at this age enjoy getting out and exploring, and the day camp program is designed to support this with daily off-site activities ranging from art and science experiences to recreation and swimming.

Program Policies

Supervision

Teaching staff at the DDE Center practice *Active Supervision*. This means that teaching staff are focused on the children, engaging them in individual conversations and participating in play. Teaching staff are also responsible for maintaining an awareness of the whole group and will move quickly to intervene in a situation when needed. Teaching staff directly supervise children during routine caregiving, such as meal times, diapering or using the toilet, and sleeping. The DDE Center maintains low teacher to child ratios to support our *active supervision*.

Inclusive Environment

The DDE Center supports an inclusive environment and welcomes all children regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, or ability. We work with all families to find ways to support children with specific needs and will make reasonable accommodations to best serve all families. We encourage interaction with children of all different abilities and often coordinate play and meal times with the Sound Beginnings and/or ASSERT Preschool programs. We work with Up to Three, ASSERT, and local school districts to support children's IFP's and IEP's.

In addition to all other policies and practices the DDE Center staff and families of children with special needs will work together to coordinate services and appropriate accommodations based on the individual child, the classroom/group, and the type of accommodation needed. The following guidelines will also be followed to best support the child, the family, and staff.

- Families will provide specialized training to staff on child's needs, abilities, appropriate medical responses (when applicable), and other concerns.
- Families and staff will maintain ongoing open communication to discuss child's progress and goals, coordinate services, and arrange appropriate accommodations or activities to best meet the child's individual needs.
- If a child has specialized feeding needs, the program staff will keep a daily record documenting the type and quantity of food the child consumes.
- Individual medical emergency responses will be documented for medical known medical and/or developmental conditions that may require specialized care. This plan will be kept in the child's file and shared with classroom teachers.
- Reasonable accommodations will be made to include every child in the normal activities of the center.
- When off-site children with documented needs will be assisted by an individual teacher.

Classroom Transitions

At the DDE Center we work hard to help each child feel like he/she is a part of a community, both within their classroom and within the center. For this reason we try to limit the number of classroom transitions children experience. To balance the need for classroom transitions as children age throughout the year and our growing classroom communities, children will transition from one classroom to another in one of three situations.

1. A child will transition to the next classroom when he/she reach the maximum age of a classroom as allowed by state licensing. Typically this is the situation with children transitioning from the infant/toddler class to the young preschool class when they turn two.
2. A child will transition to the next classroom after one of three developmental checkpoints throughout the year (often coinciding with parent teacher conferences). These developmental checkpoints allow teachers the opportunity to assess a child's

development and to work with the family to help ease the transition into a new classroom. Developmental checkpoints are scheduled for late fall, late spring, and summer.

3. A child may transition from one classroom to the next when the lead teachers, parents, and the program administrator agree that it is in the best developmental interest of the child to change classrooms, regardless of time of year or age (if over two).

When a child transitions to a new classroom the process will begin approximately two to four weeks before the actual day the child will begin in the next classroom. The transition process will begin with brief visits to the new classroom (typically around 15 minutes) with a familiar teacher/caregiver. As the child becomes more comfortable in the new classroom the child will begin visiting without their current teacher during self-selected activity times but will return to their own classroom for routine care needs (such as lunch or nap). Within the last few days of the transition the child will begin to eat snack and/or lunch with the new classroom. Ideally children will be transitioning with other peers from their current class.

Classroom Diapering and Toilet Training Guidelines

The Infant/Toddler Classroom and the Junior Preschool Classroom are equipped to handle children in diapers and/or potty training. Families need to provide either commercially available disposable diapers or cloth diapers and wipes.

If using cloth diapers they must have both a liner and protective outer layer that can be replaced at each change. As per state licensing requirements DDE Center staff will **not** wash out cloth diapers. Cloth diapers must be taken home daily to be laundered. In order to meet our state licensing regulations and NAEYC accreditation criteria, families using cloth diapers will be assessed an annual fee of \$60, which will cover the cost of the required individual diaper pails and daily plastic liners. The annual fee will be assessed in September, at the beginning of Fall semester. If a child joins the center sometime other than September, the fee will be pro-rated for the remainder of that year. Parents will need to talk with the classroom teacher and the center director before starting their child with cloth diapers.

Teachers are prepared to work with families as children gain skills towards independent toileting. Classroom teachers and parents will work together to decide if a child is ready to begin toilet training while at the DDE Center, though usually this would not begin until a minimum of 18 months of age as children younger than this are physically unable to control their bowels. Classroom teachers follow the following guidelines when a child is ready for toilet training.

- Children are never forced to sit on the toilet, nor are they forced to remain on the toilet against their will.
- Classroom teachers will work with parents to create a toilet training plan and will follow the parent's lead on toilet training.

- Classroom teachers will encourage a child to use the toilet if he/she exhibits any signs of toilet readiness.
- Children's timelines for toilet training will be respected and if a child does not demonstrate a desire to toilet train classroom teachers will not push, belittle, or shame the child about this, regardless of age.
- Classroom teachers are prepared for toilet-training children to have frequent accidents. Children will be encouraged to help clean up the accident and themselves, but teachers will never punish, embarrass, or shame a child that has an accident.
- Classroom teachers will communicate daily with parents about toilet training progress.

Though we expect occasional accidents (one to two accidents every few weeks), the Senior Preschool classroom is not equipped to handle children who are still in the process of toilet training. It is expected that children in this classroom can use the toilet independently and successfully with minimal assistance from teaching staff. If a child is wearing pull ups or this is not considered potty trained. For this reason, children will not be transitioned to the Senior Preschool classroom until they have had demonstrated success with independent toileting. In cases where a child has documented special needs that affect their ability to use the toilet independently, teaching staff will work with families to determine the best procedures for toileting in any classroom. Teaching staff in both the Junior Preschool and the Senior Preschool are happy to work with parents to figure out the best steps for toilet training and assisting each child in achieving independent toileting.

Nap/Rest Guidelines

Having an opportunity to rest and sleep during a busy day at the DDE Center is important to all children and required by state licensing standards. Each classroom follows the guidelines below to encourage and support a peaceful, rejuvenating rest time.

- **Infant/Toddler Class** – Children are encouraged to sleep on their own schedules. Each child is assigned his/her own crib (or cot for toddlers). We follow “Back to Sleep” Guidelines and only lay infants on their backs in cribs unless there is a documented medical condition.
- **Junior Preschool Class** – Children rest on individual cots in our multipurpose room with quiet music and minimal lighting. Teachers stay close to children to help them fall asleep. Children typically rest for a minimum of 45 minutes beginning at 1:00 PM and are allowed to wake up on their own. All Junior Preschool children rest and we strongly encourage afternoon half-day families to arrive close to 12:30 so children have an opportunity to play prior to resting. Children are encouraged to bring a security item that helps them to rest and sleep.
- **Senior Preschool Class** – Children rest on individual cots in our multipurpose room with quiet music and minimal lighting Teachers stay close to children to help them

fall asleep. Children typically rest for a minimum of 45 minutes beginning at 1:00 PM and are allowed to wake up on their own. All children participating in the afternoon rest for some time. A family may choose not to have their child rest. In this case quiet activities will be available in the classroom.

- **Kindergarten Care** – Kindergarten children do not rest or nap but their schedule does allow for flexible quiet play from 1:00 to 1:45 in the preschool classroom and a designated reading time occurs around 2:00 providing some quiet time each day.

Celebration Guidelines

At the DDE Center, we recognize, understand, and value cultural celebrations. We honor all cultures and try not to miss an opportunity to enjoy these traditions. We invite all families to share information about their valued celebrations with the classroom teachers. We will also have special celebrations at the DDE Center from time to time. Families will be notified in advance when such activities are scheduled.

If families would like to provide a special food to accompany a celebration we ask that you talk with the food program coordinator and program administrator. We welcome opportunities for children to prepare and try special foods together but we do not allow sugary treats such as cookies, cupcakes, or candy at any time.

Child Guidance Practices

Young children are learning how to interact socially with other children and adults. They are also just beginning to understand emotions. Our goal at the DDE Center is for all children feel safe as they begin to explore these early relationship skills.

To help children develop these skills we encourage three simple guidelines that each classroom and all the teachers support in developmentally appropriate ways. These guidelines are:

1. Respect myself.
2. Respect others.
3. Respect the environment.

As children grow and develop their social and emotional skills these guidelines take on new meanings and complexity pertinent to each classroom and age group.

To help children develop their social and emotional skills we follow three guidance practice:

1. *Responding Instead of Reacting* – We focus on responding to children’s behaviors rather than reacting to them. This means that our responses to behavior are individualized, meaningful to the child, and developmentally appropriate. We focus on learning appropriate behavior and positive social skills.

2. *Clear and Consistent Expectations and Boundaries* - All of the staff at the DDE Center work to provide developmentally appropriate and simple expectations and boundaries for behavior. We encourage exploration and creativity while providing boundaries and expectations that help to keep children safe. The boundaries and expectations support our three guidelines.
3. At the DDE Center we believe that one of the best guidance strategies is to ensure that children are involved in meaningful and engaging activities that are developmentally appropriate. We ensure that the daily schedule is predictable so that children know what to expect and we model appropriate behavior and social skills.

To help children develop their growing social skills and emotional expression the DDE Center staff will take the following steps in providing positive guidance.

- Always ensure children's safety.
- Remind the child of what to do.
- Provide the child with alternative responses and/or solutions.
- Redirect the child to positive alternative activities.
- Ensure that the child has the opportunity to express feelings, and that those feelings are validated.
- Help the child use words to solve problems.
- Have the child take a break by spending a minute or two away from the group to calm down.
- Have a meaningful (and developmentally appropriate) conversation with the child to help him/her learn acceptable and unacceptable actions.

*** Corporal punishment, shaming, belittling, or yelling at a child is never acceptable at the DDE Center. If a parent has concerns about how behavior issues are being dealt with, he/she is encouraged to talk immediately with the lead teacher and program administrator. ***

If a child presents challenging behaviors, the lead teacher, program administrator, and the family will work together to develop an individualized plan to address the behaviors. When families and staff feel it is needed the DDE Center staff will work with families to connect them to community professionals who can assist in developing plans that meet the child's needs.

Biting

Biting is a normal and expected behavior for infants, toddlers, and two year olds. In fact it is rare for a child to reach the age of three without biting. Biting is also hard to prevent. A child who bites may be doing so for a number of reasons, including exploration, teething, frustration, or overstimulation. At the DDE Center we recognize that biting may occur, especially in our Infant/Toddler and Junior Preschool classrooms. Teaching staff implement practices to minimize biting, but biting happens very quickly and is often difficult to prevent. When biting does occur, teaching staff work to create an opportunity for learning by providing comfort and care to the child who has been bitten and expressing to the child that bit how much it hurt their peer. An injury report is created and shared with the parents of the bitten child. It is important for parents

to understand that teaching staff are required to maintain confidentiality for each child and family. It is not appropriate for teaching staff to share with parents the name of the child who bit. Teaching staff will work closely with families to help a child who is biting to learn new ways to solve problems, teaching staff will take steps to help minimize the biting and to ensure all the children's safety.

Animals

The DDE Center supports children gaining an understanding of the natural world through the observation of animals in the classrooms. Reptiles are **not** permitted at the DDE Center due to the risk of salmonella exposure. Classroom teachers can provide families with information on any of the animals at the DDE Center including recent veterinary reports, vaccinations, etc.

Helping within the Center Community

The DDE Center is more than a set of classrooms. We work to provide a community experience for all the children. Children may be asked to provide developmentally appropriate help to the community by assisting with simple cleaning jobs (such as dusting), helping to prepare or clean up meals, or "helping" with younger children. These activities help children develop nurturing skills, provide for one on one time with teachers, and help to instill a sense of pride in the center community.

Physical Activity

The DDE Center supports an environment of activity and movement. All children in all classes are engaged throughout the day in meaningful activities that keep them moving. We provide large blocks of unstructured play time in the classrooms and outside (or in the multipurpose room if the weather is bad). We also have a PE/Movement specialist that does movement activities with each group once per week. The restriction of play times, indoors or out, is never used as a punishment.

Outside Play

At the DDE Center outside play is an important part of our curriculum. We believe that outdoor play has unique advantages for promoting social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development. Each group is scheduled to spend one to two hours outside daily (typically one hour in the morning and one hour in the afternoon). However, teachers use their knowledge of the children and their activity levels in combination with current weather to best determine the best amount of time to be outside. For example, children may be out longer in the summer and less time on cold days. Children will go outside in all types of weather including, light rain, snow, and cold temperatures. Each family must bring clothing appropriate for the weather. Teaching staff use several criteria to assess if (and for how long) they should go outside. These include air temperature, wind chill, air quality, amount of shade or sun, play yard conditions, and children's activity level. Children will not go outside if the air temperature (with wind chill) is below 10 degrees, above 98 degrees, or if current particulate matter (PM 2.5) is above 35.5 ug/m³ (i.e. Orange Air Day). Air quality and temperature are checked throughout the day using www.airquality.utah.gov.

Screen Time

The DDE Center follows screen time recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics and does not allow any screen time in our infant/toddler class or our Junior Preschool Class. Senior Preschool and Kindergarten may have occasional and very limited screen time (under 10 minutes) only when screen media would support the curriculum goals (for example watching a You Tube Clip on the iPad of an animal they are studying). Day Campers may have occasional screen time as part of a scheduled activity and parents have given permission (for example movie and PJ afternoon). When screen media is used only G rated materials will be used. Screen media is never used at the DDE Center unless it is a part of the stated curriculum plan.

Food and Meal Program**Snacks and Lunch**

Snacks and lunch are an important part of the DDE Center's curriculum. The Food and Meal Program Teacher works to incorporate the cultural backgrounds and preferred tastes of the children into the menus. Families are encouraged to share favorite recipes so that all children will have a favorite menu item on occasion. We serve a variety of healthy foods with a focus on fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Nutritious morning and afternoon snacks are offered to all children between 9 and 10 a.m. and 2:30 and 3:30 p.m. Snacks help refuel the children and are not sufficient as a substitute for breakfast or lunch. Junior Preschool, Senior Preschool, and Kindergarten eat lunch in our Food and Meal Classroom. Lunch is served at 11:30 for Junior Preschool, 12:00 for Senior Preschool, and 12:30 for Kindergarten Care. Snack and lunch menus are posted outside each classroom. Food is never used as a reward, incentive, or punishment at the DDE Center.

Family Style Service

All snacks and meals and snacks at the DDE Center are served family style. Teachers eat with the children encouraging conversations and appropriate eating. This is a social time for children and helps them strengthen relationships with other children and adults. During the school year Junior and Senior Preschoolers are joined at lunch time by the Sound Beginnings students to promote social interaction and language development. Meal times are also a time for learning. Children develop self-help skills (setting the tables, serving themselves, pouring milk, and helping with clean up) and they learn about the importance of nutrition in building healthy bodies.

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

We participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) through the USDA which requires children have access to specific food groups and serving sizes. By following CACFP guidelines we ensure that children receive appropriate servings of protein, dairy, grains, and fruits and vegetables. Families will be asked to complete a form for the CACFP program upon enrollment and annually.

Family Choice in Feeding

The DDE Center will support families in their choices for feeding their children, especially infants. The DDE Center will work with families to support and accommodate adherence to dietary restrictions, food allergies, or dietary preferences. In some cases accommodating all dietary needs may be difficult and families may be asked to supplement food for their child's meal. Families are encouraged to speak with the food and meal teacher or the program administrator if they have any concerns about the food being served. The DDE Center also encourages family input in meals and snacks. Families are encouraged to share favorite or special recipes to be included in our menu rotations.

Breastfeeding

The DDE Center works to support breast feeding mothers to maintain breast feeding while their child is in care. The infant/toddler classroom is equipped with a separate room for families wishing to feed their child or needing to pump while on campus. In addition, all staff are trained to handle breast milk in a safe manner. Breast milk being brought from home must be labeled with the child's name and the date and time the breast milk was collected and immediately stored in the classroom refrigerator or freezer. According to state licensing, staff must discard breast milk within 24 hours of collection or thawing. Breast milk can be kept frozen for two weeks in the classroom freezer. After a feeding any remaining breast milk is discarded to prevent bacteria growth. Information and resources to support breastfeeding are available in the infant and toddler classroom. DDE Center staff is happy to work with parents to coordinate feedings.

Formula

The DDE Center also provides formula for those infants whose parents request it. The formula is "Parents Choice" Premium Formula for infants 0 to 12 months. Parents may also provide their own preferred type of formula for their child. Formula being brought from home must be in a factory sealed container with the child's first and last name and the date. All formula is prepared according to the package instructions and in the amounts required by the Child Nutrition Program for specific ages. If your child requires different preparation techniques or solid foods mixed in directions for this must come from the child's health care provider.

Developmental Assessments

The DDE Center completes regular and ongoing developmental assessments of all children using resources from *The Creative Curriculum*. Families can access developmental information and the observations used to complete assessments via *Creative Curriculum Gold website*. These assessments are comprised of classroom observations and samples of children work. Lead teachers review children's development and progress at the three developmental checkpoints and share that information with families regularly.

The DDE Center also asks families to complete the *Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)* every fall to help teachers and staff determine appropriate activities and materials for children's developmental level. The *ASQ* also assists teachers and families in identifying any developmental concerns.

The *purpose and use* of these assessments are to 1) to develop and incorporate specific learning activities into the daily curriculum to support children's learning, 2) to monitor developmental progress of all children, and 3) to identify any children who may be demonstrating delays in their development who may benefit from additional services. The results of these assessments are *interpreted* by trained teachers and administrators to develop individual learning goals for children to be used in planning future learning activities and preparing lesson plans. Results that suggest developmental delays are immediately discussed with families with recommendations for obtaining additional assessments or services. Teaching staff have been *trained* through their college course work and the *Creative Curriculum Gold* training materials to conduct and use the developmental assessments. All children are assessed on developmental items both individually and through observation of their daily activities in group settings by teachers they are familiar with and interact with daily. Families have access to all developmental assessments through completing the screening materials themselves (*ASQ*), participating in their children's profile on the *Creative Curriculum Gold website*, and discussing their children's progress during parent/teacher conferences.

Family Information

Family Involvement

The DDE Center cares about children and their families. We strive to create a family friendly atmosphere that welcomes children and families. We invite all families to participate in center activities, volunteer opportunities, and advisory board activities. We have numerous opportunities for family involvement including sharing in classroom activities, joining the children on field trips, special family events, or helping out with special projects. Please note the following information:

- Parents of enrolled children are entitled to free access to their children (court orders regarding custody issues, child visitation, and restraining orders are followed as appropriate) at all times.
- The program administrator maintains an open door policy and is available any time to discuss ideas or concerns, and to answer questions.
- Lead teachers love to chat during drop off and pick up times about any concerns or questions, but their attention is primarily on the children at this time. If there is an issue of serious concern we encourage families to schedule a conference with the lead teacher.

- Copies of parent policies, licensing requirements, NAEYC Accreditation Standards, and any other documents pertaining to the administration of the DDE Center are available for families to view upon request.
- Make sure to watch for the monthly DDE Center Newsletter as this is our primary way to share with families about all the great activities and opportunities for involvement.

Special Events at the DDE Center

Below is a list of typical special events throughout the year at the DDE Center. Families are welcome to participate in any and all events that they can, even if they are not registered to attend on the day a special event is held. One adult must stay with the child if they are not registered for that day. Families are encouraged to volunteer to help with special events that interest them or to bring a new special event to the center.

- Fall Family Feast
- May Day Breakfast
- World Mud Day
- Family Information Nights
- Winter Sports Day
- Art Fair
- Ice Cream Making
- Week of the Young Child
- Children's Day at the Gardner's Market
- Heart Healthy February

Advisory Board

A great way for families to be involved in the long term planning and/or daily operations of the DDE Center is through participation on the Advisory Board. Any family member who is interested in participating on the Advisory Board should talk with the program administrator. Advisory Board members consist of family, University, ASUSU, and community representatives who are advocates of providing and maintaining high quality early childhood care and education services for families with young children.

In supporting the DDE Center's program, the Advisory Board objectives are to:

- Serve as a Center program advocate.
- Promote the mission and goals of the Center.
- Provide recommendations for effective functioning.
- Assist with special programs, events, and services.

Communication

Daily Communication

The DDE Center staff recognizes that parents often want information about their child's temperament, involvement in activities, eating, resting, and bathroom routines. The Infant and Toddler Classroom and the Junior Preschool Classroom maintain detailed records of children's daily activities for families to take home. We encourage brief conversations during pick-up and drop-off times but ask that families be aware that the teachers are responsible for the supervision of children during these times. It may be best to schedule extra time if the parent wishes a more extensive or detailed discussion. Parents or the Lead Teacher can request an individual meeting at any time when questions and concerns arise. These meetings will be scheduled in a timely manner.

Family Cubby Box

For each child enrolled, a family box is placed at the top of the child's cubby. Parents should check the box regularly for newsletters, registration deadlines, book order forms, payment statements and receipts, special notices of events and activities, and other important information.

Emails

Families will receive email notifications weekly from their classroom teachers detailing curriculum plans and any special events. It will also provide a highlight of the past week's activities. Families will also receive an emailed monthly newsletter from the Program Administrator highlighting center happenings, family events, menu information, research activities, and any reminders or changes about center policy. Families should check the email frequently for other announcements or notifications from the DDE Center.

Family Conferences

Family conferences are held during Fall and Spring semesters, coinciding with our developmental checkpoints. Several days prior to the conferences, a sign-up sheet will be available for families to schedule a conference time with Lead Teachers. Conferences are designed to provide parents with an update on their child's development and learning interests, discuss any concerns or ideas, and provide a time for families and teachers to set future goals. We do not include children in these conferences, but they will be welcome to join the classroom activities during conference times.

Annual Family Survey

At least once a year, families will receive a program evaluation survey form to complete and return. These are confidential and anonymous. Constructive and critical feedback is appreciated regarding the program. The feedback is used to determine if the needs of families and their children are being met and/or how services can be improved. Between these formal evaluations,

parents should feel free to provide suggestions or voice any concerns with the Lead Teacher and/or the program administrator.

*****Interpretive Services***** Interpretive services can be arranged for most languages for family conferences, written communication, or meetings. All written material, including the Family Policy Handbook can be translated if needed. Please let the program administrator know if you need interpretive/translation services.

Confidentiality

Verbal or written information, developmental assessments, or information submitted about the health and abilities of any child or family circumstances are considered confidential. Child records are kept in a locked cabinet in a secured area of the center. All information is only shared with the appropriate teaching staff as necessary to meet the needs of the child or requests of their families. A child's legal guardians may view a child's file or request any information on their child at any time. Child care licensing may view children's files periodically to ensure proper record keeping. Information will only be released to other agencies with the express, written permission of the legal parent or guardian.

Mutual Respect/Supportive Partnerships

The DDE Center recognizes parents and family as the first and most influential teachers in their children's lives. The family is valued as the critical component in a child's development. It is the intention of the staff to always communicate with parents and other family members in a respectful manner. This respect also includes maintaining professional confidentiality for information parents share with any teachers or administrative staff. Staff members will avoid discussing private/personal information when others are present.

We are always happy to support families through any difficult or challenging issues and appreciate when families share with us major changes in the home, concerns about development or behavior, or other important information that may affect a child's day-to-day experiences at the DDE Center. We can also offer a number of resources or other support if a family is experiencing a crisis.

Research and Teacher Education

The DDE Center serves as a laboratory for early childhood teaching/learning and research. Each classroom has an observation booth open to families, students fulfilling class assignments, and researchers. Permission for these observations is assumed and observations are considered to be part of our program. We do not provide any information to observers other than the general ages of the children.

Our program has an active research component. To protect the welfare of children and families at the DDE Center, all proposed research projects are reviewed by the Executive Director and an advisory board subcommittee for appropriateness for our families and our center philosophy. Participation in any of the research studies is voluntary and participants may withdraw at anytime. Parents will be informed about all research studies and will be required to give informed consent for their children to participate. No confidential information will be released without parent's knowledge and consent. Documentation of USU Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval is required for all research, and all researchers with direct contact with children must have an approved background check.

SECURITY/SAFETY

Access Code

The DDE Center is a secure facility with access restricted to the main entrance through the use of a key code. Authorized family members will select a five digit key code or a key card.

Family Sign-In/Sign-Out Responsibilities

Parents or other adults (siblings over 16) with written authorization are required to sign children in and out using the Maggey System and the use of their family code . **The DDE Center does not become responsible for children until they have been signed in and acknowledged by a teacher. Upon signing out, parents assume responsibility for their child.** Parents should not leave the DDE Center until a teacher has greeted the child. Please make sure a teacher has observed your child's arrival and departure, especially during busy times.

Release of Children

Children will not be released except to persons authorized by the parents or guardians. All authorized persons are noted in the emergency contact book located in the child's classroom. If an unauthorized or unfamiliar adult comes to pick up a child, teachers will ask for identification and will call parents or guardians to confirm authorization to release the child.

Kindergarten Care Transportation

The DDE Center will provide pick up services for children attending AM kindergarten at Edith Bowen Elementary only. Children will be released by the Kindergarten teacher to the DDE Center teacher. The DDE Center teacher will accompany the children back to the DDE Center where they will be clocked in by the DDE Center teacher.

Suspected Child Abuse

All children deserve to feel safe both at the DDE Center and in their homes. For this reason we take any suspicion of child abuse (including physical, emotional, sexual, or neglect) very seriously. Staff at the DDE Center are required by state law to report any suspicion of child abuse. During staff orientation all staff are trained to recognize the signs of child abuse and the steps they must take if they suspect a child is being abused by any person, including family members or coworkers.

If a parent suspects that their child has experienced any form of child abuse while at the DDE Center we encourage them to talk with the program administrator **immediately!** Suspicion of abuse is taken very seriously by the administrative staff. Each classroom is equipped with video cameras, which administration and families can review together. Families are also encouraged to take the steps to file a report with Department of Child and Family Services (1-855-323-3237). DCFS will also notify Utah Child Care Licensing if a report of abuse is made.

Student Parent Locater Service

Each semester, parents who wish to participate in the Student Parent Locater Service can fill out a class schedule at the Women and Gender Studies office in 310 TSC. In case of an emergency, the DDE Center Office Manager will call the office and one of their staff members will locate parents in classes. Parents should let the DDE Center know if they are participating in the service.

Photographs and Video

The DDE Center requests permission to take pictures and video footage of children for documenting the child's development, use in classroom displays, use in newsletters, and occasionally use in promotional materials. A family may choose to not allow their child to be photographed or filmed on the General Permission form.

Families are not permitted to take photographs or video of children other than their own in the center or during special events. This is to protect the confidentiality of all of our DDE Center families.

HEALTH INFORMATION

Early Childhood Health Assessment and Immunization Records

Each child is required to have a current health assessment, completed by a health care provider, and immunization records on file. Health assessments and immunization records must be completed at the time of enrollment and updated regularly. A child's file is only accessible to DDE Center staff, child care licensing, and the child's family. Health related information will not be released without prior consent from the child's family.

The health assessment provides the DDE Center with valuable information on children's overall health, ongoing medical issues, allergies, and preferred emergency care if needed. In the case of serious known medical issues (such as seizures, asthma, or severe allergies) or developmental issues that may need special consideration in the case of emergency, procedures for care are outlined in the health assessment and signed off by the family's health care provider.

Sick Children

Parents and staff share the responsibility for reducing exposure and the spread of communicable illnesses and diseases. An ill child should remain at home to prevent the spread of infection to other children and staff and the Center notified (797-3657) as to the nature of the illness.

State regulations require that a child should not be brought to the Center and cannot remain at the Center if they are ill with an infectious disease. (Child Care Center Rule Interpretation Manual, R381-100-16 (17-20)). NAEYC accreditation requires that a child not be brought to the center or remain at the center if: 1) an illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities, 2) creates a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children, or 3) if they have signs of an infectious disease.

Signs and symptoms of an infectious disease MAY include:

- Temperature above 100.4 degrees (Fahrenheit)
 - This temperature is based on information from the American Academy of Pediatrics, and is considered by the AAP to be a fever temperature. (<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/fever/Pages/Signs-and-Symptoms-of-Fever.aspx>)
 - A child's temperature will be taken when they exhibit other signs of an illness.
 - Temperature will be taken with an ear thermometer.
 - Staff will take the child's temperature in both ears, and average the results to get a temperature reading.
 - Each staff member will be trained on proper use of the ear thermometer as part of his/her orientation.
- Runny nose with thick yellow or green discharge
- Excessive coughing
- Red or watery eyes or eyes showing yellow discharge
- Severe earache or ears discharging fluid
- Sore or red throat, swollen glands, and/or pustules on the back of the throat
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Unusual behavior
 - Child is listless, cranky, or less active than usual

- Child cries more than usual
- Child has change in eating or drinking habits
- Skin infections or bumps, rashes, or breaking out on skin
- Conjunctivitis or pink eye
- Head lice
- Any communicable diseases, including but not limited to: chicken pox, strep throat, scabies, measles, or whooping cough.
- Children needing over the counter medication on a regular basis throughout the day are too sick to be at the center.

Children need to be free and clear of most symptoms for 24 hours BEFORE returning to the Center. These include vomiting, diarrhea, fever, unusual behavior. Please call the Center if you have questions about when your child can return.

Children may exhibit signs of an infectious disease not be listed above. Center staff may refer to the Information and Prevention Guidelines for Child Care Centers and Schools found on the Utah Department of Health website (http://health.utah.gov/epi/school_childcare/daycarebook.pdf), and may consult with our Health Care Specialist if necessary. (Our Health Care Specialist is an RN who serves as a Child Health Consultant for Cache Valley.) The center director or director designee will make the final decision on when a child needs to be sent home.

Usually children with the above symptoms may return to school 24 hours after symptoms and conditions have disappeared. A written statement from a physician may be required in some cases. If a doctor's note and our policies are conflicting, we will follow the DDE Center policies. These policies are designed to protect all children and staff.

Parents should notify the Center (797-3657) when their child is absent because of an illness so the Center can keep abreast of illnesses and childhood diseases. Parents should have a back-up plan in place for those days when their child may be too ill to attend. Tuition is not reduced for a child's absence due to illness.

Isolation of Sick Children

Should a child become ill during the day, he or she will remain isolated from other children and staff in the Program Administrator's office or a designated area under adult supervision until a parent or authorized person arrives to take the child home. Parents should let the teachers know if they can be reached at an alternative number in case of emergency. If a parent cannot be reached after two attempts, staff will contact the emergency contacts.

Notification of Communicable Disease

Parents should notify the DDE Center if their child has contracted a communicable disease. In the event that more than one child has contracted a communicable disease (other than common colds or stomach bugs) and exposes other children to the illness, notice of such exposure will be posted and parents will be notified that children have been exposed to the disease. The sick child will not be allowed to return to school until the period of contagion has passed.

Emergency Contact Information

It is the responsibility of the parents to make sure the emergency contact information on file is up to date. This information includes phone numbers, locations, class schedules, and other important information.

Illness Prevention

The DDE Center takes every precaution to prevent the spread of illness in compliance with Utah Health Department guidelines such as washing hands frequently, and sanitizing tables and food preparation counters and other areas with a diluted bleach water solution. On a daily basis, campus facilities do general cleaning of floors, bathroom fixtures, and other general areas. Children are supervised in washing of hands before handling and eating food and after using the bathroom facilities, which includes after diapering. Facial tissue is located in areas that can be reached by children. In addition, DDE Center staff encourages children to cover their mouth with their forearms when coughing.

Frequent Hand Washing

Frequent hand washing is the best way of preventing and spreading of disease and illness. All children and staff wash their hands upon arrival at the center and when they come into a new classroom. Children learn to use warm water and soap and to rub their hands together for at least 20 seconds when washing hands. Hands are washed before and after eating, after toileting, after blowing a nose, and at other times throughout the day.

Medication Administration Policies

The DDE Center will only keep lifesaving medications (such as epipens, inhalers, etc) on site. If your child requires the use of a lifesaving medication the medicine needs to be in the original container and labeled with the child's first and last name, doctor, medicine name, dosage, and a current date. In addition all staff members responsible for the care of the child will need to complete training with the family on how to administer the medication. Lifesaving medications must also have a completed medication permission form and a signature will be required any time the medication has been given. Lifesaving medications will be stored in a locked cabinet in the child's classroom.

Staff at the DDE Center will not administer or keep non lifesaving medications. Parents are welcome to come and administer medications to their children but the medication **cannot** be kept at the DDE Center, in the child's classroom or in their cubby.

Parents should never leave medicine, dietary supplements, vitamins, or other items at the DDE Center as this could violate our state licensing and NAEYC Accreditation efforts, and can pose a risk to children.

Emergency Medical Procedures

All teachers are trained in First Aid and CPR. If a child is injured, the staff will take the necessary emergency steps and contact the parent as soon as possible. Medical procedures will not be taken without parent contact except in the case of a medical practitioner's determination that such an immediate action is necessary. Any transportation of an injured child will be by ambulance or other emergency transport.

DDE Center Emergencies

Fire and Evacuation

In the case of fire or other emergencies that make the DDE Center no longer safe for the children all children and staff will evacuate the center and meet by the line of trees along the west end of the Edith Bowen Lab School Playground. If it is determined that it will not be safe to reenter the building within a reasonable amount of time children and staff will relocate to Child Care Resource and Referral in the HSRC building until the necessary arrangements are made and children's parents have been contacted. All children practice emergency evacuation procedures monthly. Detailed Emergency Response plans are available for parents to view on the center website.

Weather, Natural Disaster, or USU Declared Emergency

In the case of severe weather, natural disaster, or other USU declared emergency DDE Center staff will work closely with campus law enforcement and emergency personnel, keeping children safe until families can arrive to pick up their child. Families will be contacted as soon as possible and be apprised of any changes in an emergency situation.

Financial Information and Policies

Fees and Tuition

Application Fee

A \$35 non-refundable application fee is due at the time an application for enrollment is submitted. A child will not be considered on the wait list or eligible for enrollment until this fee has been paid.

Annual Registration Fee

A \$35 annual Registration Fee is due on the first day of the school year with the annual update in paperwork. This fee is used to offset administration, key code/card, parking costs, and to resupply consumable art items.

Tuition

Tuition is prepaid each month and is due on the first day of the month. Tuition rates are based on the schedule a family is registered for and are adjusted for school closures. **Tuition is not reduced for a child's absences due to illness or vacation.** Tuition is considered late after the 7th and a late fee of \$5/day will be assessed for each subsequent business day.

Child care services may be terminated immediately if payment is not made in full, including late fees, by the end of the month. If families experience financial difficulties they are encouraged to talk with the program administrator to work out a payment plan.

Late Pick Up Fees

A late pick up fee of \$1.00 per minute will be assessed for morning half-day families that pick up after 12:30 or for full day or afternoon half-day families that pick up later than 5:15 PM.

Schedule Change Fee

Any changes in schedules will be accommodated only if space is available. The first time a family needs to change their schedule there is no fee. Any subsequent schedule changes will be assessed a \$20 fee.

Sunscreen Fee (Optional)

Families may choose to use the DDE Center provided sunscreen by signing the sunscreen permission on the orange Permission Record. The annual \$10 fee can be paid with registration or every September.

Flexible/Drop In/ Hourly Care

The DDE Center does **not** offer drop in, daily, or hourly care. If a family needs additional care than they are registered for a child may occasionally be able to attend an extra day or half-day if

space is available. Arrangements for extra care need to be made at least 24 hours in advance. Families will be charged either the full day rate or half day rate depending on the additional care provided.

Taxes/Flex Spending

Each family should keep personal records of tuition, registration, and special fee expenses paid during each semester and calendar year. The Center's tax ID number is 87-6000528. During January, the Staff Assistant provides a printed statement of the family account showing the total amount paid for the taxable year. If a receipt is needed, parents should ask the Staff Assistant for one.

Student Parent Scholarships

Scholarships are available to all full time USU student parents (graduate and undergraduate). The scholarship is provided through Tier 2 tuition dollars and offsets a portion of the monthly tuition during the regular academic year. Scholarship amounts vary year to year and are based on the amount we receive, the number of student children enrolled, and each child's schedule. The student scholarship is awarded to the student parent.

Program Withdrawal

We understand that the DDE Center may not be the right choice for every family. If a family decides to leave the DDE Center a two weeks' notice is requested. If a parent does not provide a two weeks' notice the DDE Center will expect payment in full for the two weeks, even if the child is not attending.

The DDE Center maintains the right to ask a family to withdrawal from the program at any time. The following circumstances would be grounds for immediate withdrawal.

- Parents or family members verbally and/or physically threatening teachers, staff, children, or other parents.
 - A child demonstrating severe behavior that physically threatens the safety of children, teachers, or staff.
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2015-2016 School Closures

August 24 – Professional Development Day
 September 7 – Labor Day Holiday
 November 26 and 27 – Thanksgiving Holiday
 December 21 – January 1 – Winter Break (School Reopens January 4)
 January 18 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
 February 15 – Presidents Day
 May 30 – Memorial Day
 July 4 – Independence Day
 July 25,26, 27 – Pioneer Day/Summer Break
 August 22– Professional Development Day

Contact Information

Infant and Toddler Class797-8739
 Lead Teacher – Danielle Jensen danielle.jensen@usu.edu
Junior Preschool Class797-8740
 Lead Teacher – Hillary Christensen hillary.christensen@usu.edu
Senior Preschool Class797-8741
 Lead Teacher – Lauren Pace lauren.pace@usu.edu
Kindergarten Care.....797-8741
 Lead Teacher –
Program Administrator.....797-7525

Front Desk.....797-3657
 Office Manager – Rebecca Baron rebecca.baron@usu.edu