



Early Childhood Education Program

Parent Handbook 2016-17

Welcome to the Child Studies Department Early Childhood Education Programs at West Valley College. This handbook is designed to familiarize you with our program policies and will help you to understand how the Child Development Center operates. We hope your experience with us is positive and rewarding.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Our non-profit on-campus child development program is designed specifically for students, college staff, faculty, and local community families with young children. We are licensed through the Department of Social Services Community Care Licensing Title 22 regulations and administered through the Child Studies Department at West Valley College. Currently, funding for tuition subsidy for low income families is received through the Office of Child Development in the State Department of Education. Therefore, Title 5 regulations are also followed.



The programs are part of the Child Studies Department and are uniquely involved in the academic life of the college by serving as a teacher training and observation site for students and parents. The program is operated on a non-discriminatory basis, according equal opportunity for access to services and employment without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry or sexual preference. No religious instruction of any kind is provided. Children are enrolled according to admission and eligibility policies or waiting list procedures established and monitored based on State

Department of Education funding requirements.

Our early childhood program consists of classrooms which are designed for children two to five years of age. The program operates daily, Monday through Friday, 12 months a year.

OUR EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Children deserve to be in an **aesthetic environment** that respects and understands the process of growth and development of the child. We believe **play is the natural medium** through which growth and development can best be realized for each child. Therefore, we reflect an emergent developmentally appropriate curriculum in a natural setting.



EMERGENT CURRICULUM

While children play, they put their ideas into action. They learn to communicate effectively. They discover how to get along with other children. They make things happen and enjoy a sense of competence. Play allows children to experiment and problem solve. It fosters the ability to focus attention and to concentrate for long periods of time. Play provides opportunities for children to express their thinking and feelings. It requires authentic learning

experiences, fosters imagination and encourages children to generate creative ideas.



Learning experiences are developmentally appropriate and are matched with the age of the child, their individual interests, their abilities, and their temperament. Workbooks, coloring books, and pre-cut art materials are ready-made adult models for children, that provide little or no opportunity for individuality and creativity. A rich array of **natural materials** and **authentic learning experiences** enables the child's involvement in a full range of activities.

Learning experiences are child-directed rather than teacher-directed. Children are presented with many opportunities for selecting materials, initiating activities themselves, participating in activities others have chosen, and following through to satisfactory completion. Children are given ample **opportunity and time** to discover, invent, create, feel, taste, touch, and enjoy a full range of activities within the classroom and college campus.

The curriculum is ethnically diverse, non-sexist, and anti-biased as demonstrated by use of appropriate learning materials, books, pictures, and foods. We have a diverse staff and are often assisted by our parent and student groups in providing ethnic and cultural experiences, food, dress, and celebrations. It is our goal to create an environment and foster interactions that provide children with the opportunity to:

- Develop a positive sense of self and capabilities, feel unique, and know they are valued individuals.
- Establish on-going relationships with teachers and peers based on respect and trust.
- Build their strengths, muscular coordination and physical skills.
- Establish a foundation for sound health and safety habits.
- Grow in their ability to understand their social, physical, and cultural environment.
- Develop problem-solving skills, to concentrate. and to think creatively.
- Learn to be responsible for their own actions, to act independently with confidence.
- Grow in their ability to recognize and express feelings appropriately.

DAILY EXPERIENCES

Sufficient blocks of time inside and outside set the framework for children to become engaged in activities in small groups or individually. Classroom schedules are designed to be flexible and to meet the needs of the group of the day. Morning snack is served around 9:30 a.m. Lunch is served around 11:30 a.m., and an afternoon snack is offered to children after 2:30 p.m. Rest time is generally from 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. A current daily schedule is posted on the outside bulletin board.

PHOTO AND VIDEO DOCUMENTATION POLICY

Documentation of children's play and curriculum activities are a vital part of our program. Consequently, classroom teachers and supervised students may frequently photograph children while they play. These photographs and videotapes may be used in parent teacher conferences, for educational purposes on bulletin boards and photo displays, in campus newsletters, and in articles about the West-Valley-Mission Community College District Child Studies Department.

VISITS AND CONFERENCES

We strongly encourage parents to visit the center, converse with the teachers, and participate in the program as much as possible. More formal parent-teacher conferences are scheduled each semester. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, feel free to make an appointment with the teachers or the program director. We look forward to meeting with you.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT PLAN & PARTICIPATION



Parents are a vital and important part of our early childhood program. We talk to parents regularly about their child's experience in our classes. Parents are encouraged to assist us in presenting authentic cultural experiences for our children by visiting the classroom, providing cultural dress and food items for activities, providing cultural music and language experiences, and teaching us about cultural celebrations that they regularly observe. Family potlucks and parent-teacher conferences are part of our program.

DIVERSITY POLICY

West Valley College Child Development Centers maintain an open-door and inclusive program. We do not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, gender, mental or physical disability, race, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, sexual orientation, or national origin. No religious instruction of any kind is provided.

INCLUSION POLICY

Children who are medically fragile and/or have physical or mental disabilities may be enrolled if it is determined by the director, teachers and parents, after a period of observations and discussions, that the program is appropriate and the individual needs of the child can be reasonably accommodated within the group experience.

ADULT / CHILD STAFFING RATIO

The program follows the State Department of Education's Title 5 requirements for adult/child ratios and staff qualifications. We schedule one adult for every eight children. Our center is staffed with qualified early childhood teachers and teaching assistants. More information about Title 5 regulations is available in the Child Studies Department office.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Each year the West Valley College Child Development Centers plan staff development activities, events, and opportunities. All newly hired staff members attend a staff orientation and receive a staff handbook. Staff attend weekly classroom meetings and all classrooms meet together monthly. Staff attend bi-annual meetings before Fall semester and before Spring semester with all faculty. We have numerous staff development days scheduled into the school calendar allowing our staff time for training and development. The staff is encouraged to attend local state and national conferences. The staff are encouraged to continue their education to earn advanced degrees in Early Childhood Education.

ADULTS AS ROLE MODELS

Please do not discuss children or their behavior while in their presence. All adults coming into the center and outdoor classroom are role models for our children. Consequently, we expect all adults to behave in an empathetic, courteous, respectful manner with the children and with each other at all times. The Child Development Center is not to be used as a place to settle disputes, school/work, personal, or related issues. No smoking is allowed on the center premises or front walkways or within 25 feet of building and outdoor classroom.

DISCIPLINE PHILOSOPHY

The physical environment and general atmosphere of our Early Childhood Programs are designed to be safe and to encourage age-appropriate behavior from young children. The limits or rules set by the teachers for the children are simple and consistent. A positive approach is used with children in ensuring their safety and social-emotional well-being while in the program. Depending on age, temperament, and individual needs of a child, the following techniques and accommodations are used to foster cooperative, peaceful, and safe behavior of children in our programs:

- Modeling and recognizing acceptable behavior.
- Recognizing each child's individual needs.
- Structuring or modifying the environment and schedules as needed.
- Anticipating and eliminating potential problems.
- Planning routines to allow children a successful mix of choice and structure.
- Engaging children in purposeful activities.
- Recognizing and encouraging children's attempts at solving their problems.
- Identifying and discussing what a child might be doing and feeling.
- Stating what a problem is and discussing ways to respond.
- Giving choices.
- Encouraging children to use their words and social problem solving abilities.
- Redirecting a child's attention to another activity or area of the room.
- Using natural or logical consequences.



The expression and practice of *time-out* is not used. When consistent unsafe behavior persists, the child's actions will be stopped. For example, this includes instances of physical and verbal aggression towards other children or teachers, bullying, inappropriate throwing of objects, kicking, biting, and hair pulling. When necessary, the teacher helps the child move away from the existing situation and directs the child to

another activity in the room. When children are asked to leave a play situation because of unsafe behavior, the teacher gives a simple explanation of the situation and the reason why the child is being asked to leave. The child is able to return to the play situation as soon as both the teacher and the child feel the child has calmed down and can behave safely and cooperatively.

ON A DAILY BASIS ...

DAILY SIGN IN AND OUT

The Department of Social Services Community Care Licensing requires that each child is signed in daily upon arrival and signed out daily (using full legal signatures) by an authorized adult when leaving the center. Children will be released only to authorized persons whose names are on the emergency forms. If an adult, who arrives to pick up a child, is not recognized, name and photo ID will be requested and verified on the child's emergency list. If the name is not on the emergency list, the child will not be released. Parents or guardians will be contacted immediately.

ARRIVAL TIME: 7:30 am to 9:30 am

Children are expected to **arrive at the center before 9:30am** If your child has not arrived at the center by 10:00am. and you have not contacted the center to notify the teachers you will be late, your child will be considered absent for the day.

PICK UP TIME: Families are expected to adhere to their contracted hours. Children are to be picked up by or before contracted time. **A LATE PICK-UP FEE** will be assessed per family and based on "cell phone" time after 12:30 p.m. for part day schedules and after 6:00 p.m. for extended day schedules.

ABSENCES

Parents must leave a voice message on the director's telephone line (408.741.2152) or email the director (Anne.Horgan@westvalley.edu) if their child will be absent for any reason. **An absence verification form must be completed for each absence (forms are located in the front pocket of the sign-in sheet binder).** If a child is absent without notification for three or more days, termination of services may result.

Families who receive full or partial subsidy from our state subsidy contract are allotted 10 "Best Interest" days per fiscal year – absences that are in the best interest of the child's health and well-being (for example: family vacation, grandparent visiting, child needs time with parent at home, etc.). **An absence verification form must be completed for each absence.** Beginning with the eleventh unexcused absence, your childcare contract may be terminated.

SAFETY AND SECURITY OF CHILDREN

Parents are required to fill out an emergency form, medical release form, and family plan for disasters prior to the first day of attendance. It is the **parents' responsibility** to keep these forms current. The center staff will care for minor cuts and scrapes at the center. Parents receive an incident form documenting the injury and treatment. In the event that a more serious injury occurs, parents are notified at once. If necessary, the authorized persons and/or specific directions designated on the emergency card will be followed. Otherwise, the child will be taken to the Student Health Center on campus and appropriate emergency medical treatment services and procedures will be followed as deemed necessary.

The teachers will respond to an emergency on campus or in the community such as fire, floods, and earthquake, as specified in the WVMCC District emergency handbook. If necessary, children will be evacuated to the parking lot adjacent to the center. Emergency food and water are stored on campus.

Teachers will remain with the children as long as necessary. Children will be released only to authorized persons whose names are on the emergency forms.

TOILET LEARNING

Teachers and parents collaboratively decide when the child is ready to begin the toilet learning process. We believe this process should take place in a relaxed environment with the understanding that each child has his/her own timeline. If your child is wearing diapers or training pants please discuss the toilet learning process with the classroom teachers. For those children wearing diapers, teachers follow state health and safety procedures for changing diapers. Parents are responsible for providing disposable diapers and wipes for their child.

EXTRA CLOTHING AND REST ITEMS

Each child has a cubby with plastic container at the center to hold extra clothing and nap items for the day. Please make sure your child has an extra pair of socks, underwear, long pants and a shirt in their cubbies at all times. We strongly recommend that you label your child's clothing, especially jackets, sweaters, and sweatshirts. If your child will be napping at the center, please bring a blanket that can be left at the center. ***Children are asked to keep food items, gum, candy, and toys at home.*** Parents are expected to keep a fresh supply of clean clothes in their child's cubby box at all times.

BIRTHDAY AND HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

On special occasions, parents may provide a book for the teachers to read to celebrate birthdays or holidays. Please discuss your plans with staff prior to the celebration.

MEALS AND SNACKS

A morning and afternoon snack are served daily. The program will provide lunch and milk. Weekly lunch and snack menus are posted.



Special food requirements or food allergies must be identified during enrollment. Parents must obtain written information from the child's physician about the food allergies. Specific written instructions are to be included on the enrollment forms, and discussed with center staff. Parents may need to supply food items for their child if the center is unable to meet the special food requirements.

HEALTH POLICIES

MEDICATIONS

Teachers may administer prescription medication, asthma medication, inhalers or EpiPen injection.

Clear instructions from a physician must be clearly labeled on the original prescription container.

Over the counter drugs such as Tylenol and cough syrup will not be administered by the teachers. Parents may visit the center at any time and administer the medication themselves.

HEALTH AND IMMUNIZATIONS

State licensing regulations require that all children have a medical examination upon entrance into the program or as needed. The child must be fully immunized according to age specific regulations prior to enrollment. A physician must sign a Health Evaluation Form indicating the child has had the medical examination and immunizations are up-to-date. This form must be completed within 7 days of enrollment.

Children must stay home if any of the following symptoms are evident:

Fever: 99.6° orally, 98.6° rectally or tympanic (ear), 100.6° auxiliary (under the arm) before fever medicine is administered.

Colds and Runny Noses: runny nose with fever, lack of appetite, lethargy, or irritability; runny nose which is yellow or green for more than a week; runny nose plus other signs of illness. Any symptoms that persist for two or more weeks usually require medical attention. Child can come to center with clear runny nose if there are no other symptoms.

Cough: a wet, wheezy cough with mucous secretion.

Ear Infection: with fever, lethargy, nausea, vomiting, loose stools, drainage, irritability, tugging on ears. Child may return to center when on medication and 24 hours after symptoms are gone.

Eye Infection: with yellow or green drainage. Child must be on medication 24 hours and have very little drainage before returning to center.

Vomiting: recurring or with fever.

Skin Infection or Rash: with drainage.

Lice or Scabies: Child may return to the center after appropriate treatment and shampoo.

Diarrhea: All cases of diarrhea must be reported to the center. Diarrhea has more serious consequences than catching a cold. Severe dehydration can lead to hospitalization. The risks of spreading diarrhea are more serious than the risk of spreading colds. *A child must stay home if they have: 2 or more watery, loose, or mucousy bowel movements and/or additional signs of being sick (fever, runny nose, lack of appetite)*

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

In the event of a situation that involves difficulties and/or differences among classroom staff and parents, every effort will be made to resolve the issues as follows:

- Parents shall inform the director of their concerns – either in person, via telephone or email
 - Anne Horgan, Interim Director; (408) 741-2152; Anne.Horgan@westvalley.edu
- Every effort will be made to resolve the parent concerns
If necessary, the director will hold a special conference among the different parties to attempt to further resolve any issue.

OTHER INFORMATION

- The Department of Social Services has the authority to interview children or staff, and to inspect and audit child or Child Development Center records without prior consent.
- The West Valley College Child Studies Office reserves the right to modify and/or terminate contracted attendance schedules in the best interest of the child.
- For information or questions concerning enrollment and scheduling, subsidized tuition contracts, licensing information (Title 22 and Title 5), tuition fees, and payments, contact the director: Anne Horgan, Interim Director; (408) 741-2152; Anne.Horgan@westvalley.edu

CONTACT INFORMATION

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