UNH Child Study and Development Center

Nursery Program II

Parent Handbook

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Table of Contents

3 Foundation
4 Framework
5 Intentions
6 Daily Schedule
7 General Information
  7 Program Hours
  7 Enrollment
  7 Staffing
  7 Newsletters
  7 Daily Notes
  7 Parent/teacher Conferences
8 Outdoor Play
8 Snacks
8 Book Club Offers
8 Indoor Shoes
8 Clothing
8 Extra Clothes
8 Diapers and Toilet Training
9 Birthdays
Foundation

The goal of the curriculum is to ensure that a child’s experiences in school lead to growth in all areas of development—language and cognitive, physical, social and emotional. This includes knowledge and skills as well as positive dispositions towards learning. The curriculum has intentional as well as emergent components. The intended curriculum is defined by the teacher and consists of broad themes believed to be relevant and important to the young child’s education. These include: relationships, physical knowledge, the natural environment, and the arts. The emergent curriculum consists of topics that fall within the framework of the intended curriculum but emerge from the children’s interests, their ideas, their questions and misconceptions, and the conflicts of problems they encounter.

Children are naturally curious and learn best through active exploration in a safe and comfortable environment. Skills are practiced and knowledge is constructed (and reconstructed) as children engage in new experiences and revisit previous experiences that have been modified to expand upon, reinforce or challenge what has already been learned. Collaboration with others (peers and adults) is considered an important element to the learning process and children are encouraged to work together.
Framework

In the CSDC Nursery School, teams of student interns from the Department of Family Studies work with the lead teacher to develop and implement the curriculum. The classroom environment is set up to provide a wide variety of materials and activities. The daily schedule provides consistency of routine and allows children time for individual, small group and large group experiences.

As children participate in these experiences, their interests, ideas, current knowledge, questions, and misconceptions are observed and documented by both the student interns and the classroom teachers. Through analysis of this documentation, the teaching team identifies specific topics to “investigate” with small groups of children. The “investigation teams” meet regularly and it is the responsibility of the student interns, with guidance from the lead teacher, to provide developmentally appropriate activities designed to reinforce, challenge or expand upon the children’s understanding of the concepts being investigated.

Through this process, children develop new understandings about the topics under investigation, they practice emerging skills and they develop dispositions needed to become confident, lifelong learners.
Intentions

It is our intention to provide a safe and nurturing environment that promotes growth in all areas of development and responds respectfully and enthusiastically to children’s needs and interests. Children are expected to grow in their understanding of basic concepts and to develop good problem solving skills as they actively investigate and explore the environment.

It is our intention that children enjoy their time in school and see themselves as valuable members of a diverse classroom community. In an environment where children’s ideas are valued and their interests embraced, we support the development of respectful and respected individuals and group members who are happy and confident lifelong learners.
Daily Schedule

8:30 – 9:00  Pre-session set-up and teachers’ meeting
9:00 – 9:30  Arrival and outdoor play
9:30 – 9:50  Circle
9:50 – 10:40 Center choices and investigations
10:40 – 10:50 Clean-up and bathroom
10:50 – 11:10 Snack
11:10 – 11:30 Small group
11:30 – 12:00 Outdoor play and departure
12:00 – 12:30 Post-session clean-up and teachers’ meeting

* Please note that this schedule may be revised as we observe the needs and interests of the children.
General Information

Program Hours

Nursery Program II meets Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM. The program runs during the Fall and Spring semesters while UNH classes are in session.

Enrollment

Eighteen children, generally nine boys and nine girls, aged 3 - 4 years. Children must be three years old by September 30th to be eligible for enrollment. Children previously enrolled in Nursery Program I are automatically accepted into Nursery Program II. New families are offered home visits and/or invited in to meet the teacher and explore the classroom before school starts.

Staffing

Program II is taught by an experienced lead teacher with a Master’s degree in Early Childhood Education and an assistant teacher with a BA in Early Childhood Education. In addition, at least nine students completing requirements for Family Studies 635 spend one day per week in the Program (three students per day). The students observe and document interactions with the children and implement an investigation with a group of children over the course of one semester.

Newsletters

At least once a month, parents/guardians receive a program newsletter. Classroom news, information about investigations or projects, information about upcoming events and activities, and information on relevant topics or issues of importance to families are included. Newsletter are distributed to families in their parent files and are also available at the CSDC website.

Whiteboard

Each morning, planned activities are listed on a large memo board, which is placed on the classroom door so that parents or guardians and children can read about the day’s plans as they drive up at arrival time. Activities, songs, stories, and the snack for the day are included in this note, as well as reminders of upcoming events or requests for materials or other resources. Please be sure to read the whiteboard daily.

Parent/teacher conferences

Parents or guardians may request meetings or phone conversations with the lead teacher at any time they have questions or concerns about their child or the program. Conferences are routinely offered at the end of each semester to discuss each child’s development and his/her participation in the program. Once a year, families receive a developmental profile written by the lead
teacher, teacher assistant or student teacher. This profile describes the child’s skills, as observed in the classroom, in the areas of motor, language, social/emotional and cognitive development.

In the event that concerns are raised about a child’s development, a referral for further evaluation may be made, with consent of a parent or guardian, to the school district or other appropriate agency. Please refer to the CSDC Family Information Guide pages 12-16 for more information.

Outdoor Play

Children arrive in seasonal outdoor apparel, ready to play outside. Weather permitting; we are on the playground from 9:00 until 9:30 AM and again from 11:30 AM to 12:00 noon. We do not play outside when the wind chill factor is 10 degrees or below. We will play outside when the temperature is 10 degrees or higher (with a wind chill of 11 or more).

Snacks

A nutritious, daily snack is provided by the Center. A snack list is posted on a bulletin board in the classroom to the right in the entryway. Snacks generally consist of a grain (assorted crackers or cereal), fruit and water.

Indoor Shoes

Because we remove our outdoor shoes before we enter the classroom, each child brings in a pair of extra shoes or non-skid slippers to wear inside. These “indoor shoes” should be labeled with the child’s name or initials and may be kept at school in the child’s cubby.

Clothing

Please be sure that your child comes to school dressed appropriately for the weather and for a fun day of movement. Expect for your child to get dirty at school send him/her in play clothes. We also ask that children wear shoes that cover their toes. Open-toed shoes can be a tripping hazard and can lead to cuts and bruises on little feet.

Extra Clothes

Each child keeps a complete change of clothing at school stored in plastic bags labeled with the child’s name. These are kept in cabinets below the changing table in the classroom bathroom.

Diapers and Toilet Training

Children do not need to be toilet-trained to be enrolled in the program. The Center provides disposable diapers and diapers are changed as needed. The staff works with parents/guardians whose children are in the process of potty training to ensure their efforts are carried over into the school environment. All children are assisted as needed with their toileting needs.

Birthdays
We love to help children celebrate their special day. Families are asked to provide a special healthy snack on their child’s birthday and we will sing happy birthday to them.

**Late Pick-up**

Between 12 and 12:30 the Classroom Teachers and the student interns are having a post session meeting to discuss curriculum, children’s development, make plans for the next session and clean up the room. All late pick-ups will be documented. A family will be considered late if they are not at CSDC by 12:00.

**Illness**

CSDC has many policies around health and illness. Our primary concern in Nursery is whether or not a child can fully participate in the morning’s activities. Please read the health section of the CSDC Family Information Guide at http://www.chhs.unh.edu/sites/chhs.unh.edu/files/docs/csdc/CSDC-Family-Handbook_Health.pdf