



UNH Child Study and Development Center

Nursery Program

Parent Handbook

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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 literacy, cognitive, physical, creative, social and emotional. This includes knowledge and skills as well as positive dispositions towards learning. The curriculum has intentional as well as emergent components. Teachers use their knowledge of child development and the NH Early Learning Standards to create an intentional learning environment and access to materials that support all domains of development. The emergent curriculum reflects children's interests, ideas, questions and misconceptions, and problem-solving opportunities. Teachers' observations of children's engagement with materials and with their peers begin the "Cycle of Inquiry" process, and curriculum is co-constructed by children and teachers. 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 are empowered to revisit previous experiences to expand upon, reinforce or challenge what has already been learned. Community and respect are at the core of the program. Children will learn how to share ideas individually and in a group setting, collaborate with peers, communicate their feelings and needs and develop strong friendships.

Framework

In the CSDC Nursery School, teams of student interns from the Department of Family Studies work with the lead teachers 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 curriculum threads to further investigate and explore together. Student interns, with guidance from and in partnership with the lead teachers, learn 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 and practice emerging skills needed to become confident, lifelong learners.

*"One of the greatest gifts we can give our children is the **empowerment** to create a life they love, filled with purposeful, enjoyable work, and relationships they hold dear."*-Sarah L. Cook.

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 and self-help 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 individuals and group members who are happy and confident in a learning community.

Family participation in the classroom is encouraged and valued by the teaching team, as is communication. Teachers are committed to fostering open lines of communication, through daily conversations and are accessible via email and phone. It is our intention to respectfully partner with all families as we work together to support each child's development.

“Research and experience confirm that the course of learning and development varies greatly during the early years and that an effective model of early education has its foundation in an in-depth knowledge of the unique qualities of every child in the classroom.”

Nursery Program Schedules: Please note that this schedule is fluid and flexible as we observe the needs and interests of the children.

Daily Schedule Nursery 1 and 2

- 8:30 – 9:00* Pre-session set-up and teachers' meeting
- 9:00 – 9:45* Arrival (drop-off in classroom)
- 9:45 – 10:00* Circle
- 10:00 – 10:50* Center choices and investigations
- 10:50 – 11:00* Clean-up and bathroom
- 11:00 – 11:15* Snack
- 11:15 – 12:00* Outdoor play and departure (pick-up at playground)
- 12:00 – 12:30* Post-session Teacher meeting

Daily Schedule Nursery 3

- 12:30-1:00* Pre-Session set up/teacher meeting
- 1:00-2:00* Arrival and Outdoor Play (drop-off at playground)
- 2:00-2:15* Transition to classroom
- 2:20-2:40* Circle Time
- 2:40-3:40* Center Choice and Snack
- 3:40-3:50* Clean-up and 2nd Circle
- 3:50-4:00* Dismissal (from classroom)
- 4:00-4:30* Post session Teacher meeting

General Information

Program Hours

Nursery 1 meets Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM.

Nursery 2 meets Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM.

Nursery 3 meets Monday-Thursday from 1:00-4:00.

The program runs during the Fall and Spring semesters while UNH classes are in session.

Staffing

Nursery 1, 2 and 3 are taught by experienced teachers with Degrees in Early Childhood Education. In addition, at least nine students completing requirements for the Human Development and Family Studies 635 course spend one day per week in the Nursery 2 and 3 Program (three students per day). In the Nursery 1 program, 2-3 students in the HDFS 709 course are in the classroom both days. The students observe and document interactions with the children and implement investigations with children over the course of the semester.

Whiteboard

Before each session planned activities are listed on a large memo board, which is placed on the classroom door so that family members and children can read about the day's plans as they arrive. Reminders about upcoming events or requests for materials or other resources might also be listed. Please be sure to read the whiteboard daily.

Parent/teacher conferences

Parents or guardians may request meetings or phone conversations with the lead teachers at any time they have questions or concerns about their child or the program. We believe strongly in open communication between teachers and families. It is important for children to see that we are partners in their care and education and that we are sharing messages with children that are consistent between home and school. Please share any information you feel is important for us to know in order to best work with your child. We can be reached by e-mail at Jamie.gleason@unh.edu or bethany.leahy@unh.edu or marissa.audy@unh.edu. In the case of urgency or emergency please call the office at 862-2835.

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 teachers. 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 should come to school with the outdoor apparel necessary for that day's weather. Children should also arrive with the necessary sunblock/bug spray needed. Depending upon weather and children's investigations, we are on the playground or in the surrounding areas such as the forest, garden or field for 45-90 minutes. We do not play outside when the wind chill factor is 15 degrees or below. Please send your child with what they will need to play outdoors comfortably for each day's weather.

Snacks

A small daily snack is provided by the Center, which will generally consist of a grain (assorted crackers or dry cereal), a fruit or vegetable from the garden or an item we have baked or prepared as a class. ***We ask that each child bring his or her own labeled water bottle each day.**

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. Please label each article of clothing, including winter gear, hats and mittens to minimize confusion and lost items. It is likely that your child will get dirty and/or wet while at school and on the playground. Please send him/her in play clothes that you don't mind getting soiled. Many families have found that rain suits are very helpful! We also ask that children wear comfortable shoes that cover their toes. Open-toed shoes (and flipflops) 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.

Lost and Found

Items left behind each day (including clothing and water bottles) will be left in the white lost and found bin on the shelf at the end of the Nursery cubbies.

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 toilet 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 welcome to provide a special Nut/Peanut free healthy snack on their child's birthday. We will also sing happy birthday to them and do a class dance party. If your child has a birthday in the summer and would like a "half-birthday" celebration during the school year we are happy to do so. We ask families who are distributing birthday party invitations to do so at school only if each child in the class is being invited. Invitations should be placed in cubby baskets in the hall.

Holidays and Celebrations

We follow the CSDC guidelines for celebrations related to holidays, out of consideration and respect for all families and for developmentally appropriate practices. Please see pages 21-23 in the CSDC Parent Handbook for further detail.

Arrival, Dismissal and Late Pick-up Policy

When dropping off or picking up your child, please make sure that you have spoken with Jamie, Marissa or Bethany so that we may sign your child in or out on our attendance sheet. This is extremely important for safety reasons. Nursery 1 and Nursery 2 children arrive to the classroom at 9 and are dismissed from the playground by 12. At this time, the teachers need to return to the classroom for their post-session meeting and another class will have their playground time, therefore all Nursery 2 families need to leave the playground by 12:00. Nursery 3 children will be met by Marissa and Bethany outside the playground gate at 1:00 for their arrival time, and will be dismissed from the classroom.

Between 12 and 12:30 or 4 and 4:30 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 by the office. A family will be considered late if they are not at CSDC by 12:00 (for N2) or 4:00 (for N3).

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 day'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/csdcc/CSDC-Family-Handbook_Health.pdf