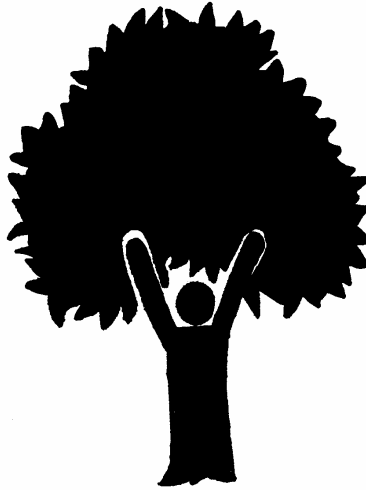


*Early Learning Center  
Child Care Program*



*Handbook*

Early Learning Center  
Messiah College  
P.O. Box 3021  
One College Avenue  
Grantham, PA 17027  
(717) 796-5043

[www.messiah.edu/academics/early\\_learning](http://www.messiah.edu/academics/early_learning)

7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m., Monday-Friday



*Messiah College Early Learning Center does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, age, disability, or national or ethnic origin in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities. Program services shall be made accessible to eligible persons with disabilities through the most practical and economically feasible methods available. These methods include, but are not limited to, equipment redesign, the provision of aides, and the use of alternative service delivery locations. Structural modifications shall be considered only as a last resort among available methods.*

## *Early Learning Center*



### **Quick Reference Contact Information**

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| Center Office & Administrative Assistant | 796-5043           |
| Director                                 | 691-6085           |
| Family Grouping Classroom                | 796-1800 ext. 3968 |
| Extended Care Classroom                  | 796-1800 ext. 3964 |
| AM Lab School Classroom                  | 796-1800 ext. 3962 |
| AM/PM Lab School Classroom               | 796-1800 ext. 3961 |

***7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., Monday-Friday***



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## **Welcome!**

Thank you for your interest in childcare at the Messiah College Early Learning Center. This handbook serves as a guide to the families enrolled or interested in enrolling in the Center. We hope that the information in this booklet provides you with the answers to your questions and informs you of the various programs and procedures of the Center. Please feel free to call (717) 796-5043 if you would like more information.

## **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Early Learning Center is to provide quality early childhood programming to children and families while serving as a training site for pre-service educators and social science students. The Early Learning Center is dedicated to providing both experiential learning and research opportunities to students and professionals.

## **Relationship to Messiah College**

The Early Learning Center is located in the lower level of Hostetter Chapel on the campus of Messiah College. The half-day Lab School Program was established in 1972 and serves as a site for Early Childhood training and education for the College. In 1999, full-day childcare was added to meet the needs of Messiah College faculty, staff, and students. Both programs within the Early Learning Center exist to provide a model of high quality early childhood programming for children and their families.

## **Program Philosophy**

The staff at the Messiah College Early Learning Center believes that children should be provided with nurturing care, learning experiences, positive encouragement, and opportunities for growth. Recognizing that each child develops on an individual basis with varying developmental needs, children enrolled at the Center are provided with learning experiences that strive to meet their needs in all areas of development: social-emotional, intellectual, physical, and spiritual. Children are cared for in an environment where Christian teachers and program components emphasize and model strong values and moral development.

We believe that children are happiest if their development and growth occur where a balanced schedule of structure and flexibility exists. The Center's daily schedule is flexible, with enough structure to provide children with developmentally appropriate learning experiences that will contribute to their knowledge of basic living and educational skills. Our goal is also to help each child experience a healthy feeling of self worth in an atmosphere that fosters safety, security, and regularity of routine. When children feel safe and good about themselves, they are better able to interact with others and have a positive impact on the whole group. It is our goal to help all children achieve this crucial life skill.

We want this Center to be your child's home away from home. Therefore we are committed to you as a family and will strive to work in partnership with you to meet the needs of your child. We believe and respect the fact that parents are the most significant providers of care and nurture

in a child's life. We are honored to serve as an extension of that care.

## **What Makes Us Unique?**

- Experienced and caring teachers who broaden their education through professional development and training.
- Opportunities for involvement with professors and students in Messiah College courses (Early Childhood, Child Development, Music, etc.)
- Student teaching, volunteer, and work-study programs for Messiah College students.
- Literature rich environment including classroom and family libraries.
- Access to campus facilities and grounds for special events
- National Association for the Education of Young Children Accreditation.
- Keystone Stars "Star 4" Center.

## **Programs Offered**

### **Family Grouping Room (6 weeks-2 years 9 months)**

In this room, children from 6 weeks to age 2 years 9 months are nurtured in a multi-age setting. The children benefit from the continuity of care provided by the co-teachers and the opportunity to play and interact with children of varying ages. Messiah College student assistants and volunteers support teachers throughout the day.

Infants are accepted at the Early Learning Center after six weeks of age. Nurturing interactions with the infants and toddlers are the main focus of this group. They are held, sung to, read to, talked with, and played with throughout the day by qualified staff. Fresh air and daily walks occur on the surrounding campus sidewalks and grounds, weather permitting. Each child's feeding and sleeping schedule is designed in accordance with their home schedule. Upon arrival, each child is signed in by a parent or guardian and a daily individual schedule is started by the parent indicating the child's last diapering, feeding, and sleeping time. This sheet is updated throughout the day by the co-teachers, with any additional comments, and returned to the parent upon pick-up of the child.

In this multi-age classroom, children are full of curiosity, mobility, and energy, and primarily learn by "doing" with their whole mind and body. Due to this fact, active exploration is facilitated and encouraged. Our staff model appropriate behaviors through verbal and physical interactions to help guide children toward self-control and independence. Children are encouraged to foster kind and helpful relationships with each other. Simple sign language is taught and used to communicate before language skills are developed. The schedules in the Family Grouping room are flexible and spontaneous, with teachers taking cues from the children's needs in order to plan or modify the day's events. While flexibility and spontaneity are important, it is also important to establish a routine for young children. This helps children further their understanding of themselves and others as well as provides them with a feeling of security.

Toilet training is a major milestone and will not occur at the Center until it has started at your

home. Every effort will be made to work together in this interest, but it will not be made a part of the programming until the parents and Center staff agrees that it is time to start. This typically begins around age 2 1/2. For more information on toilet training, please discuss this with your child's teacher.

Please send the following **labeled** items in with your child:

1. Items to remain in your child's personalized cubbie in the Family Grouping room:
  - One complete set of extra clothes, including socks and shoes
  - Crib-sized sheet and blanket, which is taken home for washing at the end of each week
  - Diapering supplies
  - Pacifiers, a lovey & a hair comb, if desired
2. Items to remain in the Family Grouping room :
  - Snack items for the babies, snacks for the older children are provided
  - Two sipper cups
  - Bibs (we prefer the vinyl, for ease of cleaning)
  - A family picture for our family wall
3. Items to bring daily:
  - Daily lunch in a lunch box or bag
  - Formula and bottles

\*Please note that bottles will be hand washed daily, but sent home weekly for the dishwasher.

Please do not leave diaper bags in the classroom. The state regulations require that diaper bags be inaccessible to children and we do not have adequate space for storage. This is a safety precaution since diaper bags may contain inappropriate items for young children.

### **Extended Care Room (2 years 9 months - 5 years)**

Children ages 2 years 9 months through age 5 are provided with care and learning opportunities in our Extended Care room before and after the morning Lab School program and all day when Lab School is not in session. As in the Family Grouping room, the teachers are supported by College student assistants and volunteers.

We believe multi-age grouping provides a wonderful and natural opportunity for children to learn by doing, observing, and teaching one another under the guidance and care of skillfully trained teachers. Our Extended Care program provides children with hands-on activities and experiences across all areas of development and learning. There are many self-selected and teacher-directed activities from which each child may choose. These include pre-literacy activities, science and math exploration and manipulatives, various art and music activities, fine motor and large motor activities, small and large group lesson times, and computers. Outside play is an important part of the planned activities for each day. A rest time is planned each afternoon for children to nap, or participate in quiet activities on their rest mat.

Please send in the following **labeled** items in each day or week with your child:

- sheet, blanket & pillow for rest mat

- ☑ favorite nap time security item, if needed
- ☑ one change of clothes (including socks and underwear)
- ☑ disposable diapers & wipes (diaper cream if needed)
- ☑ sweater/jacket for outdoor time (hat and gloves in winter)
- ☑ sun screen during summer months
- ☑ bookbag/totebag
- ☑ lunch in labeled container/bag
- ☑ a family picture for our family wall

Movement from the Family Grouping room to the Extended Care room is dependent on the child's age and developmental level and will occur at three times during the year. Transitions will be made at the beginning of either the fall or spring semester or the beginning of summer. With any change of classroom teacher and environment, our focus is to help ensure a smooth transition for both the child who is moving up and the children who will welcome him or her to their room. The age ranges listed in the previous sections for each classroom are simply guides; teachers, Center personnel, and parents will confer on a child's developmental readiness, age, and the classroom dynamics when determining the best time for a move.

### **Lab School Program (2 years 9 months - 5 years)**

The multi-age Lab School Program is a half-day preschool program, licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and operates during the academic year. Children enrolled in Extended Care attend Lab School Monday through Thursday mornings during the academic year. Each classroom is directed by a Master teacher, who is assisted by student teachers completing their ECE coursework.

Children enrolled in the Lab School range in age from 2 years 9 months to 5 years. A typical class includes 16 – 20 children with a ratio of one teacher to every five to seven children. Programming is offered Monday through Thursday, with two morning sessions and one afternoon session. Children are enrolled in either a four-day or two-day per week option. The two-day per week option includes Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday. The morning sessions meet from 8:45–11:30, and the afternoon session is held from 1:00–3:45. Please refer to the Lab School handbook for more information on this program.

## **Approach to Discipline: Positive Guidance**

As with other areas of development, discipline is viewed as an individual growth process and learning opportunity. Our staff's primary goals are to help keep all children safe from harm, to help teach them respect for their and others' belongings, and to guide each child toward a positive sense of self and others. Teachers will set logical limits for children by explaining and modeling those limits as well as by working with each child to achieve self control and responsibility in a natural way.

If a child has a conflict or problem with others, they will be encouraged to verbalize their anger or concerns, talk through the problem, and try to find a reasonable solution. Our staff will, at all times, do their best to be consistent, patient, and firm when helping a child in this learning process. It is our belief that when a child learns over time that the expectations for behavior and action are reasonable, they develop a sense of security, stability, and trust between themselves

and their care-givers. This holds true for even the youngest children. When an infant without verbal skills hears their care-giver describing a problem and talking through the solution, they begin to understand logical solutions. Only in extreme circumstances (i.e., when a child is emotionally out of control or presents a threat to other children) will the child be separated from the situation in order to regain self-control. Under no circumstances will any child be verbally shamed, humiliated, or frightened. If a child engages in aggressive behavior in a persistent manner, the parents, teachers and Director will meet to discuss the situation and to create a plan that encourages consistency between home and the Center.

## **Yearly Calendar**

The Early Learning Center is open Monday-Friday from 7:30 a.m.- 5:30 p.m., 12 months a year with the exception of the following days:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the Friday following Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day
- The week between Christmas and New Year's Day
- 2 full day closings for staff in-service training
- 2 half day closings for staff in-service training

Calendars will be provided with the actual dates the Center is closed each year. If you did not receive one, please pick one up from the office, or download from the web site. Please make a personal note of these days so you will have adequate time to find alternate childcare if necessary. **Please also note that a full week of tuition will be charged for any week where a holiday or in-service day occurs, with the exception of the week between Christmas and New Year's Day.**

## **Health Issues**

At the Early Learning Center, your child's health and safety is our first priority, therefore we work with parents to promote and maintain healthy children. Please note the following guidelines as provided by the Department of Public Welfare (DPW) to ensure the well-being of all enrolled children.

### **Health Appraisals**

Every child must have a current documented health appraisal on file at the Center. Health Assessment forms are available in the office. These assessments must be conducted by a physician or CRNP and must include a review of the child's immunization status. All special needs must be fully documented and explained to the director and your child's teacher. Forms are to be updated at the following ages:

- 2 months     4 months     6 months     9 months     12 months     15 months  
 18 months     24 months     3 years     4 years     7 years     8 years

### **Safe Sleep Policy**

The following guidelines are followed to reduce SIDS risk factors, as suggested by the American Academy of Pediatrics:

- Sleeping children will be monitored.
- Babies are always put to sleep on their backs. Babies who can turn over are allowed to adopt whatever position they prefer.
- A physician's note is required for non-back sleepers. A copy will be kept in the child's file and a copy posted on the child's crib.
- Babies' cribs will be free of toys, stuffed animals, and excess bedding.
- Babies under approx. 6 months (depending on developmental readiness) may not use a blanket in the crib.

### **Medication**

We encourage you to administer your child's medication before arriving at the Center if possible, however, if medication needs to be given at school, please notify the office and complete the medicine log form. Early Learning Center staff will administer medications to your child according to the following criteria:

- All medication must be in its original packaging.
- All medication must have written instructions for use on the packaging.
- In order for a child under two to be given non-prescription medication which states, "For children under two years of age consult a physician," a physician's directions, written on a prescription pad, must be given
- All prescription medication must include the child's name on the label
- Parents must indicate the following information on the medicine log located in the office: child's name, date, name of medication, dosage, times to be administered, need for refrigeration, parent's signature. Upon administering medication, staff will sign the medicine log.

If your child takes daily medication for a chronic condition, you may elect to have a separate medicine log kept expressly for your child. On this log, you would indicate all pertinent information and the period of time for which it is to be administered. You will need to update this personal log as your child's medical needs change. Upon daily administering of the medication, a staff member will sign that log. This option will eliminate the need for you to fill out a medicine log every day. You may discuss this further with your child's teacher.

For children with special health needs (including asthma and allergies), the health record on file must include an additional section from your child's physician, describing the chronic illness, what teachers need to watch for, and what to do for the child routinely and when the child has a problem.

### **Ill Children**

We want to provide a learning environment that fosters safety and well-being. There are several reasons for a sick child to be excluded from a classroom setting. The first is to prevent the spread of any communicable disease or infection to other children or teachers. Another reason is to ensure that the child receives adequate rest and attention. Therefore please do not bring your child to the Early Learning Center if:

- ✓ your child has a fever of 100 degrees or higher,
- ✓ your child has an unexplained rash,
- ✓ your child has persistent diarrhea (diarrhea not contained in the diaper) or vomiting, or
- ✓ your child has a contagious disease or condition including, but not limited to:

pink-eye (conjunctivitis) - until 24 hours after treatment is started if discharge is thick and yellow

chicken pox - until 6 days after the last blister appears

lice or scabies - until 24 hours after treatment is started and infestation is eliminated

strep throat - until 24 hours after antibiotic is started

hand, foot, and mouth (coxsackievirus) - until 24 hours after fever is gone and your doctor advises your child's return to school.

If your child must stay home due to a contagious disease, please contact the office so that we may update our confidential illness log for reference by parents and staff. If your child begins to exhibit symptoms of any illness or condition noted above, a staff member will contact you immediately to pick up your child. If you cannot be reached, a person designated by you as an emergency contact will be called. Please be aware that tuition will not be reimbursed for days missed due to illness.

If your child is sent home for illness, they must be kept home for the entire next day and be symptom free for a 24-hour period before being re-admitted. Giving your child Tylenol or a fever reducer in the morning before coming to the Center is not acceptable and only temporarily masks symptoms. Please understand that this policy is in place to protect the health of all children enrolled.

We believe that daily outdoor play-time and exploration is a vital part of the early childhood program when weather permits. When your child is dropped off for care, it is assumed that they will be able to participate in all activities. If your child is unable to spend brief periods of time outdoors due to illness, we believe they are too ill to come to school. It is not possible for us to leave one child indoors while the rest of the class is outside.

### **Accidents/Injuries/Emergency Situations**

Although every attempt is made to keep children safe, young children do suffer minor injuries. Tripping and stumbling are usually the main culprits, but occasionally another child is the cause of the injury. Children from 12-30 months are especially prone to shoving, hitting, and biting, as they are not yet cognizant of the consequences of their actions or fully able to handle situations

in nonaggressive ways. Any time a child is significantly injured while at the Center, a staff member will complete an incident report, detailing the accident or injury, its treatment, and measures to avoid recurrence. Parents will be asked to sign the report, acknowledging their notification of the injury.

Upon a child's admission to the ELC, a parent must complete and sign an emergency contact/informed consent form. If an emergency occurs, the child's parent will be contacted as soon as possible. A staff member will stay with the child at all times until a parent arrives. If necessary, emergency first aid/CPR will be administered with parental consent. You may discuss this further with your child's teacher.

Monthly evacuation drills are held at the Early Learning Center in order for staff and children to practice exiting the building in case of an emergency. A detailed emergency evacuation plan is posted in the office for your reference. The teachers are trained yearly in fire safety, emergency preparedness, first aid, and infant/child and adult CPR.

### **Snacks and Meals**

Providing children with nutritious meals and snacks is very important and we want to work together with you to help your child develop healthy eating habits. In all programs, the Early Learning Center will provide nutritious morning and afternoon snacks, with 100% fruit juice, milk, or water available whenever the child is thirsty throughout the day. If you bring another drink for your child due to personal or dietary needs, please bring enough for the day in a labeled container. In addition, for children in the Family Grouping room, please send in two labeled sippy cups if your child uses them. Parents of infants are responsible for bringing all their child's nutritional needs, including formula and baby food, in labeled containers. All other parents are responsible to bring their child's daily lunch. Each room has access to a refrigerator and microwave to store and prepare meals. Please be sure all containers are labeled and brought in a paper bag or other container with a label. The ELC reserves the right to label any unlabeled items brought from home. When preparing your child's lunch or other daily nutritional needs, please remember that we cannot save and serve for a second time food or drink from a container (including sippy cups and bottles) from which your child has eaten or drank. Upon arrival at the Center in the morning, your child's lunch bag should be placed in the classroom refrigerator. When appropriate, you may feel free to send along a special snack or birthday treat. If you wish to do this, we ask that you speak with your child's teacher several days in advance and ask about any food allergies within the classroom.

## **Tuition Policies**

### **Registration Fees**

A non-refundable registration fee of \$40.00 will be charged each year for each child enrolling. This fee can be paid with confirmation from us that a space is available for your child. At this time, enrollment paperwork will also be provided for you to complete prior to your child's attendance. Please do not send the registration fee until we have informed you that space is available.

### **Payment Schedule**

Payments are to be made at the Early Learning Center office once a month for the upcoming

month of care. Payment can be made either the first business day of each month or the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month depending on your personal preference. Checks may be made out to the **Early Learning Center** and dropped off at the office with the administrative assistant or in the locked box near the office door. A \$25.00 fee will be charged for any returned check.

### **Late Payment Fee**

A grace period of one week will be granted for late tuition payments. On the Friday ending that week, a late fee of \$25.00 will be added to your bill if the payment is not received. If late payments become a consistent problem, a payment plan can be arranged to assist you. If it is still a problem, your child may be withdrawn from enrollment and no longer offered services.

### **Discounts**

When siblings are enrolled, a 5% discount will be deducted from the oldest child's tuition rate.

### **Late Pick-up Fee & Policy**

Please make every effort to be at the Center by 5:15 p.m. so that you are able to talk with your child's care-giver and gather his or her belongings by the 5:30 p.m. closing time. If you know you will be later than 5:30 p.m., please call to alert the staff. If you are not at the Center by 5:30 p.m. an initial \$5.00 late fee will be charged. At 5:35 p.m., we will call you and/or your emergency contact person to pick up your child if you have not given the Center notice of your delay. Beginning at 5:35 p.m. an additional \$5.00 will be charged for each subsequent five-minute interval.

### **Withdrawal Notice**

Notice of a child's withdrawal from the Early Learning Center must be made in writing to the Center Director at least two weeks in advance. Tuition is required for these two weeks, even if the child is not in attendance.

## **General Policies & Procedures**

### **Enrollment**

Applications for enrollment are accepted at any time. If no openings are available, applications will automatically be added to the waiting list. First priority for enrollment is given to siblings of previous or currently enrolled children. Other vacancies will then be offered to those who have applied according to the date the application was first received, considering a reasonable balance of ages and schedule requests. The Center's minimum enrollment is two full days or five consecutive half days per week.

Prior to enrollment, parents and children are scheduled to visit the Center to gain an understanding of the program and to meet the staff. In order to comply with the Department of Public Welfare, each child's file must include a completed Emergency Contact/ Parental Consent Form, an Agreement, and a Child Health Assessment before a child may be officially enrolled. These forms may be obtained from the Early Learning Center office.

### **Trial Period**

This three-month period is an initial time for parents, children, and staff to get acquainted and to

determine if the child's needs are being met. It is our goal to do our very best to serve you and your child. This time exists to mutually determine if the child would be better served in a different setting. If at any point during your child's tenure at the Early Learning Center serious concerns arise concerning his or her suitability for a childcare setting, teachers and/or administrative personnel will work with you and your child towards a developmentally appropriate solution.

### **Grievance Policy and Procedures**

We encourage our staff and parents to practice what we encourage children to do: to talk through conflicts with the person directly involved. If further action is necessary, then go to that person's supervisor. If this is still not satisfactory, please bring your concern to the Director. The Director reports to the Dean of the School of Education and Social Science at Messiah College.

### **Periodic Records Review**

State regulations require that the Emergency Contact/Parental Consent Form and the Agreement be reviewed and updated every six months or as changes occur. In order to comply with these regulations and to keep the lines of communication open, please contact the office with any changes in family, medical, or contact information as soon as possible to update your child's file. If your child's enrollment changes, we will update your Agreement to have you sign and review it. Your child's most recent Health Assessment (following the schedule on page 7) needs to be brought in as soon after their scheduled appointment as possible. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated in helping to maintain our records for your child.

### **Inclement Weather**

As part of the Messiah College community, we follow the College's decisions regarding cancellations, delayed openings, and early dismissals in response to weather conditions and other emergencies. When the decision has been made to alter the College's schedule, the Center's hours are adjusted accordingly. If the decision is made to close early, your child's teacher or office personnel will contact you. If you cannot be reached, we will call your emergency contact person. The most current weather-related information is announced on the campus emergency information line at 691-6084. Information specific to the Early Learning Center will be recorded on the office answering machine at 796-5043. Please check this number in addition to the College hotline.

### **Transportation & Field Trips**

Daily transportation is not provided for children enrolled in the Early Learning Center. However, with parental permission the Extended Care and Lab School programs will occasionally plan an off-campus field trip using College vans as the primary means of transportation. Written notice of such trips will be provided in advance with a permission slip indicating parental consent. Parents must provide labeled child safety seats the day of the trip.

### **Clothing/Sunscreen**

Your child should be dressed in comfortable clothing, suited to play activities as well as weather conditions. Occasionally, a child will soil his/her clothes while participating in an art project or experimenting at the water table. Be sure to keep a set of labeled, size and season appropriate

clothing in your child's cubby at all times for such emergencies.

Daily outdoor time is planned 12 months a year. As the weather changes and grows cooler, please send your child in appropriate clothing and footwear. Keep in mind that all removable clothing must be labeled. The ELC reserves the right to label any unlabeled items brought from home.

Likewise, as the spring and summer sun grows stronger and jackets are put away, please send in a bottle of labeled sunscreen for your child. Parents are asked to apply sunscreen in the morning; Center staff will add a re-application before afternoon outdoor time. Staff will only apply sunscreen to your child when you provide it and sign the sunscreen permission form provided by your child's teacher.

### **Housekeeping Issues**

Each child's lunch bag and leftovers must be taken home daily. Bedding will be used for one week if possible, and then returned home for laundering each Friday. In the case of an accident, bedding and clothes will be sent home that day to be laundered and returned the following day. You may also want to send in a photo of your family, a special security toy or blanket, etc. to make the transition between home and childcare easier.

### **Drop-off and Pick-up**

Parents or guardians must accompany children into the classroom each day to sign in upon arrival. A parent or guardian must also sign children out of the classroom at the end of each day. If staff members do not recognize a parent or guardian, they will ask to see identification before releasing a child. If an adult other than a child's parent/guardian will be picking up the child, the Center must receive written permission from the child's parent/guardian and photo identification will be required.

If a child will be arriving more than fifteen minutes earlier than usual, or leaving more than fifteen minutes later than usual, advance notice is requested. This information is important for staffing purposes as well as classroom activities. Please make every effort to pick up your child by 5:15 p.m. to allow ample time for communication before the 5:30 p.m. closing time.

### **After-hours Care**

We realize that parents' work schedules sometimes necessitate after-hours care. If a staff member agrees to watch children of the Center, we prefer that they not watch children whom they directly teach or care for at the Center. Arrangements for after-hours care may not be made during the staff member's workday. Additionally, a staff member may not be listed as a family's emergency contact person nor are they permitted to pick up or drop off children at the Center.

### **Classroom Scheduling**

Each classroom will have a daily schedule posted for parents to review. An activity plan or lesson plan will also be posted so parents can see what activities their child will be involved in during the week.

### **Home/School Communication**

Maintaining a strong bond between home and school is a vital part of any successful early

childhood program, therefore daily notes will be sent home in the Family Grouping room, in addition to newsletters and notices for all programs on a regular basis. Parents of children attending Lab School and Extended care will receive weekly notes from the Lab School teachers in their child's communication notebook. The Extended care teachers will write daily happenings on the classroom whiteboard. Please read this information carefully and share relevant information and upcoming events with your child.

Teachers and staff can be reached directly in their classrooms by dialing the College's automated line and the classroom's extension listed on the first page of this handbook. In addition, parent conferences will be scheduled throughout the year to discuss your child's growth experiences and any questions or concerns you or the staff may have.

### **Parent Involvement and Responsibilities**

Parents are encouraged to spend a few minutes at either drop-off or pick-up time to talk with the staff to relay important information or to hear about your child's day. Daily communication is essential in avoiding misunderstandings and unanswered questions. Parents are also invited to visit and spend time with their child at anytime. From time to time, there will be opportunities to participate in special events and programs as well. If a parent wishes to take a child to lunch or for a walk, they are encouraged to do so. We simply ask that you let us know of your plans that day in case we plan an activity outside the classroom. Any parent removing a child from our care needs to sign out, and upon return, sign the child back in.

We also ask parents to closely monitor what children bring to school. We ask that children not bring toys from home (especially those of violence), candy, gum, soda, money, or coins. We also request that children be sent to school in comfortable clothing and shoes that will accommodate active play (no flimsy shoes or flip-flops please).

As our program philosophy states, "We are committed to you as a family and will strive to work in partnership with you to meet the needs of your child. We believe and will respect the fact that parents are the most significant providers of care and nurture in a child's life. We are honored to serve as an extension of that care."

## **Questions & Notes**