

Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to assist Early Childhood students in their daily work at the Center. Please feel free to contribute your suggestions and ideas and to ask questions about any areas that may not appear clear. Your input is welcome.

Please read this handbook carefully. You are responsible for the information contained inside. You will need to complete a form at the end of this handbook which states that you have read, understand, and will be held responsible for all policies and procedures.

Karen Sanders
Director

Important Phone Numbers

Main Office	535-2299
Karen Sanders, Director	535-2838

***Voice mail is active at all times when the Center is closed.**

CYCF Website Address: www.plymouth.edu/services/cycf

The Plymouth State University Center for Young Children and Families is licensed by the State of New Hampshire and is accredited by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. This national accreditation recognizes and honors early childhood programs of high quality. Only seven percent of programs nationwide have achieved this honor. The Center for Young Children and Families (CYCF) is part of the Plymouth State University Department of Early Childhood Studies and is viewed as an academic laboratory program for Plymouth State students.

MISSION

The mission of the Center for Young Children and Families is to provide a high quality early childhood program to young children and their families. A high quality program is identified by its ability to offer comprehensive learning experiences through a planned environment. The center is not a “day care” in the traditional sense of the idea. Child

care is only one component of the program. Within the Center environment, the developmental needs of children are planned for in a consistent and secure setting offering developmentally appropriate practices. As part of the Department of Early Childhood at Plymouth State University, the Center is a model early childhood program for the education of students in the field of early childhood studies.

PHILOSOPHY

The Center for Young Children and Families offers developmentally-based programs that focus on the needs of the whole child—physical, emotional, social, cognitive, and familial. All staff members recognize the importance of teacher-child interactions and strive to establish and maintain warm and trusting relationships with children and their families. Activities and routines at the Center are based on sound developmental practices and build on children’s natural curiosity and problem-solving abilities. Children participate in many play and language activities and have the opportunities to work and play in small and large groups and individually. Our child-centered philosophy reflects an understanding of the needs of young children in a complex society. Our program seeks to serve all children, including young children with disabilities.

The Center for Young Children and Families offers four programs for children ranging in age from approximately 13 months – 4 years 10 months (as of August 31): Toddler, Early Preschool, Preschool, and PreK. Please review the descriptions and goals of each program, included at the end of this handbook.

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**Plymouth State University Center for Young Children and Families
Administration and Staff**

Karen Sanders, M.Ed.	Director
Wendy Hartke, M.Ed.	Facilitating Teacher
Meredith Leighton, B.S.	Early Childhood Teacher II
Kayla Roper, B.S.	Early Childhood Teacher II
Carly Roy, B.S.	Early Childhood Teacher I
Natalka Sywenkyj, B.S.	Early Childhood Teacher I
Amanda Myles, B.S.	Early Childhood Teacher
Marcia Huckins	Assistant Teacher
Francis "Grant" McKinnon	Early Childhood Fellow 2015-2016

*Plymouth State University Student Classroom Assistants
Plymouth State University Early Childhood Students*

Early Childhood Committee

Patricia Cantor, Ed.D.	Professor of Early Childhood
Mary Cornish Ph.D.	Professor of Early Childhood & EC Dept. Chair
Elisabeth Johnston, Ph.D.	Assistant Professor of Early Childhood
Meagan Shedd, Ph.D.	Assistant Professor of Early Childhood

Donald Birx	President of Plymouth State University
Julie Bernier	Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Gail Mears	Dean of the College of Education, Health and Human Services

Plymouth State Students and the CYCF

The students who work at the Center for Young Children and Families are considered an important part of our staff. Some have had many experiences working with children, others are new to the field, but all are expected to have one quality in common—a commitment to children. The Center staff value the contributions of student classroom aides and early childhood students. Students are expected to understand the extent of their responsibilities and to ask a staff member or the Director for clarification if necessary.

Early Childhood Practicum Students are regarded as part of the teaching team in a classroom. This is the equivalent of a student teaching experience for them. Practicum students meet together in weekly seminars and are invited to attend teachers' meetings when they can. Practicum students will work with a Mentor Educator in the classroom and will be supervised by the Center Director, Facilitating Teacher, or an Early Childhood Department Faculty member.

The Center is host to many students throughout the year on many different kinds of assignments. **Students** from the **“Preschool and Kindergarten Curriculum and Instruction”** and **“The Project Approach”** classes will be at the Center Monday – Friday mornings on a regular basis. Students from other classes will visit the Center for a one-time observation or activity or for a longer-term assignment, individually or as part of a class. Other visitors to the Center may include prospective Plymouth State students and their parents.

We ask that you be patient with all visitors to the Center and provide them with any help they need. The Center is an important part of the academic experience for many students, particularly Early Childhood students, and we wish them to feel as welcome as possible.

Before you begin. . .

APPROPRIATE APPAREL

People who work with children know that their day consists of many different activities ranging from art projects to outside play. All staff members, including students, should be dressed comfortably, yet appropriately, for participating in diverse activities with children, meeting the public, and supervising the playground in all seasons.

Please use your judgment and dress professionally. Baseball caps or similar hats should not be worn indoors. Shorts are appropriate for warm weather, but please wear shorts that allow you to sit on the floor comfortably and modestly. Be sure to always have appropriate footwear for playground conditions.

Early Childhood students and are expected not to wear yoga pants, leggings or sweat pants. EC students are considered to be student teachers and should dress accordingly. We suggest EC students model their dress after the regular staff.

Nametags must be worn at all times when you are in a classroom.

CPR and FIRST AID

All staff members are CPR and First Aid certified. **Students are not responsible for administering First Aid or CPR.**

CRIMINAL RECORD CHECK

All EC students are required to complete a fingerprint/criminal record check. **This must be completed before your first day at the Center. You cannot work with the children before this is completed.** Information about the fingerprinting should have already been given to you, if you have been registered for a practicum at the Center. If you have not received it, contact the Director immediately.

PHYSICAL

A physical, completed within the last two years, is required to be on file at the Center before you begin working. Please contact the Center if you need a form.

PARKING

Unfortunately, there are no parking arrangements at the Center for students. You must park in your regular parking area on campus. If you park on Cummings Street or in the hospital lot across the street from the Center, you will get a parking ticket from the town of Plymouth and may very well have your car towed.

Staff and students should not park in the front driveway, in the Visitor space, or in the Handicapped space (unless you are permitted by law).

ABSENCES AND LATENESS

Working with groups of children makes you vulnerable to some of the illnesses that sweep through the Center. You can help yourself stay healthy by eating properly, sleeping properly, and washing your hands frequently during the course of the day.

If you do become ill, please use good judgment about whether to come to work. If you must be out due to illness, please call the Center directly to report an absence. **All absences, whether regular staff, student classroom aides, or Early Childhood students should be reported to the office immediately at 535-2299. You must call, do not email this information.** The Center answering machine is on at all times, so messages may be left in the evening.

All staff members and students are expected to be “on the floor” at the time that they are scheduled to begin to work. Lateness seriously affects the staffing in the room and impacts negatively on the other staff and children.

Early Childhood students will be required to make up any time they miss. Please be sure these arrangements are made with your Mentor Educator.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Spaces have been designated upstairs for the storage of personal belongings of Early Childhood students and student classroom aides. Please do not bring your belongings (such as coats, bags, or backpacks) in the classrooms, unless specifically asked to do so by the classroom teacher. Any students who will be going outside during their time in the classroom should bring their jacket to the classroom and ask the staff for an appropriate place to keep it.

The Center is not responsible for the loss or theft of any personal items. Please be sure to store your belongings carefully.

COMMUNICATION

Good, clear communication among colleagues is essential to keep the Center functioning smoothly. In our hectic daily environment, this goal can be difficult to accomplish. Staff and students are asked to consider the following suggestions for effective communication with each other.

- __Set aside regular meeting times for program teams and for teachers
- __Establish and communicate clear expectations
- __Deal with issues directly if possible, talking with the individual involved rather than discussing with others.
- __Write down messages for colleagues. Forgotten messages can create bad feelings and even problems if important information about a child is not communicated.
- __If you have questions about your responsibilities, please speak with the

Mentor Educator immediately.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is crucial at all times if we are to establish and maintain trusting relationships with children and families. Protecting children's and family's rights is an essential responsibility for all staff and students and is taken very seriously at the Center. ***Discussion of Center children and families with non-staff members outside the Center is a breach of confidentiality and may be grounds for dismissal.***

The information in the children's files should be read only by the teaching team in each program. These files are kept upstairs in file cabinets. File contents are confidential and may not be removed from the building.

It is important that all parent questions about a child's behavior or other issues regarding a specific program be directed to the appropriate teacher. It is every staff member's responsibility to direct parents to the appropriate person. If you have a concern about a child, please share it with the Director.

As part of our confidentiality policy, parents' wishes regarding videotaping or photographing their child must be respected. Parents communicate their wishes on the blanket permission forms filed at the beginning of the school year. Parents or others who wish to come in to videotape or photograph their child's class should be asked to speak with the teacher first.

Staff members should not give parents the phone numbers or addresses or last names of other children or parents. If a parent wishes to contact another family, he or she may leave a written note in the family's Center mailbox.

The privacy of staff members, including student classroom aides and Early Childhood students, will be respected as well. Parents often ask for telephone numbers of students for babysitting purposes. We do not release student telephone numbers, but will instead pass along written messages to students so that they may choose whether to respond to the request.

NOTE: In custody disputes, staff members may be asked to talk with a Guardian Ad Litem or an attorney. If this happens, please discuss immediately with the Director.

Daily Routines. . .

RESPONSIBILITIES AND SUPERVISION

Early Childhood students are responsible to any staff member or substitute wearing a green nametag. Any questions about students' roles and responsibilities should be directed to a staff member or the Director. ***It is not the student's responsibility to handle family questions or concerns. These should be directed to the teacher in the classroom.***

Staff members are expected to involve student classroom aides and Practicum students in the daily routine and activities of the classroom and to establish and communicate clear expectations for them. Practicum students should be regarded as part of the teaching team.

All staff members, student classroom aides, and Practicum students are expected to wear name tags at all times.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

- You are part of the teaching staff of the program. We depend on you. Punctuality is your professional responsibility. Absences are only accepted for illness or family emergencies. **If you must be absent, you must notify the Center office at 535-2299 and your Mentor Educator as soon as possible so that we may find a substitute for you.**
- You will be actively involved with children and materials both indoors and outdoors. Please dress appropriately (casual clothes for activities, hat, mittens, and boots in winter). You will go outdoors with children in all weather. It's easier to enjoy activities with children when you are not concerned about your clothes or comfort.
- We will share personal information about children, families, and ourselves. Respecting confidentiality is your professional responsibility.
- You will be involved in: planning, set-up, activity supervision, clean-up, outdoor play supervision, appearance of the Center, guidance and discipline, preparing and cleaning up snack, dressing, seminars, parent interaction and communication, and other tasks as requested by your Mentor Educator.
- You will be part of a teaching team including professional staff and university students. We need to be supportive of each other and responsible to the team. We all have different backgrounds. Each contributes to other's learning and growth. Teamwork is your professional responsibility.
- **Don't be surprised if you feel confused and overwhelmed at first. Part of growing is trying things. We all learn through our experiences—some experiences are more successful than others. We expect you to take initiative, make mistakes, ask questions, be enthusiastic and demonstrate a positive attitude and a willingness to learn!**
- Self-reflection and feedback are important components of your professional growth and experience. Your Mentor Educator and faculty supervisor will give you ongoing written and verbal feedback. If you feel you need more feedback than what you are receiving, please do not be afraid to ask for it.

Guidelines for University Students at the CYCF

- All adult conversation will be pertinent to your work with the children. Please avoid socializing. Direct your attention to the children.
- Conversation about children happens in seminar and meetings with your team only. While with children, talk to them, not about them! You should only talk about the children with your teaching team, not with people outside the Center.
- There is no chewing gum, food or beverages allowed in the classroom (except water or if you are here for lunch time).
- Arrive Promptly.
- If you will be absent, call the Center as soon as you know you will not make your regular shift.
- Be a participant observer. Be involved with children and be observant of what is going on throughout the program. Sit on the floor or chairs. Tables and other furniture are for children's activities.
- Always wear your nametag while in the Center.

GREETING CHILDREN

All Children and parents should be greeted upon their arrival and acknowledged when they leave. Each classroom staff will decide how this will be handled. A friendly greeting and a welcoming smile can make a big difference in a child and families' day. At no time should a child and parent arrive without someone acknowledging their presence. Staff members, including students, should make an effort to help the child become engaged in the classroom routine before the parent leaves.

Families may have important information about a child's day that should be communicated to staff members who work later in the day. Please write the information down and make sure it is passed on to appropriate others.

At times, families may wish to have an in-depth discussion regarding their child during arrival and departure. Please be mindful that your primary responsibility at this time is to be with the children. Let families know that what they want to discuss is important to you and ask if you can set up a separate meeting time or arrange to call them during your planning time.

Responsibilities During Small Group Time

- Activity areas will be chosen/assigned—a week in advance during your meeting with your Mentor Educator.
- Learn where materials for activities are stored. Do not be afraid to ask for help if you need it, but plan ahead, don't wait until right before your activity.
- Try to tie activity ideas to ongoing curriculum and developmental levels.
- Set up your activity. All materials must be ready when children come into the area.
- Be sure the appropriate number of children are in the activity area. Each child needs adequate space and materials to have a successful experience.
- Try to help as many children participate in an activity as possible without setting rigid limits.
- Encourage children and enjoy the activity with them. Talk with them, listen to them, and ask them about what they are doing. Try not to ask them questions to which you already know the answer to. Ask them questions to encourage their thinking and problem-solving. While doing creative activities, when appropriate ask children: "Tell me about that" rather than "What is that?" Participate with the children but let them do their own activity. Do not draw with or for children. Encourage each child's creativity.
- Children need to help clean-up the activity area. All materials that were taken out need to be put away in their proper places or set aside in a designated area until you have the chance to return the materials to their correct spots (ie: if something goes on the collage cart, in the kitchen, another classroom, or upstairs). Children and adults need to be respectful of the materials and put them away in a manner that is respectful and aesthetically pleasing.
- Your enthusiasm and active facilitation will support children's participation.
- If you have done something with the children that you would like to share, please ask your Mentor Educator about making a display.
- Preparing/cleaning up snack responsibility may be assigned on a rotating basis.

SNACKS AND LUNCHES

It is very important that staff members sit down to eat with the children. Please plan your lunch and snack times so that at least one staff member is always sitting with the children. Please remember you are a model during this time and follow guidelines given to families for meal times. Please try to include healthy choices and do not include candy or soda.

Please be sure that you know about any food allergies of children in your program

Children are not allowed to share food due to food allergies and family food preferences. Children are not told what to eat at lunch (ie. You can't say eat your

sandwich first) but are encouraged to make good, healthy choices and eat a balanced meal.

We welcome you to bring water bottles into the classroom. If you would like to bring coffee, please be sure that it is in an appropriate container. Remember that if you use these in the classroom, you must follow the same guidelines as the children for consuming food and liquid (sitting at a table, etc).

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

- Introduce yourself. Smile and be friendly. Wear a nametag.
- Try to attend open houses, family meetings, and social events as another way of getting to know families.
- Discuss something positive that happened during the day about their child. Share positive anecdotes about their child. These can be written as well as verbal.
- **The discussion of children’s development, social relationships, accidents or difficult times is the responsibility of the professional staff. Please refer families to supervising teachers if they have questions or concerns.**
- Be cordial and communicate with all families. Keep trying! Don’t give up – parents are people too; some are shy, some are outgoing, and some are in between – just like you.

CHILDREN’S HEALTH

Children attending the program are expected to be able to participate comfortably in all components of the day, both indoors and outdoors. *The general rule is that if a child is well enough to come to the Center, he/she is well enough to go outside; HOWEVER, exceptions to that rule are made in cases where parents or teachers have good reasons for not wanting a child to go outside that day (for example, in the case of a child with weather-triggered asthma).*

WHEN A CHILD BECOMES ILL AT THE CENTER

If you suspect that a child is ill, please notify the teacher in the classroom at once. **Only the teacher should take the responsibility of calling a family to send a child home.**

ALLERGIES

Some children at the Center have allergies and cannot eat certain foods. Families have documented this information on their child’s entrance forms. Please make sure you are familiar with any dietary restrictions. If you have any allergies please be sure that your classroom team is aware so that we can be helpful in an emergency.

Some children and staff members are allergic to various perfumes, hairsprays, and air fresheners. Please use these items sparingly, if at all, at the Center.

It is Center policy that lotions and sprays—such as diaper rash ointment, insect repellent, or sunscreen—can **only** be applied if the item has been sent in by the child’s families and is labeled with the child’s name. Many children are allergic to these items. For that reason, **these items should only be applied by regular staff (not students), and the child’s reaction to the lotion or spray should be carefully monitored.**

CHILDREN’S COMFORT

Be as sensitive as possible to children’s comfort level, indoors and outdoors. *In general, Center policy is to have the children wear the indoor and outdoor clothing that was sent in with them by their parents that morning; HOWEVER, teachers must use their judgment to decide whether the child’s clothing is appropriate for prevailing weather conditions.* Please be especially sensitive to this during our New England falls and springs, when mornings may be much cooler than the afternoon.

Please be sure that children drink plenty of fluids, all day, indoors and out. Water should **always** be available to the children.

MEDICATIONS

As stated in the Family Handbook, **only prescription medication can be administered at the Center**, and only with signed permission from the parent. It is Center policy that we **do not administer non-prescription drugs or medication to children.**

Only the professional staff may administer medication to children. Students are NEVER responsible for administering medication.

OTHER HEALTH NOTES

Please read the section of this handbook on Universal Health Precautions very carefully.

If you suspect child abuse or neglect, immediately report your suspicions to your Mentor Educator or the director.

CONTROLLING THE SPREAD OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE

All staff working at the CYCF must practice appropriate health precautions when serving food, changing diapers, assisting children with injuries which involve open wounds, and assisting children with toileting. Good hygiene practices should be modeled by staff and students at all times.

Remember that frequent and thorough handwashing is the first line of defense against infectious disease.

Periodically wiping toys down with a bleach solution or putting them through the sanitizer is required of all programs. Please do not put toys with sand in the sanitizer and be sure that items have been rinsed thoroughly, especially if you are putting items that held paint in the sanitizer. Tables and mats are also to be cleaned daily with a cleaning solution provided by the physical plant. Please check with the lead teacher in your classroom regarding the cleaning routine.

Student classroom aides and Early Childhood students may NOT administer first aid, even something as simple as applying a Band-Aid to a scraped knee. ONLY staff members administer first aid. EC students are encouraged to watch as first aid is applied, so that they can learn through observation.

Please read the following section on Universal Health Precautions very carefully. Be sure you understand the sections that apply to you as a staff member, student classroom aide, or Practicum student. Students are NOT involved in any diapering, toileting, cleaning up bodily fluids, or administering first aid; however, they should be aware of effective methods of handwashing and know when handwashing is appropriate.

Universal Health Precautions And Methods of Controlling the Spread of Infectious Disease

All staff working at the CYCF must practice appropriate health precautions when changing diapers, dealing with tears, saliva, or nasal discharge, assisting injured children who have incurred open wounds, and assisting children with toileting, in order to protect ourselves and the children from infectious diseases, including all forms of Hepatitis and human immunodeficiency viruses. Universal Health Precautions dictate that we treat all blood and other bodily fluids as potentially capable of transmitting these and other pathogens. We are therefore obligated to exercise the following precautions:

Staff and Students:

1. Handwashing with friction is the best method of disease control. The steps for effective handwashing are posted in each bathroom. All staff must wash their hands in each of the following circumstances (starred items refer to student classroom aides and Practicum students):
 - *--before and after your shift
 - *--before and after eating, handling food, or feeding children
 - *--after using the bathroom
 - *--after cleaning soiled areas and equipment
 - *--after wiping your nose or a child's nose, or after coughing or sneezing into your hand
 - before and after handling children's injuries
 - after changing a child's diaper or assisting in toileting

--after coming in contact with bodily fluids (including urine, feces, nasal discharge saliva, vomit, and blood)

2. Staff are expected to wear latex gloves in the following circumstances:

--on both hands before any diaper change. It is mandatory that gloves be changed, hands washed, and diaper table sprayed down between successive diaper changes.

--when attending to cuts, scrapes, and other open wounds

--when assisting with bloody noses and other blood spills

--when assisting a child with toileting

--when cleaning up vomit, urine, or other bodily fluids

Latex gloves are located in each classroom and in the children's bathrooms. Staff members are expected to carry a pair or two in their apron for emergencies. Students should not be involved in any incident that would require them to wear latex gloves.

3. Dispose of contaminated gloves, diapers, paper products, etc. as follows:

--Soiled diapers are to be placed inside gloves (with gloves turned inside out over diapers) or in a plastic bag and disposed of immediately in the appropriate receptacle. Never use hands to open receptacles.

--Blood-contaminated gauze, paper products, etc. should be either pulled inside gloves or placed in a plastic bag before being disposed of in the appropriate receptacle.

--Blood, urine, or feces-soiled clothing and accessories must be placed in a plastic bag and returned to the child's cubby. Soiled clothing may not be washed at the Center.

4. Staff are advised to wear clean aprons daily. Aprons should be washed at the Center

5. For staff and Practicum students:

When a child is observed putting a toy in his/her mouth, or sneezing or coughing on it, remove the toy and replace it with another. Then wash your hands immediately. Be sure you know where to put soiled toys so that they can be cleaned and sanitized later. Each classroom will designate a place for toys to be cleaned.

The toy will need to be sanitized before it can be returned to the classroom for children's use. Periodically wiping toys down with a bleach solution or running them through the sanitizer is required of all programs. Each room should devise a

cleaning procedure. Before toys are packed away for the summer, or before they are unpacked at the beginning of the school year, they must be sanitized.

6. The use of resuscitation mouthpieces is mandated for any resuscitation. Do not use direct mouth-to-mouth contact. Resuscitation mouthpieces are located in the First Aid backpack found in each classroom. Only staff members will be involved in emergencies requiring resuscitation
7. Sleeping mats must be sanitized daily with bleach/water solution and air-dried. Mats should be stored with the sides that come in contact with the floor touching each other (green side out).

Children:

1. Handwashing is necessary:
 - before and after eating
 - before and after use of the water/sensory table
 - after outside play
 - after wiping own nose
 - after toileting/diapering
 - before and after participating in cooking activities
 - after contamination with any bodily fluids

Please recognize that children may need help and supervision while washing their hands. For handwashing to be effective, soap must be used and friction applied for 15 seconds.

2. All injuries resulting in potential skin breaks (bites, scrapes, etc.) should be washed with antibacterial soap and water by a staff member.

LANGUAGE

How you talk with children is very important. A vital part of your role is to model appropriate language and encourage the child's language development. When you engage in conversation or talk with the children, you are helping them to learn how to interact with other people and how to express their thoughts and emotions.

Points to remember when working with children of any age:

- Use respectful and courteous language with the children and with other staff members
- Avoid referring to the children as “you guys”. This is a tough habit to break, but if you are conscious of it you will use it less. “Boys and girls”, “friends”, or “okay, everyone” will work just as well to get the children to pay attention.
- Take care with your pronunciation (watch for “gonna” or “wanna”)
- Use specific and precise language to help children develop a rich vocabulary of words they can understand and say. For example, rather than asking a child to “Please give me that one over there,” you can ask, “Please give me the big red truck with the yellow wheels.”
- Encourage children to experiment and play around with oral language, just as you encourage them to experiment with drawing and writing. Sing songs, recite rhymes, tell jokes, and share long or silly words that you think they might enjoy.
- Be patient with the children and give them time to say what they need to say, rather than finishing sentences for them or immediately responding to their nonverbal cues.
- Address all children and adults by name. This is a sign of respect and helps the children learn and recognize each others' names. Try not to refer to children just as “honey,” “sweetie,” etc.
- When we tell children to “use your words” to resolve a conflict, please keep in mind that they may not know what words to use. It is more helpful to model the language that would be appropriate in the situation.

DISCIPLINE

At the Center, we understand discipline to mean helping children to learn acceptable behavior. We believe that children begin to learn self-discipline, or how to guide their own behavior, when they are treated with respect. We do not use the same discipline technique in every situation, for we recognize that each child and each situation is unique. Still, all staff members at the Center recognize and follow certain general discipline techniques, as endorsed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. These discipline guidelines are to be followed by all staff and students. It is the responsibility of classroom staff to make sure that student classroom aides and Practicum students understand and follow the guidelines.

- Setting clear, consistent, and fair guidelines for classroom behavior, and reminding children of these guidelines when necessary.
- Listening carefully to what children have to say about their feelings.
- Regarding mistakes as opportunities for learning.
- Helping children to develop the skills to solve their own conflicts.
- Modeling appropriate and respectful treatment of people and materials.
- Redirecting the children to a more acceptable behavior or activity.

In the case of inappropriate behavior, a staff member would first try to determine what happened, and then use his/her professional judgment to decide how best to handle the situation. Children are encouraged to talk about what is bothering them, and staff members try to involve children in resolving conflicts. Staff members also try to encourage the children to see each other's point of view, which is a first step in developing empathy, an important prosocial behavior.

The Center does not use a "time out" chair or area. On occasion, a child may be redirected away from a group or activity, but this is not used as a punishment. Instead, an attempt is made to change the situation that is leading to the inappropriate behavior.

Staff members are strongly encouraged to be "reflective practitioners": that is, to think about what they do. This is especially important because we serve as models for the college students at the Center. In addition to dealing with discipline in terms of handling inappropriate behaviors of individual children, we need to consider our overall classroom management strategies. The way a program or activity is structured can have a major impact on how the children behave. **In cases of inappropriate behavior, staff members need to evaluate whether their own teaching styles or techniques are a contributing factor and to consider whether the program or activity could be designed in a way that would encourage more prosocial behavior.** Reflective

teaching should be discussed with and modeled for student classroom aides and Practicum students.

Staff members are expected to be respectful in their dealings with each other, with parents, and with the children.

The following actions will not be used at the Center under any circumstances: hitting, yelling, criticizing, threatening, or making hurtful or sarcastic comments. Hitting or threatening to hit a child is grounds for immediate dismissal. Withdrawing food from a child, refusing to give a child snack or lunch, or denying a child outdoor time are not acceptable forms of discipline.

VIDEO WATCHING

Videos should only be shown to children to supplement the curriculum and must be approved by the Mentor Educator.

When showing a video, follow these guidelines:

- *Do not show a video you have not already seen.*
- Leave some lights on in the room. Watching a television screen in a dark room is not good for children's eyes
- Do not insist on absolute silence, and do not constantly shush the children or allow them to shush each other. Research shows that children derive the most benefit from television programs and videos if an adult watches with them and discusses the content with them while they are viewing or immediately after.
- Other activities, such as table blocks, puzzles, or art materials, must be available in the classroom where the video is being shown, so that children who do not care to watch may choose to do something else. These other activities should be supervised.
- Staff members and students should be with the children while videos are being shown, either watching the video or supervising other activities. They should not be chatting or reading.

PLAYGROUND SUPERVISION

Playground safety is a major priority at the Center. The playground is physically as safe as we can make it, but staff members and students must continue to be vigilant during playground time. *Strong staff supervision is crucial for playground safety.* This means that:

- At least one student or staff member should be stationed at each piece of major equipment to serve as a spotter or facilitator. There should also be one person stationed in or behind the house structure. **THIS IS ESSENTIAL.** Please be sure that each teaching team agrees on a system for supervising children on the equipment during playground time. Student classroom aides and Practicum students should be advised of the system, and all adults should follow it. Please be sure to guide students to more beneficial placements on the playground.
- Students should not be left in charge on the playground. At least one staff member should be out on the playground at all times, and an adequate staff-child ratio must be maintained at all times.
- Staff members handling playground accidents should follow standard First Aid procedures and the Universal Health Precautions outlined in this handbook. If you are the only staff member on the playground during an accident, please go to the Preschool door or the Early Preschool door and ask for assistance. Please do not leave a student in charge of the playground or to take care of the accident.
- Keep in mind that children have different levels of tolerance for hot or cold weather and watch all children carefully. In hot weather, monitor the children carefully and make sure they drink plenty of liquids. This is important for preventing heat-related illnesses. Watch for hot, red, dry skin. In cold weather, staff should be alert to signs of cold-weather injuries such as “frost nip.”
- Try to limit discussion on the playground with other staff members or with parents. While some conversation is necessary, if you feel you need to engage in a longer discussion, get someone else to take your place at your station. Parents who seek spur-of-the-moment conferences on the playground should be encouraged to set up a separate meeting time.
- Please do not sit on tabletops or stand on tableseats, and do not allow the children to sit or stand on tables.
- While on the playground, you are expected to be standing at a piece of equipment or moving around with the children. You should not be sitting down unless engaged in conversation with a child or group of children, or unless sitting is a better way to supervise (as at the sandbox). If you are engaged with one child or a small group, please be sure to be scanning other areas of the playground.

- If you notice a hazard on the playground, such as broken glass, or if the children are playing in a potentially dangerous way, redirect the children and explain the hazard. Report any safety hazards to the head teacher immediately.
- Take the children away from the playground immediately if a skunk, raccoon, dog, or cat is on the playground. Report the situation immediately to the head teacher and to the office. Rabies is still widespread in this area.
- All of the equipment, including tricycles, scooters, swings, and slides is designed for children. Please do not use the equipment yourself, as it may break under your weight. You could also be denying a child the use of the equipment while you are on it yourself.

Please read carefully the guidelines posted on the playground for Playground Rules and Powerplay. You are responsible for this information and following through with it. If you have questions, please ask the teachers.

NOTE: Classroom doors to the playground should NOT be left open during the day, whether children are in the classroom or on the playground. While children are on the playground, please make sure classroom doors to the hallway are also closed. Children should not be sent into the building for toileting or other purposes without an adult going with them.

RELEASING CHILDREN

Students DO NOT have the responsibility of making the decision to release a child to someone other than the child's parent or usual pick-up person. If for some reason you are alone in a classroom when a child is to be picked up, please ask them to stay until the classroom teacher or other regular staff member has returned. Students should be advised to consult a staff person immediately if they have any questions or concerns about someone who has come in to pick up a child.

ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES INVOLVING CHILDREN

All accidents must be communicated immediately to the lead teacher. Only teaching staff may administer first aid, not students. Latex gloves must be worn. Accident reports (including Form H if blood is evident) must be filled out and the parent must sign the accident report that day. The accident report should be reviewed by one of the teachers before the family is given it to sign. (See samples of the Accident Report and Form H at the back of this handbook) All signed forms should be given to the Director.

Each room has their own first aid kit, which should be taken on all field trips. Each playground also has its own first aid kit.

In case of a medical emergency that requires you to call an ambulance, emergency telephone numbers and directions to the Center are posted above each telephone.

SEVERE WEATHER POLICY

The Center must follow the University in its closing or delay due to inclement weather. A message will be posted to the outgoing messages on the Center phone as soon as we are aware of the cancellation. It will also be posted on WMUR TV. You may also sign up for the Remind Alert system which will send a text or email to the number or email account you provide. Information on how to sign up will be given early in the semester.

If there is a delayed opening and you are scheduled during the time of the delay, you are expected to show up for the remainder of your shift. For example, if we have a delayed opening until 10am and you usually work 9-12, we expect you to come in 10-12.

Occasionally the Center may delay even if the University has not called a delay. If you notice the weather is questionable, please check the above resources.

FIRE DRILL PROCEDURES

The Center schedules monthly fire drills at different times of day to familiarize staff and children with appropriate procedures. State licensing mandates monthly fire drills. Staff are notified of drills held early in the year in advance and are encouraged to use their judgment as to whether to let children know and how much advance notice to give them. Some children are terrified of the loud fire alarm and need to be introduced to fire drills gently.

Please make sure that your teaching team designates people to carry out responsibilities related to fire drills. Staff who are on break are expected to participate in fire drills. They are asked to check first to see if the Toddler room needs help, and then to help in other programs.

Red fire alarms are located near ALL exits. Be sure that you know how to pull the fire alarm. Fire extinguishers are located

- On the front hallway wall near parent mailboxes
- In the kitchen on the left side of the refrigerator
- In the upstairs conference room
- In the library/room between the Early Preschool and kitchen.

Please familiarize yourself with the location and use of extinguishers.

IN CASE OF A FIRE DRILL/FIRE

- Take the first aid back pack
- Exit children quickly through your fire door (make sure doors to room are closed)

Toddler Room: take the children out the room rear door (playground side) and walk them to the end of the sidewalk in front of the Center (keeping out of the driveway). Follow this procedure also if the children are on the Toddler playground.

Early Preschool: exit children through the playground door and out the sandbox gate and walk them to the sidewalk in front of the Center (keeping out of the driveway). Follow this procedure also if the children are on the playground.

Preschool: exit children through the side door closest to the driveway and walk them on the grass toward the sidewalk in front of the red house. If the children are on the playground, exit through the single gate near the preschool room and walk across the parking lot to the sidewalk in front of the red house.

PreK: exit children through the door closest to the driveway and walk them on the grass toward the sidewalk in front of the building. If the children are on the playground, exit through the single gate near sandbox and walk across the parking lot to the small hill behind the dumpster.

When all children are outside, immediately check attendance and compare it to the attendance sheet.

Do not re-enter the building until clearance is given by the Fire Department. No one may remain inside the building, upstairs or downstairs, during a fire drill.

UNIVERSITY HOLIDAYS

The Center is closed on University-wide holidays

PHONE CALLS

Students should instruct their family and friends NOT to call them at work except in an emergency. Students are not allowed to use the telephone in the main office. If you must make a phone call from the Center, please see the office assistant.

IF YOU ARE INJURED AT WORK

Please notify the Office Assistant immediately if you have an accident or are injured while at work. This applies to staff and students alike. Paperwork needs to be processed through the Human Resources Office within 24-hours. See the Office

Assistant immediately after the accident or injury and before you leave the Center to arrange the paperwork.

DAYS OFF POLICY

For planned days off:

- Clear your request for a day off through the Mentor Educator as soon as you can before the day off. Please put your request in writing.

For unplanned days off:

Opening Shift:

- If you know the night before that you will be out the next day, call the Center and Leave a message in the office to indicate that you will be out.
- If you do not know until the morning that you will be out, please call the Center as soon as possible.

In General:

- Make sure that the office knows that you will be out. It is the Program Assistant's responsibility to notify the Director about who is out for unplanned absences. If you are not at the Center for one of your regularly scheduled times, it is the responsibility of the Program Assistant to find a replacement for you.

SICK DAYS

EC students should call the Center and speak with their Mentor Educator directly, if possible. EC students are required to make up any time they miss.

