Welcome to NIU Campus Child Care (CCC). Listed below are the names and titles of the professional staff at the center. We also supplement our program each semester with Student Workers, Interns, and Volunteers.

Parents are responsible for reading and becoming familiar with all of the enclosed material. Feel free to talk with us and ask questions at any time.

Campus Child Care Center . . . 815-753-0125
Fax ........................................ 815-753-8502

Chris Kipp . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Director
Lisa Schmidt . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Assistant Director
Janene Boyer . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Office Manager

**Teachers**
- Jamie Peterson & Kellie Fuss
- Carol Schroeder & Sherie Newman
- Dawn Reader & Kathy Coffman
- Kendra Nenia & Jennifer Young
- Barbara Zeman & Diane Coleman
- Diane Mathison & Pam Yockey
- Kristin Schulz & Kristi Hayward
- Stefanie Echols & April Kaiser
- TBA

**Classroom**
- Infant
- Toddler
- 2/3’s-1
- 2/3’s-2
- Preschool 1
- Preschool 2
- Preschool 3
- Preschool 4
- Summer School-Age

Visit us at our Web site (www.ccc.niu.edu) for more information and lots of photos

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PROGRAM ORIENTATION

MISSION AND PURPOSE

NIU Campus Child Care exists to provide high quality care and education to children of NIU students, faculty, staff, and the surrounding community. Children ages 2 months through 5 years (6-8 years during the summer) participate in the program. Priority for enrollment is given to student families, and community enrollment is limited to the preschool classrooms.

The program is licensed by the state of Illinois. The program is also accredited by the NAEYC Academy for Early Childhood Program Accreditation, which serves as an indicator of a high quality program. Classrooms are staffed with degreed teachers and trained student workers. The program seeks to meet the individual needs of children and families within a safe, nurturing, and richly diverse environment. CCC sees itself as an integral part of the university, supporting parents in their effort to work and attend school at NIU.

ACCREDITATION

You have chosen a program for your child this is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. NAEYC administers the largest and most widely recognized accreditation system for all types of early childhood programs and child care centers. NAEYC is the nation’s largest organization of early childhood educators.

What is Accreditation? Early childhood programs accredited by the NAEYC Academy for Early Childhood Program Accreditation have voluntarily undergone a comprehensive process of internal self-study and improvement. Each NAEYC-accredited program must meet all 10 of the NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards. For more information about the standards and NAEYC Accreditation, visit www.rightchoiceforkids.org.

What is a high-quality early childhood program? High-quality programs provide a safe and nurturing environment while promoting the development of young children. NAEYC-accredited programs show their quality by meeting the 10 NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards, which are based on the latest research on the education and development of young children. All NAEYC-accredited programs must

1. Promote positive relationships for all children and adults.
2. Implement a curriculum that fosters all areas of child development – cognitive, emotional, language, physical, and social.
3. Use developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate and effective teaching approaches.
4. Provide ongoing assessments of child progress.
5. Promote the nutrition and health of children and staff.
6. Employ and support qualified teaching staff.
7. Establish and maintain collaborative relationships with families.
8. Establish and maintain relationships with and use resources of the community.
9. Provide a safe and healthy physical environment.
10. Implement strong program management policies that result in high-quality service.
LICENSING
The center is licensed to provide services to children ages 2 months - 8 years through the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. This agency regulates the care we provide and reviews our program through unannounced visits and regularly scheduled re-licensing visits. We are required to meet their standards for staffing, discipline, health, safety, curriculum, equipment and materials, nutrition, transportation, records, and reports.

PHILOSOPHY AND CURRICULUM
It is the intention of the center to provide an informal atmosphere and a child-oriented, developmentally appropriate curriculum where children learn through play and the exploration of their environment. Children have the opportunity to become independent and successful in this educational environment, begin to successfully solve problems, and learn to express their ideas and feelings.

The National Academy of Early Childhood Programs (our accrediting body) advocates activities for children to be developmentally appropriate. These activities promote success for the child because they are geared to developmental stage and individual ability and interest. **Children’s play is the essential component of a developmentally appropriate curriculum.**

The teachers will observe and assess the children's play on a regular basis. This is an essential tool in planning curriculum, arranging the classroom environment, selecting the activities to be offered, and providing the appropriate props. Curriculum is what happens in the educational environment – not what is planned to happen but what actually takes place when all players are present. **Learning is not imposed on the child,** rather, it is what takes place naturally in an environment that offers a choice of activities created with children’s needs in mind. Early childhood curriculum arises from the children’s individual and collective interests, actions, questions, and manipulations of the environment. When curriculum works, it is a carefully orchestrated moment by the ‘set designer,’ an unplanned event instead of a scripted scene envisioned by a meticulous teacher.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY
Our program philosophy is based on the premise that children learn about the world around them through play (active involvement with other children, adults, and materials).

Children need years of experience with real objects and events before they are ready to understand the meaning of symbols such as letters and numbers. Learning takes place as young children touch, manipulate, and experiment, with things and interact with people. The teachers’ role is to create an environment that supports the ideas and experiences of children and invites them to observe, be active, make choices, and experiment. Children spontaneously engage in activities such as block building, painting, or dramatic play, adding pieces of information to what they already know and thereby generating new understandings. Children learn simple concepts and then use these concepts to grasp more complex ideas (the building blocks of learning).
Play is an active form of learning that unites the mind, body and spirit.

Because our program is designed to maximize individual development and promote developmentally appropriate practices, our activities focus on the process of learning. Therefore, the emphasis is on the experiences of the children rather than the results of those experiences. For example, painting is more important than what has been painted; building with blocks is more important than what is built. Each child has his or her own set of possibilities and we help those possibilities unfold. Days are filled with planned and spontaneous moments of learning. There is time allowed for active outdoor play, imaginative games, independent discovery, and group activities.

**STEPS IN THE FOUNDATION TO LIFELONG LEARNING**

The premise of the Early Childhood Education philosophy is to acknowledge the value of a strong foundation to early learning. Our program philosophy is strongly embedded in the belief that we, as early childhood educators, must lay a foundation that fosters a child’s ‘love of learning,’ rather than to ‘teach’ specific academic skills. This early childhood philosophy includes several steps that, if accomplished with enduring quality, will strengthen one’s ability to acquire the necessary skills for lifelong learning. *How* a child acquires these skills (i.e., basic skills) is also important to the early childhood philosophy. The six main steps/stages are listed and defined below.

**Trust**
Developing trust in those around us is the basis of all relationships. A child’s first group experience is often the initial try at trusting adults other than the parent. Trust is based in security, protection (without overprotection), and unconditional regard and acceptance.

**Self-Value**
Building a strong sense of self-identity strengthens the desire to belong to the group experience. Feeling valued and worthwhile increases self-confidence, and, as a result, develops social skills. Feeling positively about oneself is a necessary step to facilitate pro-social behavior.

**Self-Control**
The third step in building the strong foundation of early experiences is to recognize our ability to control our own behavior – that is, we can make decisions that affect our behavior. The goal of this emotional control is our ability to discipline ourselves through *intrinsic* motivation as compared to extrinsic control. Assisting the child to problem-solve, adjust to social experiences, encourage independence, decision making, and cooperation enables the child to gain mastery in understanding emotional responses.

**Learning Tools**
Our ability to feel accepted and secure, possess a strong self-value, ability to problem solve, and make decisions about our own behavior lends easy access to acquiring sound learning skills or learning tools. These dispositions facilitate the innate necessities to go on learning. We seldom learn these skills through drill and rote, yet they are essential to the satisfaction gained through learning. To develop an understanding of language, to be curious, to listen to others, to persist at a task until completed, to concentrate, all will help us learn. To share time and materials, to gain confidence, to comprehend meaning, all are useful in this process. To discover, be inventive, express ourselves, be humorous, be resourceful, all are skills necessary to the ambience of learning.

**Basic Skills**
Basic skills are the immediate forerunners to academic learning. Pre-reading, pre-math, and pre-printing provide us with the information required to read, compute, and write. These skills are learned as a result of consistency, rote, and drill. It is difficult to separate these units of actions from the disposition to learn as they seem to occur simultaneously. For example, you can learn the words to a song through
repetition, but you cannot learn to like to sing in the same way. You can learn the words in a book, but wanting to read is different. Learning to write requires a love of written expression, which cannot be learned through repetitiously printing letters.

The attitudes and interests of the adults in a child’s life charge the environment from which the modeling of learning skills or dispositions originates. This natural acquisition emanates from the relationships that have developed in the building of the foundation of early human experience. Through the vehicle of play, these avenues of learning are illuminated, strengthening social skills and language as voracious ingredients to the process.

**Lifelong Learning**

The cycle of these early childhood experiences can be reaffirmed throughout life. Academic educational opportunity is less complex, more successful, and satisfying with the strength of early education firmly in place. If teachers and parents share this philosophy, the relationship existing between them is sustained.

**Why Are These Steps So Important?**

These steps are all interrelated, building on the step before. Each level of the ladder of learning must be completed with a certain amount of success. Children need to develop a sense of trust in order to develop relationships. To strengthen a sense of self-identity, an individual must feel valued, accepted, and worthwhile by others. This can only occur when trust has been established. Academic learning cannot take place successfully unless a child has acquired some learning tools and emotional control, which is difficult if self-esteem is low. Without listening skills, concentration, and self-discipline, academic learning becomes a struggle.

Early Childhood Educators, together with parents, can guide the young child through each step on the ladder of learning, beginning with trust and continuing with broadening of language and basic skills. At this last level, children should have the skills and confidence to advance to academic learning associated with formal education.

“Early childhood education means empowering children through knowledge, skills, and social values to develop capabilities of reasoning and judgment necessary to live in harmony with him/herself, the family and the immediate and global community.”

- Barbara Elliot

BELIEF STATEMENTS

We believe it is important to:

1. Provide for the health, safety and well being of children and families.
2. Provide a developmentally appropriate environment that allows children the opportunity to enhance their social, emotional, physical and cognitive growth.
3. Respect the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual child, family and colleague. Celebrate and embrace all families.
4. Promote pro-social behavior, nonviolence and conflict resolution.
5. Respect diversity and promote gender equality.
6. Work in partnership with parents, communicating regularly to bring greater consistency between home, center and school.
7. Commit to play a role in public policy regarding issues of care and education.
8. Commit to a philosophy of lifelong learning and maintaining a standard of excellence.

WELCOMING ALL FAMILIES

All families are welcome and celebrated in our program. We define families as those who are committed to each other over the lifetime of the child. For special events, we extend invitations to all who would like to attend. Some families are made up of two moms, two dads, one mom, one dad, mom and dad, siblings, cousins, grandparent(s), foster parents, aunts/uncles, etc. We make no assumptions about whom a child lives, who they love, and who loves them. We welcome all families. Also, within the classrooms, teachers will discuss all types of families, and not just the traditional mom-dad-child structure.

STAFFING

Our center is staffed by professionals and NIU students with varying degrees of education and experience. All of the teachers have either a bachelor’s or associate’s degree in early childhood education or a related field. Student workers, interns, and volunteers supplement the staffing and assist the head staff with the implementation of the program. All staff receive training previous to employment as well as on-going training to develop and strengthen their skills. Most of the professional staff is certified in CPR and First Aid.

Children learn best in open-ended explorations when teachers help them make connections.

Our typical teacher-child ratio is 1:8 for school-age, 1:6 for preschool, 1:4 for two year olds, and 1:3 for infants and toddlers.

PRIMARY CAREGIVING

Primary Caregiving ensures that every child has a “special” person and every parent has a primary contact. The head and assistant teachers in each room will divide the group of children (theoretically, not literally) so each child has a primary caregiver. This person forms a caring, nurturing, and responsive relationship with your child. In the classroom s/he will be the “expert” on your child, knowing pertinent information like your child’s individual schedule, developmental abilities, special needs, sleeping habits, and individual interests. This teacher will also evaluate your child’s development and hold parent conferences with you.
Keep in mind, however, that “primary” does not mean exclusive. Children should not become completely dependent on the presence of one person. The other staff in the classroom will also develop a relationship and interact with your child as s/he explores the learning environment.

MOVING UP TO A NEW AGE GROUP

Children in the Infant, Toddler, and 2/3’s classroom ‘move up’ to the next age group at the beginning of summer or fall semester. We try to move groups of children together and, if possible, we move one of the teachers with the group. The infants all stay together when moving to the Toddler room, but the toddlers are split between two classrooms and the 2/3’s are split between four preschool classrooms. In an effort to ease the transition process, we will always make sure each child moves with a small group of friends and/or with a familiar teacher.

Most of the preschool children will remain in their current classroom, although a child may be moved to another room based on the request of a parent or recommendation of a staff member.

DAILY SCHEDULE

The center is open Monday through Friday from 7:15 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. Some children attend during the semesters while others attend year-round. See ‘Interim Care’ under the Enrollment / Billing section for more information regarding year-round child care.

Approximate Schedule for Toddlers and Twos:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:15 – 8:45</td>
<td>Classroom Exploration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:45 – 9:00</td>
<td>Group Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 – 9:30</td>
<td>Snack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30 – 10:00</td>
<td>Transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00- 10:45</td>
<td>Outdoor / Large Motor Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45- 11:15</td>
<td>Transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15-11:30</td>
<td>Group Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30-12:00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00-12:30</td>
<td>Transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30-2:30</td>
<td>Nap Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:45-3:00</td>
<td>Group Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00 – 3:30</td>
<td>Snack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30 – 5:45</td>
<td>Classroom Exploration / Playground</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Approximate Schedule for Preschool:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:15 – 9:15</td>
<td>Classroom Exploration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:15 – 9:30</td>
<td>Group Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30 – 10:00</td>
<td>Snack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00-11:00</td>
<td>Classroom Exploration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00- 11:45</td>
<td>Outdoor / Large Motor Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45-12:00</td>
<td>Group Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00-12:30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30 – 1:00</td>
<td>Transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 – 3:00</td>
<td>Nap Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:15 – 3:30</td>
<td>Group Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30 – 4:00</td>
<td>Snack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00-5:45</td>
<td>Classroom Exploration / Playground</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Children MUST arrive by the designated time to be served snack/lunch. An automatic fee of $5.00 will be assessed any time a child is served a meal during a time s/he is not scheduled.

**REST TIME**

All children are required to rest on a cot from 1:00 – 2:00 (12:30 – 2:00 in the Toddler & 2/3’s room). We make every effort possible to provide an environment that is quiet enough for those who need to nap yet not too restrictive for those who do not. When staffing allows, children who are awake at 2:00 will go outside or to the large motor room while children who have fallen asleep continue to nap. Children will be awakened by 3:00 (2:30 in the Toddler and 2/3’s room).

We will provide a cot sheet and blanket for each child, so parents don’t need to bring anything for naptime. If you wish, you may bring a small pillow or stuffed animal (must be a soft object and be able to fit between the stacked cots) to help your child rest. Please do not bring toys that encourage children to play during rest time. Teachers will monitor all items brought from home to make sure they are appropriate for naptime. Items brought in by parents will be sent home to be washed on a weekly basis; we wash our own cot sheets and blankets.

Teachers assist children in resting by reading stories, providing soothing music, and rubbing backs. Children are not required to sleep, but are expected to rest quietly on their cots during this time.

Please keep in mind that if children are tired, they will fall asleep on their own and we will not wake them or prevent them from sleeping based on the request of a parent. The only thing we can do is to instruct teachers not to rub their back or assist them in falling asleep.

**CENTER CLOSINGS**

The Center is open on all days on which the university is open, with just one exception. CCC is closed on the first Friday of the Fall Interim (in mid-August) for our annual all-day staff training. CCC may also close due to severe weather conditions or problems with the building such as flooding, lack of heat, water, or air conditioning. These types of closings are highly unlikely.

If the entire university closes due to bad weather, this means classes are canceled and ALL offices are closed, including Campus Child Care. Occasionally, classes will be canceled due to bad weather but offices will remain open; CCC will be open when this occurs. If the university closes in the middle of the day, please call the center regarding our status because we may close early.

In addition to listening to the radio, you can check the NIU Web site (www.niu.edu) or call the following numbers to find out the current open/close status of the university. The NIU Weather Status Hotline is: 815-752-OPEN or 888-4NIUOPEN.
PARKING

Parents are responsible for purchasing parking permits at the NIU Campus Parking Services for on-campus parking and must adhere to all policies related to parking. Any problems with parking should be directed to Parking Services.

Parents may use the circle drive in front of the center to drop off and pick up their children. Although a permit is not required to park in this area, the following rules apply:

- **DO NOT** park in the circle drive for more than 30 minutes. This area may **NOT** be used for all-day parking. Any car that is left in this area beyond 30 minutes may be towed.

- You should have your flashers on while you are parked in the circle drive or you may receive a ticket.

- Adhere to the “one way” direction of the circle drive. Park along the north side of the curb so your children do not have to walk through the driveway to enter the car.

- Do not park on both sides of the drive or in such a way that you will block others from getting through.

- **DO NOT** leave your car running. This is an illegal and unsafe practice.

- **DO NOT** park in front of the curb cuts.

- **DO NOT** leave children of any age unattended in the car (this is considered child neglect and our licensing rep. has instructed us to call DCFS if this occurs).

  We expect parents to use the safe practice of placing children in a car seat in the back seat of your car and buckle them in before you leave. Remember, it’s the law!

CARD SWIPE ACCESS

Our facility has a card swipe system at the main entrance to assist us in limiting access to the building. Parents who are students, faculty, or staff will need to obtain an NIU One Card to access the building. Your first card is provided free of charge and can be obtained at the NIU One Card Office in the Holmes Student Center. There is a $15 fee to replace a lost card, and a $5 fee to replace a damaged card.

Parents who don’t work at the university will be issued a “Guest Card” which will work in the same way. Please remember that guest cards must be returned once your child is no longer enrolled in our program. There is a charge of $5.00 for each Guest Card, refundable if returned to the Center in usable condition.

Friends and relatives, or anyone who occasionally drops off or picks up, will have to stop at the window to be ‘buzzed in.’ **Do not** give your card to someone else who is picking up your child. We need to check the identification of anyone who is picking up who may be unfamiliar to us.

It is important to use your One Card or Guest Card to enter the building every day. We understand that you may occasionally forget to bring your card, but also remember that it takes time away from other
tasks when we have to continually let people in. The intent is for all parents to use the card swipe system and we should only have to ‘buzz in’ those who are visitors to the center. For every 3 times within a semester that a parent does not bring their One Card / Guest Card, a charge of $5.00 will be applied to their bill.

Also remember there is no way for the card swipe system to guarantee 100% security for the center. It is possible for people to “tail gate” in (follow someone in), and we cannot monitor the door every time someone enters. For this reason, you need to let others swipe in for themselves – please do not hold the door for them. If you think someone is not a parent here, please advise them to go to the window and talk with our secretary before entering the building.

Adults lay the foundation for reading every day, when they point out objects and describe what they are doing while dressing an infant, grocery shopping, or cooking with a preschooler.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

The center is equipped with observation booths in each classroom. These are available to parents so you can observe your children at any time during the day. When you are observing, please keep in mind you are probably just seeing a ‘glimpse’ of a situation, so feel free to talk with your child’s teacher if you have any questions or concerns regarding your observation.

We try to work cooperatively with several departments on campus whose students need to observe children. For this reason, all children enrolled in our program may be observed by NIU students needing to fulfill classroom assignments. Permission is assumed and observations are considered to be part of our program. To aid in this process we post a picture, first name, and birth date of each child in the classroom. We do not have the ability to instruct students as to who they can and cannot observe. If you have an objection to this, then talk with your child’s teacher about not including your child’s picture in the booth.

Although it is not a regular part of our program, CCC occasionally participates in research projects. Parents will be informed about research projects as they arise and given the option to have their child participate or not. Participation in research is not required.
ENROLLMENT / BILLING POLICIES

ADMISSION PROCEDURES

Parents interested in enrolling their child(ren) for the first time should obtain an application from the enrollment section of the center’s Web site (www.ccc.niu.edu). Applications are posted for the current semester and two months prior to the upcoming semester. After completing the application, it can be submitted via mail, fax, or in person. An application must be submitted for each semester in which child care is desired (they do not carry over from semester to semester).

Currently enrolled families will receive priority. Applications will be placed in parent pockets for the upcoming semester prior to the time when new families can apply.

Enrollment in the infant, toddler, and 2/3’s is limited to the children of NIU students, faculty, and staff. Preschool and summer school-age enrollment is open to community families as long as space is available. Enrollment is secured each semester on a first-come, first-served basis with priority for available spaces given to currently enrolled families. NIU students also receive priority, making up 60% of the center’s enrollment (faculty, staff, and community make up the remaining slots). Enrollment also depends on space availability for a particular age group and the ability to match schedules.

After the applications are received, our office manager will send confirmation packets to applicants stating those hours and days which have been confirmed for child care. If a child is placed on the waiting list for some or all of the desired hours, we will keep parents informed of openings that might occur as those enrolled adjust their schedules. We will also send letters informing those for whom we don’t have space available at this time.

With every new semester a student’s schedule will change and so will the children’s schedules. This means there is a possibility (especially in the Infant and Toddler rooms) that some continuing families may not receive all of their desired hours. Anyone who starts with a very part-time schedule but wishes to expand to full-time may not be able to do so because of space restrictions. When reviewing applications for currently enrolled children, we will give priority to those who wish to continue with full-time care rather than increasing someone from part-time to full-time.

ALL children and parents must visit the center and classroom, and meet the teachers and administrative staff prior to their first day. This ensures a proper transition for each child and allows us to make an initial determination if we feel our program is suitable for the child and family. Parents are encouraged to attend the New Parent Orientation, typically held on the Wednesday or Thursday prior to each semester, if this is not possible, another time must be scheduled by the parent during a mutually agreeable time.

Due to the fact that we enroll so many students in our program who need to change their schedule each semester, every child in our program must be re-enrolled every semester. Please never assume that just because you have full-time care your enrollment is continuous. If we do not receive an application back from you, or a contract, we have to assume you will not be returning for the upcoming semester (which is the case for ~30% of our families).
**Note:** We consider the parent who signs the enrollment forms and with whom we have primary contact as the parent to whom we are accountable. We will not adhere to the requests of a parent with whom we have little contact unless the request is approved by the primary parent. If we are familiar with both parents and there is a disagreement about emergency contact info, who can pick up your child, permission slips, etc., these issues need to be resolved by both parents (or a court order) in order to maintain child care at the center. We cannot be placed in the middle of parental disputes.

**CHILD CARE OPTIONS**

Half and full-day child care is available in every classroom. **Full-day** child care is defined as 5-10 hours of child care, 1-5 days per week.

**Half-day** child care is defined as 3-4.5 hours of child care, 2-5 days per week.

**Minimum enrollment** is 3 hours, 2 days per week (or 1 full day per week). **Maximum enrollment** is 10 hours per day, 5 days per week.

**Enrollment options** (parents may only select from these time frames):

Full-days: 7:15-5:15; 7:30-5:30; 7:45-5:45
Half-days: 7:15-12:00; 8:00-12:30; 8:30-1:00; 9:00-1:30; 9:30-2; 10:00-2:30; 2:00-5:30

All children must arrive at the center by 10:00 each morning. You must receive permission to come in later. This is for the benefit of classroom planning.

**Note:** Infants and toddlers may not be able to enroll at 7:15 am or remain until 5:45 p.m. due to staffing and ratio constraints. Please talk with the office staff if you need these hours.

Our center is open to half-day children **during each 16 week semester** (8 weeks during summer). **Only full-day care is available in between semesters** (Interims).

**EXTRA CHILD CARE** - Although you may not switch your child care hours on any given day, or switch one day for another, you do have the option of requesting additional hours (**‘extra care’**) as needed. These requests will be granted **if space is available** in your child’s classroom. Extra care can be arranged **no more than one week in advance**. If we schedule extra care weeks in advance, it could block someone who may want to add hours on a permanent basis. All extra care hours will be charged at the regular rate plus a 10% administrative fee (i.e., if the regular fee for the hours requested is $26.00, the charge for extra care would be $28.60). The intent of extra care is to provide parents the opportunity to add time that is not typically needed (a one-time meeting or study group). Extra care is **NOT** intended for families to use on a regular basis. If you find this is the case, we ask that you make a permanent schedule change.

**PERMANENT SCHEDULE CHANGE** – Every family will be allowed one schedule change per child per semester; thereafter, an administrative fee of $5.00 per change will be assessed. A request for a permanent schedule change may be made at any time during the semester but a **2-week notice is required**. If additional time is needed (and approved) prior to 2 weeks, extra care will be charged.
Parents may not substitute different hours once a schedule has been established. Each family is responsible for the contracted hours during the semester and will automatically be billed a late fee for any additional time that is used without approval.

**CHANGE IN NIU STATUS**

Parents will need to let us know in the office if your status changes from that of a student or faculty/staff at NIU.

Once an individual is no longer a student or employed as faculty or staff at NIU, we may not be able to continue child care services if your child is enrolled in the Infant, Toddler, or 2/3’s classrooms; this will depend on space availability. Students who have graduated or are no longer attending NIU are welcome to continue their enrollment in the preschool classrooms; the community rate will apply.

At the beginning of each semester, we will verify each parent's student status. If the university does not have you enrolled as a student for the current semester, you will receive a notice and we will automatically bill you at the faculty/staff/community rate.

**INTERIM CHILD CARE**

Child care is available during the Interim periods (between semesters and Spring Break). A separate application will be sent out two months prior to each Interim period. You **must** request interim care to have your child attend during these times. Please keep in mind that **only full-day child care is available during Interim** and the center hours are shortened slightly (7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.).

**Specific schedules are not requested** since we are only providing full-day care; everyone is scheduled 7:30-5:30 during this time. Although you may choose to shorten those hours, everyone will be billed the full-day rate. The extra care rate (additional 10%) will be charged for anyone who submits an application after the enrollment deadline.

Although different classrooms are grouped together during Interims (due to low enrollment in each room), your child’s rate will not change until all of the children ‘move up’ to a new age group at the beginning of Summer or Fall Semester.

**SCHOOL-AGE SUMMER PROGRAM**

School-age summer care is provided during the 8-week summer semester for children ages 6 - 8 years (completed kindergarten – 2nd grade). The enrollment policies are the same for this age group as all others, so please refer to the procedures listed above for more enrollment information.

We realize that school-age children are ‘older’ and they are ready for more challenging activities, so we try hard to meet their needs. Children this age often feel they are too “old” for structured care and no longer want to attend ‘day care’ (after all, babies go here!). There are many school-age programs available in a variety of settings -- ours just happens to be in a child care center. We try to meet both the child’s need for more independence and freedom while also meeting the parent’s need for a safe and secure environment. We don’t allow children to wander around on their own or leave them to their own devices to keep themselves busy. We provide a very busy curriculum along with time for nourishment and rest. Listed below is some
information which will help to give you an idea of what our program has to offer. Feel free to talk with the Director if you would like more information about this program.

Up to 24 children may be enrolled in the school-age program with 3 teachers (8:1 ratio). The Center has a large classroom (1000 square feet) specifically designated for this age group which is set up as a classroom (tables, block area, computers, book area, dramatic play, art area, table games, private bathrooms, etc.).

One of our teachers moves to the school-age room for the summer and works with an assistant teacher and student workers.

The schedule for their day is similar to that of a preschool classroom but includes more structured activities and time to work on some long-term projects. Although a rest time is provided for those who need to nap, those who don’t are provided with alternate activities and are not required to nap.

All of the activities and materials are geared toward the abilities of school-age children. Some examples include: gardening, on-campus field trips and walks, guest speakers, arts and crafts, board games, computer, dramatic play, block play, etc.

**CHILD CARE FEES / BILLING**

We bill parents for child care services **four times per semester** (at the end of 4 wks, 8 wks, 12 wks, and 16 wks). The exact dates will be printed on the semester calendar as well as on your invoice. We upload the fees for student parents to your MyNIU account so you can access them on-line. We will also provide a monthly statement for your convenience. **You must go by our payment deadlines to maintain child care (not the Bursar’s deadline).**

Faculty, staff, and community members will be billed through Accounts Receivable. They send us your monthly invoice and we place this in your parent pocket. All payments must be made to the designated location on your statement, not to our office. We encourage parents to keep their invoices throughout the year. **We do not provide statements regarding your child care expenses for tax purposes – it is up to you to track this.** Our tax number is 36-6008480.

Anyone who misses a child care payment deadline will receive a letter from the director. **If more than one payment is overdue, you will receive a termination notice. All accounts must be paid in full before child care can be secured for a future semester or interim period.** Keep in mind, in order to eliminate a balance due, you may need to go to the Bursar’s Office / Accounts Receivable and request for your payment to go directly toward child care (otherwise, we are considered low priority and the money will go to pay other outstanding debts such as tuition, fees, books, etc.).

Enrollment is secured for the **entire** semester, so you will be billed for the **full** 16 weeks (8 weeks in summer). These weeks will be divided into **four equal payments** (2 in the summer). Parents do not have the option of withdrawing early from a semester unless it is a permanent withdrawal (you are not returning for a future semester). Parents are also responsible for paying fees on the following holidays if it is a regularly scheduled day for your child: Labor Day; Thanksgiving and the day after; Martin Luther King Day; Memorial Day; and the 4th of July. Parents will also be billed for any days in which the university closes for weather or emergency related reasons. We will not charge for the seven day administrative closure during late December and early January, or the Friday in mid-August when we close for staff training.

**Child Care fees are based on enrollment, NOT attendance. Fees MUST be paid whether or not a child is in attendance.** Once a schedule is set for the semester, there are **NO** days on which you do not have to pay for child care (unless you permanently drop hours). Refer to the Web site for current
half and full-day child care rates.

If you have any questions concerning your child care fees or the billing process, please contact our office. If you have questions concerning your MyNIU account, please contact the Bursar's Office.

DCAP
Anyone who is enrolled in a Dependent Care Assistance Program must receive a receipt from the Bursar's Office to verify payment or wait until we receive verification at the end of each month before we can sign off on these forms. **We will not sign off on your reimbursement form for any amount that has not been paid in full.**

ENROLLMENT FEE
A $40.00 **non-refundable** enrollment fee (per child) is charged at the beginning of a child's enrollment ($20 for the summer school-age program). This fee will be billed to your NIU account upon receipt of your signed semester contract. **IF THE SIGNED CONTRACT IS NOT RETURNED BY THE SPECIFIED DUE DATE, YOUR CHILD WILL NOT BE ENROLLED FOR THAT SEMESTER.**

This charge is per child and is a one-time fee unless a child withdraws during a semester or does not return at the beginning of the semester immediately following enrollment. For example, if a child attends during the fall semester and does not re-enroll until the next fall semester (skipping spring semester), another registration fee will be charged. Summer is the only semester that can be omitted without having to pay another fee.

LATE FEES
The hours that you have contracted for child care are the hours in which your child(ren) should be in attendance at the center. The staff is scheduled according to the children's schedules throughout the day. Dropping your child off prior to your scheduled time or picking up later can significantly disrupt our group size and teacher/child ratios.

**Late fees will be applied to anyone exceeding their scheduled hours.** Anytime you are late picking up your child (or early dropping off) without prior approval from the office, a **$5.00/15 min.** fee will be charged; **$10.00/15 minute** will be charged after 5:45 p.m. No exceptions to this fee will be granted. **Late pick-up times will be determined according to the digital clocks within the building, not according to personal watches.** When scheduling care, it is important to allow adequate time before and after class, to drop off and pick up your child. If, for any reason, you need to drop your child off **later than** their scheduled time or pick up **early**, you should just inform one of the teachers. We are not as concerned about this since it does not have a negative impact on our group size and teacher/child ratios. **All children need to arrive by 10:00 a.m. each day.**

BUZZ-IN FEE
For every 3 times within a semester that a parent does not bring their One Card / Guest Card, a charge of **$5.00** will be applied to their bill. The administrative staff has many tasks and buzzing parents in is not considered one of them.
SICK POLICY (PAYMENT)

We understand that children become ill on occasion and will be unable to attend the center on those days. Although we can sympathize with your situation, please keep in mind that we are a business and cannot afford to waive fees for days on which your child does not attend. We do, however, have a payment policy which takes into consideration a child who is seriously ill and is therefore unable to attend the center for an extended period of time. We understand this does not take into consideration ALL potential emergency situations families may encounter (death of a family member, travel plans, maternity leaves, parent’s illness, etc.), but we urge parents to make appropriate decisions which may include either paying to save your child’s space during an absence or withdrawing from the program.

If a child is seriously ill and cannot attend the center (per doctor’s written orders) for more than one consecutive week, the following payment policy will apply:

- Week 1 – 100% of regular fee is charged
- Week 2&3 – 50% of regular fee is charged
- Week 4 – 100% of regular fee is charged

In order to be eligible for a reduced rate for weeks 2 & 3 of a child’s serious illness, the parent MUST provide us with a note from the attending physician stating the child’s condition and when s/he will be able to return to the center. If a parent chooses to keep a child out for an extended period beyond the doctor’s recommendation, you will have to decide whether to pay full price to save your child’s space or withdrawing from the program.

NOTIFICATION OF WITHDRAWAL

If you have been accepted into our program and choose to withdraw prior to the beginning of the semester, you MUST notify the office at by the designated deadline stated in the contract letter (4-5 weeks prior to the first day of the semester). If you miss this deadline, you will be billed for the first two weeks of child care based on the schedule on your signed contract.

If you completely withdraw from our program anytime during the semester or decide to decrease your child’s schedule, a two-week notice is required. You will be charged child care fees for the two weeks of care whether or not your child is in attendance. After a withdrawal, you may submit an application for a future semester but you will NOT receive priority as a currently enrolled family and you will also have to pay another enrollment fee/child. This policy applies to the Summer session, as well as Fall and Spring semesters.

NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCES

We appreciate a phone call (815-753-0125) when children will be absent from the center so that we can better plan for the daily program. If your child is absent due to a communicable illness, we need to know so we can inform other families (i.e., flu, thrush, strep throat, ringworm, etc.). All children need to arrive by 10:00 a.m. each day.
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE & CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES

Parents needing financial assistance should talk with the secretary or director about available funding and eligibility requirements.

Several funding sources are available to families with limited incomes. If you believe you may be eligible for a child care subsidy, please see the director for more information. We will refer you to the appropriate agency (4-C) and they will determine your eligibility based on family size, work schedule, and income. (Funding is typically available for low-income, single parents.)

Those who are receiving a state subsidy must adhere to all rules established by the center and the Illinois Dept. of Human Services. Parents need to make sure paper work is completed in a timely manner and deadlines cannot be missed. If we provide any child care that was not approved by the subsidy program, the parent(s) will be responsible for paying the regular rate for child care. You are also obligated to pay for months in which your child attended zero days because the state will not reimburse us unless your child attends for at least one day during the month. Anyone with poor attendance will be dropped from the subsidy program because this negatively affects our reimbursement. You must also make your subsidy caseworker aware of any changes in your class or work schedule, as this will affect your eligibility for child care and payments. Again, parents are responsible to pay for any scheduled child care that is not approved and covered by the state.

SCHOLARSHIPS / GRANTS

Anne Kaplan Scholarship

A special fund has been established to assist single parent(s) in paying for child care. The Anne Kaplan Fund was established in 2000 and will provide up to $1,000 in aid each year to one or more eligible applicants.

Eligible applicant must be currently enrolled student at NIU, attending NIU Campus Child Care, and nearing the completion of a degree (preferably senior status). Applicants must also be a single parent. Preference is given to female students for whom the cost of on-campus child care represents a significant hardship. Preference will also be given to students who are not eligible for other forms of child care assistance or subsidies.

Letters inviting parents to apply will go out at the beginning of each fall semester, and the scholarship will be awarded for the following spring semester. Feel free to see the director for more information regarding this scholarship fund.

TERMINATION OF CHILD CARE

CCC reserves the right to discontinue child care if we decide that either the center, child, or family is not benefiting from the arrangement. Child care may be terminated for the following reasons:

1 – If a child’s behavior indicates s/he is not adjusting to the program, has needs the program cannot fill or accommodate, or is detrimental to the functioning of the class as a whole. Staff members will consult with staff, parents, and professionals in order to determine if the child would be better served by another program. If it is determined the center cannot serve the child’s needs, or if a child significantly disrupts the program for other children, parents will be given two weeks to find alternate child care.
2 – If a parent or guardian exhibits behavior that is detrimental to the health and well-being of the children or staff in a classroom, or negatively interferes with the normal functioning of the classroom, s/he will be given one week’s notice and asked to find alternate child care services. In an instance in which a parent (or other adult) is deemed verbally or physically hostile or abusive, exhibits erratic behavior, or is considered to pose a potential threat to others, child care may be terminated immediately. The center reserves the right to take measures to maintain a harmonious and safe center environment. Campus police, DCFS, and Legal Services will be contacted as necessary in such instances.

Parents are expected to inform us of any situation in which they feel their child or family may be threatened in any way (i.e., domestic violence). The center administration may consult with other professionals (NIU lawyer and police) to determine if we are able to keep a child in our program due to a potentially threatening situation.

3 – Failure of a parent to abide by center policies and procedures may result in the parent’s being asked to find alternate child care. Disregard of center policies and procedures might include, but are not limited to: delinquent payments; leaving a child past closing time; leaving a child unattended; endangering the well-being and safety of children; parents’ reluctance to provide information or seek assistance for their child; failure to comply with agreed upon plan of action relating to child’s behavior; failure to submit or update medical forms; arriving or departing with a child while under the influence of substances that leave the parent incapable of safely caring for a child.

Although we pride ourselves on serving a diverse population of children and families, with a wide variety of needs, we cannot maintain enrollment for a child or family who requires more time and attention than we are reasonably able to give. Although some children may require extra time and attention on occasion, we cannot continue to provide care for a child who is unable to function within the routine of the classroom, and within the stated ratio. Some examples include a child who needs persistent one-on-one, displays chronic aggressive behavior (beyond what is typical), cannot manage transitions or the daily routine, cannot function or behave appropriately in a social setting.

We understand that, as a parent, you are concerned about the welfare of your child but, as a center, we need to be concerned with the welfare of all children enrolled in our program. Be assured, however, that it is NOT our goal to exclude children and families from our program. On the contrary, it is our goal to work with families to provide the best possible care for your child.

There are many times when a parent may decide another child’s behavior is inappropriate and warrants dismissal. We want to be clear that there is a range of behavior for children of all ages that although not acceptable (biting, hitting, use of profanity, etc.), may be developmental and manageable within our setting. The center’s professional staff will make the determination if a child’s behavior is beyond this developmental range to the extent we feel we are not able to successfully work with him/her.
HEALTH AND SAFETY

MEDICAL EXAM AND IMMUNIZATIONS

Campus Child Care requires children enrolled in our program to have a physical examination signed by a physician, as well as a TB skin test within six months prior to enrollment. An up-to-date record of immunizations is also required. A medical form with all of the above information MUST be on file before a child will be allowed to attend the center. The physical examination must be renewed every two years and immunizations must be kept current.

ILLNESS

Please keep your child at home if s/he has been ill during the night or in the morning and has active symptoms as listed below. A child will likewise be sent home from the center when exhibiting the following symptoms:

- Fever (oral temperature of 101 degrees or above) accompanied by behavior changes or other symptoms
- Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness (lethargy; uncontrolled coughing, persistent crying; difficulty breathing; wheezing)
- Diarrhea – defined by more watery stools, not associated with changes of diet or medicine, that is not contained by the child’s ability to use the toilet
- Undiagnosed skin rash
- Vomiting (2 or more times within 24 hours)
- Persistent abdominal pain
- Mouth sores with drooling
- Rash with fever or behavior change
- Head lice (from the end of the day until after the first treatment)
- Strep throat or other streptococcal infection, until 24 hours after initial antibiotic treatment and cessation of fever
- Chicken Pox, until all sores have dried and crusted
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment
- Scabies, until after treatment has been completed
- Any communicable illness

It is not our intent to allow children who are truly sick to stay at the center, but it is also not our intent to exclude children who are only mildly ill. We are relying on parents to make good decisions regarding your child’s health, so please don’t send them to the center if they are sick. The staff will assess and monitor the health of all children in the program and will need to decide if a child is too ill to attend. Please provide the teachers with accurate information about your child’s health so they can make the best decision for the welfare of your child as well as of the other children in the program.

We understand it can often be difficult to determine the seriousness of the situation when a child is not feeling well. We tend to look for signs of a child getting better versus feeling worse. We encourage you to consult with your physician as well as CCC staff to help you determine if your child is too sick to attend. Every situation is different, but we will use the following criteria to determine if a child needs to be excluded:
1. The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in our daily routine and activities.

2. The illness results in a greater need for care than the child care staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children.

3. A fever is accompanied by any of the symptoms or conditions previously listed.

4. The child’s condition is determined (by our nurse or the child’s physician) to be contagious.

Please keep in mind that children should not be given fever-reducers, such as Tylenol, just prior to attending the center in an effort to disguise a fever. The medicine will wear off and, if a child is truly sick, s/he will relapse quickly and will most likely be sent home.

If a child becomes ill while at the center, the parent(s) will be notified immediately. We will contact parents by phone or try to find someone within your department of study to get you from class. It is imperative for all parents to provide us with accurate contact and scheduling information so we can locate you during the day. If a parent cannot be reached, we will contact someone on your emergency list. We will sometimes call parents to notify you of a low-grade temperature or an incident of vomiting or diarrhea. If we determine your child is too ill to stay, parents are expected to pick up within one hour (sooner for a child with a high fever).

Please notify the center if your child has a communicable illness such as chicken pox, pink eye, strep throat, ringworm, etc., so we can post a note informing others of their exposure to the illness.

SAFETY PRACTICES

All classrooms practice safety drills on a regular basis including, tornado, fire, lock down, and evacuation. In the case of evacuation, we go over to the lower level lounge in Graham Hall. For tornadoes and lockdowns, we seek appropriate shelter within the center. In the case of a lockdown, the main door will be locked and we ask parents to stay safe where you are and not come to the center until we receive an all clear from the NIU Police. If possible, our voice message will be changed and an e-mail will go out to parents. A note indicating we are in lockdown will also be posted on our front door. In the case of a lockdown or tornado, anyone who is in the building at the time will not be permitted to leave until we receive an all clear.

Here are some ways parents can help to ensure safety of all children at CCC:

- Keep us informed of any potentially unsafe or threatening situation that involves you or your family.
- Keep the number of people who come to drop off and pick up your child to a minimum; it is difficult for us to track so many people.
- Do not hold the front door open for anyone.
- Do not send someone to pick up your child who is not on your authorized pick up list.
- Do not have friends or family meet you at the center or invite them to stop by.
- Have your child walk with you when entering and exiting the building; do not let them run ahead of you. Remember, when you are exiting the building you are walking into a very busy parking lot.
- Do not leave your car running in the circle drive.
- Do not leave children unattended in your car.
- Drive S-L-O-W-L-Y in this parking lot and circle drive area.
Parents are expected to inform us of any situation in which they feel their child or family may be threatened in any way (i.e., domestic violence). The center administration may consult with other professionals (NIU lawyer and police) to determine if we are able to keep a child in our program due to a potentially threatening situation.

**HAND WASHING**

To help control the spread of illness, children are required to wash hands upon arrival at the center and at other times throughout the day. Washing hands is the best way to prevent the spreading of illness. We are happy to provide lotion for children whose hands become dry due to all of the hand washing.

**MEDICATION**

Parents need to administer **ALL** medication to their children at home whenever possible. Many medications can be administered twice a day, which means it can be taken at home rather than at the center. Always check with your doctor to see if this is possible for your child's medical condition.

If medicine must be administered at the center, the following policy applies. Medication that needs to be given to a child by a teacher **MUST** be in the original, labeled, Doctor's prescribed bottle. Over-the-counter medication may **only** be administered if we receive a signed note from the physician with the following information: child’s name, name of prescribed medication, explanation of condition requiring medication, date, and dosage. A doctor’s note is required, even if administered by the parent. Fever-reducers, such as Tylenol, **cannot** be administered by our staff and should not be given to a child for that purpose just prior to attending the center. Also remember that cough drops may not be given at the center – they are considered a choking hazard.

**MOSQUITO REPELLENT**

For health reasons, we do not use mosquito repellent unless the local health department deems it necessary. If bug spray is necessary, deet is a necessary ingredient to keep children safe from illness that can be transmitted by mosquitoes.

**PEST CONTROL POLICY**

Structural and landscape pests can pose significant hazards to people, property and the environment. Pesticides can also pose hazards to people, property and the environment. It is, therefore, the policy of NIU Campus Child Care to incorporate Integrated Pest Management (IPM) procedures for control of structural and landscape pests. Licensed pesticide operators from a local pest control company apply pesticide on a monthly basis to control insect infestation. They only apply baits and traps indoors using IPM practices as required by IDPH regulations for schools kindergarten through the 12th grade. Parents will be notified by e-mail any time the outside perimeter of the building is sprayed.
SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN AT THE CENTER

Parents are responsible for the safety and well-being of their child(ren) any time in which you are together at the center (Parent Programs, drop-off and pick-up times, etc), but CCC staff will step in if we feel a child’s behavior is considered unsafe for him/herself or others.

Please do not allow your child to wander or run off anywhere in the center without you (classrooms, large motor room, etc.). There are many potential dangers, so it is imperative that children are always supervised.

When entering and exiting the building, your child must remain with you at all times. They should not run ahead to their classroom or run out the front door without you – this is teaching them a very unsafe practice. We ask children not to push the red button that opens the front door because it gives them quick and easy access to a busy parking lot. Children should never be outside of the building without direct adult supervision.

ACCIDENT INSURANCE

Our center carries an accident insurance policy for all children enrolled in our program which provides primary coverage with a limit of $25,000. At the beginning of every fall semester, parents will be billed $6.00/child for this insurance. Everyone must participate because our policy is based on the total number of children enrolled. This policy has a claim notice provision, so the company must be notified of a claim within 30 days after a covered loss begins.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Parents are responsible for paying any amount which is not covered by insurance (including deductibles, and any amount above and beyond reasonable and customary costs).

ACCIDENTAL INJURIES, MEDICAL AND DENTAL EMERGENCIES

In the case of a serious illness or injury, we will make an immediate attempt to contact a parent. If necessary, we will call 911 and an ambulance will take your child to Kishwaukee Hospital.

Because of this, it is essential for parent(s) to let us know the following information:

1. Where you can be reached while your child is in attendance at the center.
2. Physician’s name and phone number.
3. Emergency contacts and phone numbers.

If injuries are not of a serious nature, we will apply first aid and notify parent(s) at the end of the day.

CAR SEATS

Illinois law requires all children under the age of 8 years to be restrained in a child safety seat. The law also specifies that, as the parent, you are responsible for providing a child safety seat to anyone who transports your child.

Children ages 8-15 must use a safety belt in the front or rear seat of the car (the back seat is recommended for children). Those found in violation of the law the first time will be fined $50 and subsequent violations are punishable by a $100 fine.

All parents in our program are expected to use the safe practice of securing their child in a car seat. NIU police will occasionally monitor our circle drive to ensure parents are obeying the law.
BIKE HELMETS

The center provides two sizes of bike helmets for the children to use while they are riding bikes and scooters on our playground. Parents are invited to bring in your own helmet if you want to ensure a proper fit for your child. It is preferable for these helmets to be left at the center; the teachers can keep them in the outdoor storage unit. No other child will use your child’s helmet, but all children will share the center’s helmets (teachers spray them with Lysol at the end of each day). Our primary purpose for the use of bike helmets is to help children develop good safety habits and encourage them to wear a helmet whenever they ride a bike.

FOOD SERVICE

One of the most basic requirements of any day care program is to provide adequate nourishment for each child. The USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program provides guidelines for food preparation and service. Meals are available to all enrolled children without regard to race, color, national origin, handicap, sex, or age.

We are required to serve meals to ALL of the children throughout the day. This includes infant formula and baby food.

We serve a morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack to all children who are enrolled during the times those meals are served. Meals will NOT be served at any other time, so be sure your child arrives on time so he does not miss a meal (mealtimes vary according to age groups, so be sure to check your child’s classroom schedule). Also, children who are scheduled to leave right at the beginning of a snack or lunch will NOT be served that meal (i.e., if a child is scheduled to leave at 3:30, and that is when snack begins, s/he will NOT be served that meal). Parents will automatically be billed a $5.00 fee if a child eats a meal for which he was not scheduled.

Parents are invited to join their child(ren) at a meal time, but you must notify the classroom teacher at least one day in advance to be sure we have an adequate amount of food. We are, of course, required to serve the children first.

We are required by licensing to provide these necessary meals throughout the day. Our morning snack, however, should not be considered a child’s first meal of the day. Children need to eat breakfast at home before coming to the center. Food from home is NOT allowed to be brought into the classroom, so please have your child eat breakfast at home and not at the center. Parents are also not allowed to bring in food for other children in the center (including birthday treats, child’s last day, etc.).

Food Substitutes – We are required by DCFS licensing and the Child and Adult Care Food Program to provide all of the required meals throughout the day for children enrolled in our program. This means that parents are NOT allowed to restrict their child’s diet while they are at the center based on a child’s dislikes or presumed allergies. We do, however, allow food substitutes based on medical, personal, and religious reasons as explained further.

Any child requiring a special diet due to medical reasons MUST fill out our form regarding food allergies.
and intolerances. Specific foods to be avoided must be listed on this form and it MUST be signed by a medical doctor. The parent must then provide an appropriate substitute for that food. Unless we have a doctor’s note and a food substitute, your child will be served all of our food components (including milk).

Note: According to the USDA, soy milk is not considered a creditable source of milk. To be credited, milk must be pasteurized and meet State or local standards for fluid milk. All milk should contain vitamins A and D at levels specified by the FDA. Soy milk is creditable only if used as a substitution because of medical or other dietary needs. A statement signed by a medical doctor must be on file for a child being served soy milk.

Parents who do not want meat products served to their child, due to personal or religious reasons, may provide an appropriate food substitute. In these situations, meat is the only food component that can be replaced by the parent.

Parents must talk with the Director and provide information in writing before any food substitute will be served. All food substitutes are subject to approval and must be similar to the food it is replacing -- substituting a protein for meat, carbohydrate for grains, etc. Also, food substitutes must be brought in already prepared, ready to eat, and labeled with the child’s name and date. We can refrigerate food in the classrooms and warm it up in a microwave but cannot prepare anything beyond that. Please remember that it is your responsibility as a parent to follow through with these procedures if your child is to be served any food other than what is on our menu. Remember, if you forget to bring a substitute food item, your child will be served our food.

PERSONS AUTHORIZED TO PICK UP

Children will be released from the center ONLY to authorized persons whose names appear on the application form or on a written note from the parent. (A note should be given to the center staff in advance -- please do not send a note along with the person who is picking up.) A telephone call will only suffice in the case of an emergency. Please give the teachers in your child’s classroom (and the office staff) advance notice if someone else is picking up your child.

We consider the parent who signs the enrollment forms and with whom we have primary contact as the parent to whom we are accountable. Parents who are unfamiliar to us will not be allowed to pick up their child unless they are identified on the enrollment form as a parent, the primary parent gives permission, or court documentation is provided identifying the person as a custodial parent.

Anyone who is picking up a child and is unfamiliar to a staff member MUST show identification before the child can be released. Anyone who does not provide identification will be turned away (this includes parents who are unfamiliar to us).

All individuals designated on the pick-up list must be at least 16 years of age. We will NOT release a child to anyone under 16 years of age – NO exceptions.

We will attempt to detain anyone (including parents) who attempts to pick up a child and appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs (as determined by the appropriate staff person). We will also
attempt to contact another person on your pick-up list. As a parent you always have the right to pick up your child, but we implore you to make good decisions regarding your child's safety.

**CHRONIC INFECTIOUS DISEASE**

We will look at the individual situation of any child with a chronic infectious disease whose family may desire our services. The Director will consult with a professional review team as well as the family to determine our ability to provide the needed services for a child. For more information, see the section entitled, ‘Special Needs & Services.’
GENERAL OPERATING POLICIES
AND PROCEDURES

LATE PICK UPS

The center closes promptly at 5:45 p.m. Please keep in mind that you must pick up your child and be ready to leave the building by this time, as our closing teacher is off at 5:45.

If a child has not been picked up by 5:45 p.m., a late fee of $10.00 per 15 minutes will be assessed. If a child remains at the center past this time, one staff member will remain until all children are picked up. Parents and/or emergency contacts will be called. If a child is still at the center at 6:30 p.m., the Director or her designee will be called. At 7:00 p.m., the police and DCFS may be contacted if all attempts to reach family and other contacts have failed.

Remember that your child anticipates your arrival. A child can become worried and anxious if his classmates have all been picked up and his parent has not yet arrived. In addition, staff who have put in a full day are inconvenienced. They are ready to leave to return to their families and carry out their personal plans for the evening. Parents must abide by the closing schedule – not doing so will result in termination of child care services.

CLOTHING

Clothing that children wear to the center should be comfortable, easy to put on and remove, easy to care for, and labeled with your child’s name. Please send your child in ‘play’ clothes. We offer art activities, water, sand, and outdoor play, so children need to wear clothing that allows them to move about freely and get dirty. Teachers cannot be responsible for keeping your child’s ‘good’ clothes clean throughout a busy day in a child care center.

During cooler weather, it is necessary for each child to dress appropriately. Children will go outdoors daily unless it is raining, or the wind chill is below 10 degrees. Boots, mittens, a heavy coat, snow pants, and a hat are necessary for winter play. Gym shoes (rather than sandals) are appropriate for the summer.

Small children often do not recognize their own clothing. In order to eliminate confusion, it is requested that all clothing be clearly labeled with your child’s name.

Every child needs to have an extra set of labeled clothing, including pants, shirt, underpants, and socks. Please check periodically to make sure they are seasonally appropriate and also to be sure your child has not outgrown the clothing. It is also important to replace items once they are used.

CCC clothing that is borrowed should be washed and returned as soon as possible.

Note: Every classroom in the center uses a bleach solution (as required by licensing regulations) to disinfect tables and clean toys. There may be times when your child’s clothing can be ruined because they come in contact with a recently washed table. We try hard not to let this happen, but we cannot guarantee that it won’t. This is another reason you should send your children in ‘play’ clothes.
DIAPERS

Disposable diapers and wipes will be provided by the center for all children in the Infant and Toddler classrooms. Anyone requiring the use of a specific brand of diapers will need to supply their own. Cloth diapers may not be used in group care.

Because most children learn to use the toilet sometime between the ages of 2-3 years, **parents are required to provide disposable diapers and wipes once their child is in the 2/3’s and preschool classroom.** If your child runs out of diapers and we provide them, you will be billed $.50 per diaper and the cost of one container of wipes as needed. Keep in mind that the teachers change diapers every 2 hours (more often if needed) so a child who is enrolled for a full-day could easily go through 5-6 diapers and numerous wipes each day.

OUTDOOR PLAY

**All children who are well enough to be in attendance at the center will be taken outdoors for play on a daily basis.** The only exceptions are rainy days, summer days when the heat index is over 100, and winter days when the wind chill factor is below 10 degrees. On these days, children will either stay inside or go outside for brief periods of time. Studies have consistently shown that children do not have lowered resistance to colds or other infections because of outdoor play, but are much healthier and have stronger resistance to illness with exercise out-of-doors. Also, in order to maintain our teacher-to-child ratio, **ALL of the children must go out at the same time.** Parents **MAY NOT** request for their child to stay indoors while the rest of the group is outside.

SIGN-IN AND SIGN-OUT

**Children are to be brought directly into the classroom (or playground) and ‘signed in’ on a daily basis.** We ask that the time and signature of the individual dropping off or picking up the child be marked in the appropriate space. **The center is not responsible for a child who is not signed in or brought directly into the classroom or playground before the parent leaves.**

Children’s coats can be hung on their designated hooks in the cubby area when they arrive, and other items can be put in their cubbies.

Please remind (or help) your child to wash his/her hands before going into the classroom. We also have specific procedures to follow (water, soap, water; scrub for 15 sec.; thoroughly rinse hands; dry hands with paper towel).

ITEMS BROUGHT FROM HOME

Our center maintains a generous supply of materials, toys, and equipment for the children to use. Therefore, children are asked to keep toys and other personal items at home. This helps us to avoid hurt feelings if an item is lost or broken. Teachers cannot be responsible for personal possessions, such as toys, that children might choose to bring to school. If it helps your child to take a toy or special item with when they leave the house each day, leaving it in your car is a safe and secure place where your child can have it later. If a child brings a toy into the center, the teacher has the discretion to bring it to
the office area for the parent to pick up at the end of the day, or it will sit in their cubby and they will be unable to play with it here. We strongly discourage this practice because we find that once one child starts bringing a toy, then it gives permission for all children to bring in toys and miscellaneous objects. Please be respectful of this policy and help your child to understand that their toys belong at home. In addition, please do not bring food, gum, candy, or money into the center. These items will either be thrown away or placed in your parent pocket. Please help your child to understand these rules.

We also prefer if you don’t bring a pacifier for your child once they are in the Toddler classroom. If you do bring one, the only time your child can have access to the pacifier is during naptime. Teachers cannot ensure a pacifier stays clean and sanitized in a busy toddler classroom.

**TELEPHONE USAGE**

If you find that you must make a phone call while at the center, you may use the wall phone in the hallway by the Parent Resource Room. This phone allows for on-campus and local calls only. To make a long distance call, you must use a calling card or your own phone.

We respectfully ask parents to refrain from using your cell phone as you are dropping off and picking up your children. This allows for better communication with the teachers and a chance to greet your child without disruptions.

**HOLIDAYS**

Campus Child Care serves children and families representing a wide variety of nationalities, religions, languages, and culture groups. Holidays are de-emphasized at CCC and not celebrated in the traditional sense. We will discuss holidays and sometimes read stories about them, based on children’s interests, but we avoid parties and activities that are directly related to holiday themes (we will opt for seasonal activities instead). Parents are always welcome (and encouraged), however, to share your family’s culture and traditions with your child’s classroom at any time during the year (please arrange this with your child’s teacher).

Although programs for young children in the U.S. have had a history of using holidays as vehicles through which to teach the curriculum, professionals in the field of early childhood education now seriously question this practice. Some of the reasons that early educators recommend a shift in emphasis away from school holiday celebrations are:

- Young children are just beginning to experience the holiday traditions of their families. When a school or classroom celebrates a holiday, it tends to send a powerful social message to children that this is the correct way (and event) to celebrate, thereby potentially undermining the values and traditions the families are attempting to build.

- Many holidays that appear secular in nature to most Americans are perceived by members of other cultures to be based on religious concepts that conflict with their own. Therefore they feel uncomfortable sending their children to school during those holiday celebrations. Halloween and Valentine’s Day are some examples of these.

- Holiday celebrations that emphasize the celebrations of the most dominant cultures in schools neglect the self-identity needs of the students who don’t participate in that event.
• School programs that attempt to celebrate the holidays of all cultures represented find that their curriculum becomes completely driven by holidays, and that there is great difficulty in transmitting the concepts authentically and meaningfully.

• Holiday seasons that are celebrated in the dominant culture can create a lot of stress in families and communities. Young children are very susceptible to this stress. The additional stress of school holiday preparations often result in behavior changes in the children including crying and exhibitions of insecurity.

Parents often understand our policy but then question why we don’t celebrate ‘certain’ days, such as Valentine’s Day. We will not adjust our policy based on an individual desire to have us celebrate that particular holiday. So please remember that children do not dress up for Halloween and we do not allow distribution of valentines or candy on Valentine’s Day. There are many years of traditional school ahead for your children where they will celebrate those days; we encourage you to enjoy this ‘down’ time! It is also important to recognize that many of our families have to manage on very restricted budgets. We try not to impose any additional out-of-pocket expenses that may cause a hardship for families in our program.

**BIRTHDAYS**

Due to the high number of allergies in young children, DCFS licensing, and federal food program regulations, we do not allow food to be brought in for the children to eat (this includes birthday treats). Instead, the children will eat the regular meal as scheduled but will use a special birthday plate. The teachers will also provide other ways in which to acknowledge your child’s birthday (sticker, crown, etc.).

Please keep in mind that although we are happy to share in the excitement of your child’s birthday this is not an appropriate setting for a party. In fairness to all, we want every child to have a similar birthday experience in the classroom, so we prefer to keep things simple. Please do not bring decorative cups, napkins, plates, or goody bags. Goody bags may contain choke-able items (balloons, horns, hard candy) that we will not be able to distribute. If you wish to have a birthday party for your child, plan to do this somewhere separate from the child care center. If you intend to invite children from the center, we can provide you with names and addresses for those who have given permission to release this information. You may also distribute your birthday invitations through our parent pockets (give them to Janene and she can distribute them).

**SEPARATION**

Separation can be stressful for parents as well as children. We are here to help in this sometimes difficult, but very common, developmental process.

Sometimes children are upset during their first few weeks, and some don’t express anxiety until a few weeks later when they feel comfortable enough to do so. This is completely understandable because they are in a new environment with people they don’t yet know. It will take time for them to develop bonds and relationships with the teachers and children in their room. Please know that we will comfort and reassure your child. The teachers will acknowledge and talk about his/her feelings and we will need you to do the same. Keep in mind that children are very sensitive to the feelings of their parents, so if you don’t feel good about leaving your child at the center, they won’t feel good about it either. Please talk about your child’s experience in a positive way.

**Transitions are exciting opportunities for children to learn and grow.**
When you leave your child, please don’t ‘sneak out.’ Make the ‘good-bye’ and hug something s/he can count on, even if it brings some tears at first. When it's time for you to leave the classroom, after you say your good-byes, make the departure definite. Lingering can make a child unsure of what is expected of him/her. It is helpful when parents develop a routine (leave after reading a book together, washing hands, greeting the teacher, etc.). Consistency is the key. Over time your child will become accustomed to this routine and learn that you always come back when you say you will (after snack, outdoor play, nap, etc.). Together, we will work through this important developmental process.

GUIDANCE TECHNIQUES

Guidance techniques are designed and carried out in such a way as to help the individual child develop self-control and to assume responsibility for his or her actions. The rules are simple and understandable -- redirection, along with an explanation, is a common technique. Natural and logical consequences are used to help children learn to make good decisions.

If a child is removed from the group or an activity to gain control, it will be for a short period of time. Generally, a child having difficulty in one area will be redirected to another area to play.

Please remember that young children need the experience of interacting with other children on a consistent basis. Learning how to share and cooperate with others is an ongoing process for young children, and consequently some aggressive behavior will occur (i.e., hitting, yelling, name calling, biting, pinching, kicking, etc.). Although we do not allow this behavior to persist, it takes time for a child to learn a more acceptable way of dealing with his/her anger and frustration (i.e., using appropriate words to express his/her feelings).

Please see the Director if you would like a copy of our more detailed guidance procedures which are used to train our staff.

Challenging Behaviors

We will make every attempt to work with a child; however, if there are continual discipline problems w/ significant disruptive or aggressive behaviors, the parent(s) will be called in for a conference with the teachers and director. Our goal is to work together to help your child. If needed, we will call in the social worker, parent educator, or nurse from 4-C to assist the staff and parents. We also may work with staff from the NIU Speech and Hearing Clinic and with Psychological Services. We sometimes require parents to seek additional services from their school district. Parents must be cooperative with our efforts to seek assistance or additional services for their child. If a parent is not supportive or cooperative with our efforts, we maintain the right to discontinue child care.

In general, we will take the following steps when working with a child who exhibits challenging behaviors in the classroom: the teacher, along with a director, will meet with the parent(s); strategies will be implemented in the classroom to help the child; referrals and recommendations will be made to the parent which need to be acted upon; other options such as changing classrooms or reducing child care hours will be considered. It is never our goal to discontinue child care, but that will be our final option if we do not feel we can meet the individual needs of a child / family or if the child’s behavior is creating an unsafe environment for himself or others. Each situation will be evaluated on an individual basis and the final determination regarding a child’s enrollment status will be made by the center director.

Regulations Regarding Discipline

No child will be punished by corporal punishment or verbal abuse. Please keep in mind, this policy
also applies to parents. Children may not be yelled at, spanked, or threatened to be spanked while at the child care center.

The following behaviors are prohibited (by ALL persons) in all child care settings:

- Corporal punishment, including hitting, spanking, swatting, beating, shaking, pinching, and other measures intended to induce physical pain or fear;
- Threatened or actual withdrawal of food, rest, or use of the bathroom;
- Abusive or profane language;
- Any form of public or private humiliation, including threats of physical punishment; and
- Any form of emotional abuse, including shaming, rejecting, terrorizing, or isolating a child.

It is also our policy that we will handle ALL discipline situations that may arise with the children while they are at the center, according to our stated philosophy. If a parent has concerns regarding another child’s behavior, we ask that you discuss your concern with the appropriate teacher. Under NO circumstances will parents be allowed to approach a child or his/her parents in an effort to deal with a situation yourself. We consider this method is inappropriate and will not be tolerated.

REFERRALS

As a member of 4-C (Community Coordinated Child Care), our center, along with individual families who are enrolled in our program, are eligible for their services. 4-C employs a variety of professionals who specialize in various aspects of early childhood education (i.e., parenting classes, nursing, nutrition education, health and safety, subsidy program, etc.).

We will have the nurse and social worker from 4-C visit our center on a regular basis to observe our program and the children. ALL children enrolled in the program will be observed by 4-C staff, who will then consult with our staff. If they have concerns about a particular child’s development or health during one of their visits, we will contact the parents to determine an appropriate course of action. The social worker is available to come into the center to observe children and then meet with the parents and child care staff to develop some strategies appropriate to the concerns we have (i.e., concerns related to a child’s behavior). This is an important aspect of our program, and although parents will ultimately determine what services, if any, are provided for their child, keep in mind that we reserve the right to discontinue care for a child who we feel is not responding to our program.

We also make referrals and sometimes work directly with staff from the NIU Speech and Hearing Clinic and Psychological Services. Staff from these programs may come in to observe children in our program in an effort to provide support and consultation to our staff.

Guidelines for staff that indicate the need for a referral:

- Is the child’s mental, emotional, or physical welfare and development in jeopardy?
- Does a healthy parent-child relationship seem in jeopardy?
- Does the parent’s own mental or physical health, financial status, or housing resources impair their ability to adequately or safely parent their child?
- Is the child’s behavior frequently harmful to him/herself or others?
- Is the child’s ability to learn, or that of his/her classmates’, impaired by the concern/problem?
- Is the classroom’s social environment frequently disrupted and tense due to the problem?
- Have co-teachers or other professionals noted the same concerns/behaviors?
- Has the concerning situation persisted regardless of multiple strategies and/or attempts to cope with the problem without outside help?
- Is the child’s behavior or problem significantly unusual as compared to typical and expected child development patterns for the child’s age and experiences?
SPECIAL NEEDS & SERVICES

We pride ourselves on serving a diverse group of children with differing abilities within our center, thus creating a rich learning environment. We will, however, look at the individual situation of every special needs child whose family might desire our services. We will consult with appropriate resource personnel to determine our ability to provide the services required for each child. The resource team may consist of the Center director and assistant director, classroom teachers, and registered, licensed, and/or certified resource personnel such as physicians, psychologists, social workers, speech therapists, physical and occupational therapists, educators, and other technical and professional personnel, as indicated by the child's special needs.

We will not exclude a child based on a disability. However, we reserve the right to consult with other professionals to determine the extend of the child's needs. Reasonable adaptations and changes will be made to accommodate a child with disabilities or special needs while ensuring an undue burden (expense or significant difficulty) is not placed on the program.

Parents are expected to make arrangements for children who require specialized staff or consultants to help them fully participate in the program. All arrangements need to be discussed with staff and approved by the director. Parents are financially responsible for any additional services. Any support staff who enter the program will be expected to work cooperatively with CCC staff and follow all policies and procedures (including the submission of a DCFS application, background check, fingerprinting, current medical, and three references). Support staff who are not qualified or trained as early childhood teachers will spend limited time in the classroom.

It is expected that the parents of a special needs child will provide our staff with appropriate information to assist us in providing the best possible care for their child (i.e., IEP, IFSP). When a child has a diagnosed need, the staff need to be fully informed so we can provide the best possible care for him/her and continue to work on his/her goals.

It may be appropriate for a child to spend time in a classroom prior to enrollment to determine if their needs can be met by our staff. It will then be up to center staff to determine the appropriateness of a child’s placement in our program.

BABYSITTING

The staff hired at CCC are professional teachers so it is expected that parents will not ask our teachers to babysit for them. We do allow enrolled parents to fill out a form requesting a student worker to babysit if you need care during the evening. Parents are responsible for contacting any student who signs up and for making arrangements regarding location of care, payment, etc. Please be aware that we can offer no referral or recommendation for students you choose to hire. Parents are solely responsible for screening any and all potential home care providers, and neither the center nor the University shall have any responsibility for the performance or actions of an individual you choose to hire outside the Center.
HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

We value our relationship and communication with parents, as we serve as partners in the care of your children. We encourage you to let us know anything that might help us in our work with your child – a move, developmental or medical needs, the birth of a baby, divorce or separation, death in the family, a new pet, etc. All are examples of information that can be helpful to us.

Teachers will share information with you about your child’s day on a regular basis. Although we want you to be aware of certain situations and behaviors your child may be exhibiting at the center, we don’t expect you to ‘fix’ it or to punish your child. We will handle the situations that arise, but just want parents to be aware of what we are doing in the classroom as it pertains to your child.

A monthly newsletter is distributed to provide information concerning center curriculum, policies, announcements, and general information about young children. We also try to inform you of university events. Please read these newsletters so you can remain informed about center policies and procedures. Important information regarding billing and enrollment are always included in newsletters.

Also feel free to write notes on the sign-in book by each classroom as a quick and easy way of communicating with your child’s teacher.

To enhance parent-teacher communication, we ask that you refrain from talking on your cell phone while dropping off or picking up your child.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality of information is a very important aspect of our program. Sometimes we encounter situations such as a parent who expresses a concern about another child’s behavior. This typically happens during parent conferences. Although we understand your concern for the welfare of your child, we cannot discuss detailed information about other children and families with you. Please keep in mind that children develop at very different rates and it’s not realistic to expect all children to ‘behave’ the way you expect them to. What is disturbing to one parent (name calling, hitting, etc.) is not as upsetting to another. As professional staff, we have to decide what behavior is unacceptable and beyond what is considered typical for that age. Please know that we are always working with individual children and families, but we cannot disclose this information to you. Parents need to be assured that we won’t discuss their child’s development or progress with others.

Only staff who have a ‘need to know’ will receive information that is deemed confidential. It is very rare that we share family information with student workers unless safety is an issue. Only parents and professional, full-time administrative and teaching staff will have access to your child’s file. Children’s assessment records are kept in each child’s file which is stored in a locked cabinet in our front office area. Only teachers within your child’s classroom will review your child’s assessment information.
PARENT POCKETS

Parent pockets are located between the reception area and Infant room. Please check your pocket **daily** for various center information including the billing invoice and center newsletters. Be sure you are taking the materials **inside** the pocket that has your name on it, rather than from the pocket below your name. Please remember that these pockets are for staff use only and cannot be used by parents to disperse information. Anything that is distributed through parent pockets must be approved by the office staff.

PARENT CONFERENCES

Parents are invited to speak with classroom teachers or a director at any time concerning center matters or your child's development. It is best to talk directly to your child's teacher if you have concerns regarding your child or your child’s classroom, and to a director if you have concerns about a staff member, center policy, or procedure.

We expect **ALL** parents to sign up for a conference at the designated time during fall and spring semesters. A parent conference must be held whenever a parent, teacher, or director feels it is necessary. Failure to meet with center staff regarding your child’s well-being could result in termination of child care.

CHILD ASSESSMENTS

The teachers prepare a child development summary for each child at the end of fall and spring semesters. This information is shared with parents during the conferences. Our child development summaries are not a formal screening tool, but provide the parents with valuable information about your child’s overall growth and development. The information we gather can include indicators that a child’s development is not within the normal range for his/her age, so we then make referrals for parents to seek out more in-depth evaluations for language, social/emotional, physical or cognitive development.

The teachers also documented each child’s development using portfolios. These are a compilation of photos and descriptors of a child’s milestones and achievements as they move through our program. Each child's portfolio is shared with the family during conferences.

All information pertaining to a child is kept either in a classroom or office file and considered confidential (meaning it is not shared with others). The portfolio will be given to parents at the end of each academic year. Parents are welcome and encouraged to provide feedback regarding the assessment tools used by the center.

Prior to a child entering kindergarten or when teachers feel it is necessary, additional screening will be recommended through your local school district or other community agency. Because we serve families from a large number of school districts, we encourage parents to seek out kindergarten screening and other formal assessments within your own community. If deemed necessary, other professionals are welcome to visit the center to observe a child and/or talk with our teachers. It is our intent to work cooperatively with parents and others to successfully meet the individual needs of each child.
AGES & STAGES ASSESSMENT TOOL AND EARLY INTERVENTION

The Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) is a reliable and valid screening tool for teachers and parents to help assess the development of young children in their care. Many professionals rely on ASQ as a developmental and social-emotional screening for children from one month to 5.5 years. The ASQ looks at strengths and trouble spots, educates parents about developmental milestones, and incorporates parents’ expert knowledge about their children.

Screening young children is an effective, efficient way for professionals to catch problems and start treatment when it does the most good—during the crucial early years when the child’s brain and body are developing so rapidly.

Because developmental and social-emotional delays can be subtle and can occur in children who appear to be developing typically, most children who would benefit from early intervention are not identified until after they start school. Even pediatricians, the child health specialists, fail to detect delays more than 70% of the time when they rely on clinical judgment alone.

Research underscores the importance of early intervention:

- Developmental delays, learning disorders, and behavioral and social-emotional problems are estimated to affect 1 in every 6 children.
- Only 20% to 30% of these children are identified as needing help before school begins.
- Intervention prior to kindergarten has huge academic, social, and economic benefits. Studies have shown that children who receive early treatment for developmental delays are more likely to graduate from high school, hold jobs, live independently, and avoid teen pregnancy, delinquency, and violent crime, which results in a savings to society of about $30,000 to $100,000 per child.
- If social-emotional problems are identified and addressed early, children are less likely to be placed in special education programs—and later in life, they’re also less likely to experience school failure and unemployment.

The teachers in your child’s classroom will screen your child within the first 6 weeks of enrollment. Thereafter, preschoolers will be screened annually, 2/3’s will be screened at the beginning of fall and spring semester, and the infants and toddlers will be screened at the beginning of every semester. Parents will also be invited to assess their child within their home environment and return the results to the teacher. S/he will then pull all of the information together into a final assessment which will be shared with parents either prior to or during parent conferences.

PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Parents are expected to maintain professional relationships with center staff. Although individual friendships and bonds may develop, parents and staff need to be careful about the appropriateness of the relationship. When a deeper friendship develops between a parent and a staff member, the boundary lines of friend/parent/teacher can become blurred causing miscommunication, confusion and possible breaches of confidentiality.

Confidentiality can be significantly compromised through social networking sites, such as Facebook (posting of pictures, talking about other families, children, or the center). Any communication related to the center needs to go through appropriate channels; Facebook, text messages, personal e-mail, etc., are not considered appropriate ways to communicate. Appropriate forms of communication with staff
include – calling the center to talk with staff member; talking at pick-up and drop-off; e-mailing questions or information.

PARENT CONCERNS

As a child care center we are a community of children, parents, and staff all interacting and sharing our lives together. In a community, people work closely together and hopefully interactions are positive, helpful, kind, and understanding. Yet it is to be expected that from time to time, people will experience some conflict, concerns, and difficulties.

We recognize that parenting is one of the most difficult, intense, and rewarding experiences in your life. We want you to share your thoughts, hopes, and dreams for your child. You want what is best for your child, and we know it is your job to advocate and protect your child.

We, as a staff, will make mistakes, create misunderstandings, and occasionally miscommunicate. When these mistakes occur, we want you to tell us. As a staff, it is our goal to offer your family the best child care services possible. In order to meet our goal, we need your input, your suggestions, your questions, and concerns.

When you have a concern please remember ….

- Teachers want the parents to feel very satisfied with the care their child is receiving.
- Talk to the teachers directly whenever possible. If you feel comfortable, ask your child's teacher first about any concern. Teachers prefer that you talk with them directly, but they do understand if you would prefer to talk with the director.
- Realize that if you have a concern with a teacher, the director will need to investigate and talk with the teacher directly about your concern and deal with the issue in a straightforward manner so the teacher can improve her performance and/or correct any mistakes.
- Be assured that teachers do not hold a grudge against your child or “take it out” on your child after you have expressed a concern. We would not hire anyone at our center who would react in such an inappropriate manner. Actually, after expressing a concern, your child’s teacher will be more conscientious about your issue and try to improve.
- Consider using the “once is OK” rule. With minor issues, allow staff to make a mistake once or twice, but when it becomes a pattern, it is definitely a time to bring it to their attention.
- On the other hand, don’t allow concerns to build up. As concerns occur, share them with the teachers. It is disturbing to find out “later” that a parent had a number of concerns and never expressed them.
- Sometimes we cannot make changes you may request due to other restrictions, but we ALWAYS want to hear your suggestions. We promise to consider them seriously and respond to you in a timely manner.
PARENT VISITS

Parents are welcome to visit the center at any time, but keep in mind that it may be difficult for a young child to cope with separating from a parent for a second time during the day. Children typically assume they will be picked up from the center anytime they see their parent. It is difficult for them to understand that, although you are leaving, they are expected to stay.

Please keep in mind that although custodial parents are welcome to visit the center at any time, it is not an appropriate place for others (non-custodial parent, grandparents, etc.) to visit with your child. Please schedule ‘visits’ away from the center. Anyone who spends extended time in a classroom is required to have a medical exam, references, and a background check on file per DCFS licensing requirements.

Feel free to make use of our observation booths if your child is having a difficult time at drop-off (or if you decide to check on him/her anytime during the day). This is a nice way to see how your child is doing without having them see you (if that causes him/her distress). Please consult with your child’s teacher to see which method would work best for your child.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

We encourage parents to become involved with our program. Although parents are not permitted to work with or assist other children in the classroom without going through the proper hiring/volunteer process, parents are encouraged to talk with their child’s teacher about opportunities to participate in the classroom. Some ways to get involved include: participate in the interviewing process when hiring new staff; mend cot sheets; read a book to children; share a special interest or talent (music, art, cooking, etc.); serve on the Center’s Advisory Board; help with our annual Children’s Book Fair in October; donate items for dramatic play; repair broken toys; participate in the Week of the Young Child (April), etc. We realize that our parents are very busy working and/or going to school. We encourage your involvement but also don’t want to overburden you with high expectations, so it’s up to you as to how involved you would like to become with the program.

WHAT WE EXPECT OF PARENTS

- **Read the bulletin boards, notices and newsletters that are sent home.** Important information is shared with you on a regular basis, but you must make the effort to read it.

- **Give your child time to adjust to child care before leaving them here.** Parents can help set a positive tone for the rest of the day by taking a few minutes in the morning to greet the teachers and help involve your child in an activity.

- **Value staff members and show them common courtesy.** Caregivers are more than just babysitters. We employ teachers who have training and education in child development. Show respect for their position as an important part of your child’s development.

- **Focus on your child when you pick him/her up.** Take time to greet staff and your child and see if there is anything the teacher wishes to communicate before you leave.
Pay your child care fees on time. We are providing a valuable service and deserve prompt payment. Don’t put the director in the position of begging you for payment or having to threaten disenrollment.

Be respectful and support center policies. If we ask that you don’t bring in toys, then please don’t allow your child to do this. It is impossible to fully enforce all policies at all times, but know that your disregard for a policy is causing a problem.

Make sure your children follow center rules. Please don’t allow them to run away from you, climb on furniture, etc. Your child’s safety and well-being is our primary concern.

Make sure your child is wearing appropriate clothing. Children will get dirty in child care. It is not realistic to send them in good clothing and expect teachers to keep them clean. Make sure clothing is easy to remove if your child is in diapers or in the process of toilet training (don’t send them in overalls or ‘onsies’).

Keep a sick child home. The state mandates health regulations to prevent spread of infectious illness. Although it may seem inconvenient at times, these rules also keep your child from being infected by others as well. It is up to you to have a back-up plan for a child who cannot attend.

Address concerns in a respectful way and to the appropriate person. Do not bad mouth staff to others -- seek to resolve your problem with the appropriate staff member.

Try to minimize your child’s time in child care. Most children have had a full day after 8 hours and need to re-fuel emotionally by spending time with their family. Allow them a break every now and then (a ‘day off’ when possible).

Communicate with teachers about what’s going on at home.

Make sure children get a good night’s rest so they are ready for their busy day.

Pick children up before the center closes. Staff need to get home too.

Based on an article by Stephanie Dunnewind of the Seattle Times.

PARENT RESOURCE LIBRARY

The center maintains a resource library containing various parenting books which are available for you to check out. The books are available in the Parent Resource Room, just off the main entrance. We have books dealing with topics such as toilet learning, self-esteem, death, guidance, ages and stages, etc. Feel free to ask our secretary for assistance. All books must be returned to the center by the designated due date or you may be billed for the cost of the book. For your convenience, we have included the book list in the appendix of this Handbook.
ADVISORY BOARD

The Campus Child Care Center Advisory Board serves in an advisory capacity to the Director by providing assistance with creating and revising center policies and procedures. The Board meets monthly during the academic year to carry out the stated purpose. The time and place of the meetings are arranged at the beginning of each semester. **If anyone is interested in serving as a parent representative for one academic year, please contact the Director as soon as possible.**

**Purpose:** The Campus Child Care Advisory Board shall serve as advocates for the university’s continuing support of the center and shall seek to ensure that the center provides high quality care to the children of NIU students.

**Composition of the Advisory Board**

Community/University Members-5
Parent Members-4
Student Association Members-2
Ex Officio Members-2 (Center Director and the Assistant Vice President for Student Services)

“**Tell Me about This**”

Begin a dialogue with a child by urging gently,

“Tell me about this.”

Take dictation from younger children.

Write their explanations about their creations (some children can write the notes themselves).

Make the connection between artist and communicator.
COMMUNITY COORDINATED CHILD CARE (4-C)

4-C provides a Resource and Referral Service to assist parents in their search for child care in Carroll, DeKalb, Lee, Ogle, and Whiteside counties. 4-C is one of sixteen agencies that make up the Statewide Resource and Referral System funded by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

4-C employs qualified personnel with degrees in child development, social work, nursing, nutrition, and counselor education. The 4-C staff is available to provide services to families and the child care community. 4-C also administers our subsidy program.

4-C Services

* Advocacy for Children
* Financial Assistance for Child Care
* Nursing Services
* Parent Education Classes
* Resource Library
* Social Work Services
* Technical Assistance for Child Care Providers
* Temporary Child Care Program
* Toy Lending Library
* Training for Caregivers
* Workshops and Seminars

4-C is located at 155 N. 3rd St., Suite 300, DeKalb, IL, (815) 758-8149.

The 4-C nurse visits our program once or twice a month to share information regarding current health issues and also the monitor the health of the children enrolled in CCC. The 4-C social worker is called in to observe children as needed to assist teachers in dealing with challenging behaviors and situations. The social worker is also available to consult with parents as needed.

NIU SPEECH-LANGUAGE-HEARING CLINIC

We make referrals to the Speech and Hearing Clinic on campus if we have any concerns about a child’s hearing or language development. The clinic provides services in the areas of audiology, speech-language pathology, and rehabilitation counseling. Most services are provided by graduate student clinicians, as part of a student-faculty team assigned to each client. Clinic and academic faculty hold clinical certification and either master’s or doctoral degrees. The clinic is open and appointments are scheduled between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday – Friday. The clinic uses standard fee structure for services. Some fees are covered by health insurance plans or are paid by local agencies to the clinic. A sliding fee schedule is available so that no one is denied services because of an inability to pay.

For more information about the NIU Speech and Hearing Clinic, call (815) 753-1481.

NIU PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES CENTER

We make referrals to Psychological Services Center if we have concerns about a child’s social and emotional development. They offer a wide variety of psychological evaluation and psychotherapy.
Individuals seeking their services are typically experiencing such problems as anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, low achievement at school or work, interpersonal or family conflict, eating disorders, and physical pain. Children and adolescents may also be having behavior problems at home or school, learning problems, excessive fears, bedwetting, developmental delays, or difficulties coping with changes in their families. Evaluations may include diagnostic interviews and formal psychological testing. They offer individual, couples, family, and group therapy. They also provide parent education, play therapy, and other therapies for children.

Graduate students working on master’s and doctoral degrees in clinical and school psychology provide most direct services. They are closely supervised by licensed and certified psychologists on the NIU faculty.

To learn more about the Psychological Services Center, the services offered, or to make an appointment, call (815) 753-0591.

VISION AND HEARING SCREENING

The Department of Public Health sends a technician to our center every fall to conduct vision and hearing screening for ALL children ages 2.10 - 5 years. Although parents are notified of the screening dates, parent permission is NOT required for this screening. The technician will report findings and make recommendations to parents whose children might need further testing.

It is also recommended for all children to see an eye doctor before attending kindergarten. Some young children have a condition referred to as ‘lazy eye’ (poor vision in one eye) which needs to be corrected at an early age. This is a condition which is difficult to detect without a professional eye exam, so the sooner it is caught, the better.

PRESCHOOL SCREENING

We do not provide preschool screening, although it is available through school districts for children ages 2.10 - 5 years. We recommend children be screened at your local school district, because they are the ones who will provide services (if needed).

Preschool screening is a brief check of developmental milestones. It can be a good way to identify areas in which a child may need some extra assistance. The areas of development that are assessed include speech and language, hand and body coordination, and general readiness for school.

Rich, stimulating experiences provided in a safe, responsive environment create the best conditions for optimal brain development.
WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?
The mistreatment of a child under the age of 18 by a parent, guardian, caretaker, someone living in the child’s home, or anyone who is responsible for the child's welfare at the time of the alleged abuse.

TYPES OF ABUSE/NEGLECT
- Physical: hitting, shoving, shaking, burning
- Emotional-Mental: screaming, intimidating, ridiculing, rejecting, denying reality, harming pets….
- Sexual: fondling, intercourse, oral sex, masturbation, exploitation…
- Neglect: failure to provide adequate supervision, food, clothing, shelter, medical care or basic needs for reasons other than poverty

MINIMUM PARENTING STANDARDS
Minimum parenting standards means that a parent or other person responsible for the child’s welfare sees that the child is adequately fed, clothed appropriately for the weather conditions, provided with adequate shelter, protected from physical, mental and emotional harm, and provided with necessary medical care…required by law.

WHO SHOULD REPORT?
Teachers and directors within day care centers are required by law to report child abuse and neglect. Parents need to be aware that we DO report suspicious / unexplainable marks we see on children.

We need to only suspect child abuse or neglect to make a report. DCFS is responsible for investigating and determining if the abuse report is unfounded or indicated. All persons who are mandated to report suspected abuse and neglect are presumed to be acting in good faith. Thus, they are immune from legal liability as a result of a report.

HOW SHOULD THEY REPORT?
Call the Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-ABUSE. Teachers must also send written confirmation of their call to the appropriate DCFS field office within 48 hours.

WHAT DO THEY REPORT?
By law, information cannot be withheld on grounds of preserving patient or client confidentiality. We include the following in all oral and written reports:

1. The name and address of the child along with his/her parents or other persons having custody;

2. The child's age and condition, including any evidence of prior injuries or disabilities; and
3. The name of the suspected abuser and relationship to the child, as well as any other information that would be helpful in establishing the cause of abuse and the identity of the abuser.

If DCFS accepts the report and decides to investigate the charges, an investigator is required to visit the child and his family within 24 hours. Sometimes, the investigator may choose to visit the child at our center and we are under NO obligation to inform the parents in advance (DCFS discourages us from informing the parents that we even made a report).

It is our intent to work with families even after we have made a child abuse report. We are primarily concerned with the welfare of the child, but we also realize that the parents may not be the perpetrators of the abuse. We prefer to continue to work with families and do whatever we can to help with the situation and to ensure a child's safety.

The quotes appearing throughout this Handbook were taken from NAEYC's Young Children Journals.
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<td>-families may be able to remain enrolled in the infant, toddler or 2/3’s classroom</td>
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