

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY CHILD CARE CENTER

ANSWERS TO PARENTS' MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Updated November 1, 2002

Dear Parents,

Whenever a new child is enrolled, we give the family a copy of our "Parent Orientations and Information Handbook." It is intended to acquaint you with the policies and procedures of the Center. Some procedure are of our own design, however others are mandated by the University, Il. Department of Children and Family Services and/or our accreditation agency.

When you have questions, the answers will be most thoroughly addressed in that handbook. To assist you in quickly finding answers, we have developed this synopsis of answers to the questions parents most frequently ask. If you require more information, PLEASE do not hesitate to speak with the Director and/or e-mail: kstephen@ilstu.edu. THANKS FOR READING!

STAFF

Who will care for my child? Photographs and brief biographies of our Head Teachers, Teacher Aides and Professional Substitute Teachers are located in each classroom. You can also see our Head Teacher and Director staff biographies on our web site. In that section you can also see their qualifications and experience.

How are staff screened prior to employment? According to position qualification requirements, staff are screened in a variety of ways, including: college transcripts, letters of recommendation, medical reports and criminal background checks.

How are staff qualified and trained? Head Teachers are required to have a minimum of a Bachelor's degree in a child development related field and three years experience with children. The Director must have a Masters Degree. All professional staff also are certified in CPR and First Aid. In addition, the Director holds a Food Sanitation Certificate. Please see our web site for further details that can be found under "Staff" in the navigation bar.

How do staff stay current in appropriate practice with children? Each staff member completes a minimum of 15 hours per year of inservice training on a wide variety of topics. Head Teachers and the Director acquire many more hours beyond that and frequently provide training for other early childhood professionals.

BILLING

How often will I be billed? Once a month. Due dates are distributed during the first week of each semester to help you anticipate your family budget expenses.

Where do I pay my bill? At the parent sign-in location identified in your child's classroom.

What if there is a mistake in my bill? Two options: (1) Return the bill, WITH a note to the Director attached, explaining why you believe it is an incorrect bill. Putting your e-mail address on the note will help you get a quicker reply. (2) E-mail or call the Director to schedule an appointment to discuss the matter.

Do I pay for days my child is absent due to illness? Yes.

Do I pay for days my child is absent for a family vacation or simply a day off? Yes, when those are days when the Center normally operates.

What if I can't pay my bill by the due date? See the Director to plan an alternate payment date BEFORE the due date. See the "Tuition" section in the parent handbook for more information.

Do I pay for holidays? Yes, if they fall within the university calendar (such as Labor Day, July 4th, Martin Luther King Day, Thanksgiving, etc.). However, you do NOT pay for Christmas break or Spring break when the Center is closed.

Will the Center accept payment from a subsidizing agency, such IL Dept. of Human Services? Yes. Please arrange this with the Director. Billing forms from the appropriate agency with the name, address and phone number of the agency (and caseworker if possible) must be submitted to the Director. Your case number is also required to process payment. You will be expected to pay for any charges that any agency will not reimburse, i.e. full daily cost of care, late fees, materials charges, registration charges.

ELIGIBILITY AND SCHEDULING

Do I have to be an ISU student to be eligible? Yes.

Do I have to reapply each semester to keep my child's space? No. You are automatically given a space once enrolled. At the end of each semester you will be asked to complete a form used for requesting hours in the Center for the next semester.

How many credit hours must I carry to be eligible for services? There is no minimum, although those using less than 4 credit hours in the fall and 3 in the summer pay a higher rate. ISU staff who are students also pay a higher rate.

If I don't attend summer school can I still have a space held for the upcoming fall semester? Yes, but you will need to pay a holding fee that will be forfeited if you do not return in the fall.

How often may I change my schedule? Once each semester. At the beginning of each semester you adjust your schedule UP TO the 10th day of classes. After that you may increase hours, but you may not decrease hours until the following semester.

If my child who is enrolled for part-time child care comes in late or misses a day, can my child stay later or come another day to make it up? No. Time can not be traded or banked for future use. If you need extra time beyond your regularly reserved hours you may contact the Director. If there is room for your child you may use extra time with an extra charge added to your bill.

What are the current child care rates? Please refer to your parent handbook or the rate sheet in the enrollment application on this web site for the latest rates.

Do I pay a registration fee each year? No, only upon enrollment. A materials charge is issued at the beginning of each semester.

END OF THE DAY CHILD PICK-UP

Can I call the Center when someone else is going to pick-up my child? No. You must fill out the necessary forms posted at the parent bulletin board BEFORE anyone else can take your child.

What happens if I am late picking up my child? You are charged a late fee. If a parent is repeatedly late, he/she may be asked to find alternate care for their child. Please see your handbook for our policies.

MEALS AND TREATS

Do I pay for the food my child receives at the center? No. The Child Care Food Program covers part of that cost. Meal charges are not included in your child care rates.

How will I know what my child eats during the day? Menus of all meals and snacks are posted on the parent bulletin boards and on our web site. You are welcome to speak with a Head Teacher about your child's eating habits.

May I bring birthday treats for my child? Yes, but only store or bakery purchased treats. Please try to make them nutritious. Let a Head Teacher know when you plan to bring a treat.

If I bring my child late for meal time, will you still provide the meal? Only in emergencies. According to DCFS regulations, sack breakfasts and sack lunches can not be brought to Child Care.

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

Does the Center have a curriculum? Yes, it is based on The Project Approach. See our curriculum section on this web site to learn more about it.

How will I know what my child does during the day? The daily schedule is posted on the parent bulletin board and this website. In addition, specific daily activities are listed in our “Highlights of the Day” for your review. The teachers will also be pleased to talk with you about the activities that are planned.

Will my child play outside in the winter? Yes, almost every day that weather permits. Please bring snow pants, mittens, hats, boots, ect. so your child can enjoy the healthful outdoors.

HEALTH CONCERNS

May child come to school when he/she is ill? No. Home is the best place for children when they are contagious or recuperating. Your handbook lists contagious illness that require children’s absense. Each semester a sheet is given parents to help them find alternate care for an ill child if they can’t stay home with them.

Will the Center give my child medicine? Yes, but only if you fill out a medicine dispensation form and give it to the Head Teacher.

How often does my child need a medical? Once upon enrollment. (Medical must e within 6 months of enrollment and include a negative TB and immunization history.) Medicals are required every two years after enrollment.

What happens if my child is ill or hurt while in the center? We will use your emergency form to find you so you can be with your child. See emergency procedures in the parent handbook.

FUNDING

Where does the Center get funds to operate? Parents only pay part of what it takes to cover the cost of the child care services provided! The Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, Student Fee Board, Provost Office and the Child Care Food Program also provide monetary support. The university provides the facility and general upkeep free of charge. All of these extra moneys help to keep parent user fees as low as possible.

PARENT & FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

How can I help my child to adjust at the center? Please see the “Handling Good-byes” section in the parent handbook. That section deals with separation anxiety. By keeping a very predictable schedule and discussing Center activities you will also be helping your child to adjust. Attending Center family events also help children feel more comfortable. If your child has separation issues, please ask for parenting resources from our staff. We

have them about lots of different topics, including morning routines and separation anxiety.

May I come visit my child at the Center? Yes! You are also welcome on field trips and during family events. You are welcome to observe your child in our observation booth, too. Please see the Director to schedule observation time in the booth.

In what ways can I be involved in my child's program? Classroom visits; enjoying classroom activities (story time, outdoor play, music time, lunch, snacks—anything you choose); attend monthly parent-teacher group meetings; chaperone field trips; contribute to the classroom newsletter or web site; schedule a parent-teacher conference; share a talent or skill as a classroom activity; or partake in classroom festivities, such as a Valentines party or our Homecoming Parade entry; fund-raising efforts.

What is the Parent-Teacher Group Meeting? Each month parents and teachers meet to discuss classroom curriculum and general parenting topics. The first half hour usually focuses on classroom project activities, the second hour is open for parents to ask questions and share parenting information with each other. There is child care provided free of charge for children and siblings age 2 and older during each meeting.

Does the Center have parenting books or resources I can borrow? You bet. We have a parent lending library with books that can be checked out. (List of book selection is on the parent sign-in area.)

The staff also has a wealth of handouts to share. Our web site has many links that can be of help to parents of young children, ranging from health and nutrition to building self esteem.

Is there a parent newsletter? Yes, you'll receive a hard copy. Our newsletters are also posted on our web site.

How do I request a parent conference? We provide parent conferences twice a year AND upon request. Feel free to request on from a Head Teacher or the Director.

If I have a concern about the services my child is receiving what can I do? Speak with the Director or a board member. (Board member roster is posted in each classroom.) Violations in licensing laws should be reported to the Department of Children and Family Services.

Can my child's relatives visit the Center? Yes, we would love to have them; but please accompany them on their first visit so we can be introduced.

Do I have to attend parent orientation meetings? Yes, it is HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.

Should I notify the Center if there are questions surrounding custody issues? Yes. Unless otherwise notified on your child's enrollment application, we assume both parents have legal custody and both have full rights to leave our Center premises with their child.

Will you include non-custodial parents in the program? Yes, if the custodial parent agrees. Non-custodial parents will also be given parent conferences upon request.

Can the Center provide me with referrals to other family or child services in the community? Yes, in many cases we can. If we don't know where to refer you, we can usually direct you to someone who can. Just ask. Parent-Teacher Group meetings is a great time to ask other parents for referrals, too.

HOLIDAYS AND SCHOOL VACATIONS

Is the Center open during semester breaks? No, the center is open only when classes are held. The Center is open only during the last 8 weeks of the summer session.

May I bring my kindergarten child all day when his/her school is closed for the holidays? No, they will be limited to regular hours.

Does the Center celebrate holidays? Yes, but in a secular manner. Please check the parent sign in area or parent newsletters for information about upcoming celebrations, i.e. Halloween, Valentine's Day, etc.

ADVISORY BOARD

How can I find out about the advisory board? Members are posted in each classroom. Copies of the board list may be obtained from the Director. The Board is comprised of 3 selected parent representatives, 2 community representatives and 3 university faculty/staff representatives.

Can I serve on the advisory board? Please let the Director know if you are interested! Elections are held when parent representative vacancies occur.

DISCIPLINE

What will the Center personnel do if my child acts inappropriately? We use positive discipline techniques and try to prevent most behavior problems. Please see our "Discipline" section in the parent handbook for more details.

Will the Center tell me if my child has special problems? If we are not able to correct them in a reasonable time, yes, we will ask for your input and assistance. In such cases, teachers or the Director will like request a parent-teacher conference.

Should I punish my child at home if he/she acts inappropriately at the Center? No! It is best if the teachers deal with the child care behaviors and parents handle the home behaviors. We would like to share strategies with each other for dealing with inappropriate behavior so we can all be as consistent as possible for your child.

FIELD TRIPS

Will I be notified of field trips? Absolutely. You will also be asked to sign a permission form. Please feel free to attend field trips when your schedule allows.

How are children transported during field trips? Your permission slip will identify transportation plans, which may include: public transportation, fellow parent vehicles, staff vehicles or University vehicles.

COLLEGE STUDENTS, OBSERVERS AND RESEARCHERS

Will college students interact with my child? Yes. College students are employed as teacher aides. The Center also serves as a lab site for graduate and undergraduate students in Family and Consumer Sciences sequences and other departments that cover early childhood college curriculum (i.e. Psychology or Early Childhood Education).

How do people get permission to observe or conduct research in the program? College students or faculty wanting to complete observations, participation hours, research or special projects must complete an application to be approved by applicable University offices and the Center Director.

Can anyone from campus drop in to observe a classroom without an appointment? No, only child care staff, parents of enrolled children, and emergency personnel have open-door access to the Center.

WITHDRAWAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

How much notice should I give before withdrawing my child? Two weeks is preferable. AT LEAST one week is required.

Can the Center dismiss my child? Yes, but it is very, very rare. Please refer to our dismissal procedures in the parent handbook.