Middle Tennessee State University

Child Development Center

Family Handbook

2017-2018
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Dear CDC Families,

Welcome to Middle Tennessee State University’s Child Development Center located in the Fairview Building at the corner of Fairview and Greenland Drives. We are part of the Early Childhood Education program in the College of Education at MTSU. The Child Development Center consists of two programs: the Infant-Toddler Program for children 1 to 3 years, and the Preschool Program for children 3 to 5 years of age. In both programs, you will find a developmentally appropriate curriculum designed to meet the needs of the age level served.

We are proud of our teachers and our programs. The purpose of our center is not only to support your child’s development but also to support you, the families. Children are very special people, and we thank you so much for your willingness to share your children with us. We welcome your suggestions, and want you to feel you can visit the programs at any time. Our teachers are Ms. Melissa Johnston and Ms. Wendy Williams. Both ladies have many years of experience in the early childhood field. Please read their bios on our web-site (www.mtsu.edu/cdc) Each teacher has worked hard to find new ideas to enhance your child’s experience in our program. We are so grateful for them!

A very warm welcome is extended to new families, along with a big welcome back to returning families. We wish the coming year to be an enjoyable and productive one for children, families, MTSU students, and CDC staff.

Sincerely,

Marzee Woodward (Ms. Zee)
Director, Child Development Center
CHILD PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

The Child Development Center’s programs are based on the philosophy that children develop best when teachers and caregivers emphasize the total development of the child. We believe that children are active learners and unique individuals. They learn in developmental sequence, progressing at their own pace. Our program welcomes diversity through cultural, racial, gender, ability, and socioeconomic inclusion; these differences enrich the environment for all children. We are all best served in integrated settings where attitudes of understanding and acceptance can be fostered. Our programs are structured to stimulate the acquisition [by all children] of competencies in communicative, cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Child Development Center exists for three purposes: The children and their families, MTSU Early Childhood Education students, and faculty teaching and research.

First, the Child Development Center strives to promote the growth and development of each individual child to his or her fullest potential. At the same time, we encourage families to: observe their child from the observation booth; be actively involved with their child in doing school-to-home activities, and discuss concerns with the lead teacher or director as a way of fostering each child’s development. The CDC staff will contact parents for a conference at the end of each semester, and other times if needed. When the CDC staff and families work together, children benefit.

Secondly, we exist as a training center for students in Early Childhood Education and related disciplines. The center provides students with practical experiences that allow them to learn about child growth and development as well as planning, implementing and evaluating activities and curriculums. Students also prepare each child’s progress report under the supervision of the lead teacher, and participate in parent-teacher conferences.

Thirdly, we strive to provide faculty with developmentally appropriate labs that will enhance their teaching endeavors and allow them to investigate a variety of research areas. The child’s welfare is of utmost concern. We will make every effort to minimize any disruptions to the children, their families, and the program. Parents will always be informed of any research programs within the labs and participation is voluntary.

POLICY STATEMENTS

I. General Policies

A. Application and Enrollment
1. Application to the Child Development Center is made by requesting a form from the director of the Child Development Center (615-898-2198) or completing the form online at www.mtsu.edu/cdc. The completed paper form can be mailed, emailed, or returned in person. The form can be emailed to: MTSU Child Development Center, PO Box 532, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, TN 37132. Upon receipt of the completed application form, the child’s name will be added to the waiting list. Parents interested in enrolling their children are encouraged to review the program with the director and to visit the labs when children are present. The Child Development Center is located in the Fairview Building on the MTSU Campus at 820 Fairview Avenue.

2. Enrollment is determined by eligibility based on balancing age, gender, cultural background and special needs within each program. Eligible children are selected by order of application date when positions become available. The director will determine enrollment and organization of the labs striving for a balance (when possible) of age, gender, and a variety of cultural and special needs.

a. Infant-Toddler Program: Children in this program must be between 12 and 35 months at the time they enter the program. There are four sessions. Children will be placed in the appropriate age group. The youngest group in the Infant/toddler Classroom is composed of six children and the other three sessions are composed of eight children each. Exact ages in each group will depend on applicants, but children of similar age are grouped together.

Children whose first or second birthday falls on or before August 15 are eligible for Infant-Toddler Program enrollment in the fall semester. Children who turn three prior to August 15 are not eligible to return to the Infant-Toddler Program in the fall (unless special circumstances exist), but are eligible for the Preschool Program as space permits. (See c.3.)

b. Preschool Program: Children in this program are three and four years old. There are two sessions that consists of mixed aged grouping of children with some being placed in the morning and others in the afternoon. Children whose third or fourth birthday falls on or before August 15 are eligible for enrollment in the fall semester. Children who turn five prior to August 15, may attend but will sign a waiver stating that they realize that this does not substitute for Kindergarten. We will allow children who are 5 with special circumstances to attend. (See c.3.) All children entering the preschool classroom must be potty trained prior to entrance. We do not have the facility to change diapers or pull ups.

c. Final enrollment of the child will depend on the following factors:

1. The center will strive to provide an inclusive population in the classroom (see I.A.2. above).

2. The center will strive to provide an inclusive program including
children with special needs. One to three special needs children may be enrolled in each session.

3. Under special circumstances, a child may be kept in the program beyond typical age eligibility. Such a decision is made with parents and others involved with the child’s particular needs. This situation is rare, and determination will be made on a case-by-case basis.

4. Children who have been attending the Infant-Toddler and Preschool programs are given priority for the next semester in that program unless they are no longer eligible, or are requested to leave by staff. Children of age to transition from Infant-Toddler to Preschool program will be prioritized based on date of original application. Criteria related to diversity will also be considered. Due to space considerations, there is not an “automatic” transition from the Infant-Toddler to the Preschool program. However, children from the Infant-Toddler program are placed in preschool before children on the waiting list are placed. All children entering the preschool program must be potty trained.

5. Parents will be notified by the director when there is an opening for their child. Children to be enrolled in fall semester classes, which begin in September, are generally selected in May and June. Otherwise, openings are filled as they occur. In November, a note is sent home asking for parents to let the director know if children are returning for the spring semester. Unless there are unusual circumstances, all children enrolled in Fall are eligible to return in the spring. Intent to Return forms are sent out again in April for the following fall semester.

3. Admission requirements

a. Parents are expected to attend a parent orientation group meeting after enrollment is completed. This meeting is held in late August or early September. Policies and information will be discussed at that time. If a parent cannot attend this meeting, an individual conference or visit must be made. Appointments are made by calling the director at 615-898-2198.

b. A non-refundable enrollment fee must be paid when the child is accepted into the program and is paid yearly.

c. The parents must complete necessary forms for the child, including but not limited to enrollment forms, immunization and physical examination, records, permission slips, etc. Routine health exams must be completed each new school year. **NO CHILD WILL BE ALLOWED TO BEGIN AT OUR CENTER UNTIL ALL FORMS ARE COMPLETE.** This is required by the Tennessee Department of Human Services. Children born in a foreign country may be required to get a TB skin test prior to entrance to our program. This is
d. Families must be willing to cooperate with departmental educational programs. This will involve the child’s regular attendance in the lab, parent conferences with staff members, and other similar activities.

e. We ask that the family be willing to cooperate with MTSU faculty on research endeavors. Participation in each research project by the child and the family is voluntary, but research may be ongoing in the classroom (though it is not intended to be disruptive in any way). You will be informed of any research projects, and allowed to decide if your child will or will not participate.

f. The family must arrange satisfactory transportation for the child. This means the child will arrive at school and sign in within a few minutes of the starting time, and be picked up within a few minutes of the ending time. **We do not have personnel or facilities to care for children before or after their session time.** Families unable to manage our session times may be asked to find another facility, which allows them more flexibility in drop off and pick up times. **There is a late fee for all families who do not pick up their children on time. It is $1 a minute and should be paid within a week.**

*If a child is being dropped off and picked up by another person on a regular basis, this must be listed on the child’s emergency card and kept in our files.*

g. Disenrollment:

I. A child may no longer be enrolled if the parents decide at the end of the semester they no longer wish their child to be in the program. Intent to Return forms are sent out before the end of the semester and parents may notify us of their intent.

II. A child may no longer be enrolled in the program if they are of age to begin kindergarten.

III. A child may be no longer be enrolled if their behavior is considered challenging and a plan has been put into place to work with the child but it does not work. See page 21 of this document.

IV. A child may no longer be enrolled in the program if their immunization records are not kept up to date in a timely manner.

V. Children’s files are kept for one year after the child is no longer in our facility.

4. **Tuition:** The tuition for each of the labs will be paid in August for the fall semester and in January for the spring semester. Payment may be made in the form of cash or check. Cash must be delivered in person to the director. Checks should be made out to MTSU Child Development Center and dropped off in person to the director or mailed to MTSU Child Development Center, PO Box 532, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, TN 37132. **(Please do not give tuition money or checks to your child’s**
teacher--their attention must be on the children). A non-refundable enrollment fee is required when the child is accepted into the program and is paid yearly. Families with more than one child enrolled in the program will receive a sibling tuition discount of fifty dollars. MTSU students will receive an 13% discount off their tuition. See the director for more information.

**Tuition is:**

Preschool: $400 a semester then include a yearly $25 non-refundable enrollment fee
Infant/Toddler: $250 a semester then include a yearly $25 non-refundable enrollment fee

MTSU Students Discount:
Preschool: $348 a semester then include a yearly $25 non-refundable enrollment fee
Infant/Toddler: $217.50 a semester then include a yearly $25 non-refundable enrollment fee

**B. Daily Concerns**

1. **Parking:** Parents may park in the spots marked Child Development Center for 15-20 minutes at drop off and pick up. A day pass is available from the director for an occasional visit to the Observation Booth. If you choose, you may purchase a parking pass from MTSU Parking and Transportation Office, located off Main St. (1403 East Main Street) just past the “formal” entrance to MTSU. Turn left into the drive (you will see a sign by the street indicating “Parking Services”), and park behind the tan building. The door to the office is marked on the building. A temporary permit for one semester only will be good for the hours your child is enrolled in our center. This permit allows you to park in the Fairview lot and cost $25.

2. **Daily arrival and departure:** **Preschool Parents:** Please use the portico on the Fairview Dr. side of the Fairview building for dropping off your child. **Always** transfer your child directly to CDC staff or a practicum student. Let us know your child is present by signing in on the Sign-in sheet on the clipboard (**This is a DHS required practice**) If you will be bringing your child to the classroom, please park in the lot and bring your child inside through the door on the Crestland Dr. end of the building. If you are late, please use the Crestland Dr. entrance, as the Fairview portico door will be locked for the safety and security of the children. Parents will then be buzzed into the school by the director through the CDC door.

**Infant-Toddler Parents:** Please use the covered door on the Crestland side of the building. Park, and bring your child to the classroom. Be sure to transfer your child directly to CDC staff or a practicum student and let us know your child is present by signing in on the Sign-in sheet on the clipboard. (**This is a DHS required practice**) Transfer at the Fairview portico door is not provided for the Infant-Toddler program.
Due to the placement of a security door, you will be admitted by a staff member or pre-service teacher.

If someone other than your child’s regular means of transportation will be picking up the child, please sign the red communication notebook. If this must be a last minute arrangement, call the director at 615-898-2198. It is our policy to discharge a child only to a person designated by the parents on the Emergency Form. Anyone unfamiliar to staff will be asked for photo I.D. Also, for all children no child will be allowed to leave in a car lacking a car seat, or when it appears the driver may be impaired in some way.

a. **Infant-Toddler Program**: Morning groups attend the center from 9:00-11:30 on Monday and Wednesday, or Tuesday and Thursday morning. Afternoon groups attend 1:00-3:30 pm either on Monday/Wednesday afternoon or Tuesday/Thursday afternoon depending on their age. Children will be admitted and dismissed at their specified laboratory time. **Children are dismissed directly from the classroom into the hallway to a parent or caregiver.**

b. **Preschool Program**: The morning group attends from 8:45-11:45 am, Monday through Thursday. Children should **arrive no earlier than 8:40am**; children may be **picked up from 11:35-11:45 from the playground gate**. The afternoon group attends Preschool from 1:00-4:00 pm, Monday through Thursday. The afternoon children will be **admitted no earlier than 12:55 pm**; children may be **picked up from 3:50-4:00 pm**. The playground gates will be locked daily at 4:00 pm. Children are usually dismissed at the gate near the Fairview door. If it is inclement weather, parents will be let in the building and children are dismissed directly to them in the hallway outside their classroom.

**All parents must sign their child into the Center, and sign out when child is picked up.**

There is a $1 a minute **late fee** for all families who do not pick up their child on time. Please **limit the number of times that a child is released early or arrives late**. We are trying to keep disruptions to a minimal number for the children in our program.

3. **Absences**: Please call the lab teacher or director (898-2198) if your child cannot attend school. This will help us know the numbers of children for the daily activities. Refer to the health policies for suggestions on attendance when sick (See II. B & C).

4. **Birthdays**: These are special days the children enjoy sharing with their school friends. Elaborate celebrations at school are discouraged, but parents are encouraged to join us at snack time and provide special refreshments. These items must be store bought and pre-packaged thus meeting FDA requirements. Remember that **healthy snacks are required**. If fruit is sent, grapes must be quartered. No nuts or hard pretzels can be served. You may wish to do a special activity with your child’s class such as read a book, play a game, or sing a few songs.
Please schedule bringing snacks or doing activities with your child’s teacher one week in advance.

5. Clothing: Each day your child will need to wear washable play clothes and shoes suitable for vigorous activity. (Flip-flops are not acceptable, as children’s feet are more likely to be injured in this type shoe.) Send an extra set of clothing for your child in case of a bathroom accident or spill. Please, put the clothes in a Ziploc bag and label each article with your child’s name. Be sure to include underwear, socks, and outerwear appropriate for the current weather season.

For children still in diapers, the parent must provide the disposable diapers for the child. If a child is in cloth diapers for medical reasons, the parent will need to present documentation. The cloth diaper must have an absorbent inner lining and must have waterproof outer material that is worn to contain urine and feces. Cloth diapers that are soiled will be sent home that day for cleaning and will be placed in a plastic bag before sending the diaper home. We will change diapers routinely each day but we will also change diapers as the need arises. **Children in the Preschool classroom MUST BE POTTY TRAINED.** We do not have facilities for changing diapers in the preschool room, so this is very important!!

**Toilet training:** We do help families with their child’s toilet training efforts. Per the Department of Human Service guidelines, the child must be comfortable with the process and must be able to communicate their need to use the toilet. The child may not sit on the toilet for more than 5 minutes (unless they feel the need to do so due to bowel movements) and will be diapered and changed as needed. We do not use toilet seats or chairs for health reasons.

**Daily outdoor play** is a vital part of our curriculum. We are a Gold Sneaker Facility. Our facility has an enhanced policy for physical activity and nutrition. We expect your child to be prepared to participate by having the appropriate clothing for the weather (hats, coats, boots, mittens, etc.) Please label all outerwear. If possible, an extra jacket, hat and shoes should remain in your child’s cubbie.

6. **Snow days:** If the University is closed, our center will be closed. All other times, we will make the decision based on the condition of the roads in the city and the ability of our teachers to get to work. Parents are asked to use their discretion regarding driving safely, if our center is open. **In case of snow, the director will use Remind 101 to inform families whether we are open or not. You can usually find out about closings by calling 615-898-2198 and listening to the voice message. If the Child Development Center is closed, the message will inform you by 8:00 am. Otherwise, we are in session.** Please do not call the Elementary and Special Education main office or the College of Education. This creates an overload on the telephones, teachers and secretaries. We appreciate your cooperation in following these guidelines.

7. **Toys:** Please prohibit your child from bringing his/her own toys to the center unless requested for a special activity (such as Preschool Special Person or as a transition object). It is very difficult for a child if his or her “special” toy gets damaged or lost, and sharing is often problematic for young ones. We have a wide variety of age appropriate toys for all of the
children to enjoy. If a child in the Infant-Toddler room needs a transitional object (blanket, stuffed animal, etc.) for comfort, we are glad to permit it in the classroom. Note: Please do not send in toy weapons or valuable merchandise.

8. Insurance: Each child is enrolled in a group insurance policy covering the child while in attendance in the program or on field trips. This is with the State of Tennessee. See the director if additional information is needed.

9. Snacks: Snacks are planned each day. Due to our lack of kitchen facilities, these are usually prepackaged snacks and milk, water, or juice. We do use a licensed dietician’s services to plan menu options. Please inform your child’s teacher of any food allergies or special dietary needs. Make sure your child’s teacher knows what foods your child cannot safely eat. If you send your child with a snack, it must be healthy and in a container that is clearly labeled with the child’s name. Grapes must be quartered and we ask that nuts not be sent to school.

10. Fire and Natural Disasters Special consideration has been given to safety procedures in the event of fire or a natural disaster. Fire drills are completed monthly. Children are moved to the farthest area of the playground. In case of tornado, children will be moved across the hallway to the office area, in the hallway, or to the basement area under Creative and Visual Services’ Offices. Any child who is identified with special needs will have a care provider assigned to him/her at the beginning of the semester. They are responsible for helping that child get to the safest area for that situation. Families will be notified by the end of the day if any drills or actual emergencies occurred.

11. Medical Emergencies: Immediate attention will be given to any accident or illness, which might occur at school. All staff members have been trained in CPR & First Aid. Owie reports will be sent home describing non-emergency events. If there is any doubt about what should be done, the parent will be called. If emergency care is needed, the following will occur:

a. 911 will be called; an ambulance would transport the child to the St. Thomas Rutherford. In the event of a severe emergency, the child would be life-flighted to Vanderbilt Pediatric. (Saint Thomas Rutherford emergency number is 615-396-4100.)

b. the parent will be called.

c. if the parent cannot be reached, other persons listed on the emergency form will be called

d. if no one can be reached, the child’s physician will be called.

Note: Parents are always responsible for keeping all forms up-to-date in case of changes in work and home telephone numbers or any other information that could help us locate you in case of an emergency.
12. Emergency Situations: The MTSU Campus Police or Murfreesboro City Police will contact us in the event that there is a potential threat to the safety and welfare of the children and staff. Specific procedures are followed in these situations.

1) If the children are in their classroom, the teacher will lock the classroom doors, both front and back while the teacher assistant and/or MTSU students calmly move the children to an area of safety within the classroom. The Center will remain in the lock-down state until given official notice that the threat to children’s safety is gone.

2) If the children are on the playground, the teacher and teacher assistant will calmly move the children into the classroom farthest away from the threat, locking each door behind them and ensuring that the classroom door is locked as well. The Center will remain in the lock-down state until given official notice that the danger has passed.

3) During this time, the Director will be in contact with the appropriate authorities regarding the situation.

4) When the threat of danger has been cleared, families and staff will be allowed to enter and exit the building.

5) If appropriate, families may be contacted and asked to remove children as soon as the immediate danger has ended.

6) Any child who is identified with special needs will have a care provider assigned to him/her at the beginning of the semester. They are responsible for helping that child get in the safest area for that situation.

7) Parents will be notified at pick up on the day of the potential threat.

13. Discipline/guidance policy: We believe in showing respect to young children. We do not use humiliation, ridicule, verbal abuse, or physical punishment to discipline your child. Our goal is to help your child learn self-control, and self-management skills. We will do the following things in order to accomplish this goal:

   a. Create a warm, nurturing environment

   b. Model appropriate behavior

   c. Set appropriate & reasonable limits based on developmental level

   d. Have a routine

   e. Use positive words by telling children what they can do rather than what
they cannot do

f. Use logical and natural consequences  
g. Listen to and watch children to interpret verbal & nonverbal language  
h. Distract, divert, or redirect children when possible  
i. Give children limited choices when possible  
j. Be as flexible as possible

14. **Open Door Policy** – Families are encouraged to email, call, write or talk to program staff members so that we can collaboratively work together to better meet the needs of their child. We will then put into practice the parent’s suggestions in our daily classroom functions. Our goal is to help the children happily learn and grow in our facility as well as make contact with the families every day.

15. **Nap Policy**: We do not take naps at the CDC. If a child should fall asleep while in our program, they will be placed on their back on a mat and will be checked every 15 minutes.

### II. Health Policies

**A. Health Forms**: Each child is required to have the series of immunizations recommended by the Tennessee Department of Human Services. Prior to starting school, the health form [required by DHS] provided by the child’s physician listing immunizations and an initial physical upon entrance to the program must be in your child’s folder. This form must be signed by your family physician or medical provider. Health forms are kept under lock and key and may be reviewed by the child’s teacher, director, child’s parents, and regulatory agency. Forms are reviewed quarterly to make sure the child is up-to-date on shots, etc.

**B. Symptoms of Illness**: Parents should check their child for physical symptoms before bringing the child to school. Any of the following should be mentioned to the lead teacher:

1. clear nasal discharge
2. listlessness, irritability
3. occasional minor cough
4. minor rash
5. lack of appetite
6. any other behavior that seems out of the ordinary

We are trying to do all we can to prevent the spread of communicable diseases, so we ask that **ill children remain at home**. Also remember that a child who feels sick wants his mother or other primary caregiver, and is likely to be miserable at school. Medication is not administered at the CDC unless it is emergency medication. *If a child shows any symptoms on the following list, he/she should be kept at home until free of symptoms or cleared by a physician:

1. earache
2. fever (100 or over)
3. digestive disturbance, including stomach ache, diarrhea, and vomiting
4. cold symptoms
5. greenish or yellowish nasal discharge
6. deep, frequent cough
7. sore throat with difficulty swallowing
8. swollen neck glands
9. headache
10. serious skin rash or eruptions

*Each child will be checked with a Wellness Check (state guidelines) upon arrival; and if any of the above symptoms appear, the child will not be allowed to come to school that day. If at school the above symptoms appear, the child will be sent to the office of the director, so that other individuals will not be exposed, and parents will be contacted immediately to pick up the sick child.

**C. When to Contact the School**

1. Parents are requested to phone after 8:00 A.M. if they have any questions about bringing their child, or if the child is to be kept at home that day. It is appropriate to leave a message at 615-898-2198.

2. Parents should immediately report to the lead teacher the child’s exposure to, or contraction of, a communicable disease (e.g., pinkeye, scarlet fever, ringworm). The teacher will inform all parents if an exposure occurs in their child’s group. Please call the director at 615-898-2198.
D. Outside Play: If a child is well enough to come to school, he or she is considered well enough to go outdoors. Children should wear clothing each day suitable for outdoor play, bringing jackets, hats, mittens, etc. if needed. (See I.B.5) Sunscreen with an S.P.F. 15 or higher should be applied by parents before children arrive at the program, if you feel it is necessary for outside play. Also, insect repellent containing DEET must be applied before arrival each day if necessary for your child, or when recommended by public health authorities. If we are to apply sunscreen or mosquito repellant at school, you are asked to complete a non-medicine form, which is in the director’s office.

E. Emergency Information: Please let the teacher know a number where you can be reached, if no one is to be at home while the child is at school. This will help the teacher locate you in the event of an illness or an emergency.

F. Medicine: Please administer any needed medication to your child before coming to the center and inform your child’s teacher that the medication has been administered. Since children are at the CDC 2½ or 3 hours maximum, we do not administer medication. The exceptions are medication for diaper rash (you will need to bring tube labeled with your child’s name) or an epi pen in case of an allergic reaction (you would need to supply the epi pen and instructions). We will also administer Benadryl if there is an allergic reaction. We need medication forms filled out as well as a plan of action in case there is a problem. These medicines must be in their original container, are in date, and labeled with the child’s name. The action plan is signed by the doctor.

Emergency medications are administered when the child shows the symptoms requiring the medication. Parents must complete the required paperwork for the medication, which is found in the Director’s office. Please make sure the amount of medication prescribed, the symptoms (or Action Plan) and doctor’s signature are on the paperwork. Over the counter meds, like Benedryll, are kept under lock and key in the office. Emergency medications such as an Epi Pen are located in the room in the teacher’s backpack hanging high above the children’s reach. Both the box and the medication must be marked with the child’s name.

II. Promoting Children’s Development:

The M.T.S.U. Child Development Center is designed to promote the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of the child through a developmentally appropriate, nurturing environment.

A. Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum: Each child is a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of growth. Therefore, the curriculum and adult interactions with children will be responsive to individual differences. Teacher observation and assessment of children and their interests lead to the formation of goals and objectives for the children. Skills and concepts appropriate to each child’s stage of development are introduced. The classrooms are prepared weekly with
centers and activities related to concepts. Hands on, concrete experiences are incorporated into a calendar of concepts which are familiar and meaningful to the children, thereby providing relevant learning. (We use the Revised Tennessee Early Developmental Standards as a basis. These were revised August 2012 by the Tennessee Board of Education. We also use Creative Curriculum as a basis for our curriculum, but do many alterations and additions to the suggested activities.) Teachers create lessons/activities using a variety of resources and their creativity, but use the TNELDS and Creative Curriculum as their guides.

As part of our curriculum, we are required by the state of Tennessee to use the Keeping Kids Safe Curriculum. It teaches children about their feelings, friendships and personal safety. This curriculum is for children 3 to 5 years of age. Parents must sign paperwork at the beginning of the semester stating that their child may participate in this program.

**C. Environment/Schedule:** Learning takes place as young children touch, manipulate, and experiment with materials and each other. Your child’s experience at the center will provide him/her with a variety of developmentally appropriate materials in a child centered, challenging environment. Children are encouraged to initiate their own activities, learn at their own pace, and develop a positive self-image. **Our policy is that all children must be within sight and sound at all times.**

**D. Field Trips:** Because young children learn best through experience, special visitors may be included as part of the curriculum. Due to our short day and the stringent DHS guidelines regarding transportation, field trips are very rare. Should one be planned, parents will be informed and asked to sign a permission form.

**D. Teacher’s Role:** Teachers of young children serve as guides and facilitators, preparing the environment to provide stimulating and challenging materials and activities for play to occur. As in any good classroom, teachers are also learners, observing children to see what is understood, and offering additional challenges to push thinking further. Effective teachers constantly monitor and adjust activities during the course of a lesson or an activity. It is our desire to meet the children where they are in their learning needs.

Due to our licensing and accreditation requirements, only the classroom teacher or practicum students (under supervision of the classroom teacher) may correct the behavior of children during the school session. **A parent cannot spank his/her own child in the classroom since our guidelines do not allow corporal punishment; the child would have to be removed from our center.** However, if a parent wished to request their child cease an activity or behavior, that would be fine, and within our guidelines.) **Parents may not reprimand or discipline children who are not “theirs.”**

**E. University Students’ Involvement in the CDC Setting:** University students in the practicum courses plan activities to enhance development in social, emotional, physical, and cognitive skills across the curriculum: math, science, language, social studies, art, music, movement, and
dramatic play. Students’ plans must be approved by the lead teachers prior to using the plans with the children. Each practicum student will teach a variety of different activities supervised by the classroom teacher. The practicum students and lead teachers work as a team. Students enrolled in Early Childhood Education/ Human Development courses observe children enrolled in the Child Development Center. These students observe via the observation booths or from the Big Room. Human Development students are observing behaviors relevant to class discussions on development. Due to the nature of our courses, students are given priority in the observation booths, but you are most welcome to use those facilities when there is a seat available, or you may stand. (We do ask for quiet, as students are trying to hear the children’s language development. We also ask that you avoid wearing perfume or scented products when in the observation booth.)

If you have concerns about a practicum student or observation student, please bring it to the attention of the classroom teacher or director. Do not confront the student directly, as staff are the ones with the responsibility for handling issues involving college students. Please remember that we are a training program, and our college students are still learning. (See Grievance Policy)

F. Visual Media Activities: Two purposes of the Child Development Center are to provide practicum students “hands on” experiences with children and to provide faculty with labs for research purposes. In conjunction with these purposes. These videos or pictures are used primarily for evaluation of the college students’ interactions with the children. Videos and photographs may also be used as teaching aids in the college classroom. If children are videoed or photographed as a part of a research study, parents will be informed in advance and participation is completely voluntary for both child and parent. Parents will be asked to sign an additional form granting permission for each research project. Children pictures are also featured on our web page and social media postings. No names are shared on public sites. The center requests that parents sign a release allowing children to be photographed or videoed.

We do use web cams in the classroom for parents to observe their child in the school environment. All parents are screened using the Sex Offender Registry before they are given a pass code.

G. Sample Schedules and Themes: These are samples and actual classes may differ.

1. Infant-Toddler Program

   Daily Schedule
   Center Time
   Clean-up Time
   Music and Movement
   Wash hands/clean up
   Snack Time
   Outdoor Play
Discovery Time  
Book Time/ Story Time  
Dismissal  

b. Tentative for fall  
Hello Friends  
All About Me  
Nursery Rhymes  
Apples  
Leaves and Trees  
Fall is in the Air  
Transportation  
Pumpkins  
Forest  
Harvest  
Bears  

c. Sample concepts for spring:  
Winter Fun  
Friendship  
Farm Life  
Plants  
Caterpillars to Butterflies  
Etc.  

2. Preschool Program  

a. Daily schedule (Exact time spent on each activity may vary)  
Centers  
Circle Time (Reading/Language Arts)  
Structured Activities and Small Group  
Music and Movement  
Snack  
Circle Time (Math/Concept Building)  
Outside  
Dismissal  

b. Fall concepts  
Welcome to Preschool  
Chicka Chicka Boom Boom/Fun with our name  
All About Me  
Five Senses  
Bats, Spiders, and Scarecrows  
Apples and Pumpkins
IV. Parent Involvement

A. Parents in the Classroom: As early childhood professionals, we realize that parents are children’s first and most important teachers. Therefore, you are an important aspect of our program. We would like to invite you to be involved in the Child Development Center at MTSU in a variety of ways.

1. Parents with children in the Preschool may be interested in working with the class on a special presentation or project (e.g., your native customs, gardening, cake decorating, etc.). Your participation in such activities is encouraged and appreciated. Please see your child’s teacher with ideas. Due to the number of adults already in the classroom, we request parents leave the classroom (you are welcome to use the observation booth) unless needed by your child or assisting with a special project.

2. Parents with children in the Infant-Toddler Program are welcome to stay at the center and observe their child from the observation booth. This will help you to better understand your child in relation to others and hopefully will give you some creative ideas for infants, toddlers, and twos. If you want to participate in the lab for a special occasion, your child’s teacher will arrange a schedule of participation with you on an individual basis. Since we have so many adults already in the classroom, our policy is that a parent may be in the classroom if needed by the child, but if your child is doing well, please step out. Children can be intimidated if there are too many “big people” around.
B. Lines of Communication: Effective communication involves the joint effort of the director and teachers with the parents and children. We use many techniques to communicate information at the center. Several of these are listed below. We do appreciate any suggestions you may have in strengthening our lines of communication or program as a whole.

1. Parent Orientations inform new parents of policies and information about the program, and “old” parents of any changes. A group meeting will be held at the beginning of the fall semester. Individual appointments will be arranged for those who cannot attend.

2. This Family Handbook defines our program philosophy; outlines major policies, gives parent and school responsibilities, and more. All parents, old and new are provided with the current revision of the handbook by looking on-line.

3. The CDC Newsletter provides information on scheduling updates, meetings, special event notices, new items in the classrooms or playground, and covers topics related to parenting. The Director also will send out emails from time to time reminding parents of upcoming information. If a child has special needs, a report will be sent home daily of what the child did that day.

4. The Parent Bulletin Boards provide information relevant to the labs and parenting. These are located outside the Infant-Toddler and Preschool classrooms.

5. Weekly Calendars preview daily activity plans and provide updates and notices. These are posted on bulletin boards and sent home in children’s cubbies on a weekly basis.

6. “Owie” and Accident Reports describe how your child got hurt and what we did about the injury (e.g., applied ice). These are sent home about minor incidents, bumps, scrapes. Any major accident will warrant a phone call!

7. Remind Text will be utilized to help keep parents informed about what their child is doing at school and any information that is happening at the center.

Other notes inform parents of special activities or events (e.g. Open House, Family Night, pictures, etc.). These are placed in children’s cubbies or sent out as an email notice.

8. Before sharing information about your child with other relevant providers, agencies, or other programs, the staff of the CDC will obtain a written consent form from the family. Any screening or test results requiring further assessment may be forwarded to a professional or specialist on request by the parent. All
confidential information will be kept in a locked cabinet until access is required.

9. Your child’s personal information can be viewed by the director, or his or her classroom teacher only. On request select portions of the file may be viewed under supervision by the practicum student assigned to that child.

10. Please share with your child’s teacher information about your child’s interests, approaches to learning, and the child’s developmental needs. We want to learn what your concerns and goals for your child are, so please share that with the teachers.

Volunteering at the CDC- We often have opportunities throughout the school year that we need families involved in the program through volunteering. When we ask for volunteers, please understand that volunteer opportunities are open to all and volunteers will be selected in unbiased ways. Paperwork for the university is completed before volunteer work begins. Please read your classroom newsletter or the director’s email for information about volunteer opportunities.

C. Observation Booths: The observation booth is located between the Infant-Toddler and Preschool classrooms. The observation booth is primarily for Human Development students to do assigned observations. When space permits, the observation booth offers excellent opportunities for parents to gain new perspectives into their developing child. Laughter and chairs bumping together are easily heard in the classroom. Although the children are aware of the booth’s existence, please keep conversation and movement inside the booths to a minimum. Also, Human Development students need to be able to hear the children, so please avoid talking in the booth.

*PLEASE do not bring food or drink into the observation booths. Also, please do not allow young children or infants sit or stand on the counters or bang on the observation windows. Smearing the observation windows with food or sticky fingers is not appreciated. We do not permit cell phones in the booth. This is a working environment and unexpected things have occurred that were unpleasant.

The sound system for each classroom allows one to hear the noise of the whole room via earphones. Please treat the equipment with care.

Web cameras are in each classroom. After parents are checked on the Sex Offender Registry, they will receive a password to access the cameras and view the classrooms on their PC.

Note: We ask that parents do not take pictures from the Observation Booth. Not all children have signed the permission form to be photographed.

D. Lending Library: A book bag may be needed for your child to transport books, art work, etc. home each day. Books for parents of both labs are also available for checkout from the classroom teachers. These may be checked out on a weekly basis. The parent books are located
in the hallway outside the Observation Booth. Please ask the director for assistance as needed. We ask that you help teach your child to be responsible by returning the books promptly.

**E. Conferences:** Your child’s teacher will be available to conference with you by appointment throughout the semester. Please call the teacher in order to schedule a time convenient for everyone (Infant-Toddler: 898-2895; Preschool: 898-2092). Both parents are encouraged to attend conferences. Regular conference times will be planned at the end of each semester to discuss your child’s progress and any other important topics. Practicum students will participate in these conferences to prepare them for future parent-teacher interactions.

**F. Transitioning Children Due to Staff Turnover**
When the program has staff turnover, one of two things must happen. The staff member must give a month’s notice and a temporary replacement (after training and background check are done) will be put in the room or the director will work in the room with a temporary office replacement. The job will be posted as soon as the position becomes available and is approved by the Provost and or President. We will try everything possible to make sure there are very few transitions issues with the children. The director maintains a close relationship with families and children so that he or she can step in and help where needed.

**G. Pre-attendance school visit:** All parents of new children will be contacted by their child’s teacher and requested to bring the child for a visit before the child attends for the first time. The Department of Human Services requires that all children entering a program must complete a pre-visit or enrollment visit. A visit is also suggested for returning children—please check with your child’s teacher about a good time to meet the new practicum students. This visit is intended to be short, we request you stay with your child as we will not yet be set up to care for your child. This visit is important for your child’s comfort level, and also to meet DHS and NAEYC standards. Meet and Greet Days are set up by the teacher prior to the first day of school so that children may come as a group with their parent to meet the teacher.

**H. Parent Surveys:** One or more surveys will be conducted throughout the school year. These surveys may help in securing ideas for improvements to the program, etc. Please return any survey to the director unless specified otherwise. Research surveys may be distributed by faculty from the Department of Elementary and Special Education; these surveys are completed on a voluntary basis and will be explained in further detail when necessary.

**I. Special Events:** The two special events held for families in the Child Development Center throughout the year are Open House and Family Night. Open House takes place during the Fall semester and Family Night takes place during the Spring semester. On these special nights, we use the large “Fellowship Hall” in Fairview for friends and family to enjoy an informal evening of conversation with other parents, practicum students and CDC staff. Activities are provided for CDC children and their siblings. These events are wonderful opportunities for families to share a “night out” together. We hope you will attend.
J. **Parent Advisory Board**: Parents volunteer to be on this committee. We will meet twice a year, or more if needed. This committee decides on the annual fundraisers, and how money collected will be spent. Issues and concerns of parents will be brought to this group. Some years this group is more active than others, but is always needed and required by DHS and NAEYC.

V. **Procedures for Child Abuse Investigations Involving Child Care Agencies**

A. Teachers have a legal obligation to report cases of suspected child sexual abuse. As parents, you also have an obligation to report such suspicions. Tennessee state law now says that the person suspecting the abuse must report it.

B. In Murfreesboro/Rutherford County, suspected abuse is reported to the Department of Children’s Services: (615) 217-8900. In many phone books there is an entry, “Child Abuse,” but not in our local phone book. You may also call the Tennessee Abuse Hotline at 1-877-237-0004. Once a call is made, an investigation will follow.

C. At the appropriate time, or if childcare personnel are suspected perpetrators of abuse, parents will be consulted. The child’s best interest is the first consideration.

D. We have very “open” classrooms, with observation booths in use and no “hidden places” thanks to the layout of the space and mirrors in the Infant-Toddler room. All staff and practicum students must meet the Tennessee Department of Human Services background check requirements. We have an obligation to see that your children are in a safe environment when attending our center, and we take that obligation very seriously.

VI. **Grievance Policy**

The MTSU Child Development Center staff is committed to providing quality services to children and families enrolled in our program. In the event that you find any procedure, policy or action of a staff member, or of MTSU practicum student questionable or objectionable, please be aware of the procedures to follow to address the issue:

A. Talk to the staff person most directly related to the concern or problem. Often problems arise due to misunderstanding, and can be resolved easily by open communication.

B. If you feel your grievance or problem has not been met to your satisfaction, contact the Director, Marzee Woodward (Ms. Zee) for further guidance at 615- 898-2198.

C. If you are not satisfied with the decision of the Director and you wish to take your complaint outside the CDC the following avenues are available:
It is important that you know your input and opinions are of value to us. We want you to be aware of your rights and procedures for handling issues should they arise.

**Child Guidance**

The MTSU Child Development Center staff understands that young children are developing important social and emotional skills. They are committed to teaching children appropriate ways to interact with others and the environment, and communicate their needs and feelings. Children are respected. In order to facilitate healthy social and emotional development, a warm and nurturing environment is created. Routines with appropriate and reasonable limits are established. Adults model appropriate behavior and use positive words to tell children what they can do. When challenging behaviors exist, children are distracted, redirected, or provided logical and natural consequences. Children are given choices when possible and taught strategies to communicate their needs and desires. When children exhibit severely challenging behaviors, teachers and parents develop a plan for addressing those behaviors. Should teachers and/or parents feel a plan is necessary; the following steps will be followed in accordance with the Department of Education requirements:

1. Teachers will meet with director to come up with an action plan that best meets the needs of the child.
2. Teachers, director, and parents will meet to go over the plan and make revisions based on collaborative input.
3. Parents will sign off on plan, and determine a date to meet again to reevaluate plan.
4. Teachers will collect data to determine if strategies outlined in the plan are effectively addressing the issue. Parents will inform staff of any changes that could cause a change in the child’s behavior or any changes in behavior at home.
5. At date of re-evaluation, the team will decide if the plan needs any revisions. If so, revisions will be made and a follow-up meeting will be scheduled. If progress is being made, the plan will be continued.
6. If the issue is not resolved and the child’s behavior is impacting the safety and/or learning of other children enrolled, the child will be dis-enrolled from the program.

Thank you for taking the time to read our Family Handbook. Please sign the document enclosed in your packet indicating that you have read this Family Handbook.
Thank you,

The Child Development Center Staff