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School year 2010 – 2011,

Dear CDC Families,

Welcome to Middle Tennessee State University's Child Development Center located in the Fairview Building and part of the Early Childhood Education program in the College of Education at MTSU. The Child Development Center consists of two programs: Infant-Toddler Program for children 1 to 3 years, and the Preschool Program, with a morning class for 3-year-olds and an afternoon class for 4-year-old children. In all 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, as we are able. 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. 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.)

A very warm welcome is extended to new families, along with a 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,

Elaine Mitchell Palmore
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 (898-2198) or complete the form online and email to the office at epalmore@mtsu.edu. The completed paper form should be returned to: MTSU Child Development Center, Human Sciences Department, 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.
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 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 September 30 are eligible for Infant-Toddler Program enrollment in the fall semester. Children who turn three prior to September 30 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: 3-year-olds are placed in the morning, and 4-year-olds are placed in the afternoon.

Children whose third or fourth birthday falls on or before Sept. 30 are eligible for enrollment in the fall semester. Children who turn five prior to Sept. 30, are not eligible to return in the fall (unless special circumstances exist). (See c.3.)

- 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, therapists, 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 second year 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 the morning preschool before children on the waiting list are placed.
 5. Parents will be notified via telephone by the director when there is an opening for their child. Children to be enrolled in Fall semester classes, which begin mid-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 Spring semester. Unless there are

unusual circumstances, all children enrolled in Fall are eligible to return in Spring.

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 898-2198.
 - b. A non-refundable enrollment fee must be paid when the child is accepted into the program.
 - 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. Routing 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.
 - d. We ask that the family be willing to cooperate with departmental educational programs. This will involve the child's regular attendance in the lab, parent conferences with staff members, student home visits, 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.
4. Tuition: The tuition for each of the labs will be paid by August 24 for the Fall semester and by January 11 for the spring semester. Payment may be made in the form of cash or check. Cash must be delivered in person to the director or Human Sciences departmental secretary. 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. Families with more than one child enrolled in the program will receive a sibling tuition discount. See the director for more information. Enrollment fees include coverage in a group insurance policy.

B. Daily Concerns

1. Parking: In the enrollment packet of materials, you will be given a card to fill out and return to the MTSU Parking and Transportation Office, located off Main St. 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.

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.

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.

If someone other than your child’s regular means of transportation will be picking up the child, please send a note with your child. If this must be a last minute arrangement, call the teacher (Preschool: 898-2092, Infant-Toddler Program: 898-2895) or director (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 I.D. Also, **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 8:55-11:30 on Monday and Wednesday, or Tuesday and Thursday morning. Afternoon groups attend 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**. 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 4:15. Children are transferred to a practicum student at the Fairview portico, and picked up at the same location, though usually dismissed from the playground gate near the Fairview door.

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

3. Absences: Please call the lab teacher or director (898-2198) if your child cannot attend school. This will help us to know about 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.

Remember that **healthy snacks are encouraged**. Please schedule 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.

Daily outdoor play is a vital part of our curriculum. 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 child's locker.

6. **Snow days:** If the University is closed, our center will be closed. At 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 safety issues if our center is open. **In case of snow, you can find out about closings by calling the 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 Human Sciences main office or the teachers. 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 Star Student). 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.
8. **Insurance:** Each child is enrolled in a group insurance policy covering the child while in attendance in the program or on field trips. 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 (boxed) juice. Other items will be served (such as applesauce) when individual portions can be obtained. **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.
10. **Emergency policy:** Special consideration has been given to safety procedures in the event of fire or a natural disaster. Fire drills are done monthly. In case of tornado, children will be moved across the hallway to the office area, or to the basement area under the old sanctuary. Other emergencies will require we follow MTSU directions.
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. Accident 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 Middle Tennessee Medical Center. In the event of a severe emergency, the child

would be life-flighted to Vanderbilt Pediatric. (MTMC emergency # 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.

11. 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

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 **yellow form** [required by DHS] provided by the child's physician listing immunizations must be in your child's folder. **This form must be signed by your family physician or medical provider.**
- 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. *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 by the lead teacher; and if any of the above symptoms appear, the child will be sent to the office of the director, where other individuals will not be exposed, and parents are 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 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 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.

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 a labeled tube) or an epi pin in case of an allergic reaction (you would need to supply the epi pen and instructions).
- III. 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 themes. Hands on, concrete experiences are incorporated into a calendar of themes which are familiar and meaningful to the children, thereby providing relevant learning. (We use the Tennessee Early Childhood Early Learning Developmental Standards as a basis. These were adopted August 27, 2004, 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.)
- B. 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.
- C. 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. 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.

Due to our licensing and accreditation requirements, only the classroom teacher or practicum students (under supervision of the classroom teacher) may discipline or reprimand children during the school session. A parent may reprimand or discipline his/her own child in the classroom, but only if within our guidelines (i.e. **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 if a parent wished to use spanking.** However, if a parent wished to request a 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."**

If you are concerned about the behavior of a child in one of our programs, please discuss it with the child's teacher and feel free to bring the matter to the attention of the director. We want all children to find the CDC a positive place.

- E. College Students' Involvement in the CDC Setting: College 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 has the opportunity to serve as the lead teacher for two or three days--again supervised by the classroom teacher. The student teachers and lead teachers work as a team. As part of the team, student teachers participate in contributing to class books, preparing bulletin boards, participating in parent-teacher conferences, and attending workshops. Students enrolled in Early Childhood Education courses observe children enrolled in the Child Development Center. These students observe via the observation booths or from outside the playground gates. Human Development students are observing behaviors relevant to class discussions on development.

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 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, the center requests that parents sign a release allowing children to be photographed or videotaped. These videos or pictures are used primarily for evaluation of the college students' interactions with the children. Tapes and photographs may also be used as teaching aids in the college classroom. If children are taped 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.
- G. Sample Schedules and Themes: These are samples and actual class may differ.

1. Infant-Toddler Program
 - a. **Daily Schedule**
 - Center Time
 - Clean-up Time
 - Music and Movement
 - Wash hands/clean up
 - Snack Time
 - Outdoor Play
 - Discovery Time/Book time
 - b. **Sample themes for fall**
 - Back to School - Music to Our Ears
 - Things That Are Soft
 - Teddy and Other Bears
 - Homes
 - Cars and Trucks
 - Halloween (Pumpkins, cats & bats)

Opposites (Big & Little; Push & Pull)
Hide and Seek
Birds and Flying Things
Fruits of All Kinds and Colors
Thanksgiving (turkey gobble and walk; manners)

- c. **Sample themes for spring:**
 - Boxes
 - Pots, Pans, and Pretend Play
 - Friendship: Hearts & Hugs
 - Shapes and Sizes
 - Rhyming Words/Nursery Rhymes
 - Using our senses
 - Name that Tune
 - Clothing-Head to Toe
 - Babies and Bunnies
 - The Circus
 - Plants
 - Caterpillars to Butterflies

2. Preschool Program

- a. **Daily schedule** (Exact time spent on each activity may vary)
 - Free Time/Learning Centers
 - Discussion Group
 - Book Check Out/Toileting
 - Snack
 - Structured Activity
 - Movement/Music
 - Story Time
 - Outdoor Time
- b. **Fall themes**
 - Getting to Know You
 - Home Sweet Home
 - Under The Sea
 - Friends Around The World
 - Creatures of Long Ago
 - Getting There is Half The Fun
 - Autumn is Falling
 - Masks and Disguises
 - In your Neighborhood
 - Once Upon a Time/Children's Literature
 - Showtime
 - Holiday Customs and Traditions
- c. **Spring themes**
 - Brrr
 - Let's Get Dressed
 - P. S. I Love You
 - Play It Safe
 - Animal Friends
 - Blast Off
 - Under The Big Top
 - Hug The World

Spring Has Sprung
Let's Grow
Creepy Crawlies
Saying Good-Bye

IV. Parent Involvement

- A. 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.
- A. 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. Fall Parent Meeting informs 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.
 3. The CDC Newsletter provides information on scheduling updates, meetings, special event notices, new items in the classrooms or playground, and covers a topics related to parenting.
 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 Incident 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. 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.
- B. 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 on the counters or bang on the observation windows. Smearing the observation windows with food or sticky fingers is not appreciated. AVOID WEARING PERFUME, SCENTED HAND LOTION, ETC. IN THE OBSERVATION BOOTH. WE HAVE CHILDREN, STUDENTS, and TEACHERS WHO ARE SENSITIVE TO THESE CHEMICALS/ SCENTS.**

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

- C. Lending Library: Both labs in the Child Development Center have books available for overnight; they can be checked out daily. 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 teacher offices. Please ask the director for assistance as needed. We ask that you help teach your child to be responsible by returning the books promptly.
- D. 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.

- E. Home Visits: At the beginning of each semester, most families will receive a home visit conducted by one or more practicum students. Home visits are a requirement for the practicum students. **(However, if we do not have enough practicum students in a given semester to visit all children, it is possible you would only get one visit during the school year.)** You will be contacted prior to the visit(s) by the student(s). Remember the students are coming to your home to visit with your child, not to assess your housekeeping. *Please submit a map (or directions) to your home if requested.
1. Home visit suggestions for parents:
 - a. Schedule the visit for a time when your child will be rested and when regular routines will not be interrupted.
 - b. Help your child to anticipate the time for the visit (i.e., Miss Jamie is coming after lunch).
 - c. Explore with your child the possibilities for teacher-child interaction, such as having the child share favorite toys or play areas with the teacher.
 - d. Continue with your regular daily routine as much as possible. Do NOT feel you must entertain the practicum teacher, although the college student may have questions requiring some of your time.
 - e. Some children become very excited about the teacher's visit, so it is recommended to wait until the day of the visit to announce plans to the child.
 - f. The practicum students are required to meet the course requirements of their instructor. **Please refrain from making special requests of practicum students such as what type of presentation book you would like, or asking a student to care for your child in the lab before or after class session so you can have extended childcare time.** We will not be able to honor such requests.
 2. Home visit objectives for your child
 - a. To become better acquainted with a practicum student (as a teacher) in the secure atmosphere of the home.
 - b. To grow in independence by establishing or strengthening relationships with people outside the family.
 - c. To have the undivided attention of the practicum teacher without the rivalry of other adults or children.
 3. Home visit objectives for the student teacher
 - a. To become better acquainted with the child and his/her home environment (family members, pets, family activities, favorite toys and play activities, etc.).
 - b. To convey the practicum teacher's genuine concern for the child as an individual.
 - c. To strengthen the home-school relationship.
- F. 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. 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.
- G. 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 Human Sciences; these surveys are completed on a voluntary basis and will be explained in further detail when necessary.

- H. 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." We hope you will attend.
 - I. Parent Advisory Committee: Parents chosen by the CDC staff are asked 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.
- 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 follow 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, 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, Elaine Palmore for further guidance at 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 are available:
- Robyn Ridgley is the Early Childhood Education coordinator at 898-5526
 - Dean of the College of Education, Lana Seivers at 898-2874.
 - TN Department of Human Services, 1177-B Old Fort Parkway, 848-5107 ext. 169 for Lois Johnson our evaluator.

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.

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

Child Development Center Staff