

# **Williams College Children's Center Parent Handbook**

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# **Williams College Children's Center Parent Handbook**

On behalf of Williams College I would like to welcome you and your child to the Williams College Children's Center. We will do everything possible to assure quality care and education for your child and look forward to building relationships with you over the years.

You are always welcome at the Children's Center. We hope you will join your child for an occasional lunch as well as participating in other classroom and Center wide activities. We invite you to take as active a role in our community as you would like. We know that the relationships families and children make during their years in early childhood programs can last a lifetime. We have a wonderful, state-of-the-art facility filled with evidence of children's learning and the high quality of care. We value parents' knowledge about their children, the contributions that parents can make to programming, and the thoughts that parents can offer as we continue to develop our learning community.

This handbook will answer many of your questions about the program. We urge you to sit down with it so that you can become thoroughly familiar with all aspects of the Children's Center.

My door is always open. Please come and speak to me any time you have thoughts or concerns.

Welcome!

Carrie A. Gagne  
Director

## **Mission**

The Williams Children's Center provides outstanding, responsive early education and care for young children while supporting families as they work and raise their children.

## **Vision Statement**

We join together as a community of diverse families and teachers to inspire children's wonder, joy, and curiosity. We prepare children for their futures - connected, hopeful, and open to the world of learning and possibility.

## **Core Values**

**Vital relationships among teachers, children, and families are essential for children to trust and learn about their world**

We hold play and the ability to form positive relationships as a foundation for children's learning. Children bring goodwill, kindness, and generosity to their relationships and share ideas in play and collaborative group work. Teachers value the family's image of their child, openly welcoming each family's stories and knowledge.

**We intentionally create aesthetic, responsive environments which support children's independent abilities to explore, discover, and invent through authentic hands-on learning**

We design beautiful environments to inspire creativity. We make natural, soft, and light spaces for children and present "loose parts", open-ended pleasing objects that invite children to investigate and develop thinking with others. Experiences with the outdoors and natural materials are central to active learning so that children value the beauty and uniqueness of the world around them. Children connected to nature are far more likely to contribute to a sustainable world.

**By offering extended time to dwell and discover we build upon the ebb and flow of learning across the classrooms throughout the years**

We value the chance for children to play, concentrate, and experiment with learning, both formally and informally, over time. Knowledge expands when children dabble, create, and hone thinking and skills. Because teachers carefully observe, they know when to facilitate or extend the next step as children ponder, experiment, pause to consider, and try again.

**We document and communicate children's work to better understand and make learning visible to the children, families, and ourselves**

The work of children is present throughout the center. We select photos and capture observations to highlight aspects of learning. Families see evidence of their child's growth and engagement. Documentation allows teachers to reflect on their teacher practice, pose questions to each other, and make plans to extend learning. Like the children, teachers engage in a cycle of inquiry.

## **Children and teachers alike challenge themselves to develop life-long dispositions for learning**

Children are competent, curious, full of wonder and joy; they engage their minds as they figure out the world around them. We plan learning experiences to foster curiosity, critical thinking, persistence, flexibility, compassion, resilience, inventiveness, and an ability to problem solve in future learning beyond our walls. Teachers feel accomplishment through their common, reflective work, engaging their hearts and minds as they invest in their own learning and that of the children. Teachers and children grow alongside each other.

### **Non-Discrimination Statement**

Williams College Children's Center is committed to mixed groupings of children and believes this type of grouping provides them with unique and valuable opportunities for enhanced learning and social interactions. To this end, no family will be excluded or subject to discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, political beliefs, cultural heritage, or any other protected status. In addition, toilet training status is not an eligibility requirement for enrollment.

### **Licensing/Incorporation**

The Williams College Child Care Center, part of Williams College, is licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care and is in compliance with the state and local regulations such as building codes, fire laws, and health/safety guidelines. The Center meets, if not exceeds, the licensing requirements for staffing.

### **Chart of Organizational Authority**

Williams College Board of Trustees

The President of Williams College

The Vice President for Finance and Administration

The Director of the Children's Center

Assistant Director

Lead Teachers

Teachers

Administrative Assistant

The Parent Handbook is written by the Directors of the WCCC and approved by the Department of Early Education and Care.

## **Program and Curriculum**

The Williams College Child Care Center serves children infancy through pre-school five days per week, full days from 8:00 AM **with a pick-up time of 5:15 PM**. If space permits, we accommodate part-week schedules or half day (half day options are for Pre-School only). A part-time week might be:

- Monday, Wednesday and Friday or Tuesday and Thursday full days.
- Half-time mornings for the Pre-school. Half day morning hours are 8 AM to 12:30 PM and afternoons are from 12:30 PM to 5:15 PM.

Out of School Time Program for school-aged children:

- A School Age program is available for elementary aged children from 3:15 PM to 5:15 PM in the afternoon.
- In the summer and during school vacations school age children are offered a full day program five days per week.

## **Ratios and Teaching Structure**

Each classroom has a teaching team of one lead teacher and two teachers. For the main part of the day, we aim to have our three teachers in the classroom with the children. At the ends of the day, when enrollment is lower, we schedule one or two teachers to meet state ratios. Below are the Department of Early Education and Care's required ratios.

Infants: (6wks – 15 months)	Staff: Child Ratio	2:7
Toddlers: (15 mo. – 2 years, 11 mo.)	Staff: Child Ratio	2:9
Young Preschool: (3 years – 3 years, 11 mo.)	Staff: Child Ratio	2:13
Preschool 2: (4 years - School Age)	Staff: Child Ratio	2:18
After School: (School Age - 12 years)	Staff: Child Ratio	2:18

The ages above, as of September 1<sup>st</sup>, are guidelines used for placing children. Placement consideration will be based on the number of children that are clustered in a particular age group and the developmental ages of individual children.

## **Infant and Toddler**

The early years of life are when children acquire a sense of trust, safety, autonomy and independence. The sense of security and safety that comes from the family is echoed in the warm, responsive, predictable care teachers provide throughout the day. Teachers are loving as they feed, diaper, and comfort children. They communicate with children at eye level, join in laughter and conversations, and extend language as they respond to children's vocalizations or queries. Teachers also narrate what is happening throughout the day to help children understand how the world works around them. They are responsive to children's signals of

distress and structure children's days with calm in mind. Autonomy and independence increase as we encourage more opportunities for independence and exploration.

We partner with families by learning about family care routines and practices so that young children feel safe and secure in our care. Teachers observe how families interact with their infants so that they can imitate a parent's responses in ways that are warm and predictable to the child. We welcome each family's culture and diversity by honoring children's first language, working with families to understand and support child-rearing practices, and encouraging families to bring in such items as pictures, books and other materials that are familiar to each child.

*"We appreciate the teachers taking the time to get to know the needs of each of the babies, and teach us parents a trick or two! One of the teachers noticed that while I nursed my daughter, she liked to nuzzle her cheek up against me and was comforted by that. She realized that if she used a soft cloth as she held her she would nuzzle up against that and instantly be comforted. We copied the trick at home, too, and it worked like a charm!"*

*Geraldine, Infant Mom*

Providing consistent routines and responses to children supports healthy attachments and dependable relationships. We support the development of relationships so that children can gain a sense of security and safety that is necessary for all future learning.

Moments of one-to-one or small group care and learning are at the center of healthy development, caring, nurturing, and learning. Children connect with people through conversations and respond to their surroundings through active play. A rich, built-in learning environment allows a child to touch, talk, listen, and play and allows teachers relaxed time to nurture, feed, diaper, dress, or ease a child into or out of sleep.

Young children need a safe environment with ample opportunities to actively explore and enjoy experiences which allow them to see, hear, feel, touch, and move. Infants and toddlers are sensory-motor beings. They explore the world with their senses and their developing motor skills. The emphasis therefore is on what the child gains in the process of engaging with people, equipment and materials rather than on the creation of a product.

*"The staff in the infant room has been exceptional at helping our son adjust to his daycare routine. Being first time parents to a child born almost 7 weeks premature the teachers and staff at the Children's center have been extremely accommodating to meeting his unique needs. The center has graciously worked with the outside specialists that have been brought in to assist with our son's development, and it all happens so smoothly, there is really no significant interruption to his day or any interruption to the day of the other children."*

*Patty, Infant mom*

The child's entire experience with the program is important; there is no clear separation between learning and caring, play and work. The learning environment is designed to:

- Support relationships between educators and children, parents and children, and children with each other
- Empower each child to become a confident, lifelong learner and a secure, caring person
- Promote all aspects of development: social, emotional, language, cognitive, and physical health and well-being

- Nurture a positive self-concept
- Encourage children to accept and enjoy diversity
- Provide a wonderful place for childhood learning and play

The fundamental premise at Williams College Children's Center for curriculum is that infants and toddlers are active learners who learn best through investigating the rich and carefully planned environment that teachers provide. Children are recognized as scientists and builders, as gymnasts and artisans who need active experiences with the world of people and things. Teachers offer materials and opportunities for children to create and learn and are there to stimulate and respond to the children's language, questions, and curiosity. Staff support and encourage the children. They offer children new challenges while helping them to build autonomy, confidence, and self-regulation to develop increasingly more sophisticated skills, relationships and knowledge.

Infants and toddlers not only explore the world of the classroom and outdoor playground, but also the neighborhood through walks. In the oldest toddler classroom the children occasionally go on local field trips.

Finally, teachers also incorporate suggested practices from the Massachusetts Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers.

### **Infant Daily Schedule**

This schedule is a framework only. Infants are on individual schedules to accommodate their rhythms of eating and sleeping. Adjustments are made as individual needs change. Overlapping time periods allow for individualized scheduling and small group needs. Parents are most welcome to join the classroom as desired for visits or feedings. Schedules, menus, and curriculum outlines are posted each week. Diapering followed by hand washing occurs every two hours or as babies need.

- Welcoming children as they arrive, washing hands, inspirational provocations, self-directed play, bottles and snack for older infants.
- Snacks and lunches are offered at the table with bowls and spoons so infants can begin to independently feed themselves with the support of a teacher. Meals are offered individually or in small groups
- Teachers settle children into naps whenever needed
- Self-directed play occurs in the classroom, the gymnasium and on the specially designed infant play yard. Infants engage in gross motor exploration, tummy time, play with sensory materials and informal activities with each other. Teachers sing to and read with the children. Dependent on the weather, teachers and infants may go for a walk around campus.
- Late afternoon snack/feeding as needed. End of day feeding and diaper change. Good-byes, conversation with parents, and departure.

## Helpful Hints for Transitioning Your Baby into the Infant Room

Our infant teachers are warm and loving, capable and experienced. They provide your child with the responsive individual care he or she needs. Although group care may be different from your home, our teachers work closely with you to ease the transition and to create a center environment that is as home-like as possible. We understand the children have lived their whole lives with certain routines and we wish to honor those patterns where we can. We know that different parents choose to nurse and others to feed your babies with formula. We want you to know that we support whatever choice you make; you are welcome to come to the classroom at any time to feed your baby.

We suggest the following tips as you prepare your child for the infant room:

- Talk with your lactation consultant about introducing the bottle to your baby. It has been suggested by some consultants that families begin one bottle a day from the age of three weeks. Infants who are able to take a bottle when they start care often have a much easier transition.
- We warm milk for bottles using running tap water. The milk becomes nicely warm, but may not be as warm as your baby may be used to. You may wish to start introducing slightly cooler bottles to ease the transition.
- Our infant class can have up to seven infants at any given time. We use soft music for sleeping as well as shutting shades. However, there are more sounds in the class and new babies often have an adjustment period when they learn to sleep with a different level of sound. Please allow time for your baby to adjust to this change and anticipate that your baby's sleep patterns may differ in their first few weeks.
- Our regulations stipulate that only children under six weeks may be swaddled, therefore we do not swaddle babies in our center. If your child is used to being swaddled it is good to slowly prepare your child for the infant room by introducing other sleep options. We provide SleepSacks for your child to nap in. Sacks come in different sizes and thicknesses for varying weather. You are welcome to send in your personal SleepSack if you prefer. Blankets are not permitted for infants per our regulations.
- Our regulations also stipulate that we put children down to sleep on their backs. Once a child is able to roll over by him or herself, we may leave them in their preferred position if they roll over independently. If your infant is not yet able to roll over and is used to falling asleep on his or her stomach, it is also helpful to get your baby used to the new routine before coming to our infant room.

*"One of our concerns when our daughter started at WCCC was introducing her to bottle feeding. She had not consistently taken a bottle and we feared her difficulties would be compounded with new people and a new environment. The teachers' experience and their dedication to helping her transition both solved the problem and helped lead to our complete comfort with her new care. The teachers used a special spoon / bottle combination that both taught our daughter how to feed without us and also offered an approach to bottle training that we had not heard about despite our frantic Internet searches and conversations with family and friends. We were so grateful for that and many other experiences with the teachers!"*

*Joe, Infant Dad*

**We are here to help you as you and your child adjust to the infant room. Please feel welcome to call the classroom direct on 413-597-4443 or stop in whenever it is convenient for you.**

## Toddler Daily Schedule

A toddler schedule helps the group to flexibly meet the needs of the individuals and yet be predictable since a schedule is important for children, families and teachers. It allows toddlers the predictability to develop trust in their environment. It gives families a sense of what their children are doing during the day. Finally, a schedule gives teachers a picture of the day that can be adapted as necessary to fit the needs of the group. The schedule below is an example of a child's day in a Toddler classroom yet each teacher makes the schedule according to his or her group's needs. Every child's development is different so the schedule also reflects flexibility. Children are encouraged to clean up as a natural part of play throughout the day. Schedules, menus, and curriculum outlines are posted each week.

### **Good Morning and Child Initiated Activities**

Upon arrival children wash hands as teachers greet children and families. A variety of activities are available for the children to play with as they begin their day. Teachers set out choices for the children (art activity, sensory table, music, and/or manipulative equipment) based on current interests of the group and teacher goals. The children explore the activities at their own pace. They are encouraged to make their own choices and try a variety of the activities.

### **Morning Snack**

A nutritious snack is provided. Before children are seated they are encouraged to wash their hands by themselves or with the assistance of a teacher. Teachers promote the children's independence by having older toddlers pour their own drinks and serve themselves. A teacher sits with the children to promote conversation and interaction.

### **Toileting/Diapering**

Toileting and diapering occur at regular intervals and as needed throughout the day. Teachers take turns diapering the children. Toilet learning is encouraged as children show signs of readiness. Further toileting and diapering will occur throughout the day as needed on an individual basis.

### **Morning Group**

Some toddlers are very interested in joining a small group for a brief story, finger plays, movement, or singing. Children who are not quite ready to join the small group enjoy listening from the side as they play quietly. These activities last for the duration of the children's interest.

### **Outside Large Motor, Movement Room, or Campus Walks**

Children have a chance to engage in active play outside on our yard designed for toddlers or in a large space with a variety of equipment and movement exploration. Many ideas for older toddler curricula stem from interests expressed on walks around the campus.

Time spent outside will depend on the weather so families should prepare children for outside play in any weather. Outside time encourages older infants and toddlers to use their bodies. When inclement weather occurs, the classroom or indoor open space room will be used for climbing, dancing, riding toys and other large motor activities.

### **Small Group/ Large Group Time**

This gathering time helps the children to re-group and prepare for their lunches and upcoming rest time. Often conversations recalling the events of the morning or stories and singing are a part of this time. Small group construction, art or puzzles often occur during this time.

## **Lunch**

The lunch time and duration will vary based on the needs and hunger of the children. Sometimes lunch is earlier and lasts for a longer or shorter period of time based on the pace and needs of the children. Meal time is a pleasant time for the children, providing role modeling of eating, and conversation. In addition we promote independent self-help skills such as pouring one's own drink, wiping one's own spills and throwing away one's own trash.

## **Cleaning up, Hand Washing, and Tooth Brushing**

## **Nap Time**

Nap time is relaxing; lights are dimmed and soft music is played. Teachers may read to children before they settle for naps. Rest areas are assigned to each child and the same cot is given each day. Some children may choose to have their backs rubbed to ease them to sleep. Children who awaken or are not napping at this time are offered a quiet activity in an area with sufficient lighting.

## **Wake-up Time**

There will be quiet activities offered for children who awaken earlier or who remain awake.

## **Afternoon Snack**

## **Outdoor play**

## **Good-byes and check-in with parents**

## **Pre-School and School Age**

Children in the Pre-School and School Age continue to need loving, attentive, consistent, and responsive care as they move through their busy days and gain increasing autonomy and skill. Teachers keep calm in mind as they plan children's days and are always there with a warm hug, a ready smile, a chance to share laughter and conversation, and to build relationships.

Play continues as the heart of the Pre-school program with the understanding that children are active designers of their own learning. Play inspires delight and curiosity and impels children to investigate and experiment. Play is the framework for building relationships with other children, for sharing and furthering ideas. It is the serious work of experimenting with materials, processes, and ideas over time that allows children to pose questions, adjust thinking, and make connections across their learning. Children try out and hone techniques. With increasing independence and growing skills they become familiar with enough of the world to begin a life-long commitment to their own interests and learning. In the landscape of play and relationships, creativity takes root. Individuals contribute thinking and action to the whole group which allows shared thinking and creativity to become more than the contributions of individual children.

In the Pre-school children join with each other in visions for play and projects. Children work out relationships while joining other children, at times leading, at times following as they problem-solve, collaborate and mediate with each other. The Children's Center helps children form affectionate, respectful and lasting relationships so that all children are included in the community of the classroom. We acknowledge the range of feelings that children have while offering them practice in how to express feelings appropriately, form friendships, problem-solve conflict, and value the diversity of their peers. Children embark on a life-long respect for diversity by appreciating differences in classmates' choices, opinions, and cultures.

Like the younger classrooms, the Pre-school rooms are set up for independent, age appropriate exploration of materials and experiences. Classrooms include areas for blocks, the arts, music, games, sensory play, exploration with manipulative toys, construction, science and math investigation, books and early literacy experiences.

Teachers construct curriculum which responds to the observed interests and concerns of the individuals and the group while also incorporating the teacher's educational goals for the group and the individuals. Teachers frame the days so that there is an alternating mix of active and quiet learning times, individual and group exploration, child-initiated and teacher-led learning. As children move through the pre-school years, emphasis is placed on longer-term involvement with individual and group projects. Such projects emerge out of observed interests of individual children or group thematic curricula. Authentic formalized learning is woven into group studies in ways that support the development of skills, helping children launch into further independent learning and expression.

In addition children are offered structured experiences which introduce them to and help them gain skill in early literacy, mathematics, the sciences, social studies, the arts, and health education. The totality of exploratory, social, and formal learning helps children to become confidently prepared for future school learning.

Finally, Pre-school classes take advantage of the Williams College campus, walking through the neighborhood and taking trips to near-by points of interest that extend the learning in the classroom.

### **Pre-School Schedule**

Teachers frame the day with a schedule so that children can rely on familiar patterns. At the same time they plan for the week ahead but see plans as flexible so that they can respond to emerging interests, learning needs, and the pacing of the group. The schedule includes time for children to clean-up and care for the room. The schedule below is an example of a pre-school day. However, each teacher forms the schedule to best suit the needs of his or her group.

#### **Pre-School Schedule:**

##### **Open Choice and Snack**

After washing up, children come in for open "children's choice" time to investigate open areas of the room and "invitations to learning" which draw children in to explore including block and dramatic play, books, writing and drawing journals, sensory play, manipulative and constructive toys, hands-on mathematical and science investigations, art and music. During

this open choice time children are able to come and enjoy a school-served community snack for good nutrition and conversation when they wish.

### **Clean-up Time**

Children work cooperatively to care for the room. Teachers support the big job by suggesting specific tasks to children such as “you find all the triangle blocks.”

### **Greeting Circle**

The group gathers for conversation and sharing, songs, stories, thematic studies, early literacy and math activities, and mapping out the day. Over the year, children begin to recognize letters and words in the morning message.

### **Group Time**

The group gathers for thought-provoking conversation, stories, thematic studies, early literacy and math activities, or planning out project work. This time is often broken into small groups for hands-on formal and thematic learning or active project work.

### **Open Choice, Outside Play**

Children play actively in outside versions of dramatic play or thematic investigations. Children run, bike and climb as well as enjoy the great outdoors and nature. If weather is not cooperating, children will be able to use the gym for exercise, active play, group games, and relaxation.

### **Wash hands/Lunch/ Toileting/Brush Teeth/ Make Mats**

Children and staff sit together to enjoy conversation and lunches brought from home. Please see our list for healthy lunch ideas. Children work independently to wash, toilet, clean up, brush teeth, and get mats ready for rest.

### **Quiet Time**

Children quiet themselves with individual books while they use the toilet and brush their teeth as the children settle on their mats with books or are read to as they settle down before rest time.

### **Rest Time**

Children settle into naps or quiet time with lowered lighting and soft music. Children who wish can have their backs rubbed to help settle them into rest or sleep. After resting briefly, children who don't sleep enjoy quiet activities on their mats with sufficient lighting.

### **Open Choice Table Activities**

Once children start waking up, they are able to get books or enjoy a quiet table activity or engage in a theme related activity.

### **Washing Up and Snack Time**

Children actively participate in getting the room cleaned up from rest time. Children enjoy a school-served community snack for good nutrition and conversation.

### **Open Choice Table Activities/Project Work and Outdoor Open Choice Play**

Children choose from special activities in the classroom or further work on their projects. Outside, children choose from seasonal play – winter sledding, summer water play, exploring the woods or garden, running, biking, sand, biking, and exploring the climbing structure.

### **Good-bye**

We say good-bye and touch base with parents.

### **School Age Group**

School Age children arrive at the Center by the WES school bus after a full day of school. Children also come from other schools. The program is also open for a half day each Wednesday as children arrive at 1:45 from Williamstown Elementary School on the school bus.

We offer an experience where children can both relax after a long day and invest in further play and learning. Children continue learning through a foundation of play, individual exploration of activity choices, and group investigations or projects. As with the younger children, teachers observe the interests and concerns of the group as they are expressed in play, activity, discussions, and creative work and then develop curriculum that weaves these interests into thematic study or projects. Teachers actively seek input from the group on how to direct and plan for investigation and projects. The teacher makes use of and further develops the blossoming skills of the group. In addition, the teacher helps the older children make ties to the younger groups by occasionally having the group plan activities for the younger children. All of these pieces help the School Age children to become capable of enacting change and taking responsibility for their own learning and community.

As with the younger groups, the classroom is set up for independent exploration. Students have access to blocks, construction and expressive art materials, science and math tools, cooking, craft materials for things like sewing and knitting, games, computers, books, and sensory materials like clay. In addition there are times in the day for group meetings, active project work, outdoor play, indoor movement and games as well as time for contemplation, relaxation and quiet study.

Trips are an essential part of the School Age group, especially during school vacation weeks and through the summer. The School Age program is open full time during the February and April vacations as well as during the summer. Summer time includes options for short term enrollment and centers on engagement with open-ended materials, experiences with the arts, nature, and field trips.

Our goal is to encourage a strong sense of group and community as well as friendships that cross the span of ages. We support children’s friendships by taking time to encourage leadership, foster collaboration and group creative process, and process conflict through problem-solving and independent mediation. Children develop a life-long respect for diversity by appreciating differences in classmates’ choices, opinions, and cultures.

Below is an example of a School Age schedule yet the teachers plan their schedule to fit the needs of each group:

**Arrive and settle in**

**Shared Reading, Discussion, and Snack**

Share the day, connect, plan for individual or group projects

**Open Choice/Group Projects**

Open activity choice, quiet contemplation, reading, thematic group projects, or study

**Outdoor/Active Play**

**Clean-up and departure**

**Enrollment**

**Initial Visit and the Waitlist**

We welcome families to come visit The Children’s Center. The Director or Assistant Director will offer initial tours to families to see our “state of the art center”, meet the staff, and to answer questions about the care of the children, the curriculum, and the enrollment process. At this time, we recommend that families complete their Application Form to enroll at the Center. Once your application form is completed you will either be offered a slot if one is available at that time, or you will be placed on a waitlist to be contacted about upcoming available slots. Families are welcome to be in touch with further questions at any time.

The Assistant Director checks in periodically with waitlist families to give families an idea of upcoming availability of slots. We do not inform families of their exact place on the waitlist since variables such as college or sibling priority can affect the waitlist at any time. We have typically experienced longer wait lists for the infant program and thus recommend that families apply for this program as soon as they know they may need care.

**Enrollment Priority Guidelines**

The Children’s Center serves both college and community families. Priority is given in the following manner with the understanding that slots desired by parents have to fit within what is available at the Center. The Center may also ask a family to delay enrollment in a desired classroom if their child is too close to the upper age limit of the desired classroom.

- Children of College employed faculty and staff

- Children of College enrolled students
- Children of alumni of the College
- Children of community families
- Families requesting full-time care schedules (Monday – Friday) have priority over families seeking part-time care schedules.

### **Community Accommodation Policy**

The Williams College Children’s Center is often in a position to provide childcare to members of the community outside of Williams College. The College is pleased to offer this care to community parents with the mutual understanding that the Center serves primarily as a benefit to Williams College faculty and staff and as such the childcare needs of those parents take precedence. These guidelines outline how the Center can offer care to community parents when viable.

If there is space available in a desired classroom, a community member may enroll after June 1st for the upcoming year. Enrollment is secure thereafter until June 30th of the next year, or until an alternate date specified in an enrollment agreement when only a short term slot is available. Enrollment agreements are renewed annually and the availability of space for members of the community, outside of Williams College, is predicated on faculty and staff enrollment. Therefore, enrollment spots are not guaranteed for more than 12 months at a time, and may be for a shorter duration as outlined in the short-term enrollment agreement.

If a Williams College employee is in need of childcare in the following year in a room where there will be no vacancies but in which a community child is enrolled, the Center will notify the community parent that their enrollment agreement for care may be terminated or renegotiated as of the next re-enrollment date (June 30). If the contract is to be ended, the Center will give the community parent at least a one-month notice to find alternative childcare accommodations for their child.

If a Williams College employee wishes to enroll at a time of year that *does not coincide* with the annual re-enrollment date (for instance someone is looking for infant care beginning in February) the Center may offer to re-enroll the community child for a short-term agreement (for example, July 1 - January 31, instead of the regular July 1 –June 30) for the upcoming year.

Because there is a possibility that a slot will be needed for a College family each June, community families are advised to keep in touch with the WCCC Directors as to the status of their child’s slot as the contract time approaches.

### **Space Holding**

In an effort to help guarantee full-time enrollment to Williams College employees, an available slot for any classroom can be held up to three months in advance of need at a cost to the employee of one-half of the current charge for care for the period of time for which the slot is held.

The purpose of this policy is to relieve College parents of some of the uncertainty that can accompany initial enrollment in the Center, by guaranteeing a start date for full-time enrollment well in advance of need.

When a slot becomes available, it will be offered to the next College employee on the waitlist seeking full-time care. If that employee wishes to enter into a space holding agreement, The Children's Center will hold the slot for up to three months, and the employee will only pay one-half of the current fee. This payment must be paid in full at the time the space-holding agreement is offered.

If the employee changes his or her plans about the start date for enrolling the child, he or she may opt to continue to pay beyond the three months in order to hold the slot for a longer period; however, the parent will be responsible for the full cost of the slot after the three months have lapsed.

Once parents are offered a slot they must accept it and enroll their child, accept it and exercise their space-holding option, or decline the slot.

If a parent declines an offered slot, the slot will be offered to the next person on the waitlist; the declining parent will remain at his or her current standing on the wait list and will be contacted again upon the opening of the next available slot, at which time the parent must again decide whether to enroll, space-hold, or decline. In choosing to forego the opportunity to enroll or to space-hold, an employee who declines an offered slot assumes the risk that there may not be another slot available when it is desired.

This policy is available to any full-time College employee for any classroom. This will be limited to full-time slots. It may not be used to hold a slot for an already enrolled child during a temporary absence. All fees paid are non-refundable. This option is available only once per child.

Parents may opt not to exercise this option and may simply request a slot with the hope that it will be available at the desired enrollment date.

We ask parents to give the Children's Center a two week notice if they plan to enroll their child sooner than the end of the Space-holding contract date.

### **Using the Space Holding Slot for Adjustment to the Program**

The Center helps new children adjust to the program through our enrollment visit process when parents and children visit the classroom together for a few short periods of time. Sometimes parents wish to leave their children during the space-holding period for a half or full day. This can only be done once all paperwork has been submitted and the enrollment visit has been completed so that the teacher will have been made aware of the child's care needs. In addition, we recommend that this only be done in a way that makes the most sense for the continuity of care for the child and is only recommended when the child is very close to the time of enrollment.

If a child is left for a full or half day, the family is charged for 2/3 the cost of care for that period of time.

### **Sharing a Space Holding Slot with Children Adjusting to the Program**

Occasionally an enrolled child adjusting to the program benefits from extra drop-in days to support the child's adjustment to the program. Such days are usually only available during a time when another family is space-holding a slot for their child. If a currently enrolled family wishes to make use of the open days held by the space-holding family, the Assistant Director will first check in with the Space-holding family to be sure that the Space-holding family is not planning to enroll their child earlier than expected or to use the days for helping

their own child to adjust to the program. If the Space-holding family is not planning to use the slot during this time an enrolled child may add extra drop-in days.

## **Children with Special Needs**

The Children's Center welcomes applications for children with special needs. The Center, in conjunction with the parent's input, will identify in writing all the specific accommodations, if any are necessary, to meet the child's needs while at the Center. This includes any modifications and or changes required in daily activities, special equipment needed and staff/child ratio to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience at the Center. This process will help the Center determine whether the accommodations required present an unreasonable or undue burden, considering the nature and cost, impact on the program, financial resources of the program and availability of funding or services elsewhere. If the necessary accommodations were to cause an undue burden to the program, the Center would notify the parent in writing and let the parent know that s/he could request an EEC review of the program's decision.

If the Center were able to meet the needs of the child, we would make appropriate accommodations and work with the parents, local service providers, former schools and others to serve the child. The Director and family would discuss which age grouping would best allow the child to enjoy and benefit fully from the program.

## **Transitions**

### **Welcoming New Children and Transitioning Into Childcare:**

New families are invited to participate in an enrollment visit prior to enrollment. During this visit parents and children meet with new teachers and other children in the child's new classroom. The family meets with the Director and child's Lead Teacher to go over any questions the family may have. They also discuss the child's developmental history, center policies and procedures, and required paperwork and payment options. Before the enrollment visit we provide a link to this handbook which includes the mission statement and philosophy, services provided, the referral policy, the child guidance policy, the fee schedule and billing, the prompt payment policy, the policy for reporting child abuse, a copy of the health care policy as well as the administration of medication, procedures for providing emergency health care and the illness exclusion from care policy.

Depending on the child's age, familiarity and ease with being in care, a specific transition plan may be developed to help the child transition into care. This plan will be developed by the Lead Teacher with the help of the family and Director or Assistant Director. Once enrolled, we encourage families to visit the program at any time and share information with teachers that might be helpful in getting to know the child. Ongoing communication between parents and teachers is always encouraged.

Parents may schedule additional visits if desired.

### **The First Day of School:**

When the child begins school, the first day away from familiar surroundings can vary for each family. Please allow extra time for the transition to go smoothly. Parents are encouraged to talk with their children about where they are going and what they will be doing. Parents are welcome to stay in the class during initial days,

leaving their child alone when both are ready. The Director and teachers often speak to parents about easing children in slowly. When possible for the parents' work life, it can be beneficial for children to begin with a shortened schedule. We are always available for consultation on how to help your child adjust successfully. Please understand the staff is very knowledgeable and experienced assisting and consoling your children. Please feel free to call the Center to check how your child is doing.

### **Tips for a Peaceful Separation:**

Learning how to separate from parents is a fundamental part of growth for children. It is natural for parents and children to have some difficulty when separating from each other. The degree of difficulty varies from person to person and from time to time. Sometimes a typically well-settled child can go through periods later on when separation becomes more difficult. Acknowledging the feelings of both of you helps you and your child move through this process.

No matter what your child's age is, prepare your child ahead of time by telling him or her about your plan for the child to go to school and how you plan to help your child adjust. If you are calm and upbeat, it goes a long way toward giving your child a matter-of-fact "can-do" attitude.

If you plan on staying with your child, please find a quiet place and talk to your child about what you see going on in the class. Joining your child in an initial activity like reading a book or working with a material can help your child settle in. If there are other parents in the class, it is best to visit with them after you have all left the classroom since your child needs your attention at this point.

When you feel you are ready to leave, tell your child that you will be leaving in one minute. If he or she becomes upset, assure your child that you will be back at the end of the day and ask a teacher to come and help your child feel better while you leave. ***It is important to leave when you say you're going to leave.*** We know it can be upsetting to leave a crying or a clinging child. If you are comfortable doing so, a teacher can take your child from you on your cue. It is also important to make sure your child knows you are leaving and that you say good bye. Please do not leave without telling your child even if your child appears to be involved in an activity.

Usually a child will be upset for just a few minutes after a parent leaves. During this time a teacher will comfort your child and attempt to engage him or her in finding the pictures you may have brought in of your family. After your child feels more comfortable, the staff member will begin directing your child's attention towards the children in the classroom, making comments on their activities. As your child's interest grows, the staff member will invite your child to join the other children for a closer look. As the teacher facilitates interaction among the children your child will join in as much as his or her comfort level allows.

Please feel free to check in by calling your child's teacher or by using the pre-school observation room. If your child cries for more than 15 or 20 minutes we will call you and develop a plan for the rest of the day. If separation difficulties go on, please make a time to speak to your child's teacher so that we can work together to support your child.

### **Moving Up to Older Age Groups:**

Teachers and Directors inform families well in advance of move-ups that normally occur each fall. We believe in the benefits of children remaining with their teachers and classmates for at least a year and aim to have once a year moves to new classes. However, there may be a circumstance when a child may move to another classroom other than the scheduled fall move-up date. In this case, directors, teachers and families will be in contact to plan the best transition for the child.

When age appropriate, teachers also provide activities to help children to understand the upcoming event. Teachers talk to the children about the upcoming move and work to support friendships with new children. Teachers may read books to children about moving to a new school or class, or they might use a visual tool like a calendar to cross off days before the move to another room. Teachers also help children learn about or practice expected routines in the new classroom.

Teachers work together in advance to arrange times for children to visit new classrooms. Younger children begin with more informal visits and then more deliberately make longer visits before making the final move to another program. Visits are individualized for each child based on the particular child's needs and comfort level in a new classroom. Teachers from the new room might visit the younger rooms prior to transition visits in order to get to know the children, or they might trade places in order to accompany children on early visits to the new class. Teachers share information with the next child's teacher (with parent permission in the "informed consent") that includes the child's developmental history, emergency contacts, and allergy/medical condition information. Information specific to the child can also be shared which might include approaches that reassure the child, the child's interests and ways of learning, some of the child's favorite toys and special accommodations a child might need.

Prior to transitions teachers from both the current and new classrooms help the family to prepare for the transition. New teachers send out either a letter or welcome packet explaining their program prior to the transition. Parents may meet with their child's new teacher prior to the child's transition to a new room or visit the classroom. Parents are encouraged to visit and call as often as they would like and teachers are open to speak often with parents about their child's progress.

### **Developmental Placements:**

We occasionally place a child outside of their chronologically defined age group (meaning the basic Infant, Toddler, or Pre-School programs) based on a review of the documentation, observations, the child's most recent progress report, conversations between the child's teacher and the Director, or a narrative from the child's parent addressing the child's abilities in the areas of mobility, fine and gross motor control, communication, social interactions and cognitive skills. One of our toddler classrooms is also licensed to be converted to a Toddler/Pre-school program in order to serve the needs of both age groups when the ages of the children in the room range between toddlers and pre-schoolers.

Whenever a developmental placement is considered the Director consults with the child's parents to seek input on the group assignment decision. We obtain the parents' written permission to make the placement and offer the reasons why this placement is being considered. Once the placement is made, the teachers and Director meet monthly to review the child's progress in the group until the child turns the typical chronological age for the group. If the child remains in a group for longer than is typical, monthly review takes place to be sure that the child's needs are being met. We also put a plan for transition to the next group in place when the time is appropriate.

There are no more than two children outside the chronologically defined age range in any age group.

### **Daily Transitions:**

Transitions are a part of daily life in an early childhood program. We work to minimize transitions and look for ways to complete them in a safe, timely, predictable and unhurried manner. We structure daily activities keeping in mind that it can be difficult for children to wait. We let children know when transitions are coming up so they can learn to bring their play or work to closure and anticipate what is coming up. We want transitions to be as smooth and flexible for children as possible. Teachers expect that children will not always move as a group from one activity to another. Visual, verbal and auditory cues help support children's transitions. We also use other methods to support children's transitions through creative activities like singing, movement or simple games. These are particularly helpful for children who have to wait for others to join the group.

### **Transitioning to Kindergarten:**

The Director serves as the Kindergarten Coordinator and works closely with the Lead Pre-School 2 teacher to communicate with local Kindergarten teachers about children's transition into kindergarten. Parents sign permissions to share information with the child's new kindergarten teacher so that our teachers are able to share important information about the child that will help in their transition to the new school.

Pre-School teachers refer to the state department of Early Education and Care Pre-School Learning Standards and the Core Standards as they develop their curriculum and prepare children for the next steps in their future learning. Teachers support the children transitioning to Kindergarten by discussing the coming move or doing various activities that help the children think about the anticipated transition. Teachers also celebrate the children moving on to Kindergarten with activities and events for parents.

We encourage families to visit Kindergarten classrooms with their children as WES or at any other local schools so that children can become familiar with the routines in Kindergarten. We remind parents that when their children visit a Kindergarten program the children they will see are a year beyond where their child will be when he or she enters Kindergarten in the fall. This helps families remember that the Kindergarten children have had a whole year of experience in comparison to the children leaving pre-school.

Any families who would like support helping their children make the transition to Kindergarten are welcome to meet with the Pre-school 2 teacher and/or the director.

### **Children Leaving the Program:**

When children leave the program with advance notice (such as when children move away) or unexpectedly for reasons that may relate to the particular situation of the child or family, plans will be put in place to prepare the child to leave the school in a way that the child can understand and that will give the best possible, supportive closure for the child.

### **Children Who Attend More Than One Program:**

Teachers will be aware of part-time children who attend other schools and if appropriate, will request permission from parents to share information between teachers in the two programs so that learning and routines in other programs can be understood and built upon.

### **Massachusetts Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers**

On the web at:

[http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docs1/Workforce\\_Dev/Layout.pdf](http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docs1/Workforce_Dev/Layout.pdf)

### **Massachusetts Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences**

On the web at:

<http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docs/TAGuidelinesForPreschoolLearningExperiences.pdf>

### **Child Guidance:**

As we work with children it is our hope that they will become active participants in learning how to make positive, lasting, meaningful, and loving relationships with both children and adults. Putting structures for child guidance in place offers children a reassuring framework to organize their relationships to other people, to care for people and the environment, to respect ideas and people's work, to internalize an inner sense of discipline, and to build self-knowledge and self-esteem.

A developmental approach to child guidance takes into consideration:

- How each child thinks and learns
- The child's experience
- The child's and the group's strengths and challenges
- The child's culture
- The child's ability to understand particular situations
- The child's ability to communicate
- Behaviors which are acceptable or not acceptable along with how to tell the difference
- That conflict and learning to resolve it are necessary parts of growth

### **Goals for Children**

The child guidance goals of the Center help children to:

- Be safe with themselves and with others
- Feel good about themselves
- Develop self-regulation and good coping skills
- Appropriately express the range of their feelings
- Become increasingly independent

- Balance personal needs and desires with those of others
- Learn collaborative problem-solving skills
- Learn through conversation – how to share and respect the ideas of others as well as how to use equipment, materials, and other resources in caring, appropriate ways

### **Child Guidance Practice**

The Center’s child guidance practices include:

- Arranging the environment – furniture, pathways, and materials in the room to encourage active learning, independent thinking, freedom to move, and independence
- Modifying activities to meet the needs of individual learners and their needs
- Using adult and peer support to encourage desired behaviors and decrease challenging behaviors
- Encouraging children’s autonomy
- Recognizing children’s efforts and accomplishments
- A plan for daily scheduling that engages children with a balance of independent and group activity, active and quiet, stress-free times, and avoids having to wait or be hurried
- Putting systems in place which help children understand and rely upon the structure of their days so that routines are predictable and consistent
- Having ample opportunity for children to select activities and move between them at their own pace, assuring that all children have equal opportunities to take part in all activities and use all materials
- Giving children ample notice of transitions ahead of time
- Having a method to communicate effectively with each child
- Providing children with expectations that are clear, positive, age-appropriate, and applied in a consistent way
- Redirecting children toward positive activities, acceptable choices, or engagement with other children
- Allowing children to participate in the establishment of rules, policies, and procedures where appropriate and feasible
- Working to maximize the growth and self-awareness of each individual child while also assuring the safety of all children
- Reinforcing positive behavior by recognizing children’s positive actions and growth
- Encouraging children to listen to, help, and support each other
- Helping children to understand and respect people different from themselves
- Modeling appropriate behavior by the way adults speak, interact, listen, and problem-solve
- Offering appropriate, real choices
- Listening carefully to children’s concerns
- Encouraging children to independently discuss and resolve their conflicts while offering adult assistance, when necessary - rather than imposing an adult’s solution on them
- Intervening quickly when there is physical aggression
- Helping children learn to respect each other’s possessions and work
- Helping children learn effective ways to deal with bullying, teasing, and other forms of intolerance
- Encouraging children to express their feelings in words and to resolve problems peacefully
- Encouraging children, where developmentally appropriate, to acknowledge the effects of their actions and words on other people and to practice, where appropriate, words or actions that can make reparation
- Ignoring simple inappropriate negative behavior that is unpleasant

- Communicating amongst staff members about the needs or challenges of individual children in relationships and about consistency of child guidance structures
- Modeling or supporting age appropriate expectations:
  - Toddlers do not share easily, thus sharing is modeled but not required
  - Teachers narrate play as it is happening for toddlers, “Oh, I see your friend wants to play with you” or “let’s move so your friend can get around you” – thus supplementing language and building awareness of others
  - State expectations positively: “Look how we can build with these blocks” *rather* than “Don’t throw the blocks!” or “Touch your friend like this” *rather* than “Don’t push your friend”
  - Toddlers use and process fewer words when working through conflict so modeling a direct action may be more useful than using lots of words
  - On the other hand older children can benefit more from the time taken to process things verbally
  - Try to redirect toddlers before separating them from a situation since we want the developmental step of separation to be a positive experience
  - An older child may benefit from a brief period to “cool down” in order to gain self-control and gather his or her thoughts to further resolve a conflict
  - Never would separating a child be defined as humiliation or punishment and there would always be discussion following such a time to help a child process and reintegrate with the group
  - Older children can also benefit from reflective structures like drawing about what has happened or dictating words to process solutions

## **Prohibitions**

The Center strictly prohibits the following:

- Spanking or other corporal punishment of children
- Subjecting children to cruel or severe punishment such as humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, neglect, or abusive treatment including any type of physical hitting inflicted in any manner upon the body, shaking, threats, or derogatory remarks
- Depriving children of outdoor time, meals or snacks
- Force feeding children or otherwise making them eat against their will, or in any way using food as a consequence
- Disciplining a child for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet; or forcing a child to remain in soiled clothing or forcing a child to remain on the toilet, or using any other unusual or excessive practices for toileting
- Confining a child to a swing, high chair, crib, playpen or any other piece of equipment for an extended period of time in lieu of supervision
- Excessive time away from the group. Any time away must take place within an educator’s view and is followed up with a conversation between the child and teacher as developmentally appropriate.
- Please also note that EEC does not allow any licensed child care programs to use discipline or child guidance techniques that require the use of any physical restraint

## **Reward Systems Discouraged**

The Children's Center discourages formal reward systems for discipline, for either the whole group or for individual children:

- Instead, we help children learn self-awareness and self-management through reflective conversations and collaborative problem-solving
- We base child guidance on intrinsic rewards – in other words, on the satisfaction a child or the group gets from internalizing self-discipline and standards for behavior in the group
- When appropriate, we develop age appropriate tools for helping a child assess his or her own behavior

### **Working with Families**

The staff at the Center will work in close partnership with families to address children's behavior at school and in the home when help is sought. It is important to acknowledge that there can be differences in child guidance practices between home and school and that there can be diverse cultural approaches. There may also be differences between what works at home in the close context of the family setting and what is possible or appropriate for school and the larger group of children. Teachers consider both the needs of individuals and the needs of the group. In general, staff will observe and document the range of children's engagement with the group and will communicate on-going social growth and challenges in bi-annual conferences with families. When there are particular concerns, staff and families can regularly be in touch with each other and can develop a shared understanding to foster consistency between home and child care.

Children also learn about behavior from watching other children and watching the reactions of adults to behavior. Families sometimes find that children bring behaviors they have seen at school to try out at home. This can be disconcerting to families yet often occurs because children want to try out behaviors in the safe context of home to see if expectations of behavior are the same as they have always been at home. When families calmly reaffirm expectations and are in communication with teachers, these behaviors can resolve themselves more easily and quickly.

If a child's behavior at school continues to be harmful or disrupting to themselves or others, the Director and the staff will develop a plan with the families to address the issues. This may include developing behavioral and safety plans for children that require them. In addition, this may at times require referring the child or family, with written parental permission, to other specialized services that can help address the child's behavior or underlying learning concerns. Staff will be aware of all behavioral and safety plans for a child.

**Please also see below.**

### **Plan to Support Children If Behavior Becomes More Challenging**

The Lead Teacher and the Director will have been in close communication when a child has behavior difficulties that are hurtful or disruptive to people, property, or the school program. In addition, families will be consulted and when appropriate, with the permission of the parent, referrals will be made for support to the child in the classroom.

Every effort will be made to help the child be successful in the program. Directors will support the situation by meeting with teachers to discuss behaviors and positive plans to support the child and have the classroom continue to function well. Directors will also be available to observe children or to meet with children to discuss behavior and plans for collaborating on solutions for behavior issues. The school will consider further staff training or consultation. Families and staff can discuss whether a shorter day may aid the situation

temporarily or other options to avoid termination. School staff and parents will also discuss if this is a matter that requires a plan of action, whether in the school or home, or finally, if suspension or expulsion is recommended.

In matters of serious behavior issues, if a child poses an immediate danger or a significant threat of disrupting the program, one of the Directors will remove the child from the classroom and the parents or guardians will be notified that the child needs to be picked up without delay. If the parents or guardians cannot be reached, the school will call the emergency contact and the child will remain out of the classroom for the rest of the day. The child will not return to the classroom until a reasonable plan can be made with the teacher, Director, and family for the child to function within the normal classroom structure.

At some point in the process after the adults have spoken, every effort will be made to include the child in discussions about the behavior when developmentally appropriate. If expulsion is decided upon by the Director for any reason, the parents or guardians will receive written notice. In addition, plans will be put in place to prepare the child to leave the school in a way that the child can understand and that will give the best possible, supportive closure for the child.

### **Suspension or Termination**

Williams College Children's Center makes every effort to ensure each child's and family's needs are well matched with the philosophy of the program. In rare cases a family may be asked to leave or be suspended from the Center. The following examples are reasons a child or family may be suspended or asked to leave the program:

- Non-payment of tuition
- Non-compliance with Health Care Policies
- Inability of program to meet the child's needs
- Behavior of child threatens safety of other children or staff
- Inappropriate behavior by parents on school grounds
- Excessive after-closing pickups

### **Parents' Rights**

The General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts mandate the Department of Early Education and Care the legal responsibility of disseminating and enforcing the rules and regulations governing the operation of child care centers (including nursery schools), and school age programs.

Williams College Children's Center is required to inform parents of certain information about their rights and responsibilities at the time of their child's admission to the Center. The majority of that information is contained within this handbook.

A copy of the Early Education and Care regulations is available upon request. If you have any questions regarding any regulations, please speak with the Director. The Center must make available any information requested by the Department of Early Education and Care to determine compliance with any Department regulation governing the program, by providing access to its facilities, records, staff and references. Parents

may contact the EEC for information regarding the program's regulatory compliance history at the Springfield office:

1441 Main St, Springfield, MA 01103  
Phone: 413-788-8401; Fax: 413-784-1227

## **Parent Communication and Involvement**

Parents are always welcome at the Children's Center and are free to come unannounced at any time. We hope they will occasionally join their child for lunch as well as other classroom activities and will take an active role in our community. We know that the relationships families and children make during their years in early childhood programs can last a lifetime. In addition there will be opportunities to serve on either the WCCC Advisory Committee or the Parent Committee. We value parents' knowledge about their children, the contributions that parents can make to programming, and the thoughts that parents can offer as we continue to develop our learning community.

## **Family Engagement and Volunteering**

We invite families to be a part of our program through family engagement and volunteering. You are welcome to spend time in the classrooms and share your knowledge and interests. Please feel free to talk with the class teachers to see if your participation could expand their curriculum in some way, or simply spend time in the classroom helping the children during group time, playing a game or reading a story. We value families in our program and find the children gain so much learning and pride from having a new perspective to learn from. For those family members looking to spend regular, scheduled, recurring time in a classroom we do require a background records check process.

Teachers occasionally send home suggestions for small projects that children can do at home which relate to their current studies. We hope you will enthusiastically engage with your child during these times since what children do at home is often shared with the group and helps to support a home/school connection.

We have put together a few tips that may be helpful as you think about your time in the classroom. Please feel free to chat with specific classroom teachers or directors if you have further questions or if you would like to share your ideas.

- First and foremost- have fun and enjoy the experience of working with young children! Just having you come in and share your time with the children gives them the valuable experience of learning from another adult and will likely be a highlight of their day!
- Talk with classroom teachers about best times for you to offer an activity, daily schedules and routines and a general idea of the children's expected attention span so your time will be the most enjoyable
- You are welcome to talk with teachers about what you would like to share with the class and to ask them for feedback or ideas
- Let the teachers know if you would like the children or the classroom to be arranged a certain way- for example children in small groups or easy access to water for clean-up. Feel free to only work with a small group rather than the whole class if you prefer!

- We would love to hear your feedback about how things went and any suggestions you could offer for other parents or for the next time!
- Remember the teachers are there to help in any way you need them

### **Community Events**

The Children's Center looks forward to many events where families and staff can gather. Throughout the year we offer events such as pot luck classroom meals and times when children share their learning from particular projects. We host All School Sings, Music Monday performances, "Lunch and Learn" gatherings on topics of interest to parents, "Curl Up and Read", the winter family open house, our annual spring family picnic, and a summer time ice cream social. We look forward to your input on these events. Families are welcome to participate as much or as little as they would like. We appreciate your help in making them happen whenever you have the interest or the time!

### **Daily and Weekly Communication and Blogs**

Each classroom will have individual ways to promote daily communication with parents, depending on the age of the children. In general teachers want to hear about information that could affect a child's day within the classroom - for example, if the child hasn't slept well, if there is a change in pick up time, if a parent is away on business, etc.

Weekly curriculum reflections are posted to our blog accessed by password through our website, and/or emailed to parents. Teachers may also post summaries of the day's events, sometimes involving the children in summarizing the day. Teachers of younger children will give Daily Sheets to parents summarizing care-giving details. Other teachers may use notebooks.

Upon enrolling at the Center, you will receive an email invitation to our private, password protected Blog site. Here you will be able to read about each classroom and learn more about our program. You can sign in from our website page or by using the following link:

<https://childrens-center.williams.edu/blogs/>

Teachers in the Infant, Toddler, and Pre-School programs give either daily or weekly communication noting a child's engagement in the program. Teachers of older children may leave notes in cubbies or mailboxes, send them by email, or communicate in person about the child's individual day. Staff will be writing regular newsletters to the families posted by email or given to parents on paper if preferred. It is important that parents check their email or cubbies daily.

Finally, when children or families do not speak English, the school will find ways to communicate with the family and work to support the child's English language learning.

### **Parent Teacher Conferences and Progress Reports**

Parents are invited to set up a conference with a classroom teacher or the Director at any time regarding the Center or their child's development. In addition, the Center designates time during both the fall and spring semesters for parent conferences. Progress reports are written in January and May so that the teachers can include information shared by the parents at the earlier conferences, as well as the goals set by parents and the teacher together and to update parents on further progress. We offer conferences and reports to parents of infants or parents of children with disabilities four times per year. Parents are strongly encouraged to sign up during these times. If at any time a parent, teacher or Director believes it is necessary, an additional conference will be held. It is very important to meet with teachers and/or a director if there are particular or urgent concerns about a child and the staff has requested a parent conference so that all can work together to support the child. Parents should keep in mind that our ability to serve your child depends on such joint problem-solving.

### **Parent Questions, Concerns and Comments**

Our hope is that the Center will flourish in an atmosphere of open communication and that all who are involved will bring a spirit of trust in our ability to be a strong and generous community. Along with the pieces we put in place for regular communication from the staff, we want parents to feel they can communicate with us easily when they have concerns about their children, their child's participation in the program, or other matters appropriate for parent input. It is first of all very helpful for parents to communicate with teachers about anything going on at home that might have an effect on their child, whether it is something like interrupted sleep patterns or whether their child has had a particularly happy or difficult morning. It is also very helpful for us to know about more complex matters like changes in family circumstances. We would keep information confidential as requested while still being able to support the child through changing situations. We ask that parents be sensitive to the teachers' needs to be with the children during transition times, so making a call later in the day or arranging a time to speak would be appropriate if greater time were needed.

When a parent has a concern about something in the classroom, we ask the parent to speak to the teacher first if at all possible. This helps keep an open dialogue and gives a teacher a chance to explain the program or ways of supporting the child. Sometimes the classroom will be very busy and teachers may ask parents to set up a time to meet or to talk on the phone. Arrangements should be made to talk within the Center's hours of operation unless the teacher welcomes calls during non-school hours.

If a parent feels the need for further conversation with a Director we are available to speak in person or on the phone. The Directors are always happy to speak to parents. We will generally not address such issues by email although parents could feel free to write to us. We would call back or ask to meet in person.

Questions or input about the Center policies should be directed to the Director or Assistant Director.

- The Assistant Director handles questions about enrollment
- The Administrative Assistant handles questions about billing
- The Director oversees all programming and school policy
- For parents who wish to share thoughts or concerns regarding the infant or toddler classes, speaking with the Assistant Director would be an appropriate step after talking with teachers
- For parents with children in the Preschool or School Age classes, talking with the Director would be a next step after speaking to teachers
- However, the Director is always available for conversation on any matter

There are additional avenues for parent feedback. The WCCC Advisory Ct., comprised of parents and interested members of the community, will serve the function of giving input to the Directors on program and policies. In addition, all parents are welcome to join the Parent Committee which supports the program in multiple ways. Fred Puddester, Vice President for Finance and Administration, is available to hear parent concerns after other avenues have been pursued.

### **Daily or Updated Information from Parents**

We ask parents to communicate with teachers about circumstances which may affect your child's day. Please call the classroom or the front desk to let us know any changes in your child's attendance. It is best to communicate changes in pick-up arrangements by email and copy the front desk, the directors, and the classroom teachers so that the message gets through since teachers will not necessarily read email during the day.

It is important for parents to keep the Administrative Assistant apprised of changes in contact numbers – home, work, and cell – as well as changes of address or email addresses. We will also need updated emergency contact numbers, changes in designated pick-up people, changes in family circumstances, or pertinent medical or educational information. Please give these changes to the office in writing or by email.

### **Divorced or Separated Parents**

The Children's Center tries to be aware of and sensitive to the families we serve. If divorced or separated parents are sharing custody and there is some way the program can help make this easier, or avoid making the situation more difficult, please let us know. We can include both parents in all-Center e-mails and other notices. We urge parents to come to joint parent/teacher conferences yet will conduct separate conferences if requested. Please note we cannot presume one parent has more or less rights than the child's other parent without a legal document (i.e. copy of custody settlement or restraining order).

### **Confidentiality**

The WCCC respects the confidentiality of children and their families. All information contained on a child's record is confidential. Staff discuss children during in-house professional meetings to further support individual children and the group. Information in a child's record is not released unless the child's parent provides written consent to do so.

### **Children's Records**

Children's records are kept in a locked cabinet at the Center. Only parents and professional, full time administrative and teaching staff will have access to a child's file. Parents must be notified if a child's record is subpoenaed. Each child at the center will have a file that includes:

- The Child's Enrollment Sheet
- Emergency Contact and Release Form
- Permissions and informed consents
- Contracts for Enrollment
- Physical Examination
- Dental, hearing, and eye exam records when offered by the family

- Developmental History Forms
- Immunization Records
- Copies of referrals and reports from referrals
- Injury reports
- Transportation plan for the child
- Medication consent forms
- Medical condition action plans
- Copies of progress reports and assessments of the child
- Copies of custody agreements when provided by the family
- Any other relevant information regarding the child
- A log identifying access to and copying of child's record

Parents have the right to add any information or comments to their child's record. Parents also have the right to amend or delete any information in the child's record.

Parents are entitled to access their child's records at reasonable times on request. The request must be processed within two (2) business days unless a longer time period is agreed upon. Copies shall be available at a reasonable cost.

When a child is no longer in care at the Center, the Director or said designee will release the child's record only with a written request from the parent.

## **Activities Requiring Authorization**

### **Photography, Videography and Other Technology**

During the course of the semester, students at the Center may be video- taped or photographed inside the classroom for the program, (newsletter, blog entries, parent reports), research, advertising and news reports. Parents will always be asked for written permission allowing their child to be photographed as part of our "Informed Consent". Parents will also be asked for written permission for any published photos. Photographs and videos are an essential part of the program as a means to share the life of the classroom with the community of children and families, to observe children's engagement with the program, and to document the program for licensing and national certification such as NAEYC. Because of the ease of transmitting photos and videos through available technology, we want to be especially cognizant of protecting children's privacy.

We ask that if parents want to photograph or video-tape their own children while in the classroom that they do not photograph or video-tape other children without written permission. We want to protect children's privacy when they might be having a difficult day, even if the parent is not aware of it. On the other hand, when we are gathered for community events and there is no expectation of privacy, parents are welcome to photograph or videotape children. Still, we ask that these photos or videotapes not be transmitted electronically to others. The restriction of posting photos and videos over the Internet also applies to staff. The only exception is for staff to send photos of individual children to the child's own parents or for a teacher to send photos of the group or members of the group on to the parents as part of classroom news or weekly notes. It is to be understood that such photos are not to be forwarded on to other persons, to be posted on social networking sites such as Facebook, to be posted on photo sharing sites, or in any way modified or published in hard or electronic copies.

## Research

The Williams College Children's Center will provide opportunities for the faculty and students of Williams College to engage in research on issues related to young children and education. The Children's Center and the College will consider the needs of the children and families while also making scholarly research opportunities available. Students from the College will be under the direct supervision of faculty and their research or projects proposals will be scrutinized by faculty. All research with human subjects is additionally approved by the Institutional Review Board of the College. In addition, the WCCC Directors will have opportunities to comment on and approve research projects done at the Center. Children's identities will be masked for research purposes.

Parents will be asked to sign permission for on-going passive observation for research purposes by Williams College students and members of the faculty as part of the "informed consent" signed by parents each year. Observational research is classified as exploration that does not involve direct interaction or contact with the children outside of the child's daily routine and activities. The researcher may use the observation room, be seated directly in the classroom, or on the playground. The researcher does not remove the child from the classroom. Observational research may also include the use of video and audio tape recorders, event recorders and/or hand-written notes. Children's names are not used, and all observational material is destroyed at the completion of the project.

All procedures for observational research must be approved by the Director of the Center prior to the beginning of the observation period. Observations which are anonymous and part of class assignments but will not be published or presented at a conference do not need Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. Observations which will potentially result in publication or professional use must have IRB approval and parents must sign a separate consent form.

Occasionally other colleges or universities request permission from the Director to observe for an academic assignment. In this situation, the same research procedures are followed. Letters outlining specific projects or research working directly with children will be given to parents and parents will then sign permission slips for these projects or research.

## Transportation

The Williams College Children's Center does not provide transportation. Parents are responsible for making arrangements for transportation. Parents can arrange to have transportation for their children from Williamstown Elementary School for the School Age Program or to attend programs or services at WES. All families will fill out a transportation plan for children.

The Center will follow these procedures to reduce the chances of injury during transportation times.

- "Children at Play" signs are posted to warn motorists they are approaching a school zone
- There is a safe drop off and pick up location. Parents can park in the parking lot and walk up the sidewalk or if room in the circle, can **momentarily** park in the second half of the circle while accompanying their child into the classroom
- Do not park in the first half of the circle, reserved for emergency vehicles, at any time

- For safety, please turn cars off and do not leave children unattended
- Please accompany children to and from the classroom when they arrive and leave the Center
- Parent, please sign your children in and out in the classroom and notify the teacher when your child arrives and leaves
- Children will not be transported in personal vehicles for school programs
- During trips, teachers will take first aid kits, cell phones, and each child's emergency information cards
- Field trips will be cancelled if weather is determined to be too dangerous for travel.

Teachers will model pedestrian safety when on walking field trips. Teachers and other staff members of younger classrooms will supervise children in the front and end of the line. Teachers will show children to look both ways before crossing a street, and to cross at the corner, at cross-walks, or when traffic signals show that it is safe to cross.

The WCCC insurance does not cover employees to transport a child or parent at any time. Any employees who wish to transport children/parents outside of work hours do so at their own risk.

### **Transporting Children with Disabilities**

While the Children's Center does not offer transportation to any children attending the Center, we will work with parents to determine the transportation and safety needs of children with disabilities who have special requirements for travel. The College vans do not have special equipment for special needs. The WCCC will work with agencies or public schools, where possible, when it is appropriate for transportation to be arranged by such organizations either for daily travel or for field trips.

### **Field Trip Transportation**

Field trips are an important portion of the program, further enhancing the children's experiences and learning. On the occasion a field trip is planned, parents are given written notice in advance. Blanket field trip permission slips will have been signed for commonly taken trips including walks on campus and through nearby neighborhoods as part of the "Informed Consent." Parents will be given the opportunity to sign permission for all other trips. Parents will be notified in writing on daily message boards, by email, in weekly lesson plans, or in newsletters when field trips are planned. Teachers will use classroom communication boards in the morning when children will leave the building for impromptu walks.

There may be a nominal charge for a field trip (i.e., the cost of entrance to a museum or renting roller skates). Parents are very welcome to come along on field trips and can join the group in the van if there is sufficient room. Please let the teacher know if you plan to go along on a trip. Occasionally parents could be asked to come along on a field trip in order to support their individual children.

The Children's Center uses insured and properly maintained vans from the College for field trips. Only certified teachers or directors with driver's licenses will drive the vans. Parents do not drive vans and cannot take other children from the Center in their cars for field trips. Parents must bring appropriate car seats for children to participate in trips for which William's College Children's Center provides transportation. This includes booster seats for children in the School Age program who are under eight years old or under 4'9". Parents will secure their child's individual car seat in to the designated College van. In addition every teacher must be securely fastened into seatbelts. Teachers carry valid driver's licenses and bring all necessary first aid,

cell phones, and emergency contact information. Radios are silent and teachers pull over to speak on cell phones only when necessary to the safety of the trip.

Additional protocols are in place for tracking attendance, supervising the groups, swimming protocols, dealing with emergencies and supporting children in disciplinary situations. A copy of the plan is available upon request.

### **Safe Rides Home Policy**

At the Children's Center we want to make sure that all children are in safe hands as we release them to parents, guardians, or care-givers at pick-up time. On rare occasions teachers can be faced with the delicate situation of wondering if the person picking up the child is in some way impaired and therefore unsafe for the child to be with.

If that were to be the case, the teachers and/or the Directors would engage the person picking up the child to see if the grown-up was functioning well enough to take the child home. If the staff were concerned that the child would not be safe, a Director (or teacher left in charge) would suggest an alternate pick-up arrangement, and hopefully the adult would agree to a plan that would keep the child's safety in mind. Were the pick-up person not agreeable about an alternative arrangement, the staff would be required, because we are mandated reporters, to immediately inform both the police and the Department of Children and Families that we suspected a child was in the care of a possibly impaired adult. This is of course a situation we never want to find ourselves in and hope that all of us will keep children's safety as our topmost goal.

### **Car Seat Policy**

There may be times when a family does not have a car seat for their child. This emergency could happen when an emergency contact may be called to pick up a child unexpectedly, families have a situation arise where they cannot make it back to the center to pick up their child or just by mistake.

In the event that a family does not have their child's care seat at the time of picking up the child the Children's Center does have both an infant/toddler car seat and a booster seat that can be borrowed for that day and returned either later that day or on the next business day. Parent will be responsible for installing the car seat in their vehicle. We provide this service to ensure that children are safely transported in an emergency that may arise. To make this service available to families whenever an emergency should arise, it is imperative that any borrowed car seat be returned on or before the next business day.

### **School Age Children Riding the Bus to WCCC**

If your child normally rides the bus from Williamstown Elementary School or Side by Side and WILL NOT be coming to school on any given day we ask that families please let the teachers or someone at the center know. It is best to email the Director, Assistant Director or Administrative Assistant, as well as the teachers because one or another of us may be away from email or the building.

If a child we have expected does not get off the bus our staff will have to follow steps to ensure that the child is safe. You can understand that we worry and that following through on these calls takes us away from the other children or duties.

- We will first try to contact families by calling and leaving messages on all known numbers.
- If we are unable to reach families, we will call the school to get confirmation the child is safe.
- If we cannot confirm with the school or reach a family member, we will call the emergency contacts listed.
- If we are still unable to confirm the whereabouts of the child we will then call the Williamstown Police Department.
- All efforts will be made to confirm the child is safe.
- Please call us back just as soon as you hear a message from us

We don't want to have to worry about your child, nor do we ever want to reach the point where we have to call the police to help us locate him or her.

## **Operating Schedule**

The Center is open at 8:00 AM. Children should be picked no later than 5:15 PM to allow a brief conversation with staff and to collect the child's belongings. The morning hours for children who attend the Pre-school program half time are 8:00 AM to 12:30 PM. The PM schedule for half day Pre-School children is from 12:30 to 5:15 PM.

## **Calendar and Holidays**

The Williams College Children's Center is closed for:

- 9 holidays
- The week between Christmas and New Year's
- 5 professional development days
- The Children's Center closes one hour early (pick-up by 4:15) one day per month for the monthly staff meeting, as announced in the annual calendar

Please refer to current Center Calendar on our website.

## **Snow Days, Inclement Weather and Other Emergencies**

As a residential college, Williams must continue to support its students regardless of inclement weather or other emergency situations. The College, therefore, does not usually close. Williams Children's Center makes every effort to provide service during inclement weather or other emergency situations. There will, however, be occasions when the Center closes or offers shortened hours. There have been times in the past when we have closed under the advisement of the state government because weather conditions were extreme. In addition, the college has sometimes decided that the weather was too perilous to open administrative offices and the Children's Center. In the case of a delayed opening the Children's Center will normally open one half hour earlier than administrative offices.

When we remain open in bad weather conditions we ask that families and staff each use individual discretion as to whether or not they come to the Center. Families should be sure to notify us when their children will not attend during bad weather so that we can plan for staffing needs.

On days when Williamstown Elementary School closes for snow or other related emergencies (if we are not otherwise closed as well) we open the School Age classroom beginning at 8:30. When WES is simply delayed

but we are open, we do not open our School Age program. If WES delays and then decides to close, we would open the School Age program as soon as possible if we are not otherwise closed or delayed.

In the event the College delays or closes the administrative offices and the Children's Center, efforts are made to make announcements as soon as possible. Announcements are made on the college's home page; the college's weather line 413-597-ICEY, college mail, and local television stations. In addition, we would send out an email to staff and parents and a message would be left on the Director's phone, 597-4434.

Children who normally attend the School Age program on the particular day of the WES closure are automatically eligible to attend if we open when WES closes. Enrolled school age students who do not normally attend on the particular day will be accepted on a first come, first served basis by emailing the following three people to ensure receipt: Director: [cag1@williams.edu](mailto:cag1@williams.edu), Assistant Director: [alc8@williams.edu](mailto:alc8@williams.edu), Administrative Assistant: [car1@williams.edu](mailto:car1@williams.edu). Parents should wait for the Director to respond before bringing children in. Please also remember to bring lunch for your child.

Older siblings of enrolled WCCC children who are not part of the School Age program are eligible to attend the Center on a WES snow day if there is still space remaining after serving currently enrolled School Age children. All enrollment paperwork must be completed for these children before being accepted for snow days. Please email the Director to see if there are slots available and the Administrative Assistant ([car1@williams.edu](mailto:car1@williams.edu)) for electronic paperwork. Drop-in enrollments will be billed separately.

### **Planning Attendance for Scheduled Williamstown Elementary School Closures**

On days when WES has scheduled closings, such as holidays, professional development days and school vacations, our school age program will be open to serve families. About a month before the planned closure we will email current school age families to confirm whether or not your child is coming on their regularly scheduled days and to see if you would like to request any additional days. We will give a deadline by which families need to reply. After sorting for priority we will serve families on a first come/first serve basis and you will be notified by email. There will be no waitlist for planned school closures and we will not accept requests for future vacations or closures.

After accepting currently enrolled school age children for drop-in days we will email all WCCC families regarding sibling enrollment for school age drop-ins with an RSVP deadline. Finally, we will accept summer-only families after that time if there is space available.

### **Financial Topics**

**Fee Schedule – Also please see Fee Schedule on our website.**

Fees are charged for annual enrollment in the program and are not based on attendance, vacations, holidays, the campus winter shut-down, or weather-related closures. Children who miss a day will not be able to make it up on another day that week.

### **Enrollment Application Fees**

Prospective families who wish to enroll their child in a class that has space available at that time can apply with the enrollment application and after paying the fee they will be enrolled. Prospective parents can put their children on the waitlist for a program that is currently full or enroll after paying the Center's wait list fee. To do this they should contact the school to request an application. Once the application is filled out and the school receives the non-refundable fee of \$50.00, the child can either enroll or be added to the waitlist.

### **Field Trip Fees**

Most field trip expenses are covered by the program. Occasionally classes take a field trip that has an entry fee over five dollars. In this case, in order for the children to benefit from a special experience, the program may ask parents to contribute the difference over five dollars. These fees will be added to the bi-monthly invoice for tuition. Parents whose children receive vouchers for childcare will not be charged additional field trip fees.

### **Prompt Payment Policy**

Williams College Children's Center expects families to be timely with tuition payments. Parents can choose to pay bi-weekly, every four weeks, by the term, or for the year. All payments are expected before service is rendered. In other words, bi-weekly payments are due on Friday of the week preceding service and so forth. Williams College faculty and staff have the option to use payroll deduction for bi-weekly payments for childcare. Please see the Assistant Director for a form.

In the event non-payment of tuition occurs, the following steps will be taken up to and including dismissal from the Center.

- Families receive biweekly invoices for care by email
- All payments are due before service is rendered
- Invoices state when fees are 15 days or more past due
- At three weeks the Director will inform families that the four week deadline is approaching when all payments for the total remaining tuition will become due; a payment plan written and submitted by the family and approved by the director can be put in place with first payment due immediately
- Failure to make required tuition payments for a period of four weeks shall cause the total tuition payments for the remaining term of the agreement to become immediately due and payable; the family will be given a written two week written notice that the child will be dismissed from the program for lack of payment

In general, keeping the Children's Center abreast of plans for payment will go a long way toward establishing that payment issues will be resolved.

### **Late Pick-up Fees**

Although the Center closes its doors at 5:30 PM, **pick-up time is 5:15 PM**. If parents are going to be unavoidably late in rare circumstances, please call the Center so that we can soothe your anxious child. If a

parent is late picking up a child more than rare circumstances a warning letter will be sent to remind parents of the policy. After such a letter is sent the parent will be charged late pick up fees. Parents are considered late (with regard to late fees) after 12:30 PM for morning pick-ups and 5:30 PM for end of day pick-ups. Parents will be charged \$10.00 for the first 5 minutes they are late and \$10.00 every 5 minutes after. We cannot emphasize enough the importance of promptness and the cost to the Center program for a staff member staying beyond his/her scheduled time, or the effect on the program when a child is picked up late during mid- day.

## **Changes in Enrollment**

### **Adding Occasional Drop-In Days**

Sometimes parents may want to add an extra day to their child's week on an occasional basis. Parents who would like this should speak to the teacher as well as the Administrative Assistant to see if this can be accommodated in the classroom. The fees for such days are listed in the Fee Schedule on our website.

### **Enrollment Agreements**

Continuing enrollment begins each year in late March when families are asked to complete their requests for enrollment schedules for the next agreement year, beginning in July. We confirm enrollment for college families by May 1st and for community families by June 1st.

During the continuing enrollment process, families who anticipate a need for changes in enrollment days at the start of a new semester should make this request on the continuing enrollment form. A decrease in days may effect priority for enrollment, as full time families are given highest priority. However, when possible we will work to accommodate this request.

On occasion, for reasons particular to a child's and family's situation, the family's care needs may change. Families agree to give at least four weeks' notice of pending termination of the enrollment agreement. Failure to give such notice will result in the forfeiture of their deposit. When proper notice is given, the deposit previously paid by the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be refunded once all fees have been paid. Please speak to a director if you are thinking about this.

If a family has unusual circumstances and would like the College to consider waiving the enrollment agreement, the family must submit their request to the Director in writing. The Vice President of Finance and Administration will review the request. The College is, however, under no obligation to waive the enrollment agreement.

### **Changes in the Number of Enrolled Days**

It is occasionally possible for parents to increase the number of days a child comes to the Center. The parents should speak with the Director or the Assistant Director to discuss availability and if so, a new enrollment agreement can be written.

Families may not reduce the number of days of care during an enrollment agreement year except in unusual circumstances.

Parents should be aware when choosing fewer days at the beginning of a new enrollment agreement year that they might be at risk of losing their spot to a family requesting full-time care. Please see a director if you have any questions about priority.

## **Health and Safety**

### **Health Consultant**

Dr. Childsy Art is the health care consultant for Williams College Children's Center. She has reviewed the Center's Health Policies, which reflect State mandated standards.

### **Required Medical Examinations for Children**

A child shall be admitted to the Center only if provided with a written statement from a physician that indicates that the child has had a complete physical examination within one year prior to admission, or obtains one within one month of admission. The physical examination required upon enrollment shall be valid for one year from the date the child was examined and shall be repeated annually. Written verification of each child's annual physical examination, updated immunizations and lead screening need to be submitted to the Center.

Pursuant to Department of Public Health regulations, all children, regardless of risk, shall be screened for lead poisoning at least once between the ages of nine and 12 months and annually thereafter until the age of 36 months unless families live in a city designated as higher risk for lead poisoning. In that case children need to be screened to the age of 48 months. The Center will obtain within one month of admission of the child, a statement signed by a physician or an employee of a health care agency stating that the child has been screened for lead poisoning.

A physician's certificate is required for all children, at admission, noting that the child has been successfully immunized in accordance with the current Department of Public Health's recommended schedules against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), poliomyelitis, measles, hepatitis B, Haemophilis Influenza Type B (HIB), varicella (chicken pox), and such other communicable diseases as may be specified from time to time by the state. No child shall be required to have any such immunization if his parents object thereto, in writing, on the grounds that it conflicts with their sincere religious beliefs or if the child's physician submits documentation that such a procedure is contraindicated. However, if there are outbreaks of infectious diseases for which a child has not been immunized, then the non-immunized child will need to be excluded from the program during the outbreak.

### **When a Child Becomes Sick**

Children occasionally get sick. When illness occurs it is important for the child to stay home. We ask that parents be sensitive to this as our program is an active one and a sick child is likely to be uncomfortable. The health of other children and the teachers also needs to be considered. If your child stays out for any reason, sickness or otherwise, please call your child's teacher. If illness occurs at the Center, the parents or other designated emergency contact will be notified to pick up the child promptly at that time. The child will be kept comfortable while awaiting pickup.

Children who exhibit symptoms of the following types of illness, such as gastro-intestinal, respiratory and skin or direct contact infections, may be excluded from the Center if it is determined that any of the following

exist:

1. The illness prevents the child from participating in the program activities or from resting comfortably;
2. The illness results in greater care need than the child care staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children
3. The child has any of the following conditions: fever, unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing, or other signs of serious illness.
  - Fever equal to or greater than 101 degrees taken by ear or 100 degrees under armpit. Child excluded at least through the following full day and thereafter may return when symptom free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication and showing no other signs of illness for which they would otherwise be restricted.
  - Diarrhea case-by-case with consideration given to known normal habits of the child, frequency, odor, consistency, child's ability to participate in their day, and current classroom viruses and illnesses. Child may return the next day if symptom free without medication and showing no other signs of illness.
  - Vomiting case-by-case with consideration given to frequency, volume, events leading up to vomiting, child's ability to participate in their day, and current classroom viruses and illnesses. Child may return the next day if symptom free and showing no other signs of illness.
  - Rash with a fever or behavior change until the physician has determined that the illness is one for which the child does not need to be excluded and the child is fever free for 24 hours without medication.
  - Tuberculosis, until the child is non-infectious
  - Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment has started or all the sores are covered
  - Strep infection, until 24 hours after treatment and the child has been without fever for 24 hours without fever reducing medication
  - Many types of hepatitis are caused by viruses. The symptoms are so alike that blood tests are needed to tell them apart. In the U.S. the most common types of hepatitis are A, B, and C. Types B and C are spread through blood and other body fluids. Type A is spread through contaminated food and water or stool (feces). Fact sheets are available from the state Department of Public health. [www.state.ma.us/dph](http://www.state.ma.us/dph)
  - Chicken pox, until last blister has healed over.

If a child has already been admitted to the Center and shows signs of illness (i.e., a fever equal to or greater than 101 degrees by ear or 100 degrees under the armpit, a rash, reduced activity level, diarrhea, etc.), or if the child manifests any of the other symptoms requiring exclusion listed above, he/she will be offered their mat, cot, or other comfortable spot in which to lie down and the parents or emergency contact person will be called to collect the child very promptly.

If a child is running a fever equal to or greater than 105 degrees, we likely will already have reached out to you to come unless this is a very sudden onset of fever. We will contact the family again for immediate pick up. We may also have contacted your child's doctor or our own health care consultant. If we are unable to contact the family or the emergency contact person, or an immediate pick up cannot occur, we will then call 911 to transport the child to the hospital.

If free of fever and other symptoms after being diagnosed with a highly contagious illnesses such as tuberculosis, chicken pox, or hepatitis, a child who has been excluded from child care may return after being evaluated by a physician, physician's assistant or nurse practitioner, and it has been determined that he/she is considered to pose no serious health risk to him or her or to the other children. Nevertheless, the Williams College Children's Center may make the final decision concerning the inclusion or exclusion of ill or recovering children.

In the case of head lice, children will be allowed to stay in the classroom until the end of the day and then must be chemically treated before returning to school. Please talk to your physician for the best treatment. Parents should try to remove all nits. However, nits that are more than ¼" from the scalp are empty egg casings and not considered a reason for further exclusion.

If a child enrolled in the school age program has been out of school, or sent home from school because of illness, we ask that you keep your child home from the center. We do our best to keep the classrooms clean and the children and teachers healthy, and your support in this goes a long way toward keeping us all healthy at the center.

When a communicable disease has been introduced into the Center, parents will be notified immediately, and in writing by the Assistant Director. When required, information regarding the communicable disease shall be made available to parents. Program Directors shall consult the Child Care Health Manual for such information. The Department of Health must be contacted when there is a reportable communicable disease in the program.

### **Plan for Mildly Ill Children**

Mildly ill children can remain in the classroom as long as they are not contagious and they can participate in all activities including outside play. If it is determined that the child poses a health threat to the other children or if their condition worsens, or if the child can no longer be cared for by the classroom staff, the child's parents or emergency contact person will be contacted by the Director or teacher. When possible, the child will be cared for in a quiet area separate from the other children until the parents arrive to pick up the child.

### **When Children Have Surgery**

When children have had surgery we ask that we receive a note from the child's doctor saying that it is safe to be at school as well as noting any restrictions. Please be sure your doctor is aware that a child's day is very active and that the child would need to be part of everyday activity that may include classroom routines like playing in the sand, normal movement, and bumping with other children. Please also have your doctor include any instructions for us to follow with regard to caring for the wound if necessary during the school day.

### **Emergency Procedure**

When an accident occurs or a child becomes ill, the Center will first determine the severity of the situation, call 911 if deemed appropriate by staff trained in First Aid and/or CPR, and then contact the parent/guardian.

If the parent cannot be reached, the Center will contact the designated emergency contact in the child's records. Either the Lead Teacher (or the teacher acting in her stead) or a Director will take the child's records and go with the child to the hospital. Once the parent arrives, the staff member may leave the hospital.

### **First Aid**

Any staff member who is trained in First Aid/CPR can administer First Aid; however, the Lead Teacher is preferred. There is a First Aid kit located in each of the classrooms.

### **Incident/Accident Reports**

No matter how minor they may appear, all accidents are to be reported to the Director with the appropriate accident report. This report will be filed by the end of the day and a copy will be given to the parent or sent home with the pick-up person. Parents should sign the form and return it, preferably at the moment it is handed to them.

### **Emergency Evacuation**

Emergency Evacuation Plans will be posted at all exits. During an emergency evacuation, the Lead Teachers will be responsible for taking the attendance information and for leading the children out of the building. Teachers, Assistant Teachers and other staff will assist in the evacuation and check for stragglers.

Infants and non-mobile toddlers will be placed in the evacuation crib and/or carried by staff. Other available staff will assist with the evacuation of the Infant Room, Swing Room, and Infant/Toddler room as well as children with special needs if applicable.

The Director of the Center (or designated representative) will make a visual inspection of each classroom before exiting the building.

All classrooms, once evacuated, will meet at the playground gate which exits from the field where the Lead Teacher will take a head count and wait for the go ahead by the Director before re-entering the building.

Were there to be an actual fire, the Director or person in charge would call 911 on a cell and Campus Security from the emergency call post outside. If it is determined that the building is dangerous to enter, the Lead Teacher will take another head count and the group will proceed to the '62 Center Theatre. Once at the Theatre, another head count will be taken. Re-entry to the Center will be made only when official notification has been given by fire personnel/security that it is safe to return.

The Center will maintain a daily attendance list that is current. Staff is responsible for reminding parents to sign children in and out of the Center by indicating arrival and departure times. The attendance list will be readily accessible in case of an emergency evacuation. The Lead Teachers will be responsible for taking the attendance list, emergency contact numbers and first aid kits, and for accounting for all of the children in the class once they are safely out of the building.

Emergency evacuation drills are conducted every other month at different times of the program day as determined by the Assistant Director. Children and staff should practice using different evacuation routes so that the children and staff will be familiar with them.

The Assistant Director will maintain a record of all fire exit drills documenting the date, time, weather conditions and effectiveness of each drill. These records shall be kept on the premises.

Procedures are in place for Lockdowns and other emergency contingencies.

- At the first safe moment the Director, Assistant Director or person in charge will begin the notification of families using an email or phone message
- Parents who are Williams employees will otherwise hear about the emergency at the Children's Center through emergency communication notices
- Parents are asked to stay away from the Center during the lockdown for their own protection
- Any children and staff who have escaped the building will make their way to the '62 Theater where they can reunite with their parents
- Otherwise, parents must wait until the "all clear" email from the Director or Campus Safety to safely come to the Center

### **Medications/Permission Forms**

Teachers must follow these rules when giving medication:

- Non-prescription and prescription drugs will only be given with the written consent of a parent and physician.
- The physician will include directions for administering the medication in the permission for the OTC medications and as part of the prescription label for prescription medications
- Non-prescription topical ointments (sunscreen, petroleum jelly, etc.) will only be applied with the written consent of a parent.
- Prescription medication must arrive in the original prescription container with date, dosage, and the doctor's name.
- Medication may NOT be left in lunch boxes, school bags or children's clothing. It must ALWAYS be handed to a teacher directly.
- Medication will not be given in any amount other than what is indicated on the prescription label.
- All medications that are administered are logged into Medication Logs. Each classroom has its own log.

### **Plan for Special Health Care Medical Conditions/Allergies**

During intake, parents will be asked to record any known allergies on the face sheet and asked to have the physician fill out a medical condition or food allergy action plan when appropriate. The face sheet will be updated at least annually. All allergies or other important medical information will be posted in each classroom with a "Confidential" cover sheet. Allergy and medical condition lists will be updated as necessary – when new children enroll or when unknown allergies or conditions become known. All staff members are made aware of this list.

The names of children with allergies or medical conditions that may be life threatening (i.e., bee stings) will be posted in conspicuous locations with specific instructions if an occurrence were to happen. The Director will be responsible for making sure that staff receives appropriate training to handle emergency situations such as allergic reactions.

## **Sleep Safety**

Families will be notified of SUID risk reduction practices, sleep positioning policies, and arrangements for sleeping all infants on their backs.

To reduce the risk of Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID) including Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS):

- Every infant twelve months of age or younger will be placed on his or her back for sleeping, unless the child's health care professional orders otherwise in writing
- When a child's doctor determines the need for the child to be put to sleep on the child's stomach, that child's crib will be labeled stating that permission is granted for stomach sleeping by the doctor
- Children can sleep in any other comfortable sleep position once they are easily able to turn themselves from the back position, but will first be placed on their backs for napping.
- Infants younger than 6 months at the time of enrollment will be under direct visual supervision at all times, including when napping, for the first six weeks of being in care. Young infants will be placed in the front cribs to monitor sleepers. Teachers will keep children in direct view and check them every five minutes for breathing signs by watching the chest rise and lower. Teachers will position themselves to allow for crib monitoring.
- No children under 12 months of age shall be put down for sleep in a crib, bassinet, port-a-crib or playpen containing pillows, comforters, stuffed animals, or other soft, padded materials
- SleepSacks are provided for all children. We do not use blankets in cribs.
- An infant's head must remain uncovered during sleep

If an infant falls asleep outside, in a stroller or backpack, teachers will monitor the child to be sure they are not over bundled in cold weather, becoming overheated in warm weather, and that nothing interferes with breathing (stroller straps secure but not too tight; no blankets or soft objects with infant; baby is positioned so they can breathe freely).

If an infant falls asleep in a swing or is dropped off in a car seat asleep, the child will be moved into a crib and any outdoor clothing will be loosened to prevent overheating.

Swaddling will not be done in our program since no children are below the age of six weeks.

When older infants between the ages of 12 and 15 months are preparing for their transition to the toddler room we can help them prepare by giving them the opportunity to sleep on a cot in the infant room. Parents are included in this decision as well as consideration for any medical reasons that might conflict with the cot sleeping, the developmental readiness of the infant and the ability to safely evacuate infants sleeping on cots. If an infant is sleeping on a cot and there is an increase in injuries involving the older infants sleeping on cots this procedure will stop and the infant will go back to sleeping in a crib while in the infant room.

## **Bottle Warming Safety**

The Department of Early Education and Care recommends the safest solution to serving bottles is to serve them cold or at room temperature. We understand however, that families may wish for their infant's bottles

to be warmed before feeding. Our teachers can do this only by holding the bottle under warm, running water or placing the bottle in a container of warm tap water for no longer than 5 minutes. After warming, bottles will be gently mixed and the temperature of the milk tested before feeding to be sure it feels warm, but not hot.

## **Diapering**

Diapering of young children happens throughout the day and is a nice one-on-one time for teachers to talk to children, to further develop relationships with care givers and further extend language with singing and narrating the diaper routine.

Teachers check diapers frequently during the day to ensure the continued comfort and cleanliness of each child. Each diaper is changed in a sanitized, designated area. Each child is fully supervised by a teacher and encouraged to participate in the diapering process (i.e., holding the clean diaper or clean wipe, helping take off pants, naming body parts and/or happily chatting).

Parents are asked to provide diapers and wipes. Teachers will remind families to replenish supplies, but should check supplies regularly.

## **Toilet Training**

Beginning to use the toilet can be both an exciting and challenging time for your child. The goal of the Center is to begin toilet training at the lead of the child and family. Children usually begin indicating signs of readiness, which both parents and teachers should look for. Each child is a unique individual and toilet training will follow according to each child's developmental readiness. Toilet training is not a requirement for enrollment. The process of toilet training is outlined below:

- The initiation of toilet training should always be based on the child's developmental level rather than on the child's age. Initiating toilet learning before the child is developmentally ready can create stress for the child and the family, and increase the length of time it takes
- It is important for the child to begin toilet training when he/she exhibits signs of interest and readiness. Ignoring these signs may cause the child's interest to wane and can delay the toilet learning process
- Therefore, readiness is viewed as a valuable window of opportunity that staff and parents identify and respond to
- Staff will work with the family as to how the family would like toilet training to proceed
- Once children have embarked on the toilet training process teachers provide access to the toilet throughout the day as well as gentle reminders inviting the children to try using the toilet
- Any reluctance to try the toilet is responded to with a calm, matter-of-fact manner and children are encouraged to try again next time
- Similarly when children have success at using or trying the toilet teachers also respond in a low-key, matter-of-fact manner
- Readiness cues include the following:
  1. The child imitates his/her parents' behavior
  2. The child begins to put things where they belong
  3. The child demonstrates independence by saying "no"
  4. The child expresses interest in toilet learning

5. The child walks and is ready to sit down
6. The child communicates his/her need to eliminate (urinate/pass bowels)
7. The child is able to pull clothes up and down (on and off)
8. The temperament of the child, which includes motor activity, intensity of reactions, mood, regularity (especially behavioral), initial approach/withdrawal response, adaptability to new situations, attention span/persistence, distractibility, and sensory threshold/frustration level, needs to be considered when determining the child's readiness and the staff and parent's strategy for toilet learning

Staff assist children in the later stages of using the toilet but encourage growing independence with wiping and using the bathroom without an accompanying adult as appropriate. Staff leave the door open when helping a child with toileting. Both children and staff wash and dry hands thoroughly when toileting is completed. It is understood and accepted that children may have accidents throughout their time in the Center. Accidents are met matter-of-factly. Independence for changing and washing up are encouraged as age appropriate. Children who are toilet trained will be reminded throughout the day to use the toilet. Please provide at least one change of clothes to be kept in your child's cubby.

## **Food and Nutrition**

The Center encourages healthy eating at the Center. We believe that sound nutrition is a basic need of children. We offer children age appropriate nutritious snacks in the morning and afternoon. Snack and meal times are warm and relaxing. This is time for conversation, self-expression and enjoyment.

The Center respects different diets based on culture, health, and personal beliefs by supporting the child's choice to eat foods their family prefers.

Please pack lunches with cold packs as necessary to maintain the food's proper temperatures. Infant and toddler lunches can be kept in the refrigerators. Pre-school and School Age classrooms do not have refrigeration space so lunches for older children need to come with cold packs. Please cut, prepare and pack your child's lunch in the way they are able to eat it on their own. Our teachers focus on the engagement with the children during meal times rather than preparing food for the children. Please label all containers sent in, including bottles.

While the teachers offer encouraging comments about trying the foods the family has sent in for the child's lunch they do not preference the order in which foods should be eaten. We believe this helps children to listen to their body's signals for hunger and fullness and to form a healthy relationship to all food choices.

To encourage a healthy decision-making process, the Center offers the following suggestions for the parents when considering lunch options for their children and/or special events in the Center.

- Tuna salad and crackers
- Fresh fruit (peeled apples, strawberries, orange segments, banana, blueberries when age appropriate and when cut small for very young children)
- Yogurt
- Cottage cheese and fruit
- Veggie pieces and hummus
- Sunflower butter (this is a nut and peanut free school) & whole wheat bread

- Hard boiled eggs
- Milk and/or 100% juices
- A variety of foods from family dinners

For younger toddlers, please avoid hot dogs, popcorn, grapes or other very small berries, raw celery, carrots, nuts or fruit with the peel on because of choking hazards. While your child may be able to manage these foods at home, in a setting with more children and lively conversations, your child may not be able to manage these foods as safely at school.

**Soda, gum, and candy** are also not allowed in the Center. Please send your child in with alternative treats.

### **No Peanut Policy**

**Because of the increasing numbers of children with severe peanut allergies this Center will enforce a NO PEANUT and TREE NUT, NO PEANUT and TREE NUT BUTTER, AND NO PEANUT or TREE NUT PRODUCT policy.** Families should be aware of things like peanut and nut oils in prepared foods or foods produced in factories where other peanut products are produced. There are some children who are so allergic that if another child ate a peanut or tree nut product and then touched the toys of an allergic child, it could have a deadly consequence. We ask families to respect the needs of individual members of the community. Staff will replace foods containing peanuts in a child's lunch with other nutritious foods if children bring nut or peanut products as part of their lunch.

### **Oral Care**

Teachers assist children in brushing their teeth when children are in care for more than four hours. Teachers wipe an infant's gums with a clean, damp cloth after feeding or use infant tooth brushes. Parents supply toothbrushes which are labeled with the child's name and date of issue, and distribute toothpaste in a manner that does not spread germs. Brushes are rinsed and stored in an open container without touching other brushes. Teachers sanitize sinks upon completion of tooth brushing.

### **Reporting Child Abuse & Neglect**

#### **Mandated Reporting**

"As professionals in contact with young children and their families, teachers are required by law to help the Department of Children and Families (DCF) become aware of children who may be abused or neglected. According to the law, public or private school teachers, educational administrators, guidance or family counselors, as well as day care/child care workers, are mandated reporters." Therefore, it is the policy of the Williams College Children's Center (WCCC) to report any and all suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect to the DCF and the Early Education and Care (EEC) immediately by telephone and to follow up in writing within 24 hours of the telephone report. The Center will offer full cooperation of its staff during the investigation of the reported incident. Staff members go through background records checks and fingerprinting every three years.

*Williams College Children's Center Staff* include administrators, teachers and all others paid directly by the Center. A copy of the Center's Child Abuse and Neglect Policy is available to parents upon request.

## **Referrals, Social Service, and Community Resources**

In the event a teacher has concern for a child's emotional, social, cognitive and or physical well-being or development, the teacher will consult with a Director. If a Director, through observations and consultation with the teachers, determines that a child or family is in need of additional support services (educational, medical or other family support services), the Director and teacher will discuss the situation with the family. Alternatively, parents may also address their concerns about their child with the teacher or a Director as part of ongoing communication or parent conferences and join in the process of seeking a referral. The Director(s) will meet with the parents and the child's Lead Teacher to address concerns.

When necessary, and with the written permission of the parents, the Director will make a referral to an appropriate agency or the Director will give contact information to the parents if parental inquiry is required by the agency. A Director will assist the parents with making the contact if this is requested by the parent.

Written parental permission will address the nature and duration of evaluations or services to be obtained, when and where services would take place, and who is to provide the services. All concerns are documented by the Lead Teacher in writing and placed in the child's folder, whether a referral is made or not. The Lead Teacher will also write a statement of the reasons for the referral, a summary of concerns or observations, and effort to accommodate the child's needs and review the statement with a Director.

Once a referral is made, a Director will meet with the Lead Teacher in regular supervision times to follow-up on the referral. If no services are provided at the time, a Director will meet with the Lead Teacher every three months to review the child's progress in order to determine if another referral is necessary. Referrals for children in the Infant/Toddler program will be led by the Assistant Director. Referrals in the Pre-School or School Age Program will be led by the Director. The designated Directors have the responsibility for placing documentation in the child's file regarding the concerns and actions taken on behalf of the child including the parent conference, signed and dated parental authorizations, and results of the referral, including follow-up. Such documentation will be written by the child's Lead Teacher.

We ask that parents inform us if their child ever receives services from an agency since we want to know who is coming to our door and so that we can all work together. We have forms for parents to sign so that we can have permission to speak to the people who serve your child. This helps us support your child.

And lastly, if ever parents have concerns about their child's development or progress, please share your concerns with your child's teacher. Additionally, directors are always available to speak with you. Your child's teacher can always make a conference time even if it is not the typical time of year for conferences.

### **For Children from Williamstown:**

Children who are over 3 years old and who live in Williamstown can be referred for a developmental screening at Williamstown Elementary School. The WES staff includes a speech/language therapist, an occupational therapist and a physical therapist. The Pre-K programs at WES have teachers who are certified in general as well as special education. Children who qualify for services after being screened can continue to attend the Williams College Children's Center and have needed services at WES. In order to attend the Pre-K Program for special needs at WES, the child would need to qualify for services through an academic educational screening tool.

Parents should contact the office of Special Education at 413-458-5707, ext. 419 to have their child screened or for further questions. Once the Special Education office receives signed paperwork from the parents, the school has 30 school days to set up the evaluation. Within 45 days of receiving the paperwork the school will bring the results of the screening to a team meeting for action. When parents take their child to WES to be screened they can expect the testing to be 45 minutes to an hour, depending on the needs and age of the child. Additional testing may take place a second day if testing needs to be done in more than one area.

### **For Children from North Adams:**

The North Adams Office of Pupil Services encompasses services for students who have handicapping conditions, are homeless, require tutoring for medical conditions and/or require transportation due to their handicapping condition. The administrative staff oversee a variety of programs at each level including programs for students requiring behavioral interventions, daily living skills, academic remediation and specialized programming until age 22. Health services for all students are also overseen through the Health Administrator within the Office of Pupil Services. Diagnostic services including testing and screening for suspected disabilities, pre-k screening and related services fall within pupil services. The Office also works closely with Northern Berkshire Community Partnerships to assist with special education referrals and services for pre-school students living in the North Adams district. Student services conduct outreach to community agencies and local private schools on a yearly basis for possible identification of students that may have a need for special education or related services.

### **United Cerebral Palsy of Berkshire County**

United Cerebral Palsy of Berkshire County is the agency now handling early intervention for children from birth to three. They offer developmental screenings for children under three at no cost to parents. Parents' insurance will be billed (if you don't have insurance, the Department of Public Health will be billed) and any co-pay will be covered by the Department of Public Health. The screenings take about 1 hour and are fun for children to participate in. Parents would need to make appointments on their own. Please call Mary in the Early Intervention office at 664-9345.

### **Community Agencies:**

The following is a partial list of some resources in the community to which a family might be referred, but referrals will not be limited to this list.

#### **Early Intervention and Child Abuse & Neglect**

United Cerebral Palsy of Berkshire County (Early intervention)	413-664-9345
Department of Children & Families (Child abuse & neglect)	1-800-292-5022

#### **Counseling and Child & Adolescent Services**

The Brien Center – North Adams	413-664-4541
The Brien Center – Pittsfield	413-499-0412
Behavior Health Network – Springfield	413-747-0705

#### **Education and Health Services**

Mass. College of Liberal Arts (MCLA)	413-662-5000
Berkshire Community College – Pittsfield	413-499-4660

Berkshire Community College – Great Barrington	413-528-4521
Healthy Families – North Adams	413-664-6104
Healthy Families – Pittsfield	413-445-4324
Visiting Nurses Association – North Adams	413-664-4536
Visiting Nurses Association – Pittsfield	413-447-2862

#### Financial Assistance and Legal Aid

Dept. of Transitional Assistance	413-236-2000
Vermont Dept. for Children & Families	1-800-479-6151
Northern Berkshire YMCA	413-663-6529
Family Life Support Center (Housing support)	413-743-7957
Berkshire Housing Services – Pittsfield	413-499-1630
New England Farm Workers’ Council (Child care info/referral services/voucher information)	866-573-4684
Community Legal Aid	413-499-1950

#### Other

Elizabeth Freeman Center (Domestic violence)	413-499-2425
Berkshire Works - Pittsfield (Employment/training)	413-499-2220
The Brien Center – North Adams (Alcoholism and addiction)	413-664-4541
The Brien Center – Pittsfield (Alcoholism and addiction)	413-499-0412
The Brien Center – 24-hour hotline	1-800-252-0227
The Salvation Army – North Adams	413-663-7987
The Salvation Army – Pittsfield	413-442-0624
Woman and Infants Feeding Program (WIC) – North Adams	413-663-3012
Woman and Infants Feeding Program (WIC) – Pittsfield	413-445-9429
Woman and Infants Feeding Program (WIC) – Great Barrington	413-528-0457

## **School and Classroom Policies**

### **Wash Hands on Arrival to School**

We ask parents to wash their children’s hands upon arriving at school. This practice goes a long way toward keeping everyone healthy and we appreciate your help each day!

### **Choke Free Clothing**

In an effort to eliminate choking hazards our regulations state that children cannot wear scarves, necklaces, or strings on their clothing or hats at the neck. This includes items worn by all ages for indoor and outdoor play. Please be sure that any strings on your child’s clothing are taken out, that they do not wear any kind of neck decorations or necklaces and that you replace scarves with neck warmers. We still want to have warm necks for outdoor play!

### **Please Leave Outdoor Shoes at the Door in the Infants Rooms**

Infants and young toddlers spend most of their time on the floor. In an effort to keep their environment clean we ask all grown-ups to remove their shoes before entering the classrooms off the Infant Alcove. ***Teachers will be wearing indoor shoes. Children who can walk should have indoor shoes or slippers as well.***

### **Birthday Treats**

Parents are welcome to bring a treat for their child's birthday, though again we ask that it not be candy. Please contact your child's teacher to make arrangements and to check on classroom allergies. In addition to our no peanut or tree nut policy, children in the room may have other allergies such as allergies to eggs. We ask that in such situations, parents providing a birthday treat plan for something that avoids the food allergen. We also ask that parents ***do not bring*** in favors or others birthday gifts as part of the birthday celebration.

### **Toys from Home**

We ask that children leave all of their own toys at home. Children have a harder time sharing their own toys in a classroom situation, and toys from home can become broken or lost. If a child carries a toy into school, it is up to the parent to take it back home right away. Children are welcome to bring cuddle items for nap time. These will generally stay in the cubby until rest time.

Teachers of older groups may also make plans for sharing items from home on specific share days. Your child's teacher will be in touch with you about whether toys can be a part of this tradition, but again, if toys are a part of share days, they will only be taken out of the cubby for share time. Occasionally teachers ask that toys be brought in as part of a specific curriculum focus. An example of this once occurred when a group was studying primates, and children were asked to bring in their stuffed monkeys to go in a tree the class had made. In such circumstances, teachers will give specific information on toys to be brought in.

### **Food from Home**

We also ask that all food, other than lunch food, be left at home. When one child has extra food or treats from home in a pocket or backpack, it is confusing to other children about why they can't have it. Children should finish breakfast before arriving. A nutritious snack will be served within the second hour after school starts.

### **Use of the Playground**

We understand that the playground is a wonderful place for families to gather. We simply ask that parents pay careful attention to children on the yard so that equipment is used safely. The Williams College Children's Center will not be responsible for children in a parent's or caretaker's care on the playground. During school hours, families should stay off the play grounds being used by classrooms. This especially applies to the School Age playground, as they need to have access to their playground at any point in the afternoon. Please also be aware that families will not be able to get into the building for use of the bathroom after the close of school. We ask that families do not allow children to pee on the yard as it is not sanitary.

