

Alabama A&M University

Department of Family and Consumer Sciences

Child Development Centers

Alabama A&M University Child Development Center
Carver Complex Hobson Wing (Room 116 – 117)
(256) 372-8158 or (256) 372-5437

Parent Handbook



Alabama A&M University
104 Carver Complex Hobson Wing
Normal, AL 35762

Name of child(ren) enrolled_____

I have received a digital or hard copy of the current Parent Handbook for the Alabama
A&M University Child Development Center.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s)_____

Date_____

Alabama A&M University
Family and Consumer Sciences Department
Area of Human Development and Family Studies

Center Directory

Director

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Toddler Teacher: Ms. Jessica Nelson

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Cook

Ms. Joice Baker

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Age Requirement and Enrollment Capacity

Toddlers- Children must be two years old.

Capacity-8 children

Preschool-Children must be three years old before September 1

Capacity-11 children

Pre-Kindergarten-Children must be four years old before September 1 and must be potty trained.

Capacity-18 children

NOTE: The Child Development Center reserves the right to dismiss a child if he/she presents a health or safety risk to himself/herself, other children, or adults in the center. The dismissal will involve the following protocol: (1.) After three behavior alerts, the students will be dismissed for one full day, and may return the following day. (2.) Upon returning, the student will be allowed only two additional behavior alerts before dismissal. (3.) Throughout the process, parents will be made aware of the behavior alerts and the status of their child within the center.

Philosophy

The philosophy of the Alabama A&M University Child Development Center includes reflective consideration of all the following aspects of the child's development: (1) the nature of childhood, (2) the principles of growth and development, and (3) the system of child guidance including environmental atmosphere, type of discipline, and breadth of educational experience.

The Nature of Childhood

The young child basically wants to please. Each one deserves to be loved and respected as an individual with rights and responsibilities in keeping with his or her age and stage of development. Each child has his or her own unique emotional, physical, social, and intellectual needs. The meeting of all needs is important if the child is to reach maturity functioning at an optimal level. Because of the vulnerability and inexperience of the young child, he or she needs boundaries. Without these the child may be overwhelmed by actions that get out-of-hand. Limitations placed on a child should be accompanied by explanations and reasons in order to help the child reach a positive state of self-adjustment.

Principles of Growth and Development

Each child's development is orderly and proceeds in proximal distal and cephalocaudal directional patterns of growth and refinement of physical motor skills. The rate of development is not constant with the individual and it differs among children. Readiness for a particular learning experience is often primarily a biological function, which cannot be hurried. Within the developing child, different parts and subsystems have their own individual patterns and sequences of development. Bodily and cognitive processes are integration, and hierarchization. As the child matures, he or she begins to make sense of the things experienced and, subsequently, can combine parts of knowledge into unified wholes. Higher-order concepts begin to take shape through the development of social competence and information processing, especially when there are frequent and timely interactions on a one-to-one basis with a responsive, caring adult.

System of Child Guidance

The system of the child guidance followed by the pre-school and the pre-kindergarten in the Alabama A&M University Child Development Center is derived from the developmental- interaction approach, known as the Bank Street model. Because this method has been evolving for over six decades, there exists well-formulated conceptual statements and implications for the teacher's role and for the program of experience that enhance learning. The environmental atmosphere, the type of discipline,

and the breath of educational learning are each explicitly and implicitly stated in the following discussion of the developmental-interaction approach:¹

The primary task of the teacher is to establish mutuality of trust and understanding as a significant adult in the young child's life. This is the foundation on which the teacher becomes effective as the mediator of the learning experience and on which the child learns to view himself. Most significantly, it is through the potency of such a relationship that the child identifies with, and takes as his own, the goals for learning that the teacher holds for him. Moreover, the quality of such a relationship becomes a model for human interchange in general.

Teacher-Child Relationship

In condensed form, specific components of the teacher-child relationship, as they exist in the learning environment of the Alabama A&M University Child Development Center, are indicated below. For example, the teachers should:

- Communicate caring and respond on a timely basis to the needs, wants, and urgencies of the child.
- Follow disciplinary guidelines that are based on knowledge of realistic expectations of behavior according to age-related and developmental characteristics of the child.
- Before reacting to a situation in which the child misbehaves, take into consideration the following factors:
 1. the characteristics of the individual child
 2. the child's stage of judgment and reasoning
 3. the child's momentary state
 4. the psychological environment
 5. the emotions of the child
 6. the settings in which the misbehavior occurs
 7. the teacher's emotions

The teacher's job is also to do all of the following:

- Promote continuation and strengthening of the affectionate bond between parent and child.
- Restate the child's feelings into words to help the child use language in lieu of physical aggression.
- Observe what the child's interest of the moment is, facilitate this, and frequently participate for mutual enjoyment.
- Serve as a secure base and provide opportunities for exploration within a safe environment.
- Establish a personal, differentiated relationship with each child.
- Serve as a resource for meeting the child's problem, e.g., confusion, fear, loss of direction, anger, or loneliness.

¹ Biber, B., "Developmental Interaction Approach," Day, M.C. & Parker, R.K. (Eds.), *The Preschool in Action*, 2nd ed. (1977), Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc. 1977, pp. 423-460.

- Sustain a relationship that offers whole-hearted support while exercising control and channeling behavior toward desired outcomes of developmental change.
- Develop awareness of each child's particular strengths and weaknesses and provide appropriate experiences to meet individual needs.
- Exercise authority as a rationale necessary to sustain the work and play life of the group.
- Take no action that exploits the psychological strength of the adult versus the weakness of the child.
- Give reasons and explanations for rules to help the child develop internalized controls and establish a basis for a relationship of mutual trust.

Curriculum

The curriculum consists of such learning areas as language arts, mathematics, art, music and movement, science/nature, social studies, and social and emotional development. Every attempt is made to provide the proper match between the capabilities of the child with the materials and concepts that are introduced.

There is a balance between structured and unstructured activities with large blocks of time allotted for child-selected free-play in centers. Activities include but are not limited to painting, drawing, role-playing, clay modeling, block building, puzzles and other fine motor manipulative, and computer.

Mode of Operation

The Child Development Center operates Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Parents will be given a copy of the current program closure schedule when enrolling a child. All children must be at school by 9:00 a.m. unless they have a doctor's excuse. Notice of any changes in this schedule will be given to parents as needed. This schedule will include the following holidays: Labor Day, Thanksgiving Holiday; Christmas Holiday, New Year's Holiday, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday, Spring Break, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, and July 4th.

Security

Effective fall 2017, the CDC will be using a Camera Audio system which will allow entry to the Center by faculty, staff, authorized students and parents of children enrolled. Parents should not allow unknown individuals to enter as they come in to drop off or pick up their child.

Meals and Snacks

The center will provide breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack. Menus with the week's planned meals will be posted. Children will also have some food and food preparation experiences as part of the monthly curriculum plan.

Arrivals and Departures

Upon arriving, the child must be signed in (via Brightwheel app Effective Fall 2021) and delivered into the hands of his/her teacher. The staff cannot be responsible for the child's safety if this policy is not adhered to. In addition, the parent or person authorized to pick up the child must sign the child out (Brightwheel app Effective Fall 2021) each day upon his/her departure from the center. Please notify the center when you will be later than usual. Your child will soon get to know when you are coming and can become upset if there is an unknown variation to the normal schedule. If someone other than a designated person will be picking up your child, the center must have written permission from the parent in order to release the child.

Late Pick-up

As parents, you want to do what is best for your child. It is very important to your child's sense of well-being and to his or her adjustment to being away from home that you come to him or her on time. A child's greatest fear is being left or deserted. Do you know that your child worries that something bad might have happened to you—that perhaps you have had an accident when you are late to come for him or her?

We value the confidence that you have shown in the faculty, administrators, and staff of the CDC and the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences by placing your child here for both care and education. At the heart of the following late pick-up policy is our genuine concern for the psychological and/or emotional safety of your child.

There is no childcare after 5:30 p.m. AAMU CDC has the right to contact DHR if the center cannot contact anyone on the pick list. The Child Development Center operates from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., with 5:30 p.m. being the designated closing time. Only in the case of an emergency will there be an exception to this policy. Should such an emergency situation arise or occur, a teacher will be prepared to stay later, if necessary. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian of the child to report the emergency to the Center as soon as possible. When the parent is detained and there is no dire emergency, she/he should send another duly authorized adult to pick up the child on time. As a safeguard, the child's application must contain names and phone numbers of three persons who may pick up the child. There is a late charge of \$10.00 per fifteen minutes after 5:30 p.m. The late charge is due at the time that the child is picked up or no later than the next morning that the child returns to school.

Inclement Weather

In the event of inclement weather, the Child Development Center will close in accordance with the university (AAMU) and the Huntsville City Schools. Tune in to your local TV station for early closures, late openings or will not open announcements.

Dismissal

Any child who is not ready for the group experience or whose presence causes a hazard to himself and others may be dismissed after a conference with parents.

Withdrawals

At least two weeks' notice will be expected and appreciated when discontinuing service. If no notification is given prior to withdrawal, charges for two weeks tuition will be expected to be paid by the party responsible for the child's account.

Field Trips

The center will take periodic field trips for educational purposes to various places on campus as well as in the community. Transportation, if needed, will be provided by the center. Parents are encouraged to accompany their child and serve as chaperones. A permission form for each trip the center takes must be signed by the parent/guardian in order for the child to participate.

Note: The Department of Human Resources does not inspect any away from center activities including swimming, or transportation to any other activities... The AAMU Child Development Center shall assume full responsibility for activities away from the Center.

T-Shirts

Children are required to wear a maroon AAMU CDC t-shirt on trips away from the campus. Shirts will be provided by the Center. Parents may purchase shirts for themselves at a cost of \$10.00 each. Plus sizes are \$5.00 additional.

Discipline of Children

It is the policy of the University that disciplinary practices shall be according to the following requirements:

1. Limits of rules shall be few and they shall be understandable to the children to whom they apply
2. Staff shall agree on acceptable and unacceptable behavior and on limits set.
3. Expected behavior shall be on the child's level.
4. Discipline shall be consistent and fair.
5. No corporal/physical punishment shall be used.
6. Punishment shall not be associated with food, naps, or bathroom procedures.
7. Techniques of punishment shall not be humiliating, shaming, or frightening to the child.
8. Punishment shall be related to the misbehavior and the worker primarily responsible for the child shall administer it immediately.

9. No verbal abuse, threats, or derogatory remarks about the child or his/her family shall be used.
10. A kind, firm voice shall be used.

Health and Medical Information

Results of medical examination, screening, or assessment must be provided for each child under five years of age prior to admission to the center. A current record of immunization (blue form) must also be provided and updated periodically according to the immunization schedule prescribed by the Alabama Department of Public Health.

For the protection of every child, a child must not be brought to the center if he/she is experiencing any of the following:

- Fever more than 101° (under arm) without medication or a persistent, low-grade fever (one or two degrees). The child may return after experiencing a normal temperature for 24 hours after onset of fever.
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea. Parents will be notified after second stool
- Undiagnosed rash accompanied by fever, other than a mild heat rash
- Upper-respiratory infection, such as a cold with yellow-green nasal discharge and/or prolonged cough. If medical attention is needed, the child may return after experiencing a normal temperature for 24 hours, and/or 24 hours after antibiotic is begun.

Children may not return to the center after a communicable disease until the doctor has released the child or all symptoms have disappeared. Readmission to the center for the following diseases shall be:

- Chickenpox-all lesions are dry and crusted (7 days).
- Impetigo- (blisters covered with honey-colored crusts) at least 24 hours after start of medication.
- Hepatitis-physician's statement for readmission.
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)-at least 24 hours after start of medication and no drainage present.
- Lice and scabies-following medical treatment. Proof must be provided.
- Pin worm-24 hours after medication
- Strep Throat-no sooner than 24 hours after the start of medication or 24 hours after an injection.

The center will notify parents of exposed children when a communicable disease has been introduced to the center. Parents are urged to notify the center when their child has been exposed to a communicable disease outside the center.

The center staff cannot give medications. Please inform your child's teacher if you have given him/her any medication before bringing him to school.

Any child in attendance who becomes ill will be isolated promptly from the group, but have continuous supervision by a staff member. The ill child's parents will be notified immediately and required to come for or arrange for another designated person to come for the child. A child who does not appear to be fully recovered from an illness will be not be re-admitted to the center without a statement from an attending physician that the child is able to return and participate in the activities of the center, or is no longer infectious.

Health inspection of children will be made daily by center staff. No child who appears ill will be admitted to the center. Any child not well enough to go outside should not be at school with the other children.

Emergency Plans for Medical Emergency, Power Failures, Storms, Fire, etc.

It is the policy of the University to ensure that an emergency plan for medical emergency, power failure, storms, and fire be posted in conspicuous places in each of its operating centers. All centers have been approved and comply with fire and health regulations. Fire drills and emergency procedures are practiced periodically and the staff and children know these procedures. Operating procedures will be developed and posted by the Assistant Director to include but not limited to the following:

1. Procedures to be followed by all staff members in emergency situations.
2. A Rolodex file containing Child's Data Card for each enrollee will be maintained in each center.
3. Emergency vehicle.
4. Emergency exit plan.

Parents or guardians must give permission for medical and/or emergency treatment. Parents are to notify the center of any changes in address and telephone numbers where they can be reached during the day.

5. In case of a medical emergency with a child, an attempt will be made to notify the parents immediately. If parents cannot be reached or if the situation warrants, an attempt to contact the child's doctor will be made and the child may be transported to appropriate facilities to receive medical assistance.
6. Fire drills are conducted periodically by the local fire department and/or center staff. In the event of an actual fire, drill procedures will be followed.
7. When watches or warnings are issued by the National Weather Service for tornadoes, severe thunderstorms, etc., or in the event evacuation from the center become necessary for reasons other than fire, procedures outlined by the County Coordinator for Civil Defense for the center will be followed.
8. If power, heat, or water is temporarily not available, the center will endeavor to remain open if at all possible. We cannot, however, compromise the health and safety of the children. Parents may, therefore, be notified to come earlier than usual to pick up their child.

Home-Center Cooperation

Children are provided with toys at the center. If an item is brought from home, the center cannot be responsible for it. The teacher will put up any toys brought from home and send these back with the child at the end of the day. On occasions when children are asked to bring something from home, no toy guns, war toys, or other toys of destruction will be allowed in the center. Furthermore, items in the center are not allowed to be used as symbolic representations of guns or other items that would cause harm.

Books, videos, or other items of interest to child's group may be brought with permission of the teacher. The child's name should always be on any item brought from home.

Birthdays are celebrated during the snack period. If parents wish to bring refreshments, arrangements should be made with the child's teacher in advance. Since we have children who eat only the tops, other who eat only the bottoms of regular-sized cupcakes, miniature cupcakes or a sheet cake cut in small servings would be easier to handle.

Parents are welcome to visit the center at any time during hours of operation. Parents should contact their child's teacher for information about the daily schedule and the child's progress, adjustment, behavior, etc.

Parents are encouraged to inform the center of situations at home such as a new baby, death, and/or illness of family members, etc. which might affect a child's behavior.

Clothing and Personal Belongings

Children should wear clothing suitable for the season, including indoor and outdoor wear. Provide sweaters and jackets even on the first sunny autumn days and caps or other suitable head covering for windy or cold days. It is better for your child to remove a coat or cap if he/she is too warm than not to have it at all.

Think of your child's comfort and provide simple clothing that is easy to fasten and unfasten. Many toileting accidents occur because the child did not have time or did not ask soon enough for help to make the necessary clothing adjustment to prevent soiling himself.

Consider the messy art materials and activities that your child may use and provide clothing that is washable. Think of the playground and provide clothing that is sturdy. Please have girls wear shorts under their dresses.

Parents are asked to label all clothing with permanent markers prior to sending and/or bringing them to the centers. The center provides marked lockers and cubbies for your child's belongings.

All children must have two (2) complete sets of clothing, including socks and underwear. These must be provided not only in case of a toileting accident, but also in case of a spill at the breakfast or lunch table.

Parents are asked to provide a sheet or lightweight blanket for their child for naptime. This cover will be sent home to be laundered each Friday. The center provides cot covers that are changed and washed each week at the center.

Ways the Staff May be of Help to You

When you enroll your child in our center, we assume the responsibility of giving your assistance with special needs in relation to your child's school adjustment and his/her growth and development. Conferences regarding your child's progress will be arranged upon request. Tests and assessments are primarily for screening purposes. You will be referred to persons who provide special services if we feel your child needs further diagnostic evaluation in the following areas of development:

1. Conferences in relation to your child's progress will be arranged upon request.
2. Tests and assessments are primarily for screening purposes. You will be referred to persons who provide special services if we feel that your child needs further diagnostic evaluation in any of the following areas of development:
 - a. Physical
 - b. Cognitive
 - c. Social
 - d. Emotional
3. Parent education programs will be set up on any pertinent topic at the request of three or more parents.

Parental Involvement

The Alabama A&M University Child Development Center recognizes the reciprocal nature of the interactions among the child, home, and preschool. As a result, the center encourages the development of a sense of "family" among the teachers, staff, children, and parents. With this goal in mind, teachers should:

- Encourage parent participation in the program as soon as the child is enrolled by involving them in the Parent Council. Parents subsequently develop a stable network of cooperation and participation in center projects and activities, such as:
 1. field trips
 2. lunch (once or twice a year)
 3. Thanksgiving dinner at the Child Development Center
 4. culminating program and graduation

5. planning, preparing, and participating in the annual Homecoming float competition as part of larger University community
 6. open visitation
 7. serving as resource persons for special events or topics
- Make anecdotal records about each child's observed landmarks of development, document child's progress, photograph children in various activities for such purposes as:
 1. Maintaining ongoing communication between teachers, parents, and children.
 2. strengthening the bond between parent and child
 3. Conveying the importance of the preschool period of the child's life.
 - Maintain a daily dialogue with parents to help establish a long-term home/school relationship.

Parent Complaints

Alabama A&M University Child Development Center desires to assure prompt and impartial consideration to any complaint which parents of children enrolled may have in the course of their involvement with a center. The center encourages parents and center staff to make every attempt to resolve these matters at the lowest level. When circumstances require, parents may submit complaints or grievances in accordance with the following steps:

1. Parents discuss the problem with his/her child's teacher. If a mutually satisfactory solution is not reached within a reasonable period of time, the parent may submit the complaint in writing pursuing the following chain of command:
 - a. Lead Teacher
 - b. Director
 - c. Department Chairperson
 - d. Dean of the School
 - e. Vice President for Academic Affairs
 - f. President of Alabama A&M University
 - g. Department of Human Resources.
2. Parents whose children are terminated (voluntarily or involuntarily) and wish to file a complaint must do so in writing ten (10) working days following separation.

Financial Arrangements

There is a onetime fee of \$150.00 non-refundable due when applying for Fall and Spring semester enrollment. If the child attends the summer program, there will be a \$150.00 non –refundable registration fee for summer registration fee assessed for summer activities.

Effective October 2021 all Tuition fees/payments will be submitted on Brightwheel. Tuition should be paid on Monday of each week in advance of services. Tuition rates effective August 2022: Toddler class \$110; Preschool class \$95.00; and Pre-K class \$85.00.

Effective as of January 2017, if your child has a balance he/she cannot return until fees are paid. Tuition is due every Monday by the end of the day. If not received by the deadline (no later than Wednesday), you will have a late fee of \$25.00 for that week. After three weeks of being late, your child can not return.

No refund of tuition will be given for absences. No waiver of tuition will be granted for early withdrawal. Parents will be notified when fees are delinquent. Any child whose account is delinquent may be dismissed from the center. Readmission may be requested from the Director once tuition is current; assuming the vacancy left by the child has not been filled.

If there are extenuating circumstances, please notify the Director as soon as possible in order to make arrangements for the continued participation of the child to the center.