

Dear Children's School Team,

Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year!!

As educators in a university laboratory school, we serve multiple constituencies - researchers, undergraduate and graduate students, pre-service teachers, and colleagues seeking professional development - in addition to those served by most of our early childhood colleagues. We can best meet the diverse needs of these individuals by combining a clarity of purpose, policy, and practice with effective communication between all parties, flexibility in adapting to changing needs and circumstances, and cooperation in improving all aspects of the services we provide.

These digital materials in this handbook folder have been compiled as one means of clear communication. Please organize all your digital files well so that you can add new materials easily and find them for reference as we creatively and constructively collaborate throughout the year. We have planned this year's emphases for growth based on feedback from the educator, family, and administrative reviews in May. We will continue our thematic curriculum, and we have chosen the whole school theme of INVENTORS and INVENTIONS to explore diverse ways of identifying and solving problems throughout history and around the world. In addition, we will continue to focus on our school's unique developmental philosophy and lab school mission, as well as the progress we have made in our commitment to and continual learning related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. To help understand each other better, our team building will include exploring the Enneagram Personality Test, and we will even more intentionally emphasize social-emotional learning and healing for all members of our learning community.

Though our children's parents and families will now have full access to the school, we will continue our creative efforts to help everyone to connect with us and invest in their children's learning. We aim to engage fully with PAUS, IALS, N4C, and NAEYC, including as many in person events as possible. At the same time, we will continue to strengthen our online communications so that the local, national, and international community can benefit from the incredible efforts of our entire team.

By working together, we created safe and successful programs on campus for the past several years, so I look forward to similarly positive and productive collaboration this year. I applaud each of you for your engagement, contributions, and positive attitude. Together, we can offer our best to the learners at the Children's School and on campus in ways that enable everyone to stay physically and mentally healthy while striving for a lifetime of learning!

Warm regards,



Sharon M. Carver, Ph.D., Director

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**Note** that the numbering throughout this handbook corresponds to the 2022 NAEYC accreditation standards.

**Additional Staff Resources:**

- Each staff member is issued an electronic Staff Handbook folder to be kept on their school laptop, with contact information, policies and procedures, NAEYC’s ethical guidelines, and the CMU Emergency Handbook, staff memos and meeting notes, curriculum and assessment, staff development, family information (newsletters, handbook, etc.), undergraduate information (schedules, handbook, etc.), and research information (schedules, assignments, etc.). Please be sure to add files to this folder as it is distributed throughout the year. This information is also available in the school’s Box folder and in each individual’s FACTS portfolio.
- The [Carnegie Mellon Human Resources Department](#) provides helpful information for current employees regarding staff policies benefits, professional development opportunities and equal opportunity services [6A.11].
- The [Employee Assistance Program](#) (EAP) is available to employees and their dependents at no cost. Use of any EAP services, from web surfing to materials requests to counseling, is always 100% confidential. There is also a new initiative, [CMU=YOU](#) to better connect staff and support belonging [6A.9].

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Children's School staff members work as a team, in partnership with the department, college, and university, to accomplish all aspects of the school's mission. Utilizing annual evaluation input from all constituents, the Director documents our impact related to each aspect of our mission and setting objectives for advancement in the coming year. The report is shared in a variety of venues and formats with staff, families, and the university.

**The Children's School**  
Department of Psychology  
Dietrich College of Humanities and Social Sciences  
Carnegie Mellon University

**Mission Statement**

(Adopted January 1995, Revised July 2012, May 2019, August 2022)

As a university laboratory school, we aim to lead through excellence and innovation as we:

1. facilitate interdisciplinary research in developmental psychology and related fields,
2. support undergraduate and graduate students studying child development theory, research, and applications,
3. create and implement developmentally appropriate, inclusive part & full-day preschool, full-day PreK/Kindergarten, and camp programs for children ages 3-6,
4. collaborate with families in nurturing and educating their children, particularly as family challenges arise and developmental difficulties emerge,
5. organize professional development experiences and provide resources for practicing educators locally, nationally, and internationally, and
6. mentor students exploring careers in early childhood, elementary education, and related fields.

To model best practices that promote positive and productive learning for all members of our learning community, we foster a professional climate of hospitality, communication, trust, teamwork, and flexible problem solving. We strive to recruit a diverse staff and student population to provide a diverse subject pool for research, broad experiences for university students, and an enriched learning environment for our children and their families. By continually striving for quality improvement in all aspects of our mission, including the foundational finances and facilities, our laboratory school exemplifies progressive design in education and the learning sciences that can be utilized by professionals in various disciplines to meet the changing needs of society.

## **EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY**

The Children's School's approach to preschool and PreK/Kindergarten education is based on theories and research in Developmental Psychology, together with years of educational practice. Our approach is also aligned with the guidelines set by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) for developmentally appropriate practice and with the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards.

### **Goals -> Program -> Assessment**

We use our developmental goals as a systematic framework for focusing our program and assessment design. Our educators are well versed in a wide variety of educational approaches, and we choose teaching strategies, daily routines, classroom arrangements, and curriculum structure that will encourage each child's development in all domains. Educator observations and documentation of individual development are used to adjust the program to better promote individual growth, as well as to conference with parents/guardians about ways we can work as a team to support each child [2A.8, 4A.1].

### **JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY, & INCLUSION (JEDI) POSITION STATEMENT**

The Children's School JEDI Committee exists to promote and implement justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion throughout our entire school community. At The Children's School, our commitment to JEDI values is continuous, and we recognize that this commitment requires ongoing learning and growth. We fully embrace the [Dietrich College DEI statement](#) in that we strive to be a place where "people of all identities, perspectives, and experiences feel welcome, able to present their authentic selves, and empowered to reach their full potential." We are a continuous learning community where **all** feel welcomed, valued, and empowered.

### **What does Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion mean to US?**

**Justice:** We are committed to standing up for and centering the voices of those who have experienced injustice. We look for opportunities in our school community to share power and seek input on our policies, practices, and ideas. We strive to notice injustices and commit to standing up against them, to advocate for change, and to help children learn to do the same.

**Equity:** True equity is when all individuals receive what they need to be successful. We practice equity in the Children's School community by learning about and working to remove barriers that may prevent the ability to achieve success. We support the creation of tools and environments that amplify marginalized voices and seek to increase access to resources and networks.

**Diversity:** We recognize and highly value the unique backgrounds and identities of all individuals. We know that this uniqueness is shaped by race, ethnicity, national origin,

gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, neurodiversity, and lived experiences.

**Inclusion:** We believe that everyone is welcome and should feel as though they belong here. An inclusive environment is one where everyone's needs are addressed and they feel empowered to fully participate. We are learning to involve more unique perspectives, and we seek to be a space where everyone is warmly welcomed, respected, supported, and valued in their personhood.

### **LABORATORY SCHOOL**

As part of the Psychology Department, we serve as a laboratory for research in child development and related fields. Our director and educators interact with researchers to strengthen studies so that our children eagerly participate in their "special games" and the resulting data meet scientific standards. Parents receive brief descriptions of ongoing studies and summary results of completed research. Please refer to the [Research section](#) of our website for further information.

Undergraduates taking the introductory child development course, and other related courses, make detailed observations during our program hours to gather data for course projects. Many of them return as undergraduate interns and student employees who enhance our children's experiences while their involvement here strengthens their connections between theory, research, and practice.

To support the professional development of both pre-service and practicing educators, the Children's School staff models and shares the educational approaches that we develop. We offer workshops, consultation, and seminars in a wide range of local and national venues, and we provide related resources on the [Educator](#) page our website.

Our program is strengthened by our relationship with Carnegie Mellon. As part of the University community, our classes have access to facilities such as the gym and track, can schedule walking field trips to interesting places such as the campus post office, food services, robotics lab, and the Purnell Center for the Arts, and have visits from university musicians, security officers, construction workers, etc. [8B.1]. The Psychology Department funds part of our administrative costs, and the University provides facilities management, accounting, human resources, legal, and security services, as well as managing environmental health and safety for the entire campus.

## NAEYC ACCREDITATION

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has created [10 standards](#) that measure the quality of early childhood programs. The standards were created by a blue-ribbon panel of early childhood experts and are based on the latest early childhood research.

As a NAEYC-accredited program, the Children's School meets a high-quality standard by:



- 1) Promoting **positive relationships** for all children and adults to encourage each child's sense of individual worth.
- 2) Implementing a **curriculum** that fosters all areas of child development: cognitive, emotional, language, physical, and social.
- 3) Using developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate **effective teaching approaches**.
- 4) Providing **ongoing assessments** of a child's learning and development and communicating the child's progress to the family.
- 5) Promoting the **nutrition and health** of children and protecting children and staff from injury and illness.
- 6) Employing a **teaching staff** that has the educational qualifications, knowledge, and professional commitment necessary to promote children's learning and development and to support families' diverse needs and interests.
- 7) Establishing and maintaining collaborative relationships with each child's **family** that are sensitive to family composition, language, and culture.
- 8) Establishing relationships with and using the resources of the **community** to support the achievement of program goals.
- 9) Providing a safe and healthy **physical environment**.
- 10) Implementing effective **leadership** to support stable staff and strong personnel, fiscal, and program **management** so that all children, families, and staff have high-quality experiences.

Each staff member is responsible for engaging fully in all professional practices related to maintaining the Children's School's status as a high-quality NAEYC Accredited program, as well as the NAEYC self-assessment process leading to renewal every 5 years. Our current accreditation is valid from 7/1/23 through 7/1/28, and we complete annual reports each spring to document our continuous quality improvement. The programs offered by the Children's School also fall under the regulatory jurisdiction of the Pennsylvania's Board of Private Academic Schools, so we are licensed as a Private Academic School. The Administrative Team collaborates to guide the documentation procedures and complete the required paperwork for our NAEYC annual reporting and renewal, as well as the annual PA licensing renewal.

## **STAFF TEAMS [6A.6]**

The Children’s School is staffed by four teams of educators – an Administrative Team, a Preschool 3’s Team, a Preschool 4’s Team, and a PreK/Kindergarten Team – plus an Educational Support Staff member who can substitute on any teaching team. All [educators and administrators](#) have many years of experience in education, as well as a bachelor’s degree and often an advanced degree in early childhood education, psychology, or a related field. Undergraduate interns and student employees complement each team, and pre-service teachers from local colleges do field placements or student teaching here.

Children’s School employees are hired and managed according to the Human Resource policies of Carnegie Mellon. They are thoroughly oriented, earn a competitive salary, have paid planning time [6A.7] and, if working full-time, receive full benefits, including tuition [6A.13], and retirement [6A.14]. The Children’s School provides an extensive professional development program of approximately 90 hours per year, as well as supporting each individual’s annual goals for growth via additional seminars, publications, and professional experiences.

Our experienced educators participate actively in the local, national, and international early childhood communities by serving in leadership capacities, giving regular presentations, providing consulting to other programs, and partnering with high-quality programs to develop new avenues for early childhood professional development. All our partner organizations are seeking ways to support each other and create synergies between their professional development initiatives that will enhance the quality of reflective training opportunities and serve as a resource for early childhood educators across the broad continuum of professional development.

Each staff member is responsible for being thoroughly familiar with their job description, Children’s School staff, family, and support staff handbooks and ongoing communication, Carnegie Mellon policies and procedures, and the NAEYC and PA Early Learning Standards.

## **INTERACTION GUIDELINES**

Regardless of position, each staff member’s job description includes the following priorities for action and interaction: *“Speak and behave in a professional manner at all times with staff, children, parents, undergraduates, university partners, visitors, service people, etc. Strive to be a team player, fulfilling individual responsibilities based on job description, taking initiative to help with tasks, sharing space and materials, offering support, communicating, and reflecting constructively, etc., for the benefit of the whole staff. Keep the “big picture” of our school’s entire mission in mind to effectively balance competing demands according to our priorities. Follow the school and university policies and procedures carefully and with attention to timeliness. Be prepared to flexibly adapt to the diverse situations that arise in early childhood education, particularly in a university laboratory school. Use the core values and standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) to guide all aspects of*



*program implementation and enhancement, while also following additional guidelines from the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Abide by the ethical standards of NAEYC, with particular attention to confidentiality.”*

Children’s School staff members follow the ethical principles of the National Association for the Education of Young Children [6B.2]. We share the following core values as guides for interactions among staff members, between staff and children, between staff and parents, between staff and undergraduates, researchers, university employees, etc.

- We use direct eye contact, smiles, warm tones of voice, positive touch, social conversations, and joint laughter to support the development of effective working relationships.
- Our partnership in learning is supported by regular, reciprocal communication, affirming recognition of effort and accomplishment, predictable, developmentally appropriate responsiveness to initiative, emotion, and concerns, and proactive conflict resolution.
- We strive to respect each individual and work to create a positive emotional climate for all learners, with sensitivity to differences in age, ability, background, language, culture, religion, and family structure [2A.6, 2A.7].
- We aim to eliminate gender bias by using gender-neutral terminology, such as “friends” instead of “boys and girls” or “firefighter” instead of “fireman”, encouraging learners of all genders to explore all the activities we offer, and focusing our affirmation on approach, effort, and accomplishment rather than appearance.
- We are committed to reaching out to people of different races, genders, ethnicity, and ability, and we strive to create an environment of inclusion that celebrates our differences and highlights our commonalities. Our program accepts children with special needs as long as a safe, supportive environment can be provided for the child consistent with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. For more information, please see [Carnegie Mellon’s Commitment to Diversity](#).

Because our mission is multifaceted, we aim to build positive relationships with all learning partners by appropriately balancing equity of care for the group with services tailored to individual needs. Our goal is to develop the school’s caring community for learning through broad participation and involvement in program improvement for all our staff, families, and university partners.

## **Staff-Staff Interactions**

The Children’s School staff uses a team approach, with hierarchical role relationships used only as much as necessary to support our diverse children and families, and for

smooth functioning of our professional development and university programs. We engage in ongoing reflection and professional development to evaluate and improve individual and team performance, continuously strengthening our practice, leadership, and outreach.

In an emergency or time-critical situation when the Director is not present or reachable by phone, the Administrative Team Members who are present serve as the Acting Director. If no Administrative Team Members are present at the time of an emergency, the most senior educator present will decide collaboratively with other educators on a course of action.

### **Staff-Child Interactions**

We make every effort for all children to know and be known by all adults in our open school environment so that they are comfortable interacting with and seeking assistance from any adult. Each child is assigned to a primary educator by age, but each team member works with all groups at a particular age level so that they are familiar with the children and routines for each group and can effectively substitute when an educator is absent. In addition, we have a full-time Educational Support Staff member who becomes familiar with all the groups to serve as a familiar substitute when necessary. We also recruit substitutes who have long-term familiarity with our program, often former educators or others who have trained at the Children’s School. We invite these individuals to have regular contact with the children and to participate in some of our staff development events to maintain their familiarity over the years.

Prior to the start of school each year (or prior to working in the classroom if an educator is oriented mid-year), new and returning educators review the files for children in their groups to familiarize themselves with the children [7A.2, 6D.2]. Educators should make note of each family’s language preferences and plan ways to incorporate those preferences into their classroom planning (e.g., ways of addressing household members, pronoun preferences, vocabulary used for body parts) [2D.5]. Our greeting and dismissal rotations and mixed-age activities (e.g., outdoor classroom time for preschoolers) help familiarize the whole staff with children in all groups. Interactions in the school’s open spaces and shared facilities (e.g., kitchen, make shop, outdoor classroom, and discovery area) encourage continuity of relationships between all staff and children, as well as among groups of children, so that they are comfortable learning in any of our indoor or outdoor spaces. We use a gradual familiarization process starting from the home base (i.e., the room where the child’s belongings are kept and the primary educator leads) and then progress to tours and other strategies for gradual introduction to other spaces, people, and groupings. This approach broadens children’s opportunities for learning, particularly in areas where they may find a closer match with an older or younger child.

Because we strive to encourage diverse interactions and not gender stereotypes, we address children as frequently as possible by their individual names or we refer to groups of children as “friends” (i.e., as opposed to “boys and girls”). For example, a

teacher might begin a sentence with, "Friends, it's time for us to ..." or indicate a subgroup of children as the "friends in the block area", etc. Similarly, we refrain from commenting on children's appearance and possessions rather than their actions or interactions. Even a friendly "What a pretty dress you're wearing" focuses the child's attention on his or her clothing, which is often gender stereotyped, rather than on learning.

All staff members, students, researchers, observers, interns, student teachers, student employees and volunteers must sign a [Statement of Commitment to Confidentiality](#) before entering our classrooms. According to the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct:

"We shall not engage in or support exploitation of families. We shall not use our relationship with a family for private advantage or personal gain, or enter into relationships with family members that might impair our effectiveness working with their children."

Accordingly, no private arrangement for childcare shall be made during the Children's School hours of operation as this may interfere with a staff member's job responsibilities, performance or ability to abide by the [Statement of Commitment to Confidentiality](#). We strongly discourage our undergraduate staff members, volunteers or others actively involved in the classrooms at the Children's School from babysitting or providing childcare for children and their families who are currently enrolled at the school. For that reason, we do not recommend staff members to families or distribute advertisements for childcare to our staff members.

## **Staff-Family Interactions**

Visitors to the Children's School must comply with all current university health and safety measures before entering the building.

All staff members aim to communicate regularly and effectively with families and other caregivers so that their perspectives can be incorporated into our understanding of the child's development, our curriculum planning, and our assessment process [2A.6, 4E.1]. In addition to the detailed family handbook and easily navigable school [website](#), we have scheduled parent/guardian meetings and conferences, regular newsletters (typically for each month or each theme), a daily email or web message for each program, and frequent spontaneous interaction.

Staff members begin the school year with a parent/guardian orientation meeting to facilitate introductions and to review school policies and procedures. They then collaborate with adult family members to help the child transition smoothly to the new school year. Regardless of age group, we begin with a school visit for each child's family. Then, the three-year-old class will have Phasing-In Days in which half of the class visits on each day while the four-year-old and PreK/Kindergarten classes begin with the regular school day schedule. Consistent routines and behavior expectations are introduced gradually, and educators adapt procedures to the individual needs of each child and family, based on the questionnaire they send prior to the start of school [7A.3-5].

Adult family members can schedule use of the one-way-mirror facilities or classroom visits to observe their child at any time in the program day. Adults are expected to

register in the office before entering the school to sign in and obtain a visitor's badge. Staff members are expected to direct adults who are in the school without a badge to register in the office. Educators are easily accessible by phone and/or email during planning time to answer questions, schedule classroom volunteering, or discuss effective ways for staff and parents to handle changes and challenges, such as a new sibling, a move, an extended illness, the parents' separation, etc.

Adult family members extend their involvement by volunteering in school wide and/or classroom activities. We ask them to complete a family involvement opportunity form and then use the information to arrange meetings, compose committees, and schedule activities according to parent preferences as much as possible.

The popular family events, including Open House, the Family Festival, and the End of Year Class Celebrations, offer the whole family a chance to participate in the child's school and interact with the staff. Many adult family members also contribute their talents to the school by reviewing books for our library, tending our gardens, offering special programs and activities, organizing family social events, etc. [7A.6, 7A.7].

Educators use a variety of informal assessment techniques to monitor children's progress in all six developmental domains, using that information to adjust the program to individual interests and needs, as well as to conference with parents and, if necessary, help parents seek special developmental support for their children [7B.3].

### **Staff-Undergraduate Interactions**

Undergraduates work as support staff in our classrooms and the office as part of their training (interns, practicum students, and student teachers), to earn money (student employees), or as volunteers. As laboratory school educators, we are responsible for facilitating the undergraduate experience at the Children's School. Doing our best with each student requires us to distinguish the purpose for their presence here.

- No undergraduate should be left alone with children in an enclosed space or out of earshot of a staff member [10E.3].
- All undergraduates are bound by the same confidentiality agreement that staff members sign.

**Observers:** Observe in the classroom as part of a class assignment. As much as possible, try to pretend they are not present. It is a kindness, however, if you know what students are supposed to be observing to nudge them with a little, "Notice what is happening over there...."

**Researchers:** Familiarize with the children and then come to play research games with them. Often, they need a little help with the "It is your turn to play the game...." line, so you can model it for them with "It's your turn to play NAME's game now. We will save your xxxxx so that you can finish it when you return." Our Educational Support Staff runs practice research with new children so that they can begin to get comfortable with the process, but sometimes having a teacher walk with them to the research lab is also helpful for the first few times.

**Interns:** Usually 4 to 8 students per semester enroll in the Practicum in Child Development. These students are assigned to specific cooperating teachers, so they should essentially shadow these teachers. These students should be with the children as much as possible, so they should not be assigned cleaning tasks in the kitchen and slop sink area, bulletin board work, etc. They can help with classroom clean up and snack, as these are classroom tasks done with the children. Interns can be used as bathroom assistants or stairmasters, ONLY IF THERE IS NO ONE ELSE AVAILABLE.

**Practicum Students / Student Teachers:** These students are education majors from other institutions (Carlow, Pitt, Duquesne, Chatham, etc.). They generally come prepared with a detailed description of what they are required to do and the time frame. Some of them are simply observing, while some of them are preparing to supervise the classroom after a number of weeks. These students have a cooperating teacher whom they shadow and from whom they take direction. If not simply observing, these students can be asked to do some of the “dirty work” of teaching, such as being the “stairmaster”, changing diapers, and wiping tables, because they should be getting a realistic idea of what being an early childhood educator entails.

**Volunteers:** These individuals are typically seeking experience with children so should be primarily interacting with the children. They can be asked to help with clean-up activities and similar tasks.

**Student Employees:** These students are hired and can be asked to do any task that needs to be done: cleaning, bulletin boards, diaper changing, taking out the trash, filing, etc. These students are assigned to specific teams and should be assigned work for the team before doing work for individual teachers. It is always a good idea to give them some time to interact with the children; otherwise, they might prefer to work elsewhere. Because they are assigned to the team, educators should flexibly adjust their classroom placement (e.g., red vs. blue room, discovery area vs. classroom) to meet coverage needs.

**High School Interns:** These high school students are getting job experience as part of their graduation requirements. See Student Employees.

**Check the Undergrad Schedule:** The distinction between interns, volunteers, student employees, and student teachers is clearly indicated on the weekly schedule and the photo page posted in the office. The Director handles placements related to training and an Educational Administrator handles the student employees and volunteers. In all cases, teachers serve as the students' primary supervisors in the classroom, assigning classroom areas to supervise, delegating tasks, monitoring interactions and work, and providing feedback in oral and written form. If staff members do not receive notification of an undergraduate absence and the student does not report within 10 minutes of the scheduled time, please use your cellphone to notify the office.

For all the undergraduates working in classrooms, our mentoring goals include facilitating acquisition of **knowledge, skills, and dispositions** related to each of our developmental domains. Overall, undergraduates need thorough orientation to our

school philosophy and developmental objectives for each age group, need to learn to make wise decisions regarding how to help the team accomplish those objectives in a manner consistent with our philosophy, and need to develop the dispositions of initiative, curiosity, and engagement.

- To further promote undergraduates' self-esteem and independence, they need to know that they are valued members of our team, as well as thoroughly know the routine and key locations within the school, and they must learn to manage their time to accomplish important tasks effectively. Related dispositions include responsibility, confidence, and a sense of humor.
- In order to interact and cooperate with both children and adults in our context, undergraduates must be thoroughly familiar with our behavior expectations and with their role as an adult coach as opposed to a friend. They must practice calmly reacting to classroom situations in a developmentally appropriate manner as a leader and role model whose dispositions include being respectful, fair, friendly, accessible, and willing to follow directions and be responsive to feedback.
- Undergraduates need guidance in adjusting their communication styles to our environment, beginning with learning our unique phrasing (especially "friends") and then practicing the use of a soft yet direct tone of voice and the use of clear, concise, and child-friendly wording of questions, directions, and other communication.
- We can help the undergraduates frame their experience here as one of discovery and exploration; we can promote their disposition to be a curious and reflective learner, open to learning and eager to solve problems they encounter. By learning from their mistakes, they will develop skills for actually utilizing the multiple styles of learning and applying theories that they have read about in other classes.
- Regarding physical capabilities / health & safety, students need to know our expectations for comfortable and practical clothing, as well as for physical interactions with children that promote independence while avoiding any appearance of impropriety (e.g., no lap sitting). The biggest challenge is to help students develop dispositions to manage their sleep and nutrition so that they are energetic as they learn to physically operate on the child's level with effective scaffolding skills, as well as to learn key tasks like diapering and hand washing, together with the related health and safety standards.
- Lastly, helping students to progress re: artistic expression and appreciation requires them to understand our process approach and invites them to focus their conversation and scaffolding on process while sharing their talents with the children in developmentally appropriate ways that are patient, creative, and open to diversity.

Educators who have concerns about undergraduate performance should first use mentoring techniques to foster improvement and document those steps on the performance evaluation form. If students fail to improve with guidance, educators should notify the appropriate administrator for additional support in working with the student. In cases involving learning or mental health challenges, the Director and appropriate support personnel at the university level can provide additional assistance.

Our goal is to work together to balance the needs of the undergraduates, the children, and the staff in the most effective way possible.

### **Staff-Researcher Interactions**

Because of our mission as a laboratory school, observers, researchers, and other students conducting projects are part of the daily life of our school. The Director is responsible for balancing the needs of the researchers with the needs of the children and educators, with at least annual input from all parties. The Director reviews all projects with respect to ethics issues, consistency with our school philosophy, and practicality within the constraints of our schedule and space. Ordinarily, research projects conducted here do not involve studying the educators in any way, nor are there reasons for the educators to be “blind” to the study hypotheses (i.e., because of the potential for educator behavior to alter the children’s performance on research tasks). Researchers who conduct an extended program of research at the Children’s School typically present seminars for the educators and benefit from their suggestions regarding children’s development as it relates to the area of study. Scheduling of approved projects is handled by the Administrative Coordinator and communicated regularly to the rest of the educators. All staff members are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the current studies by reviewing the study descriptions in the school newsletter, as well as for facilitating approved projects by following the published schedule as much as possible, introducing researchers to their groups, etc. Educators also monitor children’s responses to studies and length of absence from the classroom, relaying any concerns to the Director or Administrative Coordinator.

### **Staff-Therapist Interactions**

Therapists working with children at the Children’s School are not employees of Carnegie Mellon; nonetheless, they must abide by the policies in our Support Staff Handbook. We make every effort to coordinate and communicate effectively with the therapists and their supervisors so that children receive the best possible services during school hours in the smoothest possible manner, all while maintaining confidentiality. This approach necessitates broad involvement of classroom educators and administrators in planning meetings regarding individual children’s support. Initial therapy arrangements are typically made with the Director, who also handles relaying any concerns that arise at school. The Administrative Coordinator maintains contact information, addresses parking needs, and manages entry and exit. Even when a child has a full-time Therapeutic Staff Support professional (TSS), the educator remains the child’s primary adult at school. Classroom educators should provide the initial directions and first prompts, as they would for other children, depending on the TSS only when the child needs additional support. Remember that the therapists’ goal is always to work themselves out of a job, so we want to build relationships and interaction patterns that will last beyond the therapists’ tenure here. Educators and therapists should engage in frequent dialogue to coordinate use of strategies, alternate activities, etc. as needed. Though the goal is to include the child and related therapists in the regular routine of the classroom as much as possible, there are times when the best therapy approaches will necessitate work with the child in a space separate from

the classroom. These decisions will be made as a team, including the educators, parents, and therapists, with frequent involvement of the Director. We do not give therapists security codes because their tenure here is often short, and therapists only take children outside the security system when we cannot provide suitable space inside (e.g., need to practice on the stairs) and when there is a staff member available to go with them. Therapists are only permitted by their agencies to work with other children when their goal is to engage peers in interactions with the child they are serving. They are also not permitted to do tasks that would ordinarily be the responsibility of educators or other classroom assistants. One of the biggest challenges is to find time and space to discuss children openly and frankly without compromising confidentiality by talking about children in the presence of other adults or children. Please contact an administrator for support or temporary coverage if necessary.

## **Ethics**

All staff members are required to thoroughly review the attached NAEYC position statements regarding ethics (included in the staff notebook) and sign the following commitment [6B.2]. According to NAEYC, "This Statement of Commitment is not part of the Code but is a personal acknowledgement of the individual's willingness to embrace the distinctive values and moral obligations of the field of early childhood care and education. It is recognition of the moral obligations that lead to an individual becoming part of the profession."

### "Statement of Commitment to Professional Ethics

As an individual who works with young children, I commit myself to furthering the values of early childhood education as they are reflected in the ideals and principles of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct. To the best of my ability, I will

- \* Never harm children.
- \* Ensure that programs for young children are based on current knowledge and research of child development and early childhood education.
- \* Respect and support families in their task of nurturing children.
- \* Respect colleagues in early childhood care and education and support them in maintaining the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct.
- \* Serve as an advocate for children, their families, and their teachers in community and society.
- \* Stay informed of and maintain high standards of professional conduct.
- \* Engage in an ongoing process of self-reflection, realizing that personal characteristics, biases, and beliefs have an impact on children and families.
- \* Be open to new ideas and be willing to learn from the suggestions of others.
- \* Continue to learn, grow, and contribute as a professional.



\* Honor the ideals and principles of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct.”

## Confidentiality

Because the staff at the Children's School works as a team, with every adult knowing and interacting at times with every child, all admissions, observations, and other assessment data may be shared with all staff members. Information about family situations, special needs, and other sensitive issues is shared on an as needed basis. Student workers, volunteers, and other adults working within the school are only informed of such sensitive issues when they are a part of keeping the child safe, supporting the child's inclusion, or when the information might impact their coursework. All adults working in the Children's School sign the following confidentiality agreement.

“As an adult working, observing, conducting research, and/or regularly volunteering at the Children's School, I may become privy to confidential information regarding children and families. I realize that all such information is strictly personal and confidential and, therefore, will only share such information within the confines of the Children's School. I pledge to discuss the families, children, and staff for professional purposes only. I will also choose carefully whether to discuss children's behavior within their hearing distance, doing so only when it is in the child's best interest. When I encounter families, children, or staff outside the school, I will be courteous but use discretion.

I understand that written authorization is required before disclosing any information regarding a child to an outside agency or individual. I further understand that any photographs I take while at the Children's School are intended for authorized professional uses only; they may not be electronically shared over the internet, posted on social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, or electronically tagged in any way with individual names.

I know that confidentiality is an ethical obligation and that it is a requirement for my continued involvement at the Children's School. By signing this statement, I agree to learn all aspects of the Children's School confidentiality policy and practice them at all times.”

In accordance with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines, official written records for each child are filed in the locked Educational Administrators' office in the Children's School and/or our secure FACTS Student Information System and are immediately released upon request only to the individuals listed above, the parent(s) or legal guardians, regulatory agencies, or those for whom parents sign a written release [10D.6]. These files include enrollment forms, final conference reports, health assessments provided by physicians, results of health screenings conducted at school after parent/guardian authorization, incident reports, reports of diagnostic assessments released to the school by parents, individual education plans, etc. Staff documentation of children's behavior and development, including specialized records for children whose individual circumstances require extra classroom documentation are kept in classroom locations accessible to educators but out of the reach of children and out of sight of classroom visitors. In addition, researchers follow ethical standards with respect to confidentiality of individual data and, therefore, cannot share children's individual data with educators or families.

When discussing behavior incidents with families (e.g., a child is bit, hit, etc. by another child), staff members use discretion regarding revealing the identity of the aggressor (e.g., writing separate incident reports for the aggressor and the victim). In most cases,

the child reports identity information to the family, so the family may add that information to conversations with the educator, particularly in cases of repeated aggression. The educator's responsibility is to focus any discussion with parents on their child only, to avoid violating confidentiality or engaging in gossip. Please note that with regard to the images on the school websites and any photos or videos taken at school (e.g., during playground play dates, class birthday celebrations, etc.), families may only share photos that include their own child as the sole individual pictured (i.e., no other children, educators, interns, etc. in the photo).

## DEVELOPMENTAL OBJECTIVES

Since 1968, the highly skilled Early Childhood Educators at the Children's School have nurtured young children's social, cognitive, and physical development. We have specified learning goals for 3, 4, and 5-year olds in each of the following domains.

1. **Self-Esteem & Independence** - encouraging each child's growing self-concept and confidence, as well as increasingly independent self-regulation and self-care.
2. **Interaction & Cooperation** - promoting children's social skills for effective adjustment to school, group participation, classroom citizenship, and peer interactions.
3. **Communication** - facilitating comprehension and expression skills beginning with oral language (listening & speaking) and progressing to written language (reading & writing).
4. **Discovery & Exploration** - fostering a positive attitude toward learning through scientific and mathematical inquiry with varied materials to build strong concepts related to diverse themes.
5. **Physical Capabilities / Health & Safety** - giving children opportunities to develop small and large motor skills, healthy living habits, and essential safety practices.
6. **Artistic Expression & Appreciation** - cultivating each child's ability to express ideas and emotions through art, drama, and music and movement, as well as to appreciate the artistic expressions of others.

## CURRICULUM and ASSESSMENT [4A]

The Children's School's Continuum of Developmental Objectives was developed and is revised every other year by the staff team to reflect our current understanding of young children's natural developmental progression. All staff members are responsible for being thoroughly familiar with all the objectives and collaborating with their team to use the six categories of objectives as a flexible framework for planning learning experiences to promote the growth of each individual child rather than using a fixed curriculum guide. We incorporate children's home languages into the program wherever possible, particularly during routines and transitions, as well as with respect to key theme-related vocabulary [2A.7, 2D.5 & 6]. We develop our own plans to provide children with a variety of opportunities for learning and encourage broad exploration. We support children in doing as much for themselves as possible, given the time constraints of a part-day, part-year program. In addition, we strive to support a variety of social experiences by organizing our time and space to balance individual, pair, small group, and large group activities, making accommodations as necessary for children with disabilities and providing all children with access to semiprivate areas to play or work alone or with a peer. All staff members serve as coaches while children practice social skills involved in peer interactions, friendship formation, and conflict resolution. Throughout the day, we engage children in conversation, with extra support for peer conversation at snack and lunchtime. Whenever timing permits, adults sit with children during snack and mealtimes to engage them in conversation and scaffold peer conversation. One opportunity during this time is for children to share unique family perspectives, practices, etc. [2A.6&7].

## Thematic Approach to Curriculum

The educators prepare an engaging learning environment for exploring a theme, such as birds, artists, or transportation. We plan the themes for the year to include opportunities for integrating key areas of content, including life, earth and physical science, as well as social studies and the arts. Using the money from the materials fee, we choose a rich range of materials, including diverse technologies, to entice each of the children to engage in the thematic study. We use a group meeting time each day to set the stage for the investigation and introduce relevant concepts. Then the children pursue a variety of activities that reinforce the learning goals. We avoid commercial characters and prescribed products in favor of open-ended explorations that promote creativity and imagination. We also limit screen time to short periods of activity that is not otherwise possible in the classroom, such as child-controlled computer design or internet viewing of animals in their natural habitats. The educators monitor the activities, so that we may facilitate the children's learning and challenge them at an appropriate level. Children's explorations enrich their development of concepts related to the theme and strengthen their skills in all areas. We extend and apply their concepts by experimenting with various materials in the school, and they express their understanding by creating their own representations in a variety of media.

Educators are responsible for developing weekly lesson plans in a format that clearly indicates their focus on all six developmental domains within the theme and their adaptations to the individual profiles of their students. The overall theme guide filed in the classroom portfolio should include the following information:

- Key Conceptual Focus & Vocabulary
- Key Resources for All Ages (books, artifacts, etc.)
- Theme Emphasis in the Outdoor Classroom / Campus Explorations
- Diversity Emphasis
- Family Involvement [2A.6, 7A.5]
- University / Community Connections
- Division of Conceptual Content by Week of the Unit
- Major Reorganization of the Learning Environment for the Theme
- Focus Activities and Center Plans Specifically Related to the Theme  
including Inquiry Learning Opportunities and Technology Activities
- Key Projects
- Adaptations for Individual Children, including Accommodations for Language Diversity [2A.7, 2D.5] & Special Needs
- Mixed Age Interaction
- Summary Table to ensure balance of activities focusing on each of the six domains of development and intentionally planning to collect assessment data

During the unit, educators communicate an overview of the day's activities with families via email or a web update to promote family conversation and extension of the learning. At the end of the unit, a record of the actual thematic unit implementation should be shared with the parents and filed in the classroom portfolio. A classroom newsletter with rich documentation of all theme elements is sufficient to meet this requirement.

## **Thematic Explorations Enhance Skills**

Through varied explorations during each theme, the children develop

- a sense of themselves as competent learners,
- strategies for collaborating with peers and adults,
- approaches to communicating their ideas verbally and visually,
- means of discovering new ideas about physical properties,
- skills for small motor manipulation of tools and materials as well as large motor actions, together with an awareness of health and safety practices, and
- means for expressing their creative ideas through drama, movement, music, and visual arts, as well as appreciating the ideas of others.

## **Assessment Plan [4A.1-2, 4E.4]**

Assessment is naturally integrated into the course of every day as ongoing educator observation of group patterns and individual development is used to adjust the program to better support group and individual progress. New staff orientation and annual staff professional development includes specific sessions on Children's School assessment methods so that they follow the plan described here [4E.4]. Teaching teams meet weekly, typically on Friday afternoons, to identify children's current interests and needs and then plan accordingly for the next week's explorations [4D.4-6]. At times, these reflections indicate the need for altering the classroom environment, shifting the unit focus, trying new teaching strategies, etc. [2.A.3]. If concerns about individual children's development arise and are not readily remedied via classroom adaptations, educators initiate a dialogue with colleagues and parents to plan approaches to try at both home and school [2A.8].

Twice per year [4E.2], the educators combine these informal assessment techniques with more systematic assessment of each child relative to the school's developmental objectives for the purpose of describing each child's developmental progress. Teaching teams work together to conduct these systematic assessments, though the child's primary educator takes the lead in summarizing the findings. The process is typically collaborative, with the primary educator drafting the report and then getting input from the teaching team. These descriptions are shared digitally with parents in advance of the conference meeting so that families who need online support for translation can access that service [2A.7]. Fall conference reports include narrative descriptions of children's progress in all six of the school's identified developmental objective domains: self-esteem & independence, interaction & cooperation, communication, discovery & exploration, physical capabilities / health & safety, artistic expression & appreciation. Spring conference reports include bulleted descriptions for each of the four component skills in each developmental domain. Educator-family dialogue during conferences strengthens our understanding of each child's developmental profile and often leads to ideas for individualizing both educator and family support of children's learning, as well as plans for smooth transitions into the next level of Children's School programming or to elementary school [2A.6, 2A.8, 7A.4-5, 7C.1].

Occasionally, educators and/or parents identify the need for additional screening and referral for professional diagnostic assessment. In those cases, educators and parents

typically include the Director in the dialogue for the purpose of more precisely identifying the focus for screening / diagnosis and to review the resources available to children and families in our community, which depends heavily on where the family lives (i.e., within Pittsburgh city limits or not, within Allegheny County or not, etc.), as well as what type of health insurance the family has [7B.3].

## **Assessment Procedures**

Most Children's School assessment is informal, with direct observation by multiple educators as the primary method. Educators document observations in their own unique ways, though most record anecdotes, take photographs of constructions and interactions, and collect samples of the children's artwork, journal entries, and other projects.

Because even young children are savvy enough, however, to avoid tasks in areas that are difficult for them and to rely on peers to support their performance when avoidance is not possible, Children's School educators occasionally conduct more formal, individual assessments focused on precisely determining what a child knows or can do. Whenever possible, these assessments are designed as typical classroom activities and are widely distributed in time. For example, an educator might assess knowledge of letters and numerals by having the child be the caller in a bingo game played with peers. Gross motor skills may be assessed by having children practice an obstacle course set up in the classroom or outdoors. With individuals, educators often use puzzles or other manipulatives to check a child's knowledge of shapes, counting ability, etc. All these assessments are conducted within the regular program space and during the typical program hours. In cases where a child's performance on these more formal assessments is not consistent with our informal observations, the assessment will be repeated, conducted by another educator, or conducted in one of the quiet research rooms, etc. so that the results can be verified.

Data from both informal and formal assessments are incorporated into the narrative conference reports written by the child's primary educator in the fall and the spring [4E.2]. During the face-to-face conference reports, educators and parents review the narrative about children's progress and dialogue to create strategies to support the child's next developmental steps both at school and at home [4E.3].

Children's School assessments and conference forms are sensitive to diversity in the following ways. Assessments involve only activities that are familiar to the children, and every effort is made to eliminate verbal directions that might not be understood by a child with a language disability or limited English proficiency [2D.5]. Educators may note in the conference report any aspects of development that cannot be fairly assessed because of the child's language abilities [2D.5]. Expectations for age-level progress are routinely adapted for children with special needs at the level that qualifies them for the support of itinerant therapists or full-time therapeutic support staff, and narratives explain what the child can do independently as well as with adult support.

The Children's School does not conduct any norm-referenced or standardized assessments of preschool or PreK/Kindergarten children for comparison purposes. At

present, we use the Ages & Stages screening tools within 30 days of a child's enrollment to gather developmental observations from parents that help in determining whether to recommend that further professional screening should be initiated [4C.3]. Eligibility for special services is determined by diagnostic assessments conducted by professionals after referral by Children's School Staff. Standardized assessments may be conducted as part of research projects at the Children's School, together with novel assessments and task measures designed by the researchers. All researchers closely follow ethical standards for treatment of research data, so no individual scores are given to the school, the teaching teams, or to the child's parents. They are in no way connected to the child's school records.

### **Uses of Assessment Results [4D]**

Results of Children's School assessments are primarily used to shape the current year's program planning and to discuss individual children's developmental progress with parents so that we can work together to best support each child's growth [2A.8]. In addition, the group results impact the school's quality improvement process via each teaching team's annual evaluation and the whole school annual evaluation, both of which are conducted each May in preparation for enhancements implemented for the next school year [4A.2].

Each fall, we offer an Educator-Family discussion related to general school choice issues among public, private, parochial, and charter options, together with individual consultation related to choices for specific children [7A.6]. If parents initiate private elementary school applications for their children, they will be required to provide recommendations from the Children's School. The Children's School staff members are not permitted to complete the rating scales typically requested by the local private schools in the Pittsburgh area. Instead, when given a written request for recommendation by the parents, an Educational Administrator prepares a letter to the school indicating our policy and attaches a copy of the most recent conference report. If several months have passed since the conference, an Educational Administrator will first ask the primary educator to check the report to determine whether there have been significant changes. If there have, then the educator will prepare a revised conference report to be sent to the elementary school, with a copy given to the parents.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Professional Development is a high priority at the Children's School because it supports our continuous quality improvement. We dedicate 1.5 to 2 weeks at the beginning of the school year, every Friday afternoon, and 1.5 to 2 weeks at year's end as paid professional development time. Our time is divided approximately equally between advancement seminars, staff and team planning and reflection meetings, and independent activities. Seminars may be facilitated by the Director or another educator, other CMU professionals, or outside speakers, depending on the topics chosen. In all cases, we consistently focus on applying what we learn to enhance our program. Staff / team meeting time is essential for both maintaining and advancing our work because of the team building, dialogue, and reflection emphasis. Finally, independent time is necessary to support the educators' curriculum development, conference planning, and outreach efforts. In addition, staff members engage in professional development on their own time (i.e., evening, weekend, or summer experiences), and we make every effort to provide classroom coverage for staff members who wish to participate in professional development opportunities that are scheduled when school is in session. Families are informed of our professional development activities via our monthly school newsletter.

The Children's School is a member of the following organizations, each of which provides on-line resources and publications that are used by the Director to keep abreast of developments in the fields of leadership, adult learning, education, and early childhood and to plan professional development opportunities for the staff [6D.12&18, 8C.2].

- IALS: International Association of Laboratory Schools
- NCCCC: National Coalition for Campus Children's Centers

### **Orientation & Performance Review [6D.17]**

Initial staff orientation includes a review of everything in the staff handbook (which includes the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct) as well as the family and support staff handbooks, together with all the items listed in the Carnegie Mellon orientation procedure, which includes all the benefits information [6D.1]. New educators do not work alone with children until their Children's School and CMU orientations are complete, which includes all child protection clearances [10E.1]. In addition, new staff orientation includes training on the FACTS Student Information System and time for the educator to review documents related to each specific child and family they will serve [7A.2].

During orientation, every staff member joins the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) as an individual, which includes membership with the regional affiliate: PennAEYC. The Children's School pays for these memberships, as well as for registration at any professional development events that the staff member chooses to attend [6A.13, 6B.5]. All staff members are expected to review NAEYC's bimonthly publication, "Young Children"; articles especially related to our context may become the subject of professional development sessions.

New staff members are mentored formally by one of the educational administrators and informally by the other members of their teaching or administrative team who work with them on a daily basis. The director provides whole staff and individual coaching as



needs arise beyond the scope of the mentoring provided [6D.15]. Because all staff members are hired on a provisional basis, the Director and employee will meet to review performance after several months so that adjustments can be made prior to the end of the 6-month probationary period. Thereafter, performance reviews are conducted annually by the Director, typically in May [6D.11]. Prior to the review meeting, the staff member completes a self-evaluation form including a broad reflection on accomplishments and areas for improvement. The Director collects similar information based on each aspect of the staff member's job description. The specific format for the reflections varies somewhat from year to year, simply to provide a fresh approach. The staff member and Director meet to discuss the reflections and plan the individual's professional development focus for the coming year. After the meeting, the Director creates a summary document detailing planned improvements for each individual, each teaching team, and the staff as a whole. Individual summary documents are stored via CMU WorkDay. The Director then factors the overall results into the design of the professional development program for the subsequent year [6D.19], which is summarized in the letter on the first page of this handbook.

### **Children's School Staff Development**

The Director is responsible for organizing meaningful professional development, mentoring, and coaching related to the school's goals for continuous improvement and to the staff members' identified interests and needs. Staff members are involved both in the setting of the goals and planning of professional development topics during the formal May program evaluation process, as well as informally throughout the year as needs change and opportunities arise. In addition, each year includes health and safety training for all staff in pediatric first aid & CPR, fire safety, and emergency procedures, plus reviews as necessary of the 5 R's of Medication Administration and Epi-Pen Use in Child Care, handling of Bloodborne Pathogens, ServSafe, etc. Every five years, all staff renew their Mandated Reporter Training [5A.15].

Whole staff meetings and seminars, together with individual and small group work to prepare presentations given locally and nationally, typically total 90 hours per year or more. All these hours count toward the Pennsylvania Act 48 requirement for certified teachers through Carnegie Mellon's Center for School Outreach.

The Children's School also maintains a professional development library that is supplemented annually by the NAEYC publications sent as part of the Director's comprehensive membership and books discussed as part of the Children's School staff development or professional book clubs. Ideas for library additions are encouraged.

### **Opportunities for Collaborative Professional Development [6B.3]**

Beginning in the fall of 2000, the Children's School worked with neighboring early childhood programs to co-develop the Alcoa Collaborative for Early Childhood Professional Development. This effort was initially funded by the Alcoa Foundation to strengthen the region's early childhood professional development by encouraging collaboration. The most consistent partners included the University of Pittsburgh's University Child Development Center (UCDC), Carnegie Mellon's Cyert Center for Early Education, and Shady Lane. The leadership team for community events included the

directors from all four centers and for partner events involved the directors and educators from all four centers. The Collaborative's most extensive efforts were to provide high quality leadership training for the whole region and to enhance the professional development opportunities for our own staff members by working together, which increases the possibilities because of having 125 educators involved as opposed to the smaller numbers at any one center. Through our collaboration, educators have engaged in open houses, roundtable discussions, book clubs, local and national site visits, job shadowing and special interest groups, as well as participating in outreach events hosted by each of the centers. Though we no longer have grant funding for the project, the directors and educators are committed to continuing collaboration to support professional development, particularly via the most popular growth opportunities and with funding from other professional development agencies. In 2016, Children's School administrators launched a similar, structured effort to engage all of the university-based early childhood and elementary schools in collaborative professional development for our educators. The Pittsburgh Alliance of University Schools (PAUS) held collaborative conferences in February 2018 (Build Something Wonderful), February 2019 (Supporting Emotional and Mental Well Being), and February 2020 (Social Justice).

From 2011 until 2020, The Children's School and Duksung Women's University in Seoul, South Korea began collaborating on an International Practicum Program in which early childhood education students from Duksung Women's University and educators from both of our respective schools can participate in this cross-cultural project. Together we aim to strengthen the teaching skills of educators in both of our countries. For 2012, we expanded the partnership to include the University of Pittsburgh's Falk School and Carlow University's Campus School, and the University Child Development Center at Pitt joined the group for the 2013 practicum. In the spring of 2016, we piloted a program involving experienced educators from the NOBO School in Beijing, China in a two-week early childhood exploration in Pittsburgh, and in 2017-18, we hosted a year-long sabbatical for Dr. Byungho (Tony) Lee in CMU's Psychology Department.

### **Additional Opportunities**

The Allegheny Intermediate Unit, the Pittsburgh Public Schools, the Children's Museum, Phipps Conservatory and a variety of other neighboring universities and community organizations also offer professional development opportunities for early childhood educators. Any flyers that we receive are shared with staff members to determine whether they fit with interest and availability.

Staff members may request funding for local, regional, national, and international professional development events that are relevant to the staff member's professional development plan [6A.13]. The Director makes every effort to honor these requests when staffing and funding permit.

In all these ways, Children's School educators are better equipped to provide the best possible learning context for each of our students by being lifelong learners ourselves.

## **TIME GUIDELINES**

### **Work Schedule for Staff**

The school year runs from late August through May including approximately 200 weekdays, 10% of which are holidays and other planned paid time off for school vacations (see policies below). Another 10% of the days are reserved for professional development and conducting conferences.

Full-time staff members work 8 AM to 4 PM or 7:30 AM to 3:30 PM and part-time staff work varying hours, as stated in their position offer. Occasionally, changes are made during the professional review process and documented in the review summary. The daily schedule for teaching staff members includes preparation and planning time prior to the children's arrival, after the children's departure (at least one hour total per day), and 4 hours on Friday afternoons [6A.7]. Full-time staffing schedules also include a designated lunch break within 4 hours of the children's arrival [6A.15], and bathroom breaks for all staff are negotiated among teaching teams to accommodate everyone's needs while maintaining appropriate supervision of children. Staff may request a short and immediate break when they are unable to perform their duties by asking a team member for assistance or texting the office [6A.16].

All staff members are responsible for keeping the varied programs for children, undergraduates, and researchers on schedule so that the diverse goals of our multiple constituents can be achieved in the most effective and developmentally appropriate way possible. Classroom, course project, and research schedules are reviewed annually to continually improve our functioning for everyone's benefit.

### **Holidays & Paid Time Off [6A.12]**

The Children's School follows the Carnegie Mellon Time Off Policies as per *The Staff Handbook*. Feel free to visit the website or contact a Human Resources Representative if you have any questions about these policies.

According to the Department of Labor – Fair Labor Standard Act (FLSA), there are two types of employees: Exempt and Non-Exempt (basically referring to whether they are exempt from earning overtime pay). The Children's School Director, Educational Administrators, and educators, whether full-time or part-time, are designated by Carnegie Mellon as exempt. An exempt employee is paid a set salary for the work year as defined by our school calendar regardless of the hours worked. They are exempt from overtime pay, though they can receive stipends for work not included in their regular job description that is conducted outside their regular work year of September through May (e.g., participating in August staff development, conducting professional development seminars on non-school days, teaching during summer camp, etc.). The associate teachers and substitute teachers are non-exempt employees, as is the Administrative Coordinator; these employees are paid a salary for their hours of work in each week and are eligible for overtime pay at a rate of time and a half after 37.5 hours.

**Children’s School Holidays**

**Holiday (H):** Each nine-month, full-time employee at Carnegie Mellon is entitled to ten paid holidays. In recent years, CMU has also given 3 additional holidays between Christmas and New Year’s. The University is closed on these days:

- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day After Thanksgiving Day
- Day-Before-Christmas
- Christmas Day
- 3 Extra Holidays between Christmas and New Year’s beginning in 2017
- Day-Before-New Year’s
- New Year’s Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth

**Floating Holidays (F):** In addition to these thirteen paid holidays, each full-time staff member may take 3 "floating holidays". For the 2023-24 school year, the Children’s School calendar specifies that these floating holidays be taken on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving and December 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Paid Time Off Days (PTO)**

Carnegie Mellon offers full-time employees Paid Time Off, which is accrued at a specified rate for each month worked (excluding camp if staff work that extra month).

<u>Years of Employment:</u>	<u>Accrual Rate:</u>	<u>9 Month Total</u>
Up to & including year 3	1.42 days per month	12.75 days
Beginning year 4	1.67 days per month	15.00 days
Beginning year 8	2.08 days per month	18.75 days
Beginning year 16	2.50 days per month	22.50 days

Already accrued Paid Time Off Days may be used for vacation, illness, personal time, or to care for dependents. Except in the case of illness or emergency, PTO days must be scheduled in advance and are subject to approval by the Director. Jury duty and bereavement leave are provided under separate policies and do not count as PTO days. (See the online Carnegie Mellon PTO Policy for additional details.)

In addition to the use of PTO as defined above, the Children’s School has the discretion to require the use of PTO for Children’s School vacations as specified in the annual Children’s School calendar. For the 2023-24 school year, there are 7 such days.

- Winter Break (12/21/23-1/3/24) 1 PTO Day (Jan 3<sup>rd</sup>)  
(in addition to the 7 H and 2 F 12/21 & 12/22)
- Presidents’ Day 1 PTO Day
- Spring Break (3/4/24-3/8/24) 5 PTO Days

*Example:* If you are a first-year employee you can accrue:  
12.78 PTO Days

-8.00	PTO Days that are written into our calendar
4.78	PTO Days may then be accrued

PTO requests are made and records are kept via CMU's WorkDay system. Approvals are made by the Director and the system is monitored by Psychology Department administrators. Staff members who take PTO in excess of their entitlement may have their pay docked for the pay period in which the deficit occurs. Once a staff member has a PTO deficit, no discretionary PTO will be approved. Winter and Spring breaks may only be taken if sufficient PTO has been accrued. PTO may be granted in extenuating circumstances.

### **Part-Time Employees**

According to University policy, part-time employees do not qualify for paid-time-off (PTO). Non-exempt part-time employees get paid for the hours they work and do not get paid for time off or holidays. CMU does offer up to 40 hours of "[Paid Sick Leave](#)". Occasionally, there are opportunities for hourly employees to work extra hours at school vacation times to make up for lost income. Interested staff members should notify the Director.

Exempt part-time employees work closely with the Director to ensure that their schedules flexibly adjust to the different phases of the school calendar, particularly professional development days, days when school is in session, days when other staff members are taking PTO, and school vacations. Exempt part-time employees also qualify for the 40 hours of "Paid Sick Leave" but may have their pay docked for additional days absent.

#### *Illness*

When you know before 7:00am that you will not be in school due to an illness, call or text the whole Administrative Team, as well as your teaching team. Knowing about an absence before we arrive at school gives us extra time to make arrangements for coverage, as well as to contact a substitute if a change in work hours is necessary. Be sure to "request" the time off in the WorkDay system.

#### *Planned Absences*

If you have accrued sufficient PTO and plan to take a day for an appointment, travel, etc., please make a request via the WorkDay system as much in advance as possible so the Director can plan program coverage. Extended absences (two or more days) and absences adjacent to a school break or long weekend must be approved by the Director prior to making travel reservations.

#### *Extended Absences*

If extended absences in excess of accrued PTO are necessary, employees will be directed to arrange a leave of absence with the help of a Human Resources Representative. (See the online Carnegie Mellon policy on leaves of absence.) Further PTO is not accrued during leaves of absence.

## Snow Days

At 5:30am, the Director and the Educational Administrators listen to the news, determine what other schools in the city are doing, and make our best judgment about whether to have, delay or close school that day. Since our children do not walk to school or wait outside for buses, we do not typically delay or close school purely for cold temperatures.

Depending on the road conditions, we may decide to choose one of three options:

1. **One Hour Delay**  
During a one-hour delay, we will greet at 9:30am. Dismissal will be at the normal times.
2. **Two Hour Delay**  
During a two-hour delay, we will greet at 10:30am. Dismissal will be at the normal times.
3. **Close the School**. All classes are canceled.

Option #1 enables us to conduct the morning preschool classes, while giving our staff and families time for the road conditions to improve. An educational administrator will send a Staff and Parent Alert message via the FACTS system when there is a school closing/delay.

### ***Relation of Snow Days to PTO***

Staff members can make their own decisions regarding attendance on severe weather days, but they will be charged PTO for absences when the University has not closed. Unfortunately, our ability to provide our services to Carnegie Mellon and the community depends heavily on having enough staff present in a timely fashion to do so. For that reason, we may cancel school for students on days that the University does not close. If school is canceled because of the weather, staff members are expected to either come to work or work at home. In either case, staff members will use the time without children to work on 1) unit development, 2) activity planning, 3) conference preparation, 4) newsletter writing, and/or 5) professional reading. Staff members are expected to keep a supply of work materials at home in the event of a snow day. In addition, the Director will designate a relevant professional project or projects at the beginning of each "snow season", just in case. In some cases (typically when a major storm is predicted), she may assign particular reading and preparation for an upcoming staff seminar. Staff members who attend work or document work done at home during a school closure will not be charged a PTO day when school is closed for students.

**PURCHASING GUIDELINES**

The Children’s School Purchasing Procedures are designed to maximize convenience for all staff members and to minimize extraneous paperwork, while adhering to all the university policies and procedures.

**Team Budget**

In August of each year, the staff collaboratively decides how to allocate the Materials Fee money that our families pay in addition to their tuition.

**2022-2023 Materials Budget**

\$24,680 - \$400 for 61 children)

Spent: \$18,497.21(\$6,182.79)

Category	Budget Amount 2022-23	Amount Spent	Remainder	Notes
Music Teacher	\$1,680.00	\$1,800.00	(\$120.00)	12 classes @ \$150 per day
Playground & Playground Consumables	\$2,000.00	\$1,523.94	\$476.06	
Consumables	\$4,000.00	\$2,875.49	\$1,124.51	includes First Aid & other office supplies for children
Make Shop	\$1,000.00	\$340.34	\$659.66	
Special Events (including Special Fridays)	\$2,500.00	\$1,143.81	\$1,356.19	
Whole School Unit	\$2,500.00	\$2,830.64	(\$330.64)	
School Spirit / Hospitality	\$1,000.00	\$677.61	\$322.39	
3’s Preschool	\$1,000.00	\$846.04	\$153.96	
4’s Preschool	\$1,000.00	\$888.33	\$111.67	
Kindergarten	\$1,000.00	\$731.18	\$261.82	
Discovery Area	\$1,500.00	\$997.84	\$502.16	
Kitchen	\$3,500.00	\$2,748.02	\$751.98	This includes all water for coolers plus Giant Eagle
Library not covered by book fair	\$1,000.00	\$1,084.40	(\$84.40)	
Office	\$1,000.00	\$31.04	\$968.96	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$24,680.00</b>	<b>\$18,525.68</b>	<b>\$6,154.32</b>	

Each teaching team is responsible for making developmentally appropriate purchases that support their efforts to help children in their groups to advance in all six of the developmental domains, as well as to delve deeply into the thematic units being studied through play, sensory experiences, and activities across all content areas. The whole staff collaborates on purchase decisions for the outdoor and large motor materials, Make Shop and other joint aspects of the program. The designated Educational Administrator tracks each team’s purchases and provides them with a budget sheet bimonthly.

### **Tax Exempt Status**

The University is tax exempt and will not reimburse employees for the tax paid on items bought. For stores the staff members frequent, we have tax-exempt forms that can be taken to that store, and we can add any store to this file.

### **University Purchasing Card (PCard)**

Staff members who need to make frequent purchases may be issued a tax-exempt PCard, after attending credit card training sessions. It is the staff member’s responsibility to use the card according to the University credit card policy.

When using your PCard, be sure **to check that you are not charged tax**. As soon as possible, **provide the receipt to the designated Educational Administrator for processing**. Please include your name, a description of the purchase and program with the receipt to indicate whose card was used for the purchase and which program should be charged.

### **Ordering from Standard Suppliers**

Art Supplies and Learning Materials Educational Administrator

Art supplies are ordered prior to the beginning of the fall semester and as needed during the school year. Throughout the year, the designated Educational Administrator also orders learning materials from a variety of suppliers based on requests from staff members. Materials purchased with money from the whole school allocation are stored in the art closet and can be used by any teaching team. If a team chooses to purchase materials with their own allocated funds, those materials may be stored in their rooms to reserve them for that group’s use.

Office Supplies Administrative Coordinator/ Educational Administrator

Office supplies are ordered from the Office Depot Business Website as needed. Give the Administrative Coordinator your request (include item number) and an order will be placed.

Grocery Stores & University Dining Educational Administrator



Teachers may order items for cooking lessons and for anything found at local grocery stores such as Giant Eagle, Walmart, Target, etc. With advanced notice, certain items can also be purchased via University Dining.

### **Purchasing from On-Campus Stores Directly**

Employees can purchase items at the following stores on campus:

<u>University Center</u> Bookstore (books, office supplies, university clothing, cards) Entropy (snacks) Art Store (paper, paint, etc.) Post Office Tartan Ink
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To make an on-campus purchase, obtain a form from an Administrative Team member. Have the Administrative Team member enter the account number and sign the form before you go to the store. When you return, give a copy of the completed form indicating what you purchased and the receipt to the designated Educational Administrator.

### **Purchasing from Off-Campus Stores Directly**

If you need supplies immediately or ones that are not available through the above sources, you can use your PCard or use your own cash and be reimbursed. Remember to identify the purchase as tax-exempt before checking out AND to check your receipt to make sure tax was not charged.

To be reimbursed for out-of-the-pocket expenses, give your original receipt to the designated Educational Administrator. Print your name on the receipt and circle the items purchased (if the amount you are being reimbursed is not the total amount on the receipt). Sales tax is not reimbursed. All reimbursements will be made electronically by the University approximately 7 to 10 days later. Please complete the [Employee Expense Direct Deposit form](#) to be reimbursed for work related expense.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES**

At all times, health and safety are top priorities at the Children's School. Each individual's vigilance regarding health and safety issues contributes significantly to our effectiveness. Keep your eyes up, survey the whole scene around you and be aware of what's happening beyond your immediate activity. Always assume that you are the only one who notices a problem or potential problem and handle it to the best of your ability.

### **Preparing Yourself**

All staff members are required to submit a signed Staff Health Assessment form when hired and every year thereafter. A negative TB test is also required every other year.

The guidelines for exclusion of children who have infections that pose a risk to others apply equally to staff members. Stay home if you exhibit any of the following symptoms:

- Fever (100.4° F/38° C or higher); feeling feverish (chills, sweating)
- New cough - for those with chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, a change in the cough from baseline
- Unusual fatigue
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Runny or stuffy nose -not related to seasonal allergies
- Muscle pain or body aches
- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea

When you are sick, stay home [6A.8], seek treatment, and take steps to recover as quickly as possible. Discharging or infected wounds on exposed parts of the body are cause for exclusion from the care of children. Staff members should follow the procedures listed under Paid Time Off when missing work for illness.

**Educators, staff, and students with any illness will be expected to stay home [6A.8].** It is imperative that all members of the Children's School community stay home for 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medicine.

Hand washing is the #1 preventive measure to avoid the spread of disease. Use the posted hand washing procedure and then turn off the faucet with your paper towel in all of the following circumstances: upon arrival at work and re-entry from the outdoor classroom, before and after eating or handling food, before and after feeding a child, prior to serving food to children, after using the restroom, changing a diaper, assisting with toileting, treating a child's injury, handling bodily fluids, touching the pets, playing in the water table or with infants and toddlers, handling garbage or cleaning, and before and after preparing food, feeding a child or before and after administering medication. Non-porous, latex free gloves are provided for use when diapering, cleaning, preparing, and serving food, etc. [5A.19].

Courses in First Aid / CPR, Bloodborne Pathogens, and 5 R's of Medication Administration and Epi-Pen Use in Child Care are provided for staff each fall, and all staff must pass [5A.20]. A fire safety refresher is also provided annually, and courses like ServSafe and "restraint training" are offered occasionally. In addition, be sure that you know the location and proper use of all safety equipment, including the emergency pack, first aid supplies, fire extinguisher, and security system. Fire Drill and Emergency procedures are provided in separate documents. Staff members are responsible for reviewing them annually so that they are familiar and for keeping them handy in the classroom. In addition, use strategies to prevent back and other musculoskeletal injuries while at work (see Health & Safety Appendix).

## Preparing the Environment

In conjunction with our monthly safety drills, two members of the Administrative Team coordinate a monthly Health and Safety Check using a streamlined version of the NAEYC checklist from the 2012 "Healthy Young Children" manual (5<sup>th</sup> Edition) that is adapted to our specific facility [10D.4]. The Educational Administrator then requests that Children's School or Carnegie Mellon staff rectify any problems identified.

In addition, the Educational Administrator coordinates the provision of an emergency backpack for each class with supplies needed in case of evacuation. Educators are responsible for completing a monthly backpack check and re-supplying as needed.

Complete emergency backpacks are located in the Red Room, Blue Room, Green Room (2), PreK/Kindergarten, Outdoor Shed, and the Office. Extra supplies are stored in the office closet. Each backpack contains basic first aid supplies as well as the child emergency information and any allergy response supplies needed for the class. Educators must keep this backpack with the class at all times, including in the outdoor classroom and on field trips. The Administrative Team is responsible for having extra supplies on hand so that staff members can add to their backpacks as needed. During our monthly Safety Week, staff members complete a checklist for the supplies in the first aid backpack and add as needed. Staff members are also responsible for ensuring that no additional items are added to the first aid kits so that they remain in compliance with health standards.

Each staff member is responsible for **daily checks** of the following items.

- Safety covers are on all electrical outlets.
- Electrical cords are appropriately placed and secure.
- Adults' personal belongings (handbags, backpacks, etc.) are stored out of children's reach.
- All poisonous substances are stored in high, locked cabinets and the lock is engaged (kitchen, art closet, slop sink closet, classroom cupboards, etc.).
- All exits and hallways are free from obstruction.

The Staff Member on outdoor duty is responsible for daily checks of the following items.

### Morning

- Outdoor classroom gates are operational.

- The outdoor space is free of debris and hazards (e.g., ice, animal waste, insect nests, displaced surfacing, broken equipment, etc.).

Afternoon

- Toys are stored appropriately at the end of the day and the shed is locked.
- Sand is covered at the end of the day.

In addition, every staff member is responsible for responding immediately when encountering the following items, either by handling the problem personally or notifying a member of the Administrative Team.

- Tripping, slipping, choking, pinching hazards
- Elevated water temperature
- Physical plant problems (breaks, leaks, pests, etc.)
- Violations of [Carnegie Mellon's policy](#) re: animals, no smoking / drugs / firearms
- Outdoor classroom gates left open

If a member of the Administrative Team is not available and you cannot handle the problem yourself, please call the Service Response Center (8-2910) to report the problem and seek help.

Use procedures for standard precautions at all times. Wear gloves when contamination with bodily fluids may occur. Do not use hand-washing sinks for bathing children or for removing smeared fecal material, and do not use kitchen sinks for cleaning anything besides food or kitchen equipment. In addition, immediately sanitize surfaces that come in contact with body fluids, use barriers and techniques that minimize contact with mucous membranes or with openings in the skin, clean and sanitize according to the established procedures or alert cleaning staff to do so, and dispose of contaminated materials and diapers in a plastic bag with a secure tie placed in a closed container.

In addition, beginning in 2019, the Children's School began participating in [CMU's Scotty Goes Green Certification](#) because of steps taken to reduce our environmental footprint. Currently, we have a bronze level certification and staff members are responsible for helping with the school's efforts to reduce, reuse, and recycle.

### **Operating the Security System**

Given the large number of individuals continually entering and leaving our laboratory school context for varied purposes, our security depends on everyone being aware of potential hazards and taking responsibility for monitoring entry and exits. All staff members are responsible for knowing and following the security system procedure. Undergraduates, researchers, and families should not be given the security system code.

### **Responding to Environmental Conditions [10D.2]**

All staff members are responsible for knowing health & safety hazards and protecting themselves and children from harm.

**Heat and Cold:** Use the Child Care Weather Watch chart to determine whether the heat index or wind-chill factor are within range for safe outdoor play and ensure that children wear clothing that is dry and layered for warmth in cold weather. Generally speaking, under 80°F is safe with any level of humidity, and under 90° is safe with relative humidity less than 50%. In similarly general terms, air temperatures above 10° are safe on calm days, but winds above 10 miles per hour make even a 30° day feel like it's below 10°. Contact an Educational Administrator with questions.

**Air Pollution:** An Educational Administrator subscribes to an air quality alert system that provides notice of hazards in our area. The Educational Administrator will notify teaching staff if conditions prohibit outdoor education.

CMU provides the school with room air purifiers (one per 360 square feet of space) to improve air quality. Be sure to turn the purifiers on each morning and off at the end of the day. Filter cleaning will be handled as part of the administrative health and safety checks.

Carnegie Mellon follows a "green cleaning" policy to reduce children's and adults' exposure to harmful chemicals, allergens, and other contaminants that impact health, performance, and attendance [5C.6, 10D.2]. In addition, when strong odors occur in the air, use ventilation to control them, rather than air-freshening spray [5C.2]. Scented or unscented candles and air-fresheners are not permitted anywhere indoors at the Children's School [5C.4].

**Sun and Insects:** Our outdoor classroom is sunny for most of the day. However, there is always some shade available in the pavilion, under the climber, under the umbrellas, and in the sandbox. Families may apply sunscreen to the child prior to arrival at school. If families request a second application prior to the 30-minute playground time, they must provide the sunscreen and written permission for staff to apply it. During camp, when children are outside for a longer time and wearing bathing suits, teachers apply sun block with a minimum UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 if it is authorized in writing and provided by the family. At this time, our area is not designated by health authorities as high-risk of insect-borne disease; but if that changes, we will use daily application of repellent containing DEET when parents provide written authorization and appropriate repellent. We are not permitted to apply a product that combines sunscreen and insect repellent [5A.16].

## Supervising Children [3C.12, 3C.13, 3C.14]

- All staff members are responsible for knowing all children and should take appropriate action in response to any child's needs or behavior.
- Maintain appropriate staff – child ratios at all times [10B.22].  
Minimum of 1:10 for Preschool 3's  
Minimum of 1:10 for Preschool 4's  
Minimum of 1:12 for PreK/Kindergarten

These ratios are applicable both indoors and outdoors. Only professional staff count when outside the security system. Field trip ratios are 1:3 for preschool and 1:4 for PreK/Kindergarten. Wading pool ratios are 1:5 for both preschool and PreK/Kindergarten.

- Staff members, as a group, must supervise **preschool children** primarily by sight. Classroom space must be designed so that there are no areas of the room where children can hide. Supervision by sound is permissible for short intervals, such as when children go to the children's or private bathroom from the classroom. For children new to the school, an adult should accompany the child to the bathroom. Once children are capable and comfortable toileting independently, they should signal an adult that they are going to the bathroom, and that adult should check frequently to ensure that the child is safe. Once **PreK/Kindergarten children** are comfortable with the spatial layout of the school, they are permitted after notifying a teacher to go to the restroom, run errands to the office, or go check on a younger sibling independently (i.e., out of sight and sound supervision of the PreK/Kindergarten staff but within the security system area). Other adults in the school will provide support as necessary (e.g., a preschool staff member could help a child in the restroom or an Administrative Team member could help a child in the hallway), and the PreK/Kindergarten team will monitor the time a child is gone and check on the child if they do not return to the classroom promptly. All children must be accompanied by a permanent staff member when leaving the playground to use the university or preschool bathroom.
- Staff members responsible for supervising children during program hours (i.e., as part of the above ratio) should not make personal calls or text on their cell phones, except in cases of emergency. Personal cell phones should be programmed for emergency calls only during work hours. Use of personal email, internet, or social networking is not permitted while supervising children.
- Staff members may not leave children alone with volunteers or campus personnel, nor may they leave an undergraduate in charge. Children must always be supervised by a member of the teaching staff or a researcher, all of whom have appropriate training and child protection clearances [10E.3].

- Use your cell phone to call the office for help if needed. Be sure to take it with you to the outdoor classroom and on campus explorations.
- Intentionally account for each child in your group at every transition.
- All staff members are responsible for knowing and consistently following the school's behavior expectations and management guidelines, outdoor classroom policies, family handbook policies, and field trip procedures.
- When on the stairs, use the right handrail when available, take one step at a time, typically single file. During greeting and dismissal of preschoolers, an adult may hold the child's hand on the stairs if needed. Children are monitored by an adult while walking on the stairs at all times.
- Ensure that the children wash their hands upon arrival at school, before and after eating, after toileting (or being changed), after working with the pets, before and after using the shared sensory materials (i.e., water, sand, playdough, Floam, etc.), and after coming into the school from the outdoor classroom.
- For hand washing, help children line up at the sink and use proper hand washing and drying procedures (1 squirt of soap, vigorous and thorough hand rubbing for 20 seconds, pulling a paper towel from the dispenser, and turning off the faucet with the paper towel. Doors to the bathroom must remain open. Be sure to monitor the cleanliness of the bathroom, correct any problems, and stock supplies as needed. (See the hand washing procedure in the Health & Safety Appendix.)
- For the few children in diapers, be sure to check them at least hourly, including prior to leaving the building and after a quiet / rest time, especially if they sleep [5.A.17]. Only use disposable diapers or pull-ups. When changing a child on the changing table, never leave the child unattended, always wear gloves, and be sure to sanitize the pad and wash your hands afterwards. (See the diapering procedure in the Health & Safety Appendix.) Also, always leave the changing table free of objects and ready for the next use. Diapers should be disposed in the locked diaper receptacle located in the Red Room.
- When a child has a bathroom accident, help the child get changed into extra clothes at the changing table or in the children's or private bathroom. Place wet clothes in a plastic bag in the child's backpack and notify the family so the clothes can be retrieved and cleaned.
- When leaving the Children's School facilities, notify the Administrative Team of the reason for departure and expected duration, take the class emergency backpack and your personal cell phone, have children walk single file or in pairs, and have one adult lead and one follow the group.
- When crossing a street, have an adult stop the traffic and stay in the street, have children cross with another adult in single file or pairs, and allow traffic flow to resume only after all the children have safely crossed.

- When children have known allergies, be sure to follow the procedures specified by the parent/guardian and/or health professional regarding foods served or environmental precautions taken. Keep EpiPens out of the reach of children but easily accessible for quick action, including outside; be sure to take them with other first aid supplies on outings.
- When a child has a fall or other accident, follow the emergency procedures appropriate for the situation. Administer basic first aid as appropriate or seek the help of an administrator or Carnegie Mellon EMT as necessary. Be sure to complete an incident report and place one copy in the office file, upload one copy in the student's FACTS file and give one to the parent.
- If a child ingests a poisonous substance, immediately bring the child to the office and have someone call the Poison Control Center. Follow the directions given by the Poison Control personnel.
- When a child is sick, bring the child to the Main Office to be assessed. If the illness interferes with the child's ability to participate in group activities or poses a risk to others such as a vaccine-preventable illness, the parent/ legal guardian/ caregiver will be notified. The child will be excluded from the group and cared for in the Main Office until a parent/ legal guardian/ caregiver arrives to transport the child home or to a medical professional. An Educational Administrator will determine the appropriate follow-up course of action on a case-by-case basis after consulting *Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools: A Quick Reference Guide* by Susan Aronson, our health consultant, or the child's doctor. If a child is excluded because of a reportable communicable disease, a doctor's note stating that the child is no longer contagious may be required to return to school. *Please note: Under immunized children are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illness as directed by the state health department [5A.13, 5A.14].*
- Release children only to adults who are listed in the child's file or on a signed note from the parent/guardian [10D.9]. Parents/guardians submit a list of adults to whom we may release their child. Oral changes are permitted if you can verify the identity of the individual. In that case, log the name of the parent, date, and time of the request, name of the individual, and name of the staff person taking the call.
- In the winter, special consideration must be given to the use of winter coats as the coat can impact the effectiveness of a harness-style car seat. ***Children's School educators will remove a child's coat prior to buckling the child into a harness-style car seat at dismissal time.*** During greeting, educators will also help children to put on coats after removing them from their car seats.
- Educators who greet or dismiss at the rotunda may only remove children from the curb side of the vehicle. It is a safety hazard to the adults and children to be in the street especially during winter months when the roads can be



icy. ***Children who have car seats on the driver's side of the car will need to be buckled by the vehicle's driver and not the educator [10.D.1].***

- Our goal is to ensure that all children are in safe hands as we release them to parents, guardians, or caregivers at dismissal. On rare occasions, educators may be faced with the delicate situation of wondering whether the person picking up the child is in some way impaired and therefore an unsafe caregiver for the child. If such a concern arises, begin by observing the individual carefully to assess his or her demeanor, speech, eyes, and movement. If possible, cue another staff person to observe as well, and/or to care for the children while you walk the person to the main office. If the concern remains, calmly state that you are concerned about the person's condition and ask if there are other arrangements that can be made for the child's care and transportation [10D.9].
- At all times, interact with children without using physical punishment or any form of psychological abuse.

### **Prohibited Practices Child Abuse [1B.8-10]**

All staff members must satisfactorily complete the required Act 126 (child abuse and reporting) training at least every five years

If any staff member, family member, volunteer, or other person, while in the vicinity of the Children's School, engages in a practice prohibited by the program, the Director and/or Educational Administrator will take necessary steps to assure that there is no reoccurrence of the practice.

- Corporal or any type of physical punishment is not permitted. This includes shaking, hitting, spanking, slapping, jerking, squeezing, kicking, biting, pinching, excessive tickling, and pulling of arms, hair, or ears or other measures that produce physical pain; requiring a child to remain inactive for a long period of time.
- Any form of psychological abuse: shaming, name calling, ridiculing, humiliation, sarcasm, cursing at, making threats, or frightening a child; ostracism, withholding affection, seclusion.
- Any form of coercion: Rough handling (shoving, pulling, pushing, grasping any body part); physical restraint (forcing a child to sit down, lie down, or stay down) except when restraint is necessary to protect the child or others from harm; physically forcing a child to perform an action (such as eating or cleaning up).
- Any form of emotional abuse, including coercion, rejecting, terrorizing, isolating, or corrupting a child is not permitted.
- Any form of public or private humiliation, including threats of physical punishment, is not permitted.
- Withdrawal or the threat of withdrawal of food, rest, or bathroom opportunities is not permitted.
- Abusive, profane, or derogatory language, including yelling and belittling, is not permitted.

Appropriate use of restraint for safety reasons is permissible.

### **Reporting Child Abuse [6A.10]**

All observations or suspicions of child abuse or neglect will be immediately reported to the child protective services agency no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The Director or an Educational Administrator will call ChildLine at 1-800-932-0313 and/or the Allegheny County CYS at (412) 473-2000 to report suspected abuse or neglect. The Director or an Educational Administrator will follow the direction of the child protective services agency regarding completion of written reports. If the parent or legal guardian of the child is suspected of abuse, the Director or an Educational Administrator will follow the guidance of the child protective agency regarding notification of the parent or legal guardian. Staff who report suspicions of child abuse or neglect are immune from discharge, retaliation, or other disciplinary action for that reason alone, unless there is proof that the report is malicious [10D.5].

In the case of a staff member who is accused of child abuse, the Director or an Educational Administrator will work directly with the CMU Human Resources Liaison and Legal Consultant to ensure due process and confidentiality for the staff member. A staff member who is accused of child abuse may be suspended or given leave without pay pending investigation of the accusation. Such caregivers may also be removed from the classroom and given a job that does not require interaction with children. The Director or an Educational Administrator will follow the guidance of the University officials regarding notification of the parent or legal guardian of the suspected abused child, as well as communication with parents or legal guardians of other children so that they may share any concerns they have had. However, no accusation or affirmation of guilt will be made until the investigation is complete. Caregivers found guilty of child abuse will be summarily dismissed or relieved of their duties.

### **Preparing and Serving Food [5B]**

All snack and lunch foods for children are brought from home for individual use. Educators may include tasting and cooking activities in the classroom or kitchen.

- Food is prepared, served, and stored in accordance with the ServSafe training that is provided by our university dietician. All fruits and vegetables are thoroughly washed prior to eating, to avoid possible exposure to pesticides and bacteria [5B.8].
- Clean food preparation surfaces with Clorox Anywhere before and after use following the manufacturer's instructions, as well as between preparation of raw and cooked foods.
- Keep children safely away from any heat-producing appliances.
- Keep all liquids hotter than 110°F out of children's reach.
- Check utensils and dishes prior to use to ensure that they are not chipped or cracked.
- Use paper or washable cups or the child's water bottle for drinks between snack and meals.

- Do not re-use disposable products. Use no Styrofoam products in the kitchen. Never use plastic or polystyrene (Styrofoam™) containers, plates, bags, or wraps when microwaving children's food or beverages. [5B.9]
- Do not serve children younger than four any of the following foods: hot dogs, whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, hard pretzels, spoonfuls of sun butter, or chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole.
- Store all non-perishable food in labeled, insect-resistant plastic containers with tight lids. Food should be dated when opened and /or purchased. All perishable foods such as fruit/vegetables should be dated when purchased.
- Items not meant for cooking/eating, such as playdough, should also be labeled and dated.
- Discard foods with expired dates [5B.4].
- Work with families to ensure that snack and lunch brought from home meet recommended nutritional guidelines.
- Make sure that food requiring refrigeration stays cold until served [5B.3].
- Provide food to supplement food brought from home if necessary.
- The program documents compliance and any corrections that it has made according to the recommendations of the program's dietician / health consultant that reflect consideration of federal and other applicable food safety standards.
- For each child with special health care needs or food allergies or special nutrition needs, the child's health care provider gives the program an individualized care plan that is prepared in consultation with family members and specialists involved in the child's care [5B.5].
- All foods and beverages brought from home for storage at school are labeled with the child's name and the date and stored in re-sealable containers.
- The program protects children with food allergies from contact with the problem food. The program asks families of a child with food allergies to give consent for posting information about that child's food allergy and, if consent is given, then posts that information in the food preparation area and in the areas of the facility the child uses so it is a visual reminder to all those who interact with the child during the program day.
- For children with disabilities who have special feeding needs, program staff members keep a daily record documenting the type and quantity of food a child consumes and provide families with that information [5B.5, 5B.6].

## **Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting**

- All cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing of the facility is carried out as recommended by NAEYC's "Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting Frequency Table" [5C.5], using only the "green cleaning" products recommended by CMU's policy and ordered by the school as fragrance-free and least-toxic [5C.6].
- Carnegie Mellon's cleaning service is responsible for the following tasks.
  - Daily – Clean & disinfect door and cabinet handles
  - Clean and disinfect sinks, faucets, surrounding counters
  - Clean and disinfect soap dispensers

Clean and disinfect toilet bowls, seats, handles, etc.  
Clean & disinfect floors  
Vacuum carpets and all area rugs  
Clean & disinfect countertops and table IF they are totally clear  
Clean and disinfect mops and cleaning rags

Quarterly - Shampoo carpets and area rugs

- All other classroom area cleaning and sanitizing / disinfecting tasks are the responsibility of the teaching staff. (See the guidelines for washing surfaces in the Health & Safety Appendix.)
  - Clean and disinfect any surface contaminated with body fluids immediately (e.g., saliva, mucus, vomit, urine, stool, or blood). If necessary, University cleaning will be contacted to support cleaning efforts.
  - Clean and disinfect changing table with Clorox Hydrogen Peroxide Disinfecting Wipes or a bleach solution after each child's use.
  - Drain, sanitize, and refill the water table for each session (morning and afternoon for preschool, daily for PreK/Kindergarten).
  - Clean and disinfect countertops and tables daily using Clorox Anywhere following the manufacturer's instructions.
  - Clean and sanitize utensils, surfaces, and toys that have been in contact with saliva or other bodily fluids after each child's use. Acceptable methods include use of the kitchen dishwasher or washing by hand with water and detergent, then rinsing, sanitizing, and air drying.
  - Clean dress-up clothes not worn on the head weekly.
  - Clean non-disposable hats after each child's use.
  - Clean lockers monthly.
  - The Administrative Team handles laundering of pillowcases, blankets, etc. after each sick child's use.
  - When using wading pools (typically during June camp), follow the guidelines for Disinfecting a Wading Pool (see Appendix). Empty the pools daily.
  - Wash sheets after each use with a nap mat. NOTE that none of our programs include a regular rest time.

NOTE: The Children's School does not use walkers, potty chairs, cribs, mattresses, or sleeping bags.

## **Pets and Visiting Animals**

- Pet reptiles are not permitted at the Children's School because of salmonella risk. Small mammals, birds, amphibians, fish, worms, and insects are permitted if secured from reputable dealers and cared for according to instructions in appropriate habitats.
- Only qualified animal handlers are permitted to bring visiting animals to school (e.g., blind society representative with a seeing eye dog, nature preserve representative with various animal friends, etc.).

- Take care to instruct children on safe behavior with animals, to supervise all interactions between children and animals, and to ensure that they wash their hands before and after contact.

### **EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN [10B.19]**

The Children's School's Emergency Action Plan specifies four safety levels including one for normal operations, one for cases when children need to be kept away from a certain area (e.g., a hazardous spill that needs to be cleaned, an accident, etc.), one for emergencies that require a shelter in place/lockdown as determined by the situation (e.g., a chemical spill from the nearby railroad, etc.), and one for evacuation (e.g., in case of a fire). Our first evacuation sites are the reflection garden, parking lot, or outdoor classroom. For longer evacuations, we go to the University Center or The Cyert Center for Early Education. In the event of an emergency in which Carnegie Mellon main campus facilities require evacuation, we will be relocated to the Entertainment Technology Center (ETC) located at 700 Technology Drive, Pittsburgh, PA for shelter and safety. In the event of a long-term evacuation, we contact families as quickly as possible via text, email or phone to notify them of the plan for reuniting them with their children. If these services are not available, Carnegie Mellon officials use local broadcasting services to make announcements regarding status and procedures.

In an emergency or time-critical situation when the Director is not present or reachable by phone, the most senior Administrative Team member present will serve as the Acting Director. If none of the Administrative Team members is present at the time of an emergency, the most senior educator present will decide collaboratively with other staff on a course of action.

### **BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES [3B, 6D.3]**

The Children's School's goals related to behavior management are listed for three-, four-, and five-year-olds on the Continuum of Developmental Objectives, primarily in the domains of Self-Esteem & Independence, Interaction & Cooperation, and the part of Discovery & Exploration focused on approaches to learning. The Children's School environment, schedules, routines, activities, etc. are all designed to foster positive behavior management. All staff members guide and support children throughout the day as they gain control of their bodies, learn to use language to communicate needs, practice persisting when frustrated, take turns, and play cooperatively with peers.

Experienced educators recognize the possibility of potential problems before they occur and can redirect the child's behavior before it becomes unacceptable. All Children's School staff will:

- Provide limits in a calm, consistent, and respectful manner, which allows the child to grow in self-control and self-esteem.
- Respond to a child's challenging behavior, including physical aggression, in a manner that provides for the safety of the child and the others in the classroom.
- Help children learn to identify both positive and negative emotions, as well as to express them appropriately.
- Work with children to develop conflict resolution skills necessary to solve their disagreements in an appropriate manner.
- Help children express and acknowledge their choices.
- Help children describe problems, evaluate their actions, verbalize alternatives, and consider the perspective of others. Children are guided and supported as they learn to accept the natural consequences of their actions.

### **Steps for Addressing Problem Behaviors as a Team [1E.1, 3B.2]**

1. The behaviors of children shall be addressed by classroom staff as outlined by the Behavior Guidelines in the Family Handbook. Educational Administrators consult regularly with staff members to plan appropriate strategies, including positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior, redirection, reminders of classroom rules, modifying the classroom environment and/or daily schedule, and providing a supervised quiet time for the child to gain control. Staff members shall observe all children and use appropriate forms for documenting any atypical behavior to help ascertain any patterns re: events, activities, and interactions, as well as any precipitating contextual factors.

2. When a child exhibits a problem behavior on a continual basis that is not resolved through appropriate behavior management strategies, the educators will plan a meeting with the Director to discuss the problem behavior and ask for further guidance. If relevant, at least two staff members will independently complete the TABS assessment of the child (Temperament and Atypical Behavior Scale, Neisworth, Bagnato, Salvia, and Hunt, 1999) and the Director will observe the child to verify the TABS results. (See the Health & Safety Appendix for a list of the TABS questions and then consult the Director for the scoring guide.)

3. If the behavior problem is still not resolved, the staff shall request a meeting with the child's parent(s). If appropriate, parents will be asked to complete the TABS assessment of the child prior to the meeting so that results can be compared with the school results. At the meeting, staff and parent(s) will collaboratively develop individualized strategies to resolve the problem behavior. During this process, educators will keep the Director and parents informed of progress in resolving the behavior problem. Educators will provide information to the parent(s) in written form with copies kept in the child's file. If a child's behavior results in an injury to another child or staff member, the child's parents will be notified as soon as possible, and written documentation of the incident will be provided to the parents and placed in the child's file.

4. If the educators feel that they need further assistance in resolving the behavior problem, the Director may, with parental permission, request the assistance of an outside party. If she feels that the problem may be the result of a special need, she may request that the parents arrange for a professional evaluation of the child. The goal of this behavior management process is to support the child's inclusion and success while limiting or eliminating the use of suspension, expulsion, and other exclusionary measures. If, however, the parents refuse to pursue evaluation and the problem behavior continues, the continued enrollment of the child will be reconsidered in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 6 below.

5. If the results of an outside evaluation suggest the need for accommodations for special needs, the Children's School will provide these, or other appropriate, accommodations, as long as they are not an undue hardship on the Children's School as outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or federal / state civil rights laws.

6. If all the above steps fail to resolve the behavior problem, the Children's School may ask the parents to find an alternative educational placement for their child. The Children's School will provide the parents with 4 weeks notice, except where such notice is not reasonable because of safety concerns, and administrators will try to assist the parents with alternative placement that is appropriate for the unique needs of the child.

7. Written documentation of all the above steps will be provided to the parents and placed in the child's file.

## **GUIDELINES FOR OUTDOOR CLASSROOM USE [9B]**

**(Designed for both the Playground and the Reflection Garden, with a focus on safety and in the spirit of developmentally appropriate risk)**

NOTE: Natural elements include grassy areas, sandbox, mud kitchen, garden boxes, water play, and loose parts with logs/stumps.

- Only open areas when there is sufficient coverage to monitor them (e.g., Imagination Playground, bikes, water play, etc.).
- Educators ensure that they maintain good lines of sight to cover all areas of the playground, from the grassy outer ring to the inner oval with rubber surfacing, using an “eyes up” approach. If there is enough coverage, an educator may do a more focused activity with children.
- Monitor the gates to make sure they stay closed and latched.
- Be vigilant for safety concerns in the outdoor classroom. Educators should carry their cell phone at all times.
- Monitor the fall zones around each piece of equipment.
  - Height of equipment is less than 30 inches = 6-foot distance between structures
  - Height of equipment is more than 30 inches = 9-foot distance between structures
  - Keep the alligator seesaw away from the slide or climbers.
  - The large adult size picnic table is the only picnic table to be inside the bike oval. All small child sized tables are to remain on the outside of the bike oval.
  - Monitor loose parts, such as logs, stumps, and tires, so that they are not creating hazards in the fall zones or slide exits.
  - Ensure that children keep their feet on the ground in the Music Exploration Area.
- Ensure that children wear helmets during use of any riding toy or scooter (whether as driver or passenger). Do not allow children to wear their helmets while playing in other areas because helmets change the children's head dimensions and increase the possibilities for entrapment.
- Educators focus on supervising and promoting productive play among children.
- Classes can use the *covered* blocks Pavilion and *shaded* Reflection Garden for dramatics, snack, etc. with supervision. In addition to these areas, the *sandbox pavilion* offers good shade for sunny days, and educators can add *umbrellas and canopies* to other areas as needed. Be sure to close umbrellas when leaving the playground so umbrellas don't get displaced by the wind.
- Picnic tables and chairs are for bottoms only. No standing. No jumping.
- Jumping is permitted from the Rock Climber, Climbing Tunnel, Beanstalk Climber, benches and platforms.
- Use sidewalk chalk only on the sidewalks, NOT on the Bluestone in the Reflection Garden.



NOTE: Educators use judgment re: supervising children's catch / chase games. Staff Members should NOT be chasing children or encouraging children to chase them.

- No climbing on the fence or on the adults.
- Bikes - Wear your own helmet, ride in the designated direction, no ramming, but pushing is allowed with adult supervision. Park bikes in the "parking lot" in the mulched area between the musical instruments and the double gate.
- Wagons – All potential passengers wear helmets, with only 2 passengers at a time (3 passengers ok for field trips).
- Scooters – With helmets and supervision only.
- Slides – All positions are fine as long as everyone pays attention for safety.
- Sandbox – Sand stays in the sandbox; sand toys stay in the sandbox. Water in the sandbox only with adult permission. Children may remove shoes for sandbox play. Notify an Educational Administrator to initiate a work order if the sand level nears less than half full.
- Mud Kitchen – Mud stays in the mud kitchen. Ensure that there is no standing water at the end of each session.
- Dig only in the sandbox and garden boxes (i.e., not the gray Eco-Trail or the wood chips).
- Imagination Playground (IP) - No climbing in the storage box. All loose blocks should be returned to their designated areas at the end of each session, though interesting structures may be left for the next group.
- Shed – No children in the shed without supervision.
- Clean Up – Park bikes in the "parking lot" between the musical instruments and the double gate, make sure sand toys are in the sandbox, and put other toys away.

**Special Notes:**

- Photos may be taken by outsiders only with permission of the office. The photographer should be wearing a nametag like other visitors.
- Dogs and other pets are not permitted on the playground.
- No children may leave playground without an adult. Permanent staff members must accompany children to the bathroom (i.e., not student employees or volunteers). Researchers with clearances on file may take children from the playground to participate in research sessions. Indoor classroom practices apply to children's use of the restroom in the preschool while their class is in the Reflection Garden.
- Educators close shed doors and lock gates when playground time is finished. Sheds are locked at the end of the day.

### **STAFF USE OF THE SECURITY SYSTEM**

Installed Fall 1996

Updated with new keypads & video monitoring Summer 2006

Updated with new keypads and control pads Fall 2009 after the Flood

Updated with new cameras and video recording Summer 2014

Updated with new camera system that records to campus police Spring /  
Summer 2022

**Note:** Staff members are given a code that is “privileged”, meaning that it can be used to program the system. PLEASE DO NOT GIVE YOUR CODE TO ANYONE.

**CAUTION:** The system processes commands VERY SLOWLY so it takes time for your key presses to register!

### **Personal Entry & Exit**

Use the corridor doors.

Use the slimline number panels.

Press the access code and then the \* button.

The red light will NOT turn green to signify that the magnet has been deactivated.

You have 30 seconds to get through the door and make sure it closes.

NOTE: Having the code only allows entry to the school corridor. Keys must still be used for access to other areas.

**BEWARE:** The system does not reactivate for 30 seconds, so anyone can enter or exit the school within the 30 seconds. The system also does not accept a code for entry until 30 seconds after the last time a code was entered into the system. If you have trouble entering, wait 15 seconds and try again. Sometimes people use the code to exit but it is not accepted, which makes the alarm ring anyway.

### **Class Entry and Exit (i.e., longer than 30 seconds)**

“Ready to Arm” means that all doors are closed and unbypassed.

“Ready w/ Bypass” means that all doors are closed but at least one is bypassed.

There are now two separate processes for bypassing doors. Do not try to bypass if the keypad does not say ready. Press \* if it does not say ready.

To bypass the Corridor Doors:

For the Stairwell, press the F1 key to bypass and the F3 key to unbypass.

For the Hallway (Front), press F2 to bypass and F4 to unbypass.

These presses must be firm and slightly extended. The system will beep three times and display Stair / Front Byp / Unbyp to let you know it worked.

To bypass the Outside Doors:

Use the major key panels (office, preschool, or PreK/Kindergarten).

Press the “Bypass” key.

Press the Door Number.

03: Preschool

04: PreK/Kindergarten

Press the "Bypass" key. The system will beep and ask for Authorization.  
Press the code. The system will beep three times.

To "un-bypass" the Outside Doors:

Follow the same steps for bypassing.

To check what's bypassed,

Press the "Up Arrow" key. Each time you press it, you will see one more door that is bypassed, until you see them all.

NOTE: If you bypass a door, it is your responsibility to make sure that it is unbypassed as soon as possible. The school is not secure when the doors are bypassed because children could leave without the alarm ringing.

### **To STOP the ALARM from ringing or system from BEEPING**

Press the code on one of the major keypads.

**Press the \* key to exit any function mid-stream. The "Elk" key also works.**

### **STAFF USE OF THE INTERCOM**

#### **To Answer the Intercom when it rings**

Look for the left-most red light.

Press the button beneath it to **open the channel**.

Press the "**Talk**" button and say, "**May I help you.**"

Release the "Talk" button to hear the response.

Continue the conversation in the same manner, pressing the "Talk" button when you want to speak and releasing it when you want to listen.

\*Many people think that they have to press the buzzer to talk. If you hear the buzzer again instead of the other person talking, you'll need to wait for your turn and then tell the person not to press the button again.

Once you are sure that the person should be admitted to the school, press the red button that corresponds to the door where they are standing: either #1 or #2.

To let people enter, you disengage the alarm for 30 seconds on the relevant door by pressing the corresponding **Red Button**. [Using the Red Button near the office door is also a good way for you to leave the school via Door 2 without having to press your code.]

When you're finished, press the "**Off**" button to close the channel (or you'll continue to hear noise from outside the doors).

## Appendix – Health & Safety Techniques

### Surface Cleaning

#### Cleaning Protocol

- Wear disposable gloves to clean and disinfect.
- Clean surfaces using soap and water, then use disinfectant. Cleaning with soap and water reduces number of germs, dirt, and impurities on the surface. Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces.
- Use a wipe or spray surface with premixed bleach solution or Clorox Anwhere.
  - If using a disinfecting wipe, wipe surface after dwell time to remove chemical residue.
  - 3.2 ounces bleach to 32 ounces of room temperature water
    - 1 part bleach 10 parts water
  - Bleach solutions will be effective for disinfection up to 24 hours.
  - **Leave solution** on the surface for **at least 1 minute**.

For the changing table, use Clorox Hydrogen Peroxide Disinfecting Wipes or mix a bleach solution of 1 tablespoon bleach to 1 quart of water each day so you can disinfect the changing table following each use.

NOTE that these products have been chosen to balance eco-friendly effectiveness with minimizing exposure to allergens and harmful chemicals [5C.6].

## Hand-washing Technique

The following is the hand-washing procedure recommended by the National Association for the Education of Young Children: Rub hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds, including back of hands, wrists, areas between fingers, around nail beds, under fingernails and jewelry. The children are taught the much more detailed version below, along with the accompanying song composed by the Children's School minstrels.

Hand washing Technique:

**Step 1:** Put your hands together. Slide the tips of the fingers of the right hand to the left hand's wrist and then slide hands together in a wave-like motion until the left hand's fingertips are now touching the right wrist. Gently create a wave back and forth to wash the palms of your hands. (If you hold up your hands palms together and look, you can actually see a pocket between your hands. This is why the wave motion is effective in reaching the palms, which is a place that germs hide.)

**Step 2:** Build a bridge by placing right hand on top of the left hand. Interlock the fingers and gently move the right hand over the left hand several times. Switch hands and repeat.

**Step 3:** Create a bracelet with the fingers of your right hand over the wrist of your left hand. Slide the fingers of your right hand around and around your left wrist. Now slide your finger bracelet off and on your left hand several times. Switch hands and repeat. (This cleans the outside of the hands, paying special attention to the thumbs and little fingers).

**Step 4:** Pinch fingers together, place fingertips in the palm of the opposite hand and twist, twist, twist in a circle to gently clean your nails. Switch hands and repeat. (*Jeannie Simms, American Respiratory Alliance of Western Pennsylvania, November 2, 2009*).

# Hand-washing Song

*(sung to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat")*

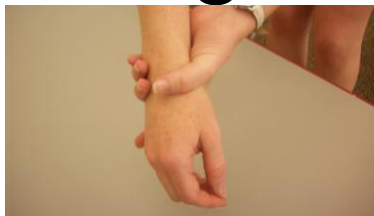
Slide, slide, slide your hands,



Make a bridge like this.



Don't forget both bracelets,



Then you have to twist!



### **CARING FOR OUR CHILDREN STANDARD: HANDWASHING PROCEDURE**

Children and staff members should wash their hands using the following method:

- a. Check to be sure a clean, disposable paper (or single-use cloth) towel is available;
- b. **Turn on warm water**, between 60°F and 120°F, to a comfortable temperature;
- c. **Moisten hands with water and apply soap** (not antibacterial) to hands;
- d. **Rub hands together vigorously until a soapy lather appears**, hands are out of the water stream, and continue for at least twenty seconds (sing Happy Birthday silently twice) (2). Rub areas between fingers, around nail beds, under fingernails, jewelry, and back of hands. Nails should be kept short; acrylic nails should not be worn (3);
- e. **Rinse hands under running water**, between 60°F and 120°F, until they are free of soap and dirt. Leave the water running while drying hands;
- f. **Dry hands** with the clean, disposable paper or single use cloth towel;
- g. If taps do not shut off automatically, turn taps off with a disposable paper or single use cloth towel;
- h. **Throw the disposable paper towel into a lined trash container**; or place single-use cloth towels in the laundry hamper; or hang individually labeled cloth towels to dry. **Use hand lotion to prevent chapping of hands, if desired.**

The use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers is an alternative to traditional handwashing with soap and water by children over twenty-four months of age and adults on hands that are not visibly soiled. A single pump of an alcohol-based sanitizer should be dispensed. Hands should be rubbed together, distributing sanitizer to all hand and finger surfaces and hands should be permitted to air dry.

Situations/times that children and staff should wash their hands should be posted in all handwashing areas.

Use of antimicrobial soap is not recommended in childcare settings. There are no data to support use of antibacterial soaps over other liquid soaps.

Children and staff who need to open a door to leave a bathroom or diaper changing area should open the door with a disposable towel to avoid possibly re-contaminating clean hands. If a child cannot open the door or turn off the faucet, they should be assisted by an adult.

**RATIONALE:** Running water over the hands removes visible soil. Wetting the hands before applying soap helps to create a lather that can loosen soil. The soap lather loosens soil and brings it into solution on the surface of the skin. Rinsing the lather off into a sink removes the soil from the hands that the soap brought into solution. Warm water, between 60°F and 120°F, is more comfortable than cold water; using warm water also promotes adequate rinsing during handwashing (1).

Acceptable forms of soap include liquid and powder.

COMMENTS: Pre-moistened cleansing towelettes do not effectively clean hands and should not be used as a substitute for washing hands with soap and running water. When running water is unavailable or impractical, the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer is a suitable alternative for children over 24 months and for adults on hands that are not visibly soiled.

Outbreaks of disease have been linked to shared wash water and wash basins (4). Water basins should not be used as an alternative to running water. Camp sinks and portable commercial sinks with foot or hand pumps dispense water as for a plumbed sink and are satisfactory if filled with fresh water daily. The staff should clean and disinfect the water reservoir container and water catch basin daily.

Single-use towels should be used unless an automatic electric hand-dryer is available.

The use of cloth roller towels is not recommended for the following reasons:

- a. Children often use cloth roll dispensers improperly, resulting in more than one child using the same section of towel; and
- b. Incidents of unintentional strangulation have been reported (U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission Data Office, pers. comm.)



**Hand Sanitizers:**

The use of hand sanitizers by children over twenty-four months of age and adults in childcare programs is an appropriate alternative to the use of traditional handwashing with soap and water. For visibly dirty hands, rinsing under running water or wiping with a water-saturated towel should be used to remove as much dirt as possible before using a hand sanitizer.

**a. Acceptable Conditions for Use of Hand Sanitizers:**

- i. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are those with 60% to 95% alcohol.
- ii. Any visible soil must be removed by hand washing or a wet wipe before applying the sanitizer.
- iii. To avoid ingestion, contact with eyes and mucous membranes, and inhalation of fumes, alcohol-based hand sanitizer dispensers are not accessible to children younger than 6 years.
- iv. Use of hand sanitizers requires 1:1 supervision by an adult to dispense and making sure that the chemical is used according to the directions on the product label. School-aged children may use hand sanitizers with close teacher/caregiver supervision.
- v. Users should pay special attention to the time the skin must stay wet with the hand sanitizer before being allowed to air-dry.

**b. Procedure for Using a Hand Sanitizer:**

- i. Dispense the amount recommended by the manufacturer of the alcohol-based sanitizer.
- ii. Rub hands together, distributing sanitizer to all hand and finger surfaces and keeping hand surfaces wet for the time specified on the product label.
- iii. Allow hands to air-dry.

**Lifting Safety: Tips to Help Prevent Back Injuries** (familydoctor.org) [10.D.1]  
[CMU's Environmental Health & Safety website](#) provides additional training information.

**Have you checked the object before you try to lift it?**

- Test every load before you lift by pushing the object lightly with your hands or feet to see how easily it moves. This tells you about how heavy it is.
- Remember, a small size does not always mean a light load.

**Is the load you want to lift packed correctly?**

- Make sure the weight is balanced and packed so it won't move around.
- Loose pieces inside a box can cause accidents if the box becomes unbalanced.

**Is it easy to grip this load?**

- Be sure you have a tight grip on the object before you lift it.
- Handles applied to the object may help you lift it safely.

**Is it easy to reach this load?**

- To avoid hurting your back, use a ladder when you're lifting something over your head.
- Get as close as you can to the load. Slide the load towards you if you can.
- Don't arch your back--avoid reaching out for an object.
- Do the work with your legs and your arms--not your back.

**What's the best way to pick up an object?**

- Use slow and smooth movements. Hurried, jerky movements can strain the muscles in your back.
- Keep your body facing the object while you lift it. Twisting while lifting can hurt your back.
- Keep the load close to your body. Having to reach out to lift and carry an object may hurt your back.
- "Lifting with your legs" should be done only when you can straddle the load. To lift with your legs, bend your knees, not your back, to pick up the load. Keep your back straight.
- Try to carry the load in the space between your shoulder and your waist. This puts less strain on your back muscles.

**How can I avoid back injuries?**

- Warm up. Stretch your legs and your back before lifting anything.
- Pace yourself. Take many small breaks between lifts if you are lifting a number of things.
- Don't overdo it--don't try to lift something too heavy for you. If you have to strain to carry the load, it's too heavy.
- Make sure you have enough room to lift safely. Clear a space around the object before lifting it.
- Look around before you lift and look around as you carry. Make sure you can see where you are walking. Know where you are going to put down the load.
- Avoid walking on slippery, uneven surfaces while carrying something.
- Don't rely on a back belt to protect you. It hasn't been proven that back belts can protect you from back injury.
- Get help before you try to lift a heavy load. Use a dolly or a forklift if you can.

**TABS (Behavior Scale)**

Child:

Date:

Birthdate:

Name of person completing the checklist:

Relationship to child:

Directions:

For each of the 55 items listed below, check “No” if the behavior is not observed. Check “Yes” if the behavior is observed. For those items marked “Yes,” check “Need Help” if there is a special concern and assistance is needed to cope with the behavior.

#	Item	No	Yes	Need Help
1	Consistently upset by changes in schedule			
2	Emotions don’t match what is going on			
3	Seems to look through or past people			
4	Resists looking you in the eye			
5	Acts like others are not there			
6	Hardly ever starts on own to play with others			
7	Moods and wants are too hard to figure out			
8	Seems to be in “own world”			
9	Often stares into space			
10	“Tunes out,” loses contact with what is going on			
11	Plays with toys in strange ways			
12	Plays with toys as if confused by how they work			
13	Makes strange throat noises			
14	Disturbed by too much light, noise, touching			
15	Overexcited in crowded places			
16	Stares at lights			
17	Overly interested in toy/object			
18	Flaps hands over and over			
19	Shakes head over and over			
20	Wanders around without purpose			
21	Upset by every little thing			
22	Often difficult to soothe when upset and crying			
23	Has wide swings in mood			
24	Gets angry too easily			
25	Too easily frustrated			
26	Has wild temper tantrums			
27	Frequently irritable, “touchy,” or fussy			
#	Item	No	Yes	Need Help

28	Can't wait at all for food or toy			
29	Demands attention continually			
30	Controls adult's behavior, "is the boss"			
31	Jealous too often			
32	Mostly on the go, "in high gear"			
33	Doesn't sit still			
34	Too "grabby," impulsive			
35	Almost always refuses to do what is told			
36	Throws or breaks things on purpose			
37	Bites, hits, kicks others			
38	Rarely smiles, giggles, or laughs at funny things			
39	Doesn't pay attention to sights and sounds			
40	Doesn't seem to watch moving objects			
41	Shows no surprise to new events			
42	Doesn't react to own name			
43	Doesn't care when others are hurt			
44	Doesn't play much at all			
45	Doesn't enjoy playing with mother or caregiver			
46	Isn't upset when toy is taken away			
47	Almost never babbles or tries to talk			
48	Doesn't react to sounds			
49	Often cries too long			
50	Often frightened by dreams or the nighttime			
51	Screams in sleep and can't be comforted			
52	Can't comfort self when upset			
53	Wakes up often and doesn't fall back asleep			
54	Doesn't have a regular sleep schedule			
55	Too often needs help to fall asleep			
TOTAL				