

# CLC

Children's Learning Centers

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## **FAMILY HANDBOOK**

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# WELCOME

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the University of Houston Children's Learning Centers (CLC). I am pleased that you have enrolled your child in our program. Please review this handbook and then keep it available for future reference.

The purpose of this Family Handbook is to provide an organized source of detailed information specifically related to ways that families can partner with the Center to ensure a high quality experience for all. The Center has established a number of policies concerning program and classroom practices. These guidelines have been developed to comply with both state licensing standards and national accreditation criteria; and also to reflect input from the Children's Learning Centers Advisory Board, UH Administration, teachers and families. The policies and procedures described in this booklet are written to provide a clear description of what families may expect of CLC and what CLC expects of families.

Our goal is to provide exemplary early childhood services for UH families, as well as, an environment of reciprocal respect, trust, and open communication in a way that promotes a sense of community and belonging. I invite each family member to become actively involved in all aspects of our program. At CLC we believe that a parent is their child's first teacher!

Thank you for choosing CLC and I look forward to partnering with you in building a foundation for your child's future learning.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Skopal  
Director

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University of Houston  
Children's Learning Centers 1  
4139 Wheeler  
Houston, TX 77204-6016  
Telephone Number: 832-842-0500

University of Houston  
Children's Learning Centers 2  
Cameron Building  
4235 Cullen Blvd.  
Houston, TX 77204-6016  
Telephone Number: 832-842-0510

E-Mail: [ccenter@uh.edu](mailto:ccenter@uh.edu)  
Website: [www.uh.edu/clc](http://www.uh.edu/clc)

## CHILDREN'S LEARNING CENTERS OVERVIEW

### HISTORY

After students voiced a need for quality child care on campus in the early 1970's, President Hoffman appointed a Child Care Student Group to examine the feasibility of opening a child care center at the University. With *Board of Regent* approval, the University of Houston Child Care Center opened in February 1975. In response to the increasing demands of the UH community for child care services the Center gradually grew. In 1989, the addition of four classrooms expanded the Center's capacity to 153 children. Then in 2010, five additional classrooms were opened at the Cameron building across the street from the original location. Today, the Children's Learning Centers, formerly UH Child Care Center, has two convenient locations on campus with a combined accreditation capacity of 196 children.

### EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK

#### MISSION

The mission of the Children's Learning Centers (CLC) is to facilitate an inclusive learning environment that celebrates diversity as well as promotes a professional commitment to impacting our community and supporting student success, through the provision of a nationally accredited early childhood educational program for the children of University of Houston (UH) students, faculty, and staff.

#### PHILOSOPHY

At CLC a primary goal is for children to feel safe and secure. Additionally, we believe that a learning environment which fosters respect for cultural diversity and utilizes an eclectic approach to education allows for optimal growth and development of young children. Young children's developmental tasks are to build trust, learn social skills, begin mastery of academic skills and develop positive self-esteem. In order to best support these tasks, our program strives to provide developmentally appropriate activities, well-trained and consistent staff, a safe and healthy learning environment, and continuity of care. Also, throughout the whole learning process we believe parents are their child's first teacher; thus, we work to support parents in their efforts to guide their child's development as well.

#### CORE VALUES

Standards of ethical behavior in early childhood care and education are based on commitment to core values that are deeply rooted in the history of our field. At CLC we have committed ourselves professionally to:

-  Appreciating childhood as a unique and valuable stage of the human life cycle.
-  Basing our work with children on current knowledge of child development.
-  Acknowledging and supporting the close ties between the child and family.

- 🐾 Recognizing that children are best understood and supported in the context of family, culture, community and society.
- 🐾 Respecting the dignity, worth and uniqueness of each individual child, family member and colleague.
- 🐾 Helping children and adults achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on trust, respect and positive regard.
- 🐾 Fostering an appreciation for and building a natural connection between the arts and learning.

In addition, CLC is committed to the mission of the University of Houston and the UH Division of Student Affairs' Values:

- 🐾 Care
- 🐾 Empowerment
- 🐾 Collaboration
- 🐾 Integrity
- 🐾 Innovation
- 🐾 Community

### **CURRICULUM GOALS & FRAMEWORK**

The early years in a child's life set the tone for future learning. Our goal at CLC is to stay current on research in child development so that we are able to build a foundation for each child that lasts a lifetime. Our infant and toddler programs implement *Emergent Curriculum*, a philosophy of teaching and way of planning curriculum that focuses on being responsive to children's interests to create meaningful learning experiences. It is child-initiated, assessment based (LAP B-K) and prioritizes active participation, relationship building, flexible and adaptable methods, inquiry, and play-based learning. As participants in the *Texas School Ready* program, CLC preschool classrooms follow the *Frog Street* curriculum- a comprehensive, research-based program that integrates instruction across developmental domains and early learning disciplines.

All classroom curriculum is implemented in a manner that reflects sensitivity to family home values, beliefs, experiences, and language as well as incorporates the following goals:

- 🐾 Developing safe and healthy habits in young children.
- 🐾 Fostering positive self-esteem and a sense of belonging.
- 🐾 Providing opportunities for creative expression.
- 🐾 Supporting the development of social skills.
- 🐾 Stimulating cognitive problem-solving skills.
- 🐾 Strengthening communication skills necessary for listening, reading, writing, and speaking.
- 🐾 Enhancing fine motor and gross motor skills.
- 🐾 Offering opportunities for children to learn individually and in groups according to their developmental needs and interest.

- 🐾 Assessing the individual needs and interest of each child. (see Appendix for the Assessment Plan)

The curriculum includes challenging context and provides equitable learning experiences that ensure developmentally appropriate cognitive, emotional, social, creative, and physical growth of all young children that lead to success at the next level.

### **PROGRAM QUALITY/STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE**

High quality early childhood education benefits children. Children who experience a quality program are more likely to have greater academic success, enhanced self-esteem and increased self-control. CLC aligns the program and curriculum with federal and state guidelines.

CLC is licensed by the **Texas Health and Human Services**, accredited by the **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)** and **Cognia** and participates in the **Texas Rising Star** and the **Texas School Ready program**.

For more information about early childhood program quality:

- 🐾 **Texas Department of Human Services-** <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/>
- 🐾 **Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers-**  
<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/doing-business-with-hhs/provider-portal/protective-services/ccl/min-standards/chapter-746-centers.pdf>
- 🐾 **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)-**  
<https://www.naeyc.org/>
- 🐾 **Cognia-** <https://www.cognia.org/services/accreditation-certification/>
- 🐾 **Texas Rising Star-** <https://texasrisingstar.org/>
- 🐾 **Texas Education Agency (TEA) – Pre-K Curriculum Guidelines,**  
<http://tea.texas.gov/index2.aspx?id=2147495508>
- 🐾 **Texas School Ready-** <https://texasschoolready.org/>

**CLC families will be notified of mandated policy changes by the organizations listed above, that are effective immediately, via email and postings.**

## INTERACTION GUIDELINES

CLC staff members share the following values as a guide for interactions among staff members, between staff and children, between staff and parents and between staff and University employees/Houston community:

- 🐾 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.
- 🐾 We use direct eye contact, smiles, and a warm tone of voice, positive touch, social conversations and joint laughter to support the development of positive working relationships.
- 🐾 We emphasize the need to work as a community of learners promoting team building processes.
- 🐾 Our partnership in learning is supported by regular reciprocal communication affirming recognition of effort and accomplishment.
- 🐾 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.
- 🐾 We strive to build community partnerships and advocate for families and children both on campus and within the greater Houston area.

## RATIOS

CLC maintains developmentally appropriate teaching staff-child ratios within each group size to facilitate adult-child interaction and constructive activity among children. These ratios are applicable both indoors and outdoors.

- 🐾 Minimum of 1 teacher to 4 children for infants
- 🐾 Minimum of 1 teacher to 6 children for toddlers
- 🐾 Minimum of 1 teacher to 10 children for preschoolers

Teaching staff provide ongoing personal contact, meaningful learning activities, supervision, and immediate care as needed to protect children's well-being. All staff members are responsible for knowing all children and take appropriate action in response to any child's needs or behavior.

## STAFF-CHILD INTERACTIONS

We make every effort for all children to know and be known by all adults in our school environment so that they are comfortable interacting with and seeking assistance from any adult. Each child is assigned a primary classroom with a Teacher and an Associate Teacher. Student Assistants are generally assigned to Program areas and make an effort to know all of the children in their area. Interactions in our open spaces i.e. multi-purpose room, courtyard and playgrounds 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. 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".

### **STAFF-FAMILY INTERACTIONS**

CLC staff aims to communicate regularly and effectively with families so that their perspectives can be incorporated into our understanding of the child's development, our curriculum planning and our assessment process. In addition to a detailed Family Handbook and easily navigable website, we have scheduled parent meetings/conferences, monthly newsletters, parent information boards, and frequent face-to-face interactions. Teachers and managers are easily accessible by phone and/or email to answer questions, discuss changes or challenges and address any concerns. Some enjoyable opportunities for family interaction include Preschool Open House, Frontier Fiesta, Family Holiday Musical, Little Cougar Homecoming Pep Rally and several holiday parades.

### **DISCIPLINE/GUIDANCE METHODS**

At CLC the purpose of discipline is to help children develop self-control and to become responsible for their own behavior. Staff may never use physical punishment, psychological abuse, or coercion when disciplining a child. Knowing what behavior is appropriate or acceptable in a situation is an important skill. We are committed to helping children learn to express feelings appropriately, to consider other people's feelings and to negotiate their own conflicts.

We use non-punitive methods of discipline, which are directly related to the child's behavior and encourage the child's participation. We ask the child to think about the problematic behavior and to find ways to remedy the situation. Children have to be taught expectations for their behavior if they are to develop internal control of their actions. The goal is to help children learn to control their own behavior. Teachers like to work closely with parents to understand each child and to determine which methods work best for that child, thus, teamwork with parents is very important.

Challenging behavior is addressed first through teacher observations. It is important to identify events, activities, interactions, and other contextual factors that predict and may contribute to the child's use of challenging behavior. After the function of the child's behavior is assessed, positive and supportive strategies are then put into effect.

If a child exhibits continually challenging, disruptive and/or unsafe behavior that is not resolved through appropriate behavior management strategies, the teachers will discuss the situation with a supervisor, parent, and/or other professionals to develop an individualized action plan that supports the child's inclusion and success. All reasonable attempts will be made to work with the child and the family to resolve the behavior problem. Staff will keep parents informed of the progress made. Referrals to community resources or an outside evaluation may be suggested.

If a parent refuses to work with the staff in resolving the problem and/or the behavior problem persists resulting in a chronic situation requiring greater need for care than the CLC teachers can provide, then the child's enrollment is subject to termination.

**The CLC discipline/guidance policy complies with the Texas Administrative Code and the rules in the Subchapter L of Minimum Standards**

### ***Discipline and Guidance Policy for the UH Children's Learning Centers***

*Discipline must be:*

- (1) Individualized and consistent for each child;*
- (2) Appropriate to the child's level of understanding;*
- (3) Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control;*
- (4) A positive method of discipline and guidance that encourages self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, including the following:*
  - (A) Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;*
  - (B) Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;*
  - (C) Redirecting behavior using positive statements;*
  - (D) Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.*

*There must be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:*

- (1) Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment;*
- (2) Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training;*
- (3) Pinching, shaking, or biting a child;*
- (4) Hitting a child with a hand or instrument;*
- (5) Putting anything in or on a child's mouth;*
- (6) Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child;*
- (7) Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language;*
- (8) Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed or open;*
- (9) Withholding active play or keeping a child inside as a consequence for behavior, unless the child is exhibiting behavior during active play that requires a brief supervised separation or time out*
- (10) Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age, including requiring a child to remain in a restrictive device.*
- (11) Grabbing or pulling a child*
- (12) Placing a child in a restrictive device for time out*

### **NAEYC CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT**

The NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct offers guidelines for responsible behavior and sets forth a common basis for resolving the principle ethical dilemmas encountered in early childhood care and education. CLC staff adheres to the NAEYC standards and uses the following Statement of Commitment as a professional guide:

## ***Statement of Commitment***

As individuals who work with young children, we commit ourselves to furthering the values of early childhood education as they are reflected in the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct. To the best of our ability we will:

- 🐾 Ensure that programs for young children are based on current knowledge of child development and early childhood education.
- 🐾 Respect and support families in their task of nurturing children.
- 🐾 Respect colleagues in early childhood education and support them in maintaining the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct.
- 🐾 Serve as an advocate for children, their families and their teachers in the community and society.
- 🐾 Maintain high standards of professional conduct.
- 🐾 Recognize how personal values, opinions and biases can affect professional judgment.
- 🐾 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 the principles of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct.

*Above all else, we strive to develop a caring community and maintain a harmonious environment for children, staff, families and University partners.*

## **OPERATIONS**

### **HOURS**

CLC operates year-round, Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., except for early dismissal days 2 times a year. The Center is closed on 5 professional development days, UH scheduled holidays and any other time that the University has an emergency closing.

### **CHECK IN/CHECK OUT PROCEDURES**

- 🐾 Children must be escorted into the Center and **checked in** on the computer at the front desk, using an assigned **PIN** code. Children should then be escorted to their classroom and released to a staff member.
- 🐾 Children must be **checked out** by an authorized adult on the computer at the front desk, using an assigned **PIN** code. A classroom staff member must be informed when a child is being picked up.

***If a child's parent is on the CLC premises, the parent is still responsible for his/her child.***

### **PARKING**

CLC parking is part of the University of Houston and requires a UH parking permit; the circle drives are only for temporary use and you may be issued a UH ticket for an extended stay in these areas. The 24/7 reserved parking space requires a special permit. UH parking tickets are

expensive and CLC cannot "fix" parking tickets. CLC may request your annual parking permit number/registration for our records. CLC discourages idling vehicles in the parking areas.

**The University of Houston parking and traffic program is administered by Parking and Transportation Services.**

### **VISITOR POLICY**

Any visitor to CLC must:

- 🐾 Sign in at the front desk & get a visitor's badge/parking pass.
- 🐾 Provide identification.
- 🐾 Have an approved purpose for a limited visit.
- 🐾 Be courteous of the classroom schedule and activities.

### **CHILD PHOTO RELEASE POLICY**

CLC families must designate whether or not they give consent for the University of Houston Children's Learning Centers (CLC) to use, without cost, expense or liability, any and all photographs, audio and/or video that contain your child's voice, image, likeness and/or images and likeness for educational (e.g. training and portfolios) and promotional purposes (e.g. brochures, flyers, website, etc.).

Families may take pictures for their own personal use at group functions sponsored by the Center, for ex. parades, graduation, musicals; however, the privacy of other children captured must be maintained and photographs/videos cannot be shared publically. Pictures taken by families of individual classroom activities must be limited to images of his/her own child exclusively.

### **CHILD RELEASE POLICY**

CLC **cannot release** any child to an unauthorized person; children are **released only:**

- 🐾 To an authorized parent/guardian.
- 🐾 To a person authorized by written permission from the parents.
  - The authorized person must present a picture I.D. and/or other identification.
  - The authorized person must be 18 years of age or older.

The safety and well-being of the children in our care is of primary importance. If any child care staff believes that an adult who is picking up a child is impaired and/or not in a condition to drive or adequately care for the child's safety, the staff will not release the child. Staff will call another authorized adult to assist in picking up the child. Determining whether or not to release a child in this situation is difficult for the adult, the child, and the staff member. Our primary obligation, however, is to protect the safety and well-being of the child. The Campus Police stand ready to assist us, if necessary.

**Law enforcement officers and DFPS Child Protective Services staff have the authority by law to remove a child without parent's permission.**

**CLC requires that any request for a new person to be added to a child's pickup list must be in writing and delivered by the parent to the Center.**

## **CHILD CUSTODY ISSUES**

It is the Center's intent to meet the needs of children especially when the parents may be experiencing difficult situations such as a divorce, separation, or remarriage. However, the Center **cannot legally restrict** a parent from visiting the child, reviewing the child's records, or picking the child up unless the Center has been furnished with current legal documents.

Upon receipt of a valid court order signed by a judge that prohibits a parent from removing the named child or children from the Center, the Center must:

- 🐾 Comply with the court order immediately and until:
  - Receipt of a subsequent court order that revokes the primary order; or
  - The court order expires as defined in the document; and
- 🐾 Maintain a copy of the court order in the child's file

## **CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT**

CLC staff are required to participate in annual staff training which includes: Factors indicating a child is at risk for abuse or neglect; Warning signs indicating a child may be a victim of abuse or neglect; Procedures for reporting child abuse or neglect; and Community organizations that have training programs available to employees, children, and parents. In cases of suspected child abuse, a report must be made within 48 hours to the Texas Department of Health and Human Services and/or to a law enforcement agency. A staff member who reports suspicions of child abuse or neglect at CLC is immune from discharge, retaliation, or other disciplinary action, unless it is proven that the report is malicious.

If there is an allegation that a child has been abused, neglected, or exploited while at CLC, the parent of that child will be notified immediately. A staff member who is accused of child abuse may be suspended, given leave without pay or be removed from the classroom and given a job that does not require interaction with children. However, no accusation or affirmation of guilt will be made until an investigation is completed by following all UH personnel procedures and collaborating with UH General Counsel. Staff members found guilty of child abuse will be dismissed in accordance with UH policies.

**Child abuse and neglect are against the law in Texas, and so is failure to report it. Call your local law enforcement agency or 911 immediately if you have an emergency or life-threatening situation.**

## **Resources:**

- 🐾 [Recognize the Signs of Child Abuse](#)
- 🐾 [When/How to Report Child Abuse](#)
- 🐾 [Reporting Abuse and Neglect](#)
- 🐾 **CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE 1-800-252-5400**

### **NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

CLC does not discriminate against any child or family based on race, color, national origin, sex, religion or disabilities. Reasonable accommodations will be made to provide services to all children enrolled in our program.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT**

CLC maintains confidentiality and respects the family's right to privacy, refraining from disclosure of confidential information (without parental written consent) and intrusion into family life. However, when we have reason to believe that a child's welfare is at risk, we will share confidential information with agencies, as well as with individuals who have legal responsibility for intervening in the child's interest.

**A parent must complete at Consent to Disclose Information and/or Educational Records form prior to a teacher releasing a child's information to an outside source.**

When staff discusses behavior incidents with families they are to use discretion regarding the identity of the aggressor. The teacher's responsibility is to focus any discussion with parents on their child only and to avoid violating confidentiality.

All staff and children files are maintained in one location in the facility and are kept confidential with access available only to administrators. Upon request, they may be shared with teachers, the child's parents or legal guardians, and regulatory authorities.

**All adults (staff & volunteers) working at the Center must sign a confidentiality agreement and participate in annual Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) training.**

## PROCEDURES & GUIDELINES

### ENROLLMENT

#### ELIGIBILITY

CLC enrolls children, ages three months to five years. **Only** children and legal dependents of faculty, staff, students, and alumni at the University of Houston are eligible. Families with children currently enrolled in the Center have priority enrollment eligibility when their annual contract expires.

**Eligibility is maintained only if a family's account is current and UH affiliation is continued.**

#### ENROLLMENT AGREEMENT

All children **must be enrolled at CLC before attending**. Once the decision to enroll is made, families must complete the following, sign where applicable, and return these to the Center **prior to the child's first day of attendance**:

- 🐾 An annual registration fee, supply fee and building maintenance fee per child is due upon enrollment and is renewable each year
- 🐾 **Signed/Initialed** Enrollment Agreement
- 🐾 **Signed/Initialed** Enrollment Information
- 🐾 **Signed/Initialed** Snack/Diet Agreement
- 🐾 **Signed** Health Assessment and Current Immunization Record
- 🐾 **Signed** Parent Policy Agreement
- 🐾 **Signed** Safe Sleep Policy (if applicable)
- 🐾 **Signed** Parent Orientation Form
- 🐾 Getting to Know our Family

**As long as a child remains enrolled at CLC, all information in the file must be updated to remain current or enrollment may be subject to termination.**

To help new families with the transition to our Center we require participation in the following before the enrollment process is complete:

- 🐾 Center tour
- 🐾 Program Orientation & Family Handbook review
- 🐾 Meet the teacher & Classroom tour

**Center tours are scheduled by appointment ONLY.**

#### VACATION WEEKS

During a 12 month contract agreement **3 weeks** may be used as vacation; if approved, payment is not required for these weeks. The vacation time must be used in **5 consecutive business day intervals**. If the 5 days occur over a 2 week time period and the child attends part of each week,

tuition will only be charged for one week and the second week will be designated as a vacation week. CLC needs the vacation time off request submitted in writing prior to the child taking the actual time off.

### **HOLIDAYS/EMERGENCY CLOSING**

The Center is closed for University observed holidays, inclement weather and/or announcements from UH Administration. The **Center is closed when the University is closed.** These closings do not affect tuition payments.

***If the UH Administration announces that the University is closing, after the Center has begun daily operations, we expect a timely pick-up.***

### **SCHOOL CALENDAR**

As part of the University of Houston we follow the University staff holiday schedule closing on the following days:

- 🐾 New Year's Day
- 🐾 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- 🐾 Spring Break (only when approved by the Board of Regents for a staff holiday)
- 🐾 Memorial Day
- 🐾 Independence Day
- 🐾 Labor Day
- 🐾 Thanksgiving Day and the following Friday
- 🐾 Winter Vacation Days (as determined by the University annually; includes Christmas Day & New Year's Day)

### **STAFF DEVELOPMENT DAYS**

Two (2) times each school year, CLC will have early dismissal, closing at 12:00 noon for staff development. Lunch will not be served and children must be picked up promptly on these days or late fees will apply. Five (5) times each school year, CLC will be closed for staff development. Fees will not be prorated for these days. Staff development days allow CLC staff to participate in professional development. Some topics covered in training include: health and safety practices, NAEYC Code of Ethical conduct, developmentally appropriate practices, curriculum/assessments and other specialized professional development subjects in early childhood education.

### **ROOM ASSIGNMENT**

Placement of a child in a classroom is determined by age and developmental level. We want your child to be placed where their needs are met and interests challenged. While we do accept input from parents about room assignments, the CLC Director and Teachers will make the **final decision** based on what is best for the child, other children, teachers and the Center.

***Please refer to the CLC Program Guides for classroom transition strategies and planning.***

## ENROLLMENT TERMINATION

Cancellation of the Enrollment Agreement **must be:**

- 🐾 Requested in writing by completing the *Enrollment Termination Form*
- 🐾 Two weeks prior notice
- 🐾 Approved by the Director

Parents who do not provide the Center with the minimum notice must pay fees for two weeks after notice is given, even if the child no longer attends. Cancellation, if approved, negates the privilege of priority registration for the next enrollment period.

## WAITLIST POLICIES

- 🐾 The Center reserves the right to enroll children from the waitlist on the basis of different priorities; things considered can include the date applications are received and the availability of age-related openings.
- 🐾 UH student parents and siblings of currently enrolled families are first to be considered for CLC enrollment.
- 🐾 The Provost's Office will have access to 15 total guaranteed spots (5 infant, 5 toddler, 5 pre-school) for an August start date on an annual basis to assist with faculty recruitment.
- 🐾 Waitlist applications must be submitted with a \$45.00 non-refundable payment. Once a child is enrolled, this payment is applied to the Registration Fee.
- 🐾 When an opening becomes available, a family is notified and given 3 business days to respond. If an enrollment offer is declined, the child's name is moved to the bottom of the waitlist and we move to the next name on the list. *If a family fails to respond to our emails and/or phone calls, their name is removed from the waitlist and the waitlist fee forfeited; the parent must reapply and pay the fee again before their child can be considered for enrollment.*
- 🐾 Any time that an offer for enrollment is declined, the parent must give a new date for seeking enrollment. CLC will not contact any family for enrollment until we receive notification of a date for seeking enrollment.
- 🐾 After a family has declined an offer for enrollment 3 different times, the child's name will be removed from the waitlist and the waitlist fee forfeited. *A parent must reapply and pay the fee again before their child can be considered for enrollment.*
- 🐾 If an enrollment offer is accepted, the family has **one week** to complete a contract and pay all applicable fees.
- 🐾 Families on the waitlist may be requested via e-mail to indicate if they want to remain on the waitlist and if so, to update their contact information. *Families must respond by the requested due date or they will be removed from the waitlist and the waitlist fee forfeited.*

**A waitlist application and paid fee does not guarantee an enrollment opening for requested date.**

## FEES & PAYMENTS

All fees are to be paid by cash, check, money order, or Visa/Master Card. There is a \$25.00 fee assessed for any returned check. If this happens twice, the University requires that payment be made with cash or a money order only. **All payments are non-refundable.**

### TUITION

CLC tuition fees are charged weekly and these fees **must be paid in advance** of services being provided. Weekly tuition fees are due on Friday for the following week or the account can be pre-paid in advance for more than a week.

### CHILD CARE TUITION ASSISTANCE

CLC offers child care tuition assistance programs for UH student parents who qualify based on financial need as determined by the UH Scholarships and Financial Aid Office. Student parents, both graduate and undergraduate, may be eligible. All child care tuition assistance programs offered at CLC can be found here: [http://www.uh.edu/clc/enrollment/tuition\\_assistance\\_programs.html](http://www.uh.edu/clc/enrollment/tuition_assistance_programs.html).

### LATE PAYMENT

A late fee of \$20.00 will be assessed on **Tuesday by 12:00 noon** when payment is past due. Failure to pay on time may result in **termination** of your child's enrollment and if an account is past due, enrollment contracts **cannot** be renewed. There are **no discounts/reimbursements** for days missed due to illness, absences, vacation, or the Center being closed for holidays or emergencies.

### ACCOUNTS

**Parents are informed of current rates when children are enrolled.** If there is an increase in rates, parents will be given 30 days notice regarding the new rates. Parents are responsible for making payments every Friday and keeping the account current.

**The Center will furnish an annual report, for income tax purposes, of all tuition and fees paid for each child.**

### LATE PICK UP

Late fees are assessed if you fail to pick up your child on time. The fee is calculated at \$25.00 for any part of the first 5 minutes, an additional \$20.00 for any part of the next 5 minutes, and \$1.00 for each additional minute after 5:40 p.m. Repeated failure to pick up your child on time can result in enrollment termination.

**If we have not heard from the parent and we have not been able to contact other authorized persons listed on the child's enrollment form by 6:00 p.m., we consider a child abandoned and may call the police.**

## CLASSROOM GUIDELINES

Teaching staff develops individual relationships with children by providing care that is responsive, attentive, consistent, comforting, supportive, and culturally sensitive.

### ATTENDANCE/ARRIVAL/ABSENCES

All classrooms begin curriculum instruction at **9:00 a.m.** In order for children to receive the full benefit of our program and to participate with the group activities, we ask that all children be here by this time; however, CLC expects all children to be here no later than 10:00 a.m. No child is to be dropped off during naptime. The Center cannot accept children that are sleeping upon arrival; this is a safety practice to ensure that children are alert/ready for school.

### DAILY SCHEDULES

Teachers organize time and space on a daily basis to allow children to work or play individually and in pairs, to come together in small groups, and to engage as a whole group. Each individual classroom has a daily schedule posted on the Classroom Information Board.

### NAPTIVE

We must provide a supervised sleep or rest period after lunch for children 18 months or older. Children under the age of 18 months most often sleep according to their individual schedules. Infants, unless otherwise ordered by a physician, are placed on their backs to sleep on a firm surface manufactured for sale as infant sleeping equipment that meets the standards of the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission. Child Care Regulations prohibits swaddled infants from being laid down to sleep or rest on any surface at any time.

### BRINGING ITEMS FROM HOME

Children frequently want to share items and treasures from home with their class. Such items are especially welcomed if they support the topic being studied.

We **discourage bringing toys** from home; although, some teachers will allow items of comfort, such as a soft cuddly stuffed animal, to be brought to school to help a child sleep more comfortably. The staff will not be responsible if these items are lost or damaged.

**The Center does not allow toys of violence like guns, swords, or violent action figures even as part of a costume.**

### BIRTHDAYS/CELEBRATIONS/HOLIDAYS

The Center celebrates the children's birthdays in age-appropriate ways in the classroom. The birthday celebration, however, is purposefully kept simple and child-centered.

**Food brought from home must be approved for sharing.** Parents may bring cake/cookies/cupcakes that are store-bought and labeled with the ingredients to ensure the safety of children with allergies or special diets. These will be served during afternoon snack and parents of the birthday child are welcome to join the children.

**The child's birthday observance at the Center is not intended to take the place of each family's special observance at home and:**

 No balloons.

 No gifts are to be exchanged.

 No treat bags or party favors are to be distributed in the classroom.

***Birthday party invitations for parties away from the Center may be distributed at school only if every child in the classroom is included and they are distributed by the classroom teacher.***

CLC does observe traditional, national, cultural and seasonal holidays with activities that are child-centered, educationally oriented and developmentally appropriate. Every effort is made to be culturally sensitive. CLC facilitates the expression of cultural development by encouraging familiarity with different groups and practices through ordinary interaction and activities integrated into a developmentally appropriate curriculum. Our goal is to foster children's ability to relate to people who are different from themselves, their sense of possibility, and their ability to succeed in a diverse society, while also promoting feelings of belonging and identification with a tradition.

### **CHILDREN'S CLOTHING**

Children should be dressed in play clothes that are durable, comfortable and appropriate for play and for the season. We will go outside daily, weather permitting.

Because a wide variety of activities take place at our Center, we recommend clothes that allow for freedom of movement and no jewelry/accessories. Many of the child's favorite activities may tend to be a little messy, like finger painting and digging in the dirt, so parents should make sure the child's clothes are appropriate/washable.

At CLC, children's safety is of great concern, therefore, we ask that children come to school wearing sturdy shoes that supports the feet properly and protects the toes. Sneakers with socks are the best. Children are not permitted to wear open-toed sandals, clogs, boots or flip-flops on the playgrounds because they are dangerous for running and climbing. We also prohibit clothing that poses strangulation hazards (i.e. drawstrings, scarves, etc.) on the playground.

***CLC will not replace damaged or lost items of clothing/accessories.***

## CLASSROOM CURRICULUM

### CONTINUITY OF CARE

CLC makes every attempt to maintain continuity of relationships between teaching staff and children, and among groups of children. The program is organized and staffed to minimize the number of group, teaching staff and classroom transitions experienced by an individual child. Interactions in our open spaces i.e. multi-purpose room, courtyard and playgrounds 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.

**Please refer to the CLC Program Guides for classroom transition strategies and planning.**

**Above all else, we strive to develop a caring community and maintain a harmonious environment for children, staff, families and University partners.**

### MULTIAGE CLASSROOMS

At CLC, we utilize multiage classrooms to serve children ages one to three years old in the Toddler Program and children ages three to five years old in the Preschool Program. Multiage education is the purposeful placing of children of different ages, (and abilities) in the same classroom. This practice assists the overall development of the child within a family-like community of learners. Using multiage classrooms allows CLC to:

- 🐾 Limit multiple caregivers and classroom transitions.
- 🐾 Create consistent personal relationships with the child and encourage healthy emotional attachments.
- 🐾 Increase opportunities for interactions between children and teachers.
- 🐾 Avoid separating children by age and developmental milestones.
- 🐾 Promote cognitive and social growth through heterogeneous grouping.
- 🐾 Increase the use of research-based developmentally appropriate instructional practices.
- 🐾 Support children's development of friendships and provide opportunities for children to play and learn from each other.
- 🐾 Improve overall children outcomes.

Within a multiage classroom, new and/or younger children join the class as enrollment openings occur. Teachers plan lessons and activities according to developmental stages rather than chronological ages. A multiage classroom is a diverse environment where children are encouraged to do their best which can assist children in developing a positive self-concept that lays a foundation for life.

### LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAM

A language immersion program is one in which the children spend all or a large portion of their day learning, in a natural way, a particular foreign language. The immersion approach to teaching a second language maximizes the time the children get to practice the language they are learning. Children in a language immersion program work toward fluency in the foreign language; the method of teaching revolves around conversations.

At CLC some of the children in the program are new to the foreign language, while others come from households where family members are bilingual or even multilingual; however, all young children are still in the process of acquiring language skills. Our program is designed to help the child easily transition into the language of the classroom by participating naturally in the language. They can use, practice and rehearse the foreign language in an emotionally supportive environment that stimulates all their senses.

As early childhood educators:

- 🐾 *We support the building of a community of inclusion. We know that the young child's developmental needs are paramount; we want the language immersion process to be fun and to compliment the young child's development.*
- 🐾 *We seek to utilize the unique window of opportunity for learning languages that young children possess by exposing the young child to the rhythm, sounds and culture of another language.*
- 🐾 *We strive to foster an appreciation for a multilingual and multicultural nation by making natural connections through literature, actions, relationships, inquiries, opportunities, and repetition.*

Our methodology incorporates the CLC mission and the core values of early childhood education. We believe children develop at greater levels when activities include all learning domains; we know that children learn by doing, interacting and expressing.

### **WEEKLY LESSONS**

Each teacher develops their own lesson plans around the emerging skills of the children in the classroom. The daily schedule is predictable yet flexible and responsive to the individual needs of the children. Activities encourage exploration, experimentation, and discovery while promoting interaction.

### **TECHNOLOGY**

CLC uses developmentally appropriate technology to extend learning within the classroom and to integrate and enrich the curriculum under the supervision of teachers. Each preschool classroom is equipped with computers for the children's use. The use of passive media (television and video) is limited to developmentally appropriate programming for children 2 years and older and does not exceed 1 hour per day.

### **ASSESSMENTS & PORTFOLIOS**

Assessment components are naturally integrated into the course of every day at CLC. Ongoing teacher observations of group patterns and individual development are used to adjust the program to better support group and individual progress. Information obtained from Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP) and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) is used by teachers to further support skill development of a child receiving services. Portfolios, containing samples collected over time, chronicle where children begin when they first enter the classroom, what their interests are, what their challenges are, how much they have grown,

and who their friends are. Portfolios can be a wonderful bridge between home and school and families have ongoing opportunities to share results of observations from home to contribute to the assessment process. (see Appendix for the Assessment Plan).

Teachers document observations in their own unique ways such as recording anecdotes, taking photographs, and collecting samples of the children's work. A more structured assessment is also administered to determine a child's developmental age upon enrollment and thereafter throughout the year. Teachers receive annual training on how to conduct and use information obtained from child observation and assessment. The child's assessments are used to:

- 🐾 Identify children's interests and needs.
- 🐾 Describe the developmental progress and learning.
- 🐾 Design classroom curriculum and adapt teaching practices.
- 🐾 Communicate with families.
- 🐾 Arrange for referrals when indicated.
- 🐾 Plan program improvement.

**Results of CLC assessments are primarily used to shape the current year's classroom/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.**

**CLC maintains confidentiality and respects the family's right to privacy, refraining from disclosure of confidential information and intrusion into family life.**

## REFERRALS

When program staff suspects that a child has a developmental delay or other special needs, this possibility is communicated to families in a sensitive, supportive, and confidential manner with documentation and explanation for the concern, suggested next steps, and information about resources for assessment. Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) is a statewide program in the Texas Health and Human Services Commission that serves both children and their families from birth up to age 3. Children with developmental disabilities, delays or medical diagnoses may be eligible for ECI services. Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) services are for children three through five years of age. These services are provided through local school districts and charter schools.

**All screening referrals are kept strictly confidential and used only to help access appropriate services as needed.**

## SPECIALIZED SERVICES & CONSULTANTS

In order to support staff's efforts to meet the needs of children and families to participate fully in the program (including children with disabilities, behavior challenges, or other special needs) Any consultant utilizing the Center to access the children must meet the Child Care Regulations criteria for background checks and fingerprinting. Additionally, CLC maintains a confidential copy of the licensing information and all informational documentation concerning the child.

## **EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

CLC offers on-site opportunities for children to engage in enrichment programs that enhance their development. Some examples include:

- 🐾 **Soccer Shots** – programs for kids 3 to 5 years old with a focus on making a positive introduction to sports and activity while also making a lasting impact on kids and their families.
- 🐾 **Arts Alive** – an integrated arts and movement program for children ages one year and older that involves each participant physically, visually, aurally, and orally.

**Before facilitators are allowed to work with the children, CLC obtains proper licensing documentation and reviews expectations the Center has for the program.**

## **HEALTH & SAFETY**

### **IMMUNIZATIONS**

Each child enrolled must meet and continue to meet applicable immunization requirements specified by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS). A child may be exempt from immunization requirements for a medical reason or reason of conscience, including a religious belief. If a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs in the Center and potentially exposes the unimmunized children who are susceptible to that disease, the health department will be consulted to determine whether these children should be excluded for the duration of possible exposure or until the appropriate immunizations have been completed. The local or state health department will be able to provide guidelines for exclusion requirements.

### **ACCIDENTS/EMERGENCIES/FIRST AID**

CLC works diligently to provide a safe environment for the children at all times. However, part of growing up can include bumps and bruises. Our Center is equipped with first aid supplies and an automated external defibrillator (AED). Fulltime staff members maintain current infant, child and adult CPR and pediatric first aid certification. Each classroom team is responsible for maintaining the appropriate items in the classroom first aid kit and for checking expiration dates.

If a child has a minor accident the staff will administer appropriate first aid to the child and provide a written report to the family. If a child has a serious injury, a staff member will provide first aid and a parent/guardian will be contacted to pick up the child. If there is an emergency requiring immediate medical attention, 911 emergency personnel will be called and the parent and/or the child's physician will be notified.

**Hand-held panic buttons are on-site for staff to alert the front office and the UH police immediately in an emergency.** If a child needs to be transported by an ambulance, a staff

member will accompany the child if the parent is not available. When the parent is unavailable, alternate names in the child's file are contacted as well.

## **SECURITY**

CLC's main entries are secured using the Electronic Access Control System. Registered parents and staff can enter the building using their UH Cougar Cards once they have been entered into the database. CLC also has security cameras to assist in the monitoring of the property at all times including the front door entrance. This addition, along with other safety/security measures, helps CLC continue to meet accreditation standards by creating and maintaining a safe/healthy setting for children, staff and families.

## **HYGEINE**

Every effort is made by CLC staff to prevent the spread of germs. Non-porous gloves are provided for use when diapering, cleaning, etc. and food handler's gloves are provided for serving food.

**HAND WASHING:** We strive to maintain the highest standards of cleanliness, which includes required hand washing for children, teachers, and parents and instruction in hygiene to help minimize the spread of germs.

Please know that it is our responsibility to maintain the health and safety of the children and classroom. In doing so, it is important that each child washes their hands upon arrival and that soiled/wet diapers or clothing are changed promptly. Because there are times when the morning staff are engaged in activities with the children or in conversation with other parents, staff may ask for your assistance with helping your child with either or both of these tasks. It is our goal to partner with families in creating a positive atmosphere in which children can transition effortlessly into the classroom.

## **VISION/HEARING SCREENINGS**

CLC also performs onsite Vision and Hearing Screenings. The Texas Department of State Health Services requires that all children enrolled for the first time in a Texas Department of Family and Protective Services licensed child-care center in Texas who are 4-years-old by September 1st or any other first-time entrants 4 years to 5 years, must be screened for possible vision and hearing problems within 120 days of admission or before the end of first semester.

## **ILLNESS/'SYMPTOM FREE' RULE**

One of the most serious challenges facing group care situations for young children is preventing illness. CLC conducts daily children health checks to screen for any illness/injury that may require parent notification.

CLC uses the following guidelines to protect children and staff from contagious illness. If any of the following conditions occur while a child is in attendance, the child will be kept comfortable and isolated in a supervised space and parents will be notified to **pick up their child from the Center as soon as possible:**

- 🐾 The child has one of the following:
  - ✕ Fever, armpit temperature of 100 degrees or greater
  - ✕ Vomiting
  - ✕ Diarrhea
  - ✕ Head Lice
  - ✕ Symptoms of an infectious disorder such as ringworm, pink eye, etc.
  - ✕ Communicable disease
  - ✕ Any other condition deemed necessary by the Director/Teacher for the well being of the child and the other children enrolled.
- 🐾 The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities including outdoor play.
- 🐾 The illness results in a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children.

CLC will provide written notice to the parents of each child attending the center within 48 hours of becoming aware that a child or an employee has contracted a communicable disease deemed notifiable by the Texas Department of State Health Services. CLC will follow guidance of local, state, and federal health organization officials.

CLC will provide written notice to the parents of each child in a group within 48 hours when there is an outbreak of lice or other infestation in the group.

One of the best ways to prevent the spread of disease is to have strictly enforced standards regarding the exclusion of ill children and staff. The guidelines for the exclusion of children who have infections that pose a risk to others apply equally to staff members.

### **THE 24-HOUR 'SYMPTOM FREE' RULE**

**The Center's policy requires that a child be free of symptoms of illness: fever, diarrhea or vomiting for at least 24 hours before returning to the Center.**

**Fever-free means without medication for fever reduction.**

Please keep in mind that if we send a child home because of illness, the child will not be admitted to the Center the next day because the **24-hour period** will not have elapsed. The Center reserves the right to require a doctor's statement before any child or staff can be re-admitted to the Center.

### **MEDICATIONS**

Parents are encouraged to administer their own children's medication. Typically prescription medications can be timed to be given at home.

If parents bring medication for CLC administration, all medications need to be checked in at the front desk; please do not keep any medications in diaper bags or take them into the classrooms.

**All Prescribed and Over the Counter (OTC) Medication must include written permission from the parent/legal guardian AND instructions from a licensed health provider.**

- 🐾 The container must be labeled with the child's first and last name.
- 🐾 The medicine can only be administered to the child for whom it was intended.
- 🐾 All medicine must be in the original container with the manufacturer's instructions or the original prescription label that details the name and strength of the medication.
- 🐾 All medicine must include instructions from the licensed health provider who has prescribed or recommended medication for that child.
- 🐾 If the medication is prescribed, the name of the physician prescribing the medication must be on the container.
- 🐾 All medicine must be labeled with the date (if prescribed) or the date brought to the Center.
- 🐾 All medications must have an expiration date and we cannot administer medication after the expiration date.
- 🐾 The parent has to sign an authorization form and include the dates and times for the Center to administer the medication and these directions must follow the licensed health provider's directions. These forms are available at the front desk and at [www.uh.edu/clc](http://www.uh.edu/clc).

In order for CLC staff to administer medication, they must be trained in medication administration. (Refer to the Medication Administration Guidelines posted in the classrooms).

**All CLC staff are required to receive certification in Pediatric First aid within 90 days of employment and before having unsupervised access to children, as well as, Pediatric CPR within 90 days of employment. The certifications must remain current.**

## **NUTRITION**

All snacks are prepared, served and stored in accordance with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines. Staff takes steps to ensure the safety of food brought from home and that it meets these same guidelines as well.

If a child requires a special diet, parents must **provide the food from home and the child's file must include a signed statement** that CLC is not responsible for the nutritional value of the food brought from home or for meeting the child's daily food needs. In addition, to serve a child a therapeutic or special diet, we must have written approval from a physician or health-care professional with prescriptive authority if the diet relates to a disability that restricts the child's diet or a health-care professional or a registered or licensed dietician if the diet does not relate to a disability that restricts the child's diet. Any child's special dietary needs are posted in the classroom as a visual reminder to staff.

***Any food or beverage brought from home must be labeled with the child's name and date.***

## **PROGRAM SUPPORT FOR BREASTFEEDING**

The program accepts, stores, and serves expressed human milk for feedings. Human milk must be in ready-to-feed sanitary containers labeled with the infant's name, date, and number of ounces. It is stored in the refrigerator for no longer than 48 hours (or no more than 24 hours if the breast milk was previously frozen) or in a freezer at 0 degrees Fahrenheit or below for no longer than three months. CLC also provides a comfortable place for breastfeeding and coordinates feedings with the infant's mother.

## **MEALS**

CLC serves a morning and an afternoon snack that includes milk daily. Lunch must be brought from home daily. Monthly snack menus are carefully planned to meet nutritional guidelines. Copies of the snack menus are available at the front desk and on the Center's website [www.uh.edu/clc](http://www.uh.edu/clc).

Morning snack is served at 9:30 a.m. Children **must arrive no later than 9:30 a.m.** in order to receive the snack. We begin serving lunch at 12:00 p.m. and afternoon snack is served around 3:00 p.m. or based on the children's nap time routine.

**The Center/teachers will not hold a snack for any child arriving to the Center late. If a child arrives at the Center eating food, the parent will be asked to supervise the child away from the other children until they are finished.**

Parents must not pack and CLC will not serve children hot dogs (whole or sliced), whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, hard pretzels, spoonfuls of peanut butter or chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole, beverages with added sugars such as carbonated beverages, fruit punch, or sweetened milk (only 100% juice should be provided).

Lunch and snack brought from home must be packed to ensure proper temperatures (freeze packs for cold foods and thermal containers for warm foods). For information about food allergies, proper nutrition or healthy lunch ideas visit <https://www.healthychildren.org/english/healthy-living/nutrition/pages/default.aspx>

**The Center does enforce a no candy rule in the classrooms. Our goal is to maintain the quality of the child's daily nutrition and we ask that staff join us in this effort to promote healthy children.**

## **CHILDREN'S PRODUCT SAFETY**

CLC will distribute the monthly Consumer Product Safety Commission recall lists to all classrooms (CPSC) according to Texas Child Care Regulations. It is mandated that no unsafe products are in the Center or in the classrooms.

## **SAFE SLEEP POLICY**

All staff, substitute staff, and volunteers at will follow these safe sleep recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) for infants to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome/Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS/SUIDS): <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2550.pdf>.

## **CAR SEATS**

Injuries suffered while riding in cars are the number one preventable cause of death in young children. Here are the guidelines to follow to keep a child safe in the car:

- The rear seat is the best seat for children 12 years or younger.
- All children must use a car seat, booster seat or seat belt.
- Never hold a child in your arms or lap while traveling in the car.
- Children should ride in a car seat made for their size and age.
- The car seat should be buckled tightly in the car and not move more than one inch when pulled.

**CLC staff members are not permitted to violate these regulations by buckling a child into an improper position or device.**

## **TRICYCLE HELMET USE**

Any child riding a tricycle at CLC must wear a helmet designated to that child. Most bike accidents involve a head injury, so a crash can be very serious if a helmet is not worn.

## **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

Active play enhances fitness and general health and supports creativity, learning, and development. These opportunities are offered in the classrooms throughout the day (5-10 minute structured activities or games that promote physical activity). Toddlers have a minimum of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play and Preschool children have a minimum of 90 minutes. These may include music, songs, games that encourage movement such as dancing, running, stretching and marching. Wearing sturdy shoes that support the feet properly and protects the toes is required.

Children of all ages have daily opportunities for outdoor play (when weather, air quality, and environmental safety conditions do not pose a health risk). When outdoor opportunities for large motor activities are not possible because of unsafe conditions noted by local weather agencies, CLC provides similar activities inside.

Child care regulation recognizes that outdoor play provides for greater freedom and flexibility, fuller expression through loud talk, and a greater range of active movement. It also extends opportunities for large muscle development, social-emotional development, and small muscle development by offering variety, challenge, and complexity in ways that are not attainable in a confined indoor space.

There are a minimum of two daily opportunities for outdoor play (CLC playgrounds), weather permitting. Infants engage in outdoor play for an amount of time as tolerated by the infant. Toddlers and Preschool children engage in outdoor play for a minimum of 60 minutes daily. CLC playgrounds are equipped with small riding toys, toys for pushing/pulling, climbing equipment and outdoor building materials.

**Families are encouraged to provide insect repellent for their children. Teachers will follow the manufacturer's instructions/precautions for insect repellent application.**

## **SUN SAFETY**

CLC limits outside activities between 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., provide teacher training regarding sun safe practices and request that every child/staff member bring sunscreen and a protective hat for daily use. Teachers will follow the manufacturer's instructions/precautions for sunscreen application. Additionally, we ensure that children/staff have the opportunity for sun safe play with a variety of shade structures on our grounds.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES/DRILLS**

CLC places a high priority on being prepared for a variety of emergencies that may arise. We have set up an emergency plan as follows:

- 🐾 **Stay informed.** CLC staff monitors any kind of status alerts. When an alert is in a heightened state (for weather or otherwise), the radio and Internet are checked regularly for breaking information. Staff also stays informed utilizing the UH ALERT Emergency Notification System <https://alerts.uh.edu/about>.
- 🐾 **Assess the situation and act.** Upon receiving pertinent information and/or official notification, a decision is made to either move to a predetermined safe area of the building, evacuate or conduct a shelter-in-place.
- 🐾 **Communicate.** Two-way radios located in each classroom enable communication (within the Center and campus wide) to continue throughout the emergency. Each classroom maintains an emergency contact list with information for each child. In the event of an emergency and after the necessary actions are taken, CLC staff will inform parents of the status of the children and the situation.

First aid kits are located in each classroom, outdoor stations, and in the front office. Extra supplies are stored at the front office. In addition each classroom has a two-way radio; also available are hand-held panic alarms that when activated in an emergency notifies UH police and sounds an alarm in the front lobby.

**Evacuation** – Fire and evacuation drills are held monthly to acquaint the children with evacuation procedures. These practice drills are supervised and documented by the UH Office of Environmental Health and Life Safety. Evacuation routes are posted in each classroom and in the CLC lobby. Children who are under 24 months of age, who have limited mobility, or who otherwise may need assistance in an emergency will be evacuated using the CLC evacuation cribs.

If the CLC site at Wheeler must be evacuated, the children will be directed to the grassy area between UH Entrance 11 and Entrance 12. If the CLC site at Cameron must be evacuated the children will be directed to the grassy area on the Cullen side of the building to await further instructions from the proper authorities. If the CLC buildings have been deemed unsafe, each CLC site has designated (on campus/off campus) locations for evacuation purposes.

**Shelter-in-Place** – In the event of a shelter-in-place decision, each room is equipped with an emergency supply kit that includes all of the items recommended by the Department of Homeland Security. Each room has a step-by-step manual on what to do in a variety of situations. Each classroom team is responsible for periodically checking this emergency kit for supplies and expiration dates.

### **Severe Weather Emergency/General Procedures**

- 🐾 Stay inside away from windows.
- 🐾 Assume protective posture.
- 🐾 Keep calm and do not get excited.
- 🐾 Use two-way radios to monitor the situation and to communicate if further action is necessary.

***For more information regarding emergency preparedness for the University please refer to [www.uh.edu/emergency](http://www.uh.edu/emergency).***

### **ANIMALS**

The Center and playgrounds are free from unfamiliar animals. If animals are on the Center's premises, CLC will:

- 🐾 Notify parents in writing when they are or will be present
- 🐾 Ensure the animals do not create unsafe or unsanitary conditions
- 🐾 Ensure that children do not handle any animal that shows signs of illness
- 🐾 Ensure that caregivers and children practice good hygiene and hand washing after handling or coming in to contact with an animal and items used by an animal

Children are not allowed to play with unfamiliar animals or other animals that could be dangerous, including exotic animals. Children must not have contact with chickens, ducks, and reptiles, such as snakes, turtles, lizards, iguanas, and amphibians, such as frogs and toads.

CLC must have:

- 🐾 Documentation showing dogs and cats have been vaccinated as required by Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 826
- 🐾 A statement of health from a local veterinarian at the Center for dogs, cats, ferrets, and other animals other than small rodents, such as guinea pigs, mice, and hamsters

### **GANG-FREE ZONE**

The University of Houston Children's Learning Centers is in a Gang-Free Zone. A gang-free zone is a designated area around a specific location, including day care centers, where prohibited gang related activity is subject to increased penalty under Texas law. The gang-free zone is within 1000 feet of our Children's Learning Centers. Parents may contact their local municipality or court house for information about obtaining a copy of a map if they choose to do so.

*For more information about what constitutes a gang-free zone, please consult sections 71.028 and 71.029 of the Texas Penal Code.*

Similar to the motivation behind establishing drug-free zones, the purpose of gang-free zones is to deter certain types of criminal activity in areas where children gather by enforcing tougher penalties. Certain gang-related criminal activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of our center is a violation of this law and is therefore subject to increased penalty under state law.

**As a result of House Bill 2086 that passed during the 81st Legislature, Regular Session, Chapter 42 of the Human Resource Code includes section 42.064, effective September 1, 2009. This new statute requires that information about gang-free zones be distributed to parents and guardians of children in care at licensed Children's Learning Centers.**

## **WEAPONS**

On June 13, 2015, Governor Greg Abbott signed into law Texas Senate Bill No. 11 (S.B. 11), popularly known as the "campus carry" law. S.B. 11 amends Texas Government Code §411.2031 to allow carrying of handguns by license holders on the campuses of certain institutions of higher education, including the University of Houston. **The Children's Learning Centers is a building in which the possession of handguns is prohibited.** Peace officers as listed in §2.12 of the Code of Criminal Procedure and security officers commissioned by the Texas Private Security Board who are trained and certified to carry a firearm on duty may have firearms and ammunition on the premises of the child care center. For all other persons, firearms, hunting knives, bows and arrows, and other weapons are prohibited on the premises of the Center.

## **PARENTS AS PARTNERS**

Building a strong bond between home and school is encouraged in a variety of ways at CLC. A parents' involvement in their child's education is important; we want you to know what is happening in your child's classroom as well as at the Center. Please make every effort to stay informed; you are your child's most important teacher and advocate.

***If any parent would benefit from translation services at conferences or for key documents, we will find a translator who is fluent in the relevant language.***

## **CLC NEWSLETTER**

The Center publishes a monthly Newsletter. An email is sent to inform parents when a new newsletter is available for viewing. You may also access past CLC newsletters at [www.uh.edu/clc](http://www.uh.edu/clc).

### **CLASSROOM INFORMATION BOARDS**

There are bulletin boards located in each classroom that contains classroom/Center information, interesting articles and family resources. Please make a point to stop by and check the board each day; this will help with communication and connect parents with the Center.

### **CONFERENCES**

All parents are invited to participate in teacher conferences. These conferences will be held during school hours and at a time that is convenient for both the parents and the teacher. Occasionally a teacher may request a parent conference if there is a special concern in the classroom. We ask that parents respect this request with prompt attention.

### **EMAIL**

Teachers are easily accessible by email to answer questions, schedule conferences, or discuss effective ways for staff and parents to handle changes and challenges for the child. Administration is also available to answer questions, clarify policies and explain procedures by emailing [ccenter@uh.edu](mailto:ccenter@uh.edu).

### **PARENTAL NOTIFICATIONS**

CLC maintains a list-serv to notify families about school/classroom happenings, policy changes, illnesses, emergency closures, etc. Teachers also utilize classroom electronic communication apps to relay important information disseminated from the list-serv as a secondary means of correspondence. Families can also sign up to receive electronic communications (email/texts) from the university through the UH ALERT Emergency Notification System <https://alerts.uh.edu/about/>.

### **FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTIONS**

CLC staff makes every effort to dialogue with families in a positive manner to plan strategies, resolve issues and provide assistance in a timely and effective manner. Please feel free to suggest ways that we can strengthen our partnership with you as together we seek to provide a high-quality learning environment for everyone in our community. Remember teachers have supervision responsibilities while on duty; we do ask that you schedule a conference for longer discussions.

### **PROGRAM SURVEY**

Parents are invited to participate in a program evaluation via a survey. This process allows the Center to measure progress toward program goals and objectives. The results are used as a basis for continuing successful activities and for changing those that need improvement.

### **PARENT MEETINGS/CLASSES**

CLC offers parent meetings throughout the year. These include general meetings and program/classroom Open House. Periodically, parenting classes are held; these classes cover a variety of topics related to the young child's development as well as health/safety topics.

### **CHILDREN'S LEARNING CENTERS ADVISORY BOARD**

The Children's Learning Centers Advisory Board (CLCAB) is composed of a group of dedicated faculty, parents, staff, teachers and student members from the UH community. The CLCAB serves in an advisory capacity to provide support and guidance to the Director. Elections for parent positions are held online each year and the members serve a one year term, starting September 1. Scheduled meetings are held at the Center. The minutes from meetings can be obtained upon request. The CLCAB Constitution and Bylaws are available at [http://www.uh.edu/clc/about/advisory\\_board.html](http://www.uh.edu/clc/about/advisory_board.html).

### **PARENT PARTICIPATION**

Parents are invited and encouraged to be involved in their child's school activities. Any parent who volunteers in the classroom on a reoccurring scheduled basis must pay for and secure all criminal background checks, as required by Texas licensing regulations.

### **WEBSITE/FAMILY RESOURCES**

CLC maintains an online resource library for our families at <http://www.uh.edu/clc/links/>. Additionally each program has specific developmental information available on a variety of early childhood care and education topics.

### **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

CLC has a Leadership Team to assist with on-going communication and supervision at the Center. This team includes: Director, Assistant Director, Managers and Site Supervisors. Each member of the team can assist with questions or concerns about the Center. The Office Coordinator is also available for questions about your accounts/vacations.

Each classroom has two fulltime staff members, a Lead Teacher and an Associate Teacher and several part-time UH Student Assistants.

***For problem solving at the classroom level we recommend the following three-step process:***

-  First, bring any concern to your classroom Teacher.
-  Next, if you are not satisfied, request a meeting with a Manager.
-  Last, if you still have a concern, schedule a meeting with the Assistant Director/Director.

***Refer to Parent/Teacher Communications below (see Appendix for the Solution & Resolution Worksheet).***

### **PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATIONS**

When a parent has a concern, we ask that they remember the following ...

-  Teachers want parents to be satisfied with the care their child is receiving.
-  Talk to the teachers directly whenever possible; if you would prefer, talk with the Site Supervisor, Managers or the Assistant Director/Director.
-  Use the Solution/Resolution worksheet found in the Appendix of the Family Handbook to facilitate verbal communication.

- 🐾 Realize that if you have a concern with a teacher, that in order to deal with the issue in a straightforward manner, the Site Supervisor, Site Manager or Assistant Director/Director will need to investigate first by talking with the teacher about your concern.
- 🐾 Please give teachers a chance to correct minor issues.
- 🐾 On the other hand, don't allow concerns to build up. As concerns occur, share them with the teachers. It is disturbing to find out "later" that a parent had a number of concerns and never expressed them.
- 🐾 Sometimes we cannot make the changes you may request due to other restrictions, but we always want to hear your suggestions. We promise to consider them seriously and respond to you in a timely manner.
- 🐾 If at anytime a parent wishes to meet with their child's teacher to discuss issues that may arise, they can contact the teacher to schedule a meeting.
- 🐾 We do ask that you schedule a conference with your child's teacher to discuss issues in depth, and try not to discuss concerns during drop-off and pick-up times.

## **PARENT RIGHTS**

A parent with a child enrolled at the Center has the right to:

- 🐾 Enter and examine the child-care center without advance notice;
- 🐾 File a complaint against the child-care center;
- 🐾 Review the child-care center's publicly accessible records;
- 🐾 Review written records about the parent's child;
- 🐾 Receive from the child-care center:
  - o HHSC inspection reports regarding the center; and
  - o Information regarding how to access the center's compliance history online;
- 🐾 Have the child-care center comply with a valid court order signed by a judge that prevents another parent from visiting or removing the parent's child from the center;
- 🐾 Be provided with the contact information for CCR;
- 🐾 View any available video recordings maintained by the center of an alleged incident of abuse or neglect involving the parent's child, with certain restrictions;
- 🐾 Obtain a copy of the child-care center's policies and procedures;
- 🐾 Review upon request:
  - o Staff training records; and
  - o In-house training curriculum, if any; and
- 🐾 Be free from retaliation for exercising any of the parent's rights.

# University of Houston Children's Learning Centers

## Parent Policy Agreement

**As a University of Houston Children's Learning Centers parent, I have completed Center Orientation and reviewed the CLC Parent Handbook. I agree to:**

- Comply with and support all CLC policies and procedures.
- Be financially responsible, keep my account current and pay late fees if it is not current.
- Ensure that my child arrives by 10:00am daily.
- Pick up my child no later than 5:30 p.m. and pay late fees when I do not.
- Check my child in and out daily.
- Adhere to the Center's ill child policy and the 24 hour "symptom-free" rule.
- Pick my child up promptly in case of an injury or illness while at the Center.
- Follow medication dispensing regulations and complete all necessary forms.
- Keep my child's immunizations current and provide copies of any updates to the CLC office.
- Attend all parent conferences and/or meetings requested by the Teacher/Administrators.
- Read all information provided/shared with CLC families.
- Use the CLC website and Family Information Boards to stay informed.
- Cooperate with CLC Teachers/Administrators and follow up on medical, dental or developmental referrals/needs of my child.
- Keep all telephone numbers, emergency information and other enrollment information current.
- Inform CLC administrators if there is a UH affiliation change.
- Be willing to learn and grow as a parent and increase my knowledge of child development.
- Provide the Center with diapers, formula, breast milk, baby food, special foods, change of clothing or anything else necessary for my child's care.
- Discuss my concerns and keep open communication lines with my child's teacher and the Center seeking to avoid problems and misunderstandings.
- Respect all CLC staff.

\*I understand that failure to abide by CLC policies and procedures may result in my child's enrollment termination. Disregard of Center policies can include: ignoring state licensing rules and regulations; not keeping your account current; aggressive, loud and argumentative interactions with a Center employee; sexual harassment; hostile phone calls, voice mails, faxes or email communications.

***Above all, CLC reserves the right to maintain a harmonious and safe environment for the children. Our goal is to bring about collaboration between the home and school in ways that enhance your child's development.***

Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX**

- 1. Assessment Plan**
- 2. Solution/Resolution Worksheet**

## University of Houston Children's Learning Centers Assessment Plan

Assessment components are naturally integrated into the course of every day at the Children's Learning Centers (CLC). Children are observed in their typical learning environment under natural conditions.

CLC utilizes a formal assessment tool that is criterion referenced providing a systematic method for observing children. The Learning Accomplishment Profile™: Birth to Kindergarten (LAP™ B-K) assessment is an online observation-based tool that guides educators and clinicians to observe and track the ongoing skill development of children ages birth to 72 months. It supports teachers in assessing individual skill development in six domains: gross motor, fine motor/pre-writing, cognitive, language, self-help, and social/emotional with the addition of executive function for children ages 3+. The results of the formal assessments can be used to generate a comprehensive picture of a child's developmental progress so that individualized, developmentally appropriate activities can be planned and implemented.

Children receive a beginning, ongoing, and end of the year assessment annually and written results are shared with the parents at least twice a year during parent-teacher conferences and when requested. The assessment tool can be used with children of varying abilities.

Ongoing teacher observations of group patterns and individual development are also used to adjust the program to better support group and individual progress. Teachers document observations in their own unique ways such as recording anecdotes, taking photographs, and collecting samples of the children's work. This type of assessment is sensitive to and informed by family culture, experiences, children's abilities/disabilities and home language. Portfolios, containing samples collected over time, chronicle where children begin when they first entered the classroom, what their interests are, what their challenges are, who their friends are, and how much they have grown. Portfolios can be a wonderful bridge between home and school and families have ongoing opportunities to share results of observations from home to contribute to the assessment process.

Results of CLC assessments are used to shape the current year's classroom/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. If needed, staff and parents collaborate to arrange for further developmental screenings and/or referrals for diagnostic assessments. Information obtained from Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP) and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) is used by teachers to further support skill development of a child receiving services.

In addition, CLC performs onsite Vision and Hearing Screenings. All children enrolled for the first time in a licensed child-care center in Texas who are 4-years-old by September 1st, must be screened for possible vision and hearing problems within 120 days of admission.

CLC maintains confidentiality and respects the family's right to privacy, refraining from disclosure of confidential information and intrusion into family life. However, when we have reason to believe that a child's welfare is at risk, we will share confidential information with agencies, as well as with individuals who have legal responsibility for intervening in the child's interest. *All adults (staff & volunteers) working at the Center sign a confidentiality agreement and all staff participate in annual Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) training <http://www.uh.edu/oqc/ferpa/>*

Parent Signature

Date

*In order to be sensitive to family values, culture, identity, and home language, if any parent would benefit from translation services at conferences or for key documents, we will find a translator who is fluent in the relevant language.*

**University of Houston Children's Learning Centers  
Solution & Resolution Worksheet for Staff & Parents**

What is the issue?

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How does the issue affect/involve you?

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Who needs to be involved in solving/resolving the issue and the reason for their involvement?

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Schedule a meeting; list the date & time:

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During the Meeting: Brainstorm, with everyone present, ideas for solving/resolving the issue:

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Describe the plan to be implemented:

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List the action step(s) to be taken, the person responsible for the action step & the date set for the completion of the action step:

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List the date and time for a follow up meeting:

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