GSW Early Childhood Development Center

PARENT HANDBOOK

2011-2012

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Please sign and return this form on the first day of school.

By signing this form, I assert I have read and understand the terms and conditions of the handbook for the ECDC of Georgia Southwestern State University.

Child’s Name ____________________________________________

Parent/Guardian Name (print)

_______________________________________________________

Parent/Guardian Signature

_______________________________________________________

Date ________________
Mission

The Georgia Southwestern State University Early Childhood Development Center is committed to providing an exemplary preschool educational program incorporating group and individualized instruction. The program provides effective, developmentally appropriate experiences for all children within the mission of the university.

Program Overview

The educational programming in the Center is based on the High Scope Curriculum in which children are introduced to many experiences that contribute to their physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development. Curriculum is based on a combination of self-selected and teacher-guided educational experiences in the context of whole-group, small-group, and individualized learning opportunities. Children are encouraged to develop a positive disposition toward schooling and learning. The curriculum adheres to the Content Standards for 4–K.

Statement of Inclusion

The Center believes all children have a fundamental right to learn and grow together. Every child, regardless of any individual differences that exist, is welcomed in the program. The program incorporates best practices in early childhood and special education.

Values and Beliefs

The Georgia Southwestern State University Early Childhood Development Center believes all children should be respected and valued. This includes:

- providing an inclusive setting for all children
- establishing and maintaining a play oriented, child centered environment
- employing a developmentally appropriate curriculum
- implementing of best practices
- employing caring and competent professionals

Additionally, we believe

- children must be actively involved in the learning process
- children should be encouraged to demonstrate their individual creative characteristics
- children should be involved in experiences leading to independence, making choices, and discovering learning
- the differences, as well as similarities of individuals should be experienced and celebrated
Curriculum

The curriculum at the Early Childhood Development Center is based on developmentally appropriate practices. The High/Scope Curriculum was adopted by the Early Childhood Development Center. All developmental areas are integrated throughout this curriculum. Curriculum is designed to encompass all Georgia Pre-K Content Standards in the following areas: Language & Literacy, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Creative Expression, Social & Emotional Development, and Physical Development. Additionally, children have an opportunity to develop some basic technology skills.

Georgia Content Standards
The following is a partial list of the Content Standards for Pre-K. A complete list of standards may be reviewed online at [http://www.osr.state.ga.us/prekprogram1.html](http://www.osr.state.ga.us/prekprogram1.html)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language &amp; Literacy</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Recognizes the same beginning sounds</td>
<td>- Counts by rote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Increases vocabulary</td>
<td>- Arranges sets in one-to-one correspondence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Uses complete sentences</td>
<td>- Associates numeral name with set of objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Discusses books or stories read aloud</td>
<td>- Independently creates patterns using objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Identifies individual letters of the alphabet</td>
<td>- Sorts objects using one characteristic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Experiments with a variety of writing tools</td>
<td>- Recognizes and describes basic geometric shapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Begins to dictate ideas</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Social Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Uses senses to observe and</td>
<td>- Begins to understand family structures &amp; roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Recognizes there are basic requirements for all common life forms</td>
<td>- Participates in classroom jobs Becomes aware of the roles, responsibilities &amp; services provided by community workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Describes objects by their physical properties</td>
<td>- Demonstrates an emerging awareness and respect for culture &amp; ethnicity, &amp; abilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Participates in activities to explore earth &amp; sky, health, &amp; nutrition</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Creative Expression</th>
<th>Social &amp; Emotional Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Uses materials to create original work for self-expression</td>
<td>- Shows interest in learning new concepts and trying new experiences</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Uses music and movement to express thoughts, feelings and energy</td>
<td>- Initiates interactions with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Recreates a story or poem through drama</td>
<td>- Develops independence during activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Follows rules and routines</td>
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<tr>
<th>Physical Development</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Exhibits body and spatial awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Develops coordination &amp; balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Performs fine-motor tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Uses eye-hand coordination</td>
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</tbody>
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Field Trips & Special Events

Children’s learning is facilitated and enriched through participating in a variety of field trips and planned special events related to ongoing studies and content standards. Parents must provide written consent or permission for the child to participate. Children may not participate if written permission is not provided. All field trips are closely supervised. Pre-K children’s expenses are covered with Georgia Lottery funds. Parents who accompany and/or participate with their pre-K children are encouraged to make other arrangements for siblings who are not enrolled in the program unless the field trips/special events are designated as family events. Parents/guardians must cover their own expenses for field trips. Children are expected to participate with their class on field trips.

Program Operation

The Early Childhood Development Center’s program for four-year-olds is a lottery funded Georgia Pre-Kindergarten program. There is no cost to attend this program. A maximum of forty four children can participate in this full-day (6.5 hours) program, 160 days, in two classrooms. All children must be four years of age on or before September 1 of the participating year to qualify for admission.

General Information and Policies

Program Employees

The Early Childhood Development Center’s employees consist of the program director, two certified lead-teachers, and two assistant teachers.

University Students

The Early Childhood Development Center functions as an instructional program at Georgia Southwestern State University. As a result, numerous university students complete fieldwork in the Center each semester. University students may participate in a variety of ways, usually working directly with the children in some supervised capacity. They are closely supervised by the Center employees and are a constant presence in the classroom. The involvement of university students provides pre-kindergarteners with one-on-one interaction with adults and enriches the lives of the children as well as our GSW university students.

Enrollment

Enrollment in the program is based on the following priorities: GSW faculty and staff and students and then community applicants. Children may be placed on a waiting list prior to their Preschool enrollment year. Parents of children on the waiting list are notified in January/February of the enrollment year for which their child qualifies and given acceptance priority. An open-enrollment period before the academic year of enrollment is announced in February/March for remaining slots in the preschool program.
Children are considered enrolled when all application materials are completed and on file with the Center.

**Registration Information**

In order to be served by the Early Childhood Development Center, the primary caregiver must complete and provide the following:

→ Registration form
→ Parental agreement form
→ Emergency contact card
→ Current Georgia Department of Human Resources Certificate of Immunization Form # 3231 with the date of expiration or school attendance block checked and proof of Haemophilus influenza type B (Hib) vaccination
→ Birth Certificate
→ Current Certificate of Eye, Ear, and Dental Examinations, Georgia Department of Human Resources Form 3300
→ Pre-K Student Information Form

A copy of a child’s Social Security card is needed to enroll children with the state Pre-K funding agency. Parents who cannot or choose not to provide a copy of the card or who are in the process of obtaining a card must sign the appropriate form provided by the Pre-K director.

Proof of Georgia Residency must also be provided (proof includes utility bill for caregiver’s address, PeachNet card, car registration form, etc).

**Attendance Information**

The Early Childhood Development Center serves as a model demonstration program for Georgia Southwestern State University. The preschool school year is aligned with school calendars of area schools. The projected days of operation for each year are supplied in advance to allow parents to plan alternative childcare options. The hours of operation are from 7:50 – 2:20, Monday through Friday for the Georgia Pre-K students. Children may be dropped off between 7:50 and 8:00 am and should be picked up between 2:20 and 2:30 pm.

Caregivers are requested to notify the Center if a child will be late or absent. Children should be in the classroom by 8:00 (Children arriving after 8:10 am will be marked tardy) in order to benefit from the daily curriculum and must attend regularly to maintain their enrollment. Children are dismissed at 2:20 pm and should be picked up by 2:30 pm at the latest. Besides being disruptive to the class, children arriving late and leaving early can have a difficult time keeping up and understanding what is expected of them. Children who are consistently tardy or who depart early will be in danger of being withdrawn from the program. “Consistently” is defined as at least once each week.

Children who are absent from the Georgia Pre-K program for a total of 10 consecutive days or more without reasonable documented reasons will be withdrawn.
Snack and Lunch

For healthy development, children need a daily snack in addition to lunch. Children are asked to bring a nutritious snack each day. Snacks are packed separately from the lunch and the snack should be labeled. A drink is needed for snack.

In addition, children need to bring a nutritious lunch from home each day. This may be kept in a sack or lunchbox in the child’s cubby. Food items that need to be heated in a microwave or refrigerated are acceptable. Because of the time involved, the following guidelines should be followed concerning meals that need to be heated:

- Provide only foods that can be heated in 1 ½ minutes because of time considerations
- Make sure the meal is in a microwave-safe container
- Make sure the containers needing to be heated or refrigerated are labeled with your child’s name.
  - Cold packs are needed to keep lunches/drinks cool.

Birthday Celebrations

We are excited to celebrate a child’s birthday with his/her family. However, elaborate celebrations become disruptive to the on-going educational programming in the center. If a caregiver would like to bring a cake or cupcakes for snack time on a child’s birthday, we will be pleased to recognize your child’s special day.

Rest Time

Children participating in the Georgia Pre-K will have a maximum of a one-hour rest time. The child is assigned a cot, but each child should bring a cover for the top of the cot and to cover the child. A child may also bring a small stuffed animal or other soft toy for this time. These items are kept with children’s cots and sent home at the end of the week for laundering. If a child brings a stuffed animal, please label with the child’s name. We strongly recommend not sending the most favorite stuffed animal that is needed to sleep at night.

Delivery and Pick-up of Children

Delivery: Parents must park in the main parking lot near the School of Education (avoid slots marked for faculty and dorm parking lot), and walk their children into the Education Center. Parents and children must use the sidewalk, and parents should hold children’s hands. The Main center entrance of the School of Education is used to bring children to school in the morning. The side entrance is not available to parents to bring their children into the building unless it is raining. When it rains, parents may drive under the covered area at the side entrance of the School of Education and an assistant teacher will be on duty from 7:50 until 8:10. After 8:10, parents will need to park and use the center entrance as they walk their children in to the Education Center. Parents sign in their child with the time they arrive, say their good-bye, and depart the classroom.
**Pick-up.** Parents will line up in their cars in an orderly manner in the driveway leading to the School of Education’s covered area. Parents will stay in the car, and staff members will assist children in getting in the car. Parents will sign the attendance form indicating they picked up the child from Pre–K. Parents should drive with caution in the school zone.

Arrival and departure times are extremely hectic times in the classroom. With the exception of emergency situations, parents are encouraged to save lengthy conversations with the staff for a more appropriate time in the day. Policies are recommended to ensure the safety of the children. The Driveway is not used for Parking, and Public Safety regularly monitors the area. No child of any age is to be left unattended in any vehicle for any reason.

**All children must be signed in and out of the center daily.** For safety reasons, children are never left or collected without direct transfer to an employee. Parents line up to pick children up in the afternoon between 2:20 and 2:30. Cars are not left unattended in the driveway. The second lane of traffic beside the portico is for daycare vans only.

Upon arrival, parents are welcome to enter the classroom with their child(ren) to help with settling in, to see current displays, etc. However, parents should exit the classroom in a timely manner to allow teachers to begin the school day activities. All parents should be out of the classroom by 8:10 to help in encouraging their child to become independent in unpacking and getting ready for school. Likewise, if a parent needs to collect a child earlier than the regular dismissal time (2:20 pm), the parent should notify the staff so a child’s belongings are ready. Consistent early departure is discouraged because it disrupts the child’s participation in the educational activities of the day. Dismissal is an important time for reviewing the day’s activities and preparing children for the exciting learning that will take place the next day. At the end of the school day, parents may wait in their cars at the covered drive. Teachers will walk children out of the classroom and transfer children to parents to ensure the safety of each child.

**Late Pick-Up of Children**

Children should be picked-up from the Center between 2:20 and 2:30 in the afternoon. The Center does not provide extended care. It is necessary to charge a baby-sitting fee of $3.00 for each 5 minutes beyond 2:30 pm that a child is left in the center. The fee is used to pay the cost of a babysitter and administrative costs.

Parents who are consistently late may be asked to make other arrangements.

**Communication**

We encourage parents to inform the staff of any situation that may affect the effectiveness of the school experience for a child. Family members are asked to write down any messages to staff and leave them in the morning. Although teachers would like to talk with families about their child’s day, the arrival and departure time for children are the busiest times of the teachers. Parents are asked not to use this time to discuss questions or problems concerning the Center or their child. Parent–Teacher conferences
or phone conversations can be scheduled upon request. Of course, if parents have issues that must be addressed immediately, they can ask the staff to secure additional supervision so that you may meet with them privately.

Families should check child’s bag and folder daily. A newsletter is published several times a month and is sent home with the children. Included in the newsletter is specific information about activities at the Center.

Parents are encouraged to communicate with teachers regularly. Teachers collect information regarding each child’s skill levels through portfolio or observation assessment. These assessments are related to the High/Scope Curriculum and the Georgia Content Standards. The teacher will schedule a minimum of two parent conferences to share this information with the families.

Teachers notify parents, in writing, of significant or special events happening at the Center. Parents are encouraged to send notes to school concerning special events at home. Telephoning is the least effective method for parents to communicate with teachers from 8:00 – 2:20. Obviously the staff is working with the children and cannot answer the phone. However, parents can leave messages for the staff or send an e-mail message. Calls will be returned after the children leave school each day. If parents have an emergency, please call 229 931-2145 to get a message to the classroom.

**Release of Children**

Children are only released to authorized individuals listed on their emergency card. Identification is required of those authorized individuals who are unfamiliar to the staff. If emergency changes must be made, caregivers must phone or send a written note to the Center to inform the teacher of the change.

**Health Policy**

In the interest of every child’s well being, children who have symptoms of illness, such as an elevated temperature (>101°), vomiting, diarrhea, eye discharge or pink eye, lice, severe cold, or a draining rash are required to stay home. The child must be free from illness for 24 hours before returning to school. If symptoms of illness are observed at the Center, the child will be isolated, and a parent will be notified to pick up the child.

For minor injuries, such as scraped knees, basic first aid procedures are used. In cases of severe injury the staff will refer to the Medical Authorization Form to arrange hospital emergency care.

**Medication**

Parents must sign a medication sheet when it is necessary for a medication to be given at the Center. Parents must send the medications each day with appropriate pharmacy labels attached. Nonprescription drugs must have the manufacturer’s label attached, the child’s name, dosage amount, and the time of the dosage at school should be provided.
Medication is kept out of reach of the children. The staff will document the date, time, and dosage each time medication is administered.

**Unscheduled Closing**

In case of severe weather such as snow, flooding, hurricanes or tornadoes the Center will follow the same schedule of Georgia Southwestern State University. If the University closes due to bad weather, the 4–K Center will also close. GSW television, the local radio stations, and local news reports will generally update viewers as to school closings. Any other unscheduled closing will be reported to families as soon as possible through written notice, telephone communication, and/or e-mail. Make-up days may be required for days missed due to weather.

**Health and Safety Procedures**

The following health and safety procedures are followed:

- Fire and tornado drills are conducted regularly. Evacuation routes are posted in each of the classrooms.
- The Center maintains a first aid kit.
- The staff washes their hands frequently and appropriately as children are nurtured and handled.

**Clothing**

Children should be dressed appropriately for play. Clothing should be sturdy, washable, and comfortable. Children will often have contact with activities involving water, sand, and paint and should wear clothing appropriate for these activities. Children should wear appropriate footwear. Examples of inappropriate footwear are jelly shoes, cleats, platform shoes, flip-flops, and boots. Inappropriate footwear is the cause of many accidents.

A complete change of clothing labeled with the child’s name and placed in a Ziploc bag needs to be left at the center. If a child’s clothing becomes soiled, the child will change into the provided clothing and the soiled clothes will be placed in the Ziploc bag and placed in the child’s cubby to be taken home. If a child needs extensive cleaning to be comfortable in the classroom, parents are notified to come to the Center.

**Belongings**

All personal possessions should be labeled with the child’s name. Toys, candy, gum, jewelry, make-up, purses, large stuffed animals and money should be left at home. Toys from home tend to get lost or damaged and cause problems among the children.

The classroom teacher will establish a sharing time on specific days during the school year. On those days children may bring books, music, trip souvenirs, nature items or
some item of educational interest. Toy weapons are not allowed in the Center under any circumstances.

**Pictures**

Individual and group pictures are made during the school year. These pictures are available for purchase; however, a purchase is not required to have a child’s picture taken.

**Photographing/Videotaping**

Sometimes photographs and/or videotapes are made of children working in the Center for advertisement or educational purposes. In order to be served at the Early Childhood Development Center, parents must sign an authorization allowing GSW to videotape enrolled children.

**Permission to Participate in Research Projects**

Because of the Center’s association with the university, we occasionally have requests from professors and/or university students to use the center for research purposes. Whenever research projects are planned at the Center, an informed consent form is provided before any child participates in the study. If the research is a classroom-based project (and most are), families who desire their child not participate may be asked to make alternative arrangements during the implementation of the study. We will attempt to make the results of research that is conducted available to families.