



Family Development Center

Parent Handbook

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Welcome

Welcome to the Family Development Center (FDC). We are glad that you chose us as your child's educators. The staff and administration of the Family Development Center have designed this handbook as a means of communicating policies and procedures required of us as grantees of the Illinois State Board of Education, and (soon to be) licensed and accredited education providers. We have an open door policy, if you have questions please come to talk with us at any time.

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Mission Statement and Core Values

The mission of the Family Development Center, a division of Governors State University's College of Education, is to provide accessible and exceptional education for children, families, and students, and to encourage lifelong learning and the development of the whole child.

- **Making a Difference in People's Lives:**
We value and respect the recipients of our services and the trust they place in us. We affect change in people's lives by using an approach that builds on an individual's strengths.
- **Life-long Learners:**
We lay an educational foundation for our students; we promote learning for our parents and ourselves as professionals.
- **Quality and Excellence in our Work**
As professionals in our field, we are at the forefront of excellence in early childhood education.
- **Demonstrate Inclusiveness and Diversity**
We embrace diversity among students, staff, and faculty as well as members of the broader community, and we encourage acceptance of wide-ranging perspectives.

Building Hours

The Family Development Center is open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and from 7 to 6 p.m. on Friday.

Parking

If you are dropping off or picking up children from the preschool programs, you may park in the loading zone for up to 15 minutes. Please be aware that illegal parking in the fire or handicapped zone will result in the Department of Public Safety (DPS) issuing a ticket. For longer periods of time, you may park in lot A or B across for the FDC or soon, in the new FDC parking lot on the south side of the building. Also, be aware that the area in front of the FDC is a school zone with a speed limit of 20 mph. DPS will issue tickets for speeding or improper stopping at the stop signs. Please do not leave your child in a parked car while you 'run into' the FDC for a minute. Terrible accidents and tragedies can occur in a parked car that you think is safe. Please bring your child into the center with you. Always remember to use child safety seats and seat belts.

Programs at the Family Development Center

The Family Development Center offers several different program choices for families depending on the ages of their children and their needs. All of our programs are regulated by the State of Illinois Board of Education. At the present time, we are a licensed exempt facility, but are applying for licensing under the State of Illinois Department of Child and Family Services.

Half Day Preschool

Hours of Operation: 9 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. or 12:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. - Monday through Friday

We have two half day preschool sessions that operate five days a week, Monday through Friday during the school year. Children must be three prior to entering Half Day Preschool. The sessions are offered in the morning from 9:00 am to 11:30 pm or in the afternoon from 12:30 pm to 3:00 pm. Each of these classrooms has no more than 20 children enrolled with a teacher and teacher assistant. A snack is offered once each morning and afternoon.

Three Day Preschool

Hours of Operation: 9 to 11:30 a.m. or 12:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. - Monday, Wednesday, Friday

We offer three day a week preschool on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday when slots are open and available in the regular five day classrooms. Children must be three prior to entering Three Day Preschool. The sessions are the same as the five day preschool, with the same curriculum and experiences. The sessions are offered at a lower cost and children receive all the same experiences, except for three days per week. A snack is offered once each day.

Full Day Preschool

Hours of Operation: 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. - Monday through Friday

Full Day Preschool is specifically designed for the family that works or is in school. Full Day Preschool offers children the best preschool and child care in one classroom with the advantage that children do not have to be transported from child care to preschool and back, they spend a full day at the Family Development Center. Children must be three prior to entering Full Day Preschool. Children in this program receive a snack in the morning, lunch at noon, a nap from 1 to 3 p.m., and another snack at 3 p.m. **Full Day Preschool ends at 6 p.m., the parents of any children left in the center after 6 p.m. will pay a premium or late fee.**

Evening Care

Hours of Operation: 4 to 8 p.m. - Monday through Thursday

Evening Care is child care designed specifically for the GSU faculty member or student. Evening Care operates from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. so that parents attending 4:30 classes at GSU have time to drop off their child before class, and pick them up after 7:30. Children must be between three and twelve years of age for Evening Care. Children aged three to five will be in one group, five (Kindergarten) to age twelve in another group. The purpose of Evening Care is to provide a fun, safe place for your children while you are in school at GSU. Homework help will be offered, as well as active play in the gym or outside. An evening snack is provided. If you wish your child to have a meal, you may bring a sandwich or other cold meal from home, for your child only. They will be allowed to eat it along with their snack.

Before and After School Care

Hours of Operation: 7 to 9 a.m., 3 to 8 p.m.

Before and After Care is offered for children kindergarten age and older. Our building is open from 7 to 9 am for Before Care and from 3 pm until 8 pm for After Care. The children in this program will be combined with the Evening Care school age group. A snack will be provided each evening.

Vacation Care

Hours of Operation: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

At last, a program for when school is out! Vacation Care is for school age children during school holidays, parent teacher conference days, snow days, and school breaks when GSU is open. Children must be enrolled in advance. Before and After Care will be available.

Play With Me

This program offers play time for children age 6 weeks to 36 months in an FDC age appropriate classroom. A parent(s) or other adult must remain with and supervise their own child. This program meets once a week from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., for 10 weeks. Pre-registration and payment is required in advance. An up to date physical exam and immunizations are required for each child as well as a copy of each child's certified birth certificate.

Toddler Time

For children age 24 to 36 months with their parent /guardian. This adult – child class is led by an early childhood specialist and includes group time, songs, art, and more. Toddler Time meets one time per week from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. Pre-registration and payment is required in advance. An up to date physical exam and immunizations are required for each child as well as a copy of each child's certified birth certificate.

Birth to Three

Hours of Operation: Home visits weekly between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., depending on the needs of the family.

The Family Development Center Birth to Three program is a home visiting program designed to enhance parenting skills of parents of very young children, ages birth to three. Services are offered at no cost to families through a state subsidy. Children must be screened for eligibility prior to enrollment. An up to date physical exam and immunizations are required for each child as well as a copy of each child's certified birth certificate.

Sharing of Space with the University

The Family Development Center is located on Governors State University property. The building in which the Center is located is also used by the university to conduct art classes three times a week. Most of the classes occur after 4:30 p.m., but can occur during the day. The art classroom is located at the NORTH end of the Center building. University students attending this class are directed to enter and exit the building from the North Classroom Entrance, and to use the Atrium restroom when necessary. University students are prohibited from entering any other area of the building in which the Center's program is housed. The university classroom shall remained locked at all other times when the art class is not in session. The classroom is equipped with a magnetic lock, requiring a university issued swipe card for access.

University Research

The Family Development Center is part of Governors State University. Accordingly, university students enrolled in education and education-related courses may seek to observe Center

programs, including the teachers, staff members, and children enrolled at the Center, strictly for research purposes in accordance with the university's academic requirements. University students are required to conduct this research in accordance with the university's Policy for Protection of Human Research Subjects. To protect the integrity of such research, university students and faculty may use the Center's observations room to conduct their research. The Center's observation rooms are located between the Heart and Rainbow rooms, in the Shooting Stars room, and in the infant toddler classrooms. They are equipped with two way mirrors and have microphones in the ceiling with a self contained sound system to allow university students and faculty to observe the Center program in its normal environment outside of the audible and visible ranges of Center staff and students. University students and faculty are required to abide by all Center policies and applicable state and federal laws while on Center property.

Photography and Pictures at the FDC

The FDC photographs children for internal purposes, which includes but is not limited to: displays in classroom and hallways, compilation of individual and classroom portfolios, and to show evidence of meeting learning and accreditation standards. Photography for marketing or other external uses will only be allowed upon written consent on the Publicity Release and Waiver Form. Parents wishing to take their own photographs may take pictures only of their own children. Parents will not be permitted to photograph any child, other than their own, without written parental consent.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Equal educational opportunities shall be made available to all children without regard to race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, ethnicity, language, religion, physical or mental disability, or economic or social condition. No student or child shall be denied, on the basis of sex, equal access to programs, activities, services or benefits or be limited in the exercise of any right, privilege, advantage on the basis of sex. Further, no student shall be denied, on the basis of disability, equal access to programs, activities, services or benefits or be limited in the exercise of any right, privilege, advantage on the basis of disability. The Center prohibits discrimination, harassment, or retaliation on the basis of any of the foregoing characteristics, of or by any student, child, employee, agent, or third party participating in an activity reasonably related to the Center. Any student (or parent on behalf of a student) may file a discrimination grievance by using the Center's Uniform Grievance Procedure described below.

Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect

The Family Development Center is committed to fulfilling its reporting responsibilities under the Illinois Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (the “Act”).

Mandated Reporters

Any and all Center personnel having reasonable cause to believe a child known to them in their professional or official capacity may be an abused or neglected child shall immediately report or cause a report to be made to the Department of Children and Family Services by phone or in person. The responsibility for reporting child abuse or neglect rests with the individual identifying the suspected abuse or neglect. The individual making the report shall also notify an administrator that such report is being made, and shall take all other necessary and appropriate actions in accordance with the Center’s Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect Procedures.

Definitions

Family Development Center Personnel

For the purposes of this policy, Center personnel includes school administrators, certified and non-certified school employees, directors, staff assistants, and any other child care worker.

Abused Child

An abused child is one whose parent or immediate family member, or any person responsible for the child’s welfare, or any individual residing in the same home as the child, or a paramour of the child’s parent:

1. inflicts, causes to be inflicted, or allows to be inflicted, physical injury by other than accidental means, which causes death, disfigurement, impairment of physical or emotional health, or loss or impairment of any bodily function;
2. creates a substantial risk of physical injury to the child by other than accidental means which would be likely to cause death, disfigurement, impairment of physical or emotional health, or loss or impairment of any bodily function;
3. commits or allows to be committed any sexual offense against such child;
4. commits or allows to be committed an act or acts of torture upon such child;
5. inflicts excessive corporal punishment;
6. commits or allows to be committed the offense of female genital mutilation; or
7. causes an illegal controlled substance to be sold, transferred, distributed or given to a child.

Neglected Child

A neglected child includes any child who is not receiving the proper or necessary nourishment or medically indicated treatment including food or care, or otherwise is not receiving the necessary support or medical or other remedial care or other care necessary for his or her well-being, including adequate food, clothing, and shelter; or who is abandoned by his or her parents or other person responsible for the child's welfare without a proper plan of care.

Restraints on Reporters

The Act provides that under no circumstances shall any person in charge of a school or facility, or his or her designated agent to whom such notification has been made, exercise any control, restraint, modification, delay or other such change in the report or the forwarding of such reports to DCFS. Further, employers cannot discriminate in any manner against employees who made good faith reports of suspected child abuse or neglect or who act or will act as witnesses to testify in any investigation or proceeding concerning a report of child abuse or neglect.

Notifying Parents

If a report is made to DCFS, the Executive Director or other Center personnel shall use discretion in notifying parents/guardians of a child regarding a report of suspected abuse or neglect or when a DCFS investigator is going to see the child pursuant to such a report. DCFS is required to notify the person being investigated, unless the director of DCFS determines that such notification would be detrimental to the investigation. If DCFS takes temporary protective custody of a child, they are required to immediately make every reasonable effort to notify the child's parent/guardian.

Immunity

The Act provides that any person, institution or agency participating in good faith in making a report or referral, or in the investigation of such a report or referral, or in the taking of photographs, or in retaining a child in temporary protective custody, or in making a disclosure of information concerning reports of child abuse and neglect in compliance with the Act as it relates to disclosure by Center personnel and except in cases of willful or wanton misconduct, shall have immunity from any liability, civil, criminal or that otherwise might result by reason of such actions.

Non-custodial Parents

Parents/guardians, including non-custodial parents, shall have access to information and records regarding their children in accordance with the Center's Student Records Policy and Procedures. Unless the Center has actual notice of a court order restricting an individual's access to a student or the student's educational records, non-custodial parents, whose names are listed on the child's birth certificate as the biological parent, shall be permitted to obtain information regarding their child's education. The Center shall only permit the release of children to individuals other than the custodial parent/guardian in accordance with the Center's Arrival/Departure Policy.

Non-Religious Instruction

In accordance with state and federal law, the Center and its employees are prohibited from providing religious instruction, conducting worship services, or engaging in any form of proselytization as part of its state-funded early childhood programs.

Prohibition of the Use or Possession of Drugs and Alcohol

The Center is committed to ensuring the safety of all children enrolled at the Center, as well as the safety of all of its staff, employees, and visitors while on Center property and during Center activities. The Center prohibits the use or possession, sale, distribution, transfer or being under the influence of controlled substances or alcohol while on Center property or during Center activities. Any employee who suspects that a person is using, possessing, selling, distributing, transferring, or is under the influence of any drugs or alcohol shall immediately notify the Executive Director or designated staff member. The Executive Director or designated staff member shall seek the immediate removal from Center property of any person suspected of using or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and where necessary, shall contact local law enforcement and/or the Department of Children and Family Services in accordance with the requirements of the Illinois Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act.

Payment Policies and Fees

All accounts must be current prior to participation in any program, and must remain current to assure continued participation. The Family Development Center is prepared and must pay staff to serve all children that are enrolled on any given day. There is no deduction for sick days, absent days, or vacation days. Days missed cannot be made up. Vacation days are built into the FDC schedule, with closing at Winter Break and August Break. Parents do not pay for the weeks that the FDC has a scheduled closing.

1. Tuition fees are subject to change.
2. Tuition must be paid weekly.
3. Tuition may be paid by cash, check, money order or credit card at the Family Development Center.
4. Families receiving Child Care Assistance are responsible for payment on their account. Any child care assistance payments received will show as a credit to your account.
5. A \$25 fee will be charged for any checks returned by our bank. After three returned checks, further payments will be required in cash, money order or credit card.
6. Tuition is due no less than two (2) weeks in advance. Payment for the first week of the month is due by the 15th of the previous month.
7. If payment for the first week of the month is not received by the 20th of the month prior, parents will receive a past due notice, with a late fee assessed.
8. Payment not received by the 25th will result in services being stopped by the last day of the month. GSU students, staff, and faculty will have a Child Care hold placed on their account, which will prevent registration, release of transcripts, and graduation.

9. Services will not be re-instated until two (2) weeks of advance payment is made, and all fees are paid.
10. Any account over 30 days past due may be sent to an outside collection agency.
11. In accordance with (15 ILCS 405/10.05) any account 90 days or more past due may be sent to the State of Illinois Comptroller's Offset system for involuntary withholding from any payments you receive from the State of Illinois.

Payment Chart

Month	Payment Due	Past Due, Late Fee Added	Services Stopped
September	August 15	August 20	August 31
October	September 15	September 20	September 30
November	October 15	October 20	October 31
December	November 15	November 20	November 30
January	December 15	December 20	December 31
February	January 15	January 20	January 31
March	February 15	February 20	February 28
April	March 15	March 20	March 31
May	April 15	April 20	April 30
June	May 15	May 20	May 31
July	June 15	June 20	June 30
August	July 15	July 20	July 31

No Fee Policy

The Center's Preschool and Birth to Three programs are funded in part by the Illinois Early Childhood Block Grant programs. Accordingly, parents/guardians and their children who meet the eligibility criteria under the Illinois Early Childhood Block Grant program shall not be charged any tuition or fees to enroll and participate in the Center's Half Day Preschool and Birth to Three programs. Nor shall eligible parents/guardians and their children be charged any tuition or fees to enroll and participate in the preschool portions of the Center's Full Day Preschool program. Eligible parents/guardians shall remain responsible for tuition and fee charges associated with the child care portion of the Full Day Preschool program.

Gift Policy

As State employees, the staff of the Family Development Center are prohibited from accepting personal gifts of any kind. If you feel the need to give a gift, please give a gift to the classroom. Feel free to contact the Early Childhood Coordinator for ideas.

Admission, Enrollment, and Discharge Policies for Children

Student Enrollment

Enrollment Procedure

All children must register for school and/or child care each year on the dates and at the place designated by the Executive Director.

Prior to entering the program, children enrolling in the Center for the first time must present:

- A certified copy of the child's birth certificate or other reliable proof of identity and age.

Upon receipt, the Center shall promptly make a copy of the certified copy of the child's birth certificate for the Center's records, and shall return the original certified copy to the person enrolling the child.

Upon the failure of a person enrolling a child to provide a certified copy of the child's birth certificate, or other reliable proof of identity and age and an affidavit explaining the inability to produce a copy of the birth certificate, the Executive Director shall immediately notify the local law enforcement agency and shall also notify the person enrolling the child in writing that, unless he or she complies within 30 days, the case shall be referred to the local law enforcement authority for investigation. If compliance is not obtained within that 30 day period, the Executive Director shall so refer the case, and notify the person enrolling the child that he/she has an additional 10 days to comply with the requirement. The Executive Director shall immediately report to the local law enforcement authority any affidavit received pursuant to this paragraph that appears inaccurate or suspicious in form or content.

- Proof of disease immunization or detection and the required physical examination(s), as required by State law.

The Family Development Center Staff shall ensure that all required documents for a child are in the Center's possession prior to that child attending their first day of the program.

Screening and Assessment of Children

Children will be screened prior to enrollment in the State Pre-K and Birth to Three programs as a condition of receiving a subsidy. The screening tool used will depend on the age of the child, but will include a parent interview, a developmental screening using a research based, commercial screening tool; and documentation of family income, if income is used as a criteria.

In addition to screening to determine eligibility; children may be screened to assist teachers in providing a more individualized education. Every child's development will be assessed periodically using the Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum, and the results of that assessment will be shared with the child's parents twice yearly during Parent Teacher Conferences.

Attendance

Parents whose children are absent for excessive periods of time will be contacted for follow up. Many of our programs have waiting lists and unexplained absences mean that a child may be asked to leave so that the program can serve children more in need of programming. If your child does not maintain 80% attendance, we may dis-enroll your child so that another child may enroll in the slot.

If your child is sick, please call by 9 a.m., and let us know why they are staying home. We keep track of illnesses in order to identify trends. If your child does not show up on a scheduled day, one of the teachers or staff will call to follow up on absences.

Late Arrival

Preschool begins at 9 a.m. and at 12:30 p.m. every day. If your child is late, he or she is not receiving a complete preschool education. We cannot delay field trips or other off site visits for one child. If you are late, your child will not be able to participate.

Children with Disabilities

The Family Development Center accepts children with special needs in accordance with our established program registration policies. A local school district and/or special education cooperative may determine, through the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team process, that the Center is the most appropriate placement for a child who is eligible for early childhood special education services. The Center will work cooperatively with the local school district and/or special education cooperative, child's parents, and other IEP team members and service providers to ensure that such child's IEP or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is properly

implemented. The Center urges all parents and guardians to discuss with the Executive Director any special circumstances involving their child prior to registration or the beginning of the Center program(s). While the Center makes every effort to accommodate all children who register, if a requested accommodation would result in an undue burden on the Center's resources or fundamentally alter the nature of the Center's program, admission or continued enrollment may be denied.

If a child has an IEP/IFSP, the parents or guardians of that child must inform the Center of the existence of such plans, and indicate that the child has such a plan on the child's registration form. A copy of the child's current IEP/IFSP should be provided to the Center at the time of registration, and will be made available to the appropriate Center teachers and staff. The Center will schedule a meeting with the parents or guardians of that child to discuss the child's IEP/IFSP and the Center's role in the implementation of the plan. The classroom teacher and, if necessary, other appropriate Center staff, should participate in the child's IEP/IFSP meetings with the child's local public school district.

It is important that the Center staff members be considered part of the team of professionals working to enrich each child's preschool/program experience. Center staff members working with a special needs child must have access to information from outside services that would help facilitate each child's adjustment to the Center's program. Reports from agencies and/or private therapists providing services to a child enrolled at the Center should be forwarded to the Executive Director on a timely basis. All information shall be treated with confidentiality. Unless required by law, the Center will not send information to any other agencies, schools, etc. without the written authorization from the parents or guardians. To facilitate an understanding of a child's needs and, where appropriate, make adaptations, the Center may require parents to sign a release of information form enabling the classroom teachers, appropriate Center staff, and the Executive Director to talk directly with the agency or therapists providing services to best meet the child's needs in the classroom. The Center may also require parental consent to permit the Center staff to participate in a child's IEP/IFSP meeting with the public school district. Failure to assist the Center in obtaining information the Center believes is necessary to accommodate a child within the Center may result in admission or continued enrollment being denied.

Holidays

The Family Development Center closes for the following holidays:

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Day and the following Friday

Martin Luther King Birthday
Lincoln's Birthday
Memorial Day
Independence Day

Vacations/Closing

In addition to holidays, the Family Development Center closes for August Break and Winter Break each year. Parents will be notified in advance of these closings and do not pay for these closings.

The Family Development Center is prepared and must pay staff to serve all children that are enrolled on any given day. There is no deduction for holidays, sick days, or other absent days. Days missed cannot be made up. Vacation days are built into the FDC schedule, with closing at Winter Break and August Break. Parents do not pay for the weeks that the FDC has a scheduled closing.

Arrival and Departure

1. Parents are required to accompany their children into the building and to sign in at the classroom or front desk. You need to indicate the time of arrival and your signature. You must be sure that a staff member knows your child is in the room. Under no circumstances will a child be allowed to find his/her own way into the center without an adult.
2. Staff members directly responsible for your child should be alerted to any special circumstances which may require a special touch or attention during the day. Feel free to approach the classroom staff or Early Childhood Program Coordinator with any concerns.
3. Parents must sign their child out in the classroom or front desk. Again, we require a signature and time of departure. Once your child is signed out, they are under your responsibility.
4. A child will be released ONLY to the parents/guardians or to a person designated in writing on the centers Pick Up List, kept on file in the office. This authorized person must follow the same sign in/out procedure as described above.
5. The center staff refuses to release a child to any person, related or unrelated, to the child who has not been authorized in writing by the parent or guardians to receive the child.
6. Non custodial parents will be allowed to pick up children if they are listed on the child's birth certificate, unless there is a court order prohibiting contact with the child. It is the custodial parent's responsibility to inform the Center of any issues regarding custody.

Arrangements for Arrival of School Age Children

A staff person will watch for school age children arriving via school bus. Transportation is not provided by the Family Development Center. Upon entering the building, school age children will be signed into their classroom by their designated teacher. They must be signed out by the parent or guardian responsible for picking them up.

Your Child's Day at the Family Development Center

Appropriate clothing

Your child will paint, color, cook, play, and eat so please dress him/her in comfortable, easy to wash clothing. Clothing should also be easy for your child to manage in the bathroom. Weather permitting, (temperature above 20 F) we play outside everyday so please dress your child in appropriate outerwear (jacket, hat, gloves, scarf, boots, snow pants). Your child should have closed toe shoes appropriate for running and climbing. Please remember to label everything!

Extra Set of Clothing

A complete set of extra clothing is a must because spills are common occurrences. On the first day, please send an extra set of labeled clothing that includes underwear, shirts, pants and socks in a plastic Ziploc bag clearly marked with your child's name. Please check periodically to make sure your child's extra set of clothing is the correct size and appropriate as seasons change.

Children's Personal Belongings

A goal of early childhood programs is to develop group sharing skills. Toys and items from home create confusion for children over ownership of personal items. Therefore, we request that toys and other items be left at home. Some exceptions to this include show and tell days and nap time for Full Day. If your child is enrolled in the Full Day program he or she is welcome to bring a blanket and soft/quiet sleep toy for nap. These will be kept on your child's cot. They will be washed on a weekly basis in hot water.

Meals and Snacks

All of our meals and snacks are planned for optimum nutrition, based on guidelines from the USDA, Child Adult Care Food Program, administered by the Illinois State Board of Education. At this time, we receive our lunches from the GSU cafeteria. We must call in a lunch count by 9 a.m. each day. If you are late, and do not call to let us know, your child will not receive a hot lunch. We will provide a cold lunch instead.

Food from Home

Children receive nutritious snacks and meals while at the Family Development Center. We are able to keep our rates lower because we receive funding from the State of Illinois Child Adult Care Food program (CACFP), which guides our planning. One of the guidelines in place from the CACFP is that we cannot serve any food unless it is prepared in a licensed kitchen. Therefore, we require that all food in the center be served from our kitchen. If your child has a birthday or other celebration and you want to send treats, they must be in sealed packages from a bakery or store. We cannot serve homemade items. If your child is in Evening Care and your child requires a meal more substantial than the snack that is provided, you may send a Lunchable or other commercially prepared meal.

If a field trip is planned over lunch time, we will provide a sack lunch for each child and adult that accompanies the trip. Please do NOT bring food from home, or purchase food for your child on the field trip.

Communication Between the Center and Home

Please provide your child with a backpack or school bag to make it easy for teachers and staff to send information home. Don't forget to check your child's backpack/bag every day! You are welcome to call or visit at any time of the day or evening. We will send home newsletters on a regular basis, and notices when necessary. If you have e-mail we may use your e-mail address to provide general information such as meeting notices or newsletters. We will not share your e-mail address with anyone else.

Student Records and Release of Information

All records of a preschool student will be handled in compliance with the Illinois School Student Records Act, 105 ILCS 10/1 *et seq.* and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g. Student records are any writing or other recorded information, regardless of format, created or maintained by the Center, or at the Center's direction, or by an employee of the Center, by which a student may be individually identified. School student records do not include writings or other recorded information maintained by an employee of the Center for his or her exclusive use.

State and federal law grants students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) certain rights, including the right to inspect, copy, and challenge student records. State and federal laws provide that parents and students must be annually notified of these rights. The Center has developed a policy and accompanying procedures regarding student records. The complete policy and procedures regarding student records is available for inspection in the Center's Main office. The

Center may release directory information as permitted by law, except when students or parents/guardians object to the release of directory information. The process for filing such objections are enumerated in the procedures. The Executive Director shall designate a records custodian who shall maintain student records at the Center.

Weapons Policy

A student who uses, possesses, controls, or transfers a weapon, or any other object that can reasonably be considered or looks like a weapon, on Family Development Center grounds shall be disciplined. A “weapon” means possession, use, control, or transfer of 1) any gun, rifle, shotgun, or a weapon as defined by Section 921 of Title 18, United States Code, firearm as defined in Section 1.1 of the Firearm Owners Identification Act [430 ILCS 65/1.1], or use of a weapon as defined in Section 24-1 of the Criminal Code; 2) any other object if used or attempted to be used to cause bodily harm, including but not limited to, knives, brass knuckles, or billy clubs; or 3) “look alikes” of any weapon as defined above. Any item, such as a baseball bat, pipe, bottle, lock, stick, pencil, or pen, is considered to be a weapon if used or attempted to be used to cause bodily harm.

Required Notices

A Family Development Center staff member shall immediately notify the office of the Executive Director in the event that he or she observes any person in possession of a firearm on Family Development Center grounds. Such notice, however, may be delayed if immediate notice would endanger the health, safety, or welfare of the staff member or of the students under his or her supervision until he or she and/or the students are no longer under immediate danger. A Family Development Center staff member should also immediately notify the office of the Executive Director in the event that he or she observes or has reason to suspect that any person is or was involved in a drug related incident, or observes a battery committed against any staff member. Upon receiving such a report, the Executive Director or designee shall immediately notify the Governors State University Department of Public Safety, and any involved student’s parent/guardian. Family Development Center grounds includes modes of transportation for any FDC activity and any public way within 1,000 feet of the school, as well as the FDC property itself.

Late Pick Up Policy

Late fees will be assessed for children enrolled in the Full Day program if not picked up by 6 p.m. The late fee is \$10 for the first 15 minutes and one dollar per minute for every minute beyond 16 minutes late. FDC staff will call all emergency and back up contacts for families twice. If the child is not picked up by 45 minutes after the scheduled pick up time, the GSU Department of Public Safety (DPS) will be called to care for the child so that staff may go home. DPS will call DCFS when they determine a child has been abandoned.

Late fees will be assessed for children enrolled in the Evening Care program at 8 p.m. After calling all emergency and back up contacts for the child, the Department of Public Safety will be notified at 8:45 p.m. that a child has been left at the FDC.

It is extremely important that emergency contacts be kept up to date at all times.

Guidance and Discipline Policy

We provide learning experiences in an environment which encourages a child to find that he/she is a valued and unique being. We help each child develop a sense of self-discipline and self-control.

1. Limits and consequences shall be clear and understandable to the child, consistently enforced and explained to the child before and as part of any disciplinary action.
2. Discipline shall be developmentally appropriate and logically related to the child's act and shall not be out of proportion to the particular inappropriate behavior. The child shall be made aware of the relationship between the act and the consequences.
3. Firm positive statements about behaviors or redirection of behaviors shall be used at all times.
4. Removal from the group to help a child gain self control shall not exceed one minute per year of age. Removal from the group shall not be used for children less than 24 months of age. Removal from the group is always used as a last resort **ONLY** with children at risk of injuring themselves or other children.

The following disciplinary practices are **NEVER** used:

1. Corporal punishment, including hitting, spanking, swatting, beating, shaking, pinching, and other measures intended to induce physical pain or fear;
2. Threatening children or youth with objects
3. Threatened or actual withdrawal of food, rest, or use of the bathroom;
4. Abusive or profane language;
5. Any form of public or private humiliation, including threats of physical punishment;

6. Any form of emotional abuse, including shaming, rejecting, terrorizing, or isolating child.

Visits, Trips, Excursions off FDC grounds and off GSU campus

The GSU campus offers many cultural and natural experiences. Children enrolled in FDC programs may take walking trips on campus, especially when the weather permits. When large groups of children take walking trips off the grounds of the FDC, the campus police, are contacted to assist with traffic control in the front of the building. Safety is always at the forefront when taking any type of trip at the Family Development Center.

Special trips to places of interest, public parks, etc. may be planned from time to time. All trips will be closely supervised by staff and parents will be invited to participate. Only those children authorized by parents in writing will be permitted to participate. Parents will be notified approximately one week in advance of the field trip. A school bus company will be contracted for any off campus field trips.

Children are not allowed to bring money or personal items, including electronic devices, on field trips. Please do NOT send money for your child. Meals, snacks, and drinks will be provided by the Center. If you accompany the children on a field trip and wish to purchase souvenirs, you will be asked to keep it/them until you return home. Thank you for keeping the needs of the group in mind.

Participation in field trips, and trips off FDC grounds, are considered to be a privilege and treat for children. The FDC reserves the right to refuse children's participation if their behavior is dangerous to themselves or others. Children can only participate if they can listen and stay safe within the group.

Provisions for Emergency Medical Care, Treatment of Illnesses, and Accidents

Children's Health Policy

1. All children enrolled in the Family Development Center programs are required to submit a current (within 6 months of enrollment) health examination performed by a licensed medical professional.
2. This health examination must be renewed every year while the child is enrolled.
3. School age children (kindergarten and older) may submit the most recent physical as required by the school.

4. The health exam must indicate that the child has received the immunizations required by the Illinois Department of Public Health. These include: Polio, measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, Pertussis, tetanus, haemophilus influenza type B, hepatitis B, and chickenpox.
5. The child must receive a TB test, if the medical professional determines they are in a high risk group.

Emergency Treatment

If a child receives a minor, superficial wound or injury while at the Center, basic first aid will be administered. In the event of a minor injury parents will be notified at the end of the day when the child is picked up.

If a child receives an injury or is ill requiring emergency medical attention, the Governors State University Department of Public Safety (DPS) will be called (911), and the child will be taken to the closest hospital. The child will be accompanied by a staff member, and the signed emergency treatment form will accompany the staff. The staff person will stay with the child until a parent arrives. The parent will be contacted immediately as soon as an ambulance has been called. If the parent cannot be reached, and the emergency names cannot be reached, the Center will instruct the hospital to use the signed treatment card and to contact the family's medical practitioner. In the event a family subscribes to Christian Scientist practices, the Center will make every attempt to contact the listed practitioner.

Sick Child Policy

Children cannot attend the Family Development Center and will be sent home if they have:

- A minor illness which prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities or if the staff cannot care for the child;
- Diarrhea, until it is resolved;
- Two or more instances of vomiting within previous 24 hours (readmitted after 24 hours of no vomiting);
- Rash with behavior change or fever until a physician has determined the illness to be noncommunicable;
- Ringworm at the end of the day (re-admit after treatment started);
- Fever defined as oral temperature above 101 degrees or axillary above 100 degrees. Children can return when they have been fever free without medication for 24 hours;
- Persistent (more than 2 hours) abdominal pain, or intermittent pain associated with fever;
- Mouth sores with drooling, until a medical professional determines the child is noninfectious;

- Purulent Conjunctivitis, until after treatment has been initiated;
- Head lice, from end of day until after first treatment;
- Scabies, until treatment is completed;
- Tuberculosis, until a healthcare provider releases the child to attend;
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment started;
- Strep Throat, until 24 hours after initial antibiotic treatment and cessation of fever;
- Chickenpox, until all sores have dried and crusted; or
- Pertussis, mumps, measles, hepatitis A; until a medical professional releases child to attend.

(Caring for Our Children, National Health & Safety Performance Standards 3.065 p. 124)

Medication Administration Policy

The Family Development Center staff will administer medication to children only when the medication is in its original container and only with written parent permission and physician authorization.

- Prescription medications shall be labeled with the full pharmacy label, in the original container. FDC personnel will only administer medication according to pharmacy instructions.
- Parents will sign a release for each medication to be administered.
- A designated person in the Center will administer medication.
- The Family Development Center will maintain a record of each time the medication is administered, by date, time and the name of the person administering medication.

Over the counter medications such as cough medicine and Tylenol will only be administered with written directions from a licensed medical professional.

Sunscreen or insect repellent will be applied to children with written parent permission. You must supply repellent/sunscreen for your child. Please label the bottle with your child's name.

Children with chronic medical conditions requiring emergency medication such as an Epi-Pen must keep the Family Development Center apprised of the medication and status of the child's condition at all times. If emergency medication is to be administered by FDC, the parent must train the staff on the proper conditions to use the medication as well as the proper use of the medication. In the event of an emergency that the FDC staff feels they are not able to control with the use of the emergency medication alone, the staff of the Family Development Center will contact emergency services in the best interests of the child.

Communicable Disease Notifications

The Family Development Center will notify all parents of enrolled children when there is any communicable disease to which their child was exposed. In addition, if there is any unusual level or type of disease to which your child was exposed, we will notify you of any measures you should take at home, in accordance with the Illinois Communicable Disease Prevention Act and applicable state and federal privacy laws. We will work with the local Will County Health Department in these cases.

Family Involvement at the Family Development Center

Parent Advisory Group

A voluntary Parent Advisory Group meets approximately once a month. The purpose of this group is to offer feedback on recruitment and fundraising for the Family Development Center. Parents of all children are invited to attend. Child care is provided for those that sign up in advance.

Parent Teacher Conferences

Parent teacher conferences take place twice yearly in the fall and the spring. You will be given a choice of time slots to sign up and meet with your child's teachers regarding your child's development and educational progress. If at any time in between these scheduled times you would like to meet with the teachers, please feel free to call and make an individual appointment with the teacher.

Family Events/Meetings

The Family Development Center has scheduled events approximately one per month during the calendar year. Various topics of interest to parents will be presented by staff and faculty of the Family Development Center, GSU students, or GSU faculty as well as outside speakers and volunteers. Parents are encouraged to attend any of these free educational and informative events, and child care will be provided at no cost.

Family Development Center Calendar

September 1	First Day of Pre-K
September 17	FAMILY EVENT NIGHT
September 25	Professional Development - HALF DAY PRE-K CLOSED
October 6	Parent Advisory Meeting - Cookie Dough Fundraiser Kick-off
October 15	FAMILY EVENT NIGHT
October 23	Professional Development – HALF DAY PRE-K CLOSED
October 26	Cookie Dough Sale Ends
November 3	Parent Advisory Meeting
November 10- 11	Parent-Teacher Conferences - AM HALF DAY PRE-K CLOSED
November 12- 13	Parent-Teacher Conferences - PM HALF DAY PRE-K CLOSED
November 25	Professional Development - AM CLASSES ONLY
November 26	CLOSED THANKSGIVING
November 27	CLOSED THANKSGIVING
December 1	Parent Advisory Meeting
December 3	Family Event Night – Scholastic Book Fair
December 23	HALF DAY PRE-K CLOSED
December 24- Jan 3	WINTER BREAK – ALL PROGRAMS CLOSED
January 4	Pre-K Resumes
January 5	Parent Advisory Meeting
January 18	Martin Luther King Holiday – CENTER CLOSED
January 21	Family Event Night
February 2	Parent Advisory Meeting
February 12	Lincoln Birthday Holiday – CENTER CLOSED
February 15	Professional Development – HALF DAY PRE-K CLOSED
February 18	Family Event Night
March 2	Parent Advisory Meeting
March 18	Parent Event Night
March 19	Professional Development – HALF DAY PRE-K CLOSED
April 5- April 9	SPRING BREAK – HALF DAY PRE-K CLOSED
April 22	Family Event Night
May 4	Parent Advisory Meeting
May 14	Professional Development – HALF DAY PRE-K CLOSED
May 20	Parent Event Night
May 25 -26	Parent-Teacher Conferences - AM HALF DAY PRE-K CLOSED
May 27- 28	Parent-Teacher Conferences - PM HALF DAY PRE-K CLOSED
May 31	Memorial Day Holiday – CENTER CLOSED
June 8	Graduation

Thank You for taking the time to read through this Parent Handbook. We thank you for entrusting your child's education to us.

Please sign and return this page.

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Governors State University Family Development Center Parent Handbook.

Parent/ Guardian Signature

Date