



# Children's Center

## Parent Guidelines and Policies

Accredited by the National Association of the Education of the Young  
Child (NAEYC)

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# Introduction

## MISSION

The mission of the USCA Children's Center includes providing high quality childcare, working with parents, training students and engaging in research. The Center is a training site for childcare providers in the area. The staff of USCA Children's Center works together as a team to provide an environment for service, teaching, and research.

The Children's Center fulfills an exciting mission. The Center is a part of the University of South Carolina Aiken and has access to all university resources and services. It offers high quality childcare and education for young children, ages six weeks through four years. The families we serve are from the university as well as the Aiken community. Parents are recognized and valued as active members of the Center team and are encouraged to become advocates for young children in general. Parents are welcome visitors to our school and are assured of the highest quality care.

The Children's Center's staff members are dedicated and held accountable to the NAEYC Code of Ethics. These ethics provide that staff treat all children and families with respect and dignity. We also hold our families to the same standard of behavior. We expect parents and family members to treat staff and other families with courtesy and respect. It is our goal to resolve conflicts with fairness and cooperation. However, we do reserve the right to terminate services for any family that we feel is disruptive or exhibits behavior that is detrimental to a safe and positive environment.

The Center has a dual purpose of providing quality childcare for faculty, staff, students, and the community while serving as a laboratory setting to be utilized by the university. The research agenda for the Center includes best practices as well as training initiatives. The Children's Center provides university students the opportunity to observe multiple ages of young children as well as to apply specific skills they are learning in their educational programs.

The Child Care Program is accredited by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs. Our program meets the licensing requirements of the Department of Social Services, enhanced provider standards of the Department of Health and Human Services, safety standards of the Fire Department and Sanitation Codes of the Department of Health and Environmental Control.

Admission to the USC Aiken Children's Center is open to all children regardless of their ethnicity, sex, handicap, religious beliefs, or national origin. Center information will be provided in a language the family can understand.

## PHILOSOPHY

Several aspects of a child's development provide the framework of our program. The child's interactions with adults including their teachers and parents provide a structure for the development of language and social interactions. Adults provide guidance for children to interact with one another. The activities and the environment are carefully designed in order to provide leading activities so that they can discover the world through their method of learning-play.

Each child is unique with their own developmental path in all areas of development including cognitive/language, social/emotional and physical. Our teachers strive to get to know each unique child so that planning activities are individually as well as developmentally age appropriate.

Realistic expectations are maintained for children for their social interactions as well as their thinking abilities. Young children think differently than adults and our program reflect sensitivity to that fact.

Children, as social beings, are learning to get along with others. They gain this knowledge through the behavior modeling that they see in adults. Adults, therefore, treat other adults and children with respect, consideration, acceptance, and fairness. Adults provide guidance to the children to be able to have a good relationship with others, use words to express their desires, thoughts, and feelings, to cooperate and share with others, make good decisions, and to develop a sense of empathy and impulse control. Children are supported in the process of learning to regulate their own behavior. Differences in children are acknowledged and valued. We celebrate all children regardless of their color, ability level, gender, or economic status. When cultural conflicts arise, teachers will negotiate with parents to find a mutually beneficial solution.

In addition to the teaching staff, the environment is also a teacher for the children. The classroom is set up in learning centers so that the child can choose the area in which they would like to play, the materials they will play with, and what they will do with them. Limits to this play include the requirement that the child treats others in the play area with kindness and cooperation and those materials be taken care of and put away when the child has completed his task. The child's active exploration in the environment includes movement, materials to manipulate, roles to take on, and a variety of art mediums.

As each child travels through their developmental journey, teachers are available to support their explorations, guide their participation, and encourage their progress. The journey is taken together so that each child discovers their own possibilities.

## **GOAL**

The goal of the center is to provide a nurturing, safe environment that supports each child's development to his/her potential in all areas of growth and learning

## **THE PURPOSE OF THE CHILDREN'S CENTER**

- To provide a stable setting, a nurturing and stimulating learning environment and to provide developmentally appropriate experiences for the children enrolled.
- To provide experiences which promote the development of independence, social competence, and a positive self-concept in each child.
- To provide opportunities for parent participation and involvement based on open communication so that each child's experience in the program becomes integrated with the home environment.
- To serve as a demonstration program for individuals preparing to become teachers of young children.
- To serve as an arena for scholarly research and development efforts and a resource for all professionals in early childhood education and related fields of child related study.

# Enrollment

## REQUIREMENTS

- The Children's Center maintains a waiting list for all classrooms. There is no obligation to place your child's name on the list. However, first priority is given to families of children enrolled that are expecting a sibling. Second priority is given to children of full-time Faculty or Staff employed at USCA. Third priority is given to USCA students. Fourth priority is given to the Aiken Community.
- Infants must be 6 weeks old to attend the Children's Center. Children under the age of 24 months should not be at the Center any longer than 10 hours in one day.
- Students who will turn 5 by October 1<sup>st</sup> of a school year will age out of the Center and cannot be registered for that school year.
- Students who turn 5 by June 1<sup>st</sup> will not be eligible to attend the summer session.

## PROBATION PERIOD FOR NEW ENROLLMENT

In order to determine if a new family is a good fit for the center and to ensure the center is a positive experience for the child—new enrollees will be on a 30-day probation period. At the end of this time, parents and staff can meet to discuss any challenges and to determine if a permanent placement in the Children's center is in the best interest of all concerned.

## FORMS REQUIRED FOR ADMISSION

Parents are provided with an enrollment packet including forms and signature pages which will become part of that child's admission file. Some examples include:

1. Emergency Form
2. Statement of Child's Health
3. Child Release Authorization Form
4. Certificate of immunizations\*

\*(Due within 30 days of enrollment, on a SC immunization form.)

(For confidentiality purposes, all student files are placed in a filing cabinet in a locked room. Only authorized persons including parents of the child, teaching/administrative staff, NAEYC officials, DSS officials, or official designees will be granted access.)

## HOURS OF OPERATION

The hours of operation are 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. **Children under the age of 24 months cannot be at the center longer than 10 hours.**

Dropping off a child after 9 a.m. is disruptive to the classroom structure and learning of other students. Teachers begin lessons promptly at 9 am. Please bring your child by 8:30am so they have a chance to settle in. **To avoid disruption, we will not be allowing children to be dropped off after 9am unless you have made special arrangements with the Director. This will be strictly enforced. If you are late without a reason you will be presented with a Tardy Notice to sign.**

The Children's Center building is locked at 6:00 p.m. If you are late for pick-up, the fee is \$5 per minute at the Director's discretion. **Chronic late pick-ups can result in termination.**

The Center is closed on holidays as designated by the University Administrative Calendar and on select staff development days. **You are responsible for tuition on these days.** Please refer to the back page for these dates.

**Additionally, if there are fewer than three children in the building, we reserve the right to close for the day. This number is dependent on enrollment numbers.**

In the case of inclement weather or natural disasters, the Center will follow the decisions of USCA. Local news will keep you updated on current information. If there is a two-hour opening delay for USCA, you may drop off your child at 10:00 a.m. The Director or Campus Supervisor will send out a group email to notify parents of changes; **please make sure we have an updated email for your family.**

The use of Class Dojo to communicate to parents is a requirement for all families.

## HEALTH, ACCIDENTS, ATTENDANCE, AND AUTHORIZATION

- Each child's overall condition will be noted each morning.
- **If a child develops a fever—a temperature of 100 (for 1 year and under) or 100.5 (over 1 year) degrees or more—or is displaying symptoms of illness they will be placed in a quarantine room with admin or director until they are picked up by a parent or guardian. They must be picked up immediately.**
  - **Failure to pick up in a reasonable manner (30 mins-1 hr) of contact can result in termination.**
- Parents will also be called if the child has 2 episodes of diarrhea or vomiting or is unable to engage in normal classroom activities. Our staff reserves the right to use their own discretion based on their knowledge of each child and their typical behavior and demeanor.
- Symptoms of possible illness include not eating or drinking, excessive crying, lethargy, and/or inability to participate in such activities as circle time, center time or outside play. **Parents/Guardians should notify the center immediately if a child is diagnosed as having any type of communicable disease.** Following these guidelines will help us prevent the spread of illness. The Center deserves the right to ask for a doctor's note for any illness.
- A child cannot return to the Center until they are fever and/or symptom free **without medication** for at least 24 hours. **This period does not begin at the time the child leaves the center**, but only after medication is no longer needed to keep fever/symptoms at bay for 24 hours.
  - All parents must contact the Director prior to a child being readmitted to their classroom.
- Parents will be notified of communicable disease by written posted signs in the center and on Class Dojo.
- We reserve the right to exclude children with communicable diseases as defined by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control Exclusion Policy, State Law 1976, Code Section 44-1-110, 44-1-140, and 44-29-10.
- Children who have had medical or dental procedures that involved oral, or "twilight" sedation cannot return for 24 hours.

**NOTE: In the event that we have a "bug" or contagious illness that is confirmed by a physician, we reserve the right to amend these conditions in order to provide the safest environment possible for all.**

## FIELD TRIPS

Any field trips taken are done so on the USCA campus, and therefore we do not have any vehicle transportation for the Children's Center. All trips will be planned, and a permission slip will be sent home to the parents prior to them happening.

**Based on the DSS and DHEC list of communicable diseases, we have created a list of illnesses/symptoms and the appropriate steps we will follow to avoid the spread of communicable diseases, including when your child may return after illness:**

ILLNESS:	MAY RETURN:
Chicken Pox	When all lesions are scabbed over.
Roseola	After the rash and fever are gone.
Pink Eye	24 hrs. after medication is started & there is no discharge from the eye
Fifth Disease	24 hours fever free with no fever reducing medicine
Impetigo	24 hours after treatment has begun. Lesions on exposed skin must be covered and not draining.
Mouth Sores	When a physician or health official determines the condition as non-infectious and the parent provides the Children's Center with a written medical release from the practitioner. Child must be able to eat and drink during the course of a school day.
Strep Throat	24 hours after initial treatment, and fever-free for twenty- four hours.
Head Lice	24 hrs after treatment AND when nits are no longer visible. (This nuisance condition is sometimes difficult to remedy. Not only does the hair have to be shampooed but all nits need to be removed AND all bedding, sleep friends, etc. must be laundered).
Ringworm	When treated with antifungal for at least 24 hours and it must be covered.
Boils	Cannot attend if there is any oozing or if too painful for child to participate in daily activities; must be completely sealed with bandage upon return.
Scabies	24 hours after the first treatment with prescription cream.
Fever 100 degrees or higher	•••The child MUST BE fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medications, or until medical evaluation warrants inclusion.  <i>In order to protect the health and safety of other children and our staff, no exceptions will be made.</i>
Diarrhea (2 or more episodes of loose stools)	Free from diarrhea for at least 24 hours
Vomiting (1or more episodes of vomiting) OR fever (100.5 or higher) & ONE or more episodes of vomiting	When vomiting resolves (no episodes for 24 hours) or physician determines it to be non - communicable and the child is not In danger of dehydration AND parent provides the Children's Center with a written medical release from the practitioner.
Stitches (must be covered)	When child is able to participate in all regularly-scheduled classroom activities and parent provides the Children's Center with a written medical release from the practitioner.
Breaks (cast, etc.)	When child is able to participate in all classroom activities & parent provides a written medical release from the practitioner.
Rashes/Open Sores	With written medical release from practitioner and must be covered
Colored discharge from nose	When symptom-free and with written release from medical practitioner and no discharge
Pertussis (whooping cough)	No sooner than 5 days after the start of effective antimicrobial treatment.
<i>Hand, foot, and mouth disease</i>	<i>24 hours fever free with no fever reducing medicine; blisters must be healed</i>

*\*\*Fever-free means fever-free WITHOUT medicine.*

## MEDICINE

- We do not administer or dispense medication. Parents are welcome to come and administer medicine, except during nap time (12-2pm).
- Parents can administer up to one breathing treatment a day. If a child needs an inhaler and can do so independently, they are allowed to do so, if not they should not be at school.
- Epi-pens should be kept up to date by the parents. Epi-pens must be accompanied with a written authorization and instruction. If the use of an Epi-Pen is required, it will be administered by either a Lead Teacher or the Director.
- Any child with severe allergies or chronic illness must have a written action plan from their pediatrician or specialist that clearly outlines specific symptoms and steps to take.

## ACCIDENTS

An accident report will be sent to parents through email or school app. The Center will retain a copy of accident reports in the child's file at school. In the case of a head injury, parents will be notified by Class Dojo.

\*In the event of a serious accident or emergency, the child will be taken to Aiken Regional Medical Hospital by ambulance. A designated member of Children's Center staff will take a copy of the child's emergency information AND escort the injured child to the hospital, remaining until a parent or legal guardian arrives. The parents will be notified immediately. If they cannot be reached, the Center will attempt to notify the physician listed on the Center's Emergency Form.

## EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE POLICY

- In the event of an emergency that cannot be handled by staff a child's parents will be contacted immediately. If the emergency is severe enough to need medical attention from a doctor, 911 will be called and the child will be transported to Aiken Regional Hospital via ambulance with the accompaniment of a teacher.
- A child's allergy list will be kept in both the child's class and in the building's kitchen to be referenced regularly.
  - Any changes made to a child's allergy care plan or list should be given to the director and lead teacher ASAP.
  - If a child is provided with an Epi-Pen for allergies those will be kept in the building First-Aid box.
    - If the use of an Epi-pen is required, the parents will be informed immediately.
- If a child has an allergic reaction and they do not have a care plan the parents will be notified and Benadryl will be administered to the child.
  - In this event, however, the parent is required to pick the child up to be looked over by their PCP.
- Outside snacks are not permitted into the building unless prepackaged. There is posted signage for severe allergies that children of the center might have to be avoided.

## **SURGICAL PROCEDURES**

Children who have procedures done involving “Twi lighting” or being put to sleep cannot attend for 24 hours. We may request a note from the physician to return to the center after the 24-hour period. Children must be able to participate in an active daily schedule. Children with casts for breaks, or any supportive device must be able to participate independently to attend school.

## **ATTENDANCE**

The Children’s Center is a school setting—meaning we do encourage regular attendance so children can learn to be on a schedule and have consistency that is important to early development. While we do think that time with family and trips are important and should be taken, when possible, we also need parents to keep teachers/director informed of absences—planned or not.

Any child that is absent for 2 weeks or more without communication from the family will be disenrolled from our program.

# Daily Procedures

## ARRIVAL AND PICK-UP

- Parents must bring children in between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. Monday-Friday
- Entry cards or USCA ID may be used to get into the building. Cards are the responsibility of the parents. Please do not put holes in cards. Replacement cards will be \$25. Cards are to be turned in when the child no longer attends the Center.
- **One parent may walk their child to the classroom door.**
  - When dropping a child off please make sure that the teacher in the room is aware that you have entered, that the child is here.
- **One parent may go to the classroom door to pick the children up at the end of the day.**
- Please do not bring other children into the building if possible.
- We do not permit children running up and down the halls or standing on furniture in the halls.
- **We ask that parents make a quick trip in and out for drop off and pick up.**
- When classroom numbers are low, especially in the early mornings and late afternoons, the center reserves the right to combine children of different ages at these times.
  - This may also be applicable if we are low on staff due to illness.
- **Children must be picked up by 6:00 p.m.**

## LATENESS

Late drop-offs are not permitted and highly discouraged. Parents will receive one (1) late drop pass during the probationary period when first enrolling with The Center; first 60 days.

After this point, any drop-offs that happen at or after 9am without prior notification to the teacher or director will result in a Tardy Notice, a signed acknowledgement that you were late on that specific day and understand the next lateness will be met with the child not being admitted into the Center for that day. A pattern of lateness will result in a meeting with the director.

If a child is not late again for 3 months the 'record' of the previous lateness will be removed.

If you are more than thirty minutes late for pick-up, and we have not received a phone call with an estimated time of arrival, the staff member in charge may elect to contact DSS (the Department of Social Services).

\*\*\*Failure to pick up your child by 6:00 p.m. on more than 2 occasions could result in termination of enrollment. There may be a late charge of \$5.00 per minute at the director's discretion.

- **If an emergency occurs and you cannot pick up your child on time, please notify the teachers and give them an estimated time of arrival. The front desk phone number is (803) 641-3385.**

A child will be released only to those persons authorized by the parents. Parents must notify the Center if anyone other than those named are to pick up a child.

The Center will require *picture identification* from anyone picking up a child other than a parent until we have met and can readily recognize them. Please notify the center if someone who is authorized to pick up the child, but who does not usually do so, will be picking up the child.

- Under South Carolina law, we are obligated to release a child to EITHER biological parent (or other legally appointed caregiver) when presented with proper identification and birth certificate. If a situation arises where a parent has lost their parental rights, we MUST have a copy of any court documentation on file.
- We reserve the right to refuse pick-up if we feel the person is impaired in any way.

For persons who are not permitted to pick a child up, or if there is any persons we should be concerned about showing up we do ask the family to provide either a picture or physical description of the unauthorized persons, especially in more serious situations (i.e. Restraining orders).

Our number one priority is the children's safety, so keeping identification of people to be cautious of is something we'd greatly appreciate.

**In these situations, we would like to set up a brief meeting between you, the parents/guardians, and the director to discuss and clarify anything regarding possibly additional safety measures for your child.**

## SUPPLIES AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS

- Parents are to provide an extra set of seasonally appropriate clothing, including socks and shoes, for each of their children enrolled at the Center. Infant/Toddlers and two-year-olds should provide more than one set. Clothing should be clearly marked with the child's name. Clothes must be sent in a large Ziploc bag that is labeled with the child's name. These items will be kept at the Center until they are soiled. Any child who walks must have appropriate shoes for classroom and playground play.
- If a child soils their clothes and doesn't have a change of clothes, a parent will be contacted to bring them a change of clothes or to pick them up.
- Children with allergies may bring a ready to eat lunch in a Ziploc bag.
- Parents will provide diapers, wipes, ointment, sunscreen, baby food and formula as needed.
- Breast milk can only be accepted in bottles that are ready to feed and clearly marked with the date expressed and child's name. Formula and infant food that you provide for your child should be in a factory sealed container and it will be prepared according to manufacturer's directions. All milk (formula and breast milk) will be heated in a bottle warmer for safety. A microwave will never be used for heating. All milk that has been served but not completely consumed or refrigerated will be discarded after one hour. A private room will be provided for breastfeeding.
  - These must have child's name and the date on them.

NOTE: We do not allow bottle feedings that contain solid food.

- We cannot accept any glass bottles or baby food jars in the Center
- Parents must bring disposable diapers. The use of cloth diapers is not permitted at the center.
- Children who are in the process of potty-training are required to have pull-ups that have velcro sides.
- We require your child to eat the USDA-approved food that is provided by the Center. The only exception is medical or religious exemptions, which must be documented in your child's file. In this case, any food substitutions must be nutritionally correct and represent a well-balanced diet. All food and drinks brought from home should be labeled with the child's name and date.
- You may use our refrigerator to store food until it is served. We cannot heat up or prepare individual lunches for children.
- The Center does not serve (or allow to be eaten on-site) peanuts, popcorn, peanut butter, whole grapes, large marshmallows, raw vegetables, chewing gum and hard candy. For health and safety reasons, "sippy cups" are not permitted in Preschool I after 24 months or 2 years old, and not in Preschool II at all.
- **We do not allow fast food to be brought into the Center for children. Any foods brought into the Center for parties or special occasions must be store bought, sealed and have a list of ingredients.**
- Any lunch alternatives to our menu provided by parents are required to be well-balanced and nutritional according to USDA guidelines.

Parents may provide a "special" pillow or soft toy along with a blanket for the child's naptime if they are **twenty-four months or older**. These items will return home every Friday to be washed and should be brought back the following Monday morning. We are not responsible for providing children with blankets for naps.

Babies must be placed on their backs to sleep. No blankets, pillows, or soft toys are allowed in cribs and mobiles may not be hung over cribs.

- The Center provides adequate toys and materials for the children so no personal toys are allowed.
- We are not responsible for damage or loss to children's jewelry or other personal items.
- School clothing should be such that children may feel comfortable and free to participate in a wide variety of activities, i.e., painting, water play, sandbox, etc. without concern they will become soiled. For safety, as well as health reasons, children should wear comfortable yet sturdy footwear. They are expected to dress appropriately for the season: cool clothing for the summer; coats, hats and gloves in the winter; sweaters, etc. in the fall and spring.

Each class spends time outdoors; we have wonderful playgrounds that are adjusted to each age group. As children play, they will get sand on them, in their hair and shoes. We do our best to keep children from throwing sand, etc. but children just playing can be expected to get "sandy." This part of their development and outside time is important in their day.

To protect against cold, heat, sun injury, insect-borne disease or allergies parents will ensure that:

- Children must be able to participate in outside play. We monitor the temperatures carefully during all seasons. If your child is unable to go outside and participate, please keep child at home until they can. We cannot allow one child to stay inside because of supervision concerns.
- All children must wear clothing that is appropriate for heat or cold.
- All children must have skin protection of UVB or UVA of SPF 15 or higher, applied at home by parents when appropriate. Teachers will reapply sunscreen for afternoon outside play. Parents must provide sunscreen for their child to use at school.
- Every effort will be made to maintain areas for staff and children who have allergies or any other special environmental health need according to the recommendation of health professionals.

**Due to allergies and sensitivities-please do not wear strong colognes, lotions etc. in the Center. Please refrain from applying these to children as well.**

# Safety

## **MANDATED REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE / NEGLECT**

- Each staff member at the Children's Center is a mandated reporter of suspected child abuse and or neglect. If we have cause to believe either is occurring, we are required to contact the appropriate authorities.
- If a staff member is accused of child abuse or neglect of a child, that person will be put on administrative leave while the accusations are being investigated by an outside authority, such as DSS or local law enforcement.
- The staff member who has been accused will be reinstated if no abuse or neglect is found.
- All family members as well as staff members are innocent until proven otherwise.
- There will be no repercussions from the Children's Center toward anyone who reports child abuse or neglect.

## **SECURITY MEASURES**

- The Children's Center stays locked at all times. The front door is only accessible with a key card and visitors are "buzzed" in.
  - The center has a new camera doorbell that the front desk and director have access too.
- The doors to the outside are kept locked in each classroom.
- We have evacuation plans for bad weather or other dangerous situations.
- Our staff has been trained to be alert for any suspicious activity. We attend classes every year to prepare us for active shooters, domestic conflicts and weather hazards.
- Campus police monitor our building and area while the Center is open.
- There are security cameras posted in several key areas.
- Parents are allowed free and full access to the building, however when visiting it must not be disruptive to instructional activities or classroom routines.

# Curriculum

The Creative Curriculum is used at the Children's Center. This curricular model is based upon developmentally appropriate practice. The classroom is set up in learning centers that include blocks, art, dramatic play, books, and manipulatives. Learning Centers allow the children to have choices and to actively explore. The child learns by interacting with people and things in his/her environment.

Large group times are opportunities for children to develop understandings about themselves as group members. They enjoy language together through familiar songs, favorite finger plays, chants, and a wide variety of activities. Specific topics or themes will be highlighted.

Art activities stimulate the child's creativity, increases attention span, and develop hand/eye coordination. Clay, paint, markers, paper, crayons, and paste offer children the opportunities that they need to think through and express their own ideas through a variety of mediums.

Art experiences help children develop the fine motor skills used in reading and writing. The focus will be on creative art activities focused on process, not the final product; exploring materials and tools, rather than craft activities that are tied to teacher models.

The block center develops a child's perception of depth, weight, and height. The child learns about mathematical relationships as he/she works out problems for himself or herself.

Children are taken outside daily for play, weather permitting. Outside play activities promote large muscle development, interaction with other children and adults, and organized play. It provides a healthy release of pent-up energy and gives children a first-hand experience of exploring the world in which we live.

Music is an ongoing activity. The children are introduced to a complete range of experiences including action songs, classical music, and creative movement and rhythm instruments throughout the daily routine.

Rest time is a part of our scheduled daily activity. Some children are at the Center for 9 or more hours per day and it is important for each child to have a time to rest or sleep. We do not require any child to sleep but we do require that children are quiet during this time so others may rest. We typically allow 2 school weeks for children to become adjusted to a new class. After that time, however, children who continue to disrupt nap time could result in a call to parents to pick them up. If the behavior persists, children could be terminated for disruption of rest time for other children.

- Infants and toddlers/twos must be supervised, by sight, always. When children are sleeping, staff must be positioned so they can always see them. Mirrors or monitors may be used to supplement, but NOT to replace visual supervision. Preschool students should be supervised by sight primarily. Supervision by sound is permissible for short times only (as when children are in restroom). When children are out of sight, staff must check on them frequently.
- All classroom teachers will use an attendance sheet and tracking sheet to document children as they enter and exit the classrooms and move to new locations in or around the building. These sheets will also be used in an emergency and/or in a monthly fire drill.

**The Infant/Toddler Room:** The Infant/Toddler Classroom includes children between the ages of six weeks and 18 months. Teacher plans are devised for each child in cooperation with the child's parent. A full-time lead teacher and teacher's aide provide consistency of care through the crucial first two years of life. (In the event of turnover and/or absences, appropriate alternative staff will be on hand.) We provide a room for mothers to breastfeed in private.

**The Preschool I Classroom** is comprised of older toddlers (18-36 months-three years). Our educational program begins officially at approximately 9 a.m. and continues through lunchtime. Building social skills, self-help skills, and toilet-training are just a few of the goals the curriculum addresses. Children must be fully potty trained by 3 years and 3 months, or they will age out of preschool.

**The Preschool II Classroom** includes children from three (AND potty-trained) to four years old. The curriculum addresses continuing socialization and self-help skills, with added emphasis on preschool readiness skills. Our learning period begins at approximately 9 a.m. and continues through lunch time. Your child will receive the maximum benefits from our curriculum-based program if they arrive before 9 a.m. Children who turn 5 by June 1<sup>st</sup>, will not be eligible for our summer program. If your child will be 5 years old by October 1<sup>st</sup> of the school year, they will age out of the Center and cannot be registered for that school year.

**As a ABC Quality center, we use the following ratios:**

<b>Age/Category</b>	<b>Ratio</b>	<b>Maximum Class Size</b>
Infant (6 weeks-15 months)	1:4	8
Toddler/Two (12-36 Months)	1:6	12
Preschool (30 months-5 years)	1:10	20

## PARENT PARTICIPATION

Parents will be invited to become a part of our school app, ClassDojo.com. Teachers and families can message, see calendars and engage with their child's classroom. The Center will send an invitation code to each family.

- Parent teacher conferences will be conducted (online or phone) twice a year to discuss progress and goals
- We will be sending out information about forming an online Parent Involvement Group

## PARENT-STAFF COMMUNICATION

- a) The Center staff strives for open communication between parents and other individuals related to the Center. Teachers look forward to sharing important information about the child's day.
- b) A teacher's time during classroom hours is dedicated to the children. If you have any questions or concerns, you may request a conference at the front desk. Regular notes, letters, notices and newsletters will be sent to parents to keep them up to date about events concerning the Center and their child. Parents should check daily for announcements on their child's classroom page in Class Dojo.
- c) Parent-Teacher conferences are held twice a year, typically in October and April. These conferences will address your child's development and afford parents an opportunity to share goals with the teacher. Our lead teachers attend classes and workshops each year to ensure the most up to date knowledge of assessing children. These assessments are done by observing children in their daily classroom by their lead teacher. Before sharing information about a child with other relevant providers, agencies, or other programs, the staff will obtain written consent from the family.
- d) All Children's Center staff will treat our families and their children with professionalism and respect. In return, it is expected that parents treat all our employees, no matter their capacity, with the same level of respect. Our teachers and assistant teachers are here because they love children and have chosen to make early childhood education an important part of their lives.
- e) In the event of conflict between Center staff and family members, a meeting will be called with the Director mediating. If this initial meeting does not resolve the conflict, a meeting will be scheduled with the staff members, family member, and our Campus Supervisor. Our goal is to always ensure positive relationships and interactions between staff and families.

# Discipline

## DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

It is the goal of the Children's Center to work with families to resolve any behavioral issues. If your child disrupts a class or causes harm to himself or others, we will follow these steps:

- The classroom teacher will provide you with an "Incident Report," that outlines the behavior and what steps were taken to correct it. **We will allow a maximum of three (3) incident reports before moving to the next step.**
- If the behavior persists, the lead teacher will call you or schedule a time to speak with you about problem behaviors.
- Children who persist in behaviors that are harmful or disruptive will be directed to the Director who will review and meet with parents to discuss and form a written action plan.
- If the action plan is not successful, the Director will call parents to pick up the child for the day. This is to give a respite to the other children in the classroom.
- The Director will call a parent twice to pick up a child for the day; if the behavior persists- the child may be asked to be kept out for a week for the parents to seek additional help from pediatricians or therapists. The Director reserves the right to ask for a note from a medical professional stating the child is suited for a group setting before they are allowed to return.
- If the child returns and the behavior persists enrollment will be terminated. We will do our best to give parents the most notice as possible, depending on the severity of the behavior.
- During any time in the process of the disciplinary steps, the Center reserves the right to terminate care if a child causes serious harm to other children or staff. We also reserve the right to terminate care if a child is consistently a disruption to the classroom setting. The needs of all the children must be a priority.
- Biting 3 times will result in an immediate termination, this includes the biting of a teacher.

## TERMINATION OF SERVICES

When it is necessary for a parent to withdraw his/her child, the parent will give the Center at least a two-week notice unless an emergency arises. If notice is not given, parents are asked to pay for the additional two weeks.

In the event that you have been asked to pick up your child (due to disciplinary issues) and are required to seek intervention services before your child returns to the classroom, you are still responsible for tuition in full during the extent of the absence UNLESS you notify us that your child will not be returning. In this situation you will be charged for one week's tuition in lieu of notice.

***Service may be terminated when a pattern of any of the following becomes excessive:***

- ***Habitual late pick-ups***
- ***Requests for special accommodations that Center staff cannot meet***
- ***Failure to pay tuition in a timely manner***
- ***Failure to comply with Center policies concerning ill children***
- ***Unable to contact by phone or text/no response by calls or texts***

- *Failure to provide documentation requested by Center staff and/or required by ECE regulations*
- *Failure to keep immunization records current*
- *Failure to provide emergency contact updates*
- *Failure of parents to partner constructively with staff*
- *If a child exhibits extreme behavior that impacts the safety of children and/or adults, the child will be suspended while the case is reviewed. Suspension may result in termination of services.*
- *Three bites that leave a mark*
- *Scratching, pinching or other injuries that leave a mark.*
- *Disruption of the classroom environment including rest time*
- *Child's inability to function in a classroom or group setting*
- *Biting, kicking, hitting, or spitting on staff*
- *Should the Director believe that a child or family cannot adjust to the program explained and implemented here at the Center, the child and family will be dismissed, and this agreement terminated.*

## PAYMENT PROCEDURES

- All payments are due on *Friday* for the **upcoming** week. A late fee of \$10 can be assessed. Please pay by check made out to “USCA Children’s Center” and enclosed in an envelope with child’s name.
- We cannot accept debit or credit cards.
- If you choose to pay bi-weekly, monthly, etc. Please be aware that some months contain five (5) weeks, and your account is billed on a weekly basis.
- If a family has a pattern of returned checks, (two or more) it will be necessary for all future payments to be made in cash only.
- **Payment is required for each week. Payment is required even if the child is absent due to illness or vacation.** The entire weekly fee is due during weeks that include a holiday or staff development day. If the balance for a child's account is behind for more than two weeks a meeting will be arranged between the primary caregiver for a child and the Director to figure out a solution.
  - A payment plan can be arranged if needed/necessary, but this is extreme cases only.
  - If the tuition balance is still behind after this, it can result in disenrollment.
    - Disenrollment is also possible if the family/guardians of the child does not try to talk to the Director when notified about an accumulative unpaid balance. **This is non-negotiable.**
- There is an annual registration fee of \$150 per child billed August 1st, 2025. This can be paid (in installments if necessary).
- There is also an annual supply fee of \$150 for both preschool classrooms.

## Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), age, disability, and reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, and American Sign Language) should contact the responsible State or local Agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, which can be obtained online, at <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

or fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442;

email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

## HOW TO REACH US

**By phone:** (803) 641-3385 (mainline)  
(803) 641-3352 (Director)

**By fax:** (803) 641-3614

**By email:** [lynnwi@usca.edu](mailto:lynnwi@usca.edu)

*Campus supervisor for the Children's Center*  
Cam Reagin (803) 641-3339

## Children's Center Calendar 2025-2026

Dates are subject to change based on weather emergencies, lack of staffing around certain holidays, or other unexpected occurrences. Parents will be informed ahead of time.

<b>Independence Day (CLOSED)</b>	<b>Friday July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025</b>
<b>Labor Day (CLOSED)</b>	<b>Monday September 1<sup>st</sup> 2025</b>
<b>Professional Development (Closed to families)</b>	<b>Friday October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025</b>
<b>Center Thanksgiving Break (CLOSED)</b>	<b>Wednesday-Friday November 26-28<sup>th</sup>, 2025</b>
<b>Center Winter Break (CLOSED)</b>	<b>Monday December 22-Friday January 2nd, 2026</b>
Center Reopens	Monday January 5 <sup>th</sup> , 2026
<b>MLK (CLOSED)</b>	<b>Monday January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026</b>
<b>Good Friday (CLOSED)</b>	<b>Friday April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2026</b>
<b>Professional Development (Closed to families)</b>	<b>Friday April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026</b>
<b>Memorial Day (CLOSED)</b>	<b>Monday May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2026</b>
<b>Independence Day Observed (CLOSED)</b>	<b>Friday July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2026</b>