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# **Welcome to the University of Wyoming Early Care and Education Center**

**We welcome you as a new member of our team!**

The University of Wyoming Early Care and Education Center welcomes you as a member of our staff and a partner in creating and realizing the possibilities in our program. This is a very exciting time for all of us at the center.

We offer infant, toddler, preschool and school-age care in a program accredited through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). As an educational laboratory facility of the University of Wyoming, and a model for the state, our standards for quality care and education of young children are high, as are our expectations of all staff. This manual is designed to familiarize you with those standards and expectations as a basis for your employment.

Please take time to read this manual thoroughly and keep it available to consult as needed. You will be asked as part of your contract procedure to sign a statement that you have read and understood the policies and procedures in this handbook. Please ask any questions you might have.

It is important to remember that, while this field of work can and should be filled with joy, it is also a lot of hard work. The days are sometimes stressful and may be long. It is our goal that we treat each other with the same respect and commitment to positive relationships that we have for the children and parents. With pride in our program, and in the importance of the work that we do, we invite you to join us!

# Contact Information

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**ECEC Phones:** 307-766-4816; 307-766-4062

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# Our Philosophy

We believe:

- Children are strong, intelligent, competent and constantly learning.
- Parents know their children best and have the right to be full participants in their children's education.
- Teachers are caring professionals trained to support the children in their learning and the parents in their participation.
- Teachers are researchers engaged in the creation of new knowledge as they work alongside the children and in collaboration with other adults in the campus community.
- Children have a right to a beautiful, caring, responsive environment in which to grow and learn together with other children and adults.
- Children, parents, and teachers are all learners and all teachers.
- College students who participate in our programs at all levels of their study from beginning observations to semester-long internships are unique, integral, and valuable members of our learning/teaching community.

## Our Approach

We seek to foster the social, emotional, physical, and intellectual growth of each unique child through individual hands-on learning, engagement with real experiences in the Laramie community, and participation with others in short and long-term projects and investigations based on shared interests.

## Our Environment

- We seek to create a warm, welcoming, and home-like environment for learning.
- We believe that all members of the classroom community (children, teachers, & students) contribute to the creation and maintenance of the space in which they work and play.
- We believe children should see themselves, their family, and their culture represented in the classroom.
- We believe that children's work, learning, relationships, and accomplishments should be represented in the classroom.
- We believe that environments create community.
- We carefully prepare environments that encourage exploration, challenge, creativity, independence, and relationships.
- We include planning for and making changes to the environment as a vital part of our curriculum.
- We consider the outdoors to be an extension of the classroom, and outdoor experiences as an essential part of every day.
- We extend our learning spaces to include the University of Wyoming campus and the Laramie community.

# Our Curriculum

Our curriculum philosophy is based on the belief that children construct knowledge through their experiences with materials and with other people. We believe that children have the right to learn through play experiences that are intellectually engaging, personally meaningful, and socially relevant.

Teachers make curriculum decisions based on careful observations of children as they work individually and in groups. Children's natural gifts and curiosities as well as family interests and priorities are an essential resource in developing curriculum. Because each classroom has unique children, families, and teachers, what emerges from each classroom will be different.

Our curriculum is negotiated between what interests children and what we know is necessary for optimal learning and development. We use expertise in child development and knowledge of education standards to inform decisions about the direction of the classroom curriculum. Essential academic skills are taught within a flexible framework that allows children to also have power and make choices about their learning.

## History of the UW Early Care and Education Center

The existing center so-named opened August 22, 2005. The program was created, by fiat of the President of the University, to consolidate four pre-existing early childhood programs on campus and to enhance recruiting and retention of faculty, staff, and students by providing a visible and high quality early childhood care and education facility and program on campus. The four pre-existing programs included two from the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, a preschool class from the College of Education's Lab School, and the school-age after-school care from UW Student Housing.

*UW Child Development Center (Verna Hitchcock House)*—This program was located in a facility built in 1954 to house the Home Economics program and which originally served as housing for students of that program and a faculty advisor. The home economics students attended classes on the first floor, shared bedrooms upstairs, and worked with children who attended preschool in the basement. In the early 1970's UW classes moved to the College of Agriculture, the residential program was discontinued, and the preschool program took over the entire house. Later, in 2002, the basement was used by the after-school program through student housing. The Hitchcock House program was viewed as an "enrichment" experience, with separate morning and afternoon classes meeting just a few hours four days per week. It was intended to serve primarily the children of UW faculty, staff, and students, but tended to serve more members from the larger Laramie community than the other programs.

*UW Child Care Center*—This program began in 1979 for children ages 2 ½ through 3 and was located in a small ranch-style house just north of campus. When a need for full-day care was identified, the program was reorganized to include up to 25 children ages 3- 5 years old and operated 10 hours per day throughout the year on the University calendar, offering integrated care and education and serving as a laboratory site for students in child development and childcare management classes. It tended to serve primarily children of faculty, students, and staff. In the early 1990's, the Coordinator of the Child Care

Center was given responsibility as Coordinator of the Hitchcock House Child Development Center as well. With the creation of the much-enhanced facility of the new building and the interdisciplinary program merger in 2005, the Coordinator became Co-Director with general management responsibilities.

*UW Lab School Pre-K Class*—More than a hundred years ago, soon after the founding of the University and before statehood, the University of Wyoming Preparatory School was created to provide a secondary education to adolescents from the scattered communities and ranches of early Wyoming as preparation for later enrollment at the new university. It soon expanded to include elementary students as well. By the early 1950's there was a well-established kindergarten program and within a decade, a preschool as well. In the 1970's the high school was closed, and what was always colloquially known as "Prep" became a Pre-K through 9<sup>th</sup> grade school, featuring multi-age classrooms and relationships. The program served the College of Education as a laboratory for research and for the training of teachers and the site for their student-teaching. The student body was expected to reflect that of the total community. In the 1998/99 school year, Albany County Public Schools took over operational control of the renamed Lab School's K-9 program, leaving the Pre-K class still in the building but administratively separate and operated under the auspices of the College of Education Dean's Office. Throughout its existence, the preschool classroom served as a site for observation and practical experience for students in elementary and early childhood education as well as from child development. While its focus was always education, the program was play-based and emphasized developmentally appropriate activities rather than a specifically academic approach. It continued to provide a half-day pre-K program for a diverse group of 3-5 year-olds until the 2005 merger when the lead teacher became Co-Director of our new center, with duties focusing on curriculum and instruction and professional development.

*School-aged After-school Fun Program*—Over the years UW Residence Life and Dining (also known as Student Housing) managed a variety of childcare programs, including in-home childcare and training for infant-toddler caregivers in the late 1980s and early 1990s. When those programs ended, an after-school program was begun, meeting in the Student Housing Community Center. Beginning in 2000, the program used space in the basement of Hitchcock House for several years. It was a free program offered on a first-come, first-served basis, enrolling 25 children from kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade who lived in student housing. Funding was provided by grants from ASUW, Residence Life and Dining, and federal after-school programs. The director was a graduate assistant and the program was staffed with a lead teacher and part-time assistants. Now the school-age program is fully integrated into the Early Care and Education Center.

## **Our Current Program at ECEC**

The center is open from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. during fall and spring semesters and 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. during summer session. All programs offer play-based learning, development of relationships and social skills, and engagement with long-term meaningful projects chosen to take into account student interests. Programs in the preschool classrooms are similar, recognizing that care and education cannot be separated. The after-school program is open to tuition-paying siblings (up to age 8) of other children enrolled at the center. All common areas of the facility are available for its use. Integration of children of different ages in shared project work is encouraged; for example older children reading to younger children and “classroom helper” opportunities for the older after-school children.

# Expectations of Conduct

To serve our purpose of educating students about best practices in early childhood education, and to meet our goal of being a model for early childhood programs in the state of Wyoming and beyond, it is essential that everyone associated with the Early Care and Education Center become informed about our philosophy, principles, and approach, and work together as a team to implement them. Since our program must continually evolve to maintain and improve quality, it is also essential that everyone participate actively in examining the consistency of our work and our beliefs and in constructing together a deeper understanding of the meaning of those basic principles.

To that end, it is expected that all staff will:

- collaborate with all of their classroom team members
- keep lines of communication open – respond to all group emails/texts when asked
- seek to resolve problems when they first arise
- be prompt and reliable and complete one's fair share of whatever work is to be done – be at work every day that you are scheduled
- continue to grow professionally and personally by:
  - reading material that is offered
  - participating in spontaneous and regularly scheduled discussions examining the ongoing work
  - participating in scheduled professional development activities (i.e., monthly staff meetings)
- consider themselves professionals, dressing, speaking, and acting professionally at all times:
  - dress comfortably for direct and sometimes messy work with the children
  - maintain confidentiality policy
  - avoid clothing that is low-cut, tight, revealing or otherwise calls attention to itself
  - cell phones are to be put away and not used unless approved by program director
  - wearable smart devices may be worn during working hours, but will be required to be removed if they become too distracting
- seek a team member's assistance with the immediate problem
- be responsible for collecting and documenting children's learning and growth in digital portfolio
- withdraw to a quiet space to regain composure and perspective
- always treat others with respect (children, parents, and colleagues):
  - listen to others' ideas
  - speak respectfully and kindly
  - seek to understand and learn from differences
- be mindful and communicate with the director about their personal wellness needs:
  - staff who need support are provided referrals to resources that support them in wellness prevention and treatment of depression and stress management

Remember we are all models for the children we teach, the students we serve, the parents who entrust their children to our care, visitors from the university and the larger community, and also for each other. Above all, keep the needs of the children and families uppermost in mind.



# Personnel Policies and Procedures

## INTRODUCTION

All employees of the University of Wyoming are covered by and subject to the policies and procedures of the University of Wyoming Regulations (UniRegs) which vary with each category of employee. The UW Early Care and Education Center will have a copy of all relevant UniRegs on hand in the Director's office for you to consult as needed. All UniRegs are also on the official UW website at <http://uwadmnweb.uwyo.edu/legal/>. It is the employee's responsibility to be familiar with those terms of employment. Enclosed in this manual are the most relevant and useful regulations for your position.

The purpose of the UniRegs and of this Employee Manual is to establish basic information concerning the nature of the relationship between the employee and the employer, to explain the conditions of employment, and to clarify the procedures governing grievances, separation, and evaluation. A safeguard for all parties involved, this manual protects:

- The employee by clearly spelling out expectations and procedures, as well as explains what to do in case of a disagreement with management.
- The Director in case disciplinary action must be taken against a staff member.
- The university by providing mechanisms to assure quality of performance.
- The children and families by providing for maximum continuity of care by regulating staff employment, and providing peace of mind by spelling out emergency procedures, policies on care and appropriate relationships, discipline guidelines, and what to do in case of illness or injury.

## **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY - AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY**

The UW Early Care and Education Center is an Equal Opportunity Employer. In accordance with University policy and with federal law, the Early Care and Education Center is an equal opportunity employer. It is our policy to comply with all applicable laws requiring equal employment opportunity to all qualified applicants and employees without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, veteran status, sexual orientation or political belief. This policy applies to conditions, terms and privileges of employment. Evidence of practices that are not consistent with this policy should be reported to the Director of Employment Practices.

## **REMEMBER THIS!**

Professionalism is important. In addition to the responsibilities listed in your contract letter and job description, it is your responsibility to establish and maintain good working relationships with the interdependent parts of the center and the people it serves: the Department Head and administrative staff of Family and Consumer Sciences; other administrators, faculty and staff of the University; students; custodial staff; other professionals working for the welfare of the children and their families; and parents, who have the right to fully participate in their child's education.

## Conditions for Employment

- All employees are expected, upon being hired, to:
  - Have a TB test in pursuance of the Department of Family Services standards
  - Have First Aid and CPR certification.
  - Pass a criminal record check
  - Be free from any history of substantiated child abuse or neglect
  - Be at least 18 years old
  - Have completed high school or the equivalent
  - Provide personal references and a current health assessment that attest to the prospective employee's ability to perform the tasks required to carry out the responsibilities of their position

*Staff are provided space and time away from children during the day. When staff work directly with children for more than four hours, staff are provided breaks of at least 15 minutes in each four-hour period. In addition, staff may request temporary relief when they are unable to perform their duties.*

## Director Responsibilities

The Director has the responsibility for the administration of the personnel policies. Each employee has access to the policies. Each employee, upon being hired, will be given a copy of the Employee Manual, and, after reading it, shall sign a statement that he or she has read and understood the policies and accepts the obligation to carry out these policies under the guidance of the Director. The Director will create and distribute updates to the Employee Manual and personnel policies as needed.

## Security Screening

As an employee of the University of Wyoming Early Care and Education Center, you are required to successfully complete a security screening, also known as a criminal background check, in accordance with Wyoming Department of Family Services licensing requirements. These state that all early childhood facilities must have any employees or volunteers who regularly work with or come in contact with children successfully pass a background check. We will pay to have this done for you. It must be completed immediately upon being hired.

- A background check will be provided to you at the time of employment through the UW Human Resources.
- We process all security screening through UW Human Resources Department using the Sterling system. We will be notified of the results of your security screen.
  - ✓ **Failure to pass the security screen will result in your being separated from employment.**
  - ✓ **If you believe there is an error in the information provided to ECEC, it is your responsibility to correct the error.**
- If you have already have a current background check (within the past year), please submit a copy to the Director.

**A. Position Titles and Job Descriptions**

1. Staff job descriptions, qualifications and specialized job training requirements are all located in the UWECEC Staff Job Description manual.
2. Positions at the Early Care and Education Center include benefited and non-benefited classifications.
3. All lead teacher positions are subject to annual reappointment based on satisfactory job performance and available resources.
4. Positions may be added or deleted for improvement of the program and/or to meet fiscal responsibility.
5. Hourly paid part-time non-benefited positions are limited by available resources for each budget cycle. Continued employment beyond the current budget year is subject to satisfactory job performance and available funding.
6. Work study positions are allocated annually to students who are eligible for Federal Work Study. Eligibility for this program requires the student to annually submit the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Continued employment for any contract year is subject to maintained eligibility and satisfactory job performance.
7. Current employment is not a guarantee of future employment. When seeking to change positions, should one become available for which a current employee is qualified, the employee must follow the same application procedures as other candidates.

**B. Salary Regulations**

1. Lead teacher salaries are determined by the FCS Department Head, the Dean of the College of Agriculture and the Office of Academic Affairs. Lead teacher salaries are paid over twelve months on the last working day of each month.
2. The Administrative Assistant is a classified year-round staff position and is governed by university staff policies, procedures, and salary scale. Staff are paid on the last working day of each month.
3. Other ECEC positions are assigned wages dependent on available resources for each fiscal year. These positions are paid at an hourly rate, in accordance with minimum salary standards set forth by the UW Human Resources Department, determined by the FCS Department Head, the Director, and when appropriate for work study students, the UW Student Financial Aid Office. Employees are required to submit their hours for approval electronically through the University's HCM system, which can be accessed through WyoWeb. Employees must complete training, also accessible through WyoWeb, to use the HCM system prior to entering hours. Time sheets are available each Monday at the front desk to help with hours entry.
4. All employees are eligible for direct deposit. Payment is processed through the UW Payroll office and employee checks are mailed or direct deposited.
5. Salary increases are not automatic. Base pay and merit increases are available at the discretion of the university as funds are made available from the state legislature. Salary increases will be determined by the Department Head, the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Academic Affairs with input from the Director.
6. Overtime Pay and Compensatory Time— Positions at the Early Care and Education Center are not eligible for overtime pay or compensatory time.

7. It is important for hourly paid, part-time employees and work study students to abide by their individual work assignment schedule. Each person is assigned a set number of hours per week. It is not possible for hourly workers to make up hours they have missed one week by working more hours the next.

### C. **Benefits**

Employees in benefited positions may choose benefit packages that include but are not limited to: health insurance, dental insurance, vision coverage, retirement plans, gym access, and tuition reduction waivers. Most employee benefits are subject to specific eligibility criteria. All benefited employees must attend new employee orientation. The orientation is designed to familiarize employees with benefits (which must be selected within 31 days of eligibility). An overview of employee benefits is available at [www.uwyo.edu/HRBenefits](http://www.uwyo.edu/HRBenefits).

### D. **Leave Policies**

1. **Holidays**—Employees of the Early Care and Education Center are not required to work on official university holidays. Employees follow an annual calendar for their individual position. See the calendar attached to your contract letter.
2. **Personal Leave**—Hourly positions at the Early Care and Education Center do not accrue any paid personal leave.
3. **Emergency Absence**—If an employee must be absent because of an emergency, it is urgent that he or she call the Director as soon as possible to arrange a substitute.
4. **Sick Leave**—Benefited employees accrue sick leave at a rate defined in their benefits package. The amount of leave accrued per month will vary slightly depending on the number of days in the month. Sick leave may not be used in advance of accrual, or in the month in which it is accrued. An employee may also use sick leave for medical, psychological, dental, or optical examinations or treatment. Sick leave is also available for the medical care of immediate family. (Immediate family includes and is limited to parent, spouse/partner, child, or another member of immediate household.) When using sick leave, you must notify the Director as soon as possible on the first day of absence and on subsequent days. Failure to report to work and failure to notify the director within twenty-four (24) hours of the first day of absence may result in disciplinary action including termination. The use of sick leave is subject to verification. If asked you must provide appropriate written medical documentation.
5. **Non-benefited employees do not accrue sick leave.**
6. **Donated Sick Leave Policy**—Benefited employees are eligible for donated sick leave if they are eligible for leave according to the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Employees who wish to donate sick leave must be in an active pay status and have accrued more than 80 hours of sick leave. Donating employees are required to maintain a minimum balance of 80 hours of their own sick leave after making a donation. Any questions concerning sick leave donations should be directed to Human Resources.
7. **Family and Medical Leave Policy**—After twelve (12) months of service and having worked at least 1250 hours in the preceding twelve (12) months, employees are eligible for twelve (12) weeks of unpaid Family and Medical Leave in any calendar year of service. Any questions concerning Family or Medical Leave should be directed to Human Resources.

8. **Emergency Leave**—Employees may apply for emergency leave for unusual circumstances if there is good cause and no other leave available.
9. **Vacation**—Hourly positions at the Early Care and Education Center do not accrue paid vacation leave.

#### **E. Performance Evaluation**

1. All staff are evaluated annually by their direct supervisor. Annual performance review and evaluation is the basis for continued employment, promotion, and salary increases. The purposes of performance review are (1) to evaluate the employee's effectiveness in fulfilling responsibilities in the job description, (2) to document professional growth and development, and (3) to establish goals for the future. The review will address the duties outlined in your job description. Your review will be completed before reappointment is offered. You must read your written review. You have the right to make written comments. Your review is part of your permanent employee record. If you are not granted reappointment you have the right to resign before the end of your contract period, with the record reflecting only that you resigned.
2. Hourly paid non-benefited employees are at-will appointments and are terminable for cause at any time. Review of job performance is required prior to being rehired for a new budget year. Non-benefited employees do not have retrenchment, grievance, or disciplinary procedure rights.
3. The Director is also evaluated on an annual basis by the Department Head of Family and Consumer Sciences. Input is solicited from the center staff and parents.

#### **F. Attendance Policy**

1. All employees are expected to be at work on time and remain for the hours agreed upon at their time of hire.
2. Absences should not be taken lightly by any person on the staff. Every employee's presence is important to the efficient running of the center and the welfare of the children in our care.
3. In case of illness or family emergency, the employee is expected to notify the Director and their Lead Teacher as soon as possible.
4. Absences which are planned in advance (conferences, hospitalizations) require that lesson plans be left for the substitute.
5. Absences for hourly staff must be discussed first with the lead teacher, and a substitute must be arranged. Following that, the Administrative Assistant shall be notified in order to post the change on When2Work.
6. Requested time off is not guaranteed and is granted on a first come, first serve basis, particularly around high stress times of year. These include but are not limited to: dates before and after UW holidays such as Thanksgiving or Spring Break; dates at the beginning or end of semesters; dates before and after the 4<sup>th</sup> of July; or dates during Cheyenne Frontier Days.

**G. Confidentiality Policy**

The UW Early Care and Education Center has a strict confidentiality policy regarding matters concerning staff, families, and children. Staff Confirmed breaches of confidentiality could be cause for termination. Confidential personnel files are kept in a secure location.

**H. Staff Meetings**

1. Attendance at and participation in regularly scheduled and emergency staff meetings outside of regular working hours is required of lead teachers and strongly encouraged for all employees.
2. Items for consideration in a staff meeting should be brought to the Director's attention at least one day in advance to be placed on the agenda.

**I. Parent Meetings**

All lead teachers are required to attend parent meetings. Attendance is optional for other employees.

**J. Professional Development**

1. Regardless of previous experience and education, lead and assistant teachers are required to participate in professional development activities. Other employees are strongly encouraged to participate as well.
2. Professional development days have been built into the calendars of lead and assistant teachers for shared in-service experiences. Other hourly employees and work study students are welcome but their attendance is voluntary and unpaid, and does not count toward their official work days.
3. In addition to scheduled professional development days, lead teachers will receive one paid professional development day per year to participate in a conference or professional development experience of choice as approved in advance by the Director.
4. Professional development will include, but not be limited to:
  - a. Discussions or videos or other planned experiences as part of regular staff meetings.
  - b. Study of current research, books, and materials
  - c. Membership and participation in professional organizations
  - d. Enrollment in courses at the University
5. Some professional development will take place on the employee's own time, outside of regular working hours.

**K. Child Abuse and Neglect**

1. According to the Wyoming Department of Family Services any employee having Knowledge of child abuse, neglect or exploitation is mandated by law to report to law enforcement or the Department of Family Services. If an employee or volunteer at UWECEC suspects any form of child abuse (physical, emotional, sexual) or neglect they will report to their immediate supervisor. The supervisor will notify the center director who will report the suspected abuse to the Wyoming Department of Family Services or the Laramie Police Department. Staff who report suspicions of child abuse or neglect are immune from discharge, retaliation, or other disciplinary action for that reason alone unless it is proven that the report is malicious.
2. If an employee or volunteer is accused of abuse or neglect of a child at the UWECEC the case will be immediately reported to the University of Wyoming Human Resources Department and Legal Services. Staff, children, and family rights are protected under the University of Wyoming Regulations (UniRegs).

**L. Disciplinary Action**—All employees are expected to carry out their duties honestly, in good faith, and with diligent care.

1. Cause for discipline shall include, but is not be limited to, poor work performance; violation of child discipline policy; violation of confidentiality policy; dishonesty; drunkenness; absenteeism; damage or unauthorized use of university property; refusal to work; harassment; carelessness; assault; insubordination; discourteous treatment of children, parents other employees, students or the general public; neglect of duty; violation of state or federal law; violation of university rules and regulations; and other actions of misconduct.
2. Disciplinary action may result in a verbal reminder or warning; written documentation describing policy or practice violation; letter of reprimand in permanent employee file, termination of employment.

**M. Sexual Harassment**

The University will not tolerate sexual harassment or retaliation for reporting sexual harassment. Employees engaging in such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action. Employees who feel they are victims of sexual harassment should contact the Director of Employment Practices or other individuals referenced in UniReg 5; which describes the University policy on sexual harassment. All UW employees are required to complete “Sexual Misconduct and the Duty to Report,” training which is offered online.



## **N. Conflict of Interest/Conflict of Commitment**

1. A *conflict of interest* occurs when any employee of the university is in a position to affect significantly the business transactions of the university with an organization, agency or business in which the employee has an interest. University employees have a duty to disclose any such conflict or any set of circumstances which may give the appearance of conflict of interest.
2. A *conflict of commitment* arises when professional service or research contracted outside the University, consultations or other outside activities (e.g., outside teaching or business) of an employee interferes with the paramount obligations to students, colleagues, and the primary missions and policies of the University. Conflicts of commitment primarily involve questions of obligation and effort, but are often tied to financial remuneration or other inducements and, in such cases, may also constitute conflicts of interest.
3. Conflicts of interest and conflicts of commitment may constitute a breach of the employment contract and, if not properly disclosed and eliminated or managed in accordance with University Regulations, will result in appropriate sanctions, including the termination of employment, if warranted.

## **O. Grievance Policy**

A grievance is a violation, alleged or substantiated, of a rule, policy or procedure that has a significant effect on the conditions of the employee's employment. The UW Early Care and Education Center strives to create a culture of respect, caring, and honest communication. We acknowledge conflict as inevitable in a living system and often a source for growth and positive change. Just as we teach children social problem-solving skills, we expect ourselves and each other to practice those same skills. Whenever you have a conflict, of any kind, with a parent, student, or any other center employee, we expect and encourage you to raise the issue directly with that person first.

1. The following are beneficial steps in problem-solving:
  - a. Calmly and respectfully state your perception of the problem and how it affects you.
  - b. Listen respectfully to the other person's point of view.
  - c. Either immediately brainstorm solutions to the problem, or, if emotions are high, set a time to do so.
  - d. Together choose a solution and implement it for an agreed-upon time frame.
  - e. After testing that solution, meet together to evaluate its effectiveness. Continue or choose a different solution to try.
2. If the problem persists after repeated use of the problem-solving procedure, make an appointment with the Director. The Director may choose to meet with both parties as a facilitator.
3. If the problem has not been resolved internally, submit a written statement to the FCS Department Head, with a copy to the Director. The Department Head, in consultation with the employee or employees and Director, will assist in reaching a settlement.
4. If there is still no resolution, file a formal complaint with the Employment Practices Office.

**P. Separation from Service and Termination of Employment:**

1. Resignation—Notice of resignation shall be in writing, delivered in advance as follows:
  - a. Director: The Director must give notice of resignation at least 30 days in advance, delivered to FCS Department Head.
  - b. Lead teachers: Lead teachers must give notice of resignation at least 30 days in advance, delivered to the Director.
  - c. Staff (Administrative Assistant): Staff must give notice of resignation at least 14 working days in advance, delivered to the Director.
  - d. All hourly paid part-time non-benefited employees must give notice of resignation at least 14 working days in advance, delivered to the Director. It is expected and appreciated when, at the time of an employee's separation from service that duties have been completed and work is up to date so that his or her successor can readily take over the job.
2. Termination of Employment—Dismissal from the Early Care and Education Center will be in accordance with university policies and procedures.

# Discipline Policy

## Thoroughly read the following

It is the philosophy of the center that all children learn in unique ways and that they develop on their individual schedules. Given that, the center director and staff also believe that discipline should be individualized within the framework outlined below. When dealing with discipline issues in young children, it is important that the providers and parents agree to several critical concepts:

- The term discipline cannot be used interchangeably with punishment. Punishment is a negative consequence and is not used at the center based on program philosophy and state childcare regulations. Staff may never use physical punishment, psychological abuse, or coercion when disciplining a child. Examples include: shaking, hitting, spanking slapping, jerking, squeezing, kicking, biting, pinching, excessive tickling, and pulling of arms, hair, or ears. At no point in time is it permissible for staff to use any form of physical punishment, psychological abuse, or coercion, when disciplining a child.
- Discipline is a method of modeling to the child(ren) appropriate ways to handle a situation and encourage a solution or problem-solving process.
- It is critical for discipline techniques to remain respectful to everyone involved in the process.
- Children typically do not misbehave intentionally or with a personal agenda against adults. Most situations of misbehavior can be directly related to misunderstanding/miscommunication of a specific situation due to the child's cognition and age level, frustration of a given situation, or possibly a deeper emotional issue.

When a child has exhibited inappropriate behavior, center personnel will utilize the following discipline policy.

### **Level One: Problem Solving**

The five-step process outlined below is appropriate for children ages one year and older. It takes a lot of time and adult guidance at first and may have slight variations depending upon the age of the child. When used consistently and correctly, children learn the process and it becomes a very effective tool for classroom management as it encourages interpersonal relationships. Most discipline issues can be resolved using this method.

1. **Gather data**—Ask the people involved to tell what happened, what they want, how they feel.
2. **State the problem**—Make a simple statement describing the problem without judgment. “Susan wants to use the blocks and Mike wants to use the blocks. We have a problem.”
3. **Brainstorm solutions**—Encourage the people to think of as many ways as possible that the problem could be solved. Ask others not involved in the problem for ideas. Do not evaluate the solutions suggested.
4. **Ask for a decision**—Ask one person which way they want to solve the problem. Ask the other if that's ok with them; if not, ask them how they want to solve the problem. When there is consensus, a decision is made.
5. **Follow-up/Solution**—Say to those involved, “You solved the problem. That's wonderful!” or give a hug, or indicate in some way that you are pleased for them for solving their problem.

In a Level One discipline matter, children are encouraged to tell about problems they have had and solved by themselves. The desired goal in a Level One situation is to have little or no adult involvement until the final step—resolution of the problem. If the matter cannot be resolved using the Level One method, the following two procedures may be implemented.

### **Level Two: Parent Involvement**

If a child continues to struggle with a specific situation or the situation is at a severe level, parents or guardians will be contacted to meet with the child's teacher and the center director. During that meeting, a shared plan will be discussed and agreed upon. The plan may include: shared problem solving with parents, teachers, and child, or use of outside resources such as books, parenting classes, or counseling. Multiple meetings may be needed for additional information or feedback and discussion on progress or regression.

### **Level Three: Professional Involvement**

In the event that a child's behavior does not improve significantly after utilizing the processes outlined in Levels One and Two, it may be necessary to involve other professionals outside of the center. These professionals can include but are not limited to: staff from the UW Counseling Center, UW faculty from Family and Consumer Sciences, Early Childhood Education, Communication Disorders, or Psychology, staff from the Developmental Preschool, or private therapists and/or psychologists.

When a team is identified to assist the child, parents, and teachers at the Center, it will be determined if the child qualifies for an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) and details will be shared with the identified team.

If a parent is not willing to participate in the Level Three process or all other resources are exhausted, the Center reserves the right to remove the child on a permanent basis. If a child must be removed, the program offers assistance to the family in accessing services and an alternative placement.

# Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What if I don't know how to discipline the children?** It is important to read and understand our discipline policy. Discipline is not to be confused with punishment. We do not use punishment. We never strike children, handle them roughly, or shout, nor do we use "time out" as a punishment. Our program has a very specific policy regarding discipline, which you will be taught. If in doubt, observe the directors or lead teachers, especially those who are experienced employees of the U.W. programs. The important thing is to become familiar with and practice our problem-solving approach to discipline, keep relationships, tone of voice, and words positive, and, if in doubt....ask for help!
2. **What should I wear while at the center?** Be sure to dress comfortably but appropriately. It would not be considered professional to wear a t-shirt with an inappropriate or suggestive picture or saying on it or a pair of shorts or revealing pants or overly tight top. Remember that this is a family setting and we need to be respectful of all the families involved. At the same time, we hope to allow some individuality of dress. If in doubt, the director will let you know if your dress is inappropriate. Also remember that you will be involved with the children using glue and paint, so keep in mind that if you have good clothing on, you may need to wear a smock or paint shirt. We have some of these at the center which you may borrow. It is important and expected that the lead staff set an example for everyone on what is appropriate, professional, but comfortable attire.
3. **How do I get paid?** Benefited employees such as lead teachers and administrative assistant are paid on the last working day of the month. Hourly paid employees such as assistant teachers, aides, and work-study students are paid twice monthly. Employees are required to submit their hours for approval electronically through the University's HCM system, which can be accessed through WyoWeb. Employees must complete training, also accessible through WyoWeb, to use the HCM system prior to entering hours. Time sheets are available each Monday at the front desk to help with hours entry. All employees are eligible for direct deposit.
5. **What if I'm sick and can't come in?** While we definitely want our employees to take care of their health and not come to work when they are sick, we must maintain our required staff/child ratio. This means that if you are ill and cannot come in, it is imperative that you notify the center director or administrative assistant as soon as possible, preferably before 7 a.m. Please use the numbers listed on the "Contacts" page. If you cannot reach the director, please call the center's main number so that we can find someone to work in your place that day. Please refer to the following to know if you're too ill to work.
  - a. Facility serving well children may not admit a staff member who has any of the illnesses/symptoms of illness specified below:
    - i. Diarrhea, when it is due to disease spread by fecal contamination as determined by a physician; accompanied by evidence of dehydration or fluid loss, identified by sunken eyes or poor skin elasticity; accompanied by abnormal stools with blood or mucous; accompanied by a history of poor fluid intake or unusual drowsiness; or continued beyond four days.
    - ii. Severe pain or discomfort.

- iii. Two or more episodes of acute vomiting within a period of 24 hours.
- iv. Difficult or rapid breathing.
- v. Yellowish eyes or skin.
- vi. If a staff has a fever, the staff will not be allowed to be present until he/she is well again and has been without a fever for 24 hours. This means no fever **without** fever reducing medications
- vii. Untreated head lice or untreated scabies
- viii. Staff suspected of being in contagious stages of chicken pox, pertussis, measles, mumps, rubella or diphtheria.
- ix. Skin rashes, lesions, or wounds lasting more than 1 day that are bleeding or oozing clear fluid or pus.

5. **Can we make up days or get extra days off?** The answer is no. Benefited employees accrue paid sick leave and vacation leave, but do not accrue over-time/compensatory time for extra hours worked. Hourly paid employees are not benefited therefore they do not receive any kind of paid leave. If you are a 19 hours per week employee and miss 4 hours one day because of illness, it is not possible to work 23 hours the following week and average it out. A work schedule is negotiated at the beginning of each semester, and, because staff-child ratios must be maintained, the whole center counts on you being there as agreed. See the paragraph above concerning illness. If you, for any reason, cannot be present at your designated time, please notify the directors immediately. It is important for the flow of the center that everyone shows up as expected. We are counting on you, and you are not easily replaced! It isn't just your physical presence but also your particular interests and strengths and experiences that are vital in making our program a great place for children and families.
6. **Are we allowed to play with the children?** Absolutely! It is critical to children's social development to see adults play. This serves a dual role: letting children know that people of all ages can and do play, and helping them grow as players through your modeling new roles and possibilities. However, it is still important to maintain your teacher role and perspective. Do not become a "toy" for them by allowing them to climb on you or do other things with which you are uncomfortable. Set and maintain boundaries. It is appropriate to play alongside children or with them, especially if they engage and invite you. It is important to observe carefully and pick up on the child's cues. Don't take over the play. Follow the child's lead. Don't interrupt. There may be times when the child does not want you to join in. Respect their wishes and look for cues like body-language to help guide you. This is equally true both indoors and out. If you are fascinated by some ongoing play but are not sure an adult is wanted in it, a very appropriate and helpful role is to pick up a clipboard and sit nearby transcribing the play and any dialogue that happens. It's a vicarious way to enjoy what is going on, and the glimpse you preserve of the child's interactions and thought processes may be a critical piece that will help you and the other team members plan for valuable new learning experiences.
7. **What should I do when a child has an "accident?"** We have infants and toddlers who are not expected to be toilet trained. Each room has posted detailed instructions for changing diapers which must be learned and followed scrupulously by all adults in the program. For older toddlers, a specific plan of toilet training may be worked out with the parents. It will be posted

discreetly out of sight inside a cabinet door, and should be followed consistently by everyone working in that area.

Children are encouraged to be toilet trained by the time they enter the preschool classes, which are not set up with changing tables. However, it is very typical of preschool children, especially the younger ones, to have “accidents” or regress a little due to stress, excitement, being too busy to notice or stop, or other situations that may accompany being in group care. If this happens, please let the lead teacher know so that you can get any help you need in handling the situation. It is very important that the child not be punished or shamed for this. It should be handled carefully and tactfully to avoid embarrassment for the child. Quietly get the child’s clean clothes from the cubby and accompany the child to the toilet. Assist the child if he or she needs help. Use rubber gloves to protect from contact with bodily fluids if a child must be cleaned up.

The center has a nurse’s room with adjacent bathroom including a handicapped accessible shower. If a child has severe diarrhea or vomiting and soils his/herself, they can be taken there to be bathed and changed into fresh clothing. This should be done only by the lead teacher or person with whom the child is comfortable and whom the lead teacher designates. In such a situation, it is desirable that once the child’s physical needs are addressed, they be isolated with an accompanying adult in the nurse’s room while parents are called to take them home to avoid exposure to the other children.

If such an accident happens on the floor in a classroom or play area or outside on the playground, the area should be barricaded to prevent other children having contact with potentially infectious material, until it can be properly cleaned. Teachers can also place a request through the front desk for UW Custodial Service assistance if the occasion warrants it.

8. **Can I babysit for ECEC families?** The ECEC does not provide or arrange for childcare outside of our normal operating hours. However, we understand that parents sometimes ask center staff to babysit for their children. The following guidelines have been established to clarify some points regarding this private arrangement between staff and parents.
  - a. Because arrangements for babysitting between parents and ECEC staff fall outside of the scope of and mission of our center, neither Mark, Charli or your Lead Teacher will make recommendations to parents about individual staff for babysitting or provide parents with staff contact information without your express permission.
  - b. Private arrangements for childcare are not permitted to be arranged during the work shift of the individual staff member, and arrangements must not interfere with your job performance or professional relationships. If parents text or call during your shift, please return the contact later. If parents approach you during your working hours to arrange babysitting, ask to contact them at a later time to make arrangements.
  - c. Because these arrangements are outside of your normal work requirements, you are always free to either accept or decline such requests from parents. If you find that you need help figuring out how to decline these requests, please talk to your Lead Teacher, Mark or Charli.
  - d. If you experience problems relating to a babysitting arrangement you’ve made with parents, please ask for help. If a babysitting arrangement begins to affect your work performance or relationships, Mark may become involved to rectify the problem.

# **POLICY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

By signing below, I have acknowledged that I have thoroughly read and understood the employee manual and policies pertaining to the University of Wyoming Early Care and Education Center. I understand that these policies govern my work at the center and that any misconduct upon my part could result in a written reprimand or dismissal from my position.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

After signing, please give this form to the Director. It is required as part of your official contract and will be kept as part of your personnel file.



# STAFF EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Employee Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Local Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Physician Name and Number \_\_\_\_\_

In case of emergency, contact:

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Any allergies or medical conditions to be noted: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I authorize the Director or the Administrative Assistant at the UW Early Care and Education Center to arrange for medical treatment for me in the event that I have an emergency while at work at the Center.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

