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Section A: Welcome

The staff of the Orange Coast College Harry and Grace Steele Children’s Center welcomes you and your family to our program. Parents, children and extended family members are the inspiration behind our efforts to help you feel like you are an integral part of the Children’s Center program. Understanding our mission, philosophy and culture will assist you in this process. This Parent Handbook provides you with a description of our overall purpose and goals as well as detailed information about the policies and procedures vital to the success of our families while maintaining compliance with state regulatory agencies.

Please take the time to read the entire handbook. You will be held accountable for all written policies included in this document. Our program is funded by the State Department of Education-Child Development Division, a Federal Block Grant, parent fees, the Associated Students of Orange Coast College (ASSOC), Orange Coast College and the Coast Community College District. Many of our policies and procedures are regulated by laws, which govern funded Child Development Centers. The Children’s Center is licensed by the Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing (facility # 300605314, preschool and #300605494, infant/toddler and #304270415, school age) and monitored by the Department of Education.

MISSION STATEMENT

The OCC Harry and Grace Steele Children’s Center provides a comprehensive child development program that serves student-parents, faculty, staff and community families. The Center strives to promote a balance between healthy family living, academic success, and employment. In creating this balance, the parents must understand and develop their role in the life of their growing child(ren) while striving to succeed academically and in the workforce. For student-parents, our role is to provide the time and structural support to assist student-parents in achieving excellence in their chosen academic goals; experience an enriched campus life that includes the pursuit of leadership opportunities and extracurricular activities; and serve as advocates for strong family relationships through positive modeling. The Center provides parent enrichment and on-going support for all families. The Center has a long history of excellence in providing quality childcare for parents and will continue this tradition in the future.

HISTORY

The Associated Students of Orange Coast College established the Children’s Center in the spring of 1969. We began as a small pilot program serving 15 children. The program has expanded through the years to accommodate the growing student-parent population of the college, and we are able to serve over 190 children each semester. In the fall of 1997, the center moved to a beautiful new facility on the south end of campus, now called the Harry & Grace Steele Children’s Center. In 2003, the Center opened our doors to serve faculty and staff. The following year, 2004, community families also joined our population.
CHILDREN’S CENTER GOALS

1. To provide affordable, comprehensive, quality Child Development services to assist the goal oriented Orange Coast College student-parent, faculty, staff and the community in attaining a vocational/academic/employment goal.

2. To provide parents with open-ended possibilities to develop effective parenting skills via a wide range of parent enrichment and involvement opportunities. Within these processes for growth, we acknowledge the rich cultural diversity of each family and aim to be respectful and sensitive to individual family values.

3. To assist parents in linking up with needed support services; for example, medical and mental health, social services, housing, and financial assistance.

4. To encourage professionalism in the staff through a wide range of professional growth opportunities.

5. To provide an atmosphere of mutual appreciation and respect by building bridges of understanding about those qualities of diversity that make each individual and family unique.

The most powerful tool to a successful home/school relationship is communication. Please let us know your ideas for change and enhancement as well as any concerns you might have. The administration’s open door policy empowers and encourages parents to seek out solutions and resolve issues with clear, honest, open communication. We can solve any problem that may occur if we are aware of the issues.

ADMINISTRATION

The Children’s Center is administered by the Coast Community College District and Orange Coast College under a contractual agreement with the California State Department of Education - Child Development Division.

The Children’s Center Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) recommends Children’s Center policy changes to the college administration. The PAC includes representatives from Children’s Center staff and parents. The Committee meets monthly or more often if needed. Meeting times, agendas and minutes are posted in the classrooms. Parents are invited to share ideas and/or concerns with their representatives. The California Administrative Code, Title 22 and the California Education Code, Title V provides the legal framework for many of the program policies.

Orange Coast College does not discriminate in admission or access to programs and activities of the college. In accordance with the Federal Law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution in prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age or disability. All children are welcome and accommodations will be made as needed for children with special needs. The Children’s Center refrains from religious worship or instruction as specified by the State of California.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.
**STAFF**

The staff of the Center is comprised of the Children’s Center Director, Child Care Supervisor, Eligibility Specialist, Eligibility Assistant, Receptionists, Clerks, Food Service Worker, and Maintenance Grounds Worker.

The teaching staff is comprised of Child Development Specialists and Child Care Center Assistants. All have completed specific college course work in Child Development and Early Childhood Education and many have achieved or are working on advanced degrees. Children’s Center Instructional Permits issued by the State of California Commission for Teacher Credentialing are required of all lead teachers in our program. The lead teachers (Child Development Specialists) are assisted by assistant teachers (Child Care Center Assistants). In addition, teacher aides, classroom aides and volunteers work with the children under the supervision of our professional staff.

**ALL** Children’s Center employees are fingerprinted and cleared for criminal record and child abuse by both the California Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation and are associated with the Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing.

**HOURS OF OPERATION**

The Children’s Center program operates during the regular college calendar. A modified summer session is also provided for those student-parents enrolled in summer classes at Orange Coast College or working, in so far as funding is available. The program is closed during the holidays observed by the college. Students are encouraged to check the academic calendar in the OCC class schedule.

Children’s Center’s hours of operation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday – Friday</td>
<td>7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>(6 months – 2.5 years of age)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday – Thursday</td>
<td>7:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.</td>
<td>&amp; Friday 7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**AGES SERVED**

The Children’s Center serves children ages 6 months to 6 years during the day while the college is in session for fall, spring and summer semesters.
Section B: Children’s Center Policies and Procedures

ADMISSION POLICY

Waiting List
The waiting list is open throughout the year. The Children’s Center maintains two separate waiting lists: a subsidized family waitlist and a non-subsidized family waitlist. Children will be placed in the age appropriate classroom as space becomes available. For those parents needing care for a future semester, their application will be filed based on the semester they wish to begin their childcare.

Required Documents for the Waiting List
- Waitlist Application
- $20.00 Waitlist Application Fee
- Current Immunizations
- Printout of official OCC/other college class schedule - for student-parents requesting childcare.
- Current gross family income documentation - for subsidized families only
- Documentation of family size, ie, birth certificates, child support documentation, etc. – for subsidized families only

The following immunizations are required at the appropriate age:
- 6 Months: 3 DPT, 2 Polio, 2 Hib, 2 Hep B.
- 12 Months: 3 DPT, 2 Polio, 2 Hib, 2 Hep B., TB Test, MMR, Varicella.
- 18 Months: 4 DPT, 3 Polio, 3 Hib, 3 Hep B., TB Test, MMR, Varicella.
- Over 2 Years: Same as 18 months plus TB test every two years.

One (1) Hib on or after first birthday is required.

Siblings of children currently being served whose parents wish to enroll them in the program will be placed at the top of the waiting list in all program categories.

Non-Subsidized Child Development Services:
In addition to subsidized childcare spaces, there are a limited number of non-subsidized spaces available. Children are admitted at full-cost on a space-available basis. The priority for placement is as follows:

1st Priority - OCC Student-parents
2nd Priority – Faculty & Staff
3rd Priority – District employees (includes GWC & CCC)
4th Priority – Outside community members
Subsidized Child Development Services:

To receive state subsidized Child Development Services, families must meet eligibility and need criteria established by the State Department of Education as stated by the Funding Terms and Conditions for Child Development Programs. A potential client’s eligibility is determined by the family’s gross monthly income in relation to family size. A potential client’s need is determined by both parents and/or guardian’s educational training and/or work obligations and schedule as it applies to their childcare needs. Families are admitted according to the following state guidelines: *All families are admitted in accordance with family income, with the lowest per capita income admitted first. Monthly income must be at or below 75 percent of the state median income, adjusted for family size, to be eligible. Changes in income eligibility must be reported immediately.* Failure to do so is fraud and punishable by law (see page 22).

Eligible families are accepted into the program based on the following priorities:

1st Priority - Student-parents receiving child protective services for children at risk of being neglected, abused, or exploited.

2nd Priority - OCC Student-parents

3rd Priority – GWC & CCC Student-parents

4th Priority – Student-parents from other colleges and universities and outside community members

According to state guidelines, student-parents must establish a vocational or academic goal when they apply for services and show satisfactory progress toward the goal. Enrollment assumes active participation and attendance in course work at Orange Coast College or other colleges/universities.

![Box with text](image)

All subsidized families must provide documentation of eligibility and need for services prior to each fall semester to continue their child’s enrollment. **ANY CHANGE OF ELIGIBILITY OR NEED FOR SERVICES MUST BE REPORTED IMMEDIATELY. Failure to do so is considered fraud (see page 22).**

Additional Requirements for Subsidized Student-Parents:

According to state guidelines and Children’s Center Policies, student-parents are required to provide an academic plan upon admission and once (1) per year thereafter as a part of the fall enrollment process. In order to comply with this policy, subsidized student-parents must meet with an academic counselor prior to the beginning of each fall semester. Student-parents must be enrolled in a minimum of six (6) academic units for fall and spring semesters. Summer units are optional. All units must directly apply to the student’s established academic plan.

Upon acceptance to the program, student-parents will receive childcare during the time they are actively enrolled or employed. Study time will be accommodated to the best of our ability.

**STUDY TIME FOR SUBSIDIZED FAMILIES**

Children may be scheduled on a regular basis for additional hours, such as study time, as space allows. Study time is to be used for the purpose of completing required assignments, preparing for exams or course work and attending additional labs or clinical hours. The amount of study time given is based on the number of units enrolled in. For example, during the fall or spring semester, the normal amount of
study time given would be two (2) hours for every academic unit a student is enrolled in. For the summer semester the normal amount of study time given would be two hours for every academic hour a student is in class (summer classes are condensed into a very short period of time). Some courses, such as anatomy, physiology, chemistry and certain math classes may require more study time than the suggested two hours. A parent may request one additional hour of study time per week if they feel that they need it to be successful. Study time is not to be used for personal business. Parents or a designated person must be in an area that is accessible by cell phone and be within 30 minutes of the Children’s Center at all times. Requests for additional study time will be granted at the discretion of the Children’s Center Director. Childcare for online classes is limited to 2 hours per unit. (i.e. 3 unit class = 6 hours of total care per class)

ENROLLMENT/REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

Subsidized Families

- ALL SUBSIDIZED FAMILIES must be certified for eligibility upon acceptance, each semester thereafter, AND whenever their income changes.

- ALL SUBSIDIZED FAMILIES must be certified for need upon acceptance and each semester thereafter.

ANY CHANGE IN GROSS FAMILY INCOME OR FAMILY SIZE, EMPLOYMENT OR CLASS SCHEDULE MUST BE REPORTED TO THE CHILDREN’S CENTER OFFICE IMMEDIATELY. Failure to report these changes is considered fraud (see page 22).

- EACH SEMESTER, all returning subsidized parents must register for childcare during the two (2) week return-parent registration period, at their scheduled appointment time, with all required documentation and a completely filled out registration packet.

Failure to register, by appointment, during the return-parent registration period will result in termination of childcare services at the end of the semester. Parents whose childcare services are terminated for not registering during the above mentioned registration period would have the option to apply for childcare on our waitlist; however, there is no guarantee of continued childcare services.

Non-Subsidized Families

Registration for non-subsidized families will occur once a year prior to the fall semester. If adjustments to the child’s regular contract hours of care need to be changed at any time during the year, parents can do so with a permanent schedule change request.
CONDITIONS FOR SERVICE

Parents must agree in writing to abide by the guidelines and regulations of the Orange Coast College Harry and Grace Steele Children’s Center. Families must meet and continue to meet all conditions for service.

1. **Unit and GPA Requirement for Students:**
   a. Student-parents are required to successfully complete a minimum of six (6) academic units (half-time student status) in the fall and spring semesters. All units must be approved by an academic counselor and appear on the student/parents current academic plan.

   | IN-PROGRESS COURSES (i.e. Self Paced Mathematics) MUST BE COMPLETED BY THE SEMESTERS END IN ORDER TO MEET THE UNIT REQUIREMENT. |
   |
   | b. Student-Parents are also expected to maintain a current GPA of 2.0 or higher each semester (credit/no credit classes will be calculated in GPA as letter grade C/F). |
   |
   | c. Failure to comply with the above unit **and** GPA Requirements (a & b above) will result in the parent being placed on **probationary status** for the following **two semesters**. Parents on probation may request a summer limited term service leave; however, at re-enrollment the probationary status resumes. *For explanation of the Limited Term Service Leave, please see “Options For Service” on page 9.* |
   |
   | d. Failure to comply with the academic unit **and** GPA Requirements during the probationary period will result in termination of childcare services. The termination status may be addressed through the Children’s Center Appeals Board. |
   |
   | e. Student-parents receiving subsidized childcare may only be on **probationary status** with the Children’s Center two (2) times within the allowed cumulative total of six (6) years of child care services. |
   |
   | f. If loss of child care services occurs as a result of failure to comply with the academic and GPA requirement during the first probationary period, the student-parent will be eligible for the waitlist after 6 months without childcare service. |

2. **Contract Limit:**

   Each contracting family will receive a total of six (6) years of subsidized childcare services from their start date, or 24 semester units or equivalent after the attainment of a Bachelor’s degree to complete their educational goals. At the completion of the allowed six (6) years, student-parents will no longer be eligible for subsidized services for educational purposes. However, parents will be considered from the full-cost wait list, on a space available basis.

3. **Immunizations:**

   All health and immunization requirements must be completed and kept up to date.

4. **Each child admitted to the Children’s Center must be determined to be:**

   a. Ready for the type of group and program offered at the Center.
   b. Able to benefit from the program.
The Children’s Center program goal is to provide children with the knowledge and skills to successfully relate to other people and their world constructively. If a Children’s Center staff member has observed over a reasonable period of time a child who frequently:

- Exhibits dangerous, unsafe or abusive behavior to himself/others
- Is having difficulty participating in a group setting without consistent one on one assistance
- Is developmentally regressive
- The following action will be taken if necessary:
  1. Document behavior through observation and recording.
  2. Establish an individual plan for the child.
  3. Confer with parents to establish an individual plan for consistent treatment of the child at home and at the Center.
  4. Make a referral for evaluation or counseling.

The Children’s Center reserves the right to terminate services under any of the following conditions:

- It has been recommended that the parents and family participate in therapeutic intervention, such recommendation has not been followed, and the child is:
  1.) Unsafe, dangerous and/or his/her abusive behavior persists.
  2.) Developmentally regressive and/or is not able to participate in a group setting and is in need of one to one care.
- After appropriate therapeutic intervention, the child’s dangerous or abusive behavior persists.
- It has been determined, through a clinical diagnosis, that the child needs an environment that we are unable to reasonably provide.

**OPTIONS FOR SERVICE**

Parents needing to take a leave of absence from school may request either:

- A limited term service leave of absence for no more than twelve (12) cumulative weeks per fiscal year (July 1 – June 30) for personal reasons.
- A limited term service leave of absence for no more than sixteen (16) consecutive weeks per fiscal year (July 1 – June 30) for maternity or medical reasons.
- Every effort will be made to accommodate a family’s request for a leave of absence. However, the Children’s Center reserves the right to deny any leave of absence which will negatively affect the Children’s Center for any reason fiscally or programmatically.
**SUBSIDIZED FAMILIES - PLEASE NOTE...**

**REQUESTING A LIMITED TERM SERVICE LEAVE, FOR ANY REASON, IN THE COURSE OF A SEMESTER** resulting in failure to comply with the academic unit and GPA Requirements, for subsidized student-parents, described on pages 7 & 8, **will result** in the parent being placed on probationary status for the following two semesters.

**PARENT FEES**

**Non-Subsidized Parent Fees**

A non-refundable $50 family registration fee will be charged at the initial registration process and once a year thereafter during the fall semester registration process only.

**Full Cost Fee Schedule:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Of Child/Schedule</th>
<th>Daily Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 months to 17 months</td>
<td>$66.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 months to 2.11 Years</td>
<td>$54.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 5 years</td>
<td>$41.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Age - (currently suspended)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time rate:</td>
<td>$41.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¾ time rate:</td>
<td>$31.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time rate:</td>
<td>$25.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Subsidized Parent Fees:**

Parents are required by law to share the cost of their childcare according to family income. Parent fees and the payment policy are set by the State Department of Education. Fees are determined by gross monthly family income, family size and hours of care provided. Fees are charged for days of enrollment as required by the State Department of Education. Refunds for absences are not permitted. Fees will not be charged for days that the Children’s Center is closed.

**Payment of Fees for Full-cost and Partially-subsidized Families:**

The Children’s Center is required to collect the first month’s childcare fees in advance of providing services. Fees shall be considered delinquent after seven (7) calendar days from the first of the month. If fees become delinquent, a Notice of Action (NOA) will be used to inform the family that childcare services will be terminated two (2) weeks from the Notice of Action issue date. Services can continue if all delinquent fees are paid before the end of the two-week period. The Children’s Center Director must
approve any other payment schedule in advance. Delinquent fees shall be cause for collection proceedings through OCC Bursars Office, for OCC financial hold, withholding of transcripts and the inability to register for further college courses. For fee-paying parents **ALL ABSENCES** will be charged to your account.

Fees can be paid by credit card, cash, check or money order payable to Orange Coast College Children’s Center. There is a $15 charge for returned checks. If two checks are returned from the bank, only cash, credit card or money orders will be accepted for future payments.

**All families** are required to give the Children’s Center two-weeks notice, in writing, when planning to withdraw their child from the Center. Forms for terminating childcare are available in the office. **Full-Cost parents** will be responsible for paying childcare fees during that two-week period. Any overpayment of fees, over and above the two-week notice, will be refunded to the family.

**Full-Cost Families** are required to commit to an entire semester of care (fall, intersession, spring, and summer). Summer semester is optional and a leave of absence is appropriate for this block of time. Parents are responsible for paying the childcare fees for their child(ren)’s contracted schedule for an entire semester regardless of whether or not the childcare is used. Vacations and early leaves will require full payment through the end of that particular semester.

**Billing Late Fees** - Payment of fees for full-cost families is billed at the 1st of each month and due by the 15th of that month. If fees are not received by the 15th of the month a $20.00 late fee will be added to your bill. If the 15th of the month falls on a weekend or a day that the Center is closed, payment is expected to be made on the following business day that the Center is open. Late fees are non-refundable.

**Field Trip Fees:**

For summer semester only, a $20.00 **per child** field trip/enrichment fee will be charged for children in the preschool or school-age program. Children enrolled in the infant, toddler and young preschool programs do not leave the OCC campus grounds; therefore, they are not responsible for the fee.

**Late Fees:**

- **Children must be picked up at their scheduled contract time.** After a five-minute grace period, late fees of $1.00 per minute, **per child**, will be imposed at the point where your child’s program has ended for the day.

- **Parents are responsible for paying the late fees using EXACT CHANGE (cash only- no checks) by the following day** your child is in care. **Children will not be admitted back into the program until the cash late fee is paid in full.**

- **Exception to this policy will be considered on an individual basis.**
ATTENDANCE

The Children’s Center funding is determined by your child’s actual hours of attendance at the Center. Attendance records are used to document the children’s attendance for audit and reimbursement for funding purposes. They are also used as planning tools for staffing, meals, and the educational program. Your child’s attendance is very important. Unexcused absences will result in loss of income to the Center.

When entering or exiting the Children’s Center building, it is essential that parents and children use the front door and walk through the main corridor only. The side door (next to the kitchen) is NOT an entrance/exit and remains locked at all times during the day for security purposes. Using the side door could result in a security breech and endanger our childcare community.

Your child must attend the Children’s Center according to the agreed upon contract hours.

**IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT THAT YOU KEEP TO YOUR SCHEDULED CONTRACT HOURS. THE CENTER WILL LOSE FUNDS FOR SUBSIDIZED CHILD CARE SPACES WHERE SCHEDULED TIME IS NOT BEING USED.**

Your child may arrive no more than fifteen (15) minutes prior to the contracted start time. Children must be picked up at the scheduled departure time (NO LATER). Setting your watch/pager to the Children’s Center office clock is recommended.

Children may not be dropped off for childcare at the Center between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. It is difficult for children to enter the play environment late in the morning. It is also very disruptive to the program. Group time is at 11:00 a.m., lunch at 11:30 a.m. and naptime is at 12:00 noon. Children who have not spent the morning in play are generally not ready for lunch and nap at the time that it is scheduled. *Children in the Infant Program, who have a schedule starting later in the morning, will be excluded from this policy.*

SCHEDULE CHANGE PROCEDURE

Enrollment Change Request Forms and Temporary Schedule Change Forms are both available in the front office.

You may request a permanent schedule change in contracted hours by completing an **Enrollment Change Request Form**. Your request will be considered on a space available basis. Notification will be given upon approval/denial of your request. Schedule changes are processed weekly.

You may request a temporary schedule change (for duration of no more than one (1) week) by completing a **Temporary Schedule Change Form**. This form can be completed at any time and is subject to approval from Children’s Center teaching staff. A temporary change in your child’s schedule can be requested for many reasons.

Examples of temporary schedule changes include but are not limited to:

- **On-campus events**

  Special activities, lectures, conferences with an instructor, special study group meetings, visits to the Health Center, counseling appointments, financial aid appointments, etc.
Off-campus events

Doctor appointments, counseling appointments, parent/teacher conferences, EOPS/CARE activities and conferences, court appointments, special events and activities.

SIGN-IN AND SIGN-OUT

1. Parents must enter (using ink) the time of arrival and departure of their child(ren) in the sign-in book in the child’s classroom.
2. The parent’s full signature must be readable. Please print if necessary. Please sign in and out in the appropriate places on the sign-in sheet. This needs to be a legible signature, not a legal one.
3. Subsidized parents must give a specific reason for each day of non-attendance on the sign-in sheet.
4. Parents or other authorized adults must accompany the child to and from the classroom. Please be sure that a classroom lead or assistant teacher knows your child is in the classroom or on the playground.

The Center cannot accept responsibility for children who have not been signed in whether they are left at the entrance, in the yard, or in the classroom.
5. Children may not be released to anyone who is under 18 years of age.
6. Children may only leave the Center with authorized person(s), NO ONE ELSE....NO EXCEPTIONS!

Children will not be released to anyone other than the contract parent WITHOUT VERBAL AND WRITTEN PERMISSION, regardless of whether or not this person is named on the Emergency Card.

Whenever you arrange for an authorized person (other than yourself), who has been named on your emergency card, to pick-up your child on a particular day,

THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURE MUST BE FOLLOWED:

1. Give advance written notice to your child(ren)’s teacher(s) using the “Universal Communication Log” (located in each classroom at the front of the sign-in / sign-out book) OR bring a hand written note into the office.

AND

2. Personally give advance verbal notice to your child(ren)’s teacher(s).

AND

3. The authorized pick-up person must provide photo identification to the office staff BEFORE ENTERING THE PROGRAM AREA.
4. The authorized pick-up person must speak with the child(ren)’s teacher prior to removing the child(ren) from the Center.
5. In the event of an emergency when steps 1-2 above cannot be followed, you must call the Center with the password that appears on the emergency card before arrangements can be made.
Parents should contact the Center immediately in the event of a situation that might make them late in picking up their child. If a child is not picked up on time, and emergency contacts cannot be reached to pick up the child, the local police may be called to pick up the child.

**ABSENCES**

All families (subsidized and non-subsidized) are expected to notify the office when their child is going to be absent.

To report an absence, take the following steps:

1. Call the main Children’s Center telephone number (714-432-5569)
2. When you hear the recorded message, press #1.
3. Then choose the appropriate number for your child’s classroom according to the menu given. Each teacher accesses these messages daily.

**For Subsidized Parents**

1. **Excused Absence:**

The State Department of Education and the Children’s Center policy permits excused absences for the following reasons:

**Unlimited**

- Medical appointments.
- Illness or quarantine of the child, sibling, or parent to include: flu, cold, fever, stomachache, headache, sore throat, teething, ear/sinus infection, sprain or broken bone, sutures, asthma or allergic reaction. Illness lasting more than five (5) consecutive days must be verified in writing by a medical doctor.
- Court ordered visitations (a copy of the court order must be in the child(ren)’s file in the Children’s Center office).

**Limited**

- Limited absences can be described as “Best Interest Days”. A total of 10 days of excused absence during the fiscal year (July 1 – June 30) will be permitted for the following reasons, which are considered to be “in the best interest of the child”. These include:
  - Family vacations
  - Parent/child time
  - Visits with extended family (grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.)
Family emergency to include:

- Death in family (5 days maximum)
- Serious illness/hospitalization for immediate family member (5 days maximum)
- Home/automobile catastrophe (3 days maximum)
- Hospital stay or operation for those immediate family members residing in the home.
- Religious holidays.
- Court appearances involving the child and/or the parents.
- Transportation problems are limited to two (2) days maximum per occurrence, as public transportation is always available to and from OCC.
- Please be advised that exceeding the ten (10) days of limited excused absences per calendar year may result in termination of subsidized childcare services. The termination status may be appealed through the Children’s Center Appeal Process.

Full Cost families will be charged for all absences regardless of illness or vacation time.

2. Unexcused Absence:
The State Department of Education and the Children’s Center policy states that “Any absence that does not fall within the category of ‘Excused Absence’ listed under #1 above will be considered an unexcused absence”. Unexcused absences cannot be claimed for reimbursement through the California Department of Education, which directly affects the funding that supports the Children’s Center.

- Illnesses lasting more than five (5) consecutive days, which have not been verified by a medical doctor, will be considered an unexcused absence.

The following Policies apply to absences:

- More than five (5) days of unexcused absences will subject the family to termination of childcare services. The termination status may be appealed through the Children’s Center Appeal Process (see page 23).
- For all absences, parents must include the reason for the absence and a full signature on the sign-in sheet when the child returns to school.
- All Fee-Paying Parents will be billed for all contracted days whether or not their child(ren) attends.
WITHDRAWAL FROM CLASSES

Subsidized student-parents must notify the Center immediately when they withdraw from any class.

- Subsidized student-parents are required to notify the Children’s Center office if and when she/he withdraws from any class or drops/adds a class.
- Withdrawing from all coursework at OCC or a local college, without notifying the Center, will result in immediate termination of childcare services. The termination status may be appealed through the Children’s Center Appeal Process (see page 23).

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

The Children’s Center is dedicated to providing a quality environment for children, complete with nurturing care, rich materials for exploration, and opportunities for exciting new experiences. In order to do this we need the support of parents. We strongly encourage all parents to find a meaningful way to fulfill their participation with respect to their own personal schedule. Options for parent involvement include:

1. Classroom participation (at least two hours a week)
2. Committee work – Special Center events
3. Sewing
4. Gardening
5. Housekeeping - Laundry
6. Yard maintenance
7. Animal care
8. Curriculum enrichment
9. Fundraising
10. Parent Advisory Committee:

   Representatives on the Parent Advisory Committee are elected in the fall of each school year. Parents are encouraged to nominate themselves or another interested parent for these various offices. The committee meets as often as needed throughout the year.

   Staff, parents and campus representatives design and refine Children’s Center policy and procedures as approved by the college administration. This committee functions as a forum for parents to share ideas, discuss their concerns and make recommendations about the operation of the Children’s Center. This governing body also helps plan special events, fundraisers and activities for children and families.

Contract parents have access to their child(ren) while at the Center. Our doors are always open and parents are encouraged to become an active participant in our program. We honor your right to check in on your child’s program whenever you feel necessary; but we ask that parents be respectful of rest time and transitions such as mealtime and group time. Children sometimes experience separation anxiety every time they have to say good-bye to their parent. Making frequent or surprise visits can be difficult for your child.
PARENT ENRICHMENT

The Children’s Center offers a variety of Parent Enrichment opportunities each semester. Sessions focus on guidance, nutrition, kindergarten readiness and other current parenting topics. Parents are encouraged to attend and enrichment suggestions are always welcome.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

You may not bring your child to school when he/she is experiencing any of the following:

1. The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in routine Center activities.
2. The illness requires more care than the childcare staff is able to provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children.
3. The illness is any of the specific diagnosed conditions listed below:
   a. **Fever with behavior change or other signs of illness** – oral, ear, or axillary (armpit) temperature of 100 or greater; rectal temperature of 102 or greater.
   b. **Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness** - until medical evaluation permits return. May include unusual lethargy, uncontrolled coughing or wheezing, persistent crying or irritability, or difficulty breathing.
   c. **Uncontrolled diarrhea** - (stool runs out of the diaper or the child cannot get to the toilet in time). Child may not return until 24 hours after it is controlled or stops.
   d. **Vomiting** - more than once in the previous 24-hour period until the vomiting stops or a health care provider determines that the child may be in childcare and is not in danger of dehydration.
   e. **Mouth sores with drooling** - until a health care provider determines the condition is not from a communicable illness.
   f. **Rash with fever or behavior change** - until a health care provider determines that the child may be in childcare.
   g. **Pink eye (purulent, bacterial conjunctivitis)** - with white or yellow eye discharge, until 24 hours after treatment is started. Viral conjunctivitis usually has a clear, watery discharge and may not require medication or exclusion.
   h. **Scabies, head lice, or other infestation** - until **24 hours after treatment is started**, (in the case of head lice, until **all** live insects and nits (egg casings) have been removed from the hair. Child’s hair will be checked before admittance back into the Center is permitted.
   i. **Impetigo** - until 24 hours after treatment has begun.
   j. **Strep throat or other streptococcal infections** - until 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has begun.
   k. **Chicken pox** - until 6 days after the onset of rash or sooner if all sores have dried up and crusted over.
   l. **Shingles** - until the sores are crusted over, unless a health care provider determines that the child should otherwise be excluded.

If you need health information please call: **California Child Care Health Line – (800) 333-3212**
This is a toll-free hotline staffed with registered nurses who can give information on childcare, female & infant health.
WHEN YOUR CHILD IS ILL

A parent may not bring an ill child to school. The Children’s Center is not able to care for sick children. It is the parent’s responsibility to find alternate care for a child who is ill.

If your child becomes ill while at school, you will be called out of your class, study location or work in order to remove your child from the Center.

MEDICATION

Prescribed medication will be dispensed to a child only when it arrives at school in the original container with a pharmacy label including prescription number, date, child’s name, drug name and dosage. It is the responsibility of the parent to obtain and completely fill out a Medication Release Form. These forms are available in the Children’s Center office. Please note that each prescription medication requires a separate Medication Release Form.

Non Prescribed medication will be dispensed to a child only when a written note from the doctor is presented to the Children’s Center.

Inhaled Medication

Effective September 1998, a new state law (SB1663) allows staff persons to administer inhaled medication to a child in care when certain requirements are met. The requirements of SB 1663 must be followed when staff persons administer (or assist a child with administering) inhaled medication using either of the following:

1) Metered Dose Inhaler (MDI or “inhaler”). Most children with asthma use an MDI. An MDI is usually a small plastic, L-shaped container that when pressed down on with a finger delivers inhaled medication to the lungs. Many MDIs have a “spacer”—a plastic tube that fits over the mouthpiece of the MDI and helps deliver medication to the child.

2) Nebulizer machine (or handheld nebulizer compressor). This is a machine that helps deliver inhaled medication to the lungs. It is connected by flexible tubing to a mouthpiece or facemask. The Pulmo Aide and the Dura-neb are examples of nebulizer machines.

Under SB 1663, a licensee or staff person may administer inhaled medication to a child in care if the following requirements are met:

- Written permission from the child’s parent to allow staff persons to 1) administer inhaled medication to the child and 2) contact the child’s health care provider.

- Instruction by parent/legal guardian to each staff person regarding how to administer inhaled medication to the child. Instruction must be verified in writing.

- Written instructions from the child’s physician providing specific instruction on the administration of inhaled administration. The instructions must be updated annually.

- Record keeping of the use of inhaled medications.

- Nebulizer training as part of the pediatric first aid certificate.

- Nebulizer training materials received by childcare providers must be kept on file at the facility. These training materials must be shared with any licensee or staff person who administers inhaled
medication to children in care. These requirements do not apply if childcare providers do not receive any training materials in their pediatric first aid course.

- A child who is capable of doing so may self-administer inhaled medication providing childcare regulations in Title 22, section 101226(e) are followed.

- If the child’s parent or legal guardian chooses to do so he or she—or a health care provider he or she hires—may come to the facility and administer inhaled medication to the child.

A complete packet of necessary materials has been prepared and is available upon request for the parent and physician to complete so that we may dispense inhaled medication(s) to children. **Staff persons will not dispense inhaler medication until all requirements are met.**

### Emergency Information

Each parent files an emergency and identification card with the Children’s Center office. **You must keep emergency information current!** The card must include:

- The family physician, his/her telephone number and address.
- Telephone numbers of at least two persons designated to remove the child from the Center if the parent cannot be reached.
- Your cell phone or pager number if available.
- Location where you can be reached whenever your child is at the Center.

### First Aid

The Children’s Center staff is responsible for minor first aid and CPR.

In the event of a major injury to a child:

- The OCC Campus Security and paramedics will be contacted immediately.
- The Student Health Center will be notified.
- The child may also be taken to the nearest emergency hospital.
- The parent and/or the child’s physician will be contacted.

### Ouch Reports

The teacher observing the incident completes an **Ouch Report for incidents of minor or major injury.** A copy is given to the parents and one to the Children’s Center Director, which is stored in the child’s health file.

A report is filed with the State Department of Social Services on any major injury requiring stitches, hospitalization, or in the event of a child’s death.
**Accident Insurance**

All children whose parents are enrolled at Orange Coast College are covered by accident insurance through the College Student Accident Insurance. There is a $25 deductible fee for this insurance. Insurance forms are completed in triplicate at the Children’s Center office. This insurance is a secondary insurance. Parents are required to use their own insurance first.

**EMERGENCIES AND NATURAL DISASTER PREPAREDNESS**

**Emergency Drills**

Emergency drills (earthquake, fire and lock-down) are conducted monthly and include all programs. When fire drills occur, the teachers, children and all remaining staff members vacate the Children’s Center site, proceed to the designated staging area on campus, wait for the “all clear” and then return to the Center. When earthquake drills occur (on alternating months), the staff assist children in the “duck and cover” position wherever they might be either in or out of doors. Children are then moved to the designated safe center in the classroom or outside. Education and follow-up occurs with the 2 – 5 year old children before and after each drill. Infants and toddlers are removed from the Center just prior to the alarm. These two programs follow all other drill procedures. When lock-down drills occur, a visual light begins to strobe in each classroom and a soft auditory signal occurs in the play yards. Children are brought inside, windows and doors (both interior and exterior) are locked and the blinds are drawn. Children are asked to remain quiet in one area of the room until all clear.

The Children’s Center is a part of the campus wide emergency response system and will receive the appropriate support from the campus with regard to medical treatment, food and shelter. In the event of an emergency or natural disaster, such as an earthquake or flood, all children will be kept at the Center until the parent or authorized person picks them up. Any authorized person other than the known parent will be required to present photo identification before the child is released. Should it be necessary to evacuate children from the Center, the location of the emergency shelter will be posted at the Center. Every effort will be made to notify parents of an evacuation. Staff members will remain with the children until they are released to the parent or authorized person. **Please keep emergency forms current** to assist the Center in the event of an emergency.

*In the event of an actual emergency, the Center has the capability to sustain children and staff with food, water and shelter for up to 72 hours.*

**Medical Emergency**

If a child is injured, basic first aid is administered and an “OUCH” report is written to inform the child’s parent. If the injury is not an emergency but we feel the child needs medical attention, the parent is called to make a determination about further medical intervention. If the child’s injury is life threatening, 911, Campus Safety, and the child’s parents are called immediately.

**Rotating Power Outage**

On rare occasions, the college will experience a rotating power outage. The Children’s Center is equipped with a generator for emergency purposes. If necessary, the generator would be utilized to prepare food or provide the necessary light for the children to continue their work/play. We have found from experience that a temporary power outage does not affect the Children’s Center’s ability to care for children until their scheduled pick-up time. In the case of a power outage, the Center will remain open.

**Change of Location**

Temporary or one-time changes in location must be indicated on the **Universal Communication Log** posted in each classroom. Parents who study in the library are asked to study on the main floor of the
library and sign in at the main desk. In case of illness or injury, the parent will be called out of class or study location to pick up the child. Parents must be in an area that is accessible by telephone and be within thirty (30) minutes of the Children’s Center at all times, or have a person, named on the emergency card, who is. Cell phones and pagers have been found to be very helpful in locating parents immediately. We encourage all parents to obtain a good reliable cell phone or pager and keep it with you during those times your child is in care.

- Parents must update their child’s emergency card whenever they make a permanent change in location.
- Parents must use the Universal Communication Log to update temporary changes in location or call the Center office with temporary changes in location.

**CELL PHONE POLICY**

Out of respect for your child’s need to have you fully engaged with them during the morning separation and afternoon reunification process, we ask that you refrain from using your cell phone while in the building or on the playground. Please consider the Children’s Center a “no cell zone”. We are here to give our full attention to the children.

**OCC & CHILDREN’S CENTER’S ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE POLICY**

The Harry and Grace Steele Children’s Center adheres strongly to the following college policy: OCC is committed to a drug-free campus so that students and staff can work in a drug-free environment. In addition to our commitment to provide a drug-free environment, education, and help to students, that there are state laws and the College Code of Conduct which specifically prohibit the use and possession, distribution or sale of drugs or alcohol on college property or at any college-sponsored activity or event. These rules also describe the penalties and disciplinary actions that may result when violations occur for those who abuse or do not take positive steps to get help. Information on the laws and Code of Conduct is available at the Student Services office.

District policy states that all use of alcohol and other drugs is prohibited on District property and at any college-sponsored activities regardless of its location. Furthermore, the use of tobacco is prohibited in all District vehicles and buildings. The Children’s Center facility and surrounding areas have also been designated by the college as a smoke free area. (District Board Policy 030-8-1).

**CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS**

The use or disclosure of all information pertaining to the child and his/her family shall be restricted to purposes directly connected with the administration of the program. The contractor shall permit the review of the basic data file by the child’s parent(s) or parent’s authorized representative, upon request and at a reasonable time and place.
FRAUD POLICY FOR SUBSIDIZED FAMILIES

Definition

Fraud is defined as knowingly or intentionally withholding pertinent materials or information, making any false statements or presenting any false materials or information, as a means of obtaining state-funded childcare services. Fraudulent, false, incomplete, deceitful or misleading information provided to the Orange Coast College Harry & Grace Steele Children’s Center regarding status of income, family size, employment, seeking employment, school/training program enrollment, and/or medical incapacitation that is used to determine initial or ongoing eligibility for subsidized childcare services or parent fees, may be grounds for termination of childcare services.

Policy for the Recovery of Childcare Costs Paid As A Result Of Fraud

Eligibility and need requirements to receive subsidized childcare services are established by the California Department of Education (CDE), Child Development Division (CDD). Cost for services are based on CDE/CDD approved contract rates for services. The following conditions constitute fraud and will result in termination of childcare services and subsequent recovery of funds from the parent, guardian, and/or recipient:

- Providing fraudulent, false, incomplete, deceitful, or misleading information to the Harry & Grace Steele Children’s Center (HGSCC) which is used to determine initial or ongoing eligibility for subsidized childcare services or parent fees.

- Failure to notify the HGSCC of changes that affect eligibility, such as:
  
  - **Family Size**—All changes in family status and size must be reported. Changes in family size include marriage, father and or mother of child returns to household, father or mother leaves household, birth of child(ren), children leave household, etc.
  
  - **Income**—All income changes must be reported immediately. Sources of income include wages, cash payments for services, CalWORKs, SSI/SSP, child support, commission checks, overtime checks, tips, bonuses, etc.
  
  - **Employment Status**—Changes in employment status must be reported immediately. Changes in employment/employer location include: loss of employment, layoff, medical leave or incapacitation, raise or reduction in salary, wages, hours, discharge/quit, etc.
  
  - **Seeking Employment Status**—Recipients are allowed sixty (60) days for seeking employment per fiscal (July 1-June 30) year. Accurate documentation of days and hours employment is being sought, as well as prospective employers contacted, is required monthly.
  
  - **School or Training Program Enrollment**—All changes in school or training program enrollment must be reported immediately. Changes in enrollment include dropping classes or training program, adding classes, change in hours/days attended, change of semester/quarter, etc.
  
  - **Medical Incapacitation**—A licensed physician must supply documentation of incapacitation of the recipient indicating their inability to care for the child(ren) for part of the day.
Relocation or Change of Address And Telephone Number—Changes in address or telephone numbers must be reported immediately. Failure to report address changes may result in inability to notify recipient of actions relating to childcare services. HGSCC is not responsible for any adverse actions that occur because a parent does not receive a notice of action sent by mail.

Failure to report changes within five (5) days of any change will result in termination of childcare services. The termination status may be appealed through the Children’s Center Appeal Process (see below).

ALL SUSPECTED CASES OF FRAUD WILL BE FORWARDED TO THE LOCAL DISTRICT ATTORNEY’S OFFICE.

GRIEVANCE

A student-parent who has a grievance should arrange to talk to the involved staff person. If that brings no resolution, the parent should arrange to speak with the person’s supervisor. If the problem is still not solved, the student-parent should file a written grievance with the College Grievance Officer in the Administration Building. If the written grievance brings no resolution, the student-parent may appeal (see appeal process below).

Specific guidelines about grievances and complaints and the time-lines, which must be followed, are available from the Student Services Office or the College Grievance Officer.

Finally, the student-parent has the right to file a complaint with the State Department of Education-Child Development Division. The appeals process is printed on the back of every Harry & Grace Steele Children’s Center Notice of Action (NOA) that subsidized families receive.

APPEALS PROCESS

Student-parents disagreeing with a decision to terminate or change childcare service may contest the action according to the appeals process as follows:

1. File a written request for a hearing with the Children’s Center Manager within fourteen (14) calendar days of the date the Notice of Action was mailed or delivered.

2. Within ten (10) calendar days following the receipt of the request for a hearing, the Children’s Center Manager shall notify the parent of the date, time and place of the hearing. The hearing, which shall be held during normal working hours, shall (to the extent possible) be convenient for the student-parent.

3. The Orange Coast College Dean of Student Services, who will act as the Hearing Officer, shall conduct the hearing.

4. The contract student-parent is required to attend the hearing. In the case of a verifiable emergency, the student-parent may send a representative that is authorized to speak on his/her behalf. If the contract student-parent or authorized representative fails to appear at the hearing, the student-parent will be deemed to have abandoned his/her appeal.
5. The student-parent may bring an advisor of his/her choice to the hearing. If the advisor is an attorney, the student-parent shall notify the Children’s Center Director of the name, address and telephone number of that attorney at the time of filing the appeal.

6. The college shall have an attorney present only if the student-parent does so.

7. The role of the advisor shall be passive. He/she may advise the student but may not address the hearing.

8. If it is necessary, the college will provide an interpreter for the student-parent.

9. Other than those persons listed above, only persons directly affected by the hearing may attend.

10. The Hearing Officer shall allow the Children’s Center Manager ten (10) minutes to explain the decision that is being appealed. The Hearing Officer shall allow the contract student-parent ten (10) minutes to explain the basis of the appeal. The Hearing Officer may ask either or both parties such questions as he/she deems appropriate. The Children’s Center Director and the student-parent shall each have three (3) minutes for closing remarks.

11. The Hearing Officer shall mail or deliver to the student-parent a written decision within ten (10) calendar days after the hearing.

12. The written notice shall include the decision of the Hearing Officer and the legal, regulatory or policy basis for the intended action.

NOTICES OF ACTION

The Children’s Center’s decision to approve or deny service shall be communicated to the parent through a written statement referred to as a Notice of Action (NOA) in accordance with the Child Development Division’s Funding Terms and Conditions. Parents will be asked to sign a copy of each NOA documenting all changes that occur within the contract. For example:

- Certification/recertification
- Schedule changes
- Changes in fees
- Termination of services
- Exclusion from care for not complying with Health Dept. immunization regulations

Please pay close attention to the NOA. It lists your child(ren)’s daily schedule and fees and communicates important messages regarding your childcare contract.

WARNING NOTICES

WRITTEN WARNING NOTICES are issued to parents who violate Children’s Center policies and/or procedures as stated throughout Section B of this handbook.

A third (3rd) Warning Notice for an infraction of any Children’s Center policy and/or procedure (within a semester) shall be considered a VIOLATION. This will result in either a loss of contract hours or termination of childcare services. Parents shall be ineligible to return for one (1) full semester after termination. Once eligible to return to the program, the parent must reapply via the wait list.
Section C: Children’s Center Program

PHILOSOPHY

The Children’s Center philosophy is based on the belief that we are an extension of the family. Our desire is to provide a supportive and nurturing environment; building a sense of community among parents, children and staff. Our Center building is constructed like a family home.

Each child is regarded as a unique individual. We value and celebrate each child’s diverse cultural, ethnic, and socio-economic background. In consideration of the whole child, we strive to nourish the mind, body and sense of self for continued growth.

The curriculum at the Children’s Center is emergent, based on our belief that children need to be active participants in their own learning. Through this curriculum, we foster a balance among the social, physical, intellectual, and emotional aspects of each child’s development. The staff facilitates, guides, and supports the children’s natural inclination to challenge themselves, explore, create, take risks and play in an open ended environment.

In creating a peaceful environment for children to flourish, we feel we have a responsibility to model and guide a non-violent approach to peaceful coexistence.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The children’s daily program provides age-appropriate activities that meet Children’s Center goals and objectives. A weekly lesson plan created by the teaching staff is posted in each classroom that features curriculum designed to meet the unique needs and goals of each class.

The main goals and objectives of the Harry and Grace Steele Children’s Center are to provide each child with the opportunity to:

- Develop a positive self-image.
- Experience personal empowerment, competence and independence, which can then be assimilated into each child’s family as it applies to their culture and values.
- Develop relationships with adults and other children.
- Initiate query, exploration, and discovery in the classroom and outdoor environment to gain knowledge, skills and building experiences.
- Develop critical thinking and problem solving skills.
- Gain an understanding of peaceful and nonviolent coexistence.
- Grow in appreciation for his/her own cultural diversity and gain an understanding and respect for other diverse beliefs and cultural backgrounds.
- Develop appreciation and respect for the environment and all living things.
- Create a balance between quiet and active play.
**METHODOLOGY**

In order to learn, children need to first observe, explore, experiment and engage in the environment and activities to develop trust and meaning from the world. The teaching staff assesses each child’s developmental level and designs learning experiences so children can achieve this meaning with confidence. Curriculum is developed to meet the goals and objectives using materials and activities that stimulate a child’s body and mind. Learning experiences that enhance the child’s social, emotional, cognitive, sensory, language, and motor development are critical elements for a play based curriculum and help children construct their learning and knowledge.

Children are supported in developing problem solving skills through the opportunities of making choices in the activities they participate in and the behaviors they display daily. Small and large group activities are scheduled to provide children with time for group interaction and specific instruction.

An important component of our entire curriculum involves the teaching and support staff’s commitment to the development and positive delivery of an “anti-bias curriculum” which embraces an educational philosophy that is value based: differences are good; oppressive ideas and behaviors are not. It sets up a creative tension between respecting differences and not accepting unfair beliefs and acts. It asks teachers and children to confront troublesome issues rather than covering them up. An anti-bias perspective is integral to all aspects of daily classroom life in relation to the practice of freedom. The process for growth is ongoing and we invite all members of our Children’s Center community to engage in this very important work.

The Children’s Center provides the following for children:

- Creative materials to allow for self-expression
- Outdoor play equipment to build physical and motor development skills
- Dramatic play materials such as dolls, housekeeping equipment, and open-ended materials to promote interactive play that fosters social and emotional development.
- Group activities that encourage music, dance, language and visual arts.
- Manipulatives, blocks, science and garden opportunities and special activities that enhance and build children’s critical thinking and cognitive development.
- Challenges and ideas to talk about, relate to, compare with, match, fit into, try, reinforce, invent, discover and enjoy.

**DESIR ED RESULTS DEVELOPMENTAL PROFILE (DRDP)**

The Children’s Center maintains compliance with the California State Department of Education (Title 5), Child Development Division (CDD). As required by CDD, the teaching staff assesses each child’s overall growth and development using the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP). The DRDP is an observation tool for teachers to record individual progress toward the achievement of four Desired Results for children:

- Children are personally and socially competent.
- Children are effective learners.
- Children show physical and motor competence.
- Children are safe and healthy.

The DRDP lists behaviors that, when fully mastered, would indicate the achievement of these desired results for children. Teachers share a summary of each child’s development during the bi-annual parent-teacher conference. To review the DRDP document, visit the Child Development Division’s Web site at: [http://www.cde.ca.gov/cyfsbranch/child_development/drdp-instructions.htm](http://www.cde.ca.gov/cyfsbranch/child_development/drdp-instructions.htm).
RESPECT OF OUR CHILDREN’S CENTER ENVIRONMENT

The collective Children’s Center “family” has an expectation for respectful behavior while inside the building. It is important to guide your child in the following ways:

- Use walking feet in the building.
- Use quiet voices indoors.
- Feet stay on the ground. Climbing on or jumping on or off furniture is considered unsafe and disrespectful to our environment.
- Food and beverage are only allowed in the living room for special events. Please refrain from giving food to your child as you enter the exit the building to help us keep our space clean and safe.
- The parent library is a place of study. Social conversation in this room can be very disruptive to a parent who is trying to study. Parents are welcome to visit socially in the living room or on the front porch.

RESPECT OF LIVING THINGS – CENTER FARM

Our Garden
OCC faculty and our Garden Committee support the Children’s Center Community Garden Project. The preschool program develops early literacy and numeracy while cultivating awareness in the natural/physical sciences. The curriculum includes propagating seeds, cultivating compost, farming worms, growing fruits and vegetables and cooking the harvest. The children read books about growing food, write their own stories about this experience, measure plant growth, predict their height and weight and learn to chart their growth.

Vegetable produce, harvested from the working section of the garden, is brought into the Center’s front office area and placed in baskets for our families to take home. We ask that you take just what you need to feed your family.

Our Animals
The animal program provides a beautiful opportunity for children to care for other living creatures by watching them grow, taking care of them when they are sick and practicing “gentle touching”. We have a goat, a sheep, chickens, rabbits and birds. The smaller animals (lizards, fish, birds, tortoise, turtle and reptiles) live in the classrooms.

The working farm concept is a wonderful teaching tool to enrich the lives of young children. As on any farm, sometimes animals die. When this occurs, we bury the animal respectfully and gently in the ground and begin the process of exploring the facts and feelings surrounding death. Children will be sad, concerned, curious, and filled with questions. The expression of real human emotion is healthy and the understanding of life and death comes from our patient and honest response to a child’s questions and fears. The death of a pet is a teachable moment, and an indispensable catalyst for growth and understanding.

Please feel free to visit our gardens and animals. We encourage parents to volunteer in these areas and appreciate all the support that our families provide.
GUIDANCE

The Children’s Center philosophy of guidance is to work with the children in a positive manner. Our method is non-repressive. Our goal is to teach rather than punish. This is so children will learn how to self-regulate their behavior and become socially competent. The Education Code and the California Administrative Code, Title 22, forbid corporal punishment and abusive language. Adults bringing children to the Center or participating in Center activities are also required to follow this policy. Limits are set by the staff for the children and are constantly reinforced in order for children to learn acceptable behavior. Parents are encouraged to discuss guidance methods with their child’s teacher. Parent enrichment workshops regarding guidance techniques used at the Center are offered to assist parents in working towards consistency between school and home.

Our Center has three rules for children to follow. The children are given the responsibility daily to do their “job” in our environment:

- Keep our bodies safe – when you are safe, others are safe.
- Use our listening ears – it is important to listen to our teacher and friends.
- Be respectful – it is important to use kind/friendly words, to be respectful of people, and have a reverence of living things.

SEPARATION AND ADJUSTMENT

The process of separation from the parent as the child enters daycare is almost always difficult for both parent and child. Each child has his/her own way of coping with separation, and we respect this. At each age level, a child will react differently.

The following is a brief overview of children’s reactions to separation anxiety. Some children, regardless of age, experience little or no anxiety when separating from their parents. Each child has their own unique way of going through this process.

- Infants and toddlers may wish to stand at the door and scream, refusing to be comforted, while others need to be near an adult constantly.
- Two year olds separation and adjustment may vary from adapting readily to a week or more of genuine grieving.
- Three year olds might need a longer period to adjust. At this age a child is slowly acquiring a feeling of belonging to his/her group in daycare.
- Four year olds learn the process of separation from his/her parents within a relatively shorter period of time.
- Five year olds usually adjust in a day or two because at this age level fascination with the preschool experience becomes all consuming.

We feel it is important for children to express their sadness and/or anger in their own way. When allowed this expression of emotion, children contend with difficulties, adjust sooner and become healthier individuals. We insist that you, as parents, say “Good-bye” to your child and assure them you will be back, even if this creates an emotional scene. When you, the parent, sneak out it destroys trust between you, your child and their new environment. Let us know when you are ready to leave and we will help you say good-bye. Leaving your child with or near the same staff person daily will help them adjust. We have
found that most children adjust quickly to our program...we assure you the process becomes easier with the building of trust and the passing of time.

When leaving your child for the first time or after a long break, you might be thinking about how your child is doing at the Center in your absence. Please remember that we are here to serve you by providing quality care and education to your child. We want you to know that at any time during your child’s day at the Center, you have complete access to him/her. Feel free to call us or come by to visit. We are more than happy to give you an honest update on their progress. If coming by for a “peek” will help, please know that you are welcome. This is your school and we want you and your child to feel comfortable and safe.

**REST TIME**

At noon, children will be given the opportunity to rest. Parents need to bring a blanket labeled with the child’s name. The older children may rest on a mat or be involved in quiet activities for an hour after lunch. Rest time ends around 2:00 p.m. when regular classroom activity resumes.

**TOILET LEARNING**

The Children’s Center does not expect children less than two years of age to have completed the toilet learning process. Parents of toddlers are encouraged to discuss the toilet learning process with the child’s teacher. Additional changes of clothing will be necessary for a child involved in the toilet learning process.

**SUNSCREEN**

Parents are required to bring their child to school with their first application of sunscreen already applied, especially during the months of April through October. Please make sure that you apply the sunscreen to the entire chest, back, neck, face, ears, legs and feet. Babies should have their heads suncreened as well. After naptime, each child’s exposed skin will be reapplied with the Children’s Center’s Rocky Mountain Sunscreen for Kids with SPF 30+, UVA/UVB. If your child is allergic or overly sensitive to Rocky Mountain, you are welcome to provide your own sunscreen. Donations to fund the purchase of Rocky Mountain are gratefully accepted.

**CLOTHING**

In an effort to create a non-violent environment for children to learn and play, the following policy will be strictly enforced: children will not be allowed to bring action figures to school or wear clothing (t-shirts, pants, underwear, shoes, or P.J.’s) that portray action figures (Power Rangers, Ninja Turtles, Transformers, X-men, Spiderman, Batman, Superman, Star Wars, etc.) while at school. We accept each family’s decision to allow powerful superhero influences at home; however, it is our belief that your child’s time at the Center is better spent in creative, constructive and physically challenging activities.

Children should wear clothing to the Center that allows them to participate in active play and creative art experiences that are offered daily. As stated in our philosophy (page 25), our curriculum encourages children to become fully involved in the environment to include: mud, sand, water, paint, glue and other interesting materials. We strongly urge parents to support their children’s need to be fully engaged in the activities by both providing verbal support that “getting dirty is OK”, and providing extra clothing. Your child’s clothes will most likely become stained and dirty; therefore, we require all parents to keep 1-2 sets of extra clothing in the child’s cubby on a daily basis. All clothing must be marked clearly with the child’s name. The Children’s Center will not be responsible for unmarked articles of clothing.
Soiled clothing will be bagged, marked and then placed in the child’s cubby. Parents are expected to check each day for any soiled clothing bags. Occasionally we must use Children’s Center extra clothing for your child. We appreciate having borrowed clothing cleaned and returned as soon as possible.

Please see “accessories” below for a detailed description of additional clothing items which are not allowed to be worn at the center.

**ACCESSORIES**

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission has issued guidelines to help prevent children from strangling or getting entangled in the neck and waist drawstrings of upper outerwear garments such as jackets and sweatshirts. Drawstrings on children’s jackets are a hidden hazard that can lead to injury and death when they catch on items. CPSC recommends that parents or caregivers completely remove the hood and neck strings from all children’s outerwear including jackets and sweatshirts size 2T to size 12. We also believe that necklaces, bracelets and hoop earrings worn by young children can cause injury through the course of physical play or possible physical conflict. The Children’s Center receives current recall information from the CPSC. The information is posted regularly on the board above the family mailboxes.

It is a Children’s Center policy not to allow the previous mentioned items to be worn at school.

**FIELD TRIPS**

Preschool children and their teachers take walking field trips to places of interest on campus: science areas, horticulture and the garden, cafeteria, art gallery, and the art department to name a few. Occasionally, neighborhood walks are arranged to the grocery store, bakery and other community places of interest. When transportation is required, the children travel by Coast Community College District buses or vans on field trips. Infants and toddlers are taken on “stroller” and wagon walks on campus, weather permitting.

Each school year, parents are required to complete a Field-Trip Liability Release form. In addition, a specific Class Field Trip Permission Form must be signed before your child will be allowed to attend any off campus field-trip. Infant, toddler and young preschool programs do not participate in off campus field trips unless accompanied by their individual parent.

**TOYS AT SCHOOL**

It is the Center’s policy to discourage children from bringing toys from home. We have an economically diverse population of children who attend, and we believe that the child’s time at school should reflect an even playing field for all children. Toys from home present problems in a number of different ways. For some families, it is an expense they cannot afford. For some it is a matter of not wanting to expose their children to commercial toys and the trappings of a consumer culture. It is our belief that young children cannot easily distinguish between school toys and personal toys that belong to other children. What often occurs is that toys brought from home get left out in the classroom or outdoors and become broken or lost, causing the child who brought the toy from home to become quite unhappy. We have an ample amount of creative age appropriate toys for all the children here at the Center to play with making it unnecessary for children to bring personal toys to school. On occasion, children will be encouraged to bring something from home in support of a classroom project or activity.
Examples may include:

- nature items from: the garden, beach, hiking etc.
- bugs, lizards, frogs etc.
- pets (when prior arrangements have been made).
- photographs of a trip or special event in the child’s life.
- baby books and/or family albums.

We encourage parents to provide a small, soft cuddly animal or blanket for children who need a comfort object during nap time. At no time will we permit war toys or toys that encourage violent/angry solutions to problems. Please feel free to discuss our policy with the director, child care supervisor or your child’s teacher at any time. Thank you for your support.

**BIRTHDAYS**

Parents are invited to provide special snacks for birthdays, celebrations and other events. We request that snack foods contain healthy ingredients with a minimum amount of sugar and additives. Please consult your child’s teacher to make arrangements.

**NUTRITION**

Nutrition is an integral part of each child’s healthy development. The Children’s Center places great emphasis on the nutritional well being of each child. We contract with the Orange Coast College Food Service Department for all meals. A full day child receives two-thirds of their daily dietary allowance through the breakfast, lunch and snack program. The College nutritionist plans menus. Emphasis is on healthy foods with a minimum of sugars, additives and red meats. Parents who choose to have their child fed vegetarian meals will be accommodated. Monthly menus are available for parents in each classroom.

The Children’s Center participates in the Child Care Food Program. This facility is operated in accordance with US Department of Agriculture policy, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, age, handicap, religion or national origin. Parents must complete eligibility forms for free and reduced-cost meals. There is no extra charge for children’s meals. The children are served meals in a relaxed environment. All children are encouraged to try new foods. Dessert, when served, is considered a part of the meal and not as a special reward. Food is never used or withheld as a punishment or reward at the Children’s Center. Children with allergies will be given special consideration based on information provided by a licensed physician.

The Children’s Center is committed to providing nutrition education for both parents and children. Workshops on preparing healthy meals with relation to meal time environments and the psychology of eating will be explored throughout the year.

**FOOD FROM HOME**

The Center respectfully requests that parents **not** allow their child to bring food from home unless for reasons related to a special diet due to allergies. Food and drinks brought from home can potentially create conflict between children, envy over a sweet food that others were not offered at their meal time and the inevitable spilling of food and drinks on the carpeted areas on the way into the classroom. Please allow time for your child to finish eating their special food in the parking lot before entering the building.
**PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Formal parent teacher conferences are held in each classroom twice a year. Parents are encouraged to participate in these conferences in order to assist the teacher in planning a program for their child. Your attendance also enables us to learn more about your family goals and values. Informal parent conferences happen as needed. Please feel free to discuss your child’s progress, with the teacher, on a daily basis.

Teachers, the Child Care Supervisor, and the Children’s Center Director are available for additional conferences by appointment. If you choose not to meet for a parent/teacher conference, you will be asked to sign a waiver to be placed in your child’s portfolio.

Parents are encouraged to take their child’s portfolio (authentic assessment of the child’s actual work throughout their time at the Center) with them when they are ready to move on to another childcare program. *An individual child development summary may accompany your child to their elementary school upon entering kindergarten. This will assist your child’s new teacher in designing a plan that will best meet your child’s academic need.*

**EXITING INTERVIEW**

Upon leaving the Center, parents are encouraged to share their successes and future plans with our office personnel as a way of documenting their work and significant achievements at Orange Coast College. We attempt to keep track of our alumni and include them in special events and reunions. Please keep in touch by sending us an occasional card.
Section D: Summary

We hope that this Parent Handbook will be of help to you in understanding the policies and procedures of the Children’s Center. If we can be of any assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact either the Children’s Center Director or the Child Care Supervisor at (714) 432-5569. We wish you well and we thank you for sharing your child with us.