

PARENT HANDBOOK



THE CHILDREN'S CENTER AT CALTECH



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WELCOME TO THE CHILDREN'S CENTER AT CALTECH

Mission Statement

The Children's Center at Caltech is a non-profit organization providing quality early education and care for infants, toddlers and preschool age children, for the Caltech and Pasadena communities. Caring, nurturing educators staff this outstanding program. The Center has resources to support child, staff, and parenting development. The Center also provides leadership in the early childhood field for other colleges and universities.

To accomplish all this, every effort is made to build and nurture relationships of mutual respect among the children, parents, and early childhood professionals.

Introduction

Every effort will be made to make your time at the Center enriching for every member of your family. This Parent Handbook contains information about the Center for every family. Please read it carefully. As a parent you are welcome and encouraged to participate in your child's daily care and education here. Parent involvement will greatly enhance your child's experience and foster continuity between home and Center. If you have any questions, please feel free to discuss them with your child's Teacher or the Director. **You are welcome to visit the Center at any time.**

Philosophy and Goals

The philosophy of the Children's Center at Caltech (CCC) has its basis in a humanistic view of the child as an independent and individual learner. The aim of the program is to respond to the needs of every child as s/he develops awareness of the world and readiness for learning. Each group provides developmentally appropriate materials and activities for every child in the areas of social/emotional, intellectual and aesthetic growth and psychomotor development, while fostering a positive self-concept.

Through planned activities, children are challenged to explore their world, solve problems, develop physically, and expand language skills and concepts. Teachers nurture a sense of competence and self-worth in every child. The emphasis is on active, hands-on learning that addresses the needs of the whole child in the areas of social, emotional, cognitive, creative and physical growth.

Following long-term and current research on how children learn, the Center offers both planned and spontaneous activities, encouraging independence while presenting limits that arise from being part of a group. Teachers provide a variety of choices for play designed to encourage physical skills, cognitive learning, problem solving and independent thought. Resources and encouragement are available for those children who are ready for more directed, academic learning. Our approach is consistent with research based on long term observation of young children, which indicates that they learn best through their senses, needing many opportunities to initiate learning on their own, and needing periods of choice that alternate with periods of guidance. By means of these age-appropriate activities, a strong foundation is built for the kindergarten experience.

History of the Children's Center at Caltech

The Children's Center at Caltech opened in 1972 in a former home that had also been used as a dormitory, at 293 S. Chester. It was founded with the approval of Caltech by a group of Caltech wives and students, plus several non-Caltech Pasadena women. Like most child care centers, it has experienced growing pains and changes. In the early years, the Center had low enrollment and high staff turnover. More than once it appeared that it might have to close.

In 1988, a second classroom at 303 S. Chester was opened. A third house at 296 S. Chester, opened in 1990. In July of 1998, a Toddler Option with portable classroom adjacent to 296 S. Chester was added. This environment cultivates a home-like atmosphere. The latest addition is the office/training room in the house on the southeast corner of Del Mar and Chester.

In the early years the Center was financially independent, paying all its own operational expenses. Gradually, Caltech increased its support of the Center, and now aids substantially in terms of free rent, utilities, maintenance, repairs, and gardening. However, the Center remains separate as a private non-profit corporation with its own governing Board. Parents make up the majority of the Board of Directors. All parents are members of the corporation. The Center draws families from all over the world, making for a richly multicultural group.

Today the Community Care Division of the State of California licenses the Center to serve 99 children. Families of differing social and ethnic backgrounds, from Caltech and the community at large, are accepted on a non-discriminatory basis. There are six classroom groups. The Center serves as a lab school for nearby colleges and universities and helps train many child development students each year.

We foster a close relationship between home and school. Parents are welcome to visit the classroom, accompany the children on field trips, and participate in planned classroom activities. The high adult-child ratio allows for the individual needs of every child to be met in a comfortable, supportive setting. The Children's Center first achieved accreditation from the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs in 1993 and has been re-certified every year since then.

Children from six months to six years are accepted in the two, three, or five-day program. They are grouped by age as follows:

Bunnies	6-18 months	10 children	Koalas	3-4 years	17 children
Dolphins	18-30 months	12 children	Raccoons	3.5-4.5 years	23 children
Penguins	2-3 years	15 children	Beavers	4-5 years	24 children

Caltech provides many in-kind services and the Center occupies buildings owned by Caltech rent-free; however our operating budget is based on tuition income alone. Monies from fundraising activities are spent on major acquisitions or special items. In addition, a Teacher's Holiday Gift Fund and a Tuition Assistance Fund have been established. Contributions to these funds, or the program in general, are welcome. Contributions made to the Center are tax deductible.

Board of Directors

A Board of Directors governs the Children's Center. The Board consists of parents, staff, and members of the community who are elected by the general membership of the Children's Center. The Board has full legal responsibility for the Center. The officers are voted in once a year and parent participation hours are waived for those serving as officers.

The Board meets at 7:00 p.m. on the third Monday of each month at an announced location on campus. Meetings are announced each month on the parent bulletin boards and are open to anyone wishing to attend. There are six standing committees of the Board: Finance, Fundraising, Strategic Planning, the Committee on Trustees, Personnel, and Facilities. Everyone is encouraged to serve on one or more of these committees, for which work hour credit is given.

The Partners

In the Summer of 2000, several parents and teachers formed a parent-teacher organization and christened it the CCC Parent Teacher Partnership (PTP or Partners). The purpose of Partners is to work with the CCC to help provide a nurturing, enriching, safe, and multicultural environment for the children at the Center. To this end, Partners endeavors to assist with the flow of information between members of the CCC community while maintaining an atmosphere of mutual respect as well as adhering to the tenets of Developmentally Appropriate Practice.

Partners is available to keep parents and teachers informed about events, to find volunteers to staff projects as they arise (i.e. Fundraisers), and, in general, to "get the word out". Additionally, it is an organization that aims to provide feedback and constructive suggestions to the CCC on issues that are important to both parents and teachers. In the process, Partners hopes to contribute toward making the center a rewarding and fun place for the entire CCC community.

Partners is a volunteer organization. We elect officers but always maintain an open format and welcome any member of the CCC family to voice his/her opinion. While Partners is happy to serve as a sounding board for parents and teachers, its role is to steer individuals toward the proper channels to address any issue or find the answer to any question.

The PTP meets once a month, typically during the second week of every month, at noon in Avery Dining Hall on the Caltech campus. Parents in attendance receive one-hour credit toward their parent participation hours. Parents serving as officers on Partners have their parent participation hours waived for the year that they serve.

Staff

The Children's Center staff consists of highly qualified educators trained in Early Childhood Education. Many of our teachers hold Associate, Bachelors and/or Masters degrees. Our high teacher/child ratios allow for the staff to plan and provide a high quality program in each of our classrooms.

The CCC is committed to maintaining a staff that is consistently on the cutting edge of the Early Childhood Education field. Our teachers are provided myriad opportunities for professional growth. **All staff** are encouraged to continue preparation in Early Childhood Education, to participate in staff development opportunities and to take First Aid/CPR training, annually.

Curriculum

The teachers thoughtfully plan classroom curriculum. Broad objectives for each month, as well as retrospective summaries of daily activities, are posted on the bulletin boards located in each room. We believe that while curriculum should be meticulously planned, good teaching also involves being ready and able to catch the teachable moment by following the interests of an individual child or group into activities that may not have been pre-planned.

The Center provides activities that offer a variety of choices designed to encourage physical skills, cognitive learning, problem solving and independence. Active physical play, conceptual learning, art, music, science, language development, early literacy and dramatic play are a part of the daily program. Materials and encouragement are available for children that are appropriate to their developmental level.

An important component of our curriculum is the embracing of the entire human family. The books we read, the songs we sing, and many of our cooking projects follow this theme. Parents are encouraged to share meaningful family traditions in the classroom. This is one of the many ways we celebrate our diversity. We touch on our heritage at Thanksgiving; we celebrate winter and our appreciation of loved ones in December; and we construct and mail letters in February, including a walking trip to the post office located on campus. While we do follow the events of the year in our planning, especially in our science projects, we do not have a holiday-dictated approach.

Art activities of all kinds are done daily with the children, from the simplest crayon and paper drawings to carpentry and multi-media projects such as finger painting and collage creation. Our philosophy is that **the process is important, not the product**; the children are given a variety of open-ended materials and are encouraged to make what they will from them.

Curriculum varies according to age. As children mature, they engage in increasingly intricate and challenging activities. Year to year, curriculum reflects the dynamic that no one group of children is like another. This flexibility allows our teachers the opportunity to assess the nature of their group and design plans accordingly.



Library

Children's and adults' books (mostly on aspects of parenting) are located in the office and in every classroom, and may be checked out using the form available from any Lead or Associate Teacher. As the form states, when a book is checked out there is an obligation to return it or pay for its replacement.

Our children's library expands as CCC families purchase books through the Scholastic, Firefly or Trumpet Book Clubs. The Center receives credit to purchase books based on the amounts you, as parents, buy for your children. From October to June you will receive a monthly, four-page catalog and order form for at least one of these clubs. Ordering is optional.

Each fall, the Children's Center sponsors a weeklong Book Fair. The main purpose of the Fair is to offer parents a convenient venue and opportunity to purchase books for their children. The Center also benefits from the Book Fair, receiving a percentage of the sales in the form of additional books for the children.

Center Operating Policies

Sign-in, Sign-out

Each day your child(ren) must be brought into the classroom by an adult. As mandated by State Law, the adult must sign his/her full name on the sign-in sheet. The same is also required at pick-up time. Only adults who are authorized on the emergency cards will be allowed to pick up any child. Please make sure that a teacher knows when your child has arrived or is leaving.

Daily Schedule

Your child's schedule will vary according to the group s/he is in. Check with his/her Teacher for a detailed schedule, which will also be posted on the bulletin board.

Hours, Late Fees

The Center hours are 7:30 a.m. until 5:45 p.m. Most children arrive between 7:30 and 9:30 a.m., and depart between 3:30 and 5:45 p.m. We ask that you bring your child most days by 9:30 a.m. Parents of Bunnies and Dolphins should call in advance if they wish to bring their child after 11:00 am.

Any pick-up that occurs after 5:45 p.m. will be considered late, and the family will be charged \$5.00 for each five minutes or portion thereof past closing time. This late fee will be used for staff development. Families with two children will need to pay late fees for both children, if arriving at the Center after 5:45 p.m.

At 5:45 p.m. individuals listed on your alternate pick-up list will be contacted unless you have called in with an estimated time of arrival. If you will be late, the courtesy of a phone call will be appreciated, both by your child and the staff; however, the late charge will still be assessed.

Parking

There is a green 30-minute parking zone in front of the Center. Parking is also available in the lots adjacent to the Koala and Dolphin yards, and on public streets.

Gates

It is **imperative** that all doors and gates be **closed and latched** behind you when you enter or leave the center.

Annual Calendar

The Center is open year round. National Holidays are scheduled in conjunction with the Caltech calendar. A typical Holiday calendar will be:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- President's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day

There are also two "floater holidays" determined by the Institute. Traditionally these will be Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. Additionally there will be two scheduled closures each year to facilitate staff training. These closures will be announced in the CCC newsletter and on bulletin boards, well in advance.

Communication

There are many lines of communication available between staff and parents. Each family has a **mailbox**. Because each child is assigned a classroom mailbox you may have multiple mailboxes in more than one classroom attended by your children. (Therefore you may receive multiple copies of announcements.) Please check your mailbox daily for information from Center staff.

Individual teacher mailboxes are also provided in each classroom, should you need to get a message to any classroom teacher. The **office boxes** in each classroom are supplied with paper and pencils and may be used to get a message to anyone in the office. In turn, you may receive messages from administrators in your family classroom mailbox.

The **bulletin boards** in each classroom have news and information regarding events at the Center. Please check them frequently. The following forms are also found on the bulletin boards:

- Medical Dosage Forms
- Sign-in/sign-out sheets. Parents are required by law to sign their child (ren) in and out each day. You must sign in with your full legal signature and the time.
- CCC Board agendas, minutes, and the Director's Report
- Snack menus
- Notice of any contagious illness within the Center
- Upcoming events
- Daily schedules
- Staffing schedules
- Curriculum plans

A **newsletter** is published each month and placed in each family's mailbox [and posted on the website]. Important events, highlights from each group, articles, and fundraising information may be included. If you would like to contribute an article or item in the newsletter, please drop it in the office mailbox.

Another source of information regarding the Children's Center is the **CCC web site**: The address of the home page for the Children's Center at Caltech is www.ccc.caltech.edu. The website provides contact information, driving directions, a center-wide calendar, a copy of this parent handbook, the latest snack menu, the newsletter, minutes from previous Partners meetings, as well as other pertinent information about the Center. Feedback and suggestions regarding the web pages should be sent to ccc-help@caltech.edu.

Parent-Teacher Conferences are held formally at least once a year with each family, and twice a year for new families. Informal conferences can be scheduled at any time by either parents or teacher. Daily, informal chats with teachers are highly encouraged, though the children's presence demands that these be brief.

E-mail: The CCC maintains several mailing lists. Each classroom has a distribution list allowing for e-mail discussion of classroom-related projects or issues, and the Parent-Teacher Partnership also maintains a list. For privacy reasons (and to avoid junk e-mail) we do not publish these addresses on-line. However, they are posted on all of the classroom bulletin boards. We welcome you to add your e-mail address to the list at any time. To be added, removed or change e-mail address information on the mailing list, send your e-mail to ccc-help@caltech.edu.

Finally, in each classroom, there is a **Daybook** in which you may leave and receive messages.

Nutrition

Snacks

Snack menus are posted in the kitchen area and in each classroom. The Center provides nutritious morning and afternoon snacks. Milk is provided with snacks and lunch.

Lunches

If your child's lunch contains perishable items, please place the labeled container in the refrigerator. Remember to label lunch boxes and bags, containers and lids. Please, no glass containers. Uneaten lunch foods will be left in the child's lunch box unless the food is very messy. This allows you to determine the amount/types of food that fit your child's appetite.

Recommendations

Please do not send candy, gum, chocolate, soda pop, high sugared fruit punch or drinks, high sugar cupcakes and other pastries, or marshmallows to the Children's Center. As a guideline, if the first ingredient listed on the container is a form of sugar, please leave it for home snacking. Experience tells us that if a child's lunch contains these items, s/he tends not to eat much of the other foods you send. Bunny and Dolphin parents are requested to not send soup, or loose rice or noodles, as these foods are not compatible with learning positive self-feeding habits and coordination in a group setting.

For safety reasons, no food should be served which is of a size and/or consistency that could cause choking. Specific foods that fall into the "risk category" include, but are not limited to: small nuts, popcorn, cherries with pits, whole grapes (for children two and younger), whole hard-boiled eggs, and hot dogs. If there is a concern about the appropriateness of an item, the Lead Teacher will communicate her/his concern directly to the parents.

CCC has a **"no nuts"** policy. This policy will include but is not limited to peanut butter. For example, it includes walnuts, almonds, hazelnuts, pecans, macadamias, pistachios, and any kind of food that may include any type of nut.

While we know the policy may come as a surprise, let us assure you the decision was not arbitrary. The reason behind this decision is literally a matter of life and death. A few children in the center have a life-threatening allergy to peanuts. If the child should inadvertently come into contact with peanut butter, he/she would immediately develop a severe skin reaction. However, if the child should ingest any amount of it, the outcome may be fatal. Obviously, with a situation of this gravity, it is incumbent upon us to work together to help provide the safest environment for all the children. Unfortunately, this is not something that can be contained in the dining area. For example, if a child has peanut butter on his/her hands and touches the faucet and the allergic child should touch it afterward; a severe and possibly fatal reaction could be triggered.

A few **suggested items** for your child's lunch include: cottage cheese, yogurt, cheese cubes, sliced meat sandwiches, beans, sliced hard-boiled egg, tortillas, pita, rice, corn, potato pancakes, fruit-sweetened cookies, grated carrots, green pepper strips, broccoli or cauliflower "trees", coleslaw, halved cherry tomatoes or grapes, pitted cherries, cooked vegetables of all kinds, peaches, pears, apples, nectarines, or applesauce. The Center provides milk for both morning and afternoon snack and for lunch. You may choose to send juice as an alternative to milk with your child's lunch.

Birthdays

You may celebrate your child's birthday with the group by contributing the morning or afternoon snack. As good nutritional snacks are part of our program, we suggest fruits, crackers and cheese, 100% frozen juice bars, veggies with dip, egg rolls, or biscuits with fruit spread for birthday snacks. We want children to connect feeling special with healthy foods. We will put candles in whatever you provide for the occasion, sing Happy Birthday, read special stories, and, in general, make your child feel special.

Personal Possessions

All items, clothing and other belongings, **must be labeled with your child's name**. Your child should have a complete change of clothing in his/her cubby at all times. The Center has a limited amount of clothing to be loaned for emergencies (for example, to clean up after clothes are soiled by sudden illness or a toileting accident). Center clothes that are loaned to your child must be washed and returned to the Center by the following week. When the weather is warm, you may send a bathing suit and towel for water play.

For naptime, your child will need a crib sheet and crib-size blanket. The sheet and blanket **must be labeled with your child's name** and taken home each Friday for laundering. (Crib/mat sheets are laundered daily in the Bunny class by housekeeping staff.) If you wish, a comforting stuffed animal or doll may be brought to the Center for naptime.

Children are often eager to bring toys from home to the Center; however, the risk of damage, lost parts or misplacing the toy is great. The Center staff cannot be responsible for toys or

games brought from home. For "sharing", we encourage bringing age-appropriate books, tapes and "discoveries" such as corncobs, seedpods, feathers, interesting leaves, sprouting onions, shells or pebbles. These treasures are often displayed in the science area where they stimulate discussion and exploration. Be sure to label any items your child wants back; otherwise the Center and its staff cannot be responsible for them.

Clothing

Children should be dressed **comfortably** for the day's probable weather and temperature. Layers are best! As much as possible, children should wear **clothes that can be soiled** without it being a source of anxiety for them or frustration for you. Our paints are supposed to be washable, but occasionally they don't completely wash out. Children usually, but not always, wear paint smocks.

Shoes: Sneakers are best! In hot summer weather, sturdy sandals are acceptable. Active children need either to go barefoot, which we allow for many activities, or wear supportive, soft-soled, flexible non-skid shoes. No flip-flops please, and no boots or shiny-soled "party" shoes.

Health and Safety

We will always inform you of any contagious disease or condition occurring in your child's group, with a printed notice next to the sign-in sheet. As part of the enrollment process, parents are required to sign a **Medical Emergencies Consent Slip**, which provides the Center with information concerning the child's physician, drug and medication allergies as well as a medical release. Parents must notify the Center **immediately** of changes in emergency and identification information, including a change of physician.

Sick Child Policy

When in doubt about your child's health, keep him/her home. Please remember that the teachers and other children may catch the illness that an ill child may bring to school. Keep your child home if s/he:

- is in the first three days of a cold
- has a sore throat
- has had a rectal temperature greater than 100, with or without other symptoms, in the past 24 hours
- has been vomiting in the past 24 hours
- has had diarrhea in the past 24 hours
- has impetigo (strep or staph infection on the skin)
- has an untreated conjunctivitis ("pink eye")
- has any unidentified rash
- or any other contagious disease or condition

Please notify your child's teacher if your child has not been feeling well, or is acting "out of sorts", or has been exposed to head lice, chicken pox, measles, meningitis or any other contagious disease. Additionally, a green nasal discharge may indicate an infection requiring treatment by a physician. Please notify your child's teacher or the office if your child has contracted any of the above mentioned conditions.

If your child becomes ill while at school, you will be contacted to discuss the symptoms and you may be asked to take the child home within one hour. Your child may return to class

after s/he is free of the above symptoms for 24 hours. If your child has a fever, he or she may not return to the center until she or he is fever free without the aid of fever reducing medication for at least 24 hours. Glendale Adventist Hospital offers care for mildly ill children.

Medication

We understand that children will occasionally need to take medicine at school. Your child's Teacher will administer the medicine; however, you are required to complete a Medical Dosage Form and only medication in its original bottle will be dispensed. Blank forms are on the Parent Bulletin Board in each classroom. Center staff will administer medication only once per day. If a child needs to receive medication more than once in 6-8 hours, the child must be kept home.

No over the counter medication will be given to any child unless directed and approved by the physician. The physician should prescribe specific amounts and intervals for a specific condition before any medication is administered. If your child has a chronic medical condition, you will need to have a Physician Instruction Form, Chronic Condition on file with your child's teacher.

Medication Reminder: Please do not send medication of any kind in your child's lunch. Medication in its original bottle, labeled with your child's name and dosage, should be given to your child's Teacher, who will place it in a locked box, either on or inside the refrigerator.

Car Seats

We also remind you to use child safety seats for all children under six years of age or under 60 pounds, and to use safety belts at all times. Children must be secured in an appropriate child passenger restraint (safety seat or booster seat) until they are at least 6 years old or weigh at least 60 pounds.

Discipline

The goal of positive guidance or discipline is to help children learn to consider and respect others and the environment around them, as well as to feel secure and in control of himself or herself. Young children need to learn what is acceptable and how to live cooperatively with others. Self-discipline is the ultimate goal we set for the children. We strive to make each child intrinsically motivated to value accepted behaviors.

At the Center, clear and consistent age appropriate limits on behavior are set. The environment is arranged in such a manner as to minimize the necessity of limits, and children are allowed to participate in the decision making process. As the Children's Center at Caltech has a strong commitment to developing a positive sense of self-esteem and independent, responsible and caring behavior on the part of the children, we approach discipline in a positive rather than punitive manner. Teachers model appropriate behavior and provide positive reinforcement, praising children for exhibiting those behaviors. Additionally, the teachers provide reminders and cues as to acceptable behavior, as well as facilitate problem solving amongst the children.

When unacceptable behavior occurs, the first course of action is positive redirection, with the understanding that the child may return to an area or activity when they are able to use proper behavior. Toddlers and two-year-old children are given many, many messages and reminders, both verbally and physically, from teachers regarding what is appropriate and safe.

At no time will a child be struck, roughly handled, verbally abused, or demeaned. Bullying will not be tolerated. This behavior is categorically prohibited. This rule applies to all adults and children on the CCC premises.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

All staff working with children are mandated by the State of California to report any suspected child abuse or neglect. Reports, by law, are made without prior notification to parents, to the Protective Services Division of the local Department of Social Services. Signs of abuse and neglect include, but are not limited to: bruises, burns, prolonged inability of the child to interact with or relate to staff and/or children, or inflammation or other abnormal appearance of genitals.

We ask that you tell us the cause of visible bruises, etc. that have been incurred at home, and we in turn will notify you of the circumstances surrounding any injuries sustained at school.

One other item considered to be child neglect is leaving an unattended child in a car. If a staff member observes an unattended child in a car, she or he will mention it to the child's parent.

The Center rarely makes child abuse calls, and we earnestly wish to work in partnership with parents. For further information regarding the Child Abuse Reporting law, you may consult the Attorney General's Child Abuse Prevention Handbook in the Children's Center Office.

Disaster Preparedness

Fire and Emergency drills

Fire and emergency drills are conducted monthly to familiarize staff and children with disaster procedures. The usual evacuation destinations for each group are:

- Bunnies, Penguins and Dolphins: the grassy area north of Avery
- Koalas, Raccoons and Beavers: west parking lot behind play yards

Emergency Supplies

The Children's Center keeps emergency supplies on hand in the event of a major disaster when children might need to remain at the Center.

Emergency Evacuations

After a major disaster, if the Center facilities are considered safe by the staff of the Caltech Housing Department and Physical Plant, the children will be kept at the Center. If necessary, an alternate facility will be determined by the Institute. If the children have been moved elsewhere, information will be posted at all the regular entrances to the Center.

The Children's Center is included in Caltech's Disaster Preparedness plan, which provides shelter, food, water and basic medical attention for a 72-hour period. Children will be released only to a parent or designate listed on your **Emergency Information Form** kept on file at the Center.

Air Quality

The Children's Center is aware of and concerned about air quality. We consult with the AQMD and refer to the Lead Teacher's discretion to ensure the air quality is within a healthy range before going outside to play. Sometimes physically restricted outdoor play (no running or wheel toys) may be our response. The AQMD phone number, for your reference, is 1-800-242-4022.

Dismissal Policy

We want to partner with parents to solve any discipline problem. However, **physical or emotional abuse of another child or teacher, which is determined to be excessive or repetitious by the Staff and Director, will be grounds for dismissal.**

Following is an outline of steps that will be taken before dismissal will be considered:

- Initially, a parent conference will be scheduled to discuss the behavior(s) needing to be addressed, and to develop a plan to correct them.
- An outside assessment may be appropriate to help evaluate the problem and assist in developing a plan to correct it. This may result in additional cost to the parent.
- Next, a reasonable amount of time will be given for improvement in the child's behavior. Another parent conference will be scheduled to evaluate the child's progress.
- Finally, if the behavior persists, and cannot be resolved to the Center's and the parents' satisfaction, it may be determined by the Director and Staff that the program does not meet the child's needs. At that time it may be necessary to withdraw the child from the program.

Parents' non-support of or non-adherence to Children's Center policies will be cause for dismissal.

Grievances

It is the Children's Center policy to establish and maintain the necessary atmosphere for healthy Staff and Parent relationships. As a vital part of this process, participants in the program must have the opportunity to submit complaints or grievances arising from work situations. The Center has provided a grievance procedure designed to give such matters careful consideration and bring them to a fair and speedy resolution. All grievance issues will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Traditionally, most adults contribute to the CCC environment in a happy, healthy and harmonious manner. However, we understand that from time to time situations may arise that need to be addressed. We believe that grievances and personal complaints are best handled informally and expeditiously. Parents are encouraged to speak to their Lead Teacher or to the Director with concerns, questions and suggestions. In the event that further steps need to be taken for resolution of the parents' concern, following are the steps for filing and resolution of grievances is in place:

Step I - A written notice should be submitted to the Center Director clearly outlining the issues to be addressed. The Director will make a reasonable effort to obtain the necessary facts and to resolve the issue immediately. When appropriate, parents may request that the Director set up a special meeting with one or more affected staff in order to provide a forum in which to discuss the grievance issues. The Center Director will do fact gathering and respond to the parent no later than 10 working days from the date the grievance was first received.

Step II - In the event a mutually satisfactory solution has not been reached as a result of having explored avenues available within the Center administration, the parent may proceed in the following manner: A) the parent should write a clear, concise statement of the grievance, B) outline his or her understanding of the decision given by the Center Director and C) include his or her desired remedy or correction. This information must be completed and provided to the Chairperson of the Personnel Committee of the Board of Trustees within 10 working days from the Center Director's final decision, or from the date it was due under Step I above. The Personnel Committee will then obtain a written statement from the Center Director outlining her/his views on the matter, the basis for the decision rendered, and all actions taken to resolve the matter within the Center. The Personnel Committee will take all the above information under advisement.

Step III - The Personnel Committee will review and discuss the parent's appeal and will provide a response within ten (10) working days. A meeting to discuss the response may be requested.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Extra curricular activities are for the purpose of providing fresh experiences and learning opportunities for the children. Center teachers present related curriculum both before and following onsite presentations or field trips.

All children take walking trips on Campus, a nearby park, the fire station, the library and the surrounding neighborhood. We feel this gives the children a sense of belonging in the community. Whenever possible, the center hires guest performers such as artists, musicians, and puppeteers. Additionally, various hands-on experiences are made available to the children through visitors to the CCC. Among the many visitors to the Center, the aquarium, petting zoo, dental van, Pasadena Humane Society, and fire engines are regulars. Each of these is a valuable addition to our diverse program. Older groups may also go on bus trips to places such as the Arboretum, the Zoo, the Page Museum, Kidspace, and Descanso Gardens.

For safety and liability reasons, when children are transported offsite by vehicles, we use buses and professional drivers who have been pre-approved by the Caltech Insurance Office. These school buses have seat belts and high padded seat backs; children's own safety seats may be used with the belts. Parents preferring to drive their own child may do so. **If you prefer not to have your child go on the trip but still need care, let the office know no later than two days before the field trip** and alternate care at the Center will be arranged.

A sign-up sheet is posted on the bulletin board for field trip by bus at least a week before the trip. Please watch for this and indicate on the sheet whether your child, and/or yourself and, will be participating or not. If you would like to bring a sibling not enrolled at the Center, you may do so, however, you will need to transport that child in your own automobile and will be responsible for that child throughout the outing.

Children not regularly attending the Center on the day of a bus field trip are invited on these trips for the duration of the trip only. For instance, a Tuesday/Thursday child is welcomed on a Friday trip. If your child is in this category, be sure to sign up on the field trip sheet, and be sure to pick up your child at the end of the announced time of the trip, usually between 1:00 and 2:00 p.m. The **cost of any extra curricular activity is included in the tuition for enrolled children**. Parents may be asked to pay actual costs incurred for themselves and/or siblings.

We encourage parents to accompany us on field trips. The children benefit greatly from having an adult accessible to chat with, who can expand the experiences and sights of the trip.

To receive work hour credit for attending a field trip, a parent must take the responsibility to be a "walking partner" for one or more children throughout the entire trip. If two parents come, work hour credit will be given each parent if they each take the responsibility to be a "walking partner" for one or more child(ren) throughout the entire field trip.

Transition to a New Group

The children are grouped by age and development. Vacancies often occur over the summer, as our oldest children leave the Center to go to kindergarten. Additionally, as vacancies occur throughout the school year, children may move up to the next group. Your child's Lead Teacher will consult with you about such a move. If there is agreement on the move, your child will begin visiting his/her new class, increasing the length of the visit each day. This gives your child the opportunity to get acquainted with his/her new teachers and "classmates". When your child moves into his/her new class, your child's name will be included on the new group's sign-in sheet, s/he will have a cubby and you will have a new mailbox.

Admission and Waiting List

Parents who wish to apply for admission are encouraged to make an appointment to tour the Center. Applications for the wait list are available in the office or online at www.ccc.caltech.edu. Upon receipt of the application, the child's name is added to the wait list. Caltech, JPL, and Huntington Library families are added to the CIT (California Institute of Technology) affiliates wait list. Within the CIT wait list, siblings of children already at the Center receive priority. As openings occur, age-appropriate children are selected from the wait list based on application date to fill any vacancy in a class. There is also a separate Community wait list for applicants who are not affiliated.

The Children's Center at Caltech supports the value of inclusion-the right of all children, regardless of their diverse abilities, to participate actively in natural settings with their peers. At the Children's Center, this means that we will, on a provisional basis, accept children with special needs who meet the waiting list criteria stated above. Depending on the nature and extent of the disability, continued enrollment will depend on frequent and on-going staff-parent communication, and on careful and continuous assessment of the viability of the arrangement for all concerned.

Parent Work Hours

We believe it is developmentally beneficial for children to know and feel the importance of their own daily care and education. We believe children are most influenced by their own parents and more readily adopt for themselves the values they observe in their parent(s). **Modeling esteem for your child's school and respect for teachers can make our job easier, too!**

Two-parent families agree to contribute twenty (20) hours per year, and Single-parent families agree to contribute ten (10) hours per year. Work hours may be waived by paying \$25.00 per hour (\$500 per year for two-parent families, \$250 per year for single-parent families).

The work-hours obligation must be fulfilled during the period from October 1 through September 30 of any school year. Unless other arrangements have been made, a **minimum of ten (10) hours, or five (5) hours for single parents, must be completed by March 31**. Families will be billed for hours not completed by March 31 and the charge will appear on their May statement. You may, of course, earn and be credited for more than the minimum requirement by March 31. Remaining work hours must be completed by September 30.

Families enrolling after October 1 will have their work obligation prorated at the rate of ninety (90) minutes per full month for two parent families.

Parents may earn work hours in a variety of ways. Some examples are: preparing teaching materials, serving as a committee member for a fundraising event, participation in classroom activities (i.e., assisting a teacher with a special project), sewing, membership on the Board of Directors (a one year commitment fulfills obligation), Room Parent, participation on a field trip as a "walking partner" for at least one child, attendance at a parent function such as Options for Elementary School, or Open House, or attending Board meetings. Work hours are not earned simply by participating in a fundraising event (i.e., selling tickets or items for a fundraiser).

Each family is required to fulfill no less than 4 hours (2 hours for a single parent) by participating in a **Saturday work morning**. Families are exempt from this requirement if their work job already fulfills their annual commitment, or if families choose the payment option. A detailed Job Listing is distributed each fall.

Parents will be responsible for reporting any work hours completed by indicating such on the "Tuition Payment" envelope, which is provided in each classroom or the office. When returning your monthly tuition payment, simply print your family name on the envelope and indicate the dates and hours you worked during the previous month and the work performed.

Fundraising

The Children's Center Board sponsors three or four fundraising projects each year. We sell gift-wrap every year, Tupperware and puppets some years, and we encourage you to dine out on certain nights at restaurants that give us a percentage of their profit.

A steady fundraising project that is almost effortless is the grocery E-SCRIP. The Center receives a percentage. We encourage every family to sign-up for grocery e-scrip designating the Center as beneficiary.

Parents are expected to contribute to fundraising for the Center by participating in fundraising events and by contributing money to annual giving campaigns.

Tuition

Deposit and Payment Contract

The initial non-refundable deposit of \$500.00 is due upon acceptance of enrollment packet. This deposit may be credited to the last month's tuition with 30 days-advanced written notice. Monthly tuition is paid in advance and is due on the **first** of each month. Please make a written request to the office to receive a monthly **receipt**. Thereafter you will receive the receipts in your family classroom mailbox. **There is no tuition credit for vacation or sick days.**

Diaper Charges

There will be a standard charge per month for children using diapers, which factors in how many days a child attends. The price also includes the cost of disposable gloves, and changing paper. The diaper charge, like tuition, is charged whether or not your child is present.

Tuition Payment

"Tuition is due" reminders will be posted in the rooms every month. To assure proper credit for payments and Parent Work Hours, please return your monthly payment in the envelope provided. Write your family name in the space provided. If you are submitting Parent Work Hours, fill in the number of hours, the date and the name of the activity in which you participated. Place the tuition payment envelope in the office mailbox provided in any classroom.

Tuition Late Fee

If payment is received after the fifth of the month, a late fee of \$10 will be charged to your account. Money collected will be used for staff development. If payment is not received by the morning of the tenth, your child may not attend school that day unless the late payment has been discussed with the Director prior to 2:00 p.m. of the ninth. The Director has the authority to negotiate whatever payment plan is appropriate to bring the account up to date. Late payments received after the tenth will have an additional late fee of 5% of the outstanding balance assessed. The only exception will be if the fifth or tenth falls on a weekend; the condition will apply on the following Monday. If a child's tuition is one month in arrears his/her enrollment will be terminated. If a child's account has been delinquent after the tenth four times during the school year (October to September), enrollment will be terminated.

Attendance and Extra Days

Children may attend only those days that are reserved for them at the time of enrollment. Rescheduling and exceptions may be arranged with the Lead Teacher and/or the Assistant Director. Parents are requested to inform us in advance, whenever possible, if a child will not attend regularly scheduled days. This way spaces are freed for other parents' needs. As spaces become available, additional days may be used if a Lead Teacher or the Assistant Director gives permission. For these non-reserved **extra days**, the fees vary depending on the child's age group. You will be required to pay the Teacher on that day at drop off time.

Tuition Assistance

The Center's overall goal in offering tuition assistance is to provide help to those who need it most. Funds for tuition assistance are limited and can only be offered on the basis of availability. Parents are expected to contribute towards tuition to the extent they are able. Assistance is offered for a specified period of time and is subject to review at the end of that period. Factors considered in determining need include income and expenses, amount of savings and number of dependents.

Schedule Changes

Withdrawal from the Children's Center or reduction/increase of the number of days per week enrolled requires 30-day notice to the Office (just informing your child's Lead Teacher is not sufficient). The notice must be in writing. If less notice is given, tuition will be charged as follows: tuition for one month, minus the number of days (if any) for which the notice was given.

Transitions and Matriculation Fee

As your child makes transitions into different rooms or you request a schedule change, please complete a new tuition contract. Usually, as your child moves into an older classroom your tuition decreases.

Annual Re-Registration

Once a year usually during the fall every child will need to **re-register**. This will be a \$25 fee to update all your emergency information on file; parent participation status, to make any needed adjustments to your tuition contract, and fill in any of your child's immunization records.



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Hours: 7:30 AM - 5:45 PM

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