

Orfalea Child Development Center at Ventura College

Family Handbook



Lic# 561711563 and 56171564

Welcome!

Dear Families,

Welcome to the **award-winning** Orfalea Child Development Center at Ventura College! We are excited that you have joined our program and hope that you have a great year with us.

This handbook was prepared to answer your questions—please keep it to refer to throughout the year. If you take the time to familiarize yourself with our program policies and procedures, it will help the program run more smoothly and help ensure that your child has the best possible experience here. Contact phone numbers and e-mail addresses are included on the next page—please feel free to call or e-mail if we can be of help.

Sincerely,

The Child Development Center Director and Staff

Contact Information

College Phone Numbers

Front Office (805) 289-6030

Director's Office (805) 289-6144

Office fax line (805) 289-6035

Campus Police (805) 289-6486

Center Director

Amanda Picard, apicard@vcccd.edu

Classroom Teacher Associates

Blanca Galicia

Shirley Irwin

Classroom Teacher Assistants

Alma Garcia

Our website: <https://www.venturacollege.edu/child-development-center>.

There you will find information on all campus programs and services, as well as current and future schedules of classes.

Mission

We are committed to providing the highest quality early care and education program for the children and families we serve and to serve as a model and learning laboratory for students in the Ventura College Child Development instructional program.

Philosophy

We believe in the importance of active, child-led, hands-on learning for children. We understand that the preschool years are a critical time for brain development and so we provide a rich environment with a wide variety of stimulating activities and foster positive teacher-child relationships. We use an intentional teaching approach to nurture the whole child and provide for their physical, social, emotional, and cognitive growth. We use teachable moments and allow the children's interests to influence the curriculum to encourage every child to reach their individual potential. We recognize that while children pass through stages of development, which occur sequentially, each child is also a unique individual, growing and developing according to their own internal timetable. We believe in the importance of providing a positive first school experience to set the stage for a lifelong love of learning. We celebrate the diversity of the families we serve and the community in which we live by encouraging active participation in the program and sharing of each family's experiences and culture.

Program Goals

In accordance with our philosophy, we have developed the following goals:

1. Provide an environment where children are free to explore using their own sense of wonder and curiosity.
2. Support children in their developing sense of self: facilitate the development of a positive self-image and growing sense of autonomy.
3. Promote an awareness of the world in which the child lives. Encourage acceptance and respect for the rights of others as well as the classroom environment.
4. Respect the primary role of the family in children's lives. Work effectively with families to create a program which operates in the best interest of each child and family.
5. Provide a positive initial school experience for children and foster a lifelong love of learning as a strong foundation for their education.
6. Collaborate with each family to help each child thrive and fully commit to the success of each child.
7. Invite families to share their skills, experiences, and culture with the children through volunteer work, presentation, etc.

About Us

The Orfalea Child Development Center at Ventura College (OCDC) is located on the western part of the Ventura College campus at the corner of Telegraph Road and West Campus Way. Our toddler and preschool program emphasize active, hands-on learning. The Center also serves as a preschool laboratory for college students studying Child Development. The Center serves VC students, faculty and staff families, as well as community families.

Our program is named the Orfalea Child Development Center at Ventura College in honor of Paul Orfalea, the founder of Kinko's, who made a very generous financial endowment to the Center. We continue to receive support from the Orfalea Family Foundation and network with other programs endowed by the foundation.

The OCDC provides classrooms for children aged two through five years. The program provides a well-balanced curriculum with emphasis on children's social and emotional skills and developing a sense of autonomy. We are an award-winning STEM Program. STEM includes science, technology, engineering, and math. In addition, our program includes many other learning opportunities that promote language and literacy, creative art, dramatic play, sensory experiences, large and small motor and muscle development, music and movement, self-awareness, and the appreciation of diversity within the classroom. Children's growing social and emotional skills are practiced in daily collaborative problem solving opportunities with peers. These skills are strengthened by the Center's daily small and large group times as well as indoor and outdoor activities.

Center Staff

The Center is staffed with a **Director, Teachers, Teacher Assistants** (Student Workers/Provisionals), **Interns** and **Lab Students**. The **Teachers** facilitate the planning and implementing of curriculum, oversee the supervision of children and instruct our Teacher Assistants, Interns and Lab Students. Teacher Assistants help Teachers with planning, implementing daily activities, and supervision.

Interns are current students who are participating in a program with the Child Development Department to provide more experience working with young children. **Lab Students** are VC Child Development college students working towards their practicum hours and observations hours. **Interns** and **Lab Students** are not subject to the same clearance requirements as paid staff members. Their participation in our program is an important part of their preparation for work in the field, but they are not counted in our adult-to-child ratios and do not supervise children outside the presence of **Teachers** and **Teacher Assistants**.

Program Schedule

Hours of Operation

7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday – Friday when college classes are in session.

Days of Closure: The OCDC follows the [instructional calendar of Ventura College](#). If you would like a copy of this calendar, please ask the Center Director or click on the link above.

VC Scheduled Holidays: Campus Winter Break, Campus Spring Break, and Campus Summer Break (Days outside of our summer program), in addition to: Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving (Th/Fri), Martin Luther King, Jr Holiday and Washington's Birthday/President's Day, Cesar Chavez Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, and Independence Day.

Program Schedule Options

Fees are established at the time of enrollment, according to your child's specific schedule and age. The tuition options are:

- I. Morning Program: 9:00am-12:00pm
- II. Extended Program: 7:30am-3:30pm
- III. Full Day Program: 7:30am-5:00pm

In addition to these options, the OCDC offers an Early Bird (7:30-9:00am) option and a Lunch Bunch (12:00pm-1:00pm) option. For more information about these fees and the fee schedule please see the "Fee Schedule" section on the next page.

Families may choose to use only part of that time but must purchase the whole block.

Summer Camp Program

8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Monday – Thursday, running for 8 consecutive weeks, beginning when the Spring semester ends in May.

For Ventura College students:

In order to qualify for student rates, a child's parent or legal guardian must enrolled in 6 or more units at Ventura College for that semester and they must maintain that enrollment. If enrollment falls below 6 units during a semester, fees for the remaining months will be calculated at staff/community rates and a child may be dropped from the program if it is found that a family should not have had priority for enrollment. There is a 20% discount for all Ventura College Students.

Fee Schedule

For current fees and schedule please see the center website: [VC Child Development Center](#)

(You can also search “Child Development Center” on the Ventura College website)

Note: A child is considered a toddler until they are 3 years old and independent, being fully toilet trained.

Early Bird and Lunch Bunch Options and Policy

Families who enroll their child in the Morning Preschool Program can add on the Early Bird and/or Lunch Bunch extended care options. The Early Bird option is an additional \$10 for one hour or \$15 for the full hour and half, (7:30 am – 9:00am). The Lunch Bunch option is an additional \$10 for the one hour of extended stay, (12:00pm – 1:00pm). The amount of time or time frame offered with the Early Bird and Lunch Bunch cannot be extended or altered.

- To ensure adequate staffing for children, parents must sign up for Early Bird and/or Lunch Bunch at least one month *prior*.
- Family must also notify the OCDC *at least* within 24 hours, to inquire about their child attending early or have their child stay late for a specific day.

Fee Schedule & Payment

Fee Payments are due **in advance** of attendance. Tuition must be paid to the Student Business Office. Payments are collected the first week of the month from the credit card on file. **(805) 289-6488.**

An automatic \$25 late fee will be charged on the 15th of the month if tuition has not been received for that month. Families are asked to contact the Center director or the Student Business Office for any questions regarding tuition, charges/fees, or payments.

*Once the semester has begun, schedule changes are subject to a \$50 fee.

Tuition payments are due according to the following schedule:

- Upcoming Fall Semester deposit is due in May, before the Fall Semester.
- Upcoming Spring Semester deposit is due in December, before the Spring Semester.
- August and January tuition payments are due the first week of the month (when the center is not open).
- December and May tuition are paid through the deposits paid with original Fall/Spring enrollment.
- All of other months: February, March, April, September, October, November, tuition is due the first week of the month.

^ Vacations, holidays, sick days, professional development days, and any unforeseen closures due to safety are embedded into the yearly tuition cost that is divided into the monthly payments.

Schedule Changes

During the College add and drop period (the first two weeks of fall and spring semesters), student families can request schedule changes which will take effect as soon as the director approves them, depending on space available. After the add and drop period ends, there will be a \$50.00 processing fee for all schedule change requests approved. Once the semester has begun for community families or the drop period is over, schedule changes are subject to a \$50 fee. Requests for schedule changes must be made in advance and will be approved based on space available and Center staffing. Extra Hours/Schedule Change Request forms are available in the office.

Registration/Enrollment

Our Center begins a new waiting list each Fall semester. We believe continuity and consistency to be especially important for children; therefore, children already attending OCDC have the opportunity to pre-register for the next session before any new children are accepted into the program. Children are selected for enrollment at the Center according to the priority ranking established by the college (Ventura College students, staff members and community members), by the date they sign up for the session's waiting list and by vacancies in particular classrooms. In order to receive Ventura College student status each semester, a child's parent or legal guardian must maintain enrollment in at least six units of college coursework during that particular semester. Student parents who fall below the six-unit level or who are no longer attending Ventura College may continue to enroll their child in the program as space allows, but they move from student to community member status. A \$50.00 non-refundable registration fee is required when your child is first accepted at the Center and a \$35.00 non-refundable registration fee will be required to register for each session thereafter. In addition, if after registering a child at the Center a parent decides not to start their child in the program, the Director must be notified **at least two weeks** before the first day of the semester or your deposit will not be refundable.

Newly enrolled families must complete the following:

1. Emergency Card LIC 700
2. Permission Forms
3. Consent for Emergency Medical Treatment LIC 627
4. Preadmission Health History Parent Report LIC 702
5. Physician's Report (vision and hearing tests) LIC 701
6. Verification of current immunizations and need for TB test or medical waiver form completed by child's physician (blue card PM286)
7. Acknowledgement of Health Policy
8. Notification of Parents' Rights Form LIC 995
9. Notification of Personal Rights LIC 613A
10. Pesticide Registry Form: if choosing to register
11. Service Contract
12. Student Parents: verification of student status must be provided each session in order to qualify for student rates.

Early Drop-off/Late Pick-up Policy

Families are required to drop-off and pick-up their children at the time set in their service contract. There is no grace period on the drop-off time, but a grace period of five minutes will be given at pick-up time. A penalty fee of \$1.00 per minute is charged for children dropped off early (before their scheduled time) or picked up more than five minutes late. **After three late pick-ups in one semester, late fees will be doubled for the rest of the semester.**

Family Participation

It is important to us that Center staff work in partnership with program families so that each child receives the greatest benefit of attending preschool. We encourage families to take on an active role in participating in the classroom with such activities as volunteering in the classroom, providing a guest presentation to the children, attending family conferences and family events, preparing classroom materials at home (please return materials in a timely manner), etc. While we hope that every family will choose to volunteer, we understand that this may not work for all. Family participation is encouraged but not required. However, family participation comes in many different forms, so we encourage every family to discuss participation ideas with the Center staff so each family can participate fully in a manner that suites them best. All adult (family) volunteers are required to show proof of the MMR, DTap, and flu vaccines, and of a negative TB test (within 2 years) prior to entering the center.

Coffee Talk with a Teacher

To help strengthen the partnership between educators and families, there will be an opportunity during drop off on select days throughout the school year to connect with a teacher and enjoy a hot beverage. Families are welcome to attend all Coffee Talk events, regardless of whether the host teacher is associated with your child's classroom or not. Dates, times, and the host teacher will be posted before each event. There is no need to sign up for this event; we invite families to join when it best suits their schedule.

Getting Started

Whether your child is two years old or five years old, saying good-bye is hard for almost everyone in the beginning and it is typical for parents to have mixed feelings. This may be the first experience you have had with leaving your child with a professional caregiver or it may be the next step in care for your child as you work or study. Whatever your particular situation, it is important that you allow you and your child time to adapt to this new setting. The OCDC staff is here to assist and support you with your good-byes each day. In order to help create a smooth transition for everyone, we ask that you schedule a visit so that you and your child can meet his or her new teacher and see the classroom prior to your child's first day of attendance.

A few things that may also help:

- Talk to your child about your new routines and what to expect in advance.
- Meet with your child's teacher prior to the first day to share any information or answer questions you may have.
- Consider gradually increasing your child's hours over a period of days.
- Meet with the Director if you have any other questions or concerns.
- Make sure that the Center has correct phone numbers where you or another family member can be reached should it be necessary for Center staff to contact you.
- Consider providing a comfort item such as a photo of you and your child, a favorite blanket or stuffed animal for your child to keep in their cubby. Many children find the presence of such familiar items comforting and reassuring.

Along with these few suggestions, please take the time to carefully read the list of items you will need to bring on the first day of school.

What to bring on the first day of school:

1. A change of clothes (including underwear) **with each item clearly labeled with your child's name.** Clothes will be stored in your child's cubby to be used in case your child gets wet or excessively dirty. When clothes go home to be laundered, they should be replaced so that there is always a fresh change for your child.
2. A jacket or sweater which can be left in your child's cubby, clearly labelled with their name. (The weather in Ventura is very unpredictable)
3. If packing lunch for your child to eat at school, it needs to be packed in a lunchbox or sack clearly labeled with their name. *Please be mindful of expiration dates on perishables.
4. If your child wears diapers or Pull-ups, please bring a small pack with a box of wipes. These will be stored in your child's diaper cubby near the changing table and should be replenished as needed. If your child does not have any diapers or Pull-ups left and needs to be changed, we will borrow one from the Center supply. Families will be asked to replace this borrowed diaper by the end of the month in addition to promptly replenishing their child's supply.

Parking/Entering the Center

Several short-term parking spots are located directly behind the Center building. Parking in other spaces in the lots adjacent to and across from the Center requires a valid parking pass outside of immediate drop-off and pick-up times. All vehicles must park in marked stalls. Please only park in the disabled parking stall if you have a pass. Please DO NOT park along the curb in the front or corner the Center. Doing so may also result in a ticket.

Under Kaitlyn's Law (SB 255) children aged six or under may not be left in a motor vehicle unless someone twelve years or older is there to supervise and the keys are not left in the vehicle. Children's safety is our number one concern – if a young child is found unattended in a vehicle a staff member will stay with the child until their parent can be located and Campus Police will be notified. The streets and parking lot around the Center can be remarkably busy, so please

carefully supervise your child whenever entering or leaving the center. Please also do not leave dogs or pets animals unattended in the car while dropping off or picking your child up from the center.

Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures

The front doors to the facility are unlocked during drop-off and pick-up times. A sign-in/sign-out QR Code will be located with your child's teacher. This location is different per class and per time but remains consistent day to day. The front doors remain locked during center hours for the safety of the children and staff. If you come to the center when the doors are locked, please ring the bell. We ask for your patience, sometimes it takes time to get to the door because we are tending to children, but someone will come to the door. To avoid this, we encourage all parents/guardians who want to come to the center during center hours, to schedule a time with the director to come to the center so we can be ready for your arrival. State licensing regulations require that all parents sign their child in and out each day **using their full signature**. In addition to being legally required, proper sign-in and sign-out is important for your child's safety. In an emergency, that day's attendance would be used to determine whether all children have been accounted for. If on a particular day you cannot be reached by the phone numbers listed on your yellow Emergency Locator form, please leave a number where you can be reached for that day.

At drop off, please be sure to leave your child with a staff member: do not leave them in an empty classroom or ask them to walk alone to find their class on the yard. Upon pick-up, please let one of your child's teachers know that they are leaving the Center. You must also remember to sign your child out.

You may authorize others to transport your child from the Center if they are eighteen years of age or older, listed on the Identification and Emergency Information form in your child's file and in the approved pick up list on the Brightwheel App. If traveling by car, the person must have a child safety seat appropriate for your child. If the adult transporting your child is not listed on the form, we cannot release your child to that person. The adult picking your child up from the center will be asked to show photo identification before being permitted into the classroom.

Idling Vehicles: In accordance with CAEYC Accreditation regulation code 5A.25, the OCDC strongly discourages idling vehicles in the parking areas. This promotes an eco-friendly environment and helps decrease the carbon omissions. Children under 12 should not be left in cars alone. Cars may only be kept in idle in extreme heat or cold temperatures to maintain interior or engine temperatures.

Phone use:

We ask that you please refrain from using your phone during drop-off and pick-up times. This enables the director or teacher to speak with you, connect with you and share any moments of your child's day. *Please silence your cell phone while volunteering at the Center.

Health Policy

Understanding that families display enormous trust when they bring their child to a preschool program, we make your child's health and safety our highest priority. As a sick child can expose other children, their families and Center staff to illness, children are not allowed to attend the Center if any of the following conditions exist:

1. A contagious infection has been diagnosed or is suspected
2. A temperature of 100° or higher has occurred within the last 24 hours
3. Diarrhea or vomiting has occurred within the last 24 hours
4. They have a sore throat, earache, cough, lice/nits present in hair or persistent discharge from nose
5. Their activities need to be restricted during the course of the day. Particularly consider whether your child will be able to play outside as usual, as Center staffing does not allow for an adult to stay inside with the child.

The center director reserves the right to ask for a negative COVID test or documentation from physician/professional for any reason before returning to school. We follow county guidelines regarding all community outbreaks and public health matters.

By law, the Center is only permitted to dispense medication to children if it is a prescription medication in the child's name, in its original container with the prescription number on it and a parent or legal guardian completes a medication form in the office. Emergency medications are stored in each classroom in a locked box. Staff/Administrator who administers the medication makes an entry on the medication log kept there.

If a child becomes sick while at the Center, a parent or adult listed on the emergency pick-up list will be called to pick-up the child. A child may be asked to go home if they show any combination of conditions listed above in addition to related factors.

A sick child must be picked up within 30 minutes.

Please notify the Center in case of any infectious disease or illness your child contracts so we can inform staff and parents, as necessary. (In order to protect your privacy, staff will not identify an ill child, but rather will use statements such as "We have a case of chicken pox in the 2-year-old class.") To prevent the spread of illness, a child becomes ill, we will be isolated with a staff member until the child is picked up. This is usually in the center director's office with books and a resting mat.

It is important that you provide the Center with current emergency information, including phone numbers where you can be reached and phone numbers of others who will take responsibility for your child's care so we can contact you immediately in the event of injury or illness. Center staff visually check children each day as they enter school. If your child's classroom teacher feels as though your child is not well enough to participate in the day's activities, they will ask that your child be taken home. Please be aware that if this is your child's first experience in group care, they may be ill more frequently than in the past. **We encourage families to make a plan for alternative care arrangements.**

Immunizations: The immunization chart found on CA State Licensing Form LIC 701 (which is part of the enrollment licensing paperwork) must be filled out by the child's physician and/or a copy of vaccination records from the physician's office is sufficient. We understand if families choose to use the physician approved delayed schedule for vaccinations, however if a family chooses to not vaccinate their child and there is an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease they will be asked to keep their child home and may not return until the center director notifies them that the vaccine-preventable outbreak is resolved.

Sunscreen Authorization

As children can have allergic reactions and sensitivities to various sunscreen formulas, sunscreen is regarded as a medication. Please complete a Sunscreen Authorization form in the office, label the sunscreen you provide with your child's name and give it to your child's classroom teacher. It will be stored in the classroom's locking cabinet, out of the reach of the children. Per accreditation policy, all sunscreen provided from home must be "*non-aerosol sunscreen or sunblock with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher.*" We recommend that you apply your child's sunscreen before they come to the Center each morning; Center staff can reapply it later in the day *as needed*.

Safe Sleep Practices & Protocol

The Orfalea Child Development Center at Ventura College follows all Ca. Dept. of Social Services Community Care Licensing Title 22 regulations to ensure safe sleep and rest practices for young children. Our sleep practices are grounded in health, safety, and respect for each child's individual needs.

Nap and Rest Time Philosophy

Nap or quiet rest is an important part of each child's day. In addition to brain development, it gives the body time to rest, recharge, and prepare for the remainder of the day. Our approach is calm, respectful, and consistent with developmentally appropriate practices for early childhood settings.

Safe Sleep Guidelines

- **Supervised Nap Time:** All children are under continuous visual supervision while napping. A staff member is always present in the room and able to see each child at all times.

- **Scheduled Rest:** Nap/rest periods are offered each day, after lunch. While children are not required to sleep, they are expected to rest quietly on their cots or mats during the designated time.
- **Individual Sleeping Equipment:** Each child is assigned a personal cot or mat, labeled with their name. Spacing is at least 3 feet apart, and/or head-to-toe, in accordance to Title 22 spacing requirements.
- **Cleanliness:** Bedding is stored separately and washed weekly (or more often if soiled). Cots and mats are disinfected regularly to maintain hygiene.
- **Comfort Items:** Children are welcome to bring a small comfort item such as a blanket or stuffed animal. These items are used only during nap time and stored safely outside of that time period.

In Case of Accident

All permanent Center staff are certified in first aid and CPR. In case of minor injury, a Center staff member will administer first aid and fill out an accident report. A copy of the report will be in your cubbie or hand-delivered by a teacher when you pick up your child. An additional copy will be kept in your child's office file. In the event that a physician has ordered a special medical management procedure for a child at our center, an adult trained in the procedure will be on-site whenever the child is present. In case of a significant injury, you or another adult listed on your child's Identification and Emergency Information Form will be contacted immediately and appropriate medical action will be taken. It is the policy of the Center to contact parents in the case of any injury to the head to allow parents the earliest opportunity to seek medical assessment, at the discretion of the parent. Please be sure that you or someone on your emergency form can be reached at all times.

Safety/Emergency Procedures

In addition to the front doors being locked during center hours, all perimeter fence gates remain locked at all times. Staff have keys for these gates to be used during emergency evacuations. Doors leading to the outside remain locked at all times as well. It is important that we be prepared to care for your child under any circumstance. To that end, the Center has emergency planning and preparations in place. Each classroom in the Center is equipped with a red "go bag" filled with emergency supplies. The bag goes with the class when fire drills are conducted, on field trips or in case of a major emergency or disaster. Fire drills are conducted quarterly and earthquake (duck and cover) or shelter in place drills are conducted each semester. The Center's fire alarm system and emergency alarm are monitored by the Maintenance and Operations office and Campus Police, so they can respond quickly if needed.

The Orfalea Child Development Center emergency plan for earthquakes, fire, or other natural disasters is coordinated with the College's Comprehensive Emergency Operations Plan. If there is a major disaster, children will be cared for at the Child Development Center or, if the Center were ever deemed unsafe, the children will be

escorted by their teacher to the designated evacuation area. The Center's primary evacuation area is the softball field batting cages north of the Center. If a secondary evacuation area is necessary, it would be determined dependent on conditions at the time. The College maintains extensive first aid and emergency supplies to be used in the event that children must remain at the Center for an extended period. Families are asked to pick up their child as soon as possible. By law, regular sign-out procedures must be followed, even in the event of an emergency. This means, children must be signed out per typical sign-in/out policy, children may only be released to persons listed on their Emergency Information forms and those persons must present a photo identification. For this reason, we strongly suggest that at least one relative or friend who does not live in the Ventura area be listed on your child's Emergency Information form.

Pesticide Use Policy

As of 2007, all licensed child care facilities in California are required to explain their pesticide management policy to families and give them the opportunity to be notified in advance if any pesticides will be used in the facility. The purpose of the new regulations is to reduce children's exposure to toxic chemicals. Pesticides pose a greater risk for children than to adults because their bodies are smaller and absorb toxins more quickly. It has always been our practice to avoid the use of toxic chemicals in our Center building and grounds whenever possible and to use natural pest management techniques to the greatest extent possible.

By using good pest management strategies on a daily basis, including storing food in sealed containers, keeping areas where foods are prepared and eaten clean, and making sure the building does not have openings where pests could easily enter are strategies, we use to help prevent the use of chemical pesticides. Center staff follow CA state Licensing regulations and use a 1:10 bleach to water cleaning product several times each day to sanitize tables, counter tables, and classroom materials as needed as well as a sterilizing machine with an organic, non-toxic solution at the end of every school day. Dishes and cookware are either washed in the dishwasher in the kitchen or if washed in the classroom, are sprayed with a hydrogen peroxide sanitizing spray.

Should it ever be necessary for pesticides to be used in the Center building or on our grounds, they would be applied by the college Maintenance and Operations staff. Families who had registered to be notified of pesticide use would be notified at least 72 hours in advance. Signs with information regarding the pesticide to be used, and where it would be applied would be posted at least 24 hours in advance and for at least 72 hours afterward. Any pesticide used must be one that has been approved for use on school sites. The college would also be required to complete and submit information to the state regarding the pesticide application.

A form for the Center's pesticide registry was part of your child's enrollment packet. If you would like to update your choices, you may do so at any time in the front

office. If you would like further information regarding pesticide, use at school sites you can go to the Department of Pesticide Regulation's website, www.schoolipm.info.

Food Policy

Eating together at school is a pleasant experience that allows time for conversation. Mealtimes also provide opportunities for children to learn to care for themselves through daily routines such as handwashing, feeding themselves and cleaning up after meals. In addition, staff discuss with children the importance of taking care of our bodies by eating healthful foods.

Breakfast

The OCDC does not serve breakfast to children. We ask that families provide this first meal of the day at home. Receiving appropriate nourishment before arriving will help your child's transition in the morning and sustain them until snack time. Please understand that during morning arrival times, the Center staff is dedicated to communicating with parents, comforting children during good-byes, and setting up educational activities for the day, leaving little room to adequately supervise meals. Together, we can get your child's day off to a good start.

Snack

The Center provides a simple mid-morning snack and an afternoon snack. A snack menu is posted in each classroom. Please let the Director know if your child has any allergies or other special dietary needs.

Lunch

Parents whose children will have lunch at school are asked to provide a nutritious meal for their child, packed ready to eat. **(This means with the proper utensils and with fruit or meat already peeled and/or cut to the proper size.)** We suggest sandwiches, fruit, vegetables, milk, or water. Please send your child food that is nutritious and will fuel their body for a positive day at school. If unhealthy foods are sent to school, we will save them so the child may enjoy them at home. Raisins, dried fruit, applesauce, whole grain crackers, yogurt, etc. are good substitutes for sweets or chips. Please send lunches in a lunch box or bag clearly labeled with your child's name. We recommend including two to three healthy food options as an appropriate-sized lunch for young children. We recognized that children's appetites ebb and flow alongside growth and development. If a child is still hungry after eating their lunch, an extra snack will be offered to them, and if this becomes a pattern, a teacher will communicate with the family to discuss altering lunch portions. Uneaten food will be sent home in the child's lunch box or bag.

In addition, please follow the safety guidelines or avoid sending the foods listed below, as they are the most common causes of choking in toddlers and preschool age children:

Hot dogs – slice lengthwise, rather than in circular “coins”

Grapes – cut in half lengthwise, for an oval shape rather than circular

Carrots – cut in long strips, rather than in circular “coins”

The children look forward to lunchtime as a relaxed, pleasant time providing opportunities for rich conversation between the children and teachers. We encourage a feeling of companionship as everyone is gathered around the table.

If a child forgets to bring lunch with them to school, we ask that their lunch be dropped off by 11:45 am, so the child may enjoy lunch with their classmates at 12:00 noon.

Families are encouraged to use eco-friendly reusable lunchboxes, zipper bags, utensils and/or containers.

Birthdays

Each classroom has its own way to recognize this special occasion. As with all other areas of our program, we recognize that our families come from many diverse backgrounds, cultures, and belief systems. Please feel free to discuss your family's birthday traditions with your child's teacher or to let your child's teacher know if your family does not celebrate birthdays and we will respectfully follow your wishes for your child.

Birthday Snacks

You are welcome to bring a healthy snack to share with your child's class if you would like to do so, but **please notify your child's teacher in advance**. Due to health concerns, all snacks must be store bought and pre-packaged, or prepared in a professional kitchen.

If you are having a celebration for your child outside of school, please do not deliver invitations to school unless **all** the children in your child's classroom are invited.

Clothing

Actively exploring materials such as paint, sand, mud, and water is an important part of your child's experience in our program. We want the children to feel free to participate in all activities without having to worry about getting their good clothes dirty or stained. **We strongly recommend that children wear sturdy, washable play clothes to school.** We encourage children to wear school-provided smocks during painting activities, but they are not forced to do so. Pants with elastic waistbands allow children to manage their bathroom and changing needs more independently.

All children must arrive at school wearing closed-toe, rubber-soled shoes to enable them to participate in large motor activities like riding a tricycle. Shoes also need to have at least a strap on the back to hold children's feet inside. Children may take their shoes off inside and/or outside if they choose to. Shoes are kept in close proximity to the group (a classroom specific crate on the yard or in the classroom).

If children arrive at school in inappropriate shoes or clothing, parents will be requested to bring appropriate attire for their child.

Each parent is asked to provide at least one complete change of clothes (including socks, underwear), as well as a sweater or jacket to be left in their cubby. **All items should be well-marked or labelled with your child's first and last name.** Please check your child's cubby periodically throughout the year to be sure that appropriate changes are available at all times.

Jewelry Policy

Jewelry and small hair ornaments can be hazardous for young children. Please refrain from sending your child to school wearing jewelry of any kind. If your child has earrings, please make sure they are stud earrings. If jewelry is an important part of your culture, please let us know as we are happy to help support this custom; however, if the jewelry interferes with the child's exploration, staff will remove the jewelry item. The Center is not responsible for any jewelry lost or damaged on site.

Toys from Home

It is the Center's general policy not to allow children to bring toys from home. Your child is welcome to bring one small soft stuffed animal or favorite blanket for naptime, as children may need a comfort item to help them settle to rest. The Center is not responsible for loss of or damage to toys and books brought from home.

Communication

Order of Operations:

Center Interns and Lab Students may not discuss any matters regarding children or the program with adult family members. Teacher Assistants may respond to questions regarding activities provided, and daily menu items. All matters regarding curriculum, guidance/discipline, behavior, concerns or developmental assessments must be discussed with the child's Teacher. All matters regarding program policy, VC policy, staff, other center families, CA state licensing and/or NAEYC Accreditation Regulations must be addressed with the center director. In addition, personal information (phone numbers, email, address) should never be exchanged between center staff and family members.

It is important that adult family members and Center staff be able to share information between home and school. To make this as easy as possible, Center staff communicate with families in several different ways:

Informal Daily Chats:

Please check in with your child's classroom teacher at drop-off time to share any information that may affect your child's day at school. Staff try to share highlights of your child's day when you arrive for pick-up, but their first attention must always go to the children they are supervising at the moment. If you would like to make an appointment to meet with your child's teacher outside the classroom, please let them know and they will be happy to do so.

Brightwheel Childcare App:

It can be found on any smart phone app store.

Once you download the Brightwheel mobile app, you can stay up to date on your child's daily activities, milestones, and more! We can send you photos and videos of your child, as well as keep you in the loop on upcoming events and time-sensitive information.

While the app offers various ways to check your child in and out, we will not be using this feature. Please be sure to still sign your child in and out on the sign-in clipboard.

You will receive an email from Brightwheel with a unique 10-digit code and instructions on how to download and log into the app.

Communication:

We can now create a portfolio containing pictures taken throughout the day. These pictures will be available for you to download and/or print if you would like.

Through this app you will be able to communicate directly with your child's teacher and the director during their normal scheduled work hours. The center staff will also use this app to send helpful reminders of upcoming events and sign-ups.

Phone Calls:

Central phone numbers are located on the second page of this handbook. You are welcome to call the Center anytime to check on your child. If you would like to chat with your child's teacher by phone, let the director know; they can set up a time to call when they are not in the classroom and can give you their full attention.

Classroom Information Boards:

Staff in each classroom maintain their own information boards with such information as the daily classroom schedule, the snack menu, general notes to classroom families, articles of interest, and flyers on special events.

E-mail:

Please feel free to e-mail the director any questions or concerns you may have; the Center Director's email is listed on the "Contact Information" page of this handbook.

Teacher Conferences:

The Center will schedule teacher conferences once per Fall and Spring semesters to share the child's progress. At this time, families will receive a written assessment regarding your child's development. Families are encouraged to raise questions and/or concerns about the assessment and methods that are intended to meet the needs of the child. Families are welcome to request an additional conference with their child's classroom teacher(s) and/or the director at any time in the school year. If it is too difficult to come to the Center in person, you may request to conference by phone or e-mail at a designated appointment day and time.

Assessments/Observations:

Staff will be routinely observing and documenting your child's progress. Teachers will use the "Child's Developmental Progress" form to document the developmental progress in the following areas:

- The child's personal and Social Competence
- The child's effective learning progress
- The child's physical and motor competence
- Their safety and health status

In addition, teachers will observe and document the developing interests and abilities of every child in their care, and plan curriculum that is responsive to individual child's strengths, interests, and needs. Teachers may refer to these observations during informal daily chats. A parent conference may be scheduled if necessary.

As a Lab School our staff has the privilege of working with our observation rooms and lab students. Staff meetings are a time we train and discuss our assessment methods. Staff are instructed to observe children at various times of day and to document using objective language. Staff may then use subjective language in conversation with families while interpreting the observations as it pertains to the child's development and/or behavior.

Posting Notices

Only materials pertaining to child development will be approved for posting at the Center. Solicitation for babysitters may be submitted to the office; they will be posted on the appropriate employment opportunity board in CDC-38 (the Ventura College Child Development adult classroom). Please see the policy below (under extended support) for more information about babysitting and nanny services.

Confidentiality Policy

All information shared pertaining to an individual child and their family, both in the home and in the school setting, is considered confidential information. Disclosure of a child's records is restricted to legal guardians, program personnel, and Community Care Licensing. Additional individuals seeking confidential information will require written familial consent (except in the cases of suspected abuse or neglect).

Our Curriculum

The curriculum at the Orfalea Child Development Center is based on the premise that children are active and curious learners. The curriculum framework adopted by our program draws upon current research into effective early childhood curricula and well-accepted theories of learning and development. Additionally, our curriculum meets California Department of Education requirements for early learning and development as outlined in the California Preschool Learning Foundations.

Our curriculum:

- Integrates learning across developmental domains, promoting the simultaneous development of cognitive, physical, and social skills.
- Acknowledges play as a foundation for the development of cognition, language, self-regulation, and social competence.
- Engages children's existing ideas and understandings to facilitate the building of new understandings.
- Provides opportunities for children to challenge and clarify their own thinking and learning through discussion, questioning, and problem solving.
- Recognizes that developing expertise requires both a foundation of factual knowledge and skills and a conceptual understanding that allows facts to become "usable" knowledge.
- Incorporates purposeful planning and accurate assessment of learning outcomes for children.
- Reflects responsiveness to family home values, beliefs, experiences, and language.

The OCDC is an **award-winning STEM** program. STEM activities offer many opportunities for children to use the concepts of science, technology, engineering, and math to better understand the way things work, explore their world in greater depth, collaborate with others, engage in perspective talking, apply their knowledge and learn multiple aspects of curriculum concepts.

Our curriculum also promotes: Personal, Social, Emotional and Physical Development, Diversity, Social Studies, Language and Literacy, the Arts and Health and Safety all while using an Intentional Teaching approach.

Outdoor Classroom

At the OCDC, we believe in the power of nature also playing the role of teacher. In our Outdoor Classroom, children connect deeply with the natural world—gaining not only knowledge but also a sense of wonder, respect, and responsibility for their environment. We envision a world where all children in early education settings have access to the rich developmental opportunities that come from intentional and meaningful outdoor experiences.

We are committed to expanding both the quantity and quality of outdoor learning opportunities. By integrating engaging, well-designed natural spaces into our curriculum, we provide children with a dynamic environment that supports exploration, creativity, physical activity, social connection, and environmental stewardship. Our center also supports the broader early childhood field through education and mentorship on the value of outdoor learning environments.

Why an Outdoor Classroom?

Research in modern child development supports what we see every day: children are complex, curious beings who learn everywhere, all the time. Rather than relying on expectations for early academics, we offer developmentally appropriate experiences that reflect how children learn best—through active, hands-on

exploration. Our running/dry creek and Outdoor Classroom support growth across all developmental domains and beyond, including:

- Science and nature inquiry
- Mathematical thinking
- Executive function and problem-solving
- Sensory exploration
- Gross and fine motor development
- Social-emotional learning
- Language development
- Engineering creative expression
- Technology and simple machines

Learning outdoors offers children opportunities that are personally meaningful and deeply rooted in the real world.

Unstructured Play

Unstructured, “messy” play is not only encouraged—it’s a cornerstone of our program. We stand firmly for a child’s right to play, understanding that early childhood is not a race to academics but a foundation for lifelong learning. Outdoor experiences promote calculated risk-taking, helping children build the skills needed to assess and manage challenges confidently. At our center, children are trusted to take risks and supported in learning to guide themselves safely, thoughtfully, and with resilience

Guidance and Discipline

Self-discipline and interacting with others are skills that are developed over time. While children are developing these skills, the role of the Center staff is to create a safe and trusting environment where children know they will be listened to and where positive conflict resolution skills for children will be modeled. The Center staff helps children develop empathy towards others, problem-solving skills, emotional understanding and awareness, emotional regulation, and positive way to respond and work collaboratively with others in developing self-control.

Under no circumstances are staff ever to use physical punishment or psychological punishment (verbal threats or use of language that can have a negative effect on a child’s development and/or sense of self). Staff will not use children or other staff against each other as a means of coercion to manipulate the behavior or relationship of anyone. Gentle restraint is only permitted when a person is a danger to themselves or to others.

Many techniques are used for assisting children through conflict resolution. Although the style may differ depending on the age of the child and severity of the situation,

all efforts seek to guide children as problem solvers. The following techniques are used daily:

Consistency:

Center staff respond to behavior consistently so that children know what to expect and can learn to change their own behavior according to expectations. Consistency also creates a stable and predictable environment that allows children to feel safe.

Limit Setting:

Children feel more secure when they know that adults will keep them safe by setting limits. Rules are kept few, basic, clear, and concise. Boundaries and expectations are made in keeping with the abilities of the children.

Modeling:

Children learn by observing adults in their lives and modeling their actions. Center staff model respect for others, caring, kindness, expressing one's needs and feelings appropriately as well as responding to the needs and actions of others in equally appropriate ways.

Tone:

In word and attitude the Center staff communicates the message that children are safe, that they are competent problem solvers, and together we can work out conflicts. Center staff strive to be firm, calm, respectful, and kind.

Verbalizing:

Center staff acknowledge that children can become frustrated when they are unable to use words to describe their feelings or a conflict at hand. Sometimes a simple statement like, "You both want to ride in the wagon," or "It can be hard to wait for a turn," can reduce tension simply because a child knows they are understood. From this point problem-solving can begin.

Validating Feelings:

Center staff recognize that it is a challenging time for children who are overcome by big emotions. It is important to communicate to children that feelings are never bad or wrong, but that there are appropriate ways to express feelings. (For example, "It's okay to be angry, but you may not hit him."). During conflicts, staff ensure that every child's voice is heard. Children are not made to say, "I'm sorry," but rather, are involved in comforting or helping the child they hurt or upset.

Problem Solving:

Staff provide children with opportunities to solve conflicts independently before intervening. Staff observe and stay close to the children, ready to step in if more guidance is needed.

Staff allow children to suggest possible solutions and will then contribute some if they need help. (For example, "Can you think of a way to use the truck together?" "Would you rather do the puzzle together or take turns doing it by yourselves?" "Everyone wants a turn; how can we make it fair?") This way, children are given tools that will help them resolve conflicts on their own in the future.

Intervention:

In the event of a child hurting themselves or others, staff will intervene and help children resolve the conflict at hand.

Redirection:

Throughout preschool, children are learning appropriate boundaries and rules. If a child is struggling with a boundary or rule, staff will remind the child of the rule and suggest an alternate activity. (For example, "I'm concerned you might hurt someone if you throw the blocks. If you want to throw something, let's take out the beanbags and a bucket to throw them into.")

Natural Consequences:

"It looks like some milk is on the floor, now it's slippery and someone might fall. Please help me clean it up." This is an example of the natural consequences of an action. As in every guidance and discipline technique used in the Center, the emphasis is not on blame, but rather, learning, teamwork and helping resolve the conflict.

About 'Time Out':

Although it is a popular discipline technique, time out is not used at the Center. If a child needs time to calm down or requests a break or alone time, teachers facilitate this by sitting with the child in a quiet area of the classroom or playground. When they are calm, children are encouraged to return to the group of children or area where they had difficulty so they can have a more positive experience.

Extended Support

Babysitting or Nannying Services:

In order to maintain confidentiality, avoid potential conflicts of interest, and preserve professional boundaries between staff and families, staff may not engage in private babysitting, nannying, or any form of childcare services for children currently enrolled in the classroom to which the staff member is assigned during

their employment with the center. Violation of this policy could result in the termination of the staff member and/or child's enrollment in the program.

Observation:

Parents may be asked to spend time observing their child in the classroom to help them understand the behavior under discussion and to enable them to work as a team with Center staff for the benefit of the child.

Community Resources:

With parent approval, the child may be assessed, and teachers interviewed by an outside agency to provide additional support to the child, family, and Center staff. Information about additional community resources will also be offered to parents, this may include professional assessments, counseling, or therapy, as well as one-to-one shadowing, etc. Center staff are prepared to work in collaboration with the community resources parents pursue.

Attendance of Additional Parent-Teacher Conferences:

Parent-teacher conferences will be used so Center staff and parents may collaborate, strategize, and create a plan on how best to support the child and family. Center staff or parents may also ask that the Director participate in conferences.

Schedule Adjustment:

Center staff may determine that an adjusted schedule (for example shortened hours or a different arrival time) is in the best interest of the child and/or class. Typically, this is an interim measure; the duration is determined by the resolution of the issues.

Mandating Reporting:

In accordance with California Department of Social Services regulations, all program employees are required under California Penal Code 11165.7 to report any suspected cases of child abuse, maltreatment, or neglect as well as report any incidents which pose a hazard to the health and safety of program participants. Our goal is to maintain the Center as a safe place for everyone, children, and staff. If there is a reasonable accusation of a staff member about abuse or neglect involving a child in the center, the staff member would be excluded from the classroom and child protective services and the licensing department (DSS) will be informed, along with the dean of the Child Development at Ventura College.

Withdrawal from the Center

Our center does not use tactics such as: suspension, expulsion, or other exclusionary measures (i.e., seclusion) for any child. We understand that not all centers are the right fit for every child. We are committed to working with families and staff to meet

the needs of the child. After exhausting all protocols using our Guidance and Discipline policy and Extended Support measures listed above, it will then be a collective decision between the center and parents/guardians as to whether the Orfalea Child Development Center is the best fit for the child.

The Center expects families to participate in meeting the needs of the child. While the service contract does state that the Center director reserves the right to drop a child from the program at any time, it is NOT in keeping with program philosophy to drop children merely to make things easier for the staff. Continued enrollment is based on goodness of fit and the family's willingness to collaborate to help the child thrive.

We hope your family will be part of our program for a long time to come, but we understand that plans may change. Should it become necessary to withdraw your child from the Center, two weeks written notice must be given to the Center Director. Parents are required to pay tuition for the two weeks after notification of withdrawal, whether or not their child attends the Center during that time period. Two weeks' worth of fees will be charged.

In the event that a child is a danger to themselves or others and the center's Guidance and Discipline procedures are not alleviating the behavior, nor are the extended care procedures or the center is not receiving support and participation from the parents/guardians, then a child may be withdrawn from the program or asked to temporarily leave the program until the center deems it is safe for the child to return.

It is our heartfelt desire that children at the Center grow to value collaboration and cooperation, respect for others, and strive to work out differences in peaceful ways.

Transitioning to Kindergarten

We will be sad to see you go, but eventually it will be time for your child to transition from preschool to kindergarten and our Center staff want to help make that transition as smooth as possible for you and your child. With that goal in mind, we offer the following support plan:

Kindergarten Readiness Conference

Families are welcome to request a conference with their child's teacher and/or the director at any time and it may be particularly helpful to do so during your child's pre-K year. Your child's teacher can share information about their readiness for kindergarten and which curriculum model (traditional kindergarten, English/Spanish dual immersion, open classroom, charter school, etc.) might best suit your child's needs.

Kindergarten Registration Information

Each elementary school district opens registration on a different date in spring. As we receive this information, we will share it with program families so you can have the best opportunity to enroll your child in the school of your choice.

TK/PreK Celebration

A small celebration will be hosted at the Center at the end of the school year to celebrate the momentous occasion of children transitioning to the next stage in their education. This is an opportunity to celebrate and reflect upon children's time at the Center. The method of celebration is decided each year by the Center staff.

Family Resource List

If you are looking for support regarding a specific need that is not listed, please contact the Center Director for support.

First 5 of California: www.first5california.com

- Explore Trending Topics, Browse by Ages, Learn about Developmental Milestones
- Family Resources: www.ccfc.ca.gov/family/family.html
- Parenting with Extra Challenges:
<https://www.first5california.com/en-us/services/parenting-with-extra-challenges/>
- Immigrant Family Resources:
<https://www.first5california.com/en-us/services/immigrant-family-resources/>
- Substance Abuse Support:
<https://www.first5california.com/en-us/services/substance-abuse-support/>
- Violence and Abuse Support:
<https://www.first5california.com/en-us/services/violence-and-abuse>

VCSELPA (Ventura County Special Education Local Plan Area):

www.vcselpa.org

- Supporting Equitable Learning Programs and Accessibility for all children. View the "For Families" tab for resources, Early Childhood Services and Social/Emotional Services

Ventura County Behavioral Health: www.vcbh.org

- Crisis and Referral Line (866) 998-2243 available 24/7 to support individuals and families who are in crisis, people considering suicide, or those struggling with mental illness, substance use or both.

Tri-County Regional (for 0-3 years): www.tri-counties.org

- TCRC provides person and family centered planning, services and supports for individuals with developmental concerns (like speech).
- Tri-Counties Regional Center- Oxnard Office, 2401 E. Gonzales Rd. Ste 100 Oxnard, CA 93036 Service/Intake and Admin 805-485-3177, Service/Intake Hotline 800-664-3177

California WIC: Women, Infants and Children Program:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CFH/DWICSN/Pages/Program-Landing1.aspx>

- The Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Division administers the California WIC program. This program helps families across the state by providing nutrition education, breastfeeding support, healthy foods, and referrals to health care and other community services.

Family Resource Center Network of California: www.frcnca.org

- FRCNCA makes it easier for families to navigate, advocate and get equitable access to resources

Orfalea Child Development Center at Ventura College

Acknowledgement of Receipt of Family Handbook

I have received a copy of the Orfalea Child Develop Center at Ventura College Family Handbook.

Name (please print): _____

Child/Children's Name(s): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____