

Orfalea Child Development Center,
Ventura College

Family Handbook
Fall 2021



LITTLE PIRATES

Welcome!

Dear Families,

Welcome to the Orfalea Child Development Center at Ventura College! We're 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 Staff

How to Reach Us

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

Staff

Director

Amanda Picard

Classroom teachers

Blanca Galicia

Shirley Irwin

You can find the Ventura College website at <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.

California Department of Social Services Licenses #561711563 and 56171564.

Mission

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

Philosophy

We believe in the importance of active, hands-on learning for children. We understand that the preschool years are a critical time for brain development and so provide a rich environment with a wide variety of stimulating activities. We nurture the whole child and provide for their physical, social, emotional and cognitive growth. 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 his or her 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.

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.

Center Program

The Center provides classrooms for children aged two through five years. The program provides a well-balanced curriculum with emphasis on children's social/emotional skills and developing sense of autonomy. The curriculum includes many learning opportunities: language and literacy, STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), creative art, dramatic play, sensory experiences, large and small muscle development, music and movement, self awareness and the appreciation of diversity within the classroom. Children's growing social skills are practiced in daily collaborative problem solving with peers. Daily group times provide time for activities that will develop language and literacy skills, social skills and music.

Center Staff

The Center is staffed with a Director, Child Development Associates and Child Development Assistants who are all employees of Ventura College. All of the permanent staff meet the qualifications for their positions as established by the California Department of Education's Child Development Center Permit matrix. Both Child Development Associates and Child Development Assistants serve as lead teachers in our classrooms, planning and implementing curriculum, supervising children and instructional assistants. In addition, Child Development Associates supervise fieldwork students and interns.

In addition to the permanent staff, several Ventura College students are hired each semester to work as paid instructional assistants. Some of these assistants stay with the program over several semesters and assume increasing responsibility as they complete advanced coursework in child development to prepare them to find permanent employment in the field.

All paid staff, both permanent employees and student assistants, are subject to the same screening requirements – clearance through a Federal Bureau of Investigation/California Department of Justice criminal record check and a Child Abuse Index check. All paid staff must meet physical health requirements as mandated by the Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division and the state of California. All permanent staff hold valid cards in first aid and pediatric CPR.

Child development fieldwork students and interns 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 paid classroom staff.

Program Hours for Fall 2021

Fall 2021

Hours for Fall 2021 have been reduced as we re-open following the pandemic shutdown. Safety precautions are in place to protect children, staff, and faculty. The earlier closing time is to allow for proper cleaning and disinfecting of materials used by the children. College Maintenance and Operations staff will do daily cleaning and sanitizing of the classrooms, bathrooms, etc.

7:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Monday – Thursday when college classes are in session.

Health Screening Procedure for COVID-19

Ventura College has instituted a health screening procedure since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. You will be asked to download the free health screening app to your smart phone. Should you not be able to do so, an assistant will be available when you bring your child to the Center to assist you with the screening. Information on how to use the app can be found on the next page.

The screening process is as follows:

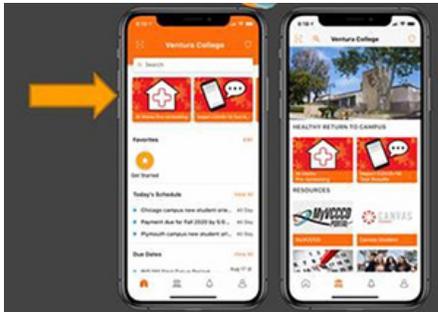
1. Complete the screening app before coming to the Center. The app will generate a health pass. If the pass is yellow, you may proceed to the Center.
2. When you arrive at the Center, bring your child to the entry to the building. A screener will be there to check the health pass and they will then issue a wristband for your child for the day. The wristband must be worn at all times. A new wristband is required each day.
3. The assistant will then take your child to their classroom. Parents will not enter the Center.
4. Screeners will be available from 7:30 AM until 9:15 AM. Should you arrive after that time, you will need to go to the main screening station in the East parking lot.

HEALTH SCREENING APP

Step 1: Download the [MyVCCCD mobile app](#) on your smartphone. If you don't have a smartphone, one of our assistants will help you using a laptop or tablet when you arrive at the Center.

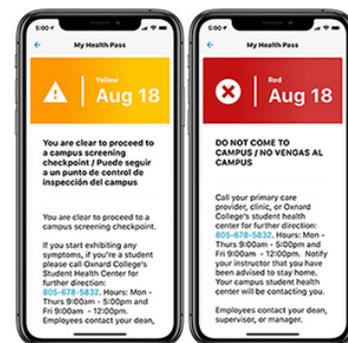


Step 2: Please take the At Home Pre-Screening Survey. You will have to complete this before you come to the campus. Answer all questions.



Step 3: You will now receive one of two notices. The pass should appear on your screen in the app or you can find it on the Home section of the app under "Health Pass".

- If the pass is **RED**, please stay at home and notify the Center.
- If the pass is **YELLOW**, you are cleared to come to campus to be screened.



Step 4: When you arrive at Center, you will show your pass and the screener will put a wristband on your child. The wristband must be worn at all times while at the Center.

Registration/Enrollment

Our Center begins a new waiting list as each semester's schedule of classes is released. As we believe continuity to be very important, children already attending the Center 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 school or the two weeks' notice fees will be charged.

Newly enrolled families must complete the following:

1. Identification and Emergency Information Form
2. Permission Form
3. Emergency Locator Form
4. Child's Pre-admission Health History Parent Report
5. Physician's Report
6. Verification of current immunizations and need for TB test or medical waiver form completed by child's physician
7. Acknowledgement of Health Policy
8. Notification of Parents' Rights Form
9. Notification of Personal Rights
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.

Families must also submit negative TB test results for adult family members planning to complete family participation hours in their child's classroom.

Tuition

Fees are established at the time of enrollment, according to your child's specific schedule. The time periods for Fall 2021 are as follows:

- A. 7:30 am to 1:30 pm
- B. 8:30 am to 12:00 pm
- C. 9:00 am to 1:30 pm

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

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.

The College's 17 ½-week long semester is divided into four billing periods, each a little over four weeks in length. Adjustments are not made for holidays, vacations, absences, staff development days, suspension for disciplinary problems, non-compliance with medical requirements or college closures beyond our control. Unused hours may not be used at other days or times. Fees are due at the end of the first week of each billing cycle. If fees are not paid on time, children may be suspended or dropped from the program. Billing is managed by the Student Business Office; child care fees are posted to parents' campus accounts, so unpaid fees may prevent student parents from enrolling in classes or receiving grades.

Fee Schedule

Part Time Fees

VC Student	\$5.75 per hour for preschoolers \$6.45 per hour for toddlers*
Staff/Community	\$6.85 per hour for preschoolers \$7.60 per hour for toddlers*

Full Time Fees

(For Fall 2021, full-time is considered 7:30 to 1:30 Monday through Thursday)

VC Student	\$552.00 per month for preschoolers \$619.20 per month for toddlers
Staff/Community	\$657.60 per month for preschoolers \$729.60 per month for toddlers

Note: A child is considered a toddler until they are 3 years old, fully toilet trained and enrolled in a classroom with a 10:1 ratio.

Deposit

A two-week deposit is required at time of enrollment. This deposit is applied to the last month of billing.

Extra hours

Arrangements for occasional extra hours may be made with the director if scheduled in advance and space is available. The fee for extra hours is the regular rate plus \$1.00 per hour. To request extra hours, fill out an Extra Hours/Change Request form in the office.

Schedule Changes

During the College add and drop period (the first two weeks of fall and spring semesters), families can request schedule changes which will take effect as soon as the director approves them, dependent on space available. After the add and drop period ends, there will be a \$10.00 processing fee for all schedule change requests approved. Requests for schedule changes must be made in advance, and will be approved based on space available and Center staffing levels. Extra Hours/Schedule Change Request forms are available in the office.

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 \$5.00 is charged for each fifteen minutes or portion thereof for children dropped off early or picked up more than five minutes late without prior approval from the Director. Any child not picked up by the 1:30 p.m. closing time will be charged \$10.00, plus \$5.00 for every fifteen minutes or portion thereof. **After three late pick-ups in one semester, late fees will be doubled for the rest of the semester.**

Family Participation Requirement

It's important to us that Center staff work in partnership with program families so that each child receives the greatest benefit of attending preschool. To that end, each family enrolled in the Center will be required to contribute five hours of participation in the program for the semester in which their child is enrolled. Either parents or other adult family members may complete the required hours. Credit will be given for participation in such activities as attending a parent/teacher conference, preparing classroom materials at home (materials must be returned in a timely manner), etc. For families enrolling mid-way through the semester, if a child begins attending before the end of the 8th week of the semester the family must complete the full five hours, if attendance begins after the end of the 8th week the family needs to complete three hours of participation.

It will be the responsibility of the person participating to sign in whenever participation hours are completed in order to receive proper credit for the time. A log book with a page for each family in the class is located in each classroom near the sign-in/sign-out sheet. You will request that the teacher obtain it for you when you are ready to log your time. Participation hours must be completed by the last day before the final exam period begins each semester. Hours beyond the five required may not be carried over to other semesters.

We hope that every family will choose to contribute their time, but families who do not want to contribute the five hours may opt to pay a "buy-out" at the rate of \$20.00 per hour. Any family not completing their five hours will be billed at that same rate on the last day before the final exam period for that semester begins.

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 usual 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 Center 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 teachers and see the classroom prior to your child's first day of attendance.

A few things that will 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 special 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 his or her cubby. Many children find the presence of such a familiar item 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.

On the first day of school you will need to bring the following items:

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 labeled with his/her name. (The weather in Ventura is very unpredictable!)
3. If packing a lunch for your child to eat at school, it needs to be packed in a lunchbox or sack clearly labeled with his/her name.
4. If your child wears diapers or Pull-ups you will need to bring some, along 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, but you will need to replace it by the end of the month.

Parking/Entering the Center

Several short-term parking spots are located directly in front and around the side of the Center building. Parking in other spaces in the lots adjacent to and across from the Center requires a valid parking pass. Families will receive parking passes at the beginning of each semester allowing 20 minutes to drop off or pick up a child. These passes are valid only in the two lots closest to the Child Development Center and nowhere else on campus. Vehicles not displaying a current parking pass may be ticketed. Vehicles must park in marked stalls, so parking along the curb in front of or across from the Center may also result in a ticket.

Under Kaitlyn's Law (SB 255) children age 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 very busy, so PLEASE CAREFULLY SUPERVISE YOUR CHILD WHENEVER ENTERING OR LEAVING THE CENTER.

Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures

A sign-in/sign-out sheet will be located at the check-in station. 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 to your child's safety. In an emergency, that day's sheet would be used to determine whether all children had been accounted for. If on a particular day you cannot be reached at the phone numbers listed on your yellow Emergency Locator form, please leave a number where you can be reached for that day.

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 playground. Upon pick-up, please let one of your child's teachers know that he or she is leaving the Center. You must also remember to sign your child out.

You may authorize others to transport your child from the Center as long as they are eighteen years of age or older, listed on the pink Identification and Emergency Information form in your child's file and, if traveling by car, have a child safety seat appropriate for your child. If the adult transporting your child is not listed on the pink form, we must have your written permission to release your child to that person. Also, the adult will be asked to show photo identification before leaving the Center with your child.

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 or offensive discharge from nose
5. Their activities will have 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 child.

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. Medication is stored in the Center's kitchen and the staff person 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 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.")

It is important that you provide the Center with current emergency information, including classroom 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 your child is not well enough to participate in the day's activities, they will request that your child be taken home. Please be aware that if this is your child's first experience in group care, he or she may be ill more frequently than in the past. **BE SURE TO PLAN FOR ALTERNATIVE CARE ARRANGEMENTS.**

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. 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.

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 classroom family file when you pick up your child. An additional copy will be kept in your child's office file. In case of a serious 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. Please be sure that you or someone on your emergency form can be reached at all times.

Emergency Procedures

It is important that we be prepared to care for your child under any circumstances. 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 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, in a designated evacuation area (which 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 of time. 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 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 some of the strategies we use to prevent the need for chemical pesticides. Center staff use a non-toxic hydrogen peroxide-based cleaning product several times each day to sanitize tables, counter tables and classroom materials as needed. Dishes and cookware are either washed in the dishwasher in the kitchen or if washed in the classroom, are sprayed with the 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 much conversation and sharing. Meal times 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 Child Development Center 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 him/her 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. Sign-up sheets are available in your child's classroom if you would like to contribute fresh fruit or vegetables for snack time. If a cooking project is part of the classroom activity period, it will take the place of the snack served by the Center. 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. Microwaves are available in the classrooms, but food to be heated must be sent ready to serve (in a microwaveable container or dish). Foods such as cake, candy, donuts, sugary fruit rolls, chocolate covered granola bars, fruit punch or soda pop do not provide the nutrition children need for a positive day at school and should not be included in school lunches. If these foods are sent to school, we will save them so the child may enjoy them at home. Raisins, dried fruit, applesauce, 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. If your child is consistently bringing home uneaten food, it is wise to reduce the amount of food sent.

In addition, 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 before eating
- Grapes – cut in half lengthwise before eating
- Carrots – cut in long strips rather than in circular “coins”
- Whole nuts
- Popcorn

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. It is not feasible, nor is it conducive to an enjoyable mealtime, for the staff to constantly monitor what each child eats, in what order, and how much. Therefore we ask that you pack a variety of foods that are 'okay' to eat no matter which is eaten first.

All children who will be in their classrooms at the scheduled 12:00 noon lunch time need to have lunch with their class. If a child's teacher finds that no lunch has been provided for a child by the scheduled lunch hour, the Center will provide crackers and fruit and charge the parent \$5.00. (If your child's scheduled pick-up time is at 12:15, please plan to provide at least a snack – children are often upset if others are having a meal and they have nothing to eat.)

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 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

One of the on-going issues in early childhood programs is whether or not to allow cupcakes or birthday cake at school. Most early childhood professionals would agree that we want to keep the focus on the birthday child, rather than the cake. While many parents do not mind their child having an "occasional" piece of birthday cake, it may not be occasional! Every year there are stretches when one class or another has several birthdays in a row – it just depends on how the birthdays fall. If you have older children in public school, you will find that most have "no cake" rules as part of the wellness policy instituted by the State of California. In light of all this, we ask that you enjoy your birthday cake at home instead of bringing it here to the Center.

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**. Muffins, fruit salad, shaped sandwiches (cut with a cookie cutter) or pizza topped with veggies are some healthier options your child and his or her classmates would enjoy.

IF YOU ARE HAVING A CELEBRATION FOR YOUR CHILD OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL, PLEASE DO NOT DELIVER INVITATIONS AT SCHOOL UNLESS **ALL** OF THE CHILDREN IN YOUR CHILD'S CLASSROOM ARE BEING 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 smocks during painting activities but they are not forced to do so. Please speak with your child's teacher if you feel strongly about having your child wear a smock. 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 climbing and running. Open-toed sandals, house slippers, soft-soled moccasins and shoes with slick soles (cowboy boots or "party shoes") do not provide adequate protection or support for children's feet during active play. Shoes also need to have at least a strap on the back to hold children's feet inside. Teachers may allow children to have their shoes off inside the classrooms and occasionally outside for a specific activity, such as using the wading pools.

Each parent is asked to provide a complete change of clothes for their child as well as a sweater or jacket to be left in his or her cubby. The weather can be extremely changeable in Ventura and it is often cool and breezy on the playgrounds. **(Children go outside as scheduled every day unless it is raining steadily.)** Please realize that most families in the Center shop at the same places and there may be several jackets, shirts or pairs of shoes in the Center just like your child's. **ALL ITEMS SHOULD BE WELL-MARKED OR LABELED 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, as children may choke on them or get them lodged in their ears or noses. In addition, necklaces can be a strangulation hazard if caught in classroom or yard equipment and dangling earrings can get caught on clothing. We strongly advise that you not bring your child to school wearing such items. 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. It is often difficult for children to share their personal toys and they provide a great temptation to other children when placed in cubbies. Toys from home divert children's attention from classroom activities. The Center serves an economically diverse community: we believe that our program should reflect "an even playing field" for all children and not emphasize the possessions children have. The Center is fully equipped with age appropriate toys and materials, and we work toward creating a sense of community in each class by sharing and caring for the Center's materials. Toy weapons or toys that encourage violent/angry solutions to problems are not permitted. Your child is welcome to bring one small soft stuffed animal or favorite blanket for naptime, as are children who are new to the Center and may need a comfort item to help them settle into their new classroom. Appropriate books may be brought from home to be shared at group time. The Center is not responsible for loss or damage to toys and books brought from home.

Communication

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:

Family Files - Family Files serve as mailboxes for the delivery of letters to families, billing statements, accident reports, wet clothing reports, health and safety notices, etc. The files will be located at the check-out station. Please check your Family File daily to make sure you are up-to-date with all Center happenings. We do not mail materials home, as postage for so many families is cost prohibitive.

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.

Phone Calls - Center 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 them 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, general notes to classroom families, articles of interest and flyers on special events.

E-mail - E-mail has become the preferred method of communication for many busy families. If you would prefer to receive information via e-mail instead of your Family File, please let us know in the office and we will do so whenever possible.

Family/Teacher Conferences - Families are welcome to request a conference with their child's classroom teacher(s) and/or the director at any time in the school year. If it would be 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.

Posting Notices

In accordance with Ventura College's policy, all materials to be posted on campus must be approved first by the Associated Student Body office and then by the department where the notice is to be posted. No sales (including the solicitation of donations for non-profit causes) may be conducted on college property unless they are approved by the Associated Student Body office and a fee paid. Approved sales must take place in the quad area of the college. Only materials pertaining to child development will be approved for posting at the Center. Postings for babysitters may be submitted to the office; they will be posted on the appropriate employment opportunity board in CDC-38 (the adult classroom).

Confidentiality Policy

The use or disclosure of any information pertaining to an individual child and his/her family, both in the home and in the school setting, shall be restricted to the purposes directly connected with program planning, and the administration of the Child Development Center. Disclosure of a child's records beyond family members, program personnel, and consultants having an obligation of confidentiality shall require written familial consent (except in the cases of suspected abuse or neglect). The Child Development Center's confidentiality policy is based on mandates from the California State Department of Social Services Child Development Division, the Family Educational Right to Privacy Act of 1974 and the National Association for the Education of Young Children's Code of Ethical Conduct.

Guidance and Discipline

Self-discipline and interacting with others in kind and respectful ways are skills developed over time. While children are developing these skills the role of Center staff is to create a safe and trusting environment where children know they will be listened to and to model positive conflict resolution skills for children. In guiding children, Center staff help children develop empathy and problem-solving skills, identify and share feelings and find appropriate responses to feelings, work collaboratively with others and develop self-control.

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 accordingly as they can anticipate what the result will be if they behave inappropriately.

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 expand in keeping with the abilities of the children.

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

Tone – In word and attitude Center staff communicate 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 and kind.

Verbalizing – 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 - Constructive thinking is virtually impossible when one is overcome by emotion such as anger, sadness, fear or frustration. It is important to communicate to children that feelings are never bad or wrong, but that there are appropriate ways to express feelings. ("It's okay to be angry, but you may not hit him.") It is essential that all children involved in a conflict be honestly listened to. Children are not made to say, "I'm sorry", but rather, are involved in comforting or helping the child they hurt or upset.

Passive Intervention – As long as children are not behaving aggressively or destructively, staff may observe children in conflict without intervening, giving them time to resolve the situation on their own. Staff stay close to the children, ready to step in if more guidance is needed.

Active Intervention – Children will be physically stopped when hurting themselves or others. Staff will then help children resolve the conflict at hand.

Generating Possible Solutions – Staff allow children to suggest possible solutions and will then contribute some if they need help. "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?" In this way, children are given tools that will help them resolve conflicts on their own in the future.

Redirection – Children often act out inappropriately when they are bored or frustrated or when they have a development need that is not being met. In redirection, a request to stop inappropriate behavior is accompanied by a staff member directing the child to or providing a more appropriate activity. For example, "You may not throw blocks. If you want to throw something let's take out the beanbags and a bucket to throw them into."

Natural Consequences - "You poured your milk on the floor – now it's slippery and someone might fall. Please get the sponge and 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 on resolving the conflict. With practice, children see the results of their own behavior and begin to modify it accordingly.

About "Time Out"

Although it is a popular discipline technique, time out is infrequently used at the Center. Young children (under age eight) are generally not yet capable of the reflective thought ("Think about what you did.") necessary to make time out a learning situation. If a child needs time to calm down, 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.

When More is Needed...

If a child's behavior is excessively disruptive or harmful to himself or others, or should the teacher and director feel that additional support and expertise is needed to best meet a particular child's needs, some or all of the following steps will be required of the family:

Observation – Children may behave differently in a classroom setting than they do at home. Parents may be asked to spend time observing their child in the classroom in order to help them understand the behavior of concern and to enable them to work as a team with Center staff for the benefit of the child.

Attendance of Additional Parent-Teacher Conferences – 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 resolution of the issues.

One-to-One Shadowing – In order to participate in the Center program, a child must be able to function well in a classroom with a 1:10 adult/child ratio. Center staffing does not allow for any staff person to spend an extended period of time with an individual child. If one-on-one supervision is needed, the family may be asked to provide an adult to provide this individual supervision while the child is at the Center.

Professional Assessment – Families may be requested to seek professional assessment and appropriate treatment or therapy outside the Center if program staff suspect that a child's behavioral issues may be the result of a developmental delay or special need.

Counseling - Families may be requested to seek professional counseling outside the Center. The counselor will be encouraged to visit the Center for observations. Center staff welcomes additional insights and suggestions and requests an exchange with family, counselor and staff.

Reporting - In accordance with California Department of Social Services regulations, incidents which pose a hazard to the health and safety of program participants must be reported. Repeated or severe injury to self, other children and/or program staff falls into this category and is reported by completing form

LIC624 Unusual Incident/Injury Report and submitting it to Community Care Licensing. Families will be notified if a form LIC624 containing information about their child needs to be filed. The purpose of submitting this form is to let Licensing know that the Center and the family involved are working together to keep the Center a safe place for everyone.

A child's continued enrollment at the Center will be made contingent upon their family's willingness to partner with staff in finding a solution, as well as the child's success in changing the behavior in question. 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. Disenrollment is only used after other options have been exhausted.

It is our heartfelt desire that our children grow to be adults who value collaboration and cooperation, who respect others and strive to work out differences with others in peaceful ways.

Withdrawal from the Center

We hope your family will be part of our program for a long time to come, but we understand that plans and needs 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 fees will also be charged for notice of withdrawal given less than two weeks before the first day of a semester.

Transitioning to Kindergarten

We'll 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 Survey – In the fall semester of your child's pre-K year with us, you will receive a short survey asking about kindergarten plans for your child. The information you provide will enable Center staff to better support you in making the transition to kindergarten.

Kindergarten Binder – A binder containing current information on some of the different kindergarten programs in our area is available in the parent resource library just off of the lobby. This binder also contains information from our local school districts on what skills they feel children need to have in order to be successful in kindergarten. **Neither Ventura College nor the Orfalea Child Development Center endorses any particular kindergarten or elementary school program.**

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.

Cell Phone Free Zone

Research has shown that constant cell phone use negatively impacts both parent/child relationships and children's cognitive development.



Unless the call is urgent, please turn off your phone while at the Child Development Center and enjoy this special time with your child.

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: _____