

Austin Community College District  
**Children's Lab School**



**Family  
Handbook  
2025-2026**

## **THE AUSTIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE CHILDREN'S LAB SCHOOL**

Welcome to the ACC Children's Lab School. We believe that families and child care centers can and should work together to provide an environment that facilitates the growth of a child into a physically and emotionally healthy individual. Our center's professional staff were selected for their knowledge of child development and practical experience with children and adult learners. Whenever you are visiting the center, please take the time to listen, watch, and learn from this unique group. Our staff is one of the many strengths of our program and it is our role to facilitate the learning of children, families, and child care and development students. This handbook has been developed to help strengthen the relationship between teachers and families by providing you with specific information about our school. It is our hope that this handbook will help you feel more familiar with and comfortable in our program.

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# I. Program

## A. Children Served, Hours of Operation, and Contact Information

The Children’s Lab School serves children 6 months through 5 years of age in four classrooms. Low staff-child ratios (1:4 infants; 1:5 toddlers; 1:6-7 mixed age preschool) are designed to allow teachers to develop relationships with children and their families as well as to assess and plan for children’s individual development.

Children are placed in classes according to their age on September 1<sup>st</sup> of each academic year. Children who enter in the infant room stay with their teachers for two years as the children and teachers move-up together to the toddler room after a year in the infant class. In the older classes, the children typically remain in the same class with the same group of children throughout the entire year. Because of the mixed age groupings in the older classrooms, children may stay in one of those classrooms for more than one year. Transitions to a new class generally happen in August.

The school operates Monday through Friday from 7:30 am to 5:30 pm. The program offers only a full day, year-round option. Two nutritious snacks are served daily and children bring their own lunches.

### Contact Information:

**Mailing address:** ACC Children’s Lab School  
3401 Webberville Rd. Bldg. 5000  
Austin, TX 78702

**Email:** [childlab@austincc.edu](mailto:childlab@austincc.edu)

**Phone:** 512-223-5200

**Fax:** 512-223-5220

**ACC Campus Police (for emergencies only):** 222 (campus police)  
512-223-7999 (any phone)

## B. Licensing and Accreditation

The ACC Children's Lab School is licensed by the Texas Health and Human Services (THHSC) Child Care Regulation. The program is certified as a Workforce Child Care Services Texas Rising Star provider (4 stars) and is also accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

## C. Discrimination Statement

Austin Community College (“ACC” or “College”) is an equal education and equal employment opportunity employer and prohibits discrimination in employment at the college and access to its programs or activities on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, and pregnancy), national origin, age (40 and older), veteran status or military service, disability, genetic information or any other basis prohibited by local, state, or federal law. This includes the prohibition of discrimination, including harassment, against any employee, applicant for employment, student, or applicant for admission. ACC will take steps to ensure that the lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in all educational and vocational programs.

## II. Philosophy

### A. Vision

*To support children and families; students, faculty and staff; and the community in developing and learning to their full potential*

### B. Mission/Purpose

The Children's Lab School serves as a demonstration school for the Austin Community College District's Child Development Department and a model program for the Greater Austin community. The Children's Lab School offers affordable, high quality services to ACC students, staff and faculty, and the greater Austin community by providing the following:

- Full day accredited child care and education program for infants, toddlers and preschool children.
- Evening care program for toddlers, preschool and school-age children while their parent/guardian attend evening ACC classes.

#### **Program** – *We strive to:*

- Plan an emergent, play-based curriculum that offers rich experiences and interactions, supports all areas of development, assesses children over time, considers individual and group needs, considers the child's social and cultural context, and prepares children for later school success
- Offer a comforting and supportive environment for busy evening care families
- Create a learning community that will benefit our children, families, students and staff in learning to value diversity
- Partner with parent/guardian and other family members to find the support and resources they need to be informed advocates for their children

#### **Staff** – *We strive to:*

- Hire staff, based on strong educational and experiential background
- Serve as models, trainers, and mentors to lab students, families, staff and the community
- Gain education and experience through continuing professional development

#### **Families** – *We strive to:*

- Build partnerships with families to foster optimal development of children and create a sense of community
- Provide parenting support by offering educational opportunities and resources
- Share information about child development while respecting and understanding each family's unique culture
- Create opportunities for families to learn about the value of play and its role in development and learning

#### **The Community** – *We strive to:*

- Serve as a resource to the community
- Model the importance of advocacy
- Help to promote the field of child development and early childhood care and education as a profession to the community

#### **Lab Students** – *We strive to:*

- Provide opportunities for observation and hands-on experience
- Create opportunities for self-reflection and feedback from experienced,

- supportive mentors
- Value and validate student’s growth as a professional, their culture and experience

**Faculty – We strive to:**

- Work in partnership to give concrete expression to abstract ideas and apply theory to practice
- Collaborate for student success

**C. Goals for Children**

**1. Infant-Toddler Loop**

We understand that infants and toddlers are sensorimotor learners (Piaget), using all their senses, moving their bodies, and manipulating objects to find out about the world around them. We also understand that growth, development, and learning happen in a holistic fashion during the first three years of life – with each experience and every exploration all developmental domains are affected. We expect that the infants and toddlers in our care will:

***Learn about self and others***

- Learn to trust one’s self, other people, and the world around them
- Develop a positive sense of self, awareness of being a separate, unique, valued and respected individual
- Develop a positive sense of belonging, within one’s family, school group, and wider community
- Develop self-regulation skills
- Learn respect for one’s self, for others, and for their surroundings
- Develop trusting relationships with adults and other children outside their family circle
- Develop autonomy and independence
- Learn to own and express feelings in acceptable ways, and to acknowledge and understand the feelings of others
- Learn basic social interaction skills – waiting, turn-taking, enjoying being with others, respecting others’ bodies and personal space, helping, etc.

***Learn about communication, language, and literacy***

- Develop ways to communicate their needs and wants, express their feelings, and share their thoughts and ideas – nonverbally and verbally
- Begin learning their home language and using that language to communicate, developing fluency and increasing their vocabulary over time
- Begin learning other languages and using those languages to communicate (especially if languages other than the home language are used often at school)
- Develop a familiarity with books and the written word
- Begin to develop a repertoire of creative expression for thoughts and feelings through exposure to and experiences with art, oral language, storytelling, poetry, books and the written word, singing, music, creative movement, dance, pretend play, and drama

***Learn about moving and doing***

- Develop comfort with their own bodies and confidence in their physical abilities
- Develop locomotion, strength, coordination, and control over their own bodies
- Learn a wide variety of ways to move and act with their bodies, purposefully and skillfully (including self-help skills such as feeding, dressing, and toileting)

- Develop an understanding about how to keep one's body safe, finding a balance between too much caution and too much risk-taking
- Engage with and explore the world around them by: using their senses, moving their bodies and moving through space, manipulating objects, and acting upon their surroundings

***Develop thinking skills and learn about the world***

- Actively participate in their physical and social environments
- Engage in independent exploration of their surroundings, experimenting with the space, objects, and people they encounter
- Develop object permanence and people permanence
- Begin to develop an understanding of physical cause and effect
- Begin to connect actions with consequences
- Develop problem-solving skills (observation, waiting, choosing, focus, effort, persistence, etc.)
- Engage in pretend play (imitation, role play, pretending with props, alternate representation, pretending without props, etc.)

**2. Preschool**

We understand that learning happens across developmental domains. Play is the context for learning, both reflecting and contributing to children's language-cognitive, social-emotional, and physical-motor skills. As children actively engage in play and interaction with their physical and social environment, symbolic thinking grows, mental reasoning emerges and the use of concepts increases, preparing children for the transition to more formal schooling. We will support children in:

***Social-Emotional***

- Achieving a positive sense of self
- Learning about differences and similarities among people
- Taking responsibility for themselves and others
- Behaving in a pro-social way, including; building empathy, labeling and managing emotions, respecting their environment and others
- Developing self-regulation and sensory organization

***Cognitive***

- Learning to solve problems
- Learning to ask questions
- Organizing ideas
- Having experiences with units of measurement
- Learning quantitative concepts – more, less, same
- Learning one-to-one correspondence
- Developing recognition of numerals, counting skills and understanding sets of objects
- Developing symbolic/representational thinking by using materials and their imagination to explore abstract ideas

***Physical***

- Developing small/fine motor control
- Developing large/gross motor control
- Refining and mastering self-help skills

### ***Self-Expression and Imagination***

- Feeling valued and respected as they express themselves creatively
- Experimenting with varied, open-ended materials that encourage self-expression
- Exploring the art of other children and adults
- Expressing themselves creatively through art, music, drama and dance

### ***Language and Literacy***

- Developing verbal and nonverbal communication
- Developing listening skills
- Gaining knowledge of the alphabet
- Responding to questions
- Practicing conversation
- Using language to solve social problems
- Making sense of written language
- Having exposure to a variety of languages (both home and other)
- Developing concept of story through experiences with books, storytelling and poetry

An overall goal for all children leaving our program is that they are socially, emotionally, physically and cognitively prepared to make the transition to kindergarten.

## **III. Curriculum**

### **A. Philosophy Statement**

Our curriculum is based on our knowledge of the developmental process, our awareness of the individual child's needs and interests, and sensitivity to each child's family culture, all of which are essential components of developmentally appropriate practice. A curriculum is a plan for learning. We understand that young children are learning all the time and so we believe that curriculum includes everything the children do all day long. Therefore, curriculum is integrated into the environment, routines and transitions; planned and spontaneous activities; indoor and outdoor play; interactions between children and between children and adults; child led and teacher directed activities; and implemented individually, in small groups and large groups. Our curriculum focuses on the development of the "whole child", that is, it considers all areas of development – physical (learning to use our body); language (learning to understand and talk); social-emotional (learning about ourselves and others); and cognitive (learning to learn and problem solve). Our curriculum also teaches concepts and develops skills in the areas of early literacy, math, science, technology, creative expression, health and safety, and social studies in ways that are meaningful to the child's developmental understanding.

Our curriculum "emerges" over time based upon our observations of the children, the experiences we provide and our reflections upon how the children respond to those experiences. Teachers are "facilitators" of the curriculum - observing, planning, providing activities and experiences, asking questions, "scaffolding" learning attempts and interests, and taking advantage of "teachable moments".

Sometimes teachers plan their weeks around a topic or area in which children have shown an interest; a current event in the family, school or community; or a developmental task or skill that our experienced teachers recognize as important to that age group. Interest areas, activities and materials may reflect this theme. Other topics, concepts and skills may also be integrated into the plan for that week. Often topics or themes may extend over several weeks as children's interest continues to cause a theme to evolve.

## **B. Our Belief in the Importance of Play**

Our curriculum is “play-based”. In the first three years, more learning and growth is taking place than at any other period in a child’s life. Very young children are learning about self, feelings, other people, communicating, moving and doing, and thinking. Every interaction and experience is literally shaping a child’s brain for learning. As children play, they grow, develop, and learn. While at play, understanding emerges and evolves. Engaged in play, interacting with people, materials, and their environment, children work to make sense of the world around them. As a result, they gain new skills and concepts as well as more complex ways of thinking.

Children discover and explore concepts in science, math, literacy and social studies through active, concrete, everyday experiences as they play. Because there is no “right” or “wrong” way to play and because children are encouraged to discover and experiment with materials, they are allowed to be creative, to solve problems, and to think for themselves.

In the year before kindergarten, our curriculum also includes individual, small and large group, and center activities that provide opportunities for children to gain the knowledge and skills for kindergarten. These activities and experiences are intentionally planned, individualized for each child, hands-on active learning, and developmentally appropriate. Teachers also share information about ways to support children’s preparation for kindergarten at home. *\*See Appendix E; a full version of our Curriculum Philosophy is available upon request*

## **IV. Guidance (Discipline)**

**A.** The purpose of the ACC Guidance and Discipline Policy is to:

1. Provide positive, supportive, and authentic guidance and discipline in order to help children develop self-regulation, empathy, and conflict resolution strategies that will help guide their social-emotional development;
2. Support families in developing knowledge and skills to support their child’s social-emotional development;
3. Create a clear process for dealing with behavioral concerns;
4. Limit or eliminate exclusion from the program; and
5. Comply with federal and state civil rights laws (ADA, IDEA, HHSC Child Care Regulation Minimum Standards).

**B.** Our Guidance and Discipline Guidelines are as follows:

Guidance and discipline must be:

- Individualized and consistent for each child;
- Appropriate to the child’s level of understanding;
- Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control; and
- A positive method of discipline and guidance that encourages self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction
- A teacher may only use positive methods of guidance and discipline that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include:
  - Appreciating each child’s unique personality, abilities, activity level, and pace of development and responding to children’s individual needs;
  - Building relationships with children by learning to read nonverbal signals, sense mood and level of attention and adjust interactions accordingly for infants and showing respect by listening, answering questions, and engaging toddlers and preschoolers in meaningful conversations;
  - Identifying and accepting children’s feelings while encouraging emotional expression of those

feelings;

- Modeling good emotional expression and management;
- Modeling and reinforcing positive behavior by using praise and encouragement of appropriate behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
- Anticipating children's behavior and gently enforcing consistent limitations;
- Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
- Redirecting children's inappropriate behaviors to a more acceptable alternative;
- Encouraging social problem solving with peers;
- Following through on logical consequences when appropriate; and
- As a last resort using brief supervised separation from the group.

**C.** Behavior problems are dealt with at school rather than family members being asked to discipline their child for events that occur at school. When behaviors continue to be a concern, staff and consultants may conduct a **functional behavior assessment (FBA)**. Staff and families will work to create a **positive behavior support plan (PBS)** that will be implemented and evaluated over time. In some cases, a referral may be made or a consultant may be used to assist with solving the problem. If staff, the family, and outside consultation determines that the program is unable to meet the needs of a child, staff will work closely with the family to find an appropriate placement for the child.

**D.** Staff may NEVER use physical punishment, psychological abuse, or coercion when disciplining a child, including:

- Physical punishment or threats of physical punishment, including, shaking, hitting with a hand or instrument, spanking, paddling, slapping jerking, squeezing, kicking, biting, pinching, excessive tickling, and pulling arms, hair, or ears;
- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age;
- Psychological abuse, including, shaming, name calling, ridiculing, humiliation, sarcasm, yelling at, cursing at, making threats or frightening a child, ostracism, rejecting, or withholding affection.
- Coercion, including, rough handling (shoving, pulling, pushing, grasping any body part); forcing a child to sit down, lie down, or stay down, except when restraint is necessary to protect the child or others from harm; physically forcing a child to perform an action (such as eating or cleaning up);
- Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training;
- Putting anything in or on a child's mouth and/or;
- Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed.

**E.** All adults are expected to follow the above guidelines while in the center. This includes staff, faculty, volunteers, lab students, parents/guardians, family members and others authorized to drop off or pick up a child. *\*See Appendix F; a full version of our Guidance and Discipline policy is available upon request*

## **V. Program Staff**

Each classroom has a full-time Teacher and Assistant Teacher who work collaboratively as a team. Questions about your child's development, curriculum, daily schedule, routines, and other classroom information should be directed to this teaching team. Questions about tuition, paper work, or other general questions should be directed to the Administrative Assistant. Any questions or concerns that cannot be answered by the above staff should be directed to the Director. In addition to the full-time

staff, hourly and work study employees assist throughout the center in the classroom, kitchen, and at the front desk. Some classrooms also have a Foster Grandparent volunteer who works with the children under the supervision of full-time staff. A current list of employees is posted on the family communication board near the front desk.

## **VI. Adult Learners**

The Children's Lab School is alive with adult learners studying Child Care and Development at Austin Community College. Through field work experiences in the Lab School setting, the students observe the principles of child development and gain practical experience with young children. Some students are observers. Other students assist teachers in the planning and implementing of the daily activities for the children. Background checks are submitted on all lab students. Students are never left alone with children and are always supervised by the classroom teachers and faculty.

## **VII. Guidelines and Procedures**

### **A. Calendar**

The ACC Children's Lab School follows the Austin Community College official calendar. You will be provided with a calendar at the beginning of each academic school year that lists school closings. The calendar will also list several dates when the program is closed for professional development throughout the year. This is a time for staff to participate in training and make environmental changes and for the college to attend to maintenance that cannot be performed when the program is in operation.

### **B. Scholarships/Tuition**

The Children's Lab School has a limited number of sliding scale/reduced tuition slots available on a first-come, first-served basis to qualifying families. Priority for sliding scale/reduced tuition slots is given to ACC students. To qualify, families must meet income guidelines and provide the required proof of income.

Tuition is due in advance on or before the first of each month throughout the school year. Invoices that are unpaid by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month may incur a late fee of \$25. The late fee will be reflected on the tuition statement for the following month.

The published monthly tuition for the current school year is:

- Sunbeams                      \$700
- Moon                              \$525
- Stars and Planet Earth      \$485

Tuition may be paid online using ACC Marketplace or at the cashier's office on any campus. At the end of each month, ACC Business Services will create and email each family a tuition invoice to be paid in advance for the following month. Please add the email address [ar-invoice-group@austincc.edu](mailto:ar-invoice-group@austincc.edu) to your contacts to ensure your monthly invoice does not go to the spam folder.

Whoever is paying tuition will need the invoice number to pay online (bank account withdrawal or credit card) or at the cashier's office (cash, check or credit card). Note: Returned checks will result in a charge of \$25.

When paying by Marketplace, the center will be notified of payment. Please remember to pay the oldest invoice number first.

Tuition is not prorated for vacation or other absences, or for center closures. Center closures were considered when tuition rates were set to keep monthly tuition amounts consistent for accounting purposes.

Tuition will be prorated for withdrawal with two weeks written notice. Families must be current on tuition or following a payment plan set up in advance to re-enroll for the new school year.

If you need to make alternative payment arrangements for the current month, please contact the administrative assistant or director prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month to avoid being charged a late fee. Payment arrangements must be made with the director or administrative assistant. Failure to uphold the terms of the agreement will result in late fees and/or loss of child care services.

Non-payment of tuition may result in a hold being up on a student's ACC record until the past due balance has been paid and/or the account being turned over to collections. Non-payment may also result in loss of child care services.

*\*Please see **Appendix A** for instructions on paying tuition online in ACC Marketplace.*

### **C. Attendance/ Arrival and Departure**

Regular attendance is important for your child's development. Arriving on time ensures the smoothest daily transition for your child and the other children in the classroom. Children can begin arriving at 7:30 am. Children should arrive **no later than 9:00 am** to ensure they have an opportunity to participate in all of the daily activities with their classmates and teachers. This also allows adequate time for communication between family members and teachers.

***Children will not be accepted after 9:00 a.m. unless previous arrangements have been made due to a scheduled appointment (medical, etc). We understand that unforeseen circumstances occur, however, children will NOT be accepted after 9:00 am on a regular basis. In order to be accepted as a late arrival, you MUST notify the Lab School before 9:00 am. \*See Appendix B Top Ten Reasons for Your Child to be at the Center by 9:00 am***

Because we serve as a learning lab for the Child Development Department, it is important that our adult students have an opportunity to observe and practice in a realistic classroom setting. Most of our lab students are scheduled between the hours of 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 3:00-5:00 p.m., so it is important that children be here at those times also. Children must attend at least 75% of the time (except in the event of documented illness or family emergency). Families bring their children to the school each day, no transportation is provided.

Upon arrival and departure, it is the family's (or other person picking up) responsibility sign the child in and out in with the Procure app each day. Family members are encouraged to share with the teacher any relevant information that might affect their child's day at school. In the Sunbeams and Moons there are clipboards for you to share important information. In the Stars and Planet Earth please share important information verbally with the teacher before you leave. Always say good-bye to your child so they know that you are leaving and remind them you will return at pick-up time. You will be asked to wake your child up for a health check if they are asleep upon arrival.

If you know that your child is going to be absent, please notify the teacher or the front desk by 9 a.m. Notification assists us with scheduling staff effectively and keeps us informed about illnesses which may be contagious so we can notify other families in the center.

When picking up your child, it is important to talk with your child's teacher so s/he can inform you of any significant events of your child's day. This also ensures that staff know which children are still in their care.

Important: You (or the responsible person) are responsible for your child(ren) until you hand them off to a classroom teacher at arrival, and again, once staff release them to you at departure. For safety reasons children must always be accompanied by an adult; including older siblings. Please walk with your child from the car into the building and all the way into the classroom at arrival. If you have more than one child, please keep them under your supervision while you escort each child to their classroom. At pick up time keep your child with you in the building while you gather belongings, pick

up siblings or visit with others. Children must be accompanied by an adult when using the adult restrooms. Make sure that a teacher is aware that you are dropping off or picking up your child. Remind your child never to leave the building without you.

If your child is enrolled in the Sunbeams classroom and has older siblings in other classrooms, please drop your infant off last in the morning and pick them up first at the end of the day. This limits the number of people coming in and out of the Sunbeams classroom which helps with supervision issues, communication, separation and stranger anxiety, and the spread of germs.

The Children's Lab School closes, and late fees begin accruing, at 5:30 pm each day. At 5:25 pm children will gather personal belongings and accompany their teacher to the foyer to wait for the person picking up. Failure to pick up on time will result in a late fee of \$5 for every 5 minutes. This late fee will be invoiced separately after the 1<sup>st</sup> of the following month and can be paid in the same way as your monthly tuition balance. Your promptness allows our staff to attend to their evening commitments. Arriving a few minutes early allows you time to touch base with the teacher about your child's day and she/he can still leave on time.

If you know you will be late, please call the school to inform staff of your expected arrival time. If children are not picked up by 5:30 pm and we have not been contacted, staff will begin calling emergency contact numbers to arrange for someone to pick up the child. Child Protective Services will be called for children who have not been picked up by 6:30 pm, if staff has been unable to reach the parent/guardian or other emergency contacts.

**Chronic late pick-up and/or drop-off will result in loss of child care services.**

#### **D. Dual Enrollment in both Day and Evening Child Care Services**

Evening Care is only available to student families who are enrolled in the day program if the child is 2-10 years of age, the student is eligible for the CCAMPIS grant, and the student is taking classes or participating in lab or clinical that extends into the evening. The family must agree to the following conditions:

- Provide adequate nutrition (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) for any days the child is transitioning into Evening Care.
- The child cannot be in care for longer than a total of twelve hours per Child Care Regulation Minimum Standards.
- Provide a plan for alternative pick up in the event they are not able to pick up within the twelve-hour framework.

#### **E. Authorized Release of Children**

Children will be released ONLY to parents or guardians or those persons authorized by the parents or guardians on the Admission Record. There must be at least two alternate pick-up people on the form in the event that you are unable to pick up your own child.

Under the laws of the state of Texas both parents or legal guardians have the right to pick up their child, unless a court document restricts that right. An enrolling parent/guardian who chooses not to include the child's other parent/guardian on the authorized pick-up list must file an official court document (for example; current restraining or protective order, sole custody decree, etc.) with both the center and the ACC Eastview Campus police. Absent that document, the center may release the child to either parent/guardian, provided that party documents their guardianship of the child.

Special arrangements must be made for any unauthorized adult to pick up your child. To ensure

that your child is going home with his/her appropriate ride please follow this procedure:

- a) Permission must be given in writing on an Information Change Form to the teacher and/or the Lab School office if someone other than the parent/guardian or authorized persons will be picking up your child. The full name and phone number of the designated adult should be provided on the form.
- b) In the event of an emergency (flat tire, car accident) a parent may call and give permission over the phone to the director, administrative assistant, or evening care coordinator. The parent/guardian will be required to give the password on the child's admission form. They will be also be required to complete an Information Change Form and turn it into the front desk the following day.
- c) Upon arrival of the designated adult, the teacher and/or office staff will ask for the adult's name and to see a picture ID.
- d) Children will not be released to anyone under the age of 18 years or to anyone appearing to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

## **VIII. Enrollment**

The ACC Children's Lab School is open to ACC students, staff and faculty as well as the greater community. Siblings of current children are given priority depending upon available slots. We strive to enroll families that reflect the diversity of cultures found in the Austin community.

### **A. Waiting list**

The ACC Children's Lab School strives to enroll children from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural groups; we also strive for gender and economic diversity in each classroom. A diverse student population is maintained in order for ACC Child Development students to receive a rich educational experience.

- Approximately 30% of the child care spaces will be reserved for children from the greater Austin community. Approximately 30% will be reserved for children of ACC staff and faculty. The remaining spaces are reserved for children of ACC students who are currently enrolled and registered for college credit courses. Siblings of children currently enrolled in the program receive priority for available openings.
- Sliding scale scholarships will be offered first to the children of ACC students, meeting the income eligibility requirements and whose backgrounds match the enrollment goals of the program. Other families will be eligible for any remaining sliding scale scholarships in order to help achieve family diversity.
- Enrollment is based on availability of slots. Child care slots are not guaranteed to anyone.
- Child care spaces funded by grants designated for the children of ACC students are not guaranteed when the parent/guardian is no longer enrolled or graduates from ACC.

### **B. Student Eligibility**

You must be working part-time and enrolled at ACC part-time (6 hours) or enrolled as a full-time student at ACC (9-12 hours) to qualify for the CCAMPIS grant sliding scale tuition. Our program provides full-time care for students to allow them the time to attend classes, study, and access other learning resources in order to be successful in school. Successful completion is defined as completing the credit hours for which you are enrolled with a "C" or above. You must successfully complete coursework two out of three semesters of the academic year. You must also meet regularly with an ACC Student Support Specialist.

### **C. Re-enrollment**

Registration usually occurs once a year during late spring. Registration packets will be sent out for all current students and siblings eligible for enrollment. Enrollment forms must be returned by the stated deadline to guarantee a spot for the upcoming school year. Children may not attend until a completed enrollment packet has been received. Open spaces available each year will be filled from our waiting list. Families must be current on tuition in order to re-enroll for the next academic year.

## **IX. Health**

### **A. Emergency Contacts**

It is important that we be able to contact parents/guardians or other designated contacts in the event of emergency or illness. Please keep contact information up to date by completing an Information Change Form when this information changes. Parents/guardians will be reminded to review and update emergency contact information quarterly. If you have a particular order you wish emergency contacts to be contacted, please include this on the admission form.

### **B. Handwashing**

We strive to maintain a healthy environment and to keep the spread of illness to a minimum. Handwashing is the best way to keep from spreading germs. Hands must be washed by all children and adults entering the classroom indoors or outdoors. We also encourage you to have your child wash his or her hands before going home. Adults modeling proper handwashing help children develop this important habit.

### **C. Illness/Health Checks/Exclusion**

Children may not attend school if:

1. The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in child care center activities, including outdoor play.
2. The illness results in a greater need for care than teachers can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children in care.
3. The child has one of the following, unless medical evaluation by a health care professional indicates that you can include the child in the child care center's activities:
  - Oral temperature of 101 degrees or higher or 100 degrees under the arm or forehead accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness
  - Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea, two or more vomiting episodes within 24 hours, rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, behavioral changes or other signs that the child may be severely ill
  - Or a health care professional has diagnosed the child with a communicable disease, and the child does not have medical documentation to indicate the child is no longer contagious.

Please inform the center if your child is ill. A brief health check will be conducted upon arrival by staff. The health check may consist of any of the following: family-staff communication about the child's night and morning, observation of the child's facial area and exposed extremities for injury or signs of illness, observation of the child's behavior, and touching the child's forehead for signs of fever. If your child is asleep upon arrival at school, we will ask you to wake him/her up so a health check can be completed.

The child will be sent home immediately if symptoms of fever, contagious diseases or illness are present. Should a child become ill at school, he or she will be isolated from the other children, made comfortable and supervised while the parent/guardian is notified. If staff is unable to reach a parent/guardian, an emergency contact person listed on the child's admission record will be notified.

The center does not have extra staff to care for a sick child. The parents/guardians or designated adult must pick up the child within one hour of being notified or the late pick up fee will be charged.

A child will be sent home if any of the following symptoms are present:

- Fever
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Discharging eyes
- Painful ears
- Unidentified rash
- Head lice\* or scabies
- Evidence of a contagious disease
- Dramatic change in child's overall appearance or behavior

A child who has any of the above described symptoms may not return to school until 24 hours after the child is symptom free. If your child is seen by a health care provider for symptoms of illness that do not exclude him/her from care, please request a note to share with the school.

When a communicable disease is diagnosed or suspected in a child or adult, information will be posted on the parent communication board at the front desk and emailed. The Communicable Disease Chart for Schools and Child Care Centers issued by the Department of State Health Services will be used for additional information and to determine readmission. In the event of a documented occurrence of a vaccine-preventable illness, all families will be informed promptly and measures taken to exclude under immunized children promptly. Decisions about the child's attendance or exclusion from care will be made based on the recommendations of the State Health Department.

\*Note: Head lice is a common problem in group care. If your child or another child has head lice a note with specific procedures to follow will be posted or sent home. The program reserves the right to implement a "no nit" policy in the case of sequential (one child with one case after another) or multiple cases of head lice in a classroom.

#### **D. Medication**

In order for medication to be given:

- The parent or guardian must complete and sign the *Authorization for Dispensing Medication* form.
- Medication must be in its original container, labeled with the child's full name and the date the medication is brought to the center. Parents/guardians may want to ask the pharmacist for two separate containers - one for school and one for home.
- All medication must be given directly to a regular full-time staff member upon arrival at the center. Medication is stored in either a locked cabinet in the children's restroom, in a lock box in the refrigerator, or if it is an emergency rescue medication, in the classroom backpack out of the reach of the children.
- Medication can only be given in the doses recommended on the label. If no dosage is listed for a particular age or weight, written instructions must be provided from the physician.
- An accurate measuring device that measures the dosage specified on the instructions must be provided with the medication and labeled with the child's name.
- Medication will only be given up to two times per day, between 11 am-12 noon and between 3-4 pm (except in special circumstances as documented by a physician). The initial dose should be administered at home to allow staff to give doses at one or both of these times.

- Unless a doctor’s note states otherwise, over the counter medication will be administered only up to 3 days each month. A break of ten calendar days must take place before the medication is administered again
- An Individualized Care Plan authorizing medication for chronic medical conditions may be completed in special situations. A health care provider’s signature is required. Specific symptoms and instructions stating when the medication would be administered must be included. The plan must be updated annually. Parents will be notified before the medication is administered when possible. When that is not possible, they will be notified as soon as is reasonably possible after the medication is administered. Special training may be required to administer some medications, for example, nebulizers or epi-pens.

*Only staff who have received special training will administer medication.*

### **E. Immunizations and Vision/Hearing Screening**

Each child must be immunized according to the requirements of the Texas Department of Health. A copy of the current immunization records must be on file in the office before your child can attend the school. Please see the Immunization and Health Record form for the required immunizations for the current school year. A signed Immunization and Health statement is required before the child’s first day and must be updated annually.

Additionally, it is a Texas State Law that all four-year-old children be screened for vision and hearing. The Children’s Lab School will provide screenings or refer families to appropriate community resources annually. Families are responsible for providing the result of outside screenings to the center so it can be reported to the Texas Department of Health as required by law.

### **F. Accident/Emergencies**

While every effort is made to ensure children’s safety, accidents with young children will occur. All staff are trained in First Aid-CPR-AED procedures. First aid kits are located in each children’s restroom and on each playground. An AED is located in the hallway to the children’s classrooms.

In the event of a minor injury (i.e., scrape, bump, bruises, etc.) a staff member will administer appropriate first aid and comfort the child. An incident report form will be completed and thru Procure explaining the nature and treatment of the injury. A courtesy call or email may be made to inform about the incident.

If the injury is major (i.e., broken limb, requiring stitches, etc.) a parent/guardian is immediately contacted. Should a parent/guardian be unavailable, alternate names on the child's Emergency Contact form are contacted. When no one can be reached, the child's physician is contacted to determine what action should be taken. Should immediate medical attention be needed, EMS will be called to transport the child to an emergency room accompanied by a staff member. The staff witnessing the accident will complete an incident report.

## **X. Safety**

### **A. Security**

The front door of the center is always kept locked. Visitors to our program must check in at the front desk when they arrive. When someone cannot be at the front desk, families or visitors may ring the doorbell located to the right of the door to communicate with someone in a classroom and/or be admitted to the building. We have an open-door policy for families; they are always welcome to visit the center at any time during regular business hours.

ACC Police are located on our campus and make rounds from 7:00 am-10:00 pm. Campus police will respond immediately upon contacting police dispatch. Personal alarms located throughout the building have the ability to contact police dispatch.

#### **B. Emergency Relocation**

If an emergency situation develops that requires that children or staff be relocated away from the building or off-campus the point of contact for families is the ACC Police dispatch: 222 (campus phone) or 512-223-7999 (any phone).

#### **C. Gang Free Zone**

Child care centers in the state of Texas are designated as gang free zones, which means gang-related criminal activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of a center is subject to increased penalty under state law.

#### **D. Emergency Procedures and Drills**

Emergency Preparedness Plans are posted in each classroom as well as the front desk area. We practice fire drills once a month, shelter in place for severe weather quarterly, and lock down quarterly. Evacuation and shelter in place routes are posted on classroom doors and at the front desk. Safety drills occur at various times (excluding naptime). Staff typically schedules the drills at the beginning of each school year, but later they coordinate with Campus Police or program staff for drills to occur without notice. When drills occur during times of drop off or pick up, family members are expected to follow emergency procedures and participate in the drill.

#### **E. Emergency Alerts**

ACC students, staff, and faculty should go onto the ACC website and click on the tab “emergency alerts” to sign up for emergency alerts. Community families can text “ACCFamily” to 780-15. An auto-reply will be texted to the user, informing them they will be added for one year, and a message stating how to opt out.

#### **F. Campus Carry**

Effective 8/1/2017, ACC and other state community colleges were required to comply with the Campus Carry Law (Senate Bill 11). The ACC Children’s Lab School building, playgrounds, and parking lot are designated as gun free zones. Guns may not be brought into these areas except by peace officers.

#### **G. Product Safety**

Families may visit the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) website at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov) to check the recall list of children’s products (toys, car seats, furniture, etc.). The center is on their email list and receives email alerts about recalled products. We then check our inventory to see if we have the product(s) and then the appropriate action to remove, fix, or replace the product(s). We will also post any relevant recalls on the family communication board in the foyer.

### **XI. Nutrition**

#### **A. Guidelines**

The HHSC Child Care Regulation Minimum Standards require that children in full time care receive half of their daily nutritional needs while in child care and that meals and snacks follow USDA guidelines. Our guidelines are as follows:

1. The school provides a morning and afternoon snack served family style; except in the Sunbeams room (they will transition later in the year to school snack). Snacks are nutritious, low in sugar, fat, and salt and strives to reflect the diversity in our program. Our snack menu is posted and copies are available at the front desk.
2. Families must provide a lunch that meets the daily food needs as outlined in the ACC Children's Lab School Food Guidelines and Lunchbox Suggestions. Please see Appendix C. The school will provide milk for the children at lunch time. Items which do not meet nutritional guidelines will be returned. Staff is always happy to share suggestions for lunches. Families will be sent a reminder if lunches consistently do not include the required components. If you need to bring your child's lunch after dropping your child off, please make sure it is here by 11 am.
3. The school keeps a small amount of supplemental food on hand in the event that a child's lunchbox accidentally doesn't make it to school. If staff have to prepare a supplemental lunch more than once for a child, the parents may be charged a fee.
4. The Health Department requires lunches that include perishable items be packed with an ice pack (for example, blue ice) or in an insulated thermos. These measures will help keep food at a safe temperature until lunch time. Families are responsible for sanitizing lunch boxes at least weekly.
5. Child care regulation requires parents/guardians of infants not yet ready for table food to provide a feeding plan and update it at least monthly. Parents/guardians of infants provide snacks, meals, and bottles for their child. Bottles with formula or breast milk must already be prepared for the day. The school provides milk served with meals after the child is 12 months old.
6. HHSC Child Care Regulation and guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics requires child care centers to limit the amount of juice served to children. Juice may not be given to children 12 months and younger and children 12 months and older can only be served 4 ounces of juice per day.
7. Parents/guardians are welcome to breastfeed their child at the center. Adult rocking chairs are provided in the infant and toddler classrooms. If more privacy is needed, we will find an unoccupied office for them to share this special time with their child.

## **B. Food Allergies**

If a child requires a special diet, parents must have the child's health care provider or dietician complete an *Individualized Care Plan* form that includes the reason for the plan, a description of the special diet, a detailed description of the symptoms to be aware of, a detailed description of any action to be taken, and a description of any next steps to be taken after the initial action. The health care provider or dietician may provide their own form at their discretion. Any plan must be signed by the health care provider or dietician.

The following are the most common foods that cause allergies: milk, eggs, soy, wheat, tree nuts (for ex. walnuts and cashews), peanuts, fish, and shellfish (for ex. Shrimp). These foods account for 90% of all reactions in children so they should be introduced one at a time, waiting 3-5 days before offering another new food.

A serious allergic reaction with widespread effects on the body is known as anaphylaxis. This sudden, potentially life-threatening allergic reaction involves two or more of the body areas listed above. In addition, there also can be swelling of the airway, serious difficulty with breathing, a drop in blood pressure, loss of consciousness, and in some cases, even death.

Food allergy reactions can vary from person to person. Some can be very mild and only involve one part of the body, like hives on the skin. Others can be more severe and involve more than one part of the body. Reactions can occur within a few minutes or up to a few hours after contact with the food.

Reactions can occur in any of the four areas of the body:

1. Skin: itchy red bumps (hives); eczema; redness and swelling of the face or extremities; itching and swelling of the lips, tongue, or mouth (skin reactions are the most common type of reaction).
2. Gastrointestinal tract: abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.
3. Respiratory tract: Runny or stuffy nose, sneezing, coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath.
4. Cardiovascular system: lightheadedness or fainting.

In general, most kids with food allergies outgrow them. Of those who are allergic to milk, about 80% will eventually outgrow the allergy. About two-thirds with allergies to eggs and about 80% with a wheat or soy allergy will outgrow those by the time they're 5 years old.

Other food allergies are harder to outgrow. Only about 20% of people with allergies to peanuts and about 10% of those allergic to tree nuts outgrow the allergies. Fish and shellfish allergies usually develop later in life and are even more rarely outgrown.

*Information from [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)*

### **C. Nut Free Zone**

All common areas in the Lab School are considered “nut free zones”.

Due to the potential risk posed to children by nut allergies, foods containing nuts (peanuts and tree nuts) are not allowed in our program. This includes lunches, family events and birthday treats.

When preparing something that only your child will eat (for example, lunches), it is OK to include items that are labeled “*processed in a facility that also produces nuts*”. However, if you are providing something that will be shared with others in the program (for example, a birthday treat or family event), food labels that say “may contain peanut or tree nuts” or similar wording should not be used. While we cannot guarantee that a child will not be exposed to nuts in our program, we make every effort to keep our facility free of potential health hazards to some children and adults. We appreciate your strict adherence to this policy in order to keep all children in our program safe.

## **XII. Developmental Screening/Assessment**

### **A. Developmental Screening/Assessment**

New children will receive a developmental screening administered by one of their teachers within three months of enrollment. Results will be shared with families if there are concerns or at their request.

In addition, an assessment will be used throughout your child’s enrollment in our program to collect information about your child’s growth and development. This developmental assessment becomes part of the child’s portfolio which also contains work samples, photos and observations. This information will be used for the purpose of informing families and planning for the child. If you would like to know more about the screening and/or assessment, please talk with your child’s teachers.

In addition to our developmental assessment designed for children birth through 8 years of age, Pre-K children (4 years on 9/1 of that academic year) are also assessed up to three times a year in critical early learning areas prior to transitioning to kindergarten. The assessment is done through Texas School Ready (TSR), a comprehensive preschool teacher training program that combines curriculum, professional development, and progress monitoring tools to support children

in being prepared for kindergarten. The assessment allows teachers to adjust curriculum to meet individual children's needs.

Teaching staff have received specialized training and participate in ongoing professional development on how to conduct developmental screenings and assessments.

### **B. Special Needs**

Sometimes families or staff will notice that a child is not progressing in a developmental area. In that case, families and teachers work collaboratively to find resources for evaluation. The earlier developmental concerns are identified and evaluated, the more quickly tools can be found to address the concern.

If your child has special needs and/or is receiving services from another entity, we ask that you share a current Individual Education Plan (IEP) so that we can best meet your child's needs. If an IEP is not available, we will work collaboratively with other organizations providing services to your child to develop an IEP for your child during their time in our program.

## **XIII. General Information**

### **A. Animals**

Some classrooms have small animals such as, guinea pigs, birds, fish, hamsters, or hermit crabs. Children assist in the care of animals with adult supervision and must wash their hands after handling animals. Animals are examined by a veterinarian prior to being placed in the classroom. Outside animals may not be brought into the center without prior arrangements and examination of current vaccination records. Please let us know if your child has allergies or fears related to animals.

### **B. Birthdays**

Birthdays are special days for children. It is a time to recognize an important milestone in their lives as they begin to understand the concepts of "growing up" and "a year". Just as each family has special ways to celebrate birthdays, each classroom also has special ways of honoring the child that recognize and value birthdays in the classroom community. Families may provide one special birthday treat in individual serving sizes to share during afternoon snack in the child's class. We encourage you to consider a treat that is consistent with our program's healthy nutritional goals. If you wish to provide a birthday treat, please discuss your plans with your child's teacher and complete a "birthday treat" form at least a week in advance.

For safety reasons, balloons and other party favors are not allowed at the center. If you choose to have a party at a location away from the center and wish to distribute invitations at school, you must bring enough invitations for all the children in your child's classroom or email them instead.

### **C. Breastfeeding**

Breastfeeding is encouraged and supported in our program. Staff will assist in finding you a comfortable, private place for your child and you to nurse if requested. Breastfeeding education and support resources in the community can be provided upon request.

### **D. Technology**

Classroom teachers use iPad and iPhone to record attendance, name to face supervision, document diaper changes and meals for infants and toddlers, communicate to families, and assess development. Except for these uses, our classrooms and hallways are 'technology-free zones'. Please put away your technology before crossing the "rainbow line." We believe this helps maximize

communication with families at arrival and departure times.

#### **E. Childcare Services Outside of Center**

It is not the mission of the center to provide child care in any location other than the center during regular operating hours or for special programs. Any arrangement for child care outside the center is strictly a private arrangement between families and the staff member. These arrangements should be made away from the center and cannot interfere with the operation of the center, the individuals' job duties, or schedule. Families also understand that staff members are free to accept or reject such requests.

#### **F. Clothing**

Children should wear comfortable, washable clothing that is suitable for active, wet, or and messy play. Please make sure your child has at least two complete change of clothes (suitable to the season) for the infant/toddler classes and at least one complete change of clothes (suitable to the season) for the preschool classes at school in case accidents or spills occur.

Children go outside every day (see also "Outdoors"). We ask that you dress your child appropriately for the seasonal weather (e.g. cool, light clothing for summer; jackets, mittens, hats, and leg covering during colder months). Sturdy footwear will ensure the safety of your child both inside and outside. Children's shoes must have rubber or other non-slip soles. Closed-toed shoes are preferred. Flip-flops are not allowed. If a child's shoes appear to present a developmental issue or safety hazard (for example, poor fit, difficulty running or climbing) you will be asked to substitute an alternative pair of shoes.

#### **G. Field Trips**

Field trip notices are posted on your child's classroom door and emailed to families at least 48 hours in advance. Family members are welcome to accompany their child on field trips. The program rents a private bus for trips. The field trip location and activity determine adult-child ratios. Emergency forms, cell phone and a first aid kit are taken on all field trips. In the event of an emergency or transportation problems, staff will contact the center. Scheduled field trips may be cancelled due to inclement weather at the discretion of the director. Permission for field trip participation is included in the enrollment packet.

Parent volunteers must read and sign a field trip orientation form.

Campus walks are taken in the interior of the campus by all classes. Classroom ratios are maintained on walks. When classes go on walks, they notify the front desk of their general location and take emergency forms, a cell phone, and first aid kit.

#### **H. Holidays**

Holidays are celebrated by incorporating child-centered, hands-on, concrete activities into the children's daily routines. The emphasis is on recognizing and appreciating diversity while introducing the children to family customs and traditions found within and between cultures. Families are always welcome to share a developmentally appropriate activity (cooking, story, or demonstration) that illustrates a tradition from their family's culture. School-wide celebrations are held each year when families are encouraged to share their own traditional foods, symbols, or customs with each other. Families celebrate holidays in different ways; therefore, we respectfully request that families not bring candy, other food treats, or non-food items to school for holidays.

#### **I. Inclement Weather**

If Austin Community College announces closings due to severe weather, the Children's Lab School will also be closed. In the event of bad weather, watch or listen to the local news or call the center. If

severe weather develops during the school day and you are delayed in picking up your child, rest assured that your child will remain in the program in the care of a staff member until you arrive. In the event of severe weather, tune into local news or contact the center. You will also receive a text or email if you signed up for ACC emergency alerts (see “Emergency Alerts”).

#### **J. Items from Home**

Your preschool child needs to bring the following items to school:

1. Extra clothing clearly marked with your child’s name
2. An extra large crib sized sheet and blanket or a bed roll, and comfort item (optional) stored in a pillow case clearly labeled with your child’s name for naptime
3. A nutritious lunch; milk will be provided by the school at lunchtime (see lunchbox suggestions)
4. Other items requested by your child’s classroom teachers

*The families of infant and toddlers will receive additional supply lists during orientation.*

Please leave the following items at home:

- candy, chewing gum, junk food
- toys from home, including jewelry, due to possible safety concerns
- money
- guns and other toy weapons
- pets, without prior arrangement by administrative staff

Special arrangements may be made in the case of an item that supports the curriculum such as books, CD’s or science items. In such cases, the family and classroom teacher will agree on the conditions under which the item will be used and the CPSC website at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov) will be checked for recall information.

CHOKING HAZARD WARNING: Hair bows, hair beads, barrettes, and pony tail holders all come with the warning "not for use with children under age three". This is because they can create a choking hazard if they come loose. Jewelry like necklaces or clothing with drawstrings can become entangled in playground equipment posing a safety hazard. We ask that you consider these safety concerns in dressing your child, especially if they are enrolled in an infant or toddler classroom. If safety concerns for your child or others arise around dress or accessories, we will meet together to discuss resolutions.

#### **K. Naps**

Each classroom has a designated rest period of 2-2 1/2 hours as part of their schedule (except the infants at the beginning of the year when individual sleep schedules are followed). Children who do not nap or who rise early are offered alternative quiet activities after one hour of rest time.

Families are responsible for taking nap items home at the end of each week and returning them clean at the beginning of each week. All nap items must be stored in an individual labeled pillowcase clearly labeled with the child’s name to prevent cross-contamination.

HHSC Child Care Regulation standards (December 2012) prohibits soft or loose bedding such as blankets and sheets (in addition to sleep position devices, stuffed toys, quilts, pillows bumper pads and comforters which were prohibited in the past) for use in cribs for children younger than 12 months of age. This is based on recommendations from the American Association of Pediatrics citing studies on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). We understand that this may be a challenge for you and your infant. We will make every attempt to work with you in partnership to help your child make this

transition at school while still following the requirements for state licensing. Once a child is 12 months old, the teachers in the classroom and family can decide when to transition to a nap mat.

*Please see **Appendix D: Safe Sleep Policy.***

#### **L. Outdoors**

We consider outdoor play an essential element of the curriculum that supports children's growth. Children go outside twice every day for an hour in the morning and an hour in the afternoon. While outdoor curriculum is free choice and child directed, engaging activities and materials are planned and implemented daily to encourage creativity, dramatic play, literacy, science, math, and moderate to vigorous physical activity during the two outdoor times. Teachers encourage children to participate in a variety of activities in the outdoor learning environment.

Outdoor time may be adjusted for extreme weather conditions and/or hazardous air quality may reduce outdoor time on some days. Generally, extreme weather conditions is defined as wind chill at or below 15 degrees, heat index at or above 100 degrees, or lightning and thunder. If a child is well enough to be at school, the child is assumed to be well enough to go outside. If you are not sure whether your child can participate in outdoor play you may want to consider keeping your child home until they are can fully participate in the program, both inside and outside.

Outdoor air quality is checked daily. In the event of unhealthy air quality or extreme weather conditions, outdoor time will be adjusted. We use the website [airnow.gov](http://airnow.gov) to see the forecasted air quality.

During cold weather, children need to be dressed in warm clothing. Layered clothing allows children to adapt to changing weather throughout the day. Please keep extra clothes for your child at the center, to help teachers adapt your child's attire to the weather which can change quickly.

During summer months we ask families to apply bug repellent and sunscreen (SPF-15 or higher) prior to or at arrival in the morning. School staff will reapply in the afternoon. Insect repellent with DEET will only be used by the center upon the advice of local health authorities. If you choose, you may provide your own bug repellent and sunscreen product. Please label with your child's first name and last initial and the teachers will show you where to store it where it is inaccessible to children. Water activities, drinking water, and shade are provided to help children stay cool. Water activities include sensory table, spray bottle, and sprinkler play. The permission form will ask you whether your child is able to swim without assistance, but we do not use wading pools in our program. In extreme heat, the schedule and duration of outdoor play will be adjusted and in the event of a heat advisory the children may stay indoors. Staff is trained in first aid and will watch for signs of heat stroke or heat exhaustion. We use the resource Child Care Weather Watch chart located at <https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/disasters-and-children/disaster-management-resources-by-topic/extreme-temperatures/> to determine when extreme weather conditions pose a significant health risk that prohibits or limits outdoor play. *\*see Appendix G for the "Child Care Weather Watch" chart*

#### **M. Toilet Learning**

Toilet learning is a process that requires good communication and planning between teachers and families. If you feel your child is showing readiness signs, please talk with your child's teacher so we can work together to come up with a plan to support your child in gaining this new skill.

#### **N. Parking**

Those who are bringing children to school may park in spots designated by blue signs saying "Child Care Pick up/Drop off" in the parking lot on the north side of the building while dropping off and picking up, without purchasing or displaying a parking permit. Parking in "handicap" designated parking is only allowed with a handicap permit. Parking is not permitted in the fire lane in front of the building, which is designated by a red curb and in other "no parking" areas. If you park in these or spots that require a

parking permit, you may be ticketed by ACC campus police. ACC campus police will also issue tickets for failure to yield to pedestrians and bicyclists, failure to completely stop at stop signs, and speeding in the parking lot. During special family events, staff will work with campus police to allow parking in spots that require a permit. Once children are dropped off at the center, students and staff-faculty should park in spots that are not designated for child care. We respectfully request that families not leave cars idling in the parking lot so as not to affect outdoor air quality around our building.

#### **O. Eco-Friendly Practices**

ACC is committed to sustainability practices. Food scraps and paper towels are composted. Recycling containers are available for metal, plastic, glass, paper, and cardboard. Staff in the classroom and kitchen model these sustainability practices and children are taught what can be composted and recycled. The center also has a garden area where food is grown and prepared by the children and staff and organic materials are composted. We also prohibit the use of any type of fragrances in our building.

#### **P. Photographs**

In order to protect children's privacy, we ask that when families are in the classroom that they do not photograph or videotape their children or other children. When families are gathered for program or community events (for example, field trips or end of year party) and there is no expectation of privacy, families are welcome to photograph or videotape children. However, these photos or videotapes may not be transmitted over the internet, including personal social media websites.

### **XIV. Communication**

Open communication is one of the cornerstones of quality child care because it is only through open communication that we can work as partners to provide children with the highest quality care possible. Please do not hesitate to ask any questions and/or share any concerns. Translator or interpreter services are available upon request.

#### **A. Family Involvement**

Families are encouraged to be active participants in their child's educational experience here at the Children's Lab School. Parents/guardians are always welcome to observe and volunteer in their child's classroom or share a special talent, hobby or family tradition with the school. Throughout the school year there will be opportunities for families to go on field trips, attend workshops, and participate in special school activities or events. Families are expected to participate in a way that maintains the smooth and efficient operation of the program and/or does not compromise the health and safety of children or staff.

Annually families are asked to complete a survey. The feedback is used to help us improve our program. A summary of the results will be shared with families each year.

All parents/guardians are members of the Parent Association. The Parent Association meets regularly and sponsors fundraising projects, family events, parenting workshops, teacher appreciation, and provides a forum for feedback and ideas.

We have an open-door policy for families; they are always welcome to visit the center during regular business hours.

#### **B. Daily Communication**

The most important way for families to be involved is through regular communication with staff about your child. Take a moment each day to briefly share with us your child's experiences since we last saw him/her. Knowing anything unusual that has taken place will help us better understand your

child's behavior and needs. It is also helpful if you let us know if there are any major events occurring in your family life – visits to special places or from special people, changes in family status (weddings, divorces, birth, death, vacations, special happenings, etc.). When you send a message thru the Procure app, both your child's teacher and the administrative staff will receive it.

Knowing this type of information helps us to better provide for your child's needs. Please ask to speak with the teacher away from the classroom if you are more comfortable sharing information privately. There are usually enough staff members present for teachers to accommodate these requests, but sometimes due to schedules or staffing the teacher may have to schedule a special time to speak with you.

We will share information with you about your child's day with us. For infants and toddlers there will be daily information shared thru the Procure app concerning eating, sleeping, and toileting, as well as information about the child's development and learning. For preschool children there will be weekly information shared about the child's development and learning also thru the Procure App. For all children there will be verbal exchanges of pertinent information. There are also lesson plans posted in each classroom about the day's planned activities. This information is often useful in helping your child tell you about his/her day. Questions such as "Did you enjoy the nature walk?" or "What was it like to paint with a feather?" may elicit more information and conversation than a simple "How was your day?" or "What did you do today?" Other forms of communication you may see are newsletters, notes, and documentation boards.

If your child will not be at school, please contact us by phone (512-223-5200), email ([childlab@austincc.edu](mailto:childlab@austincc.edu)), or send a message on Procure. If your child is ill, please let us know so we can be alert to similar symptoms in other children and post information for other families if required.

### **C. Communication about Accidents or Illness**

We will always provide you with written information about any accident your child has at school. We will also provide written information about any symptoms of illness that we observe. If an injury or illness is unusual or serious, we will call you to inform you.

### **D. General Communication**

At initial enrollment and at the beginning of each school year thereafter, families are asked to complete new enrollment information. This information helps us provide care that is consistent with the child's background and needs. Families will be notified of any policy changes in their beginning of the year enrollment packet. If changes occur during the year families will be notified in writing.

Administrative staff will communicate face to face, in writing, and virtually. The most common mode of communication from administrative staff will be by email or through Procure App. For example, tuition invoices, weekly notes from the director, and reminders about due dates or upcoming events will be emailed to families. Make sure your enrollment paperwork includes the email addresses for any family members who wish to receive these communications. Before your child starts their first day, they will be added to the Procure App. You will receive an email invitation to make an account. You can download the app or log in on a computer.

Teachers are responsible for communicating regularly with the families of the children in their classroom. Teachers will let families know how they will communicate with them and may include, but not be limited to face to face, email, Procure messages, notes sent home, notes on the classroom door, collages, and document boards. Reminders about bringing diapers, changes of clothes, water play, etc. will be sent through a message on the Procure App.

## **E. Family-Teacher Conferences**

All parents/guardians are encouraged to participate in twice-yearly conferences. The 20-30-minute conference offers teachers and families the opportunity to discuss a child's progress, share concerns, and plan together to meet a child's developmental needs. The conferences help increase consistency between home and school, and this helps us provide the best care possible for your child.

The need for extra conferences may arise from time to time. Sometimes staff who have concerns about behavior that we are seeing at school may request these. At other times these are requested by parents/guardians who have questions about their child or about things that are happening at school. We are always willing to meet to discuss your child and/or our program.

## **F. Home Visits**

Home visits are offered to families for children new to the program to help create a circular connection between home and school for the child. They help establish relationships with families and give the teacher information that will help him or her better support and understand the child. Home visits last about 30 minutes and focus on letting the family share what is important to the child at home. Home visits are sometimes offered when children are moving to a new classroom.

## **G. Confidentiality**

Families share detailed information with us as they complete and submit forms for their child's file. We understand that your privacy is important to you. Children's files are kept in a locked file cabinet at the front desk. The director, administrative assistant and teachers in your child's classroom are the only individuals with free access to the files. Parents/guardians may request access to their child's file. Practicum students may review general information in the file with staff supervision.

Except in the case of regulation authorities, we only share information with other professionals with written permission by the family.

## **H. Dealing with Problems**

If you have questions or concerns, they should be addressed first with the teacher in your child's class. If you are not satisfied with the information the teacher provides (or if you are not able to speak with the teacher), please contact the director. Hopefully all problems and concerns can be resolved with either the teacher or the director.

However, if you have concerns which the director does not adequately address, or if you have concerns about the director, please contact the ACC Chair for Child Care and Development. If he/she is unable to help resolve the problem, the next point of contact is the Dean of Public and Social Services.

Families have the right to contact Texas Health and Human Services Child Care Regulation at 512/834-3426, 14000 Summit Drive, Austin, Texas 78728 if they have complaints about violations of Minimum Standards for licensed child care facilities or allegations of child abuse. A copy of the Minimum Standards and recent licensing reports are located at the front desk of the center and available upon request or can be accessed on the HHSC CCR website at <https://hhs.texas.gov/doing-business-hhs/provider-portals/protective-services-providers/child-care-licensing>.

## **I. Child Neglect/Abuse**

Texas State Law requires the staff of this child-care facility to report any suspected abuse or neglect of a child to Texas Health and Human Services (Child Abuse Hotline 800-252-5400 or [www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org)) or a law enforcement agency. As outlined in the HHSC Child Care Regulation Minimum Standards, staff is oriented and trained regarding symptoms of child abuse and neglect and reporting policies and procedures. When staff has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect, they are required to report to Child Protective Services. Reports by the center are not made

anonymously. All information pertaining to the report and the subsequent investigation is considered confidential by HHSC. At the request of CPS, parents or guardians are not informed when a report is made, in order to not impede the investigation. If appropriate, parents or guardians may be notified after the investigation at the discretion of the director.

#### **J. Mutual Agreements between Families and the Children's Lab School**

The ACC Children's Lab School program provides an enrichment program that is designed to support the lives of children and their families. Staff and the families must recognize and strive to stay connected. This relationship is defined by mutual trust, respect, clear communication, and commitment to resolve conflicts when they arise. Through the relationship between the school and family, we are able to provide a setting that best meets the children's needs within the context of group care. The following guidelines clarify the roles and expectations of staff and the families:

1. Staff and families will recognize the potential for growth in the development of children, families, and staff.
2. There will be an appreciation of and respect for individual differences in parenting styles and care-giving styles by both families and staff.
3. Teachers will provide a stable environment that maintains necessary routines but allows for flexibility in routines to most appropriately meet the developmental needs of each child.
4. Staff and families will respect the need for daily, open communication regarding pertinent information about the child (e.g., illnesses, change in eating or sleeping habits, social interactions, play patterns, etc.)
5. Teachers will be facilitators of communication between families and the program.
6. Staff and families will maintain confidentiality about each child and his/her family.
7. Families having any concerns about their child are encouraged to discuss these with the child's teacher first and then with the director.
8. Concerns or problems should be addressed directly with the person(s) involved. If the issue is not resolved, then another person may be brought into the conflict resolution process.
9. Teachers and families must try to understand each other's perspectives on an issue and will remain open and supportive with one another during emotionally charged times.
10. Teachers will be child advocates. They will represent the child's best interest in the center, the family and the community. They will bring concerns to the attention of the appropriate people.
11. Families should use the program as a resource. Staff members are trained professionals in the field of child development or early childhood and can provide families with invaluable information about children's development and learning.
12. The program works to serve the needs of all children including those with special needs. If necessary, outside consultation may be sought to help meet the needs of some children. Families will cooperate with staff efforts to provide early intervention and guidance. If staff, an outside consultant and the family determine that the program is unable to meet the needs of a child, staff members will work closely with the family to find an appropriate placement for the child.
13. Families and staff agree to follow the policies and procedures as outlined in this Family Handbook.

*Many of these ideals and principles align with the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct*

## Appendix A: Paying Tuition

### Instructions for paying invoices online in ACC Market Place

**(\*PLEASE NOTE: if you have multiple invoices, they must each be paid separately\*)**

1. Go to [https://secure.touchnet.com/C20395\\_ustores/web/classic/index.jsp](https://secure.touchnet.com/C20395_ustores/web/classic/index.jsp)  
if paying on a mobile device, please use the following link:  
[https://secure.touchnet.com/C20395\\_ustores/web/index.jsp](https://secure.touchnet.com/C20395_ustores/web/index.jsp)
2. Select Children's Lab School
3. Click Children's Lab School Tuition
4. To make a payment you will need:
  - a. The **invoice** from the Lab School with the number and amount you are paying
  - b. Your **Credit Card number** OR if you are paying by personal check, you will need your **routing number** and **bank account number**

Jane and Jim Doe 12345 South West Street Lenexa, KS 66215		Date _____	1001
PAY TO THE ORDER OF _____		\$ <input type="text"/>	
Your Bank 12345 Main St. Lenexa, KS 66215		DOLLARS	
:123456789:		'1234567'	1001
↑ Routing Number ↓	↑ Account Number ↓		
:123456789: 1001		'1234567'	

5. Once on Marketplace, you can register to create an account or log in if you already have made an account. Click the person next to the shopping cart in the top right corner.
6. Add the **Invoice Payment Amount** (quantity will be 1) and click **ADD TO CART** (please only enter 1 invoice number, you will have the option to add another later on)
7. Enter in the information
8. Hit **Continue**
9. Hit **Checkout** or **Continue Shopping** to add another invoice number
10. At this point, you may be asked to log in or continue as a guest
11. Follow the rest of the prompts to complete the payment
12. Print a receipt for your records if needed (you will get a confirmation e-mail either way)
13. You will get an email confirmation of your payment. The Children's Lab School Director and Admin will get an emailed receipt.
14. **BE SURE TO LOG OUT!!!**

PLEASE NOTE YOU CAN ALSO PAY AT ANY ACC **CASHIER'S** OFFICE (*Eastview does not have a cashier's office*). Go to: <http://www.austincc.edu/busdept/cashier> for hours of operation and location. Please bring a copy of your receipt to the Children's Lab School Admin.

## Appendix B: Arrive by 9

# TOP TEN REASONS FOR YOUR CHILD TO BE AT THE CENTER BY 9:00 A.M.

*When your child arrives after 9:00:*

1. Outdoor time may be missed (running, climbing, digging, riding bikes, playing with sand and water, enjoying fresh air and sunshine, and playing with friends.)
2. Indoor time may be missed (participating in circle time, working and playing in learning centers, reading stories, painting and drawing, and playing with friends.)
3. Snack time may be missed.
4. Special activities (buggy rides or walks, field trips, cooking, and woodworking) may be missed.
5. Opportunities to join in the play of favorite friends may be missed. (Play groups formed early in the day sometimes exclude late arrivals.)
6. Your child's teacher may not be available to greet and reassure your child if he or she is occupied with activities already in progress.
7. Classroom activities are sometimes disrupted by your child's arrival.
8. Other children are often upset by late arrivals because they are reminded of their own drop off.
9. He or she may have difficulty at rest time, especially if they slept in and/or didn't play actively during the morning. Rest time can be very long for a child who isn't ready to rest, even with quiet activities to keep them occupied.
10. It may be harder for him or her to get into the swing of the routine. Having a consistent routine where they come to the center at about the same time each day is important to young children. A routine gives them a sense of security and helps them to know what to expect in their day.

Remember, children will not be accepted after 9:00 a.m. except in the case of an emergency or an appointment and you have called in advance. Thank you for working with us to help your child's day go smoothly.



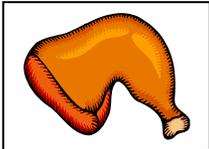
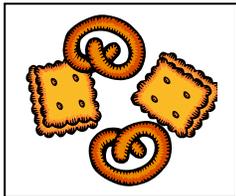
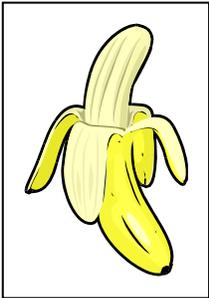
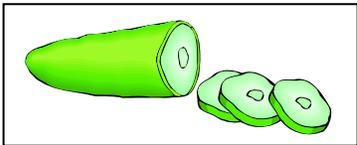
## Appendix C: Food Guidelines and Lunchbox Suggestions

### LUNCHBOX GUIDELINES

Please follow these guidelines when preparing lunches for your child. Remember to pack food in a thermos to keep food hot or include an ice pack to keep food cold. Remember our program is a **NUT FREE ZONE\***.



#### Required Food Groups/Components:

Protein	Carbohydrate
<p>Meats/Meat Alternatives or Dairy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lunch Meats (95%fat free)</li> <li>• Tuna</li> <li>• Hard Boiled Egg</li> <li>• Chicken (chunks or 1 piece)</li> <li>• Tofu or other soy products</li> <li>• Hummus</li> <li>• Beans</li> <li>• Soy Butter</li> <li>• Cheese (low-fat)</li> </ul> 	<p>Bread, Crackers, or Cereal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole wheat bread</li> <li>• Bagels</li> <li>• Tortillas or corn chips (unsalted)</li> <li>• Rice cakes</li> <li>• Bread sticks</li> <li>• Pita bread</li> <li>• Pasta</li> <li>• Rice</li> <li>• Potatoes</li> <li>• Couscous or Tabouli</li> <li>• Pretzel sticks</li> </ul> 
Fruit	Vegetable (Raw or Cooked)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apple</li> <li>• Pears</li> <li>• Plums</li> <li>• Citrus (orange, grapefruit, etc.)</li> <li>• Berries (strawberries, blueberries, raspberries)</li> <li>• Kiwi</li> <li>• Grapes (sliced length-wise for young children)</li> <li>• Peach, nectarine or apricot</li> <li>• Melons</li> <li>• Bananas</li> <li>• Pineapple</li> <li>• Cherries</li> <li>• Mandarin Oranges</li> <li>• Papaya or mango</li> <li>• Unsweetened applesauce</li> <li>• Dried fruits</li> <li>• Canned fruit in juice</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carrots (petite or sticks)</li> <li>• Celery sticks</li> <li>• Sweet red or green peppers</li> <li>• Broccoli or cauliflower</li> <li>• Cucumbers</li> <li>• Tomatoes (cherry or wedged)</li> <li>• Squash (zucchini or yellow)</li> <li>• Tossed salads or greens (dressing on the side if needed)</li> <li>• Potatoes or sweet potatoes</li> <li>• Peas</li> <li>• Corn</li> <li>• Green beans</li> <li>• Greens</li> </ul> 

To prepare a healthy lunch, you need to choose at least one food from each of the above categories every day. Note: Yogurt does not count as a fruit. It may count as a protein if it is plain or not highly sweetened.

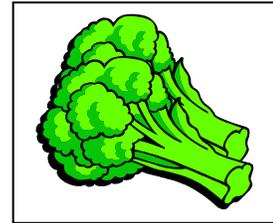
**NUT FREE ZONE\*** - It is OK to have items labeled “processed in a facility that also produces nuts” for lunches that will only be consumed by your child. Refer to the Family Handbook for guidelines for food brought to school that will be shared with others.

### Required Food Amounts:

Component	Ages 1 - 2	Ages 3 -5
Vegetables	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup total	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup total
Fruits	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup total	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup total
Protein	1 oz. meat or $\frac{1}{4}$ cup beans or 2 Tbsp. soy butter or $\frac{1}{2}$ egg or 4 oz yogurt	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. meat or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup beans or 3 Tbsp. soy butter or $\frac{3}{4}$ egg or 6 oz yogurt
Carbohydrate	$\frac{1}{2}$ slice bread or $\frac{1}{4}$ cup pasta	$\frac{1}{2}$ slice bread or $\frac{1}{4}$ cup pasta

### Sample Lunch Ideas:

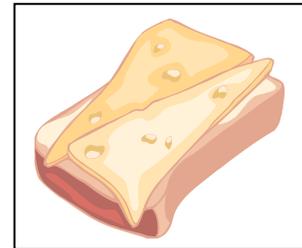
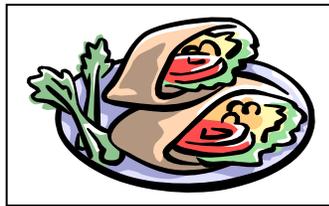
Pasta and cheese or cheese tortellini with tomato sauce  
 Broccoli (raw or lightly steamed)  
 Applesauce



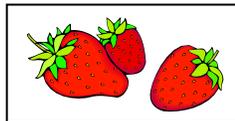
Bean and Cheese Taco  
 Orange quarters  
 Lettuce and tomato salad



Tuna or Egg Salad  
 Crackers or pita bread  
 Cucumbers  
 Watermelon cubes



Chicken (shredded, cubed, or nuggets)  
 Rice  
 Carrot slices (raw or lightly steamed)  
 Strawberries



### Reminder: The following items should not be sent in your child's lunch:

Candy or chewing gum  
 Cookies  
 Pudding  
 Desserts  
 Chips (except tortilla chips)  
 Any sweetened drink, including sodas,  
 Kool-aid or fruit beverage

### Limit or avoid sending the following items:

"Fast" food                                      Lunchables                                      Highly sweetened yogurt

For infants and toddlers, please be sure to cut food into bite size portions so they aren't choking hazards (for example, round food items like hot dogs and carrots need to be sliced lengthwise).

## ACC CHILDREN'S LAB SCHOOL FOOD GUIDELINES AND LUNCHBOX SUGGESTIONS

### MEAL PLANNING (for children 12 months and older)

The ACC Children's Laboratory School (CLS) promotes healthy development in all areas for the children in our care. We believe that nutrition is an important component of a child's growth and development, and so we want children to eat healthy, nutritious food at school. This philosophy applies to snacks and cooking projects offered and also extends to lunches brought from home.

Our daily snack menus are posted so that you will know what we are serving. The snack menu is rotated every four weeks. Some families like to check the menu to ensure that children have something different for lunch than we are having for snack. Our menu reflects the diverse family population served in our program.

Make sure that we are aware of any food allergies your child has. Our program is a **NUT FREE ENVIRONMENT**. Due to the potential risk posed to children by nut allergies, foods containing nuts (peanuts and tree nuts) are not allowed in our program. When preparing something that only your child will eat (for example, lunches), it is OK to include items that are labeled "*processed in a facility that also produces nuts*". However, if you are providing something that will be shared with others in the program, food labels that say "*may contain peanut or tree nuts*" or similar wording should not be brought to school. We understand that this may sometimes be an inconvenience, and appreciate your strict adherence to this policy in order to keep all children in our program safe.

On the last page are guidelines for serving sizes for various ages developed by USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program to help you in planning a healthy lunch for your child. Please consult the guide when preparing lunches, but also use your knowledge of your child's eating habits. Your child may eat more of some types of food than is recommended, so feel free to include slightly larger servings to satisfy your child's likes. However, we ask that you send at least the amount listed for each type of food to ensure that your child has the opportunity to satisfy all of his or her nutritional needs at lunch. Please remember that your child has had a very busy morning here at the CLS, and s/he may be hungrier than after a quiet morning at home.

According to the Texas Health and Human Services and USDA Guidelines your child must also have ½ - ¾ cup of milk with lunch, depending upon their age. The Children's Lab School provides this amount of milk for each child at lunch each day.

Packing many different kinds of foods helps your child receive a variety of nutrients and helps prevent boredom. ***In order to prepare a healthy lunch, you need to choose at least one food from each of the following categories every day:***

- Protein
- Carbohydrate
- Fruit
- Vegetable

We believe that all children will benefit from eating healthy foods while in school. These foods provide the nutrients needed to allow your child to learn and develop. We also understand that food choices at home may be different than the ones we require. Our requirements and restrictions are designed to promote an awareness and appreciation for healthy eating, and as such are part of our overall commitment to a quality early childhood experience.

Foods that are not allowed at the CLS are listed below. If these are sent in your child's lunch, we will provide your child with a healthy alternative, and we will send the food home in the child's lunch box. If you have questions about some of the items on the list, or if you are unsure if an item is allowed, please talk with your child's teacher or the director. Foods (including beverages)

which we do not allow include:

Candy or chewing gum  
Cookies  
Pudding  
High sugar desserts

Chips (except tortilla chips)  
Any sweetened drink, including sodas,  
Kool-aid or fruit “beverages”

We also ask that you avoid sending the following items:

“Fast food”  
“Lunchables”

Highly sweetened yogurt  
“Gogurt”

### **LUNCHBOX IDEAS**

We’ve listed some ideas under each type of food. Please send foods your child can eat cold. We want teachers to eat with the children and do not have additional staff to heat up lunches. We also have very limited refrigerator space at the CLS. The Health Department requires that lunches be sent with blue ice packs or in thermoses to keep food cool or hot until lunchtime.

#### **Proteins:**

Meats or Other Animal Protein: (must be accompanied by blue ice)

- Lunch Meats (95% fat free)
- Turkey Breast
- Lean/fat free wieners (must be sliced long wise to prevent choking)
- Tuna
- Ham
- Chicken (chunks or 1 piece)
- Surimi (imitation crab)
- Hard Boiled Egg

Dairy: (must be accompanied by blue ice)

- Cheese – lowfat
- String Cheese
- Plain Yogurt
- Cottage Cheese
- Cream Cheese
- Kifir

Meat Alternative:

- Soy or Sunflower Butter
- Hummus
- Sunflower Seeds (*not recommended for children under 3 years of age*)
- Soybean/tofu products
- Refried beans
- Garbanzo Beans

#### **Carbohydrates:**

Bread/Grains/Starches:

- Whole wheat bread
- Bagels
- Tortilla chips
- Raisin bread
- Popcorn cakes
- Pretzels (*hard pretzels not recommended for children under 3 years of age*)
- Pita bread
- Rolls
- Tortillas
- English muffins
- Rice cakes
- Pasta or spaghetti
- Tabouli
- Couscous
- Rice
- Potato
- Macaron

Crackers & Cereals:

- Finn
- Triscuits
- Saltines
- Wafers
- Bread sticks
- Rice cakes
- Melba toast
- Graham crackers
- Low sugar dry cereal
- Granola (without nuts)

## **Fruits:**

Fresh, frozen (unsweetened), or canned in water or own juice

- Apple
- Pears
- Plums
- Kiwi
- Peach
- Melons
- Bananas
- Pineapple
- Cherries
- Berries
- Apricots
- Mandarin Oranges
- Strawberries
- Papaya
- Mango
- Applesauce (no sugar)
- Citrus (orange, grapefruit, etc.)
- Grapes (must be sliced in half to prevent choking)
- 100% juice (no added sugar) [it is recommended that children consume no more than 4 ounces of juice daily]

Dried Fruits:

- Raisins
- Peaches
- Prunes
- Fruit Bits
- Apricots
- Banana chips
- Apples
- Papaya

## **Vegetables:**

Raw: (A small container of dip often makes raw vegetables more attractive to children)

- Carrots (petite or sticks – no rounds; steam to soften for younger children)
- Celery sticks
- Bell peppers
- Broccoli
- Cucumbers
- Tomatoes (cherry or wedged)
- Squash/zucchini
- Cauliflower
- Tossed salads or greens (dressing on the side if desired)
- Mushrooms

Cooked or canned: (low salt if possible)

- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Squash/zucchini
- Potatoes
- Sweet potatoes
- Carrots
- Peas
- Green beans
- Corn (baby, on-the-cob, or kernel)
- Greens (spinach, etc.)

## **Combination Foods:**

Sandwiches: (Don't forget the blue ice if they contain meat, egg products or mayonnaise)

- Turkey
- Ham
- Cheese
- Soy butter & low/no-sugar jelly
- Soy butter & banana
- Tuna, chicken, or tofu salad (or plain)
- Egg salad

*Note: Vary the breads – Pita stuffed with egg salad, tortilla rolled with meat & cheese, bagel & cream cheese, rice cakes with melted cheese*

Other combinations: (Remember they will be served at room temperature)

- Pasta with sauce
- Crackers and cheese/meat
- Tuna salad & crackers
- Celery stuffed with cream cheese or soy butter
- Crackers with soy butter
- Pizza slices
- Vegetables with yogurt dip

**MEAL PLANNING (for children under 12 months)**

Because of the unique and changing nutritional needs of infants, it is important that families communicate frequently with their child’s teacher. Food consumed prior to the child’s arrival at the center should be shared with the teachers each morning. Information about new foods being introduced, changing feeding patterns, and/or increased consumption should be shared at least weekly or as needed. **Child care regulation requires that feeding plans be updated monthly.** Also, due to health and safety concerns, solids cannot be added to bottles of formula, sweetened beverages cannot be offered, and juice is not recommended for children under 12 months of age.

USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program

(Also aligned with American Public Health Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines)

Serving Size Guidelines for Lunch

**Children 12 months and older**

Component	Ages 1 – 2	Ages 3 –5
<b>Vegetables and fruits</b>	¼ cup total	½ cup total
<b>Grains or Carbohydrates</b>		
Bread, cornbread, biscuit, etc.	½ slice/serving	½ slice/serving
Cooked pasta, noodles or cereal	¼ cup	1/3 cup
<b>Protein</b>		
Meat, fish or meat alternative	1 oz.	1 ½ oz.
Cheese	1 oz. slice	1 ½ oz.
Eggs	½ egg	¾ egg
Beans or Peas	¼ cup	3/8 cup
Soy butter	2 Tbsps.	3 Tbsps.
Yogurt	4 oz.	6 oz.
<b>Milk (PROVIDED BY ACC LAB)</b>	½ cup whole milk	¾ cup 2% milk

**Children under 12 months of age**

Time of Day	Component	4-7 months	8-11 months
<b>Morning</b>	Breast milk or iron fortified formula	4-8 oz.	6-8 oz.
	Dry, iron-fortified infant cereal*	0-3 Tbsp.	2-4 Tbsp.
	Fruit of appropriate consistency		1-4 Tbsp.
<b>Mid-Day</b>	Breast milk or iron fortified formula	4-8 oz.	6-8 oz.
	Strained fruit and/or vegetable*	0-3 Tbsp.	1-4 Tbsp.
	Dry, iron-fortified infant cereal <i>and/or</i>	0-3 Tbsp.	2-4 Tbsp.
	Fish, lean meat, poultry, cooked dry beans or peas <i>or</i>		1-4 Tbsp.
	Cheese <i>or</i>		½-2 oz.
	Cottage cheese <i>or</i>		1-4 oz.
	Egg yolk		1 yolk
<b>Supplement</b>	Breast milk or iron fortified formula	4-6 oz.	2-4 oz.
	Whole grain hard toast <i>or</i>		0-½ slice
	Whole grain crackers or teething biscuits		0-2

*\*optional before 6 months, but introduce by 6 months*

*Fruit and vegetable juices are not recommended for children under 12 months*

## Appendix D: Safe Sleep Policy

All staff, substitute staff, and volunteers at the ACC Children’s Lab School will follow these safe sleep recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) for infants to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome/Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS/SUIDS):

- Always put infants to sleep on their backs unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 2710 signed by the infant's health care professional stating that a different sleeping position for the child is medically necessary [§746.2427].
- Place infants on a firm mattress, with a tight fitting sheet, in a crib that meets the CPSC federal requirements for full size cribs and for non-full size cribs [§746.2409].
- For infants who are younger than 12 months of age, cribs should be bare except for a tight fitting sheet and a mattress cover or protector. Items that should not be placed in a crib include: soft or loose bedding, such as blankets, quilts, or comforters; pillows; stuffed toys/animals; soft objects; bumper pads; liners; or sleep positioning devices [§746.2415]. Also, infants must not have their heads, faces, or cribs covered at any time by items such as blankets, linens, or clothing [§746.2429].
- Do not use sleep positioning devices, such as wedges or infant positioners. The AAP has found no evidence that these devices are safe. Their use may increase the risk of suffocation [§746.2415].
- Ensure that sleeping areas are ventilated and at a temperature that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult [§746.3407(10)].
- If an infant needs extra warmth, use sleep clothing (sleep sacks) as an alternative to blankets [§746.2415].
- Place only one infant in a crib to sleep [§746.2405].
- Infants may use a pacifier during sleep. But the pacifier must *not be attached* to a stuffed animal or the infant’s clothing by a string, cord, or other attaching mechanism that might be a suffocation or strangulation risk [§746.2415].
- If the infant falls asleep in a restrictive device other than a crib (such as a bouncy chair or swing, or arrives to care asleep in a car seat), move the infant to a crib immediately, unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 2710 signed by the infant's health care professional [§746.2426].
- Our child care program is smoke-free. Smoking is not allowed in Texas child care operations (this includes e-cigarettes and any type of vaporizers) [§746.3703(d)].
- Actively observe sleeping infants by sight and sound [§746.2403].
- If an infant is able to roll back and forth from front to back, place the infant on the infant's back for sleep and allow the infant to assume a preferred sleep position [§746.2427].
- Awake infants will have supervised “tummy time” several times daily. This will help them strengthen their muscles and develop normally [§746.2427].
- Do not swaddle an infant for sleep or rest unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 2710 signed by the infant’s health care professional [§746.2428].

## **Appendix E: Curriculum Philosophy**

### **Philosophy Statement**

Our curriculum is based on our knowledge of the developmental process, our awareness of the individual child's needs and interests, and sensitivity to each child's family culture (such as values, beliefs, experiences, and language), all of which are essential components of developmentally appropriate practice. A curriculum is a plan for learning. We understand that young children are learning all the time and so we believe that curriculum includes everything the children do all day long. Therefore, curriculum is integrated into the environment, routines and transitions; planned and spontaneous activities; indoor and outdoor play; interactions between children and between children and adults; child led and teacher directed activities; and implemented individually, in small groups and large groups. Our curriculum focuses on the development of the "whole child", that is, it considers all areas of development – physical (learning to use our body); language (learning to understand and talk); social-emotional (learning about ourselves and others); and cognitive (learning to learn and problem solve). Our curriculum also teaches concepts and develops skills in the areas of early literacy, math, science, technology, social studies, health and safety, and creative expression and the arts, in ways that are meaningful to the child's developmental understanding.

### **Curriculum is Integrated Throughout the Day**

Our curriculum includes routines, such as arrival and departure, toileting, meals and snacks, and rest time; teacher led and child chosen activities; large group, small group and individual activities; interactions with both adults and other children; indoor and outdoor times; transitions; and the arrangement of the environment and how the children use it.

Our daily schedules allow for blocks of time for indoor and outdoor free-choice activities; small and large group activities; snacks and lunch; clean-up, toileting and other routines. Classrooms are arranged in interest centers. Most of the day children are encouraged to move around the classroom at their own pace and select activities of interest. During this time, teachers interact with children to extend or enhance their play by asking questions, supporting problem-solving, offering ideas or materials, and observing or assessing what children know. Depending upon the age, some of the activities each day may be more teacher-directed or guided.

### **Emergent Curriculum**

Our curriculum "emerges" over time based upon our observations of the children, the experiences we provide and our reflections upon how the children respond to those experiences. Emergent Curriculum:

- Recognizes that supportive and respectful relationships are essential to intellectual development.
- Uses the child's interests, motivations and developmental level as a starting place.
- Draws from the child's family culture, including values, beliefs, experiences, cultural practices, and languages.
- Is flexible and allows teachers to take advantage of "teachable moments".
- Values the "process" of learning rather than the "product" of learning.
- Integrates the environment, materials, experiences, and routines to support learning.
- Is child-centered, rather than teacher-directed.
- Provides opportunities for children to build on what they know.
- Is based on ongoing developmental assessment of the individual child
- Is aligned with recognized standards and guidelines in early childhood

### **Our Belief in the Importance of Play**

Our curriculum is "play-based". In the first three years, more learning and growth is taking place than at any other period in a child's life. Very young children are learning about self,

feelings, other people, communicating, moving and doing, and thinking. Every interaction and experience is literally shaping a child's brain for learning. As children play, they grow, develop, and learn. While at play, understanding emerges and evolves. Engaged in play, interacting with people, materials, and their environment, children work to make sense of the world around them. As a result, they gain new skills and concepts as well as more complex ways of thinking. For example, when an infant plays peek-a-boo he is learning that when something disappears it still exists ("object or person permanence"). When a toddler pushes a chair back and forth across the room, she is experimenting with area and distance (spatial relationships). When a two-year-old scribbles onto paper and then "reads" what it says to an adult he is taking steps toward literacy. When a four-year-old makes boats sink in the water table or puts different objects in the water to see if they sink or float she is learning about cause and effect and logical thinking. Children discover and explore concepts in science, math, literacy and social studies through active, concrete, everyday experiences as they play. Because there is no "right" or "wrong" way to play and because children are encouraged to discover and experiment with materials, they are allowed to be creative, to solve problems and to think for themselves. One of our goals is to help children "learn how to learn".

## **Appendix F: Guidance and Discipline Policy**

### **Austin Community College Children's Lab School**

#### **Guidance and Discipline Policy**

The purpose of the ACC Guidance and Discipline Policy is to:

1. Provide positive, supportive, and authentic guidance and discipline in order to help children develop self-regulation, empathy, and conflict resolution strategies that will help guide their social-emotional development;
2. Support families in developing knowledge and skills to support their child's social-emotional development;
3. Create a clear process for dealing with behavioral concerns;
4. Limit or eliminate exclusion from the program; and
5. Comply with federal and state civil rights laws (ADA, IDEA, THHS Child Care Regulation Minimum Standards).

#### **Guidance and Discipline Guidelines**

#### **For All Adults\* to follow while in the Austin Community College Children's Lab School**

- Guidance and discipline must be:
  - 1) Individualized and consistent for each child;
  - 2) Appropriate to the child's level of understanding;
  - 3) Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control; and
  - 4) A positive method of discipline and guidance that encourages self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction
- A caregiver may only use positive methods of guidance and discipline that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include:
  - 1) Appreciating each child's unique personality, abilities, activity level, and pace of development and responding to children's individual needs;
  - 2) Building relationships with children by learning to read nonverbal signals, sense mood and level of attention and adjust interactions accordingly for infants and showing respect by listening, answering questions, and engaging toddlers and preschoolers in meaningful conversations;
  - 3) Identifying and accepting children's feelings while encouraging emotional expression of those feelings;
  - 4) Modeling good emotional expression and management;
  - 5) Modeling and reinforcing positive behavior by using praise and encouragement of appropriate behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
  - 6) Anticipating children's behavior and gently enforcing consistent limitations;
  - 7) Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
  - 8) Redirecting children's inappropriate behaviors to a more acceptable alternative;
  - 9) Encouraging social problem solving with peers;
  - 10) Following through on logical consequences when appropriate; and
  - 11) As a last resort using brief supervised separation from the group.
- Behavior problems are dealt with at school rather than parents being asked to discipline their child for events that occur at school. When behaviors continue to be a problem, staff and consultants may conduct a **functional behavior assessment** (FBA). Staff and parents will work to create a **positive behavior support plan** (PBS) that will be implemented and evaluated over time. In some cases, a referral may be made or a consultant may be used to assist with solving the problem. If staff, parents, and outside consultation determines that the program is unable to meet

the needs of a child, staff will work closely with the family to find an appropriate placement for the child.

- Staff may NEVER use physical punishment, psychological abuse, or coercion when disciplining a child, including:
  - 1) Physical punishment or threats of physical punishment, including, shaking, hitting with a hand or instrument, spanking, paddling, slapping, jerking, squeezing, kicking, biting, pinching, excessive tickling, and pulling arms, hair, or ears;
  - 2) Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age;
  - 3) Psychological abuse, including, shaming, name calling, ridiculing, humiliation, sarcasm, yelling at, cursing at, making threats or frightening a child, ostracism, rejecting, or withholding affection.
  - 4) Coercion, including, rough handling (shoving, pulling, pushing, grasping any body part); forcing a child to sit down, lie down, or stay down, except when restraint is necessary to protect the child or others from harm; physically forcing a child to perform an action (such as eating or cleaning up);
  - 5) Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training;
  - 6) Putting anything in or on a child's mouth and/or;
  - 7) Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed.

**\*All Adults includes teachers, staff, faculty, volunteers, lab students, parents, family members & anyone dropping off or picking up a child at the Lab School.**

All staff are informed of the Guidance and Discipline Policy and Guidelines at an orientation prior to starting work at the center. Families are informed about the Guidelines in the Parent Handbook. Both staff and families must sign a form stating that they have read, understood, and received a copy of the guidelines.

# Appendix G: Child Care Weather Watch Chart

## Understand the Weather



### Wind-Chill

- 30° is *chilly* and generally uncomfortable
- 15° to 30° is *cold*
- 0° to 15° is *very cold*
- -20° to 0° is *bitter cold* with significant risk of *frostbite*
- -20° to -60° is *extreme cold* and *frostbite* is likely
- -60° is *frigid* and exposed *skin will freeze* in 1 minute

Wind-Chill Factor Chart (in Fahrenheit)										
		Wind Speed in mph								
		Calm	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40
Air Temperature	40	40	36	34	32	30	29	28	28	27
	30	30	25	21	19	17	16	15	14	13
	20	20	13	9	6	4	3	1	0	-1
	10	10	1	-4	-7	-9	-11	-12	-14	-15
	0	0	-11	-16	-19	-22	-24	-26	-27	-29
	-10	-10	-22	-28	-32	-35	-37	-39	-41	-43

Comfortable for out door play
  Caution
  Danger

### Heat Index



- 80° or below is considered *comfortable*
- 90° beginning to feel *uncomfortable*
- 100° *uncomfortable* and may be *hazardous*
- 110° considered *dangerous*

All temperatures are in degrees Fahrenheit

Heat Index Chart (in Fahrenheit %)														
		Relative Humidity (Percent)												
		40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100
Air Temperature (F)	80	80	80	81	81	82	82	83	84	84	85	86	86	87
	84	83	84	85	86	88	89	90	92	94	96	98	100	103
	90	91	93	95	97	100	103	105	109	113	117	122	127	132
	94	97	100	103	106	110	114	119	124	129	135			
	100	109	114	118	124	129	130							
	104	119	124	131	137									

2010

## Child Care Weather Watch

Watching the weather is part of a child care provider's job. Planning for playtime, field trips, or weather safety is part of the daily routine. The changes in weather require the child care provider to monitor the health and safety of children. What clothing, beverages, and protections are appropriate? **Clothe** children to maintain a comfortable body temperature (warmer months - lightweight cotton, colder months - wear layers of clothing). **Beverages** help the body maintain a comfortable temperature. Water or fruit juices are best. Avoid high-sugar content beverages and soda pop. **Sunscreen** may be used year around. Use a sunscreen labeled as SPF-15 or higher. Read and follow all label instructions for the sunscreen product. Look for sunscreen with UVB and UVA ray protection. **Shaded** play areas protect children from the sun.

**Condition GREEN** - Children may play outdoors and be comfortable. Watch for signs of children becoming uncomfortable while playing. Use precautions regarding clothing, sunscreen, and beverages for all child age groups.

INFANTS AND TODDLERS are unable to tell the child care provider if they are too hot or cold. Children become fussy when uncomfortable. Infants/toddlers will tolerate shorter periods of outdoor play. Dress infants/toddlers in lightweight cotton or cotton-like fabrics during the warmer months. In cooler or cold months dress infants in layers to keep them warm. Protect infants from the sun by limiting the amount of time outdoors and playing in shaded areas. Give beverages when playing outdoors.

YOUNG CHILDREN remind children to stop playing, drink a beverage, and apply more sunscreen. OLDER CHILDREN need a firm approach to wearing proper clothing for the weather (they may want to play without coats, hats or mittens). They may resist applying sunscreen and drinking beverages while outdoors.

**Condition YELLOW** - use caution and closely observe the children for signs of being too hot or cold while outdoors. Clothing, sunscreen, and beverages are important. Shorten the length of outdoor time.

INFANTS AND TODDLERS use precautions outlined in Condition Green. Clothing, sunscreen, and beverages are important. Shorten the length of time for outdoor play. YOUNG CHILDREN may insist they are not too hot or cold because they are enjoying playtime. Child care providers need to structure the length of time for outdoor play for the young child. OLDER CHILDREN need a firm approach to wearing proper clothing for the weather (they may want to play without coats, hats or mittens), applying sunscreen and drinking liquids while playing outdoors.

**Condition RED** - most children should not play outdoors due to the health risk. INFANTS/TODDLERS should play indoors and have ample space for large motor play. YOUNG CHILDREN may ask to play outside and do not understand the potential danger of weather conditions. OLDER CHILDREN may play outdoors for very short periods of time if they are properly dressed, have plenty of fluids. Child care providers must be vigilant about maximum protection of children.

## Understand the Weather

The weather forecast may be confusing unless you know the meaning of the words.

**Blizzard Warning:** There will be snow and strong winds that produce a blinding snow, deep drifts, and life threatening wind chills. Seek shelter immediately.

**Heat Index Warning:** How hot it feels to the body when the air temperature (in Fahrenheit) and relative humidity are combined.

**Relative Humidity:** The percent of moisture in the air.

**Temperature:** The temperature of the air in degrees Fahrenheit.

**Wind:** The speed of the wind in miles per hour.

**Wind Chill Warning:** There will be sub-zero temperatures with moderate to strong winds expected which may cause hypothermia and great danger to people, pets and livestock.

**Winter Weather Advisory:** Weather conditions may cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous. If caution is exercised, these situations should not become life threatening.

**Winter Storm Warning:** Severe winter conditions have begun in your area.

**Winter Storm Watch:** Severe winter conditions, like heavy snow and ice are possible within the next day or two.

# ACC Children's Lab School Family Handbook Acknowledgement Form

I have received and read the ACC Children's Laboratory School 2025-2026 Family Handbook. I understand the program guidelines and agree to follow them.

I also understand that failure to follow program guidelines may result in suspension or termination of child care services.

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Please complete, sign, detach and return this form with your enrollment paper work.**