



*Family & Consumer Sciences Division
Patrick Bettencourt, Dean*

Early Care and Education Family Handbook and Admission Agreement Contract for Services

Welcome to our program:

Thank you for your support and cooperation and welcome to our YCCD, MJC Early Care and Education program for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers! We are looking forward to interacting with the children and their families! We believe our program has one of the most important jobs - to be trusted with the care and education of your young child as we build caring relationships during these critical foundation-building years.

As we strive to work as a team to support your child's Early Care and Education experience, you are welcome to call our Child Development Office at (209) 575-6343 (Colleen Norby), the toddler classroom (209) 575-6921, or the preschool classroom (209) 575-6329, if you have any concerns, suggestions, or questions about the information and the requirements as noted in this contract. It is our hope that each family that has a reserved spot will fulfill the requirements and join our "school family" for this upcoming year!

Respectfully,

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Child Development Office
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Find us on the web: <http://fcs.sites.mjc.edu/earlycare.html>

Children's Programs Offered

- **Wawona:** Toddler Option (18 to 36 months)
- **Me-Wuk:** Preschool Option (30 months to five years of age; once a child is attending kindergarten, eligibility ends)

As you make your decision about whether or not to accept our invitation to participate at one of our two children's centers, either the Toddler option or the Preschool option, important information has been included to help you better understand our program. If your child is enrolled in the toddler program, it is our hope that the program is such an "exceptional" fit that families stay enrolled until your child turns 36 months old. If your child is enrolled in our preschool program, it is our hope that the program is such an "exceptional" fit that families stay enrolled in our program until your child leaves for kindergarten. We know continuity of care is important to the child's educational identity and that selecting one early care and education setting for the duration of the child's early years is considered best practice. If there is space available in the preschool classroom, enrolled toddlers have priority to transition to the preschool.

Philosophy and Purpose of a Laboratory Setting

Our Early Care and Education Laboratories are instructional training sites for Child Development students. Students enrolling in Child Development lab courses gain teaching experiences in our lab classrooms. The Child Development Instructional team along with the Child Development Advisory Committee work together to discuss and negotiate days and times that the program is offered in order to increase the number of students graduating as Child Development majors along with training early care and education teachers for the work force in our community. If you would like to be a member of our Child Development Advisory Committee, please contact the lab instructor for the dates and times the meetings are held; there is one advisory committee meeting each fall and spring semester.

The children's programs are a unique place where early care and education are offered while placing importance on cultural sensitivity and building caring relationships between children, their families, and our teachers; training early care and education teachers; and supporting families through formal MJC parenting course instruction.

Our programs provide a child-centered learning environment that offers an approximate ratio of 1 adult per 4-6 children in the toddler lab and an approximate ratio of 1 adult per 12 children in the preschool lab. In addition to our required ratios, our environments in both programs will utilize the support of student teachers that are not counted in these ratios. Our Early Care and Education Laboratory is staffed with one lab instructor in both programs; one Child Development Specialist/Intern in the preschool program; four Interns in the toddler program; possibly one student worker in each program; and student teachers in both programs that are majoring in child development.

The children are observed by students from other child development courses, psychology, human services, and nursing students along with students completing their student teaching. Each student teacher completes a portfolio on one child. It is the goal of the program for each child to receive one portfolio before exiting the program.

We believe in the whole child approach where our curriculum and relationships are built around all aspects of interrelated development including physical, social, emotional, aesthetic, self-help,

and cognitive. It is believed that each child is an individual with his/her own rate and style of learning and growing, and intelligence develops as it is nurtured. The program offers developmentally appropriate learning opportunities for children with a focus on the importance of play. The teachers support this learning and care through a “positive guidance” approach where time-out is not utilized but instead time-with is practiced as a means to teach rather than to punish.

Children participate in hands-on active exploration of the environment including curriculum activities. Therefore, please dress your child in clothes that allow the child to freely explore the environment where messy items such as paint, glue, mud, grass, sand, water, shaving cream, etc. are in abundance. Shoes need to fit snugly and comfortably so that the child can run, climb, skip, pedal, hop, jump, etc. without the shoes falling off. It is our hope that families will encourage their child’s participation in all activities including the messy activities. Sometimes children need to be reassured from their families that It is alright to get messy at school. We will work to encourage your child to wear a smock, but often children need time to feel comfortable wearing the smocks and sometimes will still want to participate in the messy activities while not wearing a smock which is allowed.

The children, their families, student teachers, interns (primary caregivers), Child Development Specialist, and the lab instructor consider our program to be a place where our “school family” resides. It is our goal that we build a sense of community where families are encouraging their children to greet, play with, and support every child and family in the center.

When a child is exhibiting behaviors that may feel uncomfortable, it is the goal for the teaching staff to work together with the family to support the child and his/her family in finding and nurturing the child’s compassionate, caring self. It is believed that every child is worthy of having the care and support of everyone, children and adults, involved in the Early Care and Education setting.

Our philosophy includes Anti-Bias Approach, elements of Creative Curriculum, utilizing Multicultural Principles for Head Start programs, California Department of Education Infant/Toddler and Preschool Learning and Development Foundations and Curriculum Guidelines, and unique to our infant/toddler lab, Program for Infant/Toddlers Care (PITC) and Beginning Together-Inclusive Care philosophies.

Anti-bias curriculum/philosophy:

Our children’s center practices an anti-bias approach in order to make all families feel included and respected. Our families and teaching staff arrive to our children’s center rich with culture and traditions to be shared. With this approach, children are taught about acceptance, tolerance, and respect.

Goals of an anti-bias curriculum/philosophy:

- To foster a positive self-identity within the context of a group identity
- To facilitate knowledgeable, empathic interactions with people who are different from oneself
- To foster critical thinking about bias
- To help children stand up for themselves and others in the face of bias
- To show a willingness to look at various perspectives of an issue

Each family and student teacher is invited to create a page for our family diversity book; and they are invited to bring in objects/treasures to share in the classroom, which represents their families’ culture/traditions. With respect for individual religious practices and beliefs, lab

instructor, Child Development Specialist, interns/primary caregivers, and student teachers do not initiate the celebration of “traditional” holidays in our children’s center, although each family is welcomed to work with the lab instructor to develop curriculum that can be presented in children’s programs for any holiday or celebration that is important to the family. In the preschool classroom, each family is required one time each academic year to work with the lab instructor to develop and present developmentally appropriate curriculum that represents the family’s culture so that the children have an opportunity to learn about the customs/holidays/practices that are important for that particular family. For example, children’s birthdays may be acknowledged with prior approval in the following ways:

- present birth pictures of the child and sharing information about the child’s birth such as date, time, weight (represented by a bag of oranges or a pumpkin), height (piece of yarn), who was present and the loving thoughts from family about child’s birth;
- share a special healthy snack (no candy or other foods with sugar);
- sing a song such as *Happy Birthday* that is initiated or requested by child or family;
- donate in honor of the child’s birth day an item such as a book, flowers, or flower bulbs;
- family member(s) joins child for snack
- family member(s) joins child for day at school

Our priority is to be inclusive of all children and families. As we are a center focused on relationships and investing time with children, our center may not be comfortable with:

- special birthday cups, napkins, plates, or favors;
- party invitations for any occasion handed out inside the school. Families may hand deliver them after class outside the gated area. Sometimes families mail the invitations if they are not inviting everyone from the center to avoid feelings of hurt and rejection. The Lab Instructor can work with families to help create a caring plan to hand out invitations. We are working to build a caring community where everyone feels part of instead of apart from the community.

Multicultural Principles for Head Start programs:

The Early Care and Education labs strive to provide culturally relevant programming and include families as the most important teachers in young children’s lives. Our programs utilize the definitions of culture and the ten multicultural principles from the document, ‘Revisiting and Updating the Multicultural Principles for Head Start Programs Servicing Children Ages Birth to Five. Along with having access to an updated version of multicultural principles, the document provides a selective review of research conducted since the Multicultural Principles were first published in 1991. Every aspect of a child’s life, from adult chosen eating and sleeping practices to decisions about medical care, are rooted in culture and effect how children develop and learn. Addressing cultural relevance in making curriculum choices and adaptations is a necessary, developmentally appropriate practice (Head Start Multicultural Principle 4). Dialoging with families about values for their children (e.g., is feeding self a goal for a child?) is taken into account when goal planning for children. (See Revisiting and Updating the Multicultural Principles for Head Start Programs Servicing Children Ages Birth to Five)

Elements of Creative Curriculum:

The Creative Curriculum® for Infants, Toddlers & Twos and Preschool is aligned with state and national early learning standards and guidelines. *Creative Curriculum* is based on the latest, most current research about how young children develop and learn. *Creative Curriculum* is used as a basis for developing specific goals and activities based on individual observations of children. The four goals include:

- Learning about self and others (social/emotional)
- Learning about moving (physical)

- Learning about the world (cognitive)
- Learning about communicating (language) provides a framework for students to study children's learning domains and offer materials and experiences that address individual needs.

(https://www.teachingstrategies.com/page/ccs_overview.cfm)

California's Department of Education Preschool Learning Foundations:

The California Preschool Learning Foundations outline key knowledge and skills that most children can achieve when provided with the kinds of interactions, instruction, and environments that research has shown to promote early learning and development. The foundations can provide early childhood educators, parents, and the public with a clear understanding of the wide range of knowledge and skills that preschool children typically attain when given the benefits of a high-quality preschool program.

(<http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/psfoundations.asp>)

California's Department of Education Preschool Curriculum Framework:

A companion curriculum framework for "Foundations", the *California Preschool Curriculum Frameworks, volumes 1-3*, present strategies for early childhood educators that enrich learning and development opportunities for all of California's preschool children. The *California Preschool Curriculum Frameworks* include ideas for how to intentionally integrate learning into children's play; implement child-directed and teacher-guided activities; plan environments, interactions, routines, and materials that engage children in learning; and individualize curriculum based on children's knowledge, skills, needs and interests.

(<http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/psframework.asp>)

Philosophy Unique to the Toddler Laboratory:

The philosophy utilizes ***The Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC)*** approach. From PITC, "*Good infant care is neither baby-sitting nor preschool. It is a special kind of care that resembles no other.*"

Practices that support the development of positive, warm relationships—between teachers and families, and teachers and children—are focused on and taught in the course of the practicum lab experience for college students. There are six program policies that will guide our work

(http://www.pitc.org/pub/pitc_docs/home.csp):

- ***Primary Care:*** where each child is assigned to one primary care teacher to ensure relationship based care; primary care ratio of 1:4.
- ***Small Groups:*** No more than eight children are together as a toddler group with family involvement, interns, volunteers and student teachers to facilitate the development of intimate relationships.
- ***Continuity:*** Continuity of care provides the deep connections that children need for quality care. Student interns are hired for two semesters for bonding to develop between adults/children that is sustained throughout the academic year as laboratory students change each semester. Transition plans help toddlers move into the preschool program with the support of their primary care teachers.
- ***Individualized Care:*** Following children's unique rhythms and styles promotes well-being and a healthy sense of self; the child gets the message that he or she is important, that her/his needs will be met, and that his choices, preferences, and impulses are respected.
- ***Cultural Responsiveness:*** children develop a sense of who they are and what is important within the context of culture; student interns (primary care givers) and student teachers are taught to work with families, to heighten their understanding of importance

of culture, develop cultural competencies, acknowledge and respect cultural differences, and learn to be open and responsive to and willing to negotiate with families about child rearing practices.

- *Beginning Together - Inclusion of Children with Special Needs*: relationship-based approach; inclusion means making the benefits of high quality care available to all children through appropriate accommodation support in order for the child to have full active program participation.

In following with the *PITC* belief system, it is our goal that you will find our children's programs "seek to ensure that our children get a safe, healthy, emotionally secure, and intellectually rich start in life." Our programs are relationship based. As the teachers get to know each child and become in tune with the child, the teachers will be responsive to the needs, thoughts, and feelings of the child.

It is our desire that you find a tender, warm, and respectful environment where families and staff work together to offer a relationship-based curriculum that promotes a safe, responsive, and developmentally challenging environment with a focus on the child's health. As the family and the teachers develop relationships over time, every effort will be made to make meaningful and significant connections between the program and the child's family culture.

California's Department of Education Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Foundations:

The *California Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Foundations* describes research and evidence-based expectations for the way most infants and toddlers make progress in the major domains of social-emotional, language, cognitive, and perceptual and motor development. By creating a common language to facilitate communication among families, infant care professionals, community members, and policymakers, the foundations build an understanding about the importance of the early years in children's learning and development.

(<http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/itfoundations.asp>)

California's Department of Education Infant/Toddler Curriculum Framework:

A companion curriculum framework for "*Foundations*", the *Infant/Toddler Curriculum Framework, volume 1*, is to provide early childhood professionals with a structure they can use to make informed decisions about curriculum practices. The framework is based on current research on how infants and toddlers learn and develop in four domains described in the *Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Foundations*—social-emotional, language, intellectual, and perceptual and motor development. It presents principles, a planning process, and strategies to assist teachers in their efforts to support children's learning from birth to three years of age. (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/itframework.asp>)

Families:

The families, including the siblings, are an important part of our Early Care and Education Laboratory. Please know that there are days where your child will be required to have one of his/her family members or guardians with him/her at our program such as visiting day and the first day of school; younger and older siblings may NOT attend. You are encouraged to start planning ahead now for the visiting days and first day of school, so that you'll have the needed care for siblings that are not enrolled in our program.

After the visiting day and first day of school, all family members including siblings are welcome to stay each day during the 30-minute arrival time. If the sibling is not enjoying the participation,

we respectfully ask that the family excuse themselves as many of our children are just learning how to stay focused and attend to the learning that goes on at our activities including group times and young siblings can be quite distracting (and cute!) At this point in time, if a family wants to stay on the premises, an observation booth is available. The observation booth is a “quiet” area, as we don’t want our children aware that there are people sitting on the other side of the observation window.

Program activities where all family members including parents/primary care givers, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc. are invited consist of activities such as the annual tea party, “picture” show, annual stone soup luncheon, MJC monthly library story time, MJC farm trip, and MJC Great Valley Museum, etc.

First Day of School for Children New to the Program

The teaching staff cares deeply about the children in our program and we want them to have the best possible start. If this is your child’s first semester attending our classroom, an adult is required to stay with the child from start until finish on his/her first full day. Similar to the one-hour visit, the adult is encouraged to stay near the child and be actively involved with the child rather than observe from a distance. The adult has an important task on this first day of school. Children are not able to read or tell time, so the adult will be verbally explaining to the child how each and every part of the day works while offering a comforting lap during group times and sitting at a table to eat snack with the children.

Active participation from the adult will ensure that your child is successful while attempting activities and helping to prevent any potential conflicts that might arise as children learn how to form friendships, negotiate conflict peacefully, take turns, and work together cooperatively.

Arrival and Departure, Contracted Hours, Days, Attendance

Child development majors will be completing their student teaching in our classroom and they will be completing assignments based on child observations. Therefore, it is our expectation that each family will set a goal to be present each and every day and arrive on time as late arrivals are not accommodated.

Children are required to attend each day enrolled from arrival to departure. Families are required to arrive and depart on time unless there is an emergency. Families agree not to miss more than two days each semester unless the child is sick. This requires thoughtful planning on the part of the family. Families are asked to schedule vacations and all appointments including doctor, dentist, speech, O.T., etc. during the centers closed hours/days.

Families may have already made several appointments for the next school year, and we are respectfully asking that each family start planning now to rearrange appointments if they conflict with our school session. If you know that your family has a planned trip that cannot be rescheduled, please tell us at the beginning of the semester, so that we can assess the feasibility of a student completing the portfolio assignments.

Children thrive on consistency and routine, so making a commitment to the attendance policy will support your child’s needs. In addition, the student teachers are counting on consistent attendance so that they can complete their course assignments.

- Exception to contract hours and days: once every 2-3 years, the program may have twilight hours during the summer session instead of morning and/or afternoon hours to accommodate the needs of our working student population who need to complete the

lab practicum course in order to finish their child development major. In addition, it is not guaranteed that either of the children's programs will have funding to run a summer lab experience.

- **Notification of Absence/Late Arrival:** Notify the teaching staff by 8:00 AM when your child must be absent or late for any reason. Calling by 8:00 AM allows the Child Development Specialist/Interns/Primary Caregivers to check phone message before the busy arrival time. The teachers worry when a family does not arrive on time. It is our policy to call absent families; therefore, when the staff makes a phone call, it takes time away from the children who are in attendance.
- **Family Attendance Binder:** Children must be signed in (at arrival) and out (at departure) everyday by an authorized adult, using full legal and legible signature of first and last name. Authorized adults include parents and other adults whose names are provided in writing by the family on the Identification and Emergency Information form (Lic 700.) Children under 18 years of age may not sign-in or out a child. Signing in signifies that the child is present and has received a health check by the designated staff member. Please discuss any changes in the drop off/pick up schedule with your child, so that s/he can start emotionally preparing for the change.

Health Check:

Each day when your child arrives, s/he is required to thoroughly wash his/her hands (and face if needed) immediately upon entering the center. If your child wears diapers/pull-ups, the family must check the inside of the diaper/pull-up and fill in the toileting log at arrival. In the toddler classroom, the child's Primary Care Teacher will conduct a daily health check and in the preschool classroom, the Child Development Specialist will conduct a daily health check. It is required that the parent or primary adult caretaker stay with the child until the health check is completed; once the health check is completed, the family signs the family attendance binder to sign-in their child(ren). Please inform the staff of any health issues at this time, including any incidences outside of the Early Care and Education Laboratory that has resulted in insect bites, bruising, bumps, fever, runny nose, cough, diarrhea, etc.

Note: if your child has any body marks, such as large birthmark (Mongolian spot, strawberry mark etc.) see your child's teacher immediately for this information will be needed to document in their file.

If family members are staying for the first half hour of the day, they are required to wash hands thoroughly and siblings must receive a daily health check too.

If a child has had a fever, diarrhea, throwing up, the child is required to be free of these symptoms for 24 hours before returning to school. Children who are assessed to be ill during or after the health check will be sent home. The teaching staff is not allowed by the Department of Social Services (DSS)/licensing to put sunscreen, bug repellent, or any ointment to cleanse wounds. Adult family members can put sunscreen or bug repellent on the child before s/he begins school each day. Parking lot/road: Please make sure that your child is holding your hand or staying right next to you as you get near the street.

Note: Observing physical condition of children by Department of Social Services, DSS, Community Care Licensing: DSS has the authority to observe the physical condition of the child including conditions that could indicate abuse, neglect, or inappropriate placement.

Departure and Fees for Late Departure:

Each day the families are required to arrive by the departure time. When the family arrives, please enter the classroom at departure time and walk directly to your child and greet your child. If your child is participating in an activity, please get close and offer support as your child finishes the activity.

The goal is for all families to arrive approximately five minutes before the session ends. Any time after 10 minutes late, a \$10.00 per day charge to the family is assessed. The Center will notify the Business Office who will disburse a bill for the late charges to the family. Exception: Families are not charged if there is an emergency situation or an unexpected situation such as roadwork or an accident that slows traffic. Families are responsible for providing the reason for late arrival to the lab instructor.

Dropping off children and saying good-bye:

After the visiting day and first day of school, all family members including siblings are welcome to stay each day through the 30-minute arrival; the siblings may participate in any and all activities and/or meals during the first 30-minute period. For the siblings who really desire to participate at the children's programs, we suggest that the families arrive at the start of the 30-minute arrival time instead of at the end to give the siblings the opportunity to participate. At the end of the arrival time, we encourage family members including siblings to give a five-minute transition reminder to each other. It might sound something like this, "In five minutes, mommy and daddy will be saying good-bye." At the end of arrival, family members begin the good-bye process and we encourage it to be very positive and reassuring so that if the child is feeling less than confident, that the adult family member is modeling confidence.

Please do NOT sneak out on your child. We want to encourage families to build trusting relationships and some children may feel betrayed by a family member who sneaks out. Typically when families sneak out, the teachers may observe children who feel hurt and then angry when family members don't say good-bye and often act out behaviorally; the recipients of their behavior may be other children or teachers. At the end of arrival time, it is suggested that families say good-bye and if the family wants to stay on the premises, then an observation booth is available. The observation booth is a "quiet" area, as we don't want our children aware that there are people sitting on the other side of the observation window. Please refrain from knocking on windows when in the observation booth.

Eligibility:

Our children's programs are a private pay program serving children in our community from 18 months to five years of age. To be eligible for the toddler program, children must be 18 months by the first day of school. To be eligible for the preschool program, children must be at least 30 months of age by the first day of school.

Children are enrolled in both programs from the applications received utilizing a lottery process that focuses on basic demographic areas such as family make-up including the number of people living in the home and who lives in the home with the child, languages spoken in the home, special needs, race/ethnicity; gender, age, family income with the goal of one to two years of continuous enrollment in the respective children's programs.

If a sibling applies within three years of the older sibling's participation, the sibling has priority in the lottery process as long as there is an opening. Child enrolled in the toddler program who transition to the preschool classroom have priority in the lottery process as long as there is an opening.

It is our hope that we have a diverse group of 12-16 children in the toddler program and 20-28 children in the preschool program who represent the children and families in our community.

Email:

Families can use either personal or MJC email. Because families are enrolling in Community Education the use of either email is acceptable.

Corporal Punishment and other punishers:

Our center utilizes positive guidance strategies where it is believed that an adult does not have to hurt or punish a child to teach the child successful ways to interact. The lab instructors will provide instruction during the family orientation and in a parenting course about our guidance and discipline philosophy for our classroom as we, teachers, do not utilize corporal punishment (spanking, slapping, pinching), threats, shaming, yelling, and/or time-out. We do utilize “time with” at our Early Care and Education Laboratories.

Also, while family members are on the MJC premises in or surrounding areas adjacent to the children’s programs, the families agree to refrain from using any type of strategy that might be upsetting to ALL of the children in our program who might view or hear punishers including spanking, slapping, pinching, threats, shaming, yelling, and/or time-out. We want the children in our program to know that our Early Care and Education Laboratory is a safe place and that they don’t have to fear physical and/or emotional punishment while in attendance. Imagine how scary it might feel to a child watching another child be the recipient of these strategies; this child might believe that if it is happening to that child, maybe it will happen to him/her too. If a family wants help with their child’s behavior once the family has arrived on premises and wants to learn about alternative strategies, each family is invited to take time to work with the lab instructor. While we admit, that we don’t have answers for all behaviors, we definitely invite discussions that allow everyone to participate and join in the problem solving process.

Emergency Action Plan:

Modesto Junior College has a comprehensive emergency plan. The children’s programs will practice evacuating the building each month along with one practice of gathering everyone inside. The evacuations are typically done around the arrival time. Realizing the importance of school being a “safe” place emotionally for children, we do NOT insert the word “fire” in our evacuation drill name; we just share that it is an evacuation drill where we practice leaving our building.

Off-site evacuation location: In the event that our children’s programs needed to evacuate off campus, the off site location is Modesto Church of the Brethren on 2301 Woodland Avenue, Modesto; the phone number is 209-523-1438. Each semester we practice relocating to our off-site location; we use an MJC bus for transportation. Families are invited to attend this practice drill.

Meals:

A healthy snack is included in the cost and will be served each day. Our classroom practices intuitive eating where children eat when hungry and stop when full. They are encouraged but not forced to try different foods. The student teachers will offer various cooking experiences in addition to the daily snack. Please refrain from bringing food and drinks into our classrooms as we have children with food allergies. On some special occasions such as field trips and for classroom celebrations/activities, families are invited to bring food/drink.

Enrollment paperwork and other required items:

You will receive an email regarding the paperwork that is required. In addition to the required paperwork, please bring to the child development office (MJC, west campus, Muir Hall, Office 157):

- child's most current immunization record
- birth certificate
- a complete change of clothing (i.e. shirt, pants, underwear, socks) for your child's cubby that stays there each and every day, and mark all clothing with your child's name with a permanent marker.
- Diapers/pull ups and wipes
- Families send an electronic picture of just the enrolled child (find one where the child looks content and happy) and another electronic picture of your child and his/her family. We want to be able to enlarge the pictures and laminate them for your child's cubby, journal, and the classroom. We hope to accomplish this before the children arrive for their first day of school.
- COMPLETED Physician's Release: If you are not able to get a doctor's appointment before the family orientation, please notify us of the appointment date and then turn in this form within 30 days of the child's start date. The Physician's Release form states your child is healthy and can attend school. You can access this form at: <http://virtual.yosemite.cc.ca.us/Childdevelopment/Physician.pdf>.
- Reviewing child's records: The Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing (DSS) has the authority to privately interview children or staff, and to inspect and view child or childcare records, without prior consent.
- Updating information: It is the responsibility of the family to update health, emergency and/or certification paperwork. Your child may be excluded from attending the program for the following reasons: failure to complete the required health screening, failure to bring any medication or medical equipment needed per physician's health screening, failure to submit a current immunization record and/or failure to complete re-certification paperwork (including, but not limited to, emergency locating forms, current class schedules, and current emergency cards) before the beginning of each semester.

Parenting Course:

In order to help strengthen and support the relationship between adult family members and children and between home and the Early Care and Education Laboratory, a parent or an adult primary caretaker is required to enroll in and pay for a parenting course through MJC Community Education and satisfactorily complete the course through active participation, attendance, and completion of assignments each and every semester (i.e. summer, fall, spring), that the child is enrolled in the program. Each semester, the three parenting classes typically run every other week during the evenings.

Participation in the lab programs:

- Philosophy Unique to the Wawona Toddler Laboratory:
 - Each family is required to volunteer two days each semester including summer, fall and spring semesters. In order to spread out the participation each semester, it is important that each family sign up for the two days at the start of each semester.
- Philosophy Unique to Me-Wuk Preschool Lab:
 - Each family is required to volunteer and facilitate an activity that represents your family culture one day during the academic year in the summer, fall, or spring

semester. In order to spread out the participation over the year, it is important that each family sign up for a date at the start of each academic year.

In addition to the required parenting participation component, we welcome family additional family participation in our classrooms. Please submit a negative t.b. clearance, dated within the last year. Family members wear an apron and nametag for identification. We typically find an activity for the family member to facilitate or the family member can suggest an activity such as cooking, playing an instrument such as the piano or guitar, reading children's poetry, art, science or math curriculum. If you have a special talent to share, let us know. We can help you plan an activity! While we know it is important to spend some time with your child when you are volunteering, the goal of the volunteer is to help out as a "teacher" rather than stay with their child for the entire session unless you are observing your child. There will be an occasional assignment from the parenting course where the family is encouraged to observe their child in the center.

Younger siblings may NOT attend while a parent/family member is volunteering for the day.

Home Visits:

While home visits are not a requirement of our program, each family is invited to participate in a home visit with the teaching staff. Depending on availability of program funds and staff availability, the lab instructor, Child Development Specialist, Primary Care Teacher, and possibly a student teacher will visit the home. We have had many "delightful" moments in our interactions with the children and the family in their home environment. We believe that a strong connection between home and school is vital to the partnership that is created to support the child. Please let us know, if you would like to set up a 20-minute home visit.

Special Education/IFSP/IEP:

Approximately 25% of our enrollment in either of our two children's programs consists of children with either an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Also, it is possible that once a child is enrolled that it is determined that the child may benefit from receiving special education services also referred to as early intervention.

From birth until they reach age 22, children who receive special education services have either an IFSP or IEP. If your child is under age 3, s/he will have an IFSP; once s/he reaches age 3 and if s/he still qualifies for services, s/he will then have an IEP. The formalized documents are developed by an educational team of which the parents or guardian are the most important members to specify services that the child will receive. The documents include a detailed description of the educational goals and assessment methods along with documenting the child's progress.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: According to this law, parents of qualifying children have the right to develop a Section 504 plan with their child's school. To qualify for protection under Section 504, a child must have a record of such impairment, or be regarded as having such impairment.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): DEA mandates the federal government to provides funding to education agencies, state and local, to provide free and appropriate education to qualifying students with disabilities.

Our Early Care and Education Laboratory believes that our participation in the IFSP/IEP meetings is important to the relationship between the family and the Early Care and Education

Laboratory and in understanding and participating in the child's goals that are developed in the IFSP/IEP meetings since the plans are focused on family and education. Therefore, it is the expectation of our program that we will be invited to participate in all IFSPs and IEPs from the time that the family accepts enrollment into one of MJC's children's programs. Please coordinate these meeting times and dates with the lab instructor. It is believed that when the teaching staff joins with the parents or guardian in these meetings that the goals for the child are more smoothly and effectively carried out in the Early Care and Education setting.

Student Teachers:

Student Teachers are required to abide by Yosemite Community College District's (YCCD) requirements for students in the toddler and preschool setting; therefore, the student teachers are Tuberculosis cleared but are NOT fingerprint cleared. They are under the direct supervision of the lab instructor and Child Development Specialist (preschool) or Primary Care Teachers (toddler) at all times. Families are encouraged to validate the strengths of the student teachers and to discuss any concerns with the respective lab instructor.

It is the goal to train student teachers to:

- Develop the ability to build caring, trusting, and mutually respectful relationships with children and their families
- Develop the skills needed to follow the child's lead
- Observe child growth and development
- Utilize mutually respectful, positive but firm guidance techniques that will be effective in their work with young children
- Focusing on relationships, plan, present, and evaluate learning activities for young children in a group setting
- Participate in actual teaching experiences with young children while studying theory
- Discuss and evaluate daily experiences with the children
- Observe other teachers as they work with children and present activities
- Participate as a member of a teaching team

Toilet Learning:

Children enrolled in either of our programs are NOT required to be using the toilet. However, it is important that when you confirm your spot in this program that you share with us whether or not your child will need help with toileting including reminders or changing diapers/pull-ups. Our Child Development Specialist in the preschool classroom and the child's Primary Care Teacher in the toddler classroom oversee diapering and toilet learning. The child's diaper/pull-up will be checked daily during a natural transition time, such as washing hands after snack or another meals and any other times it is soiled and needs an earlier or later change.

Upon arrival each morning, the family member is required to check the inside of the child's diaper/pull-up and change it if it is even slightly damp or soiled. Diapers/pull-ups must be checked regardless of whether or not the child was dry when s/he left home. In addition, the family is required to fill out the "Toilet Learning" log at arrival. Families provide their own diapers or pull-ups along with wipes.

Transitional Objects/Toys:

Young children are learning how to separate from their families and form caring, nurturing relationships with their teachers. In order to help with the transition from home to school, some children find a transitional object to be very comforting. Please share with the lab instructor, if your child has a transitional object. Please do not bring toys that are not transitional objects to

the classroom. Transitional objects may include items such as blankets, stuffed animal, a shirt with mom's special mom smell, family picture, etc.

Tuberculosis Clearance:

Each family member that will be participating in the program is required to submit a negative t.b. clearance, dated within the last year. The family member who is enrolled in the parenting course is eligible to receive t.b. testing at MJC's Health Services for a fee.

Tuition (Nonrefundable Fee):

To pay fees and enroll in the required parenting course, go online and enroll your child for session of choice and yourself for the parenting class. If you should drop before the start of the semester, only the parenting course fee is refundable. Your child's tuition for the program is not refundable.

The total fee for each session can be paid by going to: www.mjc4life.org, click on "courses" on the left, under "Lifestyle" click on "Personal Interest", find the class name about mid-way down the list.

Visiting Day for Children:

In order to help children become more familiar and comfortable as they gradually adjust or readjust to our classroom and meet the new student teachers each semester, we have one visiting day to start each semester. It is scheduled for one hour. It is strongly encouraged that children attend this visiting day each and every semester, as having new student teachers is a unique experience at our Early Care and Education setting.

An adult must accompany your child for the entire visit even if they have been previously attending one of our children's programs. We would like to encourage the adult to stay near and actively participate with the child during this visit rather than sitting back and observing your child. This will give the adult an opportunity to spend focused, quality time with the child while helping to support the child to be successful as s/he explores the equipment, meets the teachers, and interacts with other children.

Parking:

Parking passes will be issued once a year, **cover only the 30-minute drop-off and pick-up times**, and are displayed on your dashboard. Parking passes are signed out by number. The issued parking pass is for Lots 209 and 210 ONLY. Parking is allowed in the yellow loading zone area adjacent to Me-Wuk, student spaces (white), or staff spaces (black slots) ONLY. Families may NOT park in the green visitor slots or the driveways that are adjacent to the programs.

Purchase of a daily parking pass is required for *staying in the classroom between arrival and departure times*, the mandatory parenting courses and family orientation. Please comply with the parking requirements so that your family is not ticketed.

Terminating Services:

- **Services terminated by family:** A two-week notice is required when dropping your child from the program. The tuition paid for the semester in which the child's terminates services is non-refundable regardless of the reason for terminating services. If the family decides to terminate services, it is strongly encouraged that the child continues for the next two weeks, so that the child has the opportunity to say good-bye slowly to the other children, families, and teachers. New Family orientation is MANDATORY and if a family is not present for the orientation, does not have all paperwork complete and handed in during the family orientation along with all fees paid prior to the orientation,

the family relinquishes their spot in the program. Once the family relinquishes their spot in the program, the lottery process selects another family.

- **Services terminated by lab Early Care and Education Laboratory:** If the family does not follow the admission agreement as stated, the program has the right to terminate services with the family. In the event that the school believes this to be necessary, the teaching team will make an appointment to meet with the family, discuss the issue, and set a plan to resolve the issue. If the family is agreeable, the family and the teaching team will collaborate and develop a plan to help the family start successfully following the admission agreement terms. In the event that the family opts not to follow the admission agreement or is unable to follow the admission agreement for any reason, the family will receive a two-week written notice from the program giving a date that the services will end. Exception to the two-week notification: in the event that the family does not attend the family orientation, hand in the required paperwork during the family orientation, and pay fees by the family orientation, services are terminated immediately without notification. The tuition paid for the semester in which services are terminated is non-refundable regardless of the reason for termination.

Note to family: After reading this Family Handbook and Admission Agreement/Contract for Services, please retain this document but sign the admission agreement form stating that you have read and received a copy of this form. Thank you.