

WELCOME

This handbook is designed to inform families of the Vanderbilt Child and Family Center policies and procedures that are implemented in support of children's healthy development and to enable a successful home to school partnership.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Vanderbilt Child and Family Center provides high quality Early Childhood Care and Education.

STATEMENT OF SERVICE

VCFC offers licensed child care to Vanderbilt full-time employees who are benefits-eligible, and to degree-seeking students, for their children ages 6 weeks through 6 years (the year before Kindergarten). Waiting List priority is given to siblings of children enrolled at the Vanderbilt Child and Family Care Centers.

VCFC has a service level agreement with VUMC through July 2020, to support their ability to provide their employees with child care. VUMC manages its own wait list, tuition rates, and center placements.

VCFC VISION

The vision for VCFC is to create a dynamic learning community of children, parents, and staff. VCFC offers quality learning experiences that reflect the unique development of each individual supported by qualified educators to help each person to reach their full potential.

- Children are viewed as capable, competent, and curious, and with the ability to construct their own knowledge.
- Parents are partners in their child's education, and engage in activities which enhance their understanding of their child's development.
- VCFC staff demonstrate that they are lifelong learners by engaging in professional learning plans that enhance the quality of the VCFC program, as well as support their individual learning and development.
- VCFC engages with the Peabody School of Education and Human Development, providing research opportunities to students and faculty and benefiting from the content derived from these activities that inform high quality Early Childhood Care and Education.

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

VCFC programs reflect the research-based understanding that play is essential to children's health and well-being, and foundational to children's learning. VCFC supports children in creating their own knowledge through hands-on experiences and child-initiated play. Teachers nurture children, providing encouragement, protection, security, stimulation, and supervision.

The VCFC philosophy of Education is inspired by social-constructivist systems thinking theories, including the work of John Dewey, Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, Howard Gardner, and Loris Malaguzzi, that emphasize the collaborative nature of learning. Conceptual understandings emerge through a child's direct engagement with the world. Through primary relationships, shared language and concepts become the tools which children use to absorb social practices and construct their understanding of themselves and their community.

CHILD CARE PROGRAM QUALITY

VCFC engages in ongoing program quality improvement informed by metrics developed by and for the field of Early Childhood Care and Education. These currently include:

- ❖ The Star-Quality Child Care Program in Tennessee (tnstarquality.org) - a voluntary program that recognizes child care agencies who exceed minimum licensing standards with a rating of 1 – 3 stars. Currently all three sites are evaluated annually by the Star-Quality program by an independent observer from the TN Child Care Resource & Referral network using the ITERS and ECERS tools (www.ersi.info) to inform the rating.
- ❖ The CLASS tool informs observation of the classroom (teachstone.com). CLASS uses research-driven insights to improve how teachers interact with children every day to cultivate supportive, structured, and engaging classroom experiences.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

Parent-teacher communication is the primary co-held responsibility for families and staff. Through verbal and written communication of information, thoughts and ideas, and by collaborating on activities, projects, and events, parents and teachers strengthen their relationship and understanding. VCFC supports communication through various strategies, including:

- **Daily Verbal Exchange**
Parents and teachers exchange greetings during sign in and sign out transitions, and convey essential information. Longer conversations are scheduled for when the teacher is not directly supervising children.
- **Written Communication**
Bulletin and Electronic Boards, Calendars, Daily Notes, Incident Reports, Classroom Newsletters, Site Director Newsletters
- **Electronic Communication**
This provides parents with classroom information directly by text or email. In 2019 this will transition from Tadpoles to Brightwheel. Participation is voluntary.
- **ECE Evenings**
VCFC families meet to provide an opportunity for parent engagement. Content may include a Parent Education topic, a special assembly for Parent-Child engagement, or simple potlucks.
- **Parent Conferences**
VCFC parents meet with their child's teacher for a 30 minute conference two times each year to share their perception of the child's development and review the child's portfolio.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Executive Director	615-322-8074
Administrative Officer	615-875-8159
18 th Avenue Child Care Center	615-322-5332
19 th Avenue Child Care Center	615-322-1083
Edgehill Child Care Center	615-322-8076

POLICIES

Attendance

VCFC is open Monday through Friday from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM. VCFC is closed on all holidays observed by Vanderbilt University, unless otherwise communicated. (Care will be provided on Labor Day 2019, if VU classes are in session.) Please inform the program by 10:00 AM if your child will not be attending due to illness or unforeseen absence. Please communicate planned absences to your Site Director via email or by phone.

Use of Space

Please make sure your child is supervised by you at all times until signed into the program and placed with the teacher in the classroom. As you enter the Center, please encourage your child's awareness of the area, such as photographs and display that indicate upcoming activities and events. Please encourage walking feet. Please do not allow your child to open doors, climb on furniture and equipment, or touch the adult tools on the reception counter. Your partnership to establish safe and respectful boundaries for your child is so appreciated.

Access Code

Every family is provided with the access code, which is changed quarterly. Parents who cannot recall the access code must knock or ring the doorbell to gain entrance. Access codes should not be shared with others.

Sign In and Sign Out

In compliance with DHS licensing regulation and to ensure the safety and supervision of your child, sign your child in and out each day with your full legal signature. The classroom registers are located at the desk in the lobby as you enter the Center. After signing-in, take your child to the designated classroom or area. Please help your child through the morning steps (remove jacket, accomplish toileting and hand washing). Please connect visually and verbally with a member of the teaching staff in that classroom before leaving your child.

Children may not be left in any space unattended at any time. The adult responsible for taking the child from VCFC must be on the child's Emergency Information form authorization list. A government issued photo ID is required of anyone picking up the child – please have it ready to show to the staff on duty as requested. The authorized person must visually and verbally connect with the staff member on

duty, check the cubby, and sign the child out, with the accurate time and date they are being picked up.

VCFC has the responsibility to refuse to release a child to any person (a) who appears to be incapacitated and/or under the influence of a controlled substance that may impair their judgement to safely care for a child, or (b) whose behavior may, as deemed by a reasonable person, place the child in imminent risk. In the event of such an occurrence, teachers will suggest that another authorized individual (listed on the child's Emergency Information form) be contacted to come and pick the child up. If the authorized adult picking up does not cooperate and insists on removing their child from care, and/or if the staff member reasonably believes that refusal to release the child could place staff or other children in imminent risk, staff are directed to release the child to the guardian, but immediately call VUPD 911 (or non-emergency 322-2745) to report the potential risk and/or a possibly impaired driver.

Tuition

Tuition is payable in advance and due in full at the first of each month.

Statements are not sent out each month. You may choose to pay your fees in full on the first of the month or half on the first and half on the fifteenth.

Payroll deduction is the default option for payment. There is a \$25.00 returned check fee. Parents will be notified when payments are past due. If an account is two months past due, parents may be asked to dis-enroll their child.

Fees for Late Pick Ups

In the event parents are unable to pick up their child and depart on time and by 6:00PM, the child's account will be charged a late fee of \$10 for every five minutes which is due and payable within 24 hours of billing. It is recommended that parents arrive on site by 5:50PM to manage their child's transition. Please understand the impact caused by parents that are late picking up their children from child care: this negatively affects the child's sense of security and impacts the personal and professional lives of the teachers who cannot leave on time.

Inclusion

In compliance with federal law, Vanderbilt University does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of their race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, color, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, military service, covered veterans status, or genetic information in its administration of educational policies, programs, activities; or other University-administered programs. In addition, the University does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of their gender expression.

Special Needs

The early years are often the time when children's special needs are identified. VCFC recognizes that appropriate supports can address a child's development and learning. VCFC will work diligently to meet the individual needs of every child, within the established framework of the licensed child care ratios and program design. In the event that a child's needs determine that an alternative learning environment would better support the family, VCFC will compassionately partner with the parents to ensure this successful transition.

Enrollment

VCFC actively manages a Wait List management to accomplish full program enrollment. VCFC has an open enrollment policy. Applications will be accepted throughout the year. A separate Sibling Wait List is maintained; *siblings are prioritized as a space appropriate to their age become available.*

To enroll, families will be contacted and offered placement and have three business days to secure the spot or the family will be placed back on the Wait List and the next family contacted. A family may choose once to "pass" on offered enrollment placement without compromising their spot on the Wait List, but a second "pass" will place the family in an inactive status.

Disenrollment

Parents are required to provide a minimum 30 days written notice to VCFC, or the financial equivalency. For enrollment planning, it is assumed that Kindergarten-eligible children will not be continuing with VCFC after August 15th. If parents of Kindergarten-eligible children choose to stay an additional preschool year, parents need to communicate their decision to their site director in writing by the prior April 1st to ensure space availability.

Vanderbilt Child and Family Center makes a strong effort to work with families in crisis, to find real and reasonable solutions that will support children and parents. It is a DHS licensing requirement to state that VCFC reserves the right to terminate enrollment *without notice* for the following reasons:

- non-compliance with policies and procedures, including documentation
- adults choosing to exhibit behavior that threatens the physical or emotional safety of the children and teachers on site

COMMUNICATION

Parent-Staff communication is essential to effective partnership in advocacy for the child. Parents are asked to read the communication provided by teachers, which may include: bulletin boards and documentation panels, Daily Notes (electronic or written) or Curriculum Calendars, journals, and newsletters.

Daily verbal exchange is welcome, but parents are asked to be sensitive to the teacher's primary responsibility of supervising and supporting the children in the classroom. Long conversations may require a scheduled phone call.

Parents are strongly encouraged to attend the scheduled Parent-Teacher Conferences two times each year. Additional conferences may be requested.

TEACHER APPRECIATION

Parents coordinate teacher appreciation activities as a learning community. These delightful events happen throughout the year, with particular festivities in December for holidays and May for Teacher Appreciation Day.

There is an active parent group called CONNECT that meets quarterly across all the child care centers to support planning and coordination of teacher appreciation activities and parent engagement. If you are inspired to volunteer, please connect with your site director for information.

BABYSITTING

VCFC discourages teachers from babysitting privately for VCFC families, and assumes no responsibility or liability for employees after their scheduled work hours.

CHILD ABUSE

Maltreatment of a child is prohibited by Vanderbilt policy and the law. Staff are held to a high standard to assure children under their care are safe and are required to report concerns of maltreatment by others. Training is provided to all VCFC staff on identifying and reporting child abuse. Vanderbilt University personnel (including VCFC staff) adhere to Tennessee state law on mandatory child abuse reporting.

DISCIPLINE

VCFC embraces the definition of "discipline" as meaning "to teach." All human beings want to feel respect and self-worth and have a sense of belonging. VCFC does not punish children, we educate children. By honoring their interests and needs, adults will enable children to become capable, responsible, successful adults. VCFC staff may never use any form of physical punishment when disciplining a child. VCFC staff will not use language that humiliates and demeans children.

The primary focus for teachers is to support young children's self-image as capable of self-control, verbal problem-solving, and responding to others with kindness and empathy. VCFC follows a four step approach to discipline:

1. **MODEL:** Adults model pro-social behavior and appropriate language, and demonstrate problem-solving and appropriate risk taking.
2. **PREVENT:** Adults prevent misbehavior through attentive, compassionate supervision, and through the design of the curriculum and the learning environment.
3. **COACH:** Adults help children identify their feelings, and redirect children to different activities if they have trouble exhibiting self-control to be safe with peers. Adults will coach by asking calmed children to identify what would have been a better decision.
4. **REPAIR:** Adults support children's reflection of events and behaviors, and facilitate child-to-child conversation to name and acknowledge feelings and the actions that have impacted a peer's experience. Adults will encourage repair by inviting children to consider a positive action that demonstrates taking responsibility for the feelings and experience of the other person (or thing).
 - This might look like cleaning up a mess before moving on to play.
 - This might look like repairing a torn book or replacing a broken toy.
 - This might look like supporting first aid for a friend they injured by getting the ice pack.
 - Teachers will not encourage insincere apologies from children.

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

The Tennessee Department of Human Services requires licensed child care centers to develop a written plan to address *suspension* and *expulsion*.

Discipline is an ongoing process embedded in the child's experience and relationships. VCFC understands that children, especially pre-verbal children, use physical expression to share their feelings and needs. VCFC assures parents that an undesirable behavior indicates an opportunity for the child to develop an important skill; it is not a "morals" issue. It is possible that some children may exhibit consistent behaviors that are detrimental to the ongoing safety and security of the other children in the classroom. This may include aggression toward peers, such as biting, hitting, and kicking. VCFC will handle these situations discreetly and with compassion, and in partnership with the family. In the event that a child's ongoing behavior in child care poses a risk to themselves or to the other children in the program, the following steps will be taken:

- The Site Director will meet in person with the parents within 48 hours of the concerns being communicated to them.
- A written behavior plan signed by the parents and the Site Director will be put into place the day of the meeting. This must include:
 - *Identify the specific behavior being addressed (e.g., biting peers)*
 - *Identify supports in place (e.g., redirecting the child to a specific peer cohort, shadowing, providing a squeeze toy to bite)*
 - *Identify needed supports (e.g., a pediatric developmental evaluation)*
 - *Identify a precise timeline for the behavior plan (e.g., three weeks)*
 - *Identify precise metrics of behavior improvement (e.g., "The child's attempts to bite are reduced to two incidents or less per week.")*
 - *Identify peer respite strategy (e.g., "If the child bites twice in one day, the parent will take him home for the rest of the day.")*
- The parents will meet weekly with the Site Director to assess the efficacy of the written behavior plan, validate progress, and modify strategies.

In the unlikely event that behaviors do not respond to the efforts of teachers and parents to correct the behavior, VCFC will provide the family with *30 days' notice* to determine a more appropriate child care placement.

NUTRITION

Parents provide 100% of the food offered to children in the Infant Program:

- Parents thereby control baby's exposure to new foods that might lead to allergic reactions
- Parents provide bottles already made up, and labeled with the child's first and last name, to maintain parent responsibility for quality and portion.
- Bottles and foods will be warmed in a water bath. Bottles and food containers will be sent home "dirty" so that parents can accurately gauge the child's intake and food preferences.
- Babies are held to feed until they can sit up at a table.
- Teachers facilitate hand washing before and after feedings.

VCFC provides children (at approximately 12 months of age) with a hot lunch, and nutritious snacks in the morning and afternoon:

- Children are responsible for washing hands, sitting with feet on the floor, and trying new foods.
- Teachers sit with children to model courtesy and proper use of tools. Snack is a small group activity of 2 - 8 children with one teacher.
- Teachers will encourage every child to attend snack, but children are not required to do so.
- Children are required to join the lunch table. No child will be forced to eat. Vegetarian, vegan, and dairy-free lunches are available upon written request.

Food Allergies

If your child is allergic to any food (or develops an allergy after enrollment) please take the following steps:

- Inform the Site Director by email (you will be provided with any necessary forms.)
- Notify teachers immediately, verbally and in writing.

Food Related Conditions

Parents must provide supporting medical verification (a signed and dated note from your child's pediatrician) identifying the condition (such as Celiac Disease) and listing specific foods your child is not allowed to eat. VCFC will make an effort to stock gluten-free snack items. Although every effort will be made to uphold the health and safety of your child, without your documentation, teachers cannot provide special food for your child. Families may provide an alternative lunch if their dietary restrictions are not accommodated by the VCFC menu, but the lunch must be nut-free, low-sugar, no-chocolate and ready to eat. **There is no tuition adjustment for families that provide their own meals.**

WELL CHILD

VCFC is licensed as a Well Child program by the Tennessee Department of Human Services. Children must be able to engage in the daily rhythm of the program to attend. Parent partnership with VCFC is necessary to comply with the Well Child Policies. The goal of VCFC is to keep well children at the child care center, and parents at work. However, the health of all children is the priority over the inconvenience to one family asked to remove their ill child.

Hand Washing

Hand washing is the #1 prevention practice in place at VCFC to support health. By teaching children healthy hygiene practices, adults minimize the spread of illness.

- Parents are asked to facilitate children's handwashing upon entering the classroom.
- Teachers will ensure every child washes their hands before eating and after toileting, including diaper changes.

Partnership

We ask that parents assess their child's health and wellness based on the child's behavior as a first indicator of ill health before arriving at the child care center. If upon arrival teachers identify that the child is not well enough to attend VCFC, the child will be sent home with the parent.

If the child becomes ill while at VCFC, they will be isolated from the rest of the children. Parents will be notified and asked to come and pick up the child as soon as possible and within one hour. Children may return to VCFC after they have been *symptom free* 24 hours without the aid of fever-reducing medication.

VCFC defines these policies in an effort to protect the health and safety of all children enrolled in the program. These policies align with the Metro Nashville Public Schools' policies. Parents may not bring a child to VCFC if they exhibit any of the following symptoms and until the child symptom free for 24 hours.

Symptoms

Fever: A fever of 100 degrees or higher. Fevers are generally an indication that the body is attempting to fight off infection.

Nasal Discharge: A clogged or runny nose with green or yellow mucus. The only exception is if the child was seen by a pediatrician and has a pediatric release note.*

Conjunctivitis: Commonly termed Pink Eye, this condition is highly contagious. Symptoms include itchy, watery eyes or discharge. The child may not be at VCFC until symptom free or if the parent provides a pediatric release note.*

Lice: The child must be louse and nit free to be readmitted to child care.

Diarrhea and or Vomiting: Runny stools and/or vomiting. This is especially of concern for infants and toddlers because of the risk of dehydration. The child may not be at VCFC until symptom free. Teachers recognize the difference between loose stool related to breast feeding and teething, and diarrhea.

Unexplained Skin Conditions/Rash: Children will be excluded from VCFC for any patterns of small bumps, blisters and blotches (including: Chicken Pox, Fifth's Disease, Hand-Foot-Mouth Disease, Impetigo, Measles, Rubella, Scarlet Fever). Child may not be at VCFC until symptom free or if the parent provides a pediatric release note.*

**The parent must provide a signed, and dated within 48 hours, note stamped by a medical office that expressly states that the child was examined by a physician, is well enough to attend licensed child care, and poses no risk of contagion to the other children and adults in the child care.*

VCFC will not administer medication to young children.

Certain conditions under consistent pediatric management (e.g., asthma, diabetes, Epi-Pen for severe allergy) may be excepted. To administer medication:

- Parent must first communicate directly with the Site Director to request an exception, and provide supporting medical documentation.
- Parent will provide the *medication in its original container* with written directions on the dosage and frequency, with a signed and dated pediatric note listing the diagnosis and these precise instructions. Medication will not be administered to the child in any manner or for any reason except as stated on the pediatric note on file.
- Parent must update this note quarterly (or more frequently).
- Teacher will document every occurrence of medication administration, per DHS regulation.

DENTAL HEALTH

VCFC incorporates a Healthy Teeth curriculum for children ages 16 months and older. Teeth-brushing is part of our daily routine, beginning first with brushstroke practice in Circle Time.

- VCFC will only use water and will focus children on brushstroke mastery.
- Teachers will provide children with a joyful experience of their healthy mouths.
- Teachers will use books and song to provide positive healthy teeth messages.
- Parents will provide their child with a new toothbrush and a toothbrush cover, labeled in permanent marker with the child's first and last name.
- Parents will replace the toothbrush monthly.

TOILET LEARNING

Toilet learning is a developmental process; children are ready to learn when they are healthy, well nourished, and not pressured to achieve at a level above their capability. Parents are requested to partner with teachers, communicating frequently, so that the home-to-child care approach is coordinated and consistent. As in many areas of child development, children must reach a certain age to begin (often between 18 and 30 months of age) or be in the proper setting or situation before they are ready to learn. Parents will provide diapers, and any needed creams and lotions for their child and will sign the appropriate authorization form to allow teachers to apply it. *The product must be in its original container and labeled with the child's first and last name.*

DRESS FOR SUCCESS

Children should wear washable play clothes that support their full range of movement. Closed toe and heel shoes with socks are strongly advised. Outdoor wear must support children to play outside in temperatures ranging from 32 to 95 degrees and in conditions including snow, frost, and light rain and wind. DHS licensing prohibits children from wearing necklaces (including amber teething beads) or any loose item like a pacifier leash or clip on their clothing.

BIRTHDAYS

There are many ways to celebrate your child's birthday! Please discuss the birthday celebration in the classroom with the teachers in advance of the day of the event. Celebration suggestions include: create a special activity in honor of the child (favorite story, music or craft) or providing goodies to share, such as bubbles, "tattoos" or face paint. Many of our children have varying nutritional needs; *please do not bring in a cake or similar sugary treat.*

CELEBRATIONS

Vanderbilt Child and Family Center honors families by focusing on the love that creates our familial ties. Teachers facilitate classroom discussions to support children's positive self-identity. In recognition of the varied configuration of our families, VCFC does not focus on "Mother's Day" and "Father's Day" as celebrations for parents, but we do hold playdate opportunities and family potlucks throughout the year as a way for all kinds of parents to know and be known by one another. Instead, VCFC wants to ensure that children and their parents see themselves reflected in our language, and in the broad array of literature that we display, read, and discuss.

VCFC seeks to honor the Whole Child by endeavoring to understand their beliefs, and to create dynamic spaces for sharing and learning culture. VCFC balances this with the understanding that quality Early Care and Education environments should offer respite to children and their families from the secular marketing frenzy that assaults all our senses during Holiday times.

VCFC will facilitate education about those holiday celebrations in which children express interest. Adults, however, will follow the child's lead to ensure that traditions valued by children and their families are explored in a developmentally appropriate manner. This may look like families' contributing books, music, and other activities to share in the classroom that highlight their cultural traditions. Being child and family led, the authenticity of these activities is ensured. Successful examples include:

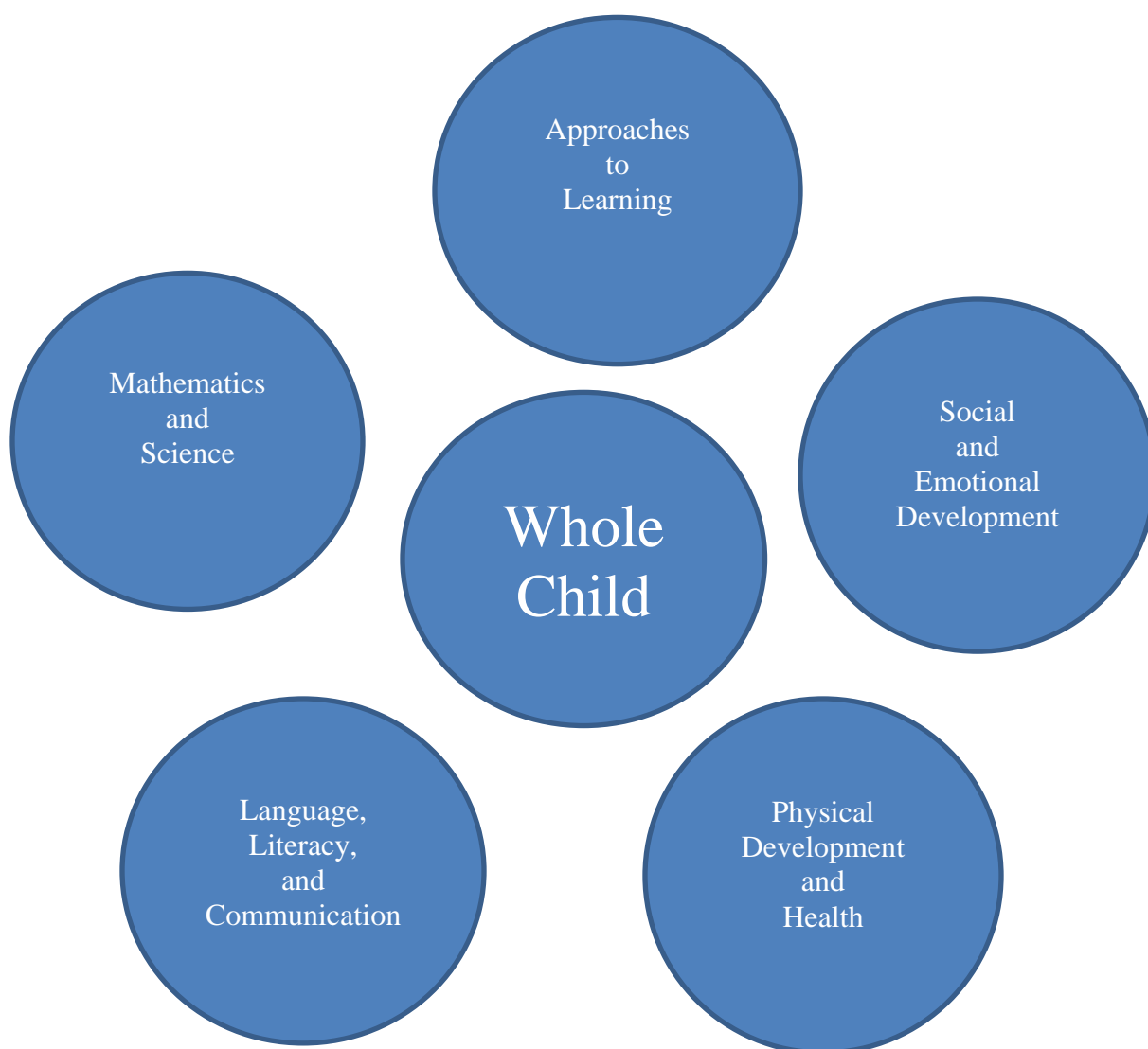
- Exploring the similarity and differences in the symbol of light among different holiday traditions (Chanukah, Diwali, Kwanzaa, Santa Lucia)
- Making a papier mache dragon head and dancing for Moon Festival
- Painting sugar skulls for Dia de Los Muertos
- Using organic vegetable dyes for spring eggs (Easter and Pagan traditions)

VCFC will not allow religious proselytizing.

Parents interested to support respectful sharing are invited to do the following:

- Email your Site Director with a proposal for a specific activity and relate this to how it ties to your family's culture.
- The Site Director will work with you and the classroom teachers to understand how this may be implemented in a developmentally appropriate and inclusive way that is respectful to all the families in the classroom.

Five Domains of Young Children's Development and Learning



RESPECTFUL EARLY EDUCATION

Children grow from the head down and the torso out. As active learners, play is critical to their healthy growth and development. *The five domains of a child's development are interrelated and interdependent.* The design of the learning environment should support peer engagement, encourage movement, and provide developmentally appropriate activities reflecting a multi-disciplinary approach to learning through play. Curriculum is child-lead and teacher-framed.

APPROACHES TO LEARNING

How children construct and apply their knowledge, through curiosity, exploration, initiative, participation, persistence, reasoning, resilience, and self-organization.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Children develop an identity of self, expression of feelings, empathy, emotional regulation, impulse control, interaction with and relationship to adults and peers, and create a foundation for social understanding.

PHYSICAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

As the child grows and develops, the body becomes more capable and competent through the integration of:

- Perceptual development – exploring the world with all five senses (e.g., mouthing a block, patting a ball, examining faces, listening to rain, tasting a new fruit).
- Fine motor development – touching, grasping, and manual manipulation, requires increasing dexterity and precision (e.g., grabbing keys, grasping a crayon, manipulating a pencil).
- Gross motor development – large movements requiring strength, coordination, and balance (e.g., crawling, standing, walking, pedaling a trike, pumping on a swing).
- Vestibular system – coordinates head and eye movements, informs and supports balance and equilibrium.
- Proprioceptive – body positioning and spatial awareness, regulating sensory input.

LANGUAGE, LITERACY, AND COMMUNICATION

- Receptive language – understanding what others are communicating (e.g., identifying and discriminating sounds, recognizing voices, understanding intention and meaning).
- Expressive language – speaking and other ways of expressing communication (e.g., gesturing, signing, babbling, speaking, drawing, scribbling, printing).
- Interest in print – understanding that pictures and symbols (letters/words/sentences) communicate ideas and information (stories, recipes, directions, books); awareness of environmental print; understanding how books work (English language books open right to left and pages are read left to right and from top to bottom – compare and contrast this with books in other languages); evolution of scribbles; representing ideas in drawing, scribbles, and printing.

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

- Describe and explore relationships among objects and materials.
- Develop skills and vocabulary to measure, pattern, and express order and position (e.g., number sense, properties and operations; shape dimension and geometric relationships).
- Observation, prediction, experimentation, and analysis through engagement with objects, materials, people, and other living things.

TRANSITIONS

Child care “transition” refers to the child engaging with a new classroom and teaching team in a Vanderbilt child care center. VCFC transitions most children into a new classroom in the summer (newly enrolled children may be accepted throughout the year as space becomes available.) Most children quickly adapt to a new classroom, especially if it is in the same child care center with familiar friends. Children are assigned to specific classrooms based on their age.

Teachers Managing Transitions

Current teachers will collaborate with new teachers to support understanding. Care Plans and critical health information will be shared (such as allergies) before your child transitions.

The new teacher will have your child’s cubby labeled, and birthday board ready. The new teacher will provide new parents a copy of the classroom Daily Schedule, Lesson Plan, Newsletter, and Roster in the first week of your child’s attendance.

The current teacher will transfer your child’s cubby contents, personal possessions, and portfolio. The current teacher will support your child in the weeks ahead by positively discussing “what will be the same, what is different” Peers transitioning together may visit the new classroom together.

Parents Managing Transitions

Two to three weeks before the transition, visit the new classroom with your child and engage with the new teacher. Then talk to your child about what to expect with the transition (e.g., child care is a place where they get to play all day, learn new things, and make friends)

Be patient. Children's responses to transition and separation depend upon their age, temperament, and experience. Allow six full weeks before you assess the child’s relationship to and experience of their new classroom.

Be positive! Your attitude matters. Make sure you communicate to your child that everything is okay. Children have incredible intuition, they sense parent anxiety.

Develop a drop-off ritual to say "good-bye" and reassure your child. This can be as simple as: hang up coat, wash hands, butterfly kiss and two hugs. In our experience, a quick and consistent ritual with positive messaging is best! Coming back inside for another “one more hug” or sneaking out of the classroom creates a sense of mistrust in the child.

Please know that children usually calm down before a parent reaches the parking lot! VCFC believes children are capable of developing good management of their emotions given support, encouragement, and the opportunity. If teachers are concerned that your child is unable to be soothed in a reasonable amount of time, the Site Director will contact you for advice.

OUTDOOR PLAY

Outdoor play and explorations are an important foundational learning experience for young children. Each child care center has a designated, age-appropriate playground. VCFC appreciates that our child care centers are located on Vanderbilt's walkable campus with its unique and distinctive park setting and will take full advantage to engage the children with the public art, arboretum, and green open spaces.

DHS requires that licensed child care centers ensure that children receive an opportunity for outdoor play every day that the temperature registers between 32 and 95 degrees. Please send children in clothing appropriate for the weather, labeled with the child's first and last name. During a light rain, we may take a walk, so a raincoat is advisable. On snowy days, please send boots, hats, gloves and layers of warm clothing. During the summer, VCFC increases opportunities for water play. VCFC asks that children wear rubber-soled shoes with closed toes and heels for outdoor play.

Parents will apply a thick coat of sunscreen to their child every morning before bringing them to child care, especially in the summer. Parents may choose to use bug spray on the child by applying it at home.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

VCFC asks parents to exercise caution when allowing children to bring personal items to child care. Please check with your child's teacher to see if there is a day designated for sharing such items. Please label all items brought from home to school. VCFC cannot assume responsibility or liability for any items brought from home that become lost or broken. VCFC does not allow candy, cosmetics, gum, money, or toy weapons (or real weapons).

Items from home can support classroom learning. Please check with your teacher if you have a personal belonging that could enhance children's understanding; this may include an artifact, book, musical instrument, or photograph.

VCFC provides sheets and blankets for both cots and cribs. If your child has a favorite sleep toy or any other security item, please check first with the teacher to make sure the item is allowed under DHS licensing regulation.

VCFC ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Executive Director is responsible for all VCFC operations, and establishes the policies and procedures reflective of research-based ECE best practice and DHS licensing regulation, and conducts activities for ongoing program quality assessment, evaluation, and improvement. This position reports directly to the Associate Vice Chancellor for Business Services.

The Administrative Officer (formerly Assistant Director) is responsible for VCFC administrative operations, including enrollment and tuition. This position reports to the Program Director.

The Education Director provides pedagogical articulation across all child care centers, working in close collaboration with teachers to facilitate dynamic Arts and Nature Education, strengthening the practice of documentation to support, expand and deepen the thoughts and ideas of children, and make learning visible to parents.

The Site Director provides the child care center with leadership that reflects VCFC's mission and philosophy, that is necessary to effective site operation, including staff management and DHS regulatory compliance, and that provides parents with the ongoing communication that supports a successful partnership.

The Administrative Assistant provides the child care center with the support necessary to ensure systems, materials, and supplies are in place to enable the site's function and operation.

The Lead Teacher provides care and education to the children, designs and implements classroom activities that reflect the values and goals of VCFC, documents children's learning, and provides parents with ongoing communication to support a successful partnership.

The Associate Teacher provides care and nurture to the children, working collegially with the Lead Teacher to implement classroom activities.

The Floating Teacher provides care and nurture to the children in this flexible role designed to support teacher absences from the classroom.

STUDENT WORKERS

Vanderbilt students that are employed at VCFC are a wonderful resource and add value to the VCFC community. Students must meet DHS and Vanderbilt University requirements prior to engaging with children, but are not VCFC staff, and parents may not leave their child alone with them in the VCFC program.

YOUTH INTERNS

Career Technical Education and youth job training is an important component of the VCFC relationship to the Nashville community. These partnerships are a wonderful way to connect the work of our Early Childhood educators to employment development opportunities for youth.

VCFC may provide opportunities for site visits, observations, and training that would engage teens to consider employment opportunities in the field of Child Development.

RESEARCH

VCFC benefits from a relationship with the Peabody College of Education and Human Development. In addition to opportunities for shared training and professional development, VCFC provides access to the classrooms at each site for Peabody student and faculty observations. All guest educators will conduct themselves at the highest level of professionalism, and are background checked as required by DHS and Vanderbilt's compliance and standards.

Additionally, VCFC parents and children may be contacted by Peabody and informed of opportunities to participate in research activities. These invitations will include an IRB reviewed informed consent form.

This relationship reflects VCFC's contribution as a university team member, and our commitment to Vanderbilt's mission, goals, and values to be a center for scholarly research, informed and creative teaching, and service to the community and society at large.

AGREEMENTS

I have read the VCFC Family Handbook, and agree to comply with the policies and procedures contained therein.

(Please initial)

___ I have been provided a copy of and thoroughly read the VCFC Family Handbook. I understand that a copy is also available on the VCFC website.

___ I read and understand, and agree to comply with the policies and procedures which inform the VCFC services providing licensed child care.

___ I understand that VCFC provides access to the child care center classrooms to the Peabody College of Education and Human Development for observation and research opportunities.

___ I understand and agree that neither Vanderbilt Child and Family Center, Vanderbilt University, nor any of their officers, agents, or employees are liable for bodily injuries or illnesses suffered by my child(ren) or damages to personal belongings, unless the injury, illness, or property damage was the direct result of willful negligence on the part of those operating the Center.

___ I understand and agree to provide VCFC with 30 days written notice of my child's disenrollment or the financial equivalency. Children age-eligible for Kindergarten will be automatically dis-enrolled by August 15th in the year of their eligibility (unless parents provide written notice by the prior April 1st of their intention to stay another preschool year).

___ I understand that VCFC has the right and the responsibility to modify practice to conform with changes to Tennessee Department of Human Services licensing regulation.

___ I understand that VCFC reserves the right to update this handbook at any time, to ensure compliance with Vanderbilt policies and practices.

(Optional)

___ I give permission for my child's image to be used in photographs within the classroom's documentation of learning (e.g., bulletin boards, crafts, booklets).

___ I give permission for my child's image to be shared on the classroom electronic updates and on the electronic bulletin board in the center lobby.

___ I give permission for my child's image to be used on the VCFC website and VU publications.

Parent Signature

A copy of this form will be maintained in your child's file

___/___/___
Date

Voluntary Participation in the Child Care Center Community

I am requesting that my family be included in the classroom roster. I understand that my decision to participate is purely voluntary. I will leave the Family Information form (below) blank if I choose to opt out.

I understand the classroom roster will be printed and published and released to the other families in my child's classroom. The intent of the roster is to support community by providing a way for children and their families to connect for playdates and recreation. Access to this information may not be used for marketing, research, or other business purposes.

_____/____/____
Parent Signature Date

(Please provide *only* the information that you want to be included in the July 2018 -19 classroom roster. You may choose to leave lines blank. Print clearly.)

Child's First Name _____ Last Name _____

Nickname _____ DOB ____/____/____

Parent's First Name _____ Last Name _____

Email: _____ Phone ____ - ____ - ____

Address: _____ Zip _____

Parent's First Name _____ Last Name _____

Email: _____ Phone ____ - ____ - ____

Address: _____ Zip _____

Cool stuff about us: _____
