THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY
CHILD AND FAMILY CENTER

PRESCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK

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Welcome to the Rockefeller University Child and Family Center. We look forward to a rewarding year with you and your child. Please read this Handbook and save it to consult throughout the year, as it will answer many of your questions about the philosophy, policies, practices and procedures at the Child and Family Center.

**History**

The Rockefeller University Children’s School (CS), founded in 1967, and Infant Toddler Center (ITC), founded in 1994, provided developmentally appropriate care and education for the youngest members of the Rockefeller University community.

We began offering full-day programs in 1992. In the spring of 1997, marking the 30th year that the university supported young children on campus, we acknowledged changes that the CS had gone through in response to the needs of the Rockefeller University community by finding a name that described the totality of who we were. The new name, The Rockefeller University Child and Family Center, expressed our values and beliefs about what is important in high quality child care and education for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. In 2001, we expanded our program to 10 rooms to meet the needs of the growing Rockefeller University community.

**Philosophy and Curriculum**

We focus on each individual child and how she/he lives within our group setting. We believe in strong connections with each child’s family and seek to create a partnership with you. While we provide a place for children where they can explore their interests and maximize their potential, these goals differ for each child at different times in his/her development. We strongly believe that each day in the child’s life is important not just for the future, but for the here and now.

The CFC is a very special place for young children exploring their world. Those attending the program come from a wide variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The mix of languages and customs provides rich and varied experiences for the children. In addition, the program is set amidst the spacious lawns and gardens of the Rockefeller University campus, which provides ample space for exploration and outdoor play. Additionally, the CFC children’s gardening program on the north end of the campus gives all of the children a unique, hands-on experience with nature, insects and planting, tending and harvesting vegetables and berries.

**The Developmental Interaction Approach, Reggio Emilia Approach, Emergent Curriculum Approach**

The core educational philosophy that guides our program is the “Developmental Interaction” approach. “Developmental” refers to our belief that children learn best when they are ready for new experiences. When a child is fully able to experience each stage of development in the social, physical, emotional and cognitive realms, she will then be prepared to move on to new experiences and learn new skills. Each stage is an essential building block in the growth of a child.
“Interaction” refers to the idea that experiences lead to learning when they occur in a socially and physically responsive environment. A carefully planned environment encourages safe, spontaneous, hands-on exploration and supports the development of curiosity, problem-solving, physical development and social growth. Young children learn best when they have many opportunities for interaction with the people and materials in their world. We endeavor to create an atmosphere that nurtures self-esteem through positive relationships with others along with respect and acknowledgment of each child’s individuality and competence.

The CFC also embraces elements of the Reggio Emilia approach, which views the child as highly capable and filled with the potential to “co-construct their knowledge” along with highly observant, responsive teachers; children and teachers learn together. Emergent, thematic, project-based curriculum is the cornerstone of the Reggio approach. Mediums such as clay, wire, colored pencil and recycled materials are the means through which children express what they have come to know. Additionally, observational drawings are key in training the child to see carefully and to transcribe that seeing. The process of learning is made visible to children and parents alike through “documentation”, which may include drawings, photos and the children’s or teacher’s descriptions of various aspects of a project.

**Core Principles of Preschool Curriculum**

A program of integrated, exploratory activities meets the developmental needs of each Preschool child. Because young children learn through rich and varied play, an important time of the day is activity/free-play time, when each child chooses from areas such as blocks, dramatic play, art, books, manipulative materials, drawing/writing center, water/sand play and group activities such as cooking or planting. Each group has an active play period on the playground as well as several group times for story, snack, music and movement and discussions. Special teachers join us twice per week for music and creative movement. The two oldest groups have art in small groups with a specialist teacher once per week.

The curriculum for preschoolers is centered on supporting children’s social, emotional, physical, language and cognitive development. Some key elements and examples are listed below:

**Social/emotional development:**
- Build strong, trusting relationships between children, parents and teachers
- Provide a physically and emotionally safe and responsive environment
- Support children in positive problem solving/conflict resolution
- Support greater independence, responsibility and choice
- Implement daily routines to give children a sense of predictability and security
- Acknowledge and label children’s feelings

**Physical development:**
- Provide abundant opportunities for gross motor play and exploration, both indoors and out
- Provide a variety of activities and materials to challenge and strengthen fine motor skills
- Challenge children with physical problem-solving activities during Music and Movement classes

**Language development:**
- Increase children’s vocabulary through stories, songs, thematic studies, group discussions
- Provide opportunities to play with language through rhyming, word games and stories
Cognitive development:

- Support curriculum based on children’s interests, current developmental issues and naturally occurring phenomena
- Build on children’s natural creativity, curiosity, wonder and delight in problem-solving, using symbols and thinking more abstractly
- Plan for enriching science, social studies, math and literacy activities
  - Science: utilize scientific method, garden program, life cycle, simple machines, weather, cooking, class pets
  - Social studies: All About Me, family curriculum, visiting other classrooms or offices, campus/community tours
  - Math: sequencing, categorizing, patterning, graphing, voting, counting songs, number puzzles, geoboards, Unifix cubes, working with blocks, calendar
  - Literacy (which includes speaking, listening, writing, reading): reading fiction and non-fiction books, letter puzzles, tracing, storytelling, sharing at meeting time, drawing/painting, making individual and group books, taking dictation

Examples of emergent, thematic curriculum in Preschool:

- The seasons – fall, winter, spring, summer
- Insects
- Patterns
- Art, Artists and Illustrators: Pollack, Picasso, Pointillism, Eric Carle
- Rhyming & Poetry
- Five senses / the human body
- Solar system
- Light and dark
- Travel and geography
- Cultural traditions
- Transportation
- Ice, water, steam
- Weaving and sewing

THE DAY AT THE CFC

The day begins at 8:30 a.m. at the CFC with parents bringing their children to their rooms or to the Big Kids’ Playground (Blue and Gold Rooms). It is important that you arrive on time as activities begin promptly at 8:30 AM. Children should arrive no later than 9:00 a.m. We have found that many children who arrive later than 9:00 a.m. can have a difficult time assimilating into the group and miss a good portion of the morning activity or outdoor period.

Each group has a regular daily schedule of activities which alternate between more and less teacher-directed ones. There are times when the children function as a group: story time, music, movement, snack time and there are times when the children make their own choices: activity/free-play period, outside playtime. Some of the activities among which the children can choose include art, block building, puzzles, dramatic play, water play and cooking.

The teachers are aware of each child throughout the day and how each child’s day flows. The teachers give children plenty of opportunities to figure things out for themselves whenever it is constructive to do so, becoming more actively involved when it seems appropriate. We are helping the child learn to exert control over him or herself and to solve his or her own problems. This applies to social skills as well as to cognitive and physical ones. Children feel good when they know they have some control over themselves and their environment.
At the CFC, the environment includes inviting, creative classrooms, well equipped outdoor play spaces, an indoor play space (Caspary 1B), a garden and an excellent music, art and movement program. In the classroom, teachers help the children discover changes and occurrences happening around them: the seasons, nature, animals, friendship, families, themselves and more through art materials, books and activities. Children are supported to see more fully, to ask questions and to guess at the answers. In the outdoor play space, they create their own worlds in and around the climbing structures and the sandbox and with large, hollow wood blocks and wheel toys.

The CFC Children’s Garden is an on-going way for children to experience the rhythms of nature and the life cycle through planting seeds, tending plants, harvesting and preparing fruits and vegetables, exploring the many insects and worms that live above and below ground and turning the soil to prepare it for the next season. Time in the garden is extended by cooking projects using harvested vegetables, reading books and making drawings of what is observed there.

Children in GSR bring their lunches and a fresh snack for the afternoon. See Food policy.

Each group has a rest time after lunch. Teachers promote rest time in a variety of ways: turning off the lights, reading to children, playing quiet music or story tapes. According to New York City Department of Health regulations, the CFC is required to have each child rest for at least one hour every day. Children are not required to sleep but are expected to stay on their cots or mats and use quiet voices when speaking so as not to disturb those who do sleep. We have found that the children who stay for the Full Day program often sleep and have a more productive afternoon when they do.

Parents supply sheets and blankets for rest time. They will be sent home weekly to be laundered. After rest time the children may have an activity or story time before some leave at 2:30 p.m. Children staying for the full day have an activity time, playground time and snack in the afternoon.

Being able to handle one’s bodily functions is an important learning experience. Children who have learned to use the toilet on their own will be encouraged to continue to do so. If children are using diapers, parents are required to send diapers and wipes to school clearly marked with their child’s name. We do not recommend “pull-ups” for daytime use as children generally respond to them as they would a diaper. Please work with your child’s teacher when you feel your child is ready to start the process. A planned, collaborative effort is supportive of your child in toilet learning. Your child’s teacher can be a source of information and guidance in the toilet learning process.

**Outings & Trips**

The children go on outings on the campus, in the neighborhood and to local parks, playgrounds and museums. The Blue and Gold Room children take a trip early in September to an apple orchard. The destination is not always the emphasis of the outing; the journey itself can offer an abundance of interesting and exciting experiences for young children. Outings encourage language development and enhance sensory motor development as the children interact with the environment. Outings also provide children with a chance to form
perceptions of the world, become acquainted with different people and their work and begin to piece together an understanding of how the world operates and their relationship to it.

Outings are best if they are unhurried and the children have time to explore at their own speed. Children often see things from a different perspective than adults, notice elements in the environment that adults don’t see or completely miss things that attract adult attention. Trips support the classroom curriculum. Children may go to the grocery store to purchase food for a cooking project or to the hardware store for materials for the water table. We usually go outside in small groups, giving each child the opportunity to walk without rushing.

**Starting the Year**

At the CFC, our emphasis begins with the development of strong, warm, trusting relationships. The social environment paves the way for the children to get the most out of the physical environment, as well as our routines and activities.

For every child, even returning children, the first days of the year at the CFC are filled with new experiences, people and expectations. We try to make this adjustment period as smooth and comfortable as it can be for each child because it serves as a foundation for a happy year at the Center and for future separations and transitions. We ask parents to work with us in creating a bridge between home and school and to help your child establish trusting relationships with their new teachers. Therefore, during the first short days, we expect that you will stay in your child’s room or in the building, depending on your child’s readiness to let you go.

Transitional articles (blanket, teddy bear or doll) are sometimes needed by a child starting school or by a child having a stressful time. If possible, however, it is best to leave treasured objects at home since they are not easily shared and are particularly missed if they get lost at school. If a special object is brought to school, it will be safeguarded by being kept in a special basket or cubby. Please cooperate with the school policy of not having toy guns, weapons, or masks in school. We welcome stuffed or soft animals or soft dolls and blankets. We have found that hard plastic TV or movie character toys that are based on aggressive and violent stories can lead to the same kind of behavior in the classroom. We ask that these toys remain at home.

**Separation and Phase-In**

Helping children to comfortably separate (say good-bye) from their parents is a key component in the program. This may be your family’s first experience with separation. Please know that we are sensitive to individual needs and feelings. In order to ease the process, parents and teachers work together to create a bridge between home and our program. We have found that when a parent feels comfortable in the GSR environment, the child will as well. The building of a relationship between parents and teachers is the foundation for the child’s positive experiences in school.

For this reason, we ask parents to spend time with their child in their room during the first week of the child’s start at the school. The amount of time will depend on the child’s development, previous experience with separations and the parent’s feelings about leaving the child at the CFC. During this phase-in period, children come in small groups with their parents (see phase-in schedule for your child). Parents spend time in the
classroom playing with their child, observing, and helping the child establish relationships with the teachers. While you are still with your child in the room, teachers will ask questions to enable them to better know your child before the full separation occurs.

*Parents must say “good-bye” to their child and tell him/her when they will return. Parents may NOT “sneak out” in order to prevent the child from crying at that moment. Leaving without saying good-bye may be easier for the parents than leaving while a child is crying, but it truly isn’t easier for the child. Their tears and cries are symbols of their healthy attachment to you. It is necessary and healthy for children to be allowed to express their emotions. Children will be helped and comforted by a teacher. Leaving without saying good-bye can also make separations more difficult because a child will fear the unexpected departure and try to keep a close eye on his/her parent. This vigilance prevents him or her from engaging in play or interacting with teachers or children. Sneaking out of the room is in direct opposition to the trust that you are trying to build with your child. They will better trust that you will return when they see that you are clear about when you leave.*

We encourage you to talk openly with the teachers in order to establish positive relationships. Expressing your feelings and needs at this time and all through the year is vital to the success of you and your child’s experiences at the CFC. It is also one of the most important things you can do to establish a working relationship with the staff. Please speak with the teachers after the children have left or arrange for a phone conversation. The Director of the school can be notified for consultation or if a problem arises.

**The following are suggestions for ensuring a comfortable, supportive phase-in period:**

- **Show your child around the Center** and introduce him or her to the staff.
- **Sit on the side of the room** and be available for your child.
- **Familiarize yourself with the materials** available for the children and don’t hesitate to encourage your child to use them.
- **Do not push your child to separate** or to participate. Your child will let you know when he or she is ready. If you have any concerns or questions about how the process is going, please speak with the teachers. They will arrange for a time to talk.
- **Share information about your child** with the teachers. They will ask questions about your child’s routines at home for meals, sleeping and being with you. They are not being intrusive; they want to be able to understand your child better. *Please inform them of any changes that have happened recently before beginning at the center (ex; moving, visitors, new sibling, a parent traveling) or are expected in the near future. Changes that may seem routine or ordinary to an adult may be regarded as unusual by a young child who has not had as many years of experience in dealing with changes.*
- **Discuss your time needs** for the separation with the teachers. (Do you need to be at work at a certain time?) We will try to accommodate them, but we may not be able to assure that your child will be ready to stay without you yet.
- **Special sitters or relatives may assist** you in being in the room with your child if you absolutely cannot stay. But remember, children separate differently from each person. It can be very confusing and even prolong the phase-in process for the child to be with a different person every day.
- **The amount of time it takes for your child to phase in depends on many factors.** Sometimes a child phases in easily only to need extra support later in the year. Some children may take months to be able to feel comfortable at the CFC. The teachers are trained to understand the developmental task of
separation and are skilled at implementing activities and routines in their classrooms that enhance the separation process.

• Remember, **communication with the teachers and your child is the key** to a successful experience. Please do not hesitate to voice your questions, concerns and needs. It is the only way we will know what you want.

**Attendance**

Each classroom maintains a daily attendance sheet, on which parents sign their children in and out each day. The teachers will have the attendance sheets with them at the playground for outdoor drop-offs and pick-ups. Parents must also let teachers know when they are leaving with their child.

If your child will be arriving late or is absent for any reason, parents must notify their child’s teachers within one hour of a child’s expected arrival time. If teachers do not receive a message, they are required to call the parents no later than one hour after the expected arrival time.

The NYC Department of Health requires that parents inform the CFC within 24 hours any absence for: chicken pox, conjunctivitis, diarrhea, diphtheria, food poisoning, hepatitis, haemophilus influenza type b infection, impetigo, measles, meningitis (all types), meningococcal disease, Methicillin resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), mumps, pertussis (whooping cough), poliomyelitis, rubella (German measles), salmonella, scarlet fever, tuberculosis, or any other disease or condition which may be a danger to the health of other children. Such disease or condition shall not include acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection.

**Morning Arrival**

**We ask that you arrive by 9:00am.** Your child’s morning transition to the classroom or playground can be facilitated with the establishment of a regular routine for saying good-bye that you will use each day. Planning to stay for a few minutes before you leave can make the leave-taking a little easier for some children. You can make reading a book to your child or helping him or her to get involved in an activity a part of the morning routine.

Then, when it’s time for you to leave, you can have a usual good-bye place (for example: by the door, on the couch) and plan for a wave at the window afterwards. Some parents go to the door with their child and teacher and sing a good-bye song.

Your child may need help from a teacher; you may have to give your child to a teacher to hold as you depart. Your child may cry when you leave. Coming back to check on your child will only prolong the crying. If you are uncomfortable, you can call the room when you get to your office/lab to see how your child is faring. Usually children stop crying and get involved in an activity fairly soon after a parent leaves.

Even children who are happy throughout the day may have a hard time saying good-bye to a parent in the morning. It is normal for children to protest when a parent leaves and some may protest for many mornings. Many children, though they greatly enjoy their friends and the activities of the CFC, would find it a perfect world if they had it all - you and the CFC! Your leaving may also be difficult on days when there have been changes at
home: a parent traveling, discussion about the arrival of a new sibling, changing apartments, etc. **Again, it’s important that you keep the teachers aware of any changes at home that may affect your child’s day here.**

The teachers have commitments and responsibilities outside the CFC just as you do. Please respect the pick-up and drop-off times. In the morning, the teachers arrive early to prepare and set up rooms. For the teachers, this is an essential part of the day. If you arrive before 8:30 a.m., please wait with your child on the deck, in the Common Room, or in the hallway, rather than coming into the room. The teachers need uninterrupted time to finish their preparations so that they are able to greet you and give you their full attention when the day begins.

**Late Arrivals and Doctor’s or Dentist’s Appointments**

We understand that there will be days when your child has a doctor’s or other appointment that means arriving late or leaving early from the CFC. **We strongly urge that you make your appointments for early or late in the day.** When children arrive at transitions, lunch or nap time, or are taken out and returned in the middle of the day, it often negatively affects the rest of their day. They are aware of what they have missed and often have difficulty with the rest of their day.

You can speak with your health care provider and request appointments at the end of the day to make your child’s day easier. However you choose to make appointments, please inform your child’s teacher the day before the appointment so that we can incorporate the information into our planning. Also, if you are running late, please call the room. Be aware that children who are brought back in the middle of the day may have such a difficult time that you may be called to come get them. **Children may not be brought back after 4:00pm.**

**Pick-Up Time**

Remember that the CFC closes promptly at 6:00pm. We expect that all children and parents will leave the CFC by 6:00pm.

A transition that frequently gets overlooked is pick-up time. Children must now make the transition from the CFC back to Mom, Dad or other care. They often greet their parents with confused emotions: “I’m so happy to see you,” is expressed along with “I’m angry that you left me,” or “Why did you come so early?” These emotions can be manifested in tantrums, refusal to cooperate, indifference to parents, a sudden need to do all the puzzles again, etc. Parents often feel confused and upset by their child’s behavior, especially if they expected the child to race into their arms and happily tell them what fun they had and how much they were missed. This can be a difficult part of the day and needs to be given thought and planning.

Teachers are more than willing to help you with this transition. Children do not have the same emotional agenda with the teachers as they do with their parents. They tend to make the biggest fuss (and reserve the most love) for their parents. Sometimes when emotions are high and everyone is tired at the end of the day, it is easier if the teachers help you get your child ready to leave. Please talk to the teachers if you need help or feel uncomfortable with what is happening at the end of the day.

**The following are some things to think about for enhancing a smooth departure:**
• Since the CFC closes promptly at 6:00pm, it is important that you arrive before 6:00pm in order to ensure ample time for a smooth transition home. Please be on time! Even a short delay can seem endless to a child who is waiting. At 6:00pm children who have not been picked up will be waiting in the office of the Director who is closing that day. The teachers will leave a note on the classroom door specifying which Director will be with your child.

• The classrooms and the Common Rooms are not available for children to play in after 6:00pm. The teachers have straightened up, cleaned and prepared the rooms for the next day. Please do not bring your child or siblings back to the classroom to play after you have picked up.

• Come 5-10 minutes early to sit down and spend time with your child and talk to the teachers before leaving. If you arrive right at closing time, the teacher will not be able to discuss your child’s day with you or help facilitate your child’s transition home.

• Work with your child’s teachers to develop a routine at pick up time that works for both you and your child. The children don’t have any choice or control over attending the center. Devising ways for them to have control over the departure often helps. For example, let them pick one activity to do with you before you leave. Again, if you come right before 6:00pm, you will not be able to give your child choices, as we will need for you to leave quickly.

• Give your child some undivided attention before engaging in conversations with other adults in the room. Parents often enjoy talking with each other at the end of the day. However, many children require a parent’s full attention at departure and may act out or become upset if they don’t have it.

• Remember that you are responsible for your child at pick-up time. If your child or a sibling leaves the room without you, please follow and bring him or her back.

• If you are going to have someone else pick up your child, please let the teachers know in advance and make sure to add the person to your Emergency Contact and Authorized Escort Form. We cannot send a child home with anyone we do not know or who is not on the Emergency or Authorized Escort form unless we have a one-time verbal or written permission from the parent. If the newly designated person is not yet known to the CFC staff, then we must see a photo ID at pick up time. The following school day, the parent will need to add the new person to the authorized escort form. Please introduce us personally to any babysitters, friends or relatives who will be picking up your child or leave us a photo for identification. Likewise, promptly inform the teachers and update the form if you want to remove someone from the list of authorized escorts.

COMMUNICATION

The building of relationships between parents and each member of the teaching team is the foundation for the child’s positive experiences at the Center. Continuity between home and the CFC is essential for providing a meaningful experience for your child. It is important that you tell us about any change or special activities in the home. The more familiar we are with your family, the more understanding, supportive and helpful we can be.

It is of utmost importance that you notify the teachers and office staff of any changes of address, phone numbers (at home and at work), caregivers, and emergency phone numbers.

Likewise, teachers need to have up-to-date information relating to your child’s health. Sharing information about allergies, illness, asthma-like conditions and medications (both prescription and over the counter) will
allow us to provide optimal care for your child. Examples of such medications/treatments include: nebulizers, inhalers, antibiotics, Tylenol, Benadryl and Pedialite.

Parents are welcome to visit their child’s room at any time once the phase-in period is completed. We encourage parents to spend time at the CFC. By spending time here, you communicate to your child that it is a place for your whole family and not just for your child. As parents build relationships with each other, the staff and other children, we become a kind of extended family for each other. This is one of the benefits of on-site child care, so please feel free to join us for lunch or just come for a visit.

For some children, it can be confusing to see a parent unexpectedly. For this reason, we ask that you let the teachers know in advance when you are planning to visit. Also, there may be some children who cannot tolerate a parent visit at certain times of the day. If this is the case, the teachers will speak to you about other times that will work better for you and your child.

Again, it is important all through the year that you inform the teachers of any changes before they happen (ex. one parent has to take a trip, illness/hospitalization in the family, moving even a short distance, parents changing jobs, etc.) Changes that may seem routine or ordinary to an adult are regarded as unusual by a young child who has not had as many years of experience in dealing with changes. These changes and others often lead to different behavior in the room. We can teach and work better with your child if we are aware of the changes at home.

Parent-Teacher Conferences are held twice per year. We strongly recommend that all parents attend. This is a time to touch base, exchange information, set goals as well as report on your child’s activities in the room. Please feel free to arrange additional meetings with your child’s teachers as needed. It is difficult for teachers to have extended conversations at arrival and pick-up times, as they need to focus on the children. They will be happy to talk with you on the phone at a time when they can be away from the children.

If you wish to speak with the teachers about your own child, please do so out of earshot of your child and the other children. Often, it is best to schedule a time to meet with the teacher out of the classroom or to talk on the phone.

Included on the CFC website is a calendar for the year. Please note on your personal calendar any holidays or early school closings or special school events. School closings and events will also be noted in the school newsletter.

**Behavior Management / Discipline**

Young children have powerful feelings and need our help in learning to express them appropriately. We see problems and conflict as learning opportunities and view discipline as a way to guide children to respect themselves and others. Here at the CFC we partner with families to explore how to best help children manage their behaviors and feelings and become a friend to others.

**Our discipline goals include:**

- Helping children establish internal controls. The ultimate goal is self-discipline.
• Helping children recognize, name and verbalize their feelings and needs rather than withdrawing or acting them out physically
• Helping to foster a comfortable and safe environment

A helpful guide for parents is Love and Learn, Discipline for Young Children, by Alice S. Honig. You can pick up a copy from the pamphlet packets in the hall.

Some positive discipline strategies:
• Setting clear, consistent rules helps children learn what is expected of them (i.e. “Blocks are for building, balls are for throwing”).
• Using short, simple phrases helps children to focus on what is important (i.e. “indoor voices,” “Chairs are for sitting”).
• Establishing reasonable, predictable routines helps children to feel secure and to begin to manage their own behavior (i.e. “First we clean up the blocks and then we can read a story”).
• Giving limited choices supports children’s independence and can reduce power struggles (i.e. “Do you want to put your coat on by yourself, or do you want me to help you?”). Too many choices can be overwhelming and actually increase frustration for young children.
• Using natural consequences helps children better understand cause and effect relationships (i.e. “If you throw sand again, you will need to leave the sandbox”). Arbitrary consequences can lead to resentment rather than learning.
• Teaching children problem-solving skills supports their creativity and independence (i.e. “I see two children who both want the same stroller. What can we do? Hmm, maybe we can find another stroller!”). When adults model these skills by thinking aloud, older toddlers can be encouraged to make suggestions and to thus begin to learn how to solve problems by using their words.
• Acknowledging children’s feelings can help to defuse conflicts and develop empathy (i.e. “Hitting hurts. I can see that you want the truck, but I can’t let you hurt Tania.”). A good rule of thumb is to limit behaviors not feelings.
• Addressing the behavior, not the child, helps children learn what is and is not acceptable without damaging their self-esteem (i.e. children are never “bad” even when a particular action might not be appropriate).
• Praising desired behaviors motivates children to keep on trying since they know that we are paying attention to their efforts (i.e. “You used your words to ask for a turn with the bike!”).
• Gentle redirection keeps the focus on the positive and reduces the risk of a power struggle. Some useful techniques include:
  o Distraction: “Let’s go look at the fish.”
  o Humor: Appealing to children’s sense of humor can quickly reduce tensions and help lay the foundation for creative problem-solving.
  o Motivation: “Where does your coat go?” rather than “Hang up your coat.” Pretending you forgot where the coat goes often thrills young children.
  o Novelty: Singing, whispering or using a silly voice to get children’s attention can work wonders.
• Ignoring temper tantrums and waiting until the child is calm enough to talk will help both adult and child find a more effective way to address the problem. When children are completely upset, they will not
understand rational arguments or consequences. By modeling self-control, adults help children learn to better regulate their own emotions.

- Anticipating problems is often the best way to avoid potentially difficult situations. Noticing patterns of behavior and examining potential triggers can help parents and teachers develop an effective intervention. Regular, on-going communication between the parents and the teaching team makes it possible to address concerns as soon as they arise.

We never:
- Use threats or bribery
- Use physical punishment
- Belittle children, use sarcasm or otherwise attack a child’s self-esteem
- Isolate children or make them feel unsafe
- Associate discipline with eating, diapering/toileting, or sleeping. No child is ever confined in any way.

Discipline is deciding which things you are going to insist on. Discipline helps children to cope with the challenges of daily living, to interpret their world and learn social skills. Discipline is also intricately tied to a child’s development and temperament. Learning how to self-regulate takes time and practice. By focusing on the process, rather than perfection, we help children develop the skills to become capable, caring friends. Your child’s teachers are excellent resources for you to help figure out what expectations are appropriate for your child at any given point in their development.

**LANGUAGE**

At the Child and Family Center, we are careful about the spoken word and the body language we use with children. The use of “no” is limited. Instead, the staff uses simple and direct explanations that offer reasons and suggest more appropriate actions. Teachers model positive, appropriate communication and problem solving skills.

Children are encouraged to use words to express their feelings as well as to work out difficulties. Even the very youngest children are exposed to verbal problem-solving. Teachers try to help the child put his or her feelings into words: “You are angry because ___ took your toy.” “Mommy leaving makes you sad”. It is important to show how physical acts can be expressed verbally and to allow children to express their feelings verbally no matter how negative they sound.

**Second Language Learners**

Families often express concern about their children learning English and/or retaining or continuing to acquire their home language. At the CFC, we strongly encourage you to use your home language with your child at all times. Current research shows that very young children acquire language in the context of a relationship, and that children do best if they hear a single language from a single adult. In addition, research shows that mastery of one language offers the best foundation for learning other languages. The teachers mostly speak English with the children at the CFC and your child will gradually acquire English through their experiences with us. Many of the teachers at the CFC have a second or third language and you may hear them using a child’s home language
in times of stress or misunderstanding. Unfortunately, it is not possible for us to cover all the languages that are spoken in our diverse community here at Rockefeller. During room visits teachers will ask you for critical words in your child’s home language.

**THE STAFF**

The CFC teaching staff consists of Early Childhood education professionals who have varying levels of degrees in the field of family and child development. They have been chosen for their dedication, interest, creativity and experience with infants, toddlers, preschoolers and their families. Each group has a Head Teacher who has or is pursuing a Master’s degree in Early Childhood education. Each group also has two Assistant teachers who have a Bachelors degree or an Associates degree in Early Childhood education or a related field or a high school diploma.

The teachers work staggered shifts to cover the 9 ½ hour day at the CFC. Therefore, although our ratio is three to 15 for three-year-olds and three to 18 for four-year-olds, there may be only one or two teachers present during the early or late hours of the day. Staff schedules may shift and vary slightly in order to cover the highest enrollment times for a particular group in a given year.

**Specialists**

We have three kinds of specialists working at the CFC – child development, enrichment and special needs.

**Child Development Specialist**

Jane Davidson, Psy.D, is our child development specialist from the Jewish Board of Family and Children’s Services (JBFCS). She takes on many roles at the CFC: observing in classrooms, consulting with the Directors, teachers and parents and leading staff and parent workshops.

**Enrichment Specialists**

The enrichment specialists are Al Hoberman, the music teacher, Lisa Johnson, the movement teacher, and Jessica Howard, the preschool art teacher.

Preschoolers have music and movement twice per week. The two older preschool rooms (Blue and Gold) have art once per week with the art teacher in the art studio.

**Special Educators**

Some children in the CFC receive services for a variety of special needs. These services are in place to strengthen particular skills and to support the child’s goals for their participation in our community and the larger society. Although they are here for one child, they also interact with the other children and the teachers. These specialists are part of our community. What do they do? The specialists may work directly in the room with the child and include others or they may work in the new therapy room in Caspary 1A. Specialists and teachers sign up to schedule use of the room.

Some of the therapists that you may be in contact with at the CFC are:

**SEIT (Special Education Itinerant Teacher)**

A SEIT works to foster the child’s interaction with the other children, materials and teachers. The children are being helped to shape their behaviors so that they are positively reinforced by the responses they get when they
do them on their own. The SEIT is also there to build rapport with the other children so that the child is not singled out and perceived as different. The SEIT encourages the child’s independent participation in the room. The regular education teachers are still responsible for the child when the SEIT is in the room, so that the child can continue to develop a relationship with all of his or her teachers.

PT (Physical Therapist)
A PT helps a child to move independently and function in the classroom by assisting the teachers in adapting the environment or, where necessary, providing hands-on help. When appropriate, devices are introduced so each child can learn to be self-reliant. Physical therapy goals are focused on gross motor skills such as walking, climbing in the playground, bike riding, dancing, and facilitating interactive play between children of differing skill levels.

OT (Occupational Therapist)
An OT helps a child to function more productively and become increasingly independent. An OT will help a child move, explore, use his/her hands, etc. She would work directly with the child’s body and also adapt the environment for success. The key word with OT is “function”--she is there to help the child function in his/her environment in the most expansive way possible.

Speech-Language Therapist
This type of therapist helps the children improve their communication skills to facilitate language comprehension and expression so the child is able to follow multi-step directions and use a wider vocabulary. They may also work with a child to promote articulation skills, so they can correctly pronounce sounds and words to be understood. When necessary, therapist also works with the child on feeding skills, stuttering and play skills. The overall goal is for the child to have better communication with peers and adults.

Student Teachers, Student Observers and Pediatric Residents at the CFC
The CFC is committed to providing placements for student teachers, observers and pediatric residents. We believe that it is our responsibility to train and support the next generation of teachers / practitioners here at our center which serves as an exemplary model for them given our highly experienced and qualified teachers, the enriched environment and extensive professional development. Indeed, student teachers ask to be placed here. Student teachers benefit our community by providing us with many opportunities for mentoring, by supporting curriculum development and by supporting the classroom. After their placement, student teachers sometimes join the CFC as part time or full time teachers.

Student teachers come to the CFC from institutions such as Bank Street College of Education, Hunter College, New York University, CUNY Center for Worker Education and the Borough of Manhattan Community College. Most are nearing the end of their programs, having been enrolled in coursework on child development, working with parents and the community, curriculum development, the history of education and more. Before they begin their placement, they get a thorough orientation and provide us with a resume, course description and have their medical records reviewed by OHS to ensure that they are fully immunized. They are supervised by our CFC teachers and observed throughout their placement by their field supervisor.

Student teachers are just that - learning to be teachers. They are never alone with children and do not change diapers or toilet children. They may implement curriculum and help with feeding, holding and napping under the supervision of a classroom teacher. They meet regularly with the room team to discuss what they are learning and how to improve their teaching skills.
We also have students who come into our classrooms to observe child behavior for a college course. Mostly these students sit and take notes about the behaviors they observe in the social, emotional, physical and cognitive realms. They may observe vocalizing/talking, movement patterns, problem solving behaviors, conflict resolution, interaction with materials, etc. These observers have minimal interaction with the children.

In coordination with the Child Development Program at Cornell, we have pediatric residents from Cornell observe in our rooms as part of their rotation. This is a valuable part of their training - seeing children at different age levels in an enriched Early Childhood setting.

Finally, we have a variety of Early Childhood professionals visiting our center throughout the year. We host meetings for professional organizations, serve as a model childcare site for the Bank Street Infancy Institute and for staff development visits by other centers. We have hosted visitors from as far away as Romania, Dubai and Iceland. These visitors receive an orientation about the philosophy and mission of the CFC and are accompanied by a Director as they tour the school. Some may quietly observe in the classrooms and then meet with the Directors to debrief afterwards.

Each classroom team will communicate with parents about student teachers or any other visitors to the room via emails and communication boards.

Please note that **student teachers must get permission from the parents before they may take photos or videos of the children in the room**. Permission forms are given to all student teachers before they begin at the CFC. Visitors are not allowed to take photographs or videos of the children.

**The Children**

The children at the CFC in the Preschool rooms range in age from two years to four years nine months in September. There may be two’s and three’s in a room, or three’s and four’s, or just three’s and just four’s. Each year is a little different from the last as we strive to create the best groupings based on the enrollment.

Interactions and relationships between children are fertile ground for growing and learning. Research shows that children are able to engage in and maintain more sophisticated language and play with the support and structure provided in interactions with other children. Older children learn as much from younger children: their skills and play are reinforced when they model them or directly help younger children. Interacting with younger children adds to their feelings of competence and growing independence. Different social skills are required depending on whether the child is engaged with an older or younger playmate. Over time, both younger and older children learn the skills required to interact with different aged children. Learning to live with and ultimately respect others in the group is a central focus of the program.

**Health Matters**

The Department of Health, Division of Day Care which is our licensing agency, requires that every child in the center has a physical examination within three months of entering the CFC and at regular intervals thereafter. **The completed health form must be in our files by the first day of the year. No child will be admitted until this form is received with complete immunization information.** Parents are also required to submit medical forms to the CFC after every “well visit” for your child and each time your child is immunized throughout the year.
Children are not allowed to attend the CFC until their records are up to date. If your child is under a physician’s care for any special health problem, is taking medication, or has any allergies or asthma, be sure that these items are noted.

Hand washing is the most effective way of cutting down on the spreading of germs in the center. The teachers wash their hands often, especially before preparing and serving food. Preschoolers wash their hands upon arrival to the CFC in the morning, after toileting and before meals.

When is a child too sick to be brought to the Child and Family Center?

- The illness, or child’s reaction to it, requires more care than staff can provide or compromises the health and safety of other children. If your child is too ill to play outdoors, then she/he is too ill to be here.
- Signs and symptoms of possible illness such as: low grade fever (99-100F or 37.2-37.7C), unusual lethargy or irritability, unusual clinging, persistent crying, constant runny nose, uncontrolled coughing or wheezing, persistent abdominal pain, lack of appetite or other signs of illness which require a higher level of care than staff can provide in a group setting and/or which compromise the health and safety of staff and other children.
- Child has persistent diarrhea (3 or more in last 24 hrs or if uncontained in diaper or underpants.
- Significant fever as defined below, until evaluated and approved for inclusion by your child’s pediatrician.
  - Children over six months of age should be excluded and referred to the child’s pediatrician whenever a child has a significant fever. A significant fever is:
    - Oral/thermal temperature of 101 degrees Fahrenheit (38.3 C) or above;
    - Rectal temperature of 102 degrees Fahrenheit (38.9 C) or above;
    - Axillary (armpit) temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit (37.8 C) or above
- Child has a new-onset, undiagnosed rash with fever and/or behavioral change.
- Child has weeping skin lesions or blisters in the mouth accompanied by drooling (including mouthing of hands, toys, etc. which spreads saliva).
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye) until symptoms have resolved or until 24 hours after medications have been administered and approved for inclusion by your child’s pediatrician.
- Untreated infestations, such as scabies or lice; child must be free of nits before returning to the CFC.
- Vomiting two or more times in a previous 24-hour period, or any vomiting accompanied by symptoms of dehydration or other signs of illness
- Contagious stages of chicken pox, until six days after the onset of rash or until all sores have dried and crusted, unless children are grouped in a room only with other children with chicken pox
- Any of the following illnesses until approved for inclusion by your child’s pediatrician:
  - Mouth sores with drooling, or Herpetic gingivostomatitis, an infection caused by the Herpes simplex virus.
  - Diarrhea due to Shigella, Salmonella, Campylobactor, Giardia, E.coli type 0157:H7, Versinia, Cryptosporidium, until there are two negative stool tests obtained at least 48 hours after treatment (if prescribed) is completed; or unless a plan for grouping children has been approved by the local or State Health Department.
o Active tuberculosis, until treatment has been initiated and readmission has been approved by the local health unit
o Impetigo, until 24 hours after medical treatment has been initiated unless there is only a small patch of impetigo that can be cleaned and covered so no other children can come into contact with the sore
o Strep throat, or other streptococcal infections elsewhere in the body until 24 hours after the initial antibiotic treatment
o Mumps, until five days after onset of gland swelling
o Rubella (German measles) and measles, until seven days after onset of the rash
o Hepatitis A viral infection (infectious hepatitis), until one week after onset of illness, and until immunoglobulin has been administered to appropriate children and staff, or as directed by the local health unit
o Shingles, if sores cannot be covered by clothing or a dressing or until sores become crusted
o Pertussis (whooping cough), until five days of a total course of 14 days of antibiotic treatment has been completed
o Diphtheria, until readmission has been approved by the local health unit
o Hepatitis B, until readmission has been approved by the local health unit
o Meningitis or meningococcal disease, until readmission has been approved by the local health unit
o Other illness or symptoms of illness as determined by the program

If your doctor places your child on an antibiotic, for an ear or throat infection for example, the child should not be brought to the center until he/she has been on the medication for at least 24 hours and is fever-free without over-the-counter medication.

Since we do not have the facilities to care for sick children at the CFC, you will be called to come and take your child home immediately if he/she becomes sick during the day. If you cannot be reached, we will call the emergency numbers that you have provided. Please be sure to give us several alternatives.

If your child is sent home sick, he/she will not be admitted the following day unless the child’s health care provider provides a written note authorizing the child’s return and the above conditions have been met. (Please see the CFC website for the Doctor’s Note form).

If your child is ill and will not be attending the CFC, please call your child’s room by 10:00 a.m. Children and teachers are concerned when a child is absent. We also notify other parents if the group has been exposed to a contagious disease. The Department of Health monitors clusters of certain contagious diseases in the city and asks us to report instances of them. If you take your child to the pediatrician ask when he/she can return to group care and request a written note for the CFC. (Please see the CFC website for the Doctor’s Note form).

With most childhood diseases, children who have been exposed but are not symptomatic are not excluded from the center, but everyone is alerted to watch for signs and symptoms. When children are in the center, they must be able to participate in all activities, including water and outdoor play. In the long run, less time is missed if early signs of an illness are heeded and the child remains at home to rest.
Medication

The CFC is certified to administer medication to children once parents provide the required documentation. Medication permission forms can be found on the CFC website.

We can apply topical, over-the-counter medication such as diaper cream or sun block on your child as long as you have signed a permission form. These permission forms have to be renewed every time you change medication and every six months. Over the counter medications which are given orally, such as Benadryl, Tylenol or Pedialyte, may be administered by an appropriately trained staff member after parents and the child’s health care provider have filled out a medication permission form.

Prescription medication including emergency medications such as an Epi-pen, an asthma inhaler or a nebulizer may be administered by trained teachers after parents and a health care provider have filled out a medication permission form identifying the exact symptoms or circumstances under which medication is to be given, the dosage and the duration of the treatment. A prescription alone is not adequate. Teachers keep track of medications administered in a medication log. If the medication needs to be refrigerated it should be placed in a refrigerator, sealed and labeled and out of a child’s reach.

Over the counter and prescription medications need to be clearly labeled with the child’s first and last name and in the original containers. All instructions and permissions for medication must be updated at least every six months.

We do not recommend medications if your child is functioning in the classroom. However, if your child has a fever under 101 degrees (for teething, for example) parents may give the child over the counter medication in the classroom.

It is imperative to notify your child’s teacher of all medications your child is taking and/or treatments your child is taking including: nebulizers, inhalers, antibiotics, Tylenol, Benadryl and Pedialyte. We rely on your cooperation and full disclosure about medications that your child is taking so that we can respond appropriately and safely to your child’s needs and can determine whether or not your child is healthy enough to be at the center and not contagious to the other children or teachers. Also, not knowing if a child is on a medication results in the teacher’s inability to provide correct information to emergency responders when needed, causing possible serious reaction to the medication administered by the emergency responders to the child.

Allergy and Asthma Protocols

For children with life threatening allergies and/or asthma, we have attached a detailed protocol (pages 31-32) to ensure that we minimize the risk of exposure to allergens and have an up to date action plan in place with appropriately trained staff. Once a child is diagnosed with a significant food allergy or other life threatening condition, parents must meet with both the program director and the child’s head teacher in order to develop an action plan. For children entering the CFC with such a diagnosis, an action plan meeting must be scheduled.
prior to the first day of school. A sample allergy action plan can be found on the CFC website. Action plans must be updated at least every six months.

**Mandated Reporting of Child Abuse**

New York State law requires that any suspicion of child abuse or neglect be reported to a central hotline. All teachers, as part of their NYC Dept. of Health requirements, take a course in child abuse and neglect. The CFC staff has a training session on the detection and reporting of child abuse and neglect every two years.

Child abuse is defined as when a parent or guardian inflicts serious physical injury upon a child, creates a substantial risk or serious physical injury or commits a sex offense against a child. Abuse also includes situations where a parent or guardian knowingly allows someone else to inflict such harm on a child. Maltreatment (including neglect) means that a child’s physical, mental or emotional condition has been impaired or placed in imminent danger of impairment by a parent or guardian:

- failing to provide sufficient food, clothing, shelter, education; or
- failing to provide proper supervision, guardianship, or medical care (refers to all medical issues, including dental, optometric or surgical care); or
- inflicting excessive corporal punishment, abandoning the child, or misusing alcohol or other drugs to the extent that the child was placed in imminent danger.

**FOOD POLICY**

The CFC provides one snack each day. Cereals, rice cakes and crackers are some of the foods we serve. Preschoolers bring their own lunches and a simple afternoon snack; the center provides milk or water. This ensures that your child is being served foods that she or he prefers. Please print your child’s first and last name clearly on his/her lunch containers and include protein (meats, cheese, yogurt, tofu, etc.), carbohydrates (bread, pasta, etc.), vegetables, and fruit.

**Because of allergies, peanuts, peanut products and tree nuts are strictly forbidden in the children’s or adults’ food at all times.**

Please send healthy food only, no “junk food”. We define junk food as any food that is high in fat, sugar and/or salt and low in nutritional value. Some examples include candy, chips, cookies, cake, doughnuts, Lunchables or other deep fried foods such as french fries. Since juice has little nutritional value, please save juice boxes for a special at home treat or for birthday celebrations in the room.

Children under four should not be given hotdogs (sliced into rounds), whole grapes, nuts, seeds, raw peas, pretzels, chips, peanuts, popcorn, marshmallows, spoonfuls of nut butter or chunks of meat larger than can be swallowed whole – they are a choking hazard.

We expect the children to feed themselves. Parents provide lunches that are prepared in the way that is easiest for their child to handle independently. Please offer foods for your child in small, manageable portions. Offering variety will often encourage eating. All foods should be prepared so that they are ready to eat such as cut into
small pieces, peeled. Some children prefer only a few foods. Send food that they have eaten at home and indicated that they enjoy. Do not send food that they have rejected or never eaten before. New food should always be tried at home first before being sent for lunch. Children learn to like new and different foods more when they are offered more than once, in small amounts, if they see you eating them and offered frequently in a calm and relaxed meal setting.

Once food has been served to a child, it is unsafe to re-serve that food at a later time. We will send home leftovers only so you can see how much was eaten that day. This food should be discarded.

**Please send in a fork and spoon daily that we will send home with lunch containers.** We wish to be more ecologically conscious and use less plastic ware. ALL PERSONAL ITEMS – CONTAINERS, UTENSILS, ETC. MUST BE LABELED with your child’s first and last names.

**Allergies and Food Sharing**

Please be aware that some of the children in the center have allergies and other children may have allergies we don’t know about. Food of an unknown source or with unknown ingredients should never be given to any child and foods should not be shared because of the risk of serious problems.

**Because of allergies, peanuts, peanut products and tree nuts are strictly prohibited in children's and adult’s food at all times.**

Children do not share food. Sharing of utensils, cups, bottles, or plates is never allowed.

**GENERAL SAFETY INFORMATION**

**Parental Supervision**

The CFC expects that when a parent is in a room, he or she is in charge of their child. Parents are not responsible for other children in the room. In general, the teacher assumes you will care for your own child while in the room, but if for some reason you wish the teacher to do so, please make sure this is clearly communicated.

Each exterior door is equipped with a keycard access pad as well as an interior green exit button, which is intentionally placed out of a child’s reach. In order to ensure the safety of all children, please do not let your child or older siblings use the keycard or green exit button. Children may only leave the CFC when accompanied by an authorized escort.

**Visitor Sign-in Book**

All visitors are required to sign in when entering the CFC. The sign in book is located on the shelf near the entrance door of the GSR building.
Send Word Now

All families are required to sign up for the Send Word Now system in order to receive emergency notifications from the CFC. Signing up for email, text and telephone calls is the surest way to receive timely notifications. The Send Word Now form can be found on the CFC website.

Emergency Plan

The Child and Family Center has an extensive emergency plan which is part of the Rockefeller University Emergency Preparedness and Response program. The plan, which is available online, outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Child and Family Center (CFC) staff and University support staff in the event of a disaster or other problem affecting the care or safety of the children or staff of the CFC. Efforts will be made to maintain childcare activities, to the greatest extent possible, in order to ensure that the needs and safety of the children will be met. The children and teachers also have monthly fire drills and regular evacuation drills.

The shelter in place evacuation site for the children in SFH is the Yellow Room. The shelter in place evacuation site for the infants and toddlers in GSR is the Small Common Room. The area of refuge on campus is in the Weiss lobby. The off-campus evacuation site is the first floor Faculty House playroom at York Avenue and 63rd Street. In case of an emergency, families will be contacted through the Send Word Now system.

In the event of weather related or other city-wide emergency, the CFC follows the closings of the New York City public schools. When the NYC public schools are closed, the CFC is closed. In such cases, we will contact parents via Send Word Now with as much advance notice as we are given.

Parent Participation

The CFC invites parents to participate as much as they can in the lives of their children while at the CFC. Parents should feel free to spend time in their child’s room, call to check on their children, have lunch with the group, go on outings, do special projects or read to children.

The Children’s Library

The Children’s Library is located across from the Violet Room in the GSR building and the adult library is on shelves near the office in GSR. Books may be borrowed for one week. You may take parenting books home without signing them out. The children's books may be checked out by accessing the librarything.com program.

The library needs constant upkeep as it is used by many, many children each day. Parents are needed to repair and shelve books and do general maintenance. Each classroom is responsible for the upkeep for one month. Each month the room parent organizes one work time either in the morning or evening. The room parent surveys the parents to see which time is best for the group.

On your child’s birthday or to mark a special occasion, you may wish to donate a book to the CFC. A special bookplate naming the donor will be placed in the chosen book.

**Room Breakfasts**

Rooms sponsor room breakfasts throughout the year, sometimes with parents volunteering to bring in a special food from home. Parents and teachers are also welcome to organize lunch or dinner potlucks. Always remember to check with the teachers for the latest information on food allergies in the room. Nuts and peanuts are never permitted at the breakfasts.

**Room Parents**

For each classroom, the CFC asks for one or two parents to volunteer to be a Room Parent. Room parents help in communication between the CFC, the Parents Association, teachers, administration and families, relay parents’ questions, concerns and ideas and share them with the Directors and help create community spirit by raising awareness of the Parents Association and CFC activities. Room parents recruit other parents to help organize library work time, keep parents informed of Parents Association activities, solicit parent involvement in all CFC and room activities and show support for the teachers. If you are interested in becoming a Room Parent, please speak with the teachers in September.

**Outings**

Throughout the year, your child’s class may go on outings around the neighborhood. When the room decides to venture a little further away, to the apple orchard or the zoo, for example, parents may be asked to join the children. Going on outings is a wonderful way to spend time with your child and support the room’s activities at the same time.

**Parents Association**

An active Parents Association serves as a liaison between Rockefeller University and the Child and Family Center. All parents with children in the CFC are members of the Parents Association. The Parents Association Board is made up of members elected by the whole parent body. The Board meets monthly. It sponsors numerous special activities for parents and children, as well as fundraising events. With the assistance of parent volunteers, the Association also runs the RU T-shirt Shop, the proceeds of which go to support the Child and Family Center. The minutes from the monthly meetings are emailed to all parents.

The mission of the Parents Association Board is:

1. To foster and encourage parent participation in the Child and Family Center by making parents aware of opportunities for involvement in the Center.
2. To promote community-building and communication among parents, teachers, directors, and University administration, through regular Parents Association Board meetings, discussions with administrators, distribution of board meeting minutes, and regular reports in newsletters.

3. To raise funds, beyond those generously contributed by the University, to enrich and enhance the educational experiences of the children.

Fundraising Opportunities

Each year the Parents Association does focused fundraising to make specific purchases for the CFC. In the past, money has been raised to buy iPads for documentation and newsletter writing, Brio trains, musical instruments, large motor equipment for the center and many books for the children’s library. Parents can get involved with fundraising at different times throughout the year.

October/February – CFC Bake Sales: Parents contribute baked goods and help sell them in Weiss.

January – Children’s concert

All year round – The T-shirt Shop: The RU T-shirt Shop is open by appointment. Throughout the year the T-shirt shop sponsors sales. During those sale days there are parent volunteers who participate on the designated sale days.

Children’s Clothes

Sturdy, comfortable, washable clothes are best for school. Smocks are provided in each room, but a certain amount of staining is inevitable in a rich and varied art program. Children should not be made to feel they have done something wrong if they get paint on their clothes.

We recommend pants with an elasticized waistband. These are easily managed and encourage independence, especially during toileting routines. Belts and pants with snaps and buttons often complicate the dressing process. All children should be dressed so they can enjoy outdoor play every day. Non-skid shoes afford maximum safety for both indoor and outdoor activities. Shoes with Velcro fasteners are preferable to laces as children can close them themselves, promoting dressing independence. During the winter, our yard remains snowy long after sidewalks are clear. Boots and snow-pants are a necessity as the children play outdoors all winter long.

Please do not send your child to school with clothing or other items such as lunch boxes, backpacks and toys that feature superheroes, cartoon or commercial characters. Such possessions can be highly prized, leading to unnecessary conflict. In addition, children often like to imitate powerful characters which can contribute to aggressive play. Please keep these items home.
Holidays & Celebrations

Here at the CFC we reflect and integrate into our curriculum the broad cultural and linguistic diversity of our children and families. We celebrate holidays and honor cultural traditions by emphasizing those aspects that are appropriate to all children and that relate to our overall program goals. We mainly focus on family traditions. These may include special stories, foods, art projects, songs, dance or clothing.

We are delighted when families come into the classroom to share their special holidays and family traditions with us. If you wish to do so, please speak with the teachers so that together you may plan what you will be doing with the children. Some of the holidays we have enjoyed learning about in the past are Chinese New Year, Korean New Year, Diwali and Sankta Lucia.

Halloween can be a frightening time for young children. We celebrate at the center without commercial masks or costumes. Please do not send masks or costumes on Halloween. Teachers incorporate appropriate aspects of the holiday in their plans for group discussions, art activities, music and movement and creative dramatics.

Birthday celebrations at the CFC are different from the kind of parties you may want to plan for home. The emphasis at the CFC is on celebrating your child’s special day in a way that is consistent with other things we do here. Specifically, the fun is in being together and acknowledging the excitement that children of this age feel about their birthdays.

Each class will have their own special ritual to mark the day – perhaps the birthday child picks a special story, makes a special hat or uses a special birthday placemat or table cloth or has a special banner made by his or her friends. It is important that birthday celebrations at the CFC feel predictable to the children so they know what to look forward to on their special day and enjoy celebrating with their friends.

Our mission at the CFC is to be able to include all children in our birthday and other room celebrations. For this reason, foods brought for celebrations must be something all children, including those with allergies, can have. Some rooms will not be able to serve all foods. Before planning to bring food to your child’s room, please speak with your child’s teacher about acceptable options.

The following foods are excellent for CFC celebrations: plain cupcakes, mini-muffins, Jell-O, ice cream, sorbet, fruit salad, banana bread or plain cake (sheet cake with no commercial characters on it). However, and be sure that there are no nuts, peanuts or peanut products in whatever you choose (again, because of allergies). A pizza lunch is also an option for preschoolers. Any food offered at the celebration should be for both children and adults (no separate food for adults).

PLEASE DO NOT BRING PARTY HATS, TABLE CLOTHS, PLATES, CUPS, FANCY CAKES, CUPCAKES WITH CHARACTERS AND/OR THICK ICING ON IT, PARTY FAVORS, GOODIE BAGS OR BANNERS! THESE ARE ALL GREAT TO HAVE AT AN “AT HOME” PARTY. Balloons are not allowed under any circumstance. If they break they pose a serious choking hazard to young children.

You will be asked to fill out a Birthday Celebration Planner a week or so before your child’s birthday so that the room will know what to expect on your child’s special day.
If you are planning a party outside of the center, we insist that invitations are not distributed at school, nor should the party be scheduled so that children go directly to a party from school – UNLESS THE ENTIRE GROUP IS INCLUDED.

Children are aware of the mail that is put in the mail pouches outside their classrooms. It can be extremely painful to a child to realize that others have been invited to a party and he or she has not. We encourage children not to discuss their out-of-school parties for just this reason. If you do not wish to invite the entire group to a party, please consider how to divide the group so you are not excluding only one or two children.

If your child cannot attend an out-of-center birthday party for a friend and you have a gift for the birthday child, please give the gift to the child’s parent or caregiver at the end of the day. It’s hard for children who don’t have gifts to see one in a friend’s cubby. Please follow these guidelines for any gift-giving situation.

We mark the end of the academic year with a Pot-Luck Dinner in July at the Faculty House playground. Parents provide wonderful food for the occasion and the school supplies plates, flatware and good weather.

**Step Up to Kindergarten:** Many children began at the CFC in our infant or toddler programs. The last days at the CFC as 4- and 5-year-olds are bittersweet for children and their parents alike. This past year, we initiated a lovely celebratory tradition for those children who are moving on to kindergarten programs at the end of the year. With family attending, we celebrate the end of their journey through the CFC with singing, individual recognition of “graduate” and a lovely reception. We look forward to this event continuing on as a joyful family tradition here at the CFC.

**Calendar**

The CFC calendar is on the CFC website. Please note on your personal calendar any holidays, early center closings or special events. If you make note of them now, you will be able to plan ahead for them. Center closings and events are also noted in the monthly newsletter.

**Key Card**

If you are a member of the Rockefeller University community, please have your card key programmed to open the door to GSR. The Security department of the University will issue a card key to non-RU parents of children attending the CFC. For each key card that you need (including spouse or caregiver, if necessary), please give the school Administrative Assistant or Director $10. She will leave a receipt in your mail pouch located next to your child’s room. You will then need to take the receipt to the Security Office in the Nurse’s Residence and a key card will be issued to you. We supply the Security Office with a list of parents who may receive a card key. After your child leaves the CFC and you return the key card, your $10 will be returned to you. When every parent has a card key, it makes arrival and dismissal times much easier.
ITEMS TO BRING

First Day

- Photo(s) of child, child with parents, parents alone, anything or anyone important to your child (grandparents, siblings, sitters, relatives, friends, and pets).
- Extra clothes (pants, shirts, sweater, two pairs of socks and underwear). *Everything must be fully labeled.* You can use a laundry pen or “Sharpie” indelible pen.
- A blanket and a small sheet for a cot. Please do not bring a pillow.
- Optional items: “comfort” toy or object (i.e., teddy bear, doll, cloth diaper or any other toy or object which will help your child feel at home at the CFC).

LIFE AFTER THE CHILD AND FAMILY CENTER

Informational meetings about on-going schools are held early in the fall to inform parents who will be applying to other schools for the following year. The Director discusses the various elementary school options (public, private and gifted & talented (G & T) programs) in the community. We review the application process for the schools. The Director meets with parents individually to discuss the process, talk about schools for each child and will meet with you as often as needed throughout the process of selecting an on-going school. We prepare and send ISAAGNY reports to private ongoing schools at your request.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU HAVE A PROBLEM

- **Financial** – speak with the Associate Controller or the Vice President for Human Resources.
- **Concerns about your child** – see the teacher first (the Director may be a helpful resource).
- **Concerns about a staff member** – talk to that person and/or the Director (important phone numbers on the following page).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
<th>Cell Phone Number</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Karen J. Booth, Director</td>
<td>212-327-7071</td>
<td>917-939-1306</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tamara Rowe, Assistant Director</td>
<td>212-327-7073</td>
<td>917-807-6824</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alexa Pomales, Assistant Director</td>
<td>212-327-7002</td>
<td>646-996-3425</td>
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<tr>
<td>Janiris William, Assistant Director</td>
<td>212-327-7063</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abigail Stein, Educational Coordinator</td>
<td>212-327-8110</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kathy Burke, Administrative Assistant</td>
<td>212-327-7072</td>
<td>646-533-8512</td>
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<td>GSR Green Room</td>
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<td>Indoor Play Space</td>
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<tr>
<td>Therapy Room</td>
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Protocols for Supporting Children with Allergies

1. **Health Form:**
   a. A completed medical form must be submitted *before* a child can attend the CFC
   b. The doctor fills in all pertinent health information including whether the child has allergies
   c. Kathy creates a list of all CFC children with allergies, what they are allergic to and what medications are necessary to treat symptoms
   d. This list is copied and distributed to each classroom and all common areas
   e. The Head Teacher will inform parents of severe allergies and food restrictions within the room.
   f. Any visitors to the room, ie. specialist teachers, therapists, substitute teachers, student teachers, are informed of any child with an allergy by the core classroom teachers

2. **Emergency treatments and paperwork:**
   If an EpiPen, Twinject or other emergency medications or treatments are prescribed:
   a. Doctor and parent fill out and sign a **Written Medication Consent Form**
   b. Doctor and parent fill out and sign a **Food Allergy Action Plan Form and/or Asthma Action Plan**
      - Please note that medication consent forms and action plans must be renewed every 6 months; check expiration date on medications and remind parent in advance to renew prescription.
   c. Both forms, along with the emergency medication/s are hand delivered to one of the Directors for initial oversight. The Director will then give forms and medications to the child’s teachers for safe, accessible storage.
   d. Before the child begins at the CFC or upon diagnosis of a severe allergy, the Director sets up a meeting with the child’s parents and the teachers to discuss the child’s allergies, the Food Allergy or Asthma Action Plan and to learn how to use emergency medications such as the EpiPen, Twinject or nebulizer.
      **At this meeting an Individual Health Care Plan is developed which will:**
      - Designate one teacher (and a backup teacher) to be responsible for any food given to the child, including monitoring the child during mealtimes
      - Designate a teacher (with backup) to give any needed medications and/or treatments
      - Specify any additional training needed
      - Outline how to limit exposure to the food allergen in that classroom via cooking projects, birthday parties, field trips, etc. Provide safe food storage, snacks, seating arrangements and cleaning procedures.
      - Specific recommendations from the child’s allergist may be requested to complete the plan.
e. Medications and copies of forms are stored together in a safe, but accessible place in the child’s classroom and originals are placed in the child’s main file
f. Whenever the child leaves the building, teachers will take along the Action Plan and emergency medications.

3. **Exposure or possible exposure:**
   a. Consult Allergy or Asthma Action Plan
   b. Administer epinephrine if needed
   c. Call 1111 and indicate to the dispatcher a possible anaphylactic allergic reaction and that advanced life support medications are needed (EpiPen Jr. Or Twinject)
   d. Call parent or emergency contact person

4. **Staff trainings:**
   a. All staff members are regularly trained in minimizing risk of allergen exposure, recognizing allergy symptoms and implementing emergency response protocols
   b. Full time staff regularly receive pediatric CPR and First Aid training
   c. Identified staff are trained in specific protocols to administer medications and/or treatments according to a child’s Individual Health Care Plan.
   d. Continue to train staff in Medication Administration Training (MAT)