



**THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY
CHILD AND FAMILY CENTER**

Parent Handbook 2023-2024

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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 and procedures at our 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. The name, The Rockefeller University Child and Family Center, expresses our values and beliefs about what is important in high quality childcare and education for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

Program and Philosophy

We focus on the individual child, how she/he lives within a group, and believe in strong connections with each child's family. We seek to create a partnership with you. While we aim to 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 as preparation for the future, but for the here and now.

The CFC is a very special place for young children exploring the 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. Our children's gardening program on the north end of the campus gives children a rich, hands-on experience with nature through planting, tending, harvesting, tasting and cooking.

The Developmental Interaction Approach, The 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, they 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 each child as highly capable and filled with the potential to co-construct their knowledge along with extremely 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 – the languages - through which children express what they have come to know. Additionally, observational drawings and other creative representations 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.

Covid-19

Please refer to the CFC's website to review all current COVID-19 policies.

Due to Covid-19 and regulations from the NYC Department of Health, necessary changes to policies and procedures have been put in place to support health and safety. The guidelines for group childcare programs are subject to change at any time, in which case, we will update all families and teachers as quickly as possible.

Phase-In

The necessary groundwork for continuity of care, routines and activities starts with Phase-In.

Phase-In to the Classroom

For every child, new and returning, the first days of the year at the CFC are filled with new experiences. We try to make this adjustment period as smooth and comfortable as it can be because it serves as a foundation for a positive and fruitful year at the CFC as well as for future transitions.

Helping children to form new relationships and say good-bye to their parents is a key component of the program. During the phase-in period, children come in for increasing periods of time (see your child's individual Phase-In schedule).

Some children may need an earlier pick-up time or a shorter day until they have settled into the classroom. Others may feel comfortable and understand that you are coming back at the end of the day from early in the phase-in process.

Drop off

During Phase-In and at any time of the year, if your child is having a particularly difficult day and crying inconsolably for a period of time, we will call you. We will ask you to guide us in how to help your child. We may ask you to come and see your child, speak with him or her on the phone or try and arrange for an earlier pick up.

Parent Role in Phase-In

The following are suggestions for things you can do during phase-in:

- **Begin to establish relationships with the teachers.** Although your child will be assigned a Primary Caregiver, all members of the teaching team can provide valuable support throughout the year.
- **Share information about your child with the teachers.** The teachers will ask a lot of questions to understand your child better. Please inform them of any changes that have recently happened or are expected in the near future (ex; moving, visitors, new sibling, a parent traveling).

This may be your family's first experience with separation, and 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 the CFC. We have discovered that when you feel comfortable in the CFC environment, then your child feels more comfortable.

Key Card

If you are a member of The Rockefeller University, please have your key card programmed to open the door to GSR or SFH. The Security department of the University will issue a key card to non-RU parents of children attending the CFC. For each key card you need (including spouse or caregiver, if necessary), please email Angie their name, residential address, phone number, and email address. You will then need to take them to the ID office in room 103 in the Nurse's Residence, and a key card will be issued to them. They are only open Mondays & Thursdays 10 am-1:30 pm. After your child leaves the CFC, you need to return the key card. When every parent has a key card, it makes arrival and dismissal times much easier.

Arrival and Dismissal

Attendance

Each classroom maintains a daily attendance sheet. Please be sure and let teachers know when you are leaving with your child at the end of their day. **We ask that you arrive to school by 9:30 am. If your child will arrive late or is absent for any reason, parents need to notify the room by 10am.**

In addition, the NYC Department of Health requires that parents inform the CFC within 24 hours of 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.

Late Arrivals and Doctor or Dentist Appointments

We understand that there will be days when your child has a doctor's or any 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. If a child has an especially hard time separating again after a mid or late day return, you may need to keep them home with you. When possible, please inform your child's teacher the day before the appointment so that we can incorporate the information into our planning.

Pick-Up Time

All families must be on time for pick up. Teachers leave promptly at closing time as many of them have long commutes, attend school themselves part-time, or have their own family obligations to attend to. Young children at the CFC are often distressed if they see their classmates go home and they are still at school. If a family member is unable to pick up on time, it is their responsibility to arrange for a friend, colleague, or caregiver to pick up their child. On the occasions that a family is late, a child may be with a CFC administrator and not necessarily one they are familiar with.

A transition that frequently gets overlooked is pick-up time as children often have mixed emotions upon being reunited with their loved one. Teachers are more than willing to help you with this transition.

The following are some things to think about for enhancing a smooth departure:

- **Since the CFC closes promptly, it is important that you arrive 5 to 10 minutes early 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.*
- **Give your child some undivided attention before engaging in conversations with other adults.**

- **Remember that you are responsible for your child at pick-up time.**
- **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.** Any family member, colleague, or caregiver must be at least 18 years or older. We cannot send a child home with anyone we do not know. Please introduce us personally to any babysitters, friends or relatives who will be picking up your child or leave us a photo for identification. We will not allow children to leave with anyone who does not have clear permission to pick him/her up. **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. We encourage you to talk openly with the teachers in order to establish these relationships. Continuity between home and the CFC is essential to providing a meaningful experience for your child. It is important that you tell us about any changes or special activities in the home. The more familiar we are with your family, the more understanding, supportive and helpful we can be.

When possible, please inform teachers of any changes (e.g., upcoming travel, changing jobs, family or friends visiting for extended stays, illness in the family, moving [even a short distance], weaning off the breast, bottle or pacifier, introducing the potty, etc.) before they happen. Changes at home often lead to changes in behavior at the CFC. We can care for and work better with your child if we are aware of the changes at home.

It is of utmost importance that you notify the office staff and teachers of any changes in address, phone numbers at home, at work or emergency contact information.

Teachers and administrators 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 Pedialyte.

For infants, each day you will complete a short daily log where you give us some information about your child's prior evening, night and morning at home. This information helps us to better care for your child. We encourage you to speak with the teachers each day as well, especially about any special instructions or unusual events. In infant rooms, the teachers use a "daily note" to record information about eating, sleeping and diapering. In **toddler** rooms, parents do a verbal check-in each morning to share information about their child to help teachers anticipate what the child may need during the day. Important information can be noted on a whiteboard or log so that it can be easily referred to over the course of the day. Toddler rooms keep track of information about eating, sleeping and diapering/toileting each day. In addition, teachers reach out individually to parents via telephone calls, written notes, or email to share anecdotal information about your child's day. Group emails, photo sharing websites and blogs are other ways that teachers communicate about classroom activities and curriculum.

Parent conferences are held twice a year. We strongly recommend that all parents attend. Parents who cannot attend a conference at a scheduled time may request a more convenient time. This is a time to exchange information and set goals as well as discuss your child's life at the CFC. Please feel free to arrange additional meetings with your child's teachers as needed. Special requests for separate conferences, drop off / pick up, visitation, etc. can be accommodated. Such requests need to be submitted in writing along with any supporting legal documents.

Teachers are happy to discuss their observations about your child and share anecdotal information about your child and the group, but they will not have in-depth conversations with parents about children who are not their own. 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.

Pick-up and drop-off are times for sharing necessary information. However, to have an extended conversation or discussion, it is best to schedule a time to meet in person or talk on the phone. Please be aware of the teacher's need to be with the children during busy and difficult times.

Individual rooms may schedule check-in meetings or group events throughout the year to discuss issues as they arise, to celebrate a birthday or simply to enjoy one another's company for a potluck breakfast or dinner. Parents are welcome to suggest topics for room meetings and/or plan a group potluck for parents, teachers, and children.

The **CFC website** includes 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 general CFC emails.

Continuity of Care

Primary Caregiving (for Infants & Toddlers)

Your family will be assigned a "primary caregiver" at the beginning of the year. This teacher carries out most of the daily routines with your child (eating, sleeping, diapering or toileting) and is responsible for building a particularly close relationship with your family and your child. Some children continue to need their primary caregiver throughout the year, while others become equally comfortable with all the teachers in their group. The level of consistency and predictability that your child needs to feel safe and comfortable will be met by the staff. Children's individual styles of interacting and coping are respected. Rest assured that all members of the teaching team care for each child and you can share information with any of your child's teachers. Teachers update each other throughout the day and will reach out for follow up as needed.

Routines

A predictable routine helps children develop a sense of competence and involvement in their world. In the Infant room, teachers work closely with parents in developing a routine that is both familiar and predictable. The infants follow their own individual rhythms of sleeping, eating, diapering, and playing. Don't be surprised if your infant's routine is slightly different at the CFC than it is at home. Also please give us as much detail as possible about your child's changing habits throughout the year. By sharing observations and ideas with one another, we can develop strategies that support each child's individual growth and development. As the infants mature, and as they approach the transition to a new year in a toddler room, we begin to prepare them for the more group-like routine of the toddler rooms. The daily schedule in the Toddler room is posted on each room's door or parent information board.

Meals

Each toddler and preschool group has a morning snack, lunch, and an afternoon snack together. A large part of social learning and family living involves food. Teachers sit with the children during mealtimes to facilitate a relaxed atmosphere. In this way, the children begin to participate in the social aspects of eating.

Older infants and toddlers are learning to eat independently and at mealtimes the teachers encourage this. We also ask parents to bring lunches with foods that are pre-cut so that children can easily feed themselves.

Rest and Nap

According to New York City Department of Health regulations, **the CFC is required to have each child rest for every day**, but children are not required to sleep, and can engage in a quiet activity if they do not sleep. Teachers are present

and closely monitor all children during rest times. We follow NYC guidelines for creating Safe Sleep Environments and teachers are trained in Safe Sleep practices and prevention of SIDS.

Each Toddler group has a rest time after lunch. Children who are still taking two naps per day at the beginning of the school year are accommodated. Teachers promote rest time in a variety of ways: turning off the lights, reading to children, rubbing backs, or playing quiet music. We have found that most children do sleep. Children sleep as long as needed and are not woken up by the staff. Do not be surprised if your child sleeps less at the CFC than at home because she or he doesn't want to miss anything or sleeps more because they are so busy that they get extra tired. If sleep becomes an issue for your family, as it often does in infancy or toddlerhood, the staff will be happy to discuss it with you.

Families are responsible for providing a crib sheet and blanket, if desired, for their child. Tight fitting sheets and blankets (for toddlers) will be sent home weekly to be laundered. **No bumpers, pillows, blankets, or crib toys are permitted for children under 12 months.** Sleep sacks are encouraged if you desire extra warmth for your infant during nap times.

Diapering and Toileting

If children are using diapers, parents provide diapers and wipes clearly marked with their child's name. Children's diapers are changed regularly. Toddlers who have learned to use the toilet on their own will be encouraged to do so. Your child's teacher can be a source of information and guidance in the toilet learning process. Due to the nature of group care, we require disposable diapers at the CFC.

Families take many different approaches to toilet learning. While the CFC respects that there are different ways to help children learn to use the toilet on their own, we are somewhat restricted in supporting all methods of toileting because of the nature of group care. In group care, children need to be able to show certain signs of readiness in order for caregivers to support their toilet learning. Readiness signs include staying dry for extended periods of time, being able to indicate in some way that they need to use the toilet and showing an interest in using the toilet. Please speak to your child's teacher when you feel that your child is ready for toilet learning.

These self-care skills are central to the curriculum at the CFC. The staff views these routine times of the day as opportunities for warm, positive one-on-one interaction. The march towards independence in dealing with life functions is an important part of infancy and toddlerhood.

Music, Art, and Soccer specialists

Children in the Blue and Gold rooms have small group time once a week with our art specialist, Rose Gavidia. We also have our Music Together specialist, Liz Richter Turner returning in September 2023. In addition, all 4 preschool rooms enjoy a Spring soccer clinic.

Consulting Psychologist

We are fortunate to have a consulting psychologist, Anne Davidson, PsyD, on site part of the week. She is a wonderful support for families and teachers. Parents who are interested in meeting her for guidance about home issues or transitions (moving, new baby, moving from crib to bed, toilet training, etc.) can schedule appointments with her by reaching out to Angie Beteta.

Physical Environment

The physical environment offers space for active movement indoors as well as outdoors; cozy, comfortable and quiet places to be alone or with an adult; ample opportunities for varied activities and spontaneous discoveries on tables, walls or floors and designated areas for eating, sleeping and diapering/toileting. Our classroom environments are designed to be flexible in order to suit the particular mix of individuals, both adults and children, and to grow as the children mature. Throughout the year, you will find a balance of familiarity (to help the children feel safe and understand that their world is

ordered and predictable) and small changes in equipment and room arrangements (that offer variety, novelty and new challenges).

We feel strongly that when children spend a full day in a particular place, it should be comfortable, calming and visually pleasing. Order and attractiveness are important to us as they convey a sense of pride in our work with children as well.

Our playgrounds offer many gross motor play opportunities including climbing structures, slides, scooters, balls, hollow blocks, sand, and water tables. Many activities go on outside throughout the year; we believe that exploratory/investigative activities such as gardening, painting, singing, building and sensory play can and should take place both indoors and out. Therefore, time spent outside is not solely dedicated to large muscle and/or child-directed activities.

Outings and Trips

There will be no off-campus activities/excursions with children during the school day until further notice.

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 your child 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

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 Tasia."). 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 really 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:
 - Distraction: "Let's go look at the fish."
 - Humor: Appealing to children's sense of humor can quickly reduce tensions and help lay the foundation for creative problem-solving.
 - Motivation: "Where does your coat go?" rather than "Hang up your coat." Pretending you forgot where the coat goes often thrills young children.
 - 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 to his or her crib.

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.

The Staff

The CFC staff consists of early childhood professionals who have varying levels of degrees in the field of family and child development. Each group has a Lead Teacher who has or is pursuing a master's degree in Early Childhood Education. Each group also has two assistant teachers or aides who are qualified as per DOH mandates. Floating teachers can be used to maintain ratios/proper supervision but will be minimized when possible.

Special Educators

Some children in the CFC receive services for a variety of special needs. In consultation with the NYC DOH we do allow children to work with visiting service providers including speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, and other specialists during Covid-19, providing these specialists observe all mandatory COVID-19 safety protocols. If you have questions or concerns about your child's development and are interested in learning more about supportive services, please reach out to the Director.

The Children

The children at the CFC in the Infant and Toddler rooms range in age from three months to approximately two years in September. The Infant rooms have eight children from three months to eleven months of age, and each Toddler room has a group of ten children from one year to roughly almost two years of age.

The children at the CFC in the Preschool rooms range in age from two years to 5 years 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.

Health Matters

The Department of Health, Division of Day Care, which is our licensing agency, requires that every child in the center has a [completed health form in our files by the first day of the school year. No child will be admitted until this form is received with complete immunization information.](#) Parents are required to submit their child's medical forms to the CFC after every routine well-child visit and after every immunization received. 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, these items must be noted on the medical form.

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

Important information regarding illness:

- If your child has a fever, sore throat, stomachache, vomiting, diarrhea, new cough, headache, concerning behavioral changes, inability to participate in classroom activities, requires more care than the staff can provide, or other signs of illness please allow your child to rest and recover at home. If your child comes to school with the above signs of illness, he/she will be sent home.
- **If your child is sick at school and sent home, he/she must be fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication, and any other symptoms must be markedly improved before your child returns to the classroom. If your child has diarrhea, he/she must be 24 hours diarrhea free or have a formed stool before returning.**
- Children who become sick at school will be picked up immediately by a parent or guardian. If we cannot reach you, we will call the emergency contact numbers that you have provided. Please be sure to give us several alternative contacts in the event of an emergency.
- If during the school year your child incurs a serious physical injury (for example: a sprain or fracture, or an injury requiring stitches or a special bandage) we must receive documentation from your child's provider stating that he/she is cleared to return to group care.
- **Communication: It is very important to communicate with your child's teachers and classroom supervisor if your child is ill and will be staying home and/or has been diagnosed with a communicable or highly**

infectious disease. Depending on your child's diagnosis, (ex: Cocksackie), the classroom supervisor may send out a health notification to the classroom parents to alert them of signs and symptoms of the illness. Also, depending on your child's symptoms, your child may be required to have a negative COVID-19 PCR test before returning. Again, please make sure to communicate timely with the classroom supervisor in the event your child is feeling unwell. This information helps us to coordinate and anticipate your child's return.

- The CFC community will be notified if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 at the CFC that impacts a classroom.
- Please be advised that room closures and quarantines will happen on and off throughout the school year and occur as a result of thoughtful and cautious clinical decision making. Your child may be required to quarantine if there is contact with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19. We encourage you to prepare for quarantines, and we appreciate your understanding and cooperation in advance.

Medication

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. **You can find the permission forms on our website; they must be turned in to your child's teachers and/or Angie.**

Emergency medications such as an Epi-pen, an asthma inhaler or a nebulizer may be administered by trained staff 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.

We do not recommend medications if your child is functioning in the classroom.

It is imperative to notify your child's teacher and classroom supervisor of all medications your child is taking and/or treatments your child is taking, for example: nebulizers, inhalers, antibiotics, Tylenol, Benadryl and Pedialyte. We rely on your cooperation and full disclosure about any medications your child is taking so that we can respond appropriately and safely to your child's needs and help to determine whether your child is healthy enough to be at the center. Also, in the event of an emergency, we need to know which medications your child has taken in order to communicate with emergency responders and to prevent potential adverse medication reactions.

Allergy and Asthma Protocols

For children with life threatening allergies and/or asthma, we have attached a detailed protocol at the end of the handbook 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. Head teachers, as part of their certification requirements, take a course in child abuse and neglect. The CFC staff has completed mandatory training sessions on the detection and reporting of child abuse and neglect.

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

Parents provide all food for infants, including baby foods and prepared formula or breast milk. Infants' bottles need to be taken home and washed each day, as we do not have adequate facilities for sterilizing bottles or preparing formula. Toddlers and preschoolers bring their own lunches and two simple snacks; the center provides water. This ensures that your child is being served foods that she or he prefers.

Parents should send in ready-to-eat, nutritious food. Children's food should be packaged in containers that do not have to be warmed up, such as food that can be stored at room temperature, in a refrigerator, or in a thermos. Parents are asked to send in reusable utensils that teachers will send home to reduce disposable waste. **Please pack a snack for children who will be on site 9-12 and two snacks for children who will be on site 9-3 or later.**

In an effort to maximize time outdoors children may have snack and lunch outdoors, weather permitting. We encourage parents to send in labeled reusable water bottles for all children enrolled in toddler and preschool classrooms. These will be sent home each day to be washed, refilled, and returned.

Please print your child's first and last name clearly on his/her bottles, cups and lunch containers, including packaged items or individual pieces of fruit. For health and safety reasons, we can only serve foods that are properly labeled.

Bottles (with breastmilk or formula) will be heated in infant rooms using bottle warmers or crockpots.

Room temperature foods (such as bananas, crackers, etc.) will be stored in the classroom, usually on the classroom kitchen counters.

Foods that need to be refrigerated (such as a smoothie) will be stored in each classroom refrigerator.

Foods that should be served warm (rice and beans, stew, etc.) should be sent in a thermos such as

https://www.amazon.com/THERMOS-FUNTAINEER-Ounce-Stainless-Steel/dp/B08NCNLL3Q/ref=sr_1_15?crid=ET37DGCRSHER&keywords=insulated%2Bthermos&qid=1688661380&spr_e fix=insulated%2Bthermos%2Caps%2C100&sr=8-15&th=1

or

https://www.amazon.com/Thermos-Stainless-Ounce-Folding-Spoon/dp/B07F2GR2YP/ref=sr_1_16?keywords=insulated%2Bthermos&qid=1692732659&sr=8-16&th=1

Thermoses safely keep hot foods hot. **The CFC teachers will not be reheating food in microwaves for children.**

Because of allergies: Peanuts, peanut products and tree nuts should not be included in children's or adult's food.

Each room has a refrigerator that accommodates lunches in small labeled bags. Because it is important that children learn not to associate healthy food with a reward, no food is considered dessert. At the CFC, portions of all the food you send will be served and your child will be allowed to eat their food in the order they choose.

We recommend that you send a variety of fruits, vegetables, proteins/ dairy (meat, egg, yogurt, tofu, or cheese) and starches (rice, pasta, bread) for your child's lunch and snacks. Food should be nutritious and include a variety of things your child enjoys eating. Sweet treats such as chocolate, candy, gum, cookies or cake should not be packed in your child's lunches. **Children at the CFC should not be given hotdogs (whole or sliced into rounds), whole grapes, hard candy, nuts, seeds, raw peas, dried fruit, pretzels, chips, peanuts, popcorn, marshmallows, spoonfuls of nut butter or chunks of meat larger than can be swallowed whole – these are choking hazards.**

We encourage toddlers to feed themselves and expect preschoolers to feed themselves as much as possible. Lunches and snacks should be prepared in a way that is easiest for the child to handle independently. **All food should be prepared so that it is ready to eat (i.e., cut into small pieces, peeled, etc.).** Please offer your child small, manageable portions. Offering variety will often encourage eating. Infants and toddlers may dislike things that are new. New food should always be tried at home first before being sent for lunch. Children learn to like new and different foods 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.

Food Safety

Young infants will either be held or fed sitting up. Older infants will be encouraged to self-feed once they show signs of readiness. A teacher will always be close by to support children as necessary during snack and mealtimes. Children are not permitted to walk about with bottles, cups or food while in the center.

Filled bottles of breast milk or formula will be refrigerated until right before feeding; after feeding, unused portions will be discarded.

Prepared bottles of powdered formula will be kept covered, refrigerated and discarded after 24 hours; an open container of concentrated formula will be covered, refrigerated and discarded after 48 hours. Unused expressed breast milk will be kept covered, refrigerated and discarded after 48 hours. Frozen breast milk will be discarded after two weeks. If the freezer does not have a door, then the CFC suggests that you store frozen breast milk for less than two weeks.

All personal items – bottles, pacifiers, containers and utensils – as well as individual food items **MUST BE LABELED** with your child's first and last name. Any food that is not labeled will be sent back home.

Once food has been served to a child, it is unsafe to re-serve that food at a later time. Infant and toddler rooms will send home leftovers only so you can see how much was eaten that day. This food should be discarded. Food that was not served will also be returned at the end of each day as we do not have room to store multiple meals for each child. While preparing meals in advance can be a timesaver, please note that current USDA guidelines recommend that most prepared foods should be consumed within 3-4 days.

Allergies and Food Sharing

Please be aware that some of the children in the center have allergies, and other children may have allergies we do not 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 should not be in children's or adult's food.

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

General Safety Information

Parental Supervision

The CFC expects that when a parent is with a child he or she is in charge of their child.

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 Log

All visitors to the CFC need to sign in. The GSR 1 sign-in log is located on the bookshelf near the main entrance. The GSR 2 sign in log is located at the reception desk. Each SFH classroom maintains its own Visitor sign-in log sheets.

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 GSRB is the Small Common Room. For GSR1, the children will use the hallway to shelter in place. The area of refuge on campus is in the Weiss lobby. The off-campus evacuation site is the first floor Faculty House preschool 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

Room Parents

For each classroom, the CFC asks for one or two parents to volunteer to be a Room Parent. Room parents are involved in different activities including helping organize class events and helping organize teacher appreciation gestures. If you are interested in being a Room Parent, please let your child's teachers and Angie know in September.

The T-shirt Shop: The RU T-shirt Shop has been a fundamental way to raise funds for the learning and developmental programs for the children at the CFC. It is staffed by CFC parent volunteers and has administrative support from Angie. If you wish to volunteer, please contact Angie.

Additional opportunities for parent participation will be shared during the school year as they arise.

Stroller Parking

The CFC has limited space for stroller parking. **Keeping the lobby spaces and hallways free of obstruction is imperative for emergency egress and safety.** Parents of preschool children are encouraged to walk with their children to school when possible. Parents of infants are encouraged to bring their children in carriers such as Ergo's and Baby Bjorn's when possible. If parents must bring their child/children to the CFC in a stroller it is helpful if the parents can store the stroller in their own workspace. If a family has special circumstances such as: a parent with an orthopedic injury or special health condition, parents of twins and multiples, an unusually long commute, etc. and needs on-site stroller parking please email both Angie and Pamela to request that. Please note the CFC can accommodate a small number of umbrella-type strollers but does not have the space to safely store multiple large non-folding strollers. **Once approved for stroller parking, you will be given a tag. Only those with a stroller tag are allowed to park at the CFC.**

Supplies/Clothing

Sturdy, comfortable, washable clothes are best for the CFC. We recommend that your child wear clothes that are not special to the CFC. The children will get soiled participating in daily sensory activities or playing outside. Smocks are provided in each room, but a certain amount of staining is inevitable in a varied art program.

Your child will need two to three changes of clothing, including a second pair of shoes. Socks with non-skid material on the bottom are best for infants and newly walking toddlers. **Please label all of your children's clothing since many children have similar items.**

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. We will take the children for walks in cold weather. Boots and snow-pants are a necessity as the children play outdoors all winter long. Please attach your child's mittens/gloves to the sleeves of his or her coat. Raincoats and rain boots help make it possible for your children to enjoy the outdoors during rainy weather in all seasons.

Outdoor shoes/indoor shoes

Children (and teachers) in many classrooms will change into indoor shoes, slippers, or socks with grippers on them while inside the CFC.

Holidays and 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 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 an activity appropriate for the room. 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 here is on celebrating your child's special day in a way that is consistent with our philosophy. 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, uses a special birthday placemat or tablecloth 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.

However, please check on allergies in the room when planning celebration treats.

Please do not bring party hats, tableclothes, plates, cups, fancy cakes, cupcakes with characters and/or thick heavy icing on them, party favors, goodie bags, or banners. These are all great to have at an “at home” party.

If you are having a party at home, please email the invitations to the children's families. Do not put them in the children's mail pouches or ask teachers to be responsible for them.

Babysitting

As of 8/29/23, CFC employees may not baby-sit, tutor, or be employed in any other way by families who have children currently enrolled at the CFC. If a CFC family and teacher have a babysitting or tutoring agreement that was established before 8/29/23 that relationship can continue. Rockefeller University has a helpful backup care benefits for all full-time employees.

Calendar

The Calendar is posted on our website each year. 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 room and general CFC emails. The calendar may occasionally have revisions.

Rockefeller Grounds

The Rockefeller University grounds are a special resource for children and teachers. We are outside almost daily, smelling flowers, feeling tree trunks and grass, working in the CFC Children's Garden, and seeing the great variety of plantings and artwork all over the campus. The grounds provide a rich resource for conversation and language development.

We share the grounds of Rockefeller University with scientists, students, and university staff. To promote neighborliness, safety and good feeling, we remind you to keep your child off the tennis court when people are playing.

We make every effort to keep people from the Rockefeller community out of the CFC buildings and playgrounds during the operating hours of the center because traffic through the area impinges upon children's play and safety.

Life after the Child and Family Center

Informational meetings about kindergarten options and 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).

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Pamela Stark, Director	212-327-7071
Cell phone	347-446-6904
Esther Kim, Associate Director	212-327-7002
Abby Stein, Educational Coordinator	212-327-8110
Angie Beteta, Administrative Assistant	212-327-7072
GSR B Green Room	212-327-8007
GSR B Gold Room	212-327-8008
GSR B Blue Room	212-327-8009
GSR B Ruby Room	212-327-7123
GSR B Violet Room	212-327-8384
GSR B Pink Room	212-327-8385
GSR B Orange Room	212-327-8386
GSR B Small Common Room	212-327-7457
GSR B Big Common Room	212-327-802
GSR 1 Lavender Room	212-327-8113
GSR 1 Lilac Room	212-327-8114
GSR 1 Aqua Room	212-327-8852
GSR 1 Navy Room	212-327-8851
GSR 1 Rose Room	212-327-8804
GSR 1 Common Room	212-327-8803
SFH Purple Room	212-327-8003
SFH Red Room	212-327-8006
SFH Yellow Room	212-327-8002
SFH Common Room	212-327-8005
Berlin Garden	212-327-8141
Front Deck	212-327-8142
Big Kids Playground	212-327-8143
Indoor Play Space	212-327-7616
Therapy Room	212-327-8077

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 primary care provider fills in all pertinent health information including whether the child has allergies
- c. Angie 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.

Things to Bring on the first Day

Any time before September 6th:

- Family pictures. (Email to the room email address)
- Medical form and all required CFC forms to Angie

First Day: Please label each item you are bringing, including socks.

Infants:

- Family pictures if you prefer to print and bring them in.
- Extra clothes (onesies, socks, sweaters, etc.)
- Sippy cup, Bottles (3 bottles)- as many as needed- we cannot refill bottles
- Formula or Breastmilk. Lunch, snacks (if eating solid foods). We also provide bibs, spoons, plates, and bowls.
- Diapers, wipes. Over the counter medication form if any diapering ointment is to be applied and diaper cream.
- Bibs
- Pacifier (if needed)
- Transitional object for soothing (special blankie, teddy)- if needed
- Crib sheet, Sleep sack- if needed

Toddlers:

- Family pictures if you prefer to print and bring them in.
- Extra clothes (pants, shirts, sweater, two (2) pairs of socks)
- Diapers and wipes, over the counter medication form for diaper cream- if needed and diaper cream.
- Sippy cup/water bottle and/or milk bottle. We also provide open cups, spoons, plates, bowls and bibs.
- Crib sheet and blanket for cot.
- Only snacks (new children) and lunch and snacks for returning children.
- Transitional object for soothing (special blankie, teddy)- if needed

Preschool:

- Family pictures if you prefer to print and bring them in.
- Extra clothes (pants, shirts, sweater, two (2) pairs of socks, underwear)
- Diapers and wipes, over the counter medication form for diaper cream- if needed and diaper cream.
- Sippy cup/water bottle. We also provide open cups, spoons, plates, bowls.
- Crib sheet and blanket for cot.
- Only snacks (new children) and lunch and snacks for returning children.
- Transitional object for soothing (special blankie, teddy)- if needed

Please Label All Items!

The teachers will be in touch with you to schedule a first meet and greet, discuss the items you need to bring in and expectations for the first days.