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# Parent Handbook

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## Amarillo College



*"Enriching the lives of our students and community by  
helping learners identify and achieve their educational goals."*

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### **Child Care Coordinator**

Patricia Keith

### **Center Directors**

Sharonda Davis 806-379-2704

Erica Cole 806-356-3636

**AMARILLO COLLEGE**  
**Child Development Lab School and**  
**Hagy Center for Young Children**  
**Welcome Letter to Families**

Welcome to our center! We are excited to have you as a part of our family. At the Child Development Lab School and Hagy Center for Young Children, every child is important and treated as an individual. Our program is academically rich and designed to promote your child's growth and development. We believe in teaching the "whole child" and our goal is to provide your child with a solid foundation of early care and education that enables your child to build upon this foundation for the rest of their life. Thank you for choosing the Lab School and Hagy Center for your child.

A transition into any new environment can be challenging and may cause anxiety for a child or family members. Our staff is trained to be alert and aware of your child's reaction to their new environment and will be sensitive to their feelings. Before enrolling your child at one of our centers, you and your child will complete a transition week and be introduced to his/her new teacher. This will also give you an opportunity to get to know the teachers and staff involved in the care of your child prior to their first day. You and the director will set the dates and times related to the transition week.

Separation anxiety is common, and your child may resist being left at the center in the beginning. However, after several days, drop-off becomes easier. We suggest that after you do the necessary signing in and walk your child to class, simply give your child a hug and assure them that you will return for them that afternoon to pick them up—then leave. Prolonging your departure could cause more anxiety for your child. We encourage parents to call any time (Lab School 806.356.3636 or Hagy Center 806-379-2704) during the day to see how their child is adjusting. If needed, the director will be happy to provide additional suggestions for a smooth and enjoyable transition into the school environment for both you and your child.

This handbook will help you understand our center goals and policies. Our guidelines are all designed to make sure that each child receives the best education possible. Please look over the information given, so that you are familiar with our operation and guidelines. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask the director or your child's teacher. Be sure to check out our Facebook page and our contact apps.

During Parent Orientation, you will be taken on a tour to meet staff who may be interacting with your child to get a general idea of a day at the Lab School/Hagy Center. Please let us know of any area in which we can be of assistance to you. We are looking forward to getting to know you and your child and providing a rich learning environment where all our children develop to their full potential.

Sincerely,

Sharonda	Davis,	Hagy	Center	Director
Erica Cole, Lab School Director				

Patricia Keith, Amarillo College Childcare Coordinator

# OPERATIONAL POLICY PARENT HANDBOOK

## Who We Are

*History:* Amarillo College Child Development Department has worked with a model program at the West Campus Child Development Lab School since it was established in October of 1973 as a service to care for children of the college's students, faculty and staff. In January of 1977, the Lab School came under the supervision of the Child Development Program. In February of 1991, the Center was first accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). It continues to seek accreditation every five years and is currently accredited. The Lab School is also a Panhandle Work Source Childcare Services (PWCCS) Texas Four-Star Rising Star Vendor.

In February 2017, Amarillo College leased the Hagy Center from the Amarillo Area Foundation. The Board of Regents named the campus AC Medi Park Campus, began the remodel of the facility, and named the center Hagy Center for Young Children. The Amarillo College Hagy Center for Young Children was developed in July of 2017. The Hagy Center serves as a sister school to the Child Development Lab School. The Hagy Center also serves as a Texas Rising Star Four- Star Vendor. This partnership with area agencies and organizations and our AC students, who will benefit from extended hours of quality care for their children, is key to success for both college and workplace goals.

*Mission Statement:* **“Enriching the lives of our students and community by helping learners identify and achieve their educational goals.”**

The Lab School and Hagy Center both serve a diverse community with a model of excellence for the early care and education of children. Intentional practices enrich the needs of the whole child with appropriate curriculum, activities, choices and support of individual needs. Guided by the interests of each child, each family becomes a partner with the Centers to provide the best foundation in these important early years. As teachers, students, children, families and friends we learn and grow together.

*Purpose Statement:* The Amarillo College early childhood centers provide early care and education for children 8 weeks to five years old year-round and some school age care in the summer and break times. Admission to either center is open to children of students, faculty, and staff of Amarillo College and the community at large. Our schools welcome families of all socio-economic, racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds and do not discriminate. It is open to students and faculty for observation and study for educational and training purposes. Our schools welcome the community to events on Parent Education and Parent Involvement.

*Program Philosophy:* The Amarillo College early childhood centers serve the children and families connected to the college and the community at large. The college believes that a high-quality model program for the early care and education of young children is an important service to the educational needs of the community and to the overall quality of life in the Amarillo area.

In order to bring a year round program to the community with confidence, we strive to meet the highest standards as set out in the research and position statements of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and in the research and content found in the materials available through the Child Development academic program at Amarillo College. The Texas School Ready grant is part of our curriculum and practices, and helps us ensure that each child is prepared for kindergarten. The state standards for Pre-K Guidelines and the Infant/Toddler Learning Guidelines also build toward our comprehensive curriculum for each age and stage of development.

This body of knowledge together with the experiences of our staff provides the foundation of our work with young children. We move forward each year with plans to work hand in hand with our families to offer early care and education that will surround the child with opportunities for engagement that enriches every aspect of the developmental needs of each individual child. We plan with intention to help each child maximize their strengths and build towards a life of satisfying educational experiences.

The team responsible for children will work together to assess the needs of the children both formally and informally. This ongoing assessment and screening informs the daily experiences and activities planned in each classroom. Families share input and insights daily, weekly and with each formal conference. Teachers plan together weekly and often as a whole staff to provide articulation between ages and stages of development and the curriculum resources. Careful attention to the individual child and the goals of the developmentally appropriate curriculum assures our college and our families that early care and education are delivered with the highest quality of results each day.

The Lab School and Hagy Center staff deliver a curriculum centered on the needs of the child. Care is taken to develop goals, objectives, and activities that support developmentally appropriate and enriching experiences in an ongoing respectful and responsive relationship between teacher and child. Assessment is linked to instruction through regular engagement with parents, child, teacher and director.

Our guiding principles used to inform our curriculum are 1) be developmentally sound in all practices, 2) Engage the child in authentic experiences to enrich understanding of self and the world, and 3) Unite all stakeholders: children, families, staff and college family and friends to value and enjoy the early childhood years.

#### **Statement of Services:**

Both centers are year-round programs that offer all day care for children ages 8 weeks to 5 years that allows children to develop to their highest potential. Our overall preference is that children begin our program at 3 months of age. However, we understand that due to maternity/paternity leave standards with most employers, you may be required to return to work/school when your child is 8 weeks old. Admission of an 8-week-old child will be made only after approval of the Director and Department Chair under a case by case basis.

We provide an individualized curriculum meant to be intentional in practice so there is a purpose behind each activity and decision made by our staff. Our individualized curriculum allows children to develop at their own pace and incorporates each child's interests. Our daily activities and program consist of a flexible schedule that has been created to provide a wide variety of activities and challenges for children in all age groups. We offer a structured program for children of all ages that includes a year-round curriculum. Learning materials are rotated frequently to provide a variety of experiences for children. Themed, integrated and curated materials are added to the learning environment to support the units of study.

Field trips and guests, such as firefighters, etc. are also resources used to enrich the learning. Families provide input into their child's culture and heritage during the admission process (Cultural Sharing Page). Teachers use this information to include and celebrate the child's background. Such inclusion may be books, recipes, pictures, collections, materials, songs, etc. which reflect the culture and heritage of the children in the classroom.

## **Children with Special Needs (including chronic illness and allergies)**

The center's policy is to welcome all children regardless of learning, developmental, behavioral, physical or medical needs. The centers welcome children with special needs, as long as the staff can provide appropriate accommodations and is reasonably achievable for the family goals and the center goals.

Our centers comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other applicable regulations pertaining to providing services to individuals with disabilities. We desire to make special accommodations for children who require such accommodations, provided it is within our power and authority to do so. Accommodation can be a specific treatment prescribed by a professional or a parent, or a modification of equipment, or removal of physical barriers. The accommodation shall be recorded in the child's file and must be documented from a professional, including allergies. The entire staff must follow the reasonable accommodations we have made for that child. Any questions about the accommodations of the child should be referred to the Director.

Prior to admission, the child's parent/guardian will complete a Special Care Plan to guide the teachers and staff in meeting the child's needs, including the needs of a child with issues such as asthma, severe food allergies, diabetes, physical limitations, behavioral or psychological issues. All allergies must be diagnosed by a physician and on file with the center. All reasonable accommodations will be made to maximize your child's experience at the center. You will also need to fill out an "Authorization to Give Medication" form if your child requires medication to manage his/her illness or condition. This is also needed if your child requires an Epi-pen or other emergency treatment.

Each child's Special Care Plan will be reviewed with the family, by the child's teacher, during the scheduled Fall and Spring parent conferences, and anytime there is a modification needed. The Special Care Plan will be updated at least annually and reviewed with each new teacher caring for the child. The Special Care Plan will be kept in the child's admission folder, as well as a copy placed in the child's individual file with each teacher. If needed, staff in direct care of your child may periodically have conferences with other specialists and therapists working with your child, including parents, to maximize our potential to work as a team to help your child have the best possible outcomes each day. All staff are trained to maintain confidentiality of records, including Special Care Plans. The partnerships between the family and the team of early educators at the center can support the individual needs of a child and lay a strong foundation of successful progress for each child and family.

**State Licensing:** The Lab School and Hagy Center believes in the importance of keeping strict compliance with the state licensing regulations in order to ensure a quality environment for your children. The centers comply with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services licensing regulations and policies. These requirements cover staff qualifications, facility, playground, health and safety guidelines, and child/staff ratios. Our compliance with regulations is posted on the website of the Department of Family and Protective Services after each monitoring visit. We encourage each family to be aware of standards and the need for high quality in the centers serving young children.

**Operation Hours:** The centers follow the Amarillo College calendar and will follow the holiday schedule approved by the Board of Regents. The Lab School hours are 7:15am to 5:15am., and the Hagy Center hours are 6:00am to 8:00pm. Our centers are open year-round, Monday-Friday with the exception of the holidays school closures implemented by Amarillo College. In addition, both centers will also be closed for 3 additional Professional Development days throughout the school year and parents will be notified well in advance of those specific dates.

**Closing due to bad weather:** Amarillo College follows the lead of the Amarillo Independent School District. If AISD closed due to inclement weather, so will AC. If the college is closed due to inclement weather, the centers will close as well. In the instance that AISD has a delay start, AC and the centers will operate at normal working hours. If Amarillo College closes during regular hours due to weather, you will be notified by telephone and be asked to pick up your child from the center immediately.

**Fees for Tuition:** The current fees for tuition for the Lab School and Hagy Center are listed below. These amounts are subject to change; however, written notice to families of children enrolled at the centers will be provided well in advance of an anticipated increase.

Both centers are both vendors with Texas Workforce Solutions Child Care Systems. Families qualifying for child care reimbursement programs will have fees honored through this system. We encourage all families to be aware of state programs and apply for this resource. Texas Workforce Solutions – Panhandle. 806 372 2836. [www.wspandle.com](http://www.wspandle.com)

**Amarillo College Rates:** (Applies to children of current Amarillo College students who are taking at least 9 hours at AC toward a degree or certificate. Class schedules must be submitted to the Lab School or Hagy Center Director by the first day of class each semester, or the Community Childcare Rate will be charged).

Days in Care	One Child	Each Additional Child Admitted
Full-time, AC Student Childcare Rate (Lab School and Hagy Center)	\$100.00 per wk.	\$80.00 per wk.
Full-time, Community Childcare Rate Lab School Hagy Center	\$125.00 per wk. \$175.00 per wk.	\$105.00 per wk. \$155.00 per wk.

**Payment Policies and Procedures: Tuition** It is our philosophy that families are paying for the spot their child will hold in our center. *This is not based upon attendance* but rather on a set monthly fee that is due regardless of the attendance habits of the child who holds the spot. This includes if a child has court ordered visitation with a parent out of town or other circumstance for any length of time, families are paying for a spot and their bill is not reflective of actual attendance. Our fee structure is based upon a monthly fee that is set by the agreement which is signed by the parents upon enrolling the child in the program.

The following are the procedures regarding how you will be billed and how to make your payment:

- You will receive a billing statement from the Director which reflects the monthly tuition owed. **Payment, in full, is expected by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.**
- Fees are paid to the Director/Assistant Director at the centers. The Director/Assistant Director is also able to take payments over the phone. Please contact the Lab School at (806) 356- 3636 or the Hagy Center at (806) 379-2704 to do so.
- Accounts must be current before the close of each billing cycle.
- After one continued year of full-time attendance, you may request two weeks of pay-free vacation. Please make this request to the Director, in writing, at least one week prior to your vacation so that your current billing statement can be adjusted.
  - *This vacation credit can only be taken in one-week increments and not partial weeks. This will be considered from September 1 to August 31 each year.*

**Accounts must be current at the beginning of each semester.**

**Workforce Solutions Panhandle Childcare Service Clients:** The early childhood centers are authorized to receive payments from WPCCS and other Federal/State daycare assistance programs. Our participation in this program in no way limits our freedom or right to set and enforce the policies listed in this handbook. Families wishing to use WPCCS assistance must make these arrangements on their own and list us as their WPCCS Childcare provider. You may enroll in the program as a WPCCS family once the office has received a letter of authorization from WPCCS or a phone call from the WPCCS client manager, establishing your eligibility in our program. WPCCS families will not receive holiday, vacation or sick credits. [www.wspanhandle.com](http://www.wspanhandle.com)

WPCCS families will have a monthly co-payment that is set by WPCCS. This is based upon family income. All payment procedures listed above for self-pay clients will also apply to WPCCS families. *Failure to make co-payment amounts will void your contract with WPCCS whether you stay at the center or move to another center.* WPCCS clients are required to report absences or a failure to report attendance to WPCCS within five calendar days. If a WPCCS client loses their card or has their card stolen, it is the responsibility of that client to notify WPCCS immediately in order to receive another card and notify WPCCS they cannot currently report attendance due to the lost or stolen card.

**Tax Statements:** Annual statements for tax and accounting purposes are mailed to families with accounts with a zero balance. *These statements are required to be given to families by January 31 of each year but every attempt will be given to deliver these at the earliest date possible in the month of January.*

**Admission Requirements:** Families interested in enrollment should call Lab School 806-356-3636 or Hagy Center 806-379-2704 to be added to the waiting list. *The waiting list is a very 'fluid' document, which changes from day to day based on new children being placed on the list as well as children promoted from one age group to the next.*

No one shall be excluded from any of our programs because of race, color, religion, disability, sex or national origin. If you feel you have been discriminated against you can call the Office of Civil Rights Act (202) 720-5964 or write them at Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410.

Only the child's parent or legal guardian may enroll a child. Proof of custody may be required. All forms provided to you upon enrollment must be completed before your child may attend one of our centers.

**Current immunization information must be submitted to the center upon enrollment, and all immunizations must be current.**

All requested personal information is kept confidential. Parents are required to update all emergency data as required by state licensing. The centers must be informed of any custody situation in advance and will request that the proper paperwork be in the child's file. Parents will be required to comply with all state regulations and center rules as set forth in this Parent's Handbook. If parents do not comply with all state and center rules and regulations, the AC early childhood centers reserve the right to terminate childcare services being offered.

## ENROLLMENT AND ADMISSION

**Enrollment** is the process of completing paperwork and the transition process, in anticipation of your child's admittance into the Center. **Admission** occurs on the date of your child's first day in attendance at the center.

### REQUIRED ADMISSION PROCEDURES

**Before** the child can be admitted to the Center, the following documentation is required:

1. A completed and signed *Admission Form*;
2. A signed statement from you stating that you have read the *Operation Policy Book (Parent Handbook)* and have visited with the Director about any questions regarding its contents;
3. A signed statement from your child's physician that includes the physician's name, address and telephone number, that says your child is healthy and can participate in child care;
4. Any *Special Care Plan* your child may need regarding modifications for allergies, chronic health issues, physical limitations or psychological/behavior issues; allergies must be documented by a physician;
5. A copy of the court order designating you as the legal guardian if you are not the biological parent of the child;
6. A completed and signed *Authorization for Emergency Treatment and Transport*;
7. Your child's *current and up-to-date immunization record*. If, for health or religious reasons, you choose not to immunize your child, you are required to provide a notarized statement from your child's physician (health exemption) or religious leader (religious exemption) stating the reason the child is not immunized.

*Written requests for the form should be directed to the Immunizations Compliance Coordinator, Immunizations Division, and 1100 W. 49th St., Austin, TX 78756. Upon completion, the form must be notarized and submitted to school officials within 90 days of notarization.*

- a. **Parents are required to submit copies of immunization records every time a child is vaccinated in order to keep our files up to date.**
- b. For the safety of an under-immunized child, we will need to promptly exclude them from our program if a vaccine preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs.
- c. If this happens the parents of the child will be notified immediately to pick-up the child and notify the parents of which vaccine preventable disease has been diagnosed.

*\*Additional information about immunization including immunization schedules can be found at <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/>.*

*\*All paperwork collected for enrollment and admission into the early learning centers of Amarillo College are kept in a locked file cabinet. All personal information is kept confidential.*

**Transition Week:** For newly enrolled families, the week prior to your child's first day at the Center, you and your child are required to complete a transition process similar to the following:

- *Day One* – you and your child visit the class together for one hour and leave;
- *Day Two* – you and your child visit the class for one & ½ hours, parent leaves for 10-15 minutes, picks child up;
- *Day Three* – your child visits the class for two hours and you leave then you return to pick up your child;
- *Day Four* – bring your child to class, returning at 11:45 am to pick him/her up; and
- *Day Five* – bring your child to class for the morning session and return at the time the class is waking from their nap. Please arrive at the Center approximately one hour before you pick up your child so that you can meet with the Director to review this *Operation Policy Book* and other pertinent information.



This schedule can be modified, depending on the age of the child and is to be arranged between parents and teachers. All transition times will occur during the morning class time, unless specifically arranged by the Director.

This transition process is designed to give your child the opportunity to become familiar with the sights, sounds, smells and routines of the class before she/he begins to attend. This process also allows you to monitor your child's adjustment to the new childcare setting and become acquainted with your child's teacher, classmates and routines. Research shows the more confident a family is in the child's quality of childcare the more productive they are at work.

## **TRANSITION & PROMOTION OF CHILDREN**

**Transition of a New Child:** The center director is responsible for informing the teacher when a new child will be joining the class. Prior to being admitted to the Center, the child and his parents complete a transition week, if possible.

**Promotion of a Child Currently Enrolled:** Almost all transitions occur at the beginning of the fall semester in August. This means that children will move up to the next age group classroom each August. Some exceptions to this transition happen on specific birthdays or to accommodate special needs. All changes to August planned transitions will be left to a case-by-case decision by the center director.

The Parent Involvement Coordinator will be notified of the promotion and is required to conduct an Ages and Stages screening for that child within two weeks of the promotion date. The coordinator will then schedule a parent-teacher conference with the child's family so that the new teacher and the center directors can share the results of the screening.

Copies of the screening documentation are to be given to the child's teacher, the parent (during the conference) and the center directors.

The teacher is responsible for informing the parents of the classroom routines and expectations along with any other relevant information during the conference.

## **Paperwork, Forms and Semester Registration**

We are required to have current and updated information on each child in our center, this includes immunization records. As mentioned above, we require all forms to be filled out on each child prior to their initial attendance at the Campus. Also, each semester, we will have you renew your emergency information. Each Fall Semester registration period will also include our parents to provide an individual helmet for your child to wear each day while riding bikes/trikes on the playgrounds if we cannot provide them at that time for your child. We must meet this standard as it is a NAEYC standard. Each helmet will be stored in the child's locker, and then be taken outside during bike riding times.

Each year, at the beginning of the fall semester and anytime treatment changes, we will have you update all special care plans. There will be a deadline given for compliance to this requirement and a fine may be charged if the new paperwork is not turned in on time.

**Drop-off:** Parents must accompany their child into the center every morning and sign-in using our front office sign-in computer with their fingerprint through ProCare before dropping their child off in the appropriate room. Both centers have a drop-off cut-off time. Drop off and pick up times are very important pieces of family-staff interactions. Please avoid coming in on your phone so that the teacher is able to speak with you when needed and you are able to say proper goodbyes to your child.

***Signing your child in and out every day is a Texas Child Care Licensing requirement that the Lab School and Hagy Center is held liable for and can be cited if not in compliance; therefore, this is extremely important for parents to do every day. If a parent has not signed in their child more than twice in a one-week period, they will be given a verbal reminder.***

*If a child is continuously dropped off without a parent signing them in, they will be given a written warning. This is something we must take very seriously and must be enforced without wavering.*

We require that all children have direct contact with a person upon arrival for early detection of apparent illness, communicable disease, or unusual condition or behavior, which may adversely affect the child or the group. If any of these things are determined, the child must go home immediately. If the child has been running fever 24 hours prior to drop-off, they may not attend that day; children must be fever-free, **without the use of medication**, for 24 hours before returning to the Centers.

For the safety of the children and the staff, each family has a code in order to enter the building. If you meet someone without a code please do not open the door and instead allow center leadership to assist them.

Children will not be permitted in the building prior to opening hours. The children are not allowed to come into the center alone. This sign-in procedure is for their protection in case of a fire or other emergency. **We ask that children be dropped off before 9:00am.** The majority of our classrooms are Texas School Ready classrooms where instruction and assessments are a vital part of the day.

***\*\*Please refrain from contacting teachers via their personal cell phones. This includes, but is not limited to, phone calls, text messages or social media messages. We ask that parents contact the school about their child via the main office phone numbers: Lab School (806) 356-3637 OR (806) 356-3636 and Hagy Center (806) 379-2704 OR (806) 379-2703. You may reach out to your child's teacher directly using only ClassDojo or the teachers Amarillo College email address.***

**Pick-up:** All children must be picked up and signed out by an adult and/or person approved by the parent and the center. No child under 18 is allowed to sign out a child (exceptions can be made with director approval). All children must be signed out before being picked up from their classroom. Anyone, including all parents, who are to be allowed to pick the child up must be listed on the Authorized Release form or be approved in writing by a parent. In an emergency, parents may call the center and give verbal approval of an alternate individual. However, this is strongly discouraged. For the safety of our children and staff, the center reserves the right to not allow any individual, legal guardian or not, onto the Lab School or Hagy Center property for drop-off or pick-up if they have created a problem or been under the influence of a drug or alcohol. Anyone not recognized by sight will be asked for a picture ID. In the event anyone out of the ordinary is to pick-up the child, please alert the office prior to that time. This is in addition to them being on the Authorized Release form or approval as stated above. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the office and make changes on this form whenever necessary. This form must be updated quarterly.

Children may only be released to a parent or a person on the list. Please make sure that brothers and sisters are not asked to go get the child enrolled in the center. This is a very large center and great care is taken to ensure the safety of each child. Knowing who is released to whom is critical to our safety plan. We will not release children to adults appearing to be under the influence of alcohol or other substances.

**Late Pick-up:** All parents are asked to pick up their child at or before closure of the centers so that staff has time to perform their closing duties. Please use courtesy and consideration for our staff and plan to be on time. Parents, or those picking the children up, are required to call ahead if they feel they are going to be *more than 5 minutes late*.

An attempt will be made to contact individuals on the emergency contact list after children have been left 15 minutes past closing. **Children left at the center later than 60 minutes past closing with no communication may be considered abandoned and Child Protective Services will be informed.**

**Picking up Ill Children:** Parents notified that a child is ill will have 30 minutes to pick up or arrange for someone from the authorized list to pick up the child

**Child/Staff Ratios & Groupings:** The most important element to high quality programs for young children is the quality of the teacher. The teacher does best in a low ratio environment. We meet state and national guidelines according to the National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) for ratio and group sizes. The ratios may be lowered when a child with special needs is enrolled, if necessary. The child/staff ratios at the centers are as follows:

Early Learning Center teacher/child ratios

Infants	1:4	Refers to children 8 weeks to 11 months
Ones	1:5	Refers to children 12 months to 23 months
Twos	1:6	Refers to children 24 months to 35 months
Threes	1:10	Refers to children 36 months to 47 months
Fours/Fives	1:10	Refers to children 48 months to 5 years 11 months

[ Both the Child Development Lab School and the Hagy Center for Young Children]

The ratios may be lowered when a child with special needs is enrolled, if necessary.

**Groupings:** The Lab School and Hagy Center has one classroom for each age group listed above. Recommended group ratios from **Caring for Our Children** are followed. Children remain with their teacher in their classroom during the majority of the day with the following exceptions:

**Lab School Groupings**

- Prior to 8:30 am, preschool children (3-5 years) are combined and after 4:00 pm following the **TDFPS Minimum Standards** for ratio, ages and groupings.
- Prior to 8:15 am, toddlers (1-2-year old) are combined following the **TDFPS Minimum Standards** for ratio, ages and groupings.
- During rest time (between 12:00 noon and 2:15 pm) the preschool age children (3-5 years) may combine with one teacher following the **TDFPS Minimum Standards** for ratios during nap time. Children between the ages of 12 months and 36 months may be combined with one teacher following the **TDFPS Minimum Standards** for ratios during nap time.

**Hagy Center Groupings**

- Prior to 8:00 am, preschool children (3-5 years) are combined after 5:00 pm following the **TDFPS Minimum Standards** for ratio, ages and groupings.
- Prior to 8:00 am, toddlers (1-2 year olds) are combined following the **TDFPS Minimum Standards** for ratio, ages and groupings.
- During rest time (between 12:00 noon and 2:00 pm), the preschool age children (3-5 years) may combine with one teacher following the **TDFPS Minimum Standards** for ratios during nap time. **(For this purpose, we ask that you do not drop off during naptime).**

Preschoolers may combine on the playground during outside time (with both teachers). Toddlers combine on the playground during outside time (with both teachers), unless there is more than an 18 month age difference between the youngest toddler and the oldest toddler. If such an age difference exists, the ones and twos play on the playground at separate times. Combined groupings of classrooms are made custom per staffing schedule needs and unplanned staff absences. These groupings of classrooms will always follow regulated standards in **TDFPS Minimum Standards**.

**Supervision Policy:** When supervising infants, toddlers and young twos, **staff** must be able to see and hear all of the children at all times. Children ages three to five years of age are supervised by, at the very least, hearing at all times. Times that Teachers may not be supervising preschool aged children by direct sight, could be during their private restroom breaks. However, a staff member stays close to the restroom to ensure supervision by hearing without infringing on the child's restroom time. Unless, the teacher is requested by the child for assistance or the teacher sees that the child needs help with restroom time. All other times children are supervised by sight and hearing. We adhere to using a face to name strategy and collecting attendance data during transition times during the school day.

Staff must position themselves so someone can always hear and see any sleeping infants, toddlers, or twos, including when staff are engaged with other children who are awake. Mirrors, video and sound monitors DO NOT REPLACE the direct sight and sound supervision required at all times for children of this age..

**Our Staff:** At both Centers, we strive to provide nurturing, quality care in a highly interactive learning environment. Our friendly qualified staff is an integral part of providing this environment. Our current staff has had:

- A detailed interview and screening process, including a check of at least three references;
- Successful completion of educational and experience requirements;
- Approval by the Texas Department Public Safety through a background analysis that cross references state and federal criminal records as well as child abuse reporting records to ensure that each employee has a background that is clear;
- Fingerprinting;
- Adult, Child and Infant CPR and pediatric first aid training;
- Extensive orientation training;
- Continuous ongoing training based on job assessment and performance reviews. A minimum of 30 hours of annual training to stay current on the latest research and best practices is required for all lead teachers in the following areas: child growth and development, guidance and discipline, age-appropriate curriculum, teacher-child interaction, recognizing and preventing shaken baby syndrome, preventing sudden infant death syndrome, early childhood brain development., or any other areas of specialized training relevant for the age group pertaining to the teacher.

**Communication:** *Written communications:* The success of our program is based on establishing a partnership between our parents and our staff. Open and frequent communication will help your child have a positive early learning experience. Parents are allowed to visit the childcare center during any of the centers open hours of operation to observe their child, program activities, the building, the grounds and the equipment. We will endeavor to keep you informed concerning your child's day and overall development through several written means:

- Monthly parent newsletters to keep you informed as to the overall program;
- Parent Boards (located at each classroom door)– updated with current information about curriculum;
- Daily written communication in the form of “Daily Report” forms, “Incident/Illness Report” forms, and classroom memos will be placed in your child's “cubby”;
- Parent/Teacher meetings twice each year;
- E-mail, Facebook and Classtag updates regarding upcoming events, holidays or other happenings
- Parents always have the option of requesting specific parent/teacher interaction to aid in the child's development.

**Verbal communications:** We will work hard to share the excitement of our day during drop-off and pick-up times. However, this is not a good time for extended conversations since the staff members/teachers have responsibilities for all of the children in the group. In addition, the person caring for your child at the pick-up time may not be the individual who has spent the majority of the day with your child due to staff work schedules. We suggest that you go to your child's lead teacher to obtain detailed information on your child's general growth and development. You can call to see how your child's day is going or to speak to your child's teacher for conversation that is more detailed. The best time to call or email and speak to your child's teacher is during naptime. You are always welcome to speak to the Director or Team Leader/Parent Involvement Coordinator. Each member of our full time staff has an email address.

***We ask that all parents please not contact staff members during the day via cell phones and text messages due to licensing regulations and it interfering with the supervision of your children; if a parent would like to notify or inquire about their child during the day, please contact the AC Lab School at 806-356-3636 or Hagy Center at 806-379-2704. We also ask that parents respect our staff and refrain from contacting them after business hours/their off time.***

## Curriculum

### *Curriculum Design & Resources*

The Centers begin with the mission statement and goals then look at individual assessments and group interactions to determine the exact needs to be addressed. Content is designed to rotate through a two-year cycle and will follow as closely as possible to our TSR adopted curriculum for Preschool aged classrooms. Units of study are developed by the teachers and Director based primarily on:

- *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* edited by Carol Copple and Sue Bredekamp
- *Caring for Our Children*
- *Texas Pre-K Guidelines*
- *Texas Infant-Toddler Guidelines*
- *Texas School Ready grant research*
- *Parents as Teachers* resources for the 0-3 ages
- *The Complete Resource Book for Toddlers and Twos* by Pam Schiller
- *The Complete Resource Book for Infants* by Pam Schiller
- *DLM* resources for 3-5 ages
- *Knowledge and assessment of the child/children's growth and development*
- *Knowledge of developmentally appropriate practices*

The curriculum resources are nationally recognized and researched to support the needs of the developing child. These materials are supplemented with other teacher created lessons and selected teacher materials or guides as needed to meet the individual interests and needs in each classroom. Each unit is planned for a one-week period but depending on the interests of children can blend into the next weeks.

Learning materials are rotated weekly to provide a variety of experiences for children. Themed materials are added to the learning environment to support the units of study. These materials can include math, science, music, art, literacy, writing, dramatic play and other materials. Walking field trips and guests, such as firefighters, etc. are also resources used to enrich the learning.

Families provide input into their child's culture and heritage during the admission process (Cultural Sharing Page). Teachers use this information to include and celebrate the child's identity. Such inclusion may be books, pictures, food, materials, songs, etc., which reflect the culture and heritage of the children in the classroom.

Families are given a parent lesson plan each month and asked to include goals they have for their child's learning and development. Teachers use this information to plan their individual lessons for each child. Families are asked to share ideas for concept development and evaluation of past lessons informally and formally through the conferences and surveys. As families share ideas, teachers use this information to guide the curriculum.

### **Curriculum Goals**

The goals of the curriculum are designed to provide maximum opportunity and resources to help children experience and master development in all the following domains:

#### Goals for Physical Development

- Gross motor
- Fine motor
- Coordination and agility

#### Goals for Intellectual Development

- Oral Language
- Early literacy
- Early Math
- Science
- Social Studies
- Creative Expression and Appreciation for the Arts
- Health and Safety

Technology – Children will have a variety of opportunities, materials and activities designed to introduce age-appropriate technology, which enhances the learning in the classroom and supports the curriculum. When used appropriately, technology and media can promote learning and relationships in early childhood. Screen time includes all forms of technology whether it is a computer, Smart Board or Ipad. These developmentally appropriate forms of technology are only used intentionally to support planned activities and learning goals of individual children, and their use does not exceed two hours per day for ages two and older. The technology used is intended to be interactive, hands-on, engaging, and empowering to support children's learning. Technology does not replace activities such as creative play, real-life exploration, physical activity, outdoor experiences, conversation, and social interaction. We feel that access to technology is important so that all children are given the opportunity to advance their ability and awareness of using technology, no matter what race, sex, ethnicity or socio-economic status a child may experience. In order to give each child an equal advantage in their future educational endeavors, which will undoubtedly involve technology, we plan to use it sparingly but with intention to support the weekly goals.

If you use TV/video, computer or video games as an activity for children, you must ensure that they:

- prohibited for children under the age of two years.
- Are related to the planned activities.
- Are age-appropriate.
- Do not exceed two hours per day.
- May be used to supplement, but may not be used to replace real-life experiences.

#### Goals for Emotional Development

- Understanding self
- Expressing self
- Self-management

#### Goals for Social Development

- Understanding others

- Positive interactions with others

## **Curriculum Structure and Organization**

Objectives: Each activity or lesson has objectives that can be found in the curriculum guides or lesson plans. The objectives are tied to meeting the domain/developmental goals for children at each age level. We track many goals with Texas School Ready assessments and the GOLD assessment tools.

Evaluation: Evaluation occurs in reflection on daily lessons and weekly outcomes, as well as in team meetings and formal assessment. Evaluation is also provided through the formal and informal feedback from the families. Evaluation leads to the monitoring and adjusting of the ongoing appropriateness of the curriculum and overall mission.

Assessment: Teachers are required to assess each week's planned activities as well as the learning goals for each child. Teachers are required to use a developmental checklist to record the milestones for each child. This record is shared with the child's family twice a year during the fall and spring parent conferences. Teachers are required to gather information, such as children's art work, anecdotal notes, pictures and any other tangible information regarding each child's development. This information is contained in a file developed for each child.

Assessment information should be used to guide the teacher in planning developmentally appropriate learning activities and experiences to individualize the instruction. Teachers are required to pass on this developmental portfolio to the new teacher when the child is promoted to the next class. Close observation, appropriate developmental goals, intentional teaching and record keeping insure each child maximizes their learning opportunities.

Planning and Implementation: Teachers are required to plan for and implement a daily schedule of developmentally appropriate experiences, materials and interactions which meet the needs of the whole class as well as each individual child in her care, based on the criteria and curriculum models appropriate to the age and needs of the children.

## **Learning Environment**

The daily learning environment is designed to meet the needs of the "whole child" including the areas of social, physical, emotional, cognitive, creative, and language development. The environment is carefully planned to provide quality care and education for young children. This approach recognizes the uniqueness of each child and provides for individualized experiences to help children reach their maximum potential. Children learn differently than adults; young children learn differently than older children. Therefore, young children are given opportunities to:

Practice decision making by selecting activities from a variety of learning centers, such as:

- language, discovery, blocks and manipulatives;
- Express themselves creatively through art, music, dramatic play, movement and use of unstructured materials;
- Develop appropriate concepts and thinking skills through the exploration of a wide variety of concrete materials and activities;
- Experience warm positive interactions with children and adults;
- Verbalize feelings in a supportive, accepting environment that encourages independence and self-control;
- Enjoy and participate in language experiences such as: conversations, stories, puppets, books, songs and creative dramatics; and
- Participate in many physical activities to develop fine and gross motor skills, such as puzzles, beads, play dough, climbing, tricycles and balls.

The curriculum also includes active participation of the families, which include:

- Parents As Teachers® Program for children age 3 months through 36 months;
- Monthly lesson planning for your child;
- Family meetings, held on a variety of parenting topics;
- At least twice-a-year family conference;
- Special classroom activities, such as holiday celebrations, reading, etc.;
- Opportunity to serve on Family Advisory Committee;
- Literacy Backpack check-out materials for children infant to preschool age; and
- Meetings for parents each month with speakers regarding early childhood issues.

Our family involvement is designed to assist families in understanding the developmental, social/emotional and wellness needs of their child. It is also our intent to receive information from families, which will help our teachers guide their practice to meet the needs of each individual child.

*Parents Who Cannot Participate in Special Events:* In the event that a parent feels like they would like to be more involved in the center but cannot due to their work schedule, or due to other conflicts, we will help them find a project or area, which they can do on their own time. The director will meet with the parent to find their area of interest. We will offer suggestions to them based on their interests and time. For example, if the parent likes to sew, we may offer to have them make doll clothes.

*Parents As Teachers®:* Both early childhood centers participate in a program called Parents As Teachers®. Parents As Teachers® is a program for infants and toddlers. The goals of Parents As Teachers® is to increase parent knowledge of early childhood development and improve parenting practices, provide early detection of developmental delays and health issues, prevent child abuse and neglect, and increase children's school readiness and school success. Our coordinator of this program arranges with each parent every month a time to meet to discuss their child's development, conduct a formal assessment called *Ages and Stages*, answer parent questions, and do an activity with your child that the parent can either take home to do with the child again or easily recreate the activity at home with household objects. The goal is to encourage child and parent interaction. We will also use GOLD, which is a way to record a child's progress and help the teacher and family follow up on appropriate next steps for the individual child.

*How Parents Can Help Their Child:* We believe that a child's first and most influential teacher is their parents. Characteristics and life skills parents are hoping to give their children often include: belief in personal capability, self-discipline, responsibility (accountability) and respect for self and others, self-confidence and courage (risk takers), desire to cooperate and contribute, communication skills, problem-solving skills, self-motivation to learn, work ethic and social consciousness, honesty, sense of humor, healthy self-esteem and happiness, flexibility and resilience.

In order to help foster some of these characteristics and life skills parents should remember to:

- Listen to your child
- Give your child simple choices such as, "Which cup would you like ...red or blue?"
- Tell your child what happened, what caused it, how they should feel about it, what they should do about it.
- Ask your child questions to help them to problem solve such as "What were you trying to accomplish?" or "What could you try next time?"
- Keep your requests short and direct
- Make eye contact and get down on the child's level
- Don't make more requests than the child can handle at once



- Have the child repeat back to you what you are asking of him/her
- Praise your child after a task is complete
- Thank your child for trying
- Model the behavior you desire from your child

**Screening and Assessment:** Both centers conduct screenings and assessments in order to provide the highest quality of instruction. Information gathered from the screenings described below will be regularly shared with you. Information gathered from screening is kept in each child's portfolio. Screenings are used to guide the selection of appropriate materials and activities that enhance development in all domains based on individual needs of your child. Regularly scheduled conferences are held with all parents, but additional visits with your child's teacher are always available. Assessment is **on-going** in all of the ways we assess the children and you will be asked for your input each month through the Parent Lesson Plan.

If, through assessment, our staff suspects your child has a developmental delay or is 3 or more months behind on a particular milestone, the director will schedule a parent conference with you and the appropriate staff, including our Childcare Health Consultant. We will assist you in finding appropriate resources to address the situation if needed and develop a Special Care Plan with you to meet all of the needs of your child. If the parent seeks outside resources, such as Early Childhood Intervention or other resource, to help with a child's delay, the centers will obtain written consent from parents to be in communication with the specialist(s) working with your child. In addition, as a part of that communication the centers will keep on file results from other specialist's assessments or case notes in order to help the teacher plan their classroom to meet the needs of the child.

*Vision and Hearing Screenings:* The Texas Health and Safety Code requires a vision and hearing screening for all four and five-year old children enrolled in a TDFPS licensed child care center. Both centers provide this screening at the center and have certified staff on site to perform these state mandated screenings. You will receive a written referral form if the screening(s) indicates a problem with your child's vision or hearing.

*Developmental Screenings:* The Center uses **Ages and Stages** to assess each child's milestones. Your child will be screened at least bi-annually with Ages and Stages, with the first screening within the first three weeks after the child is admitted. Infants will be screened up to three times until age 12 months.

*Informal Health Screenings:* for families with children 3 months to 36 months of age a trained Parent Educator will participate in the Parents As Teachers® Program, informal health screenings. Health screenings include assessing your child's developmental milestones, hearing and vision. All informal health screenings will be kept on file with the Parent Educator and shared with both you and your child's teacher.

*Formal Assessments:* The formal assessment **Ages and Stages** is used for children 2 months through 60 months. The **Ages and Stages** assessment is given every two months from birth through 24 months of age, every three months for ages 24-26 months, and every 6 months for 37-60 months of age. The children in the preschool program (3s & 4s) will be assessed for their early, emerging literacy and math knowledge using the **Texas School Ready assessment tools**. This assessment occurs approximately three times annually. Your child's teacher will share the results with you during a scheduled parent conference or at your request. Such assessment is used to plan the instruction for the class as well as for each individual child.

*Informal Assessments:* Teachers monitor each child's developmental process. Teachers gather information, such as children's artwork, anecdotal notes, pictures and any other tangible information regarding each child's development. This information is contained in a file developed for each child. Based on this information, teachers can provide you with information regarding your child's developmental progress. This information also provides the teacher with information on your child's interests so that he/she can incorporate those interests in the classroom. Assessment information is also used to guide the

teacher in planning developmentally appropriate learning activities and experiences, and gain additional information about your child's interests and needs.

*Whom May Access Your Child's screening Information:* The centers have the following policy regarding who may have access to your child's screening and assessment records:

- You, as your child's legal guardian, have a right to access any and all information regarding your child's screening and assessment records;
- Your child's teacher and student aides has access to your child's screening and assessment records for the purpose of using the information to provide guidance in the development of lesson plans to meet your child's specific developmental needs;
- The Director and the Parent Involvement Coordinator has access to the child's screening and assessment records to provide guidance to a teacher who is developing plans, which meet your child's needs, and for information, which may indicate a developmental delay. Access to the admission records is used for contact information and emergencies.
- The Department Chair has access to the child's screening and assessment records to provide guidance to a teacher who is developing plans, which meet your child's needs, and for information, which may indicate a developmental delay.
- Any local, state, or national regulatory agency which has legal right to view your child's screening and assessment records; and
- Any person you have given written permission to access your child's screening and assessment records.

*Confidentiality of Records:* Your child's screening and assessment records are kept in a locking cabinet in three places: the Center Director's office, the Parent Involvement Specialist's Office and in your child's classroom. At no time will this information be shared with anyone who does not have the right to access your child's records.

**Community Involvement:** The centers strive to stay connected to the community and connect our families with the community as much as possible to enrich the experiences of each child to gain insight into different cultures, ages, technology, languages, and creative expression. The Directors periodically e-mails community events to all parents in the program to make aware of opportunities in the community to be involved and growth of the family system.

The centers participate in community activities throughout the year including but not limited to: visiting The Bivins Pointe, The Cottages, visiting and donating goods to Ronald McDonald House, visiting and donating goods to Amarillo College's Food Pantry, sending thank-you notes or children's artwork to veterans for Veterans Day, sending thank you notes or children's artwork to local police and firefighters. The centers also arrange visits from community members such as the Kwahadi Native American dancers, dental hygienists to discuss oral health, or local musical groups or musicians. Our community involvement that we participate in is to enhance the curriculum and make connections between the classroom and community.

**Community Resources:** The following is a list of community resources in the Amarillo area and their contact information to help families receive the services they need. Please ask center staff if there are any questions, regarding any resource listed. The center staff are trained to notify the Director of any concerns with a family and to discuss any concerns or referral needs at parent conferences.

Amarillo College Adult Students Program  
Student Services Center  
Washington Street Campus  
2011 S. Washington  
Amarillo, TX  
371-5449

Amarillo College Dental Clinic  
Jones Hall, West Campus  
354-6050

Amarillo Public Libraries  
Central Branch  
413 SE 4<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
378-3054

East Branch  
2232 SE 27<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
342-1589

North Branch  
1500 NE 24<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
381-7931

Northwest Branch  
6100 W. 9<sup>th</sup>  
359-2035

Southwest Branch  
6801 SW 45<sup>th</sup>  
359-2094

Child Care Services (CCS)  
Workforce Solutions Panhandle Child Care Services  
720 S. Tyler Ste. 120  
372-2836

Domestic Violence  
Family Violence/Sexual Assault  
Family Support Services  
1001 S. Polk  
374-5433—24 Hour Crisis Line

Families in Training (FIT)  
Housing assistance for full time students  
372-2531

Family Support Services  
1001 S. Polk  
342-2500

Early Childhood Intervention (ECI)  
2505 Lakeview Dr. Amarillo, TX 79109  
358-8974

Region 16 Education Service Center  
ECI Careline

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1-800-250-2246

Health Partners Clinic  
(West Texas A & M University)  
4400 S. Washington St. Amarillo, TX 79110  
355-5721

Texas Panhandle Mental Health Mental Retardation  
(TPMHMR)  
901 Wallace Blvd. Amarillo, TX 79106  
358-1681  
Regional Emergency Assessment Center  
359-6699

Guyon Saunders Resource Center (formally Tyler Street  
Resource Center)  
200 S. Tyler St. Amarillo, TX 79101  
379-8529

WIC Nutrition Program  
411 S. Austin St. Amarillo, TX 79106  
371-1119

Uniting Parents/Coalition of Health Services, Inc.  
Community Resource Guide  
A Program for Families of Children with Disabilities  
301 S. Polk St, Ste 740  
Amarillo, TX 79101  
337-1700 or 1-888-892-2273

**Pediatric Dentists:**

Amarillo Children's Dentistry  
7201 W. 34th  
Amarillo, TX 79109  
353-2113

Children's Dentistry of Amarillo  
4501 Van Winkle Dr.  
Amarillo, TX  
351-0008

Amarillo Pediatric Dentistry  
2455 I-40 W. (Wolflin Square)  
Amarillo, TX  
350-5437

Pediatric Dentistry  
821 Martin Rd  
Amarillo, TX  
376-4700

Nguyen, Lan T.  
4600 I-40 W. Ste. 201  
Amarillo, TX 79106  
354-8526

Kool Smiles of Amarillo

**Daily Schedule:** The daily schedule is organized to meet the children's needs for a balance of time spent in active and quiet play, large and small group interaction, and indoor and outdoor activities. Between each activity, teachers allow time for transitions. Children are with their regular classroom teacher most of the day, combining, as appropriate, during arrival and departure times at the beginning and end of the day, as well as during naptime. Children have a regularly scheduled rest time during the day.

**Mealtime:** Children eat in their classrooms, with their teacher seated at the table. Mealtime/snack time is arranged so that children and teachers can converse with one another. The tables are made for the child's age/size so that the children have their feet on the floor and the table height falls between the children's abdomen and chest.

Infants younger than 12 months are held to bottle feed. When a child is able to sit up, they may be placed securely strapped into a highchair for spoon-feeding. All children of appropriate age and ability are encouraged to feed themselves, first using their fingers to pick up foods, then moving to holding a sippy cup and finally to using a utensil and drinking from a small cup.

### **Lunches:**

Lab School: Parents are required to provide lunch for your child each day she/he is in care. The morning and afternoon snacks will be prepared in the Lab School kitchen. Because your child's meal will be stored in his/her locker, food is to be brought *in a cooler/insulated lunch box, with an ice pack*. We do have the ability to warm up food in the classroom. However, we are not able to use any type of plastic container or polystyrene (Styrofoam) containers, plates, bags, or wraps when microwaving children's food or beverages. We will use paper plates or glass bowls/plates to microwave children's lunch foods. The lunch box is to be clearly labeled on the outside with your child's first name and last name initial.

Each food item and drink container in your child's meal are to be labeled with your child's first name, last initial and the date. All food sent must be cut in serving sizes before packing due to time constraints as the teacher serves. Your preparation helps all the children have a nice relaxed meal or snack.

Hagy Center: All meals will be prepared in the Hagy Center kitchen. We do not allow lunches to be brought from home unless there is a special dietary need or for special occasions. If your child has to bring lunch for dietary needs, food is to be brought *in a cooler/insulated lunch box, with an ice pack*. The Hagy Center does not have the ability to warm up food in a microwave in the classroom. The lunch box is to be clearly labeled on the outside with your child's first name and last name initial.

**\*\*If your child has a documented allergic reaction or sensitivity to a food/drink that states the child may not consume that item, we cannot serve it to the child from their lunch from home either.**

Water is served with each meal and snack in addition to milk or juice depending on what is on the daily snack menu or what parents have provided to drink. Children are not allowed to walk around the classroom with their drink, whether that be a bottle, sippy cup or regular cup to ensure safety. They are permitted to have their drink whenever thirsty and encouraged to drink water throughout the day. The child's individual water bottle is taken with them outside and on field trips or walks.

*\* The following foods are choking hazards for children under 4 years of age: whole grapes, wieners, celery, popcorn, hard candy, nuts, clumps of peanut butter, raw carrots, and raw apples. Thank you for choosing carefully.*

**Snacks:** Nutritious snacks are provided both morning, afternoon and evening. The Lab School and Hagy Center Snack and Meal Menu is posted in our hallway next to the kitchen and distributed to parents monthly. We serve only 100% fruit juice, vegetable juice, milk or water. Children over the age of 12 months are served 2% milk, but no cow's milk to infants younger than 12 months. Children are encouraged to eat, but will not be forced to finish their meal or snack. Staff discards any food with expired dates on a weekly basis to ensure the freshness of all snacks distributed to children. The health department also monitors the kitchen cleanliness and food safety on a regular basis.

**Nutritional Supplements:** We cannot give your child nutritional supplements including vitamins, protein drinks or other non-food substances without written permission and instructions from your child's physician.

**Food for Celebrations:** For special occasions, such as your child's birthday, you may bring a nutritious snack; however, all such food must be prepared and in its original unopened container, wrapper or package and not "homemade". Please remember that there are other children in the center with special allergies or health conditions.

**Food Allergies:** All food allergies, like any other allergy, must be documented and in the child's file with written instructions from a physician about what foods the child cannot be in contact with and how severe the allergy reaction may be. All food allergies are posted in the kitchen and child's classroom with the child's picture, name of allergy, and severity of allergy. Parents must provide documentation for the child's file on how to treat the child if the child has an allergic reaction. If we have been given documentation from a physician that a child should not consume a certain food/drink, we cannot serve it to them from their lunch from home either. We ask that parents DO NOT pack foods children have documentation for being allergic to. If a child is being introduced back to the food or drink, they must do this only at home, as we are restricted to do so at school per doctor's note. Children of any age with special feeding needs will document the type of food and the quantity of this food and provide the family with a daily report.

**Rest Time:** Children are scheduled for a rest time every day from approximately 12:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. Children are provided a personal cot to only be used by that child. Those cots are sanitized weekly. Parents are asked to provide comfort items from home such as a small throw blanket and travel size pillow. Please see the Director for special circumstances or provisions that are needed. Soft music plays during naptime each day for all ages. Remember these home items should be taken home and washed each Friday.

It is our philosophy that children under 5 years of age need adequate quiet time and/or rest, as a part of their daily routine. Since all the children are constantly engaged in stimulating activity, we require that everyone rest on cots after lunch. Realizing each child's rest needs are different, we try to offer alternative ways of resting by providing soft music, stories, etc. for those who choose not to sleep. Infants' individual schedules will determine when they nap. According to "American Baby", the following chart is a guideline as to the sleep needs of children up to 5 years of age:

Age	Suggested Hours of Sleep	Number of Naps Suggested
Three Months	15.00 hours	3
Six Months	14.25 hours	2
Nine Months	14.00 hours	2
One Year	13.75 hours	2
Eighteen Months	13.50 hours	1
Two Years	13.00 hours	1
Three Years	12.00 hours	1

Four Years	11.50 hours	0-1
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**Diapering:** Infants and toddlers are diapered every two hours and checked every hour, or changed anytime the diaper is soiled or wet. Use of creams, lotions and powders during diapering are administered with parent permission. Parents are asked to provide diapers or pull-ups and any diapering cream to be administered. Cloth diapers are NOT allowed as this has been shown to cause sanitation and health risks associated with storing cloth diapers after being soiled and kept throughout the entirety of the day. Any creams or powders must have the child's first name and last initial. Diapers are only changed in designated changing areas. Diaper changing instructions are posted by all designated changing areas and are separated by at least 3 feet of space and a partial wall of plexi-glass to ensure the highest health and safety standards are met as specified by *Caring for Our Children*. Diaper changing tables are used exclusively by one designated class of children. Children in diapers should also wear shorts, bloomers or other cover such as an "onesie" to class. Soiled or wet Diapers/Training pants will be checked for and changed when the child wakes up from napping times.

*\*\*Caring for our Children: 3.2.1.3 Checking for the Need to Change Diapers. Diapers should be checked for wetness and feces at least hourly, visually inspected at least every two hours, and whenever the child indicates discomfort or exhibits behavior that suggests a soiled or wet diaper. Diapers should be changed when they are found to be wet or soiled.*

**Toilet Training:** Toilet training is best accomplished with the cooperation of teachers, parents and children. Children learn toileting skills through consistent positive encouragement from adults at home and at the center. Toilet training usually begins around 2 years of age. When a child shows an interest in toilet training, the parents and teacher should develop a plan, which supports and reinforces positive toileting skills both at home and at the center. This plan is a commitment to work with the child in a consistent manner; it is not a timeline for completing toilet training.

Each child will begin at a different time and progress at a different rate. The staff will provide documentation of your child's progress each day. The director and staff are available as a resource to answer any questions about your child's toilet training progress at the centers. Several complete weather appropriate changes of clothes should be kept at the center during this process.

**Outside Play:** Children play outdoors **every day**. Children are scheduled to play outdoors once in the morning and once in the afternoon and once in the evening. Children play outdoors on the playground designed for their age. Play is closely supervised by staff when children are outdoors. Staff is instructed to move about the playground and engage children rather than sitting or standing away from children as they play. Water is served during all outdoor play or physical activity.

The following policies guide staff on when the weather is not suitable for children to play outdoors or when modifications in the amount of time spent outdoors is necessary due to weather conditions.

- **High Temperatures:** When the temperature exceeds 93 degrees Fahrenheit, children under 24 months of age are not permitted to play outdoors. Infant and young toddlers have a lower tolerance for exposure to higher temperatures and sunlight, causing their skin to burn more quickly and causing dehydration.
- Children 24 months of age and older may play outdoors without restriction, unless the temperature exceeds 96 degrees Fahrenheit, then the children may play outdoors for no more than 30 minutes.
- **Temperatures in excess of 98 degrees Fahrenheit require that all children remain indoors to avoid heat related illness/injury.**
- **Low Temperatures:** When the air temperature (including wind chill factor) is below 40 degrees Fahrenheit, children younger than 12 months of age are to remain indoors.
- Children 12 months of age and older may play outdoors when the temperature is between 25 degrees and 45 degrees Fahrenheit, with the following restrictions:

- Between 32 and 45 degrees, all children must wear appropriately warm clothing, outerwear and footwear, including hats and are to remain outdoors no longer than 35 minutes.
- **All children are to remain indoors when the temperature is below 25 degrees Fahrenheit.**
- Rain: Children wearing the appropriate rain gear or water resistant outerwear and umbrellas may play outdoors for short periods of time if the rain is a gentle mist or sprinkle, but not if the rain is heavy. **Children are to be brought immediately back indoors at the first sound of thunder or sign of lightning in this area.**
- Wind: Children are to remain indoors when there are sustained winds of 30 miles per hour or above.

**Cooking experiences:** Each Friday, children ages 1-5 will have the opportunity to prepare the morning snack in their classroom. The foods prepared are simple and designed to be a hands-on experience with measuring, stirring, pouring, as well as the pleasure of creating. Cooking experiences are an opportunity to incorporate the following developmental skills: self-help skills, gross and fine motor, math and science, health and safety, and nutrition.

**Observers:** Both centers serve as a model for childcare practices, early care and education and child development for the college and the community. The children and staff are observed regularly by students. Observations are scheduled through the Director and all students must present valid photo identification and be signed in after clearing a criminal background check through the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. All students are instructed in how to unobtrusively observe and are never in the presence of children without supervision from staff. All visitors are required to observe our hand washing policy.

**Daily Infant Schedule:** We will keep your child on his/her daily schedule as much as possible. During the day, we will do activities with your child to help him/her develop their social, emotional, cognitive, language and physical skills. These activities may include, playing with toys, art, pretending, enjoying stories and books, discovering sand and water, music, and exploring outdoors. The daily schedule will be flexible according to the baby's needs, including feedings and naps.

**Pacifiers for Infants:** Infants must also be free from pacifier clips, stuffed animals or any other attachment to the pacifier when sleeping, but may use pacifiers during nap. Pacifiers cannot have sweeteners or other solutions placed on them. Pacifiers should have the child's first name and last initial labeled on each pacifier to ensure that your child's pacifier is only used by your child. If a pacifier needs change such as parents weaning a child off a pacifier or frequency in usage desired, parents need to update the caregiver on changes on the infant feeding schedule posted in the infant classroom.

## **Meals for Infants:**

*Bottle Fed Infants:* You are to bring pre-made bottles of formula (we do not serve cow's milk to children younger than 12 months) for your infant. Upon enrollment the Director will inform you on what premade needs for your specific site. You are required to put your child's name on each bottle (first name and last name initial). Please bring plastic bottles or glass bottles with rubber covers. Your child's bottles are required to have a cap. Bottles are warmed in water no more than 120 degrees Fahrenheit or for no more than 5 minutes and *never* in a microwave. Staff will discard human milk or formula after 2 hours if not consumed or refrigerated. Staff will gently mix breast milk and not shake it to preserve nutritional components.

*Breastfed Infants:* Breast milk may be brought frozen or ready to feed in a bottle or cup with a label with your child's name (first and last name) and include the date the milk was expressed. It will be easier to store the frozen breast milk if it is in Lansinoh bags. If you would like to breast-feed your child at the Center, you are welcome to come at any time. We will provide you a private area to breastfeed.

*Infants on Solid Foods:* You are to provide infant food and snacks for your baby each day. Label each item of food you bring with your child's first name and last initial. The center staff do not offer solid foods or fruit juices to infants younger than 6 months.

*Feeding Schedule:* You are to provide a written, signed and dated feeding schedule for your infant. The schedule will be updated every thirty (30) days until the child is able to eat table food.

**Safe Sleep for Infants:** Due to the risk of SIDS in infants, the center's policy is to place all infants younger than 12 months on their backs to sleep, without the use of infant sleep positions, unless ordered by a physician. Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the major cause of death in babies between 1 and 4 months. If infants roll to their stomachs or side while sleeping, the infants will only be readjusted if there is concern for their airway to be blocked. Infants who have written documentation from a health-care professional stating that a different sleeping position is allowed and will not harm the infant, the form must then be approved. A variance through state licensing for a child to be allowed to sleep any other way than on their back is required. This written documentation from the doctor must include the name of the child, child's date of birth, specific medical reason, and period it is considered safe. No loose bedding such as blankets, sleep positioning devices, stuffed toys, quilts, pillows, bumper pads, and comforters will be used with children younger than 12 months of age. Infants cannot be excessively bundled with many layers of clothing to prevent overheating. If infants arrive to the program asleep, or fall asleep, in equipment not specifically designed for infant sleep, the caregiver must remove them from that device and place them in their crib. The temperature will be kept at a comfortable temperature for infants - not too cold or too hot. This will allow for safe sleep.

**Guidance and Discipline:** Our philosophy for discipline is very positive in nature. It is guided by our love and acceptance of the child. Our feelings and attitude that might dislike an action or deed does not change how much we care for the child. The following guidance and discipline procedures are mandated by licensing regulations and are followed by the Center.

Discipline is:

1. Individualized and consistent for each child;
2. Appropriate to the child's level of understanding and developmental age; and
3. Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.

All teachers use only positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control and self-direction, which include at least the following:

1. Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
2. Reminding the child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements; (3) Redirecting and reflecting on behavior using positive statements; and
3. Using brief, supervised separation or time-out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age
4. Example being a resource such as Conscious Discipline from Dr. Becky Bailey

There is no harsh, cruel, scary or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline are prohibited:

1. Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment;
2. Punishment associated with food, naps or toilet training;
3. Pinching, shaking or biting a child;
4. Hitting a child with a hand or instrument;
5. Putting anything in a child's mouth;
6. Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting or yelling at a child;



7. Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive or profane language;
8. Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom or closet with the door closed;
9. Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.

\*Texas Administrative Code, Title 40 Chapters 746 and 747, Subchapter L, Discipline and Guidance

Using positive guidance, appropriate behavior is the goal, which is a “taught and caught” skill. Children are taught how to behave in everyday experiences, as well as having appropriate behavior modeled by the adults at the Center. Children learn more from what you do than what you say. We say and do positive guidance.

Guidance is used to provide the child with information about the proper way to handle a situation.

Positive peer/teacher interaction is the goal; therefore, children who might bully, hurt or ignore other children will be assessed by the teacher and Director, if necessary, and additional teaching/coaching steps will be taken to help guide the child into more appropriate behavior. Parents will be included in these plans. Children learn the most from the example trusted adults set for them.

## **Biting Policy**

**When Biting Does Occur:** The staff's job is to keep all the children safe and help a child that bites learn different, more appropriate behavior. We do not use techniques to alarm, hurt, or frighten children such as biting back or washing a child's mouth out with soap or any other inappropriate method of discipline/guidance. (In accordance with Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers; Subchapter L, Discipline and Guidance §746.2803 & §746.2805)

### **For the child that was bitten:**

- The teacher will comfort the child. First aid is given to the bite. Ice will be provided and the area is to be cleaned with soap and water and covered with a bandage if needed.
- An Incident/Illness Report will be completed, documenting the incident and specify after care provided to the child. (Form 7239: Texas Department of Family and Protective Services)
- Parents may request a conference with the Director/Teacher to discuss any concerns/questions.

### **For the child that bit:**

- The teacher will remind the child that biting hurts and that teeth should be used for eating food, not biting friends. Then the teacher will show the child how he/she hurt their friend.
- The child may be placed in time out for no longer than the child's age (one year old, one minute) or removed from the situation.
- The parents are notified.
- An Incident Report will be completed, documenting the incident.

### **When Biting Continues:**

- If personnel is available, the child will be shadowed to help prevent any biting incidents.
- The child will be observed by the classroom staff to determine what is causing the child to bite (teething, communication, frustration, etc.) The administrative staff may also observe the child if the classroom staff is unable to determine the cause.
- The child will be given positive attention and approval for positive behavior.
- The child will be provided a teething ring or other appropriate teething toy.
- The Director will ensure the teacher has adequate resources and training necessary to keep the children active and engaged in supervised activities.

- The administration will evaluate the biting incident forms kept to determine the cause of the biting and make suggestions to the parent and teacher to stop the biting. The Director will provide literature to the parent and determine whether or not the teacher needs additional training. The Director will document all information.
- The Director will schedule a conference with the parents of the child who is biting to collaborate on a plan for home and the center to stop the biting.

### **When Biting Becomes Excessive:**

- After all preventative steps have been tried by the staff members, if the child continues to bite routinely the Director will have to call the parent to pick up the child for the remainder of the day. For the safety of the other children, chronic/habitual biting may require that a child be suspended from enrollment for a period of time. If a child is suspended, the parent will be informed that the child may return to the center at a decided date;
- As an absolute last resort, if the child returns to the center, continues to bite, and is endangering the other children, the child may be terminated from the program; Exclusionary measures are not considered until all possible other interventions have been exhausted and there is agreement that exclusion is in the best interest of the child. \*Texas

*Administrative Code, Title 40 Chapters 746 and 747, Subchapter L, Discipline and Guidance*

Using positive guidance, appropriate behavior is the goal, which is a “taught and caught” skill. Children are taught how to behave in everyday experiences, as well as having appropriate behavior modeled by the adults at the Center. Children learn more from what you do than what you say. We say and do positive guidance.

Guidance is used to provide the child with information about the proper way to handle a situation.

Positive peer/teacher interaction is the goal; therefore, children who might bully, hurt or ignore other children will be assessed by the teacher and Director, if necessary, and additional teaching/coaching steps will be taken to help guide the child into more appropriate behavior. Parents will be included in these plans. Children learn the most from the example trusted adults set for them.

**Suspension/Expulsion/Exclusionary Measures:** Staff understand and recognize that challenging behaviors are children’s attempts to communicate a message, such as, “I am scared,” “I am hurt,” or “I want to play with you.” To that end, they use multiple strategies to prevent and address these behaviors and to build children’s positive social and emotional regulation and their communication skills.

To help minimize challenging behaviors, teachers should routinely observe their group in action to identify events, activities, interactions, and other contextual factors that may be predictive of challenging behavior. When they identify environmental factors that might be contributing to behavior problems, they make environmental modifications and implement targeted teaching strategies designed to support appropriate behaviors [PAW1].

When responding to challenging behaviors, teachers avoid using negative responses. They are respectful and calm, and they ensure the emotional and physical safety of the child and others in the classroom. Teachers provide support and guidance to help children develop alternative behaviors. These include setting realistic and age-appropriate expectations for behavior, establishing clear and consistent routines, and engaging children in cooperative activities and group projects. For children with persistent or serious challenging behaviors, individualized plans designed to support inclusion and success are developed jointly with families and other support service staff. *\*Excerpt taken from: 1.E—Addressing Challenging Behaviors, NAEYC Standards.*

**Challenging behavior:** *any behavior that interferes with children's learning, development and success at play, is harmful to the child, other children or adults OR puts a child at high risk for later social problems or school failure. When challenging behaviors are persistent we will take steps to assess the behavior to work with families and professionals to develop an individualized plan to address the behavior. We will include positive behavior support strategies as part of the plan.*

*In our program we use Conscious Discipline techniques developed by Dr. Becky Bailey to help prevent challenging behaviors impeding on a child's ability to successfully learn self-regulation, emotional literacy, secure attachment and social relationships with peers. These strategies are based upon brain development and age/developmentally appropriate practices. We use classroom "safe places" and emotional based learning activities regularly to help children learn how to access executive functioning of their brains vs being in fight or flight emotional distress.*

*If harmful/bullying or physical injury is a repetitive behavior pattern expressed from one child towards other children, an incident form will be filled out and the Parent will be asked to review and sign it. This form will be kept in the child's folder in the Director's office to help document this behavior and assess this behavior. If this type of negative/harmful behavior persists, there will be a meeting scheduled with the teacher of the child, parents of the child and the Director to collaborate on the best possible solution to assist the child to behave appropriately towards staff members and other children. The Parent will be notified to come pick up the child from school for the day if the child has repeatedly injured other children, staff members or property and we feel we need assistance from a parent to help manage challenging behavior. At this time, it is possible that a formal assessment be conducted by a professional. Depending upon the results of a formal assessment or the recommendation of a pediatrician, the leadership at the Lab School will collaborate with the Teacher and Parents to assimilate the child back into the classroom with accommodations/advice given by the medical professionals. Exclusionary measures are not considered until all possible other interventions have been exhausted and there is agreement that exclusion is in the best interest of the child. If exclusionary measures must be taken, the program will offer assistance to the family in accessing services and an alternative placement. We will comply with all federal and state civil rights laws.*

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The following section is meant to serve as a comprehensive list of policies and procedures which families are required to follow; however, not every possible situation is guided by a policy or procedure; therefore, the judgment of the Director and/or Department/Deans may be substituted. Moreover, in the event of an emergency, the safety and well-being of children, families and staff supersedes strict adherence to some policies and/or procedures.

**Authorized Release of a Child:** We will not release your child to any person other than persons you have listed on your child's authorized pickup list. Your child cannot be released to anyone who appears impaired for any reason. Please notify your child's teacher or the Director if someone unfamiliar to our staff will be picking up your child. Make sure that person is on your child's authorized release form in advance of that person picking up your child. All unfamiliar persons will be asked for picture identification (i.e. drivers' license) before the child can be released. Any changes to the authorized pick up list need to be made in writing and given to the Director.

**In a custody situation** the parent enrolling the child into our center takes full responsibility to ensure that this is in accordance with their specific, signed and filed court agreement, which must be attached to the enrollment forms if there are any limitations of rights in regards to release of the child. If a parent who is not listed, or who believes the information given to us was inaccurate, contests the authorization details, they must first offer proof that they are indeed the legal parent or guardian and have legal rights to pick the child up. We then will require lawyers for both sides to be contacted and both attorneys will be requested to give us documentation as to the individuals approved for pick-up. The center reserves the right to not allow any individual onto our property for drop-off or pick-up if they have created a disturbance. We want to help the child feel as secure as possible when so many changes are occurring within the family. We will be helping the family adjust to new routines. Please keep the staff fully informed of the expected changes.

**Information Change:** Parents are to notify the center of any change in home or work phone numbers and addresses. This is for your safety so that we may reach you in an emergency. The center requires that someone listed on the Authorized Release form of each child be available within thirty (30) minutes notice to come and pick up a sick child or a child that the

director or person-in-charge has determined needs to go home. It is required that all changes of phone numbers, places of employment, residence changes or changes in pick-up information be turned into the office immediately. Please give the Director written notice of the change as soon as possible.

**Classifications of Persons in our Building:** Due to strict licensing guidelines and safety issues, we require that all individuals on our property be categorized as one of the following:

1. A scheduled employee during the regular course of their work day;
2. A child who is in our care;
3. Parents or others during the course of regular drop-off or pick-up;
4. Student Observers—Must have made pre-arrangements with the director and have a cleared criminal history;
5. Regularly scheduled AC employees, such as the mail delivery person, maintenance or custodian;
6. Visitors – Must be approved by the office and should be accompanied by an employee at all times not to exceed once per month and limited to a maximum of 2 hours;
7. Volunteers – Anyone who is helping with a class party or in any other capacity or anyone who has been a “visitor” for more than once a month or for over 2 hours; or
8. An Intruder or unauthorized person – Action will be taken by the staff to notify the proper authorities.

Therefore anyone who is in the building or on the property for an extended period of time must be considered either “student”, “visitor”, “volunteer,” or “intruder” including parents and employees who are off the clock.

*Volunteers:* Volunteers are welcome in our center. Anyone visiting or volunteering **for more than one day per month** must go through a screening process. Our screening process includes, but is not limited to:

1. Undergoing a fingerprinting and background check; and
2. A signed statement regarding child abuse.

*Going through New Teacher Orientation.* Any “visitor” who spends extended periods of time in the center will be considered a volunteer and be required to go through the screening and training listed above. A volunteer going through New Teacher Orientation training includes health and safety procedures, emergency procedures, and accepted positive guidance and classroom management techniques, child abuse reporting techniques and all regulatory requirement of Texas Child Care Licensing, NAEYC, and Panhandle Workforce Solutions Child Care Services 4 Star Rising Star. No volunteers are ever left alone with children as they are under the direct supervision of qualified teaching staff. Volunteers are not counted in the ratio or supervision of children.

*Intruders:* The safety of the children is our first concern. Although we have an open door policy and welcome parents to visit their children, we also have a commitment to the parents of the other children in the program. Since we cannot attest to the background of anyone that has not gone through our screening process, we also cannot allow parents to spend extended periods of time in our facility without requiring them to fulfill certain screening and training requirements. These are set by state law and our policies. Any individual who does not submit to our safety policies concerning “Visitors” and “Volunteers” must be considered an intruder and steps will be taken according to the “Intruder” portion of our “Safety and Evacuation” policies.

**Visiting the Center:** You are welcome to visit your child at the center.. We do ask that you check in with the office before going to your child's room. It is the responsibility of each employee to make sure any visitor for a child or employee has checked in with the office. If you are coming to eat lunch with your child, please let us know in advance. Persons not listed on the Authorized Release Form, will not be allowed to visit your child. In a custody situation, please note that the same procedure will be followed as listed in the Pick-Up section. Parents are encouraged to pre-arrange opportunities to share lunch with their child or visit the class. Extended family members such as grandparents and aunts are also welcome to visit in certain prearranged situations. The custody challenges of our current society demand that we follow strict guidelines in this regard. Feel free to contact a member of the management team if you wish to set up a "visit" from an extended family member.

**Field Trips:** The Centers do not provide motor vehicle transportation. We do, however, take the children on adventure walks around the campus grounds. The Hagy Center will take trips to Discovery Center, Botanical Gardens, Bivins Pointe, and other neighboring entities within walking distance. The Lab School will take walks to The Cottages, Assisted Living homes on Quail Creek, The VA on 9th and The Bridge Advocacy Center. Your child's teacher will post the date, time and place of such trips, 48 hours in advance and indicated on our monthly calendar. Child/staff ratio for field trips is maintained at all times when children are away from the Center. All teachers bring each child's emergency information with them when they leave the building, as well as a first aid kit. Ratios are increased to comply with licensing standards regarding field trips and children mixing with other children (746.1801). Parents are encouraged to participate in field trips when they desire.

1. The field trip must be posted on the Parent Board(s) 48 hours in advance of the trip.
2. Prior to leaving, all children must have a "Center" tag pinned to the back of their clothing. Or must be wearing a Lanyard from the center.
3. Teachers must take their fully stocked Emergency Backpack, containing the "Authorized Medical Release" and "Emergency Information" for each child participating.
4. Teachers must wear a blue or tan smock indicating they are a teacher of one of the Centers as an additional indicator for children, and there must be adequate staff for field trips, as stated in ***TXDFPS Minimum Standards***.
5. Prior to leaving the building, teachers must count each child and have a list of each child in their care.
6. When arriving, teachers must account for each child on their list.
7. Teachers are required to account for and supervise children at all times. Children may not use the restroom on a field trip without being accompanied by staff.

**Transportation:** Parents are responsible for their child's transportation to the center and for arranging their own car pools. The Amarillo College early childhood center staff are **not authorized to** provide vehicle transportation.

**Children's Clothing:** We encourage the children to dress for play and comfort as the seasons change. Because our program is based on play and exploration, your child WILL get dirty! Children will have opportunities for outdoor play twice a day weather permitting. It is required that you bring one set of extra clothes for your child in case of a spill or accident. **It is strongly suggested that all clothing brought or worn to the center have the child's name on it. It is required for all children to wear closed-toed shoes at the center. Children may not wear flip flops, strappy sandals without socks or high heeled shoes to school. This is to help keep your child safe on our playgrounds and also keep other children safe. Please have shorts on underneath the dresses to help support free play activities.**

**Toys:** The centers have a wide variety of toys, games and other resources to offer children during center time. Personal toys are not permitted in the center, as they can cause disputes and can be broken or lost. The exception to this is show-and-tell, which should be labeled with the child's name. These are kept in the child's cubby until the appropriate time of day.

The centers are not responsible for stolen, lost or broken toys or clothing. ***Do not bring toy guns, war toys or other toys of destruction.***

**Shoe Coverings in Infant Room:** Before entering the infant room, adults must cover shoes with disposable shoe covers located by the door. After leaving the infant room, you are to dispose of shoe covers in the trash can located under the table. *Covered shoes protect infants from exposure to dirt, chemicals and other hazards, which may be carried in on the sole of shoes worn outside the infant room.*

***For the health and safety of our infants, please do not allow your older children to enter the Infant room.***

**Pets:** The Centers will often have animals as part of the classroom experience. Such animals can include birds, worms, hamsters, rabbits, and fish. When we incubate fertilized eggs, it will be in the office to maintain the heat setting and thermostat settings.

All pets located in the classroom will have a certificate of health from a licensed veterinarian stating that the animal is in good health and is up-to-date on all of the required vaccinations. If your child has an allergy to any pet located in the Lab School and Hagy Center, please inform the Director upon enrollment. Parents will be notified in writing of any pets or animals that will be present in the building prior to the visit.

Occasionally, families are invited to bring their pet to school. Prior to any new animal being allowed on the premises, families will receive written notice of the type of animal and the time it will be on the premises. Before the animal is allowed in the building, the owner must supply the Director with a copy of the animal's most current vaccination record and statement of health from a veterinarian.

**Drills:** Both Centers conduct safety drills on the following schedule:

- a. **Fire drills** are conducted once a month at random. Fire Drills consist of practicing taking different routes out of the building so that children, staff, and visitors are aware of all exit routes for the building. All fire drills are documented and conducted by the Amarillo College Physical Plant.
- b. **Severe weather drills** are conducted once every three months. Drills are conducted at random times of the month. All severe weather drills are documented and conducted by the Director or Person in Charge.
- c. **Volatile person(s) drills** are conducted every three months, on random, unscheduled dates. All volatile person drills are conducted by either the Director/Person in Charge or AC Police

Staff is **required** to follow emergency procedures during each drill.

**Emergency Procedures:** In all emergency situations and scenarios listed below, the Director of the Centers are considered "In Charge" unless the Director is absent or away from the center. In that case, the next person in charge according to the names listed in each room regarding the hierarchy of people in charge will take over.

**\*\*Should evacuation be necessary the Lab School will evacuate to The Bridge at 804 Quail Creek Drive – 806-372-2873. For children at the Hagy Center, if evacuation is necessary they will evacuate to the Ronald McDonald House on 1501 Streit Drive – 806-358-8177. Alternatively, you may call the Lab School Director (Erica Cole) at 806-418-0877 or Hagy Center Director (Sharonda Davis) at 806-690-0578. You may also contact Amarillo College Childcare Coordinator (Patricia Keith) at 806-281-2331.**

In all emergency situations and scenarios listed below, the center directors are in charge unless the center director is away

from the center. In that case, the next person in charge according to the names listed in each room regarding the hierarchy of people in charge will take over. Each classroom contains an emergency backpack which contains a first aid kit, emergency contact information for each child, and an authorization for emergency care for each child. If the children are to evacuate the building, teachers are to gather their emergency backpack and take their children to the designated area as specified below depending on the emergency situation. If a child takes regular medication, the teacher must also gather their medicine from the medicine cabinet as well. It is the center directors' responsibility to notify emergency personnel (i.e. 911 and Amarillo College Police x5911) while the next person in charge notifies parents, and the next person in charge notifies licensing. Families will be notified via phone call of the emergency or the need to pick up their child in the case of an emergency. In all scenarios, classrooms of children with special needs are to have additional supervision (center directors, assistant center directors or student workers) in the time of evacuation or finding shelter to ensure the child with special needs is accounted for and any special accommodation needed is made.

The following emergency procedures are to be reviewed with all employed staff at least twice a year and when an individual is hired. *In all scenarios, classrooms of children with special needs are to have additional supervision (Director, Assistant Director or student worker) in the time of evacuation or finding shelter to ensure the child with special needs is accounted for and any special accommodation needed is made.*

Explosion: In the event of an explosion inside or outside of the campus, teachers are to gather and account for all children in their care. Each teacher is then to gather the emergency backpack in their room and evacuate the children to a safe place, depending on whether the explosion is inside or outside the building. The center directors will notify the Campus Police, and the Campus Chief of Police will direct staff to shelter in place or evacuate. Teachers and children are to remain in the evacuation area until the Chief of Police directs that the danger has passed or until all the children are released to their parent or guardian or other adult who has authorization to pick-up the child.

Fire: In case of a fire, each teacher is to gather the children in their care, along with the medical emergency backpack located in each classroom. Before exiting the building, all children in care must be accounted for. The teacher is to close the classroom door and take the children outside the building according to the posted and practiced exit route. All children and all staff, including staff not assigned to a classroom, must meet at the designated area within 2 minutes of the fire alarm sounding. Once at the meeting place, the teacher must have all children accounted for and remain with children until the fire department has issued an ALL CLEAR or the children are released to their parent or guardian or other adult who has authorization to pick up the child.

- The Lab School children and staff will meet at the sidewalk to the northeast of the building.
- The Hagy Center children and staff will meet as follows:
  - Classrooms 108, 111, 109, 103 will meet in the northeast corner across the parking lot, and
  - Classrooms 106, 104, 102 will meet in the southwest corner between the trees.

Hazardous Chemical Emergencies: Amarillo College is under the direction of the Amarillo Area Emergency Management Office of the City of Amarillo. In the event of a hazardous chemical disaster or accident, the AAEMO will coordinate evacuation of the areas affected. The Office will notify the Amarillo College Chief of Police as to how much time we have to evacuate and which routes to use during the evacuation. The Chief of Police will then aid and provide support in implementation and evacuation of all children and staff from the Center.

Missing Children: All children are routinely and regularly accounted for throughout the day while in care at the Center. Systems are in place to allow for all staff to know who is in their care at all times, including during field trips. However, if a child ever becomes missing, the teacher will alert the center directors and proper steps will be taken immediately, including calling College police and parents.

Severe Injury or Illness of Adult or Child: In the event that a child is severely injured or suddenly becomes ill, the teacher is to

call "HELP, CHILD ILL/INJURED." The center directors will take over care of the ill or injured child while the teacher remains with the other children in her care. The center directors will release the child to the proper medical authorities and then call the child's parents.

In the event that an adult is severely injured or suddenly becomes ill, the staff member closest to the ill or injured adult is to call "HELP, ADULT ILL/INJURED." The center director goes to the teacher, assesses the situation, and calls 911 for medical attention. The center director will take over care of the ill or injured adult and assign another staff member to remain with the ill or injured teacher's children in her care. The center director will release the adult to the proper medical authorities and then call the adult's emergency contact person.

Severe Weather: If the weather looks threatening, the center directors will keep informed through radio or television about any watches or warnings issued by the National Weather Service. When a WATCH is issued, the center directors alert the staff verbally. Teachers are then to prepare their evacuation area by moving in their emergency backpack and "Bad Weather Box." There is a severe weather box located in each bathroom designated as an evacuation space.

When a WARNING is issued, the center directors will alert the staff by blowing one long whistle. Teachers are to gather their children in their care and are to move to the evacuation area as follows:

- Lab School
  - Infants will shelter in the adult restroom located directly next door to their classroom located in the main hallway.
  - Ones will shelter in the adult restroom located in their classroom.
  - Twos will shelter in the break room directly across the main hall located inside the resource room #109.
  - Threes will shelter in the restroom located in their classroom.
  - Pre-K will shelter in the restroom located in their classroom.
  
- Hagy Center
  - Infants will be in the restroom in the main hallway.
  - Ones will shelter in the restroom located in Hagy Hall.
  - EHS class will shelter in the restroom in their classroom.
  - Twos will shelter in their restroom located in their classroom.
  - Transition room will shelter in their restroom in their classroom.
  - Three's will shelter in the restroom located in their classroom.
  - Pre-K will shelter in the restroom located in their classroom.

Teachers must account for all children both before and after moving to the evacuation area. Teachers and children are to remain in the evacuation area until the center director says that the danger has passed (as issued through the National Weather Service) or until all the children are released to their parent or guardian or other adult who has authorization to pick up the child.

Volatile Person(s): In the event a person enters the center who exhibits violent, volatile, lewd, threatening behavior and/or appears under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the center directors will announce the "code phrase" over the center communication available. Each classroom and those in leadership have assigned handheld two way radios (walkie-talkies). When teachers hear the phrase, they are to lock their doors, gather the children in their care, gather their emergency backpack and take the children to the restroom located in their room. Once the staff and children are in the restroom, all children must be accounted for. Teachers and children are to remain in the evacuation area until the center directors say that the danger has passed.

**Health and Safety:** The Lab School and Hagy Center follows the procedures for health and safety as outlined in "*Caring for Our Children*", unless a standard found in the following is higher:



- Amarillo Bi-County Environmental Health Department (rules regulating food services and environmental health).
- Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Minimum Standards
- The National Association for the Education of Young Children Standards

## Daily Attendance and Health Checks

**Children:** Teachers are required to daily complete the “Daily Attendance and Health Check” to note the presence or absence of all children in their care. Moreover, teachers are to complete a physical check of each child in their classroom as noted in **Caring for Our Children**. Health checks are visual and physical assessments of a child to identify potential concerns about a child’s health. The health check must be conducted as soon as possible after the child enters the childcare facility and whenever a change occurs while that child is in care.

The health check shall address:

- Changes in behavior (such as lethargy or drowsiness) or appearance from behaviors observed during the previous days’ attendance;
- Skin rashes, itchy skin, itchy scalp;
- Changes in behavior or appearance, elevated body temperature;
- Complaints of pain or of not feeling well;
- Other signs or symptoms of illness (such as drainage from the eyes, vomiting, diarrhea and so on);
- Reported illness or injury in child or family members since last date of attendance;

Teachers are required to be trained in First Aid in addition to CPR, Child Abuse, Communicable Diseases and Blood borne Pathogens each year to help teachers know what to look for when assessing the health of a child. If a child is ill or injured, the child’s parents will be notified or the proper steps will be taken to report child abuse in such cases. Each morning teachers are to determine if a child is well enough to attend childcare and consult with parents when there is a concern.

Teachers are required to record their findings on the “Daily Attendance and Health Check” form. The completed form is due to the Director, along with the completed “Parent Sign-In Sheets” the first day of each month, with the exception of the month of December. Forms will be due on the last day the Hagy Center is open before Winter break.

**Staff Health:** The Director is responsible for assessing the general health of all staff. Any staff who is suspected of having a contagious disease or a health issue which jeopardizes the quality of care they can provide for the children they are assigned, will be released from duty, regardless of whether the staff has paid leave time or not. A note from a doctor may be required before the employee may return to work.

**Illness and Injuries:** If your child shows symptoms of illness, including but not limited to a ***fever of 100.4 or above under the arm, vomiting or diarrhea***, she/he will be isolated from the group and supervised. You will be notified immediately. Please pick up your child within thirty minutes.

***If your child has been kept home or sent home with a temperature at or above 100.4 degrees under the arm, your child must be fever-free, without the aid of medication, for 24 hours before she/he may return to the Center.***

If your child has been absent from care due to communicable illness (including pink eye) or serious injury, a note from your child’s physician stating that she/he is well enough to return to school will be required before your child can return to the Center. A child must wait 24 hours before returning to school after vomiting, diarrhea or fever. The child must be free of all symptoms before returning to the program.

If your child has an illness that prevents the child from participating in child-care activities including outdoor play or has an illness that requires a greater need for care than caregivers can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children in care, the Center cannot admit a child for care in our center for that day.

In case of an accident or sudden illness, we will at all times try to (1) contact you first, and then (2) contact your child's emergency contact list. When neither of the above may be contacted or in case of an extreme emergency, the child will be taken to the emergency room, by ambulance, to the hospital you designate on the *Authorization for Emergency Treatment and Transport*.

If your child receives first aid, even for a minor scrape or bump, you will be notified, in writing. A copy of the "Incident/Illness Report" form will remain at the Center in your child's file.

**Accident Reports:** Safety is a top priority at our Centers. Yet, there are times when a child will have an accident/ incident between your child and another child. If the accident/incident requires "more than a hug and a kiss", our teachers will complete a report for you detailing what happened and the nature of the injuries. If any first aid is administered, the treatment will be described to you. A copy of this "Incident/Illness Report", signed by the teacher in charge at the time of the accident, will be provided to you and a copy filed with the Director's office. We ask that you sign the copy provided to you and return it to the Director's office to confirm that you were notified of your child's injury. If your child happens to be injured by another child, we must protect the privacy of all children involved. We will not release the name of the child that caused the accident or injury. We will handle all behavior problems in a professional and appropriate way.

### **Authorization for Emergency Medical Treatment & Transport**

This form will give us your consent to call an ambulance or your child's doctor or dentist if he/she needs emergency care. Please list your child's doctor, dentist and the hospital you would prefer. Also, please list phone numbers and addresses of each. The form will be kept on file with the Director as well as a copy being kept with the child's teacher. The teacher will carry this form with her whenever the children are away from the building.

## **Medication Administration**

The current medication administration guidelines for the centers are listed below. These guidelines are subject to change; however, written notice to families of children enrolled at the center will be provided well in advance.

### **Medication**

All medication (including drugs that may be obtained with or without a prescription, excluding a topical ointment obtained without a prescription) to be given to children **must** be in the **original bottle with the instructions clearly printed on it as provided by the doctor's prescription or by the pharmaceutical company**. All medicine including scripted and unscripted medications must be in an up-to-date bottle and not be outdated or past-dated. All prescription medication must have that child's name on the script. All non-prescription medicine must have a permanent sticker with the child's name and the date the medication was left at the center. A "Permission to Give Medication" form needs to be filled out prior to the administration of any medication. All medicines must be personally handed to the director in charge at the time of arrival along with the "Permission to give Medication" form (Filled out). The Center Director reserves the right not to give medicines if the dosage is questionable or not according to the label. The Center Director reserves the right to request a doctor's consent via hand

written prescription for any non-prescription medications. A copy of the "Authorization to Give Medication" form along with the medication bottle and any remaining medication will be returned to the parent upon completion of the course of medication. Medication will only be administered by the director or staff member trained in pediatric first aid and found to be competent to follow all administration of medication procedures outlined in the Personnel Handbook. All medicine is kept in a locked cabinet in the child's classroom or in the Director's office. Medications that must be readily available are stored in a safe manner, inaccessible to children, while allowing for quick access by staff. The Hagy Center will not administer breathing treatments unless it is a medical necessity with a doctor's statement. The doctor's note will have to be detailed with diagnosis and dated with start and end date. If it is "as needed" the treatments will have to be administered at home, before and after care, or you may come up to the center to administer.

**Reporting Communicable Disease:** If your child has been absent from care due to communicable illness or serious injury, a note from your child's physician stating that she/he is well enough to return to school will be required before your child can return to class.

You will be notified, in writing, when a child has been exposed to a communicable disease within the Center. Likewise, please notify the Director when your child has been exposed to a communicable disease outside the centers. (The notification may be given verbally.)

**Sunscreen and Insect Repellent:** When public health authorities recommend use of insect repellents due to a high risk of insect-borne disease, only repellents containing DEET are used, and these are applied only on children over 2 months of age. Do not use a product that combines sunscreen and insect repellent. Staff apply insect repellent no more than once a day and only with written parental permission. To protect against heat and sun injury, children have the opportunity to play in the shade. When in the sun, they wear sun-protective clothing, applied skin protection, or both. Applied skin protection will be non-aerosol sunscreen or sunblock with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher that is applied to exposed skin (only with written parental permission to do so).

Sunscreen will be applied on children 6 months and older before they play outdoors from the mid-May through September, or as the weather warrants. If your child has a medical reason for not using sunscreen, please provide a written doctor's note explaining the reason. If a parent chooses to have a certain type of sunscreen, they need to provide the sunscreen with the child's name on the bottle or tube. Otherwise, the Centers will provide sunscreen for the child that is safe for their age at an SPF of at least 50.

**Heating and Air Conditioning:** The Amarillo College Physical Plant is responsible for the maintenance and repair to the heating and air conditioning systems at both centers. It is the responsibility of the Director to report malfunctions of the system to the Physical Plant. Records of repairs and maintenance are available through the Physical Plant.

**Parking Policy:** The Lab School and Hagy Center circle driveway is to be used by families who are dropping off and/or picking up their children from the center. The time limit for this area is fifteen (15) minutes. Please DO NOT leave children in the car at any time or under any circumstances. To protect the air quality of our playground areas please do not leave your vehicle running unless during extreme heat or cold to maintain interior or engine temperatures.. Please do not idle vehicles of any type in the parking areas. We strongly urge you to turn your car off and lock it when you come in to drop-off or pick-up your child. Neither Amarillo College, the Lab School, nor the Hagy Center is responsible for items lost or stolen from cars or from

the parking lot or facility. If you will be in the building longer than fifteen (15) minutes, there is designated parking in the lot north of the building.

**Parent Involvement:** We encourage all parents and/or guardians to be involved in the activities. We believe parental participation is key to any successful child care program. We welcome parent visits. We have an open door policy to allow parents access to the center during operational hours. Below is a sample list of some of the opportunities for involvement in our center. Parents are in no way limited to the involvement listed. Any parent wishing to be involved in another area is strongly encouraged to contact the Director with their suggestion.

- Parent meetings (at least three times a year—with at least one event in the evening)
- Fall Open House
- Individual parent conferences (at least twice a year)
- Special events such as Thanksgiving Feast
- Party Day volunteer
- Come and eat lunch with your child
- Classroom volunteer
- Help with center fundraiser
- Participation in Parent Advisory Committee
- Parent Surveys, such as our annual Program Improvement Survey
- Share a special talent, read a story, perform music for a class

## **Withdrawal and Discharge**

*Withdrawing from the Center:* If you choose to withdraw your child from the Center, please provide the Director with a written notice and the child's last day in attendance. If both you and our staff concur that the placement is inappropriate for your child, the two- week notice may be waived. Any credit balance of tuition fees will be refunded to you.

*Discharged or Dismissed from the Center:* Our policy is to provide the best childcare possible for all children. However, it may become necessary for the Center, in its sole discretion, to discharge your child for any of the following reasons:

- The individual needs of your child cannot be met adequately;
- You fail to provide required health records for your child;
- You repeatedly fail to comply with policies and procedures contained in the *Parent Handbook*;
- You fail to pay your child's tuition and/or fees;
- You fail to fully disclose any special condition your child may have; and/or
- Your child's behavior is deemed detrimental to the other children at the Center.

The process and steps to dismissal are

- 1) Verbal discussion and warning will be given,
- 2) A written warning will be issued and
- 3) Dismissal will occur.

We will work very hard to collaborate with families to create the best possible situation for each child. It is rare to have a dismissal but in the event an unusual situation were to occur, families and staff will follow these steps.

**Insurance:** The Lab School and Hagy Center comply with the minimum insurance coverage as suggested by our independent agent through Amarillo College. For more information, concerning policies and liability see the Director.

**Weapons:** All weapons, including firearms, are prohibited on the premises of the Lab School and Hagy Center. Although Concealed Carry laws may be in place, the Lab School and Hagy Center are gun free zones.

**Tobacco Use:** Smoking and the use of all other tobacco products are not permitted on the premises of the Lab School or Hagy Center. This policy applies to all staff, parents, volunteers and visitors.

**Grievances:** The Lab School and Hagy Center, as part of the College, will follow the procedures for grievances as outlined in the ***Amarillo College Classified and Administrative Personnel Handbook***.

- **Conflict between parent and teaching staff:** Lab School and Hagy Center strives to maintain positive relationships between staff, families and children. If staff have a conflict with the parent or other family member, the Director is to facilitate a meeting with the parent and staff member. If the matter cannot be resolved, the Director will contact the Department Chair and schedule a meeting between the conflicted parties, with resolving the conflict amicably as the foremost goal.
- **Conflict when our professional values and practices differ from families' values and practices:** The staff will make all effort to respect the values and practices of our families; however, if conflict occurs, families, staff and the Director will meet to discuss the differences and find an amicable compromise, keeping the best interests, needs and childcare practices as the guiding goal to resolving such issues.

## **Child Abuse Reporting Policy**

The State of Texas requires that the Lab School and Hagy Center and all members of child care institutions be on the lookout for, and report to the Department of Family and Protective Services and appropriate authorities any and all suspected cases of abuse to a child. All staff are trained annually on the prevention, recognition, and reporting child abuse and neglect (per Minimum Standard 746.1309). At the Lab School and Hagy Center, it is mandatory (by law) for staff to report any suspected child abuse. All incidents or suspected incidents will be turned over directly to the Child Protective Services for investigation. We are not allowed to do our own investigation and are required by law to report anything of a suspicious nature. It is advised that families make the staff aware of any lingering bruising or other visible injury to minimize suspicion of possible child abuse or endangerment.

*Accusations of Child Abuse and/or Neglect by a Staff Member:* Any staff accused of child abuse or neglect, whether it occurred in connection with their job duties or not, will be suspended from work. Full-time staff will be suspended with pay until the matter is fully investigated by the appropriate authorities and resolution to the matter is complete—by either dismissal, plea or conviction. If, upon a complete investigation, the staff member is not charged with child abuse or neglect after a complete investigation, the employee may be reinstated, with the approval of the Director. The Department Chair, Human Resources and the Amarillo College attorney may need to approve the reinstatement, if the situation merits their involvement. Official documentation by the investigating authority must be provided to the Director before a decision of reinstatement can be made.

Practicum students will not be allowed to use the Centers to complete their coursework until an investigation by authorities finds no merit to the accusation. Official documentation by the investigating authority must be provided to the Director before a decision of reinstatement can be made.

Volunteers accused of child abuse or neglect will be dismissed from their duties. The Director will decide whether the volunteer may resume his/her work at the Center if the investigation by authorities finds no merit to the accusation. Official documentation by the investigating authority must be provided to the Director before a decision of reinstatement can be made.

*Child Abuse Signs in Children:* The hand out given upon admission, describes the kinds of abuse that might occur and the signs that some abuse has happened. This is an approved hand out from the state and will help you be fully aware of how you can protect your child.

*Violent Crimes:* Every five years after date of hire, all personnel will be submitted for a check of public records for history of conviction of a crime against children (Child Abuse Registry) and a Texas Department of Public Safety records check. This re-check will also include an FBI fingerprint check as outlined in **TDPRS Minimum Standards**. An employee whose record check and/or FBI fingerprint check reveals a charge of a violent crime considered exclusionary to work at a licensed childcare center as defined in **TDPRS Minimum Standards** is subject to immediate suspension with pay (full-time employees only are allowed pay) until the disposition of the charge is settled. Conviction on the charge or plea to the charge, including a plea of “no contest” is considered grounds for immediate dismissal.

### **Gang-Free Zone**

According to Child Care Licensing, Gang-related criminal activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of the Amarillo College Hagy Center is a violation of law and therefore subject to increased penalty under state law.

*What is a gang-free zone?* A gang-free zone is a designated area around a specific location where prohibited gang related activity is subject to increased penalties under Texas law. The specific locations include day care centers. The gang-free zone is within 1000 feet of a childcare center. For more information about what constitutes a gang-free zone, please consult sections 71.028 and 71.029 of the Texas Penal Code.

*How do parents know where the gang-free zone ends?* The area that falls within a gang-free zone can vary depending on the type of location. The local municipal or county engineer may produce and update maps for the purposes of prosecution. Parents may contact their local municipality or courthouse for information about obtaining a copy of a map if they choose to do so.

*What is the purpose of a gang-free zone?* Similar to the motivation behind establishing drug-free zones, the purpose of gang-free zones is to deter certain types of criminal activity in areas where children gather by enforcing tougher penalties.

### **Information from Our Licensing Agency**

*Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Minimum Standards:* If you would like to know about or see a copy of the Minimum Standards or view the Center’s current inspections, please contact the Director to make arrangements for access during regular business hours. You can contact the local child care licensing office by calling 358-6211 or at their address—3521 SW 15th Street Amarillo, Texas, 79102 for any additional information.

*Childcare related information:* You may access a variety of childcare related information through

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services' website [www.tdfps.state.tx.us](http://www.tdfps.state.tx.us).

*Reporting abuse or neglect* – To report child abuse, you may call Texas Department of Family and Protective Services at 1-800-252-5400. All calls are confidential.

**ADDITIONS AND CHANGES:** *The Lab School and Hagy Center reserves the right to edit or adapt the policies in this handbook as the needs arise. The center will make all changes and additions available at the time these changes are made. Families will be notified of these changes through the normal written communication system of the center at the time they are made effective.*

## Amarillo College

# CHILD DEVELOPMENT LAB SCHOOL & HAGY CENTER FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

### Parent Acknowledgment Statement

### Operational Policies Book (Parent Handbook)

I, the undersigned, acknowledge receiving and reading the Amarillo College Operational Policies Book (Parent Handbook Fall 2021 REVISION) I further acknowledge that I have been given an opportunity to ask any questions regarding the information contained therein. Finally, I hereby acknowledge, understand, and agree to abide by the terms and conditions set forth in the Operational Policies Book (Parent Handbook) Fall 2021 REVISION.

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Signature of Parent

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Date of signature





# **Amarillo College**

## **CHILD DEVELOPMENT LAB SCHOOL & HAGY CENTER FOR YOUNG CHILDREN**

### **Acknowledgment Statement Guidance and Discipline**

Our philosophy for discipline is very positive in nature. It is guided by our love and acceptance of the child. Our feelings and attitude that might dislike an action or deed does not change how much we care for the child. The following guidance and discipline procedures are mandated by licensing regulations and are followed by the Center. The goal of Discipline and Guidance policy is to limit or eliminate the use of suspension, expulsion, and other exclusionary measures. Discipline is:

- Individualized and consistent for each child;
- Appropriate to the child's level of understanding and developmental age; and
- Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.

All teachers use only positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control and self-direction, which include at least the following:

- Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
- Reminding the child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
- Redirecting and reflecting on behavior using positive statements; and
- Using brief supervised separation or time-out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age
- Example being a resource such as Conscious Discipline from Dr. Becky Bailey
- There is no harsh, cruel, scary or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline are prohibited:
- Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment;
- Punishment associated with food, naps or toilet training;
- Pinching, shaking or biting a child;
- Hitting a child with a hand or instrument;
- Putting anything in a child's mouth;
- Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting or yelling at a child;
- Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive or profane language; INCLUDING SARCASM or argumentative speech patterns
- Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom or closet with the door closed; and
- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.

Using positive guidance, appropriate behavior is the goal, which is a "taught and caught" skill. Children are taught how to behave in everyday experiences, as well as having appropriate behavior modeled by the adults at the Center. Children learn more from what you do than what you say. We say and do positive guidance. \*Texas Administrative Code, Title 40 Chapters 746 and 747, Subchapter L, Discipline and Guidance

Guidance is used to provide the child with information about the proper way to handle a situation. Positive peer/teacher interaction is the goal; therefore, children who might bully, hurt or ignore other children will be assessed by the teacher and Director, if necessary, and additional teaching/coaching steps will be taken to help guide the child into more appropriate behavior. Parents will be included in these plans. Children learn the most from the example trusted adults set for them.

**Suspension/Explosion/Exclusionary Measures:** Staff understand and recognize that challenging behaviors are children's attempts to communicate a message, such as, "I am scared," "I am hurt," or "I want to play with you." To that end, they use multiple strategies to prevent and address these behaviors and to build children's positive social and emotional regulation and their communication skills.

To help minimize challenging behaviors, teachers should routinely observe their group in action to identify events, activities, interactions, and other contextual factors that may be predictive of challenging behavior. When they identify environmental factors that might be contributing to behavior problems, they make environmental modifications and implement targeted teaching strategies designed to support appropriate behaviors.

When responding to challenging behaviors, teachers avoid using negative responses. They are respectful and calm, and they ensure the emotional and physical safety of the child and others in the classroom. Teachers provide support and guidance to help children develop alternative behaviors. These include setting realistic and age-appropriate expectations for behavior, establishing clear and consistent routines, and engaging children in cooperative activities and group projects. For children with persistent or serious challenging behaviors, individualized plans designed to support inclusion and success are developed jointly with families and other support service staff. \*Excerpt taken from: 1.E—Addressing Challenging Behaviors, NAEYC Standards.

Challenging behavior: any behavior that interferes with children's learning, development and success at play, is harmful to the child, other children or adults OR puts a child at high risk for later social problems or school failure. When challenging behaviors are persistent we will take steps to assess the behavior to work with families and professionals to develop and individualized plan to address the behavior. We will include positive behavior support strategies as part of the plan.

In our program we use Conscious Discipline techniques developed by Dr. Becky Bailey to help prevent challenging behaviors impeding on a child's ability to successfully learn self-regulation, emotional literacy, secure attachment and social relationships with peers. These strategies are based upon brain development and age/developmentally appropriate practices. We use classroom "safe places" and emotional based learning activities regularly to help children learn how to access executive functioning of their brains vs being in fight or flight emotional distress.

If harmful/bullying or physical injury is a repetitive behavior pattern expressed from one child towards other children, an incident form will be filled out and the Parent will be asked to review and sign it. This form will be kept in the child's folder in the Director's office to help document this behavior and assess this behavior. If this type of negative/harmful behavior persists, there will be a meeting scheduled with the teacher of the child, parents of the child and the Director to collaborate on the best possible solution to assist the child to behave appropriately towards staff members and other children. The Parent will be notified to come pick up the child from school for the day if the child has repeatedly injured other children, staff members or property and we feel we need assistance from a parent to help manage challenging behavior. At this time, it is possible that a formal assessment be conducted by a professional. Depending upon the results of a formal assessment or the recommendation of a pediatrician, the leadership at the centers will collaborate with the teacher and parents to assimilate the child back into the classroom with accommodations/advice given by the medical professionals. Exclusionary measures are not considered until all possible other interventions have been exhausted and there is agreement that exclusion is in the best interest of the child. If exclusionary measures must be taken, the program will offer assistance to the family in accessing services and an alternative placement. We will comply with all federal and state civil rights laws.

**Biting Policy When Biting Does Occur:** The staff's job is to keep all the children safe and help a child that bites learn different, more appropriate behavior. We do not use techniques to alarm, hurt, or frighten children such as biting back or washing a child's mouth out with soap or any other inappropriate method of discipline/guidance. (In accordance with Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers; Subchapter L, Discipline and Guidance §746.2803 & §746.2805)

For the child that was bitten:

- The teacher will comfort the child. First aid is given to the bite. Ice will be provided and the area is to be cleaned with soap and water and covered with a bandage if needed.
- An Incident/Illness Report will be completed, documenting the incident and specify after care provided to the child. (Form 7239: Texas Department of Family and Protective Services)
- Parents may request a conference with the Director/Teacher to discuss any concerns/questions.

For the child that bit:

- The teacher will remind the child that biting hurts and that teeth should be used for eating food, not biting friends. Then the teacher will show the child how he/she hurt their friend.
- The child may be placed in time out for no longer than the child's age (one year old, one minute) or removed from the situation.
- The parents are notified.
- An Incident Report will be completed, documenting the incident.

When Biting Continues:

- If personnel is available, the child will be shadowed to help prevent any biting incidents.
- The child will be observed by the classroom staff to determine what is causing the child to bite (teething, communication, frustration, etc.) The administrative staff may also observe the child if the classroom staff is unable to determine the cause.
- The child will be given positive attention and approval for positive behavior.
- The child will be provided a teething ring or other appropriate teething toy.
- The Director will ensure the teacher has adequate resources and training necessary to keep the children active and engaged in supervised activities.
- The administration will evaluate the biting incident forms kept to determine the cause of the biting and make suggestions to the parent and teacher to stop the biting. The Director will provide literature to the parent and determine whether or not the teacher needs additional training. The Director will document all information.
- The Director will schedule a conference with the parents of the child who is biting to collaborate on a plan for home and the center to stop the biting.

When Biting Becomes Excessive:

- After all preventative steps have been tried by the staff members, if the child continues to bite routinely the Director will call the parent to pick up the child for the remainder of the day. For the safety of the other children, chronic/habitual biting may require that a child be excluded from enrollment for a period of time. If a child is excluded, the parent will be informed that the child may return to the center at a decided date;
- As an absolute last resort, if the child returns to the center, continues to bite, the child may be dismissed from the program. Exclusionary measures are not considered until all possible other interventions have been exhausted and there is agreement that exclusion is in the best interest of the child.

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Signature of Parent

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Date of signature