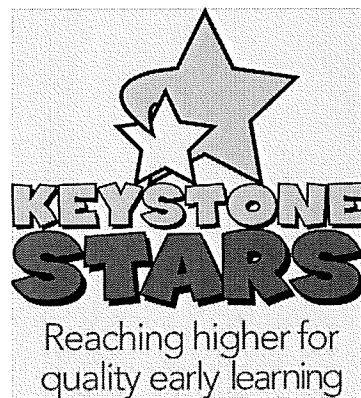


Keystone College

Keystone College Oppenheim Family Children's Center Handbook



STAR 4A FACILITY

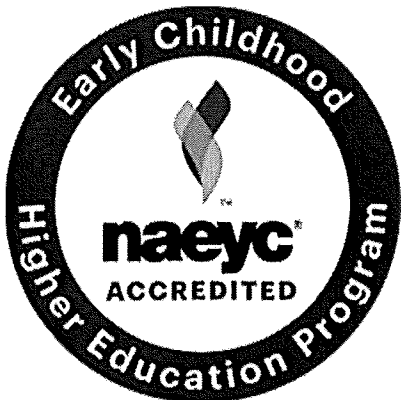


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WELCOME!

Welcome to the Keystone College Oppenheim Family Children's Center and the Keystone campus community. The handbook is intended to serve as a tool for facilitating family and staff communication about the program. It is designed to answer questions and provide background information about services provided at the Children's Center.

Your journey is beginning! Guiding the development of your child is a co-operative endeavor. Both the home and the school have important functions to serve in educating a child. These functions can be realized more effectively through mutual understanding, support, and assistance. We respect your opinions and appreciate your suggestions.

The Children's Center has an "Open Door" policy for families. We invite and encourage parents to actively participate in the program, through interactions in the classroom, attendance at meetings, and involvement in special projects. In addition to scheduled conferences during the year; notes, newsletters, and bulletin boards, as well as daily conversations, help us share information about your child. We will work as partners and friends in the task of fostering your child's development. It is through cooperative endeavors that your child will truly benefit from the early education programs that we provide. **If you are interested in volunteering, please let us know because you must obtain PA State mandated clearances.**

You can contact the Children's Center by phone (570) 945-8260, fax (570) 945-8018 or e-mail (childrencenter@keystone.edu).

On behalf of all the teaching staff, we wish your entire family a warm welcome.

Sincerely,

Silvana Coccimiglio
Director

ABOUT THE CHILDREN’S CENTER

The Keystone College Children’s Center opened in the summer of 1976. The Oppenheim Family Children’s Center complex was constructed in 2004. The Center includes four classrooms, a kitchen/staff area, and two outdoor playgrounds. The Center serves as an observation and participation site for education students and is an integral part of the Education Program at Keystone College.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Keystone College Oppenheim Family Children’s Center is two-fold:

- To provide a high quality program of early care and education in a safe, nurturing environment with many opportunities for children to discover the joy of learning while participating in age, individual and culturally appropriate experiences that address developmental needs and interests.
- To provide a model training site for the professional development of students and early childhood professionals, including opportunities for observation and participation.

Licensing/Accreditation

The Children’s Center is inspected and certified by the **Pennsylvania Department of Human Services** and its related agencies to ensure a safe, appropriate program for young children. The Children’s Center has earned a “**Four Star**” rating through Pennsylvania’s Quality Rating Improvement System (Keystone Stars). **Keystone STARS** is an initiative of the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) to improve, support, and recognize the continuous quality improvement efforts of early learning programs in Pennsylvania.

The Keystone STARS Performance Standards provide the foundation for the program. The Performance Standards are grouped into four levels: **STAR 1, STAR 2, STAR 3, and STAR 4**. Each level builds on the previous level and utilizes research-based best practices to promote quality early learning environments and positive child outcomes. The standards address staff qualifications and professional development, the early learning program, partnerships with family and community, and leadership and management.

The Children’s Center is accredited by the **National Accreditation of Early Childhood Programs**. The Accreditation recognizes outstanding early childhood programs that meet national standards of quality. Less than 10% of centers in the nation achieve this prestigious credential.

The teaching staff at the Center voluntarily undergo a comprehensive self-study and a review with an assessor in order to determine compliance of the early childhood programs with the criteria set forth by the National Accreditation of Early Childhood Programs. The criteria include:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| ▪ Interactions among staff and children | ▪ Staff/Parent interaction |
| ▪ Staff qualifications and development | ▪ Administration |
| ▪ Group size and staff-child ratios | ▪ Physical environment |

- Health and safety
- Evaluation

- Nutrition and food service

Accreditation is valid for five years from date of issue on the accreditation certificate. The Children's Center has been accredited since 1995, and was most recently re-accredited in January of 2018.

Program Philosophy

The Children's Center programs are based on a philosophy of respect for and trust in the child, with the assumption that all children are learners. Therefore, learning takes place during all activities and interactions. Our belief is that cognitive development is more effective when it grows out of the interests and needs of the child, in a nurturing, enriching and non-threatening environment. We recognize that children are unique individuals who learn in different ways, at different times, and from each other as well as from adults.

Accordingly, the classroom and outdoor environments are places where each child can explore and experiment within safe limits at his/her own pace. A broad array of materials arranged in special "interest areas" is available to provide a rich variety of activities. The environment encourages and stimulates exploration. Teachers offer guidance and support to children. The children are free to choose play activities related to art, blocks, music, science and math, dramatic play, books, language, and small manipulative materials. Activities are designed to be *process* rather than *product* oriented. This helps to foster the development of a child's critical thinking skills by giving the child opportunities to experiment, explore, question, and play. *Children learn how to learn and how to feel competent and in control.*

Growth in self-understanding will be fostered by promoting independence, initiative and feelings of self-worth. The children, working within certain limits, will be encouraged to deal with their conflicts verbally. Teachers will help them develop sensitivity toward the feeling of others. Positive attitudes towards diversity are fostered through our *anti-bias curriculum*. Our goal is to empower the children to reject negative stereotypes of race, gender, religion, age, and physical capabilities.

Family participation is welcomed and encouraged. We believe that when families participate in the classroom and observe their children, it is beneficial for the program, the children and each family.

CURRICULUM

Based on the philosophy and goals of the Center, the curriculum is:

- Developmentally based.
- Process-oriented, which focuses on having the child be an active part in this process
- Allows the child to set his/her own pace.
- Builds on the child's interests and abilities.
- Encourages the child to solve problems, question, hypothesize, experiment, and develop his/her cognitive processes.

The classrooms use The Creative Curriculum, which is aligned with the PA Department of Education's Early Learning Standards and with the NAEYC Early Childhood Learning Standards: Curriculum objectives are organized into nine areas of growth and development. These include:

- | | | |
|-------------------|--------------|-----------|
| *Social-Emotional | *Literacy | *The Arts |
| *Physical | *Mathematics | |

- *Language
- *Cognitive

- *Science and Technology
- *Social Studies

Curricular activities are appropriate to meet the Individualized Education Plan and Individualized Family Service Plan goals and/or special needs goals and objectives for individual children. For young children, meaningful and long lasting learning requires active thinking and experimentation to find out how things really work. This is best accomplished through *purposeful play facilitated by highly intentional teaching practices*.

The curriculum provides teachers with guidance in the following areas:

- *How Children Learn and Develop
- *Teacher's Role
- *The Learning Environment
- *The Family's Role
- *What Children Learn

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

The developmental screenings, observation tools, and assessment procedures utilized at the Children's Center align with the program philosophy of learning through play. Families are asked to complete a screening tool, Ages and Stages, to help the teacher get to know the child and to share information about how families' believe the child is developing. Teachers review this screening tool within 30 days of the child's enrollment. Observations of each child are recorded in the form of anecdotal records, photos, and checklists on an ongoing basis to track the child's progress. All assessment tools are aligned with the philosophy of educating the whole child and keeping the child actively involved in his/her own learning. Assessment is not done in a "testing" situation, but in a natural setting during the child's work or play.

All staff will complete the *Teaching Strategies Gold* Assessment Tool, which is aligned with the *Creative Curriculum*, three times during the year. All staff participated in staff training on Teaching Strategies Gold conducted by Bill Huber, a trainer for Teaching Strategies. Professional Development is also available on the Teaching Strategies website for any other staff member that would like additional training. These assessments are maintained in a secure online system. Teachers will print and share the online assessment summaries during parent conferences which are held twice a year. Assessment results will be kept confidential. Your child's teacher, the director, and the appropriate state agencies are the only individuals who will have access to your child's developmental assessments. These assessments will not be shared with anyone else without written permission from the parents.

Teachers will utilize the information gathered from checklists, screenings, Teaching Strategies Gold, and anecdotal records to guide curriculum development and individualize learning for each child.

CHILDREN'S CENTER PROGRAMS

The Keystone College Children's Center offers a part day and full day preschool program for children ages 3-5, two Pre-K Counts programs, and a summer camp program. We participate in the Head Start and Child Care Works (subsidized child care) programs. The Children's Center is open to all children regardless of race, color, religion, ability level, gender, or national origin.

PRESCHOOL

The program at the Children's Center is based on Child Development Theory. Young children are experiencing rapid growth in the areas of physical, social, emotional, creative, and cognitive development. Growth in these areas is interrelated. The program at the Children's Center is designed to stimulate development in an integrated manner.

The open space classroom is divided into carefully designed activity areas. The areas include sand/water, science, literature/language, art, dramatic play, blocks/construction, music, math/manipulative, and computer. Each interest area contains materials that promote skill development, foster understanding, and introduce the child to new concepts. Additionally, the classrooms provide opportunities to experiment, discover, and create.

During the day, children have opportunities to participate in individual, small group, and large group activities. "Free-Play" time encourages the children to explore their own interests in a carefully prepared environment. "Large Group" or "Circle Time" is a transition time between the "Free Play" and "Small Group" activities and is a time for music and movement activities, as well as a time for special guests. During "Small Group" the children and adults participate in a variety of developmentally appropriate activities that are designed to encourage the children's exploration of music, movement, art, science, math concepts, literacy, cooking or dramatic play. The children will also enjoy snack during "Small Group" time. The preschoolers are in the same group each day they attend and thus learn to co-operate as a team in a small group setting. The outdoor classroom provides many opportunities for learning as well. All children will participate in outdoor play each day, weather permitting. If you feel your child is too ill for outdoor play he/she should not attend the Center on that day.

OUTDOOR PLAY

Outdoor play is a vital part of the curriculum. It is not only an opportunity for learning in a different environment; it also provides many health benefits. National Standards define an acceptable temperature range for outdoor play as a wind chill factor over 15 degrees F and heat index below 90 degrees F.

ANTI-BIAS POLICY

The Children's Center staff offers children a wide variety of multicultural and diverse experiences throughout the year to promote friendship, caring, and tolerance. Teachers incorporate non-sexist, multi-cultural and anti-bias learning experiences in classroom life. Curricular goals are aimed at providing materials and activities in an environment that reflects a respect for, and celebration of, diversity in race, ethnicity, physical appearance, ability level, family composition and lifestyle. Every child and family is welcomed and supported in each classroom. We strongly encourage family support, involvement, and feedback regarding curriculum.

COLLEGE STUDENT OBSERVATION/PARTICIPATION

College students are an integral part of the program. The Children's Center is a model site for observation and participation for Keystone College students enrolled in Education classes. All children in the program may be observed by students needing to fulfill classroom assignments. Permission is assumed and observations are considered to be part of our program. Children may also participate in activities conducted by students under the supervision of a teacher. All students must have a child abuse, criminal history, and FBI clearances, as well as documentation of a current TB test, on file in the

Children's Center office before participating in the classroom. Students participate under the supervision of a staff member.

CHILDREN'S CENTER STAFF

The Children's Center staff consists of director, administrative assistant, lead teachers and assistant teachers. Students hired through the College's Work/Study program serve as teachers' aides. We also have certified substitute teachers that are available should a teacher not be available. The director and teaching staff have all earned degrees in Early Childhood Education or a related field in education. Staff members participate in a minimum of 24 hours of continuing education annually. The Program Coordinator of the Education Division at Keystone College serves as an advisor to the Children's Center staff. All staff members have completed child abuse, criminal history, and FBI clearances as well as an annual health assessment. Each child is assigned to a classroom with a lead teacher and assistant teacher who are responsible for record keeping, developmental assessments and parent conferences.

CHILDREN'S NEEDS

What to Wear

Children should wear simple play clothing that is free from complicated fastenings, washable for involvement in messy art activities, sturdy for outdoor play, and suitable for the weather. For your child's safety, he/she should wear shoes, which are sturdy, close-toed, and rubber soled. Flip flops, sandals and Crocs are not suitable to wear for active play and are not to be worn at the Children's Center. Sneakers are recommended. Children should dress in outer clothing appropriate for outdoor play, even in winter. Outdoor experiences are a vital part of the program and a joyful time for the children. Please label your child's accessories, especially boots, mittens, hats, scarves, and snow pants. Unlabeled clothing can result in losses and mix-ups.

What to Bring

Please bring to the center a complete change of clothing, to leave at the center, including socks and underwear for your child. It is best to label the articles of clothing and put them in a shoebox labeled with your child's name. If soiled clothing is sent home, please return an extra clean set the next day.

The Keystone College Children's Center will not accept responsibility for any clothing damaged while at the Center.

For full-day preschool, please provide the following:

- Light-weight blanket* if the child wants to rest
- Small pillow with cover for laundering (optional)*
- Favorite soft item for sleep (optional)
- A lunch, including a drink

** To be taken home weekly for laundering.*

For children in diapers please provide the following:

- Disposable diapers
- Diaper wipes

- Other items for diapering (powder, lotion, etc.) that you want the staff to use need a doctor's note and must be in the original container.

On sunny days:

- Sunscreen with a minimum SPF of 15. We ask that parents apply the sunscreen at home or at the Center after arrival. If parents sign a consent form, children who stay all day may have sunscreen applied to exposed skin, except eyelids, in the afternoon at the Children's Center. Sunscreen will be applied according to the instructions provided by the manufacturer. Label the sunscreen with your child's name and give it to the teacher who will store it in a locked cabinet. Do not put the sunscreen in your child's backpack or cubby. Sunscreen must have an expiration date and labeled with the child's name.

Toys from Home

Transitional objects such as stuffed animals and blankets can be brought to the Children's Center for as long as a child needs the objects to feel comfortable. These objects are the personal property of children and will not be shared with other children.

Other than transitional objects, **children should not bring toys from home**. Toys are easily lost or broken and may not be safe for use by a group of children. An exception to this rule would be items that a teacher may request that a child bring in for a specific purpose, such as "Show and Tell" or items to complement a topic of study in the child's group.

Toy weapons, projectile toys and very small objects must not be brought to the Children's Center at any time.

Goodbyes

Children may experience separation anxiety at some time during the year. Families are welcome to spend time in the classroom with children until they adjust to the new environment. When it is time for a family to leave, it is easier for your child if your good-bye is *loving, firm, and final*. You are welcome to stay and observe your child from the observation room. Feel free to call and check on how your child is doing during the day. The phone number is 945-8260.

DISCIPLINE AND BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

The goal for all children is the development of self-control and responsibility for their own behavior. We assist children and help them make appropriate choices by themselves and not to rely on adults to control their behavior for them. Utilizing *Positive Behavior Support* techniques, emphasis is placed on preventing problems through room arrangement, age appropriate expectations, interactive play and learning activities, positive staff-child interaction, and active adult supervision. Rules and guidelines are few and consistent. Teachers always explain the reasons for classroom limits. It is important that children understand the rules before they can be expected to follow them; therefore, rules are shared frequently and consistently. The five school rules are: walk; use a quiet voice; use toys safely; put toys away; and be kind and helpful. In line with these goals, we utilize supportive and positive discipline techniques that help children acknowledge their behavior, make choices about the solution, and be responsible for consequences.

If a child is displaying inappropriate behavior, the teacher will establish eye contact and discuss the appropriate behavior, using a problem solving approach. If the child continues the undesired behavior, he/she may need to be redirected to another area of the room where control can be regained. Within a few minutes, a staff member will remind the child of the appropriate behavior, and encourage the child

to rejoin the activity. Should an occasion arise and a child is not responding to the redirection methods, the teacher will meet with the families to plan individualized strategies targeting the needs of the child. Together; a consultation can be made with appropriate professionals to identify other resources that may be beneficial for a child. All discipline takes place on a one-to-one basis between the staff member and the child (or children, as appropriate). A child is never threatened or belittled. Loud voices are never used when redirecting children; rather, calm, soft voice tones are used to help diffuse challenging situations. Physical, Psychological or coercive punishment is never used in dealing with a child's behavior. (i.e. shaking, hitting, slapping, kicking, biting, roughly grasping, forcing a child to do anything against their will, name calling, humiliation, sarcasm etc.)

PARENTS AS PARTNERS

The Children's Center program welcomes ideas and input from all families. Families are encouraged to contact the directors or classroom teachers with ideas of how they would like to be involved in the program. We believe that as parents you are the primary educators of your children and the most important influence in your child's life. We appreciate you sharing your perceptions, feelings, and observations of your child.

Communication between home and school is encouraged in several ways: daily conversations, notes, meetings, bulletin boards, parent newsletters, conferences, and phone calls. We encourage you to become actively involved with us in your child's education. Classroom participation, committee works, classroom observation, child conferences, family meetings, and special program events are several ways in which you can become involved. If you would like to spend a day in the classroom or do a special project with the children, please let us know. We are pleased to have you join us! Feel free to be a part of the school by offering your time, talents, suggestions, comments, ideas, and constructive criticism. Let us know how you would like to be involved in the program.

Parent/Teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year. This is a time to exchange information and set goals. Teachers want to meet with parents to share insights and to learn more about each child. Please feel free to arrange additional meetings with your child's teacher as needed. It is difficult for teachers to have extended conversations at arrival and pick-up times as they need to focus on the children. They will be happy to talk with you on the phone when they can be away from the children. Each classroom sends home a monthly newsletter stating what lessons will be done and any other important information that will happen in the classroom such as end of the year programs, holiday schedule, visions screening etc.

To keep you informed about the Children's Center activities, we will be sending home a monthly newsletter. This will give an overview of the curriculum and special events or notices for the month. For more specific information on daily activities, be sure to check the "My Day" board, which will inform you of your child's activities for each day. Check your child's cubby daily for his/her work and for notices from the staff that can be found in the colored folder in each cubby.

Your views about the program are important to us. Each year families are asked to complete a survey asking for input about how well we are meeting the needs of each child and family. Parents will receive a copy of the survey results. This information families provide guides us in making continuous quality improvement to better meet the individual needs of families and children.

Feel free to speak with your child's teacher or the directors about any concerns or suggestions that you may have. Let us know if you require any additional services. Everything works better when we work together!

SUGGESTION BOX

Comments can be shared with the staff at any time by writing your comment/suggestion on the index cards provided and placing them in the "Comments" box in the front entrance area.

COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

Information about outside events for families can be found on the Community Bulletin Board is located in the entrance hallway. If you become aware of community events that you think would be of interest to other families, please give the information to the director or administrative assistant for posting on the Community Bulletin Board.

MESSAGE BOARD

If you have comments concerning restrictions on your child's activities during the day, please inform the teacher. Let us know of any unusual behaviors he/she may exhibit due to lack of sleep or other circumstances. In general, share with us anything that we may need to know to help your child enjoy his/her day to the fullest. Each classroom has a parent message book in which you can write daily information for the teachers. Please call and let us know if your child will not be attending on his/her regularly scheduled day.

COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

Despite a collaborative effort by families and staff to work together for the best interests of the children, disagreements may sometimes occur. Communicate calmly and directly with your child's teacher when a problem concerning your child arises. It is important to model appropriate conflict resolution and communication skills for children. If matters are not resolved to your satisfaction, please see the Director or write a formal letter to document your concerns and it will be reviewed by the Director and the program coordinator. For concerns related to administrative matters, please speak with the Director promptly. If you still are not comfortable with the outcome of situation the next step would be to make an appointment with the Program Coordinator or the Dean to discuss your concerns.

SESSION TIMES

The morning preschool session meets from 9:00AM to 11:30AM and the PM half day session is 12:30PM-3:00PM. The full day preschool program runs from 7:45AM to 5:00PM. The Pre-K Counts programs meet from 8:45AM to 1:45PM. Children attending the full day Head Start program will arrive at 8:30AM and leave at 3:00PM.

TUITION

Tuition is due by the 5th of each month. **Repeated failure to pay tuition by the date due may result in your child's dismissal from the program.** A non-refundable annual application fee of \$50.00 is required at the time of the child's application for admission. Families must reapply every year the child attends.

Tuition must be paid for the time period agreed upon in the Child Care Agreement. A late fee of \$1.00 per minute will be applied if your child remains at the Center beyond the session time. Tuition includes days missed due to illness, vacations, and Center closings, including weather-related and natural disaster closings. There will not be any substitution made should your child miss a class day. The Children's

Center offers a multiple child discount for siblings enrolled during the same school year. The youngest child pays the full tuition rate and each additional child's tuition is discounted by 15%.

CHILDREN UNDER THREE ENROLLMENT POLICY

Enrollment for the preschool program at the Oppenheim Family Children's Center begins on March 1, six months prior to the start of the academic school year, which is August 31. Families can enroll children during the time period March 1 through August 31. Enrolled children must be three (3) years of age prior to the start of the academic school year. Slots cannot be held after August 31 for applicants who do not meet the age requirements for admission. If circumstances warrant, a family seeking to enroll a child who turns three (3) after August 31, may secure a slot for the child by paying for the slot until the child turns three (3). If you are interested in reserving a slot in one of the classrooms, contact the Center Director.

TUITION SUBSIDY

We participate in the following programs which offer financial assistance to eligible families: Subsidized Child Care program, Head Start (Lackawanna County), Pre-K Counts (Wyoming County), and the Susquehanna/Wyoming County Community Foundation Scholarship program for eligible families. Please contact the Children's Center office for more information.

All fees are non-refundable. There will be a \$25 fee for returned checks. Payment may be made by cash, check, money order, or by Visa and MasterCard. Checks should be made payable to "Keystone College."

WRAP AROUND CARE FOR PRE K COUNTS

The Keystone College Children's Center offers additional care after your child's program ends. This care will be offered on a two (2) day (Tuesday/Thursday), three (3) day (Monday/Wednesday/Friday), and five (5) day (Monday-Friday) program. These rates are monthly prices and must be paid at the beginning of the month. These rates include holidays, snow days, and missed days due to illness or other reasons.

The Children's Center is closed for the following holidays: New Year's Day, Easter Monday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, the day before Thanksgiving Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and generally the days between Christmas Day and New Year's Day. **This is determined by the College President on an annual basis.**

Professional Development Days: In addition to the days listed above, the Children's Center will be closed for seven (7) staff professional development days per year. Professional development days help teaching staff maintain a high quality program. Professional development activities may include: attending workshops, organizing the classroom environment and materials, developing teaching classroom and curricular goals and curriculum; preparing children's individual portfolios; and preparing for parent conferences. Professional development days will be included in the Children's Center calendar.

NUTRITION POLICY

Good nutrition is vital to children's overall development and well-being. In an effort to provide the best possible nutrition environment for the children in our facility, the Oppenheim Family Children's Center at

Keystone College outlines the nutrition policies in this handbook. The policies are procedures in which the program engages to inform families about the food services that are provided, including meals, snacks, and drinks; a list of suggested lunch items for meals brought from home; and recommendations about appropriate food that families can provide for celebratory activities such as birthdays. The center has developed the following child care nutrition policies to encourage development of good eating habits that will last a lifetime.

SNACKS

The Children's Center provides a nutritious snack, including a drink, for each preschool session. For snack we serve fresh, frozen, and water-packed canned and dehydrated fruits and veggies, whole grain foods, and foods that offer good sources of potassium, such as bananas and nectarines. We limit foods that are high in fat and sugar to once per week. We limit juice intake to once per day and all juice is 100% fruit juice. We serve only 1% milk to children and we do not serve sugar sweetened beverages. Drinking water is available to the children throughout the day. Some examples of snacks we serve are below.

- Sliced apples and Nutella spread
- Bagels and cream cheese
- Yogurt with fruit (strawberries, blueberries, and raspberries)
- Sliced ham and crackers

*Be sure to list any food allergies or special diets on your child's information forms, so that special snack arrangements can be made if necessary.

LUNCH

The Oppenheim Family Children's Center informs families that all meals are prepared in accordance with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child and Adult Food Care Program Standards. In addition, the program maintains compliance with the Department of Human Services Certification Guidelines, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) criteria, and all other quality standards to which the program adheres.

The Children's Center contracts with Keystone College's on-campus food service to provide nutritious lunches to children attending the Center through the Head Start and Pre-K Counts programs. Menus will be posted weekly for parents to view. Families must provide a lunch in our private pay preschool programs. All lunches brought from home should consist of healthy food choices. Some examples of lunches you may bring for your child are below.

- Lunch meat on whole wheat bread, frozen Go-gurt, a fruit mix, and 100% fruit juice
- Yogurt bowl with fruit and granola, rice cake treat, and water
- Nutella on toasted bagel, cucumbers with ranch, veggie straws, and milk

The Oppenheim Family Children's Center is a peanut-free facility due to the severity of peanut allergies.

WELLNESS POLICIES

The staff at the Oppenheim Family Children's Center believes that the early years are the formative years for developing nutrition and physical activity habits that will produce a lifetime of good health. Good nutrition, healthy eating, and age-appropriate physical activity in environments supported by nurturing adults are critical to facilitate positive future outcomes.

Engagement in the Child Care Wellness Mini-grant Project provided an opportunity for teaching staff to self-assess the current nutrition policies employed by the program; as well as to review Nutrition Areas

of the program, which include menus, food groups and beverages provided; the feeding environment; and professional development for practitioners. In addition, the assessment focused on physical activity policies, both indoors and outdoors.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Children need at least 120 minutes of active play every day, including both structured and unstructured play time to maintain their fitness levels and to develop physically, mentally, and emotionally. Physical activity periods should be long enough for children to obtain health benefits. Active play time means that children are allowed to move freely, enjoying active movements such as skipping, running, and climbing. Examples of physical activities include obstacle courses, climbing on playground equipment, pulling a wagon, riding a tricycle, and playing a game of kickball.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are a special time for children. If a family would like to provide a snack for your child's class on his/her birthday, your child's teacher would be glad to help you determine an appropriate choice. We also need to be mindful of allergies. We only accept store bought snacks in original packaging. All snacks must follow the policy for foods brought from home to share below.

FOOD FROM HOME FOR SHARING

Food that comes from home for sharing among the children must be either whole fruits or vegetables or commercially prepared packaged nutritious foods in factory sealed containers. Please do not bring foods that do not meet these guidelines so as not to disappoint your child, as they will not be served.

*Note: We will respect the parents' wishes in the event that customs or religious beliefs prohibit birthday celebrations.

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES

Your child's health is important to all of us. Each child is required to have a current physical examination form, which must be completed by a physician, on file at the Children's Center in order to attend a program. A physical examination must be conducted annually. It includes a brief medical history. **If the form is not completed and signed by your child's physician, your child will not be able to return until we receive the form.**

Providing a safe, healthy environment is a goal of the Children's Center.

► The policies provided by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Public Health Association are used as the standard for our illness policies. Children will be excluded from attending the program if any of the following exist:

1. The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities.
2. The illness results in a need for greater care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children.
3. The child has symptoms such as unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, or any other signs of serious illness.

A child with *any* of the following symptoms should remain at home until the symptoms resolve and/or the pediatrician has been consulted.

- any axillary (under the arm) temperature of **100.0 degrees and over** in the previous 24 hours.
- any episode of vomiting or diarrhea in the previous 24 hours.
- breathing difficulties or very persistent coughing.
- any unidentified rash.
- unusual tiredness or loss of appetite.
- persistent crying or irritability.
- persistent abdominal pain.
- mouth sores that cause pain.
- red or pink eyes with white or yellow discharge until after treatment has been initiated
- head lice.
- any communicable disease

***PLEASE NOTE: If your child is sent home with a fever of 100 degrees or more your child cannot return to the children's center the next day.**

In addition, we will contact you to pick up your child from the Children's Center if he or she exhibits any of the above symptoms during class hours. **You will have up to 30 minutes to pick up your child from the Children's Center.** After that time emergency contacts on file will be called. Your child must remain at home until the symptoms resolve and/or the child's pediatrician has been consulted. A doctor's note stating that your child is no longer contagious is required after your child has been treated for communicable disease. The doctor's note must state that the child is able to return and a specific date that the child can return.

Remember, this policy is in place to keep all of our children and staff members healthy. Please consult these policies whenever you are not sure whether your child should attend the Children's Center.

► A child who is under-immunized due to a medical condition or the family's beliefs will be excluded from the program immediately if a vaccine-preventable disease to which the child is susceptible occurs in the program. If the program becomes aware of the incidence of such a disease while the child is present at the Children's Center, parents will be called and instructed to pick up the child immediately. The child will need a physician's recommendation to return to the program.

► If your child has a communicable disease, please contact the Center as soon as possible so we can notify other parents of possible exposure. We will also send home information about the disease, including symptoms to watch for and suggested treatments.

► Parents are urged to give as many doses of medication at home as possible. If medication is to be administered at the Center, it must be properly labeled with your child's name, the doctor's name, and instructions for dosage and administration. Medication must be in the original container and may only be given to the child whose name is on the label. All medicines will be stored in a locked cabinet. **A Medication Form must also be filled out by your child's physician and on file at the Children's Center in order for staff to administer medication to your child, even for over the counter medications.** Exceptions are insect repellents, and sunscreen which only require written parental consent. Each day the medication is to be given at the Center, a parent is required to fill in the following information on our Medication Chart: date, dosage, time to be given, refrigeration requirements, and parent's signature. All over the counter medication must be in the original package and have an expiration date.

► We work hard to provide a safe environment that is carefully supervised; however, part of growing up includes bumps and bruises. If your child receives a minor injury while at the Center, your child's teacher will complete an "Ouch Report." If your child should get a more serious injury (ex. head, neck), you will be notified and an "Accident Report" will be completed. A copy will be given to you and a copy will be kept in your child's file at the Center.

► In case of a severe injury, we will attempt to call a parent immediately. If we can't reach you or your emergency contact person, we will contact the child's physician. If necessary, we will also call an ambulance. Until the parent or ambulance arrives, the Director or designated staff member will make decisions about the care of your child. It is important that you note your whereabouts on the Sign-In sheet or Parent Message Book if you will be somewhere other than home, work, or class. The Health Care Information you signed as part of the enrollment process allows the Center to secure emergency medical treatment for your child should it ever be necessary. Injuries that require a child being seen by a physician are reported to the State within 24 hours.

► LET US KNOW IMMEDIATELY OF ANY CHANGE IN YOUR ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBER, EMERGENCY CONTACT PERSON OR FAMILY DOCTOR.

HANDWASHING

► Children and adults must wash their hands on arrival for the day. This is part of our daily routine. Children should wash their hands as soon as they put their belongings in their cubbies. If parents are spending time in the classroom, you are also required to wash your hands. Hand washing is the most effective practice to reduce the spread of germs which cause illness.

SMOKING POLICY

► The Children's Center is entirely a smoke-free facility at all times. This includes the building, playground, parking area and the front and sides of the building. No smoking is permitted in the presence of children.

SMOG

► During smog and air pollution alerts, The Children's Center will limit or cancel all outdoor activities as a precautionary method to protect children, adults, and program staff against exposure to such elements.

ANIMALS

► No animals should be brought to the Children's Center without prior approval from the director. Classroom or visiting animals must appear to be in good health. Pets or visiting animals must have documentation from a veterinarian or animal shelter to show that the animals are fully immunized (if the animal should be so protected) and that the animal is suitable for contact with children. Teaching staff will supervise all interactions between children and animals and instruct children on safe behavior when in close proximity to animals. Staff will make sure that any child who is allergic to a type of animal is not exposed to that animal. Reptiles will not be allowed in the classroom because of the risk for salmonella infection.

SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

► All Children's Center employees are mandated by Pennsylvania law to make a report if there is reason to suspect that a child is being abused or neglected. It then becomes the role of the child

protection agency to insure that your child's needs are being met. If you suspect that a staff member is neglecting or is abusing a child, families need to report it to the director immediately. Keystone College as a no-tolerance policy for any form of abuse towards children or any other person, these procedures protect both the rights of the accused staff person and the children in the program. Staff members are all trained in the mandated reporting process and must be trained in it every 5 years.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

► We make every effort to ensure a safe environment for the children at all times. We have a set of written procedures for emergencies. All Children's Center staff members receive CPR and First Aid training. An Emergency Evacuation plan is reviewed regularly with staff and a fire drill is held once a month. Shelter-in-place drills are conducted annually. In the event of an emergency that would require the evacuation of the building, the children will be taken to the Gambal Athletic Center and parents will be notified.

SECURITY

The Children's Center security system includes cameras at the main entrance, hallways, and in each classroom. These cameras are monitored in the Administrative Assistant's office near the main entrance. Entrance to the building is accessible only by an authorized swipe card or key. The main entrance has a buzzer system and an intercom in addition to the camera. Access will be granted or denied based on verbal or visual identification of individuals requesting entrance. The area outside the green room is completely fenced in. All visitors, including students, faculty and consultants are required to sign in upon entering the building. A sign in/out record is located in the front entrance area. Parents are required to sign this record only if they are staying beyond the typical pick-up or drop-off times.

LOCKDOWN POLICY

Keystone College Children's Center will follow the College Lockdown Procedure. During the lockdown procedure the center will be locked and no one will be able to come in or out of the building until everything is cleared by law enforcement and campus safety. During this time a WENS notification will go out and families will notify when there is any update.

DISASTER PLAN

The Children's Center staff receives training in emergency response procedures. The Center is strongly supported by the Keystone College Facilities and Campus Security staff. In the event of a fire, or other disaster that makes the building or grounds unsafe, the Children's Center staff and children will evacuate the building and gather at the Gambal Athletic Center. The classroom staff will bring the daily staff/child roster and the office staff will bring emergency cards which include the parents' contact information. If we are unable to return to the Children's Center building, we will contact parents by phone. A staff member will remain at Gambal Athletic Center until all children have been picked up. We will expect parents to pick up their children as soon as possible. If you are unable to get to the Center, you must arrange for an authorized person to pick up your child.

WITHDRAWAL FROM CENTER

It is important for your child to be given an opportunity to say good-bye and have a sense of closure when he or she leaves the program. Please let your child and the staff know in advance of your child's last day, so that the transition can be a positive experience for your child, his or her friends, and teachers.

We request that written notice of *intent to withdraw* be given to the Director at least two weeks in advance of the actual departure date.

ENROLLMENT CANCELLATION BY THE CENTER

The Center may terminate your child's enrollment under the following circumstances:

- Non-payment for child care services and/or lack of adherence to tuition payment policies.
- Falsification of information on enrollment forms or otherwise knowingly falsifying information.
- Lack of agreement with, or compliance with, the policies set forth in the Oppenheim Family Children's Center Handbook.
- Lack of family cooperation with the Center's efforts to resolve differences and/or to meet the child's needs through family and staff meetings or conferences.
- Inappropriate or abusive behavior and/or verbal abuse or threats by parents, guardians, family members, relatives, or other parties towards the Center staff, other families, or children.
- Inability of families to deal in a professional manner with Center personnel or other families and children enrolled at the Center.
- The continued enrollment of the child poses a risk to the health and/or safety of their own wellbeing, other children, families, or center staff members.

Our priority is to develop a positive relationship with your child and the entire family. Prior to considering a request to withdraw your child, the Center Director and Staff will attempt to work with you to meet your family's needs while in the program. We will work with Early Intervention and all agencies in order to ensure that your child is receiving all possible benefits of being in our program. You will be notified verbally and in writing when we feel the Center can no longer meet the needs within the parameters of the Center program and that of the state requirements.

PARKING POLICY

The area in the front of the Children's Center has been designated as a vehicle-free area, with the exception of two clearly marked Handicapped Parking spaces on the right hand side of the building. Individuals with approved handicap parking permits must enter and exit on the right side of the building only. Idling cars will not be permitted to park in front of the children's center for any reason.

Parking for drop-off and pick-up at the Children's Center is available in two locations: in the parking lot directly across the street from the Center and in the marked spaces adjacent to Brooks Theater, the building to the right of the Children's Center. A paved walkway leads from these two parking areas to the Children's Center. A Keystone College Public Safety Officer will assist you in crossing College Avenue during the busiest arrival/departure times. If you feel that you or your child is not capable of walking to and from the designated parking areas, please consult your physician about obtaining a handicap parking permit.

We have created a safe pick-up and drop-off procedure for children and families. We ask that you hold your child's hand while walking to and from the parking spaces. It is essential for you to observe these procedures to ensure the safety of all children.

PICK-UP AND DROP OFF POLICY

Preschool classes begin at 9:00AM. Children who are not registered for extended hours need to arrive as close to this time as possible. Should you arrive early you will need to wait in the foyer until the classroom doors open. Teachers need time to prepare the classroom for the day and are not free to supervise children before this time. Also, please do not bring your child later than 9AM since activities will have already begun. **To enhance parent-teacher communication and to properly supervise your child, we ask that you refrain from talking on your cell phone while dropping off and picking up your child.**

A staff member will be near the inside entrance area of each classroom to greet you and your child. It is the parents' responsibility to be sure the staff member knows that the child has arrived and to sign the child in at the beginning of class and sign them out at the end of class using your full signature and the time of arrival and departure. Parents are responsible for supervising their child before signing their child in and after signing them out. It is the families' responsibility to supervise the child that will be taken home when the parent arrives for pick-up. Be sure to hold your child's hand and closely supervise your child at all times as you exit the center and when walking to your vehicle.

Your child will not be released to a person not authorized by you to pick up the child. You must notify the Director or the Teacher if anyone other than those listed on your Childcare Agreement is to pick up your child. Please inform the individual that you designate, as the individual to whom your child will be released, that he/she must show some form of identification before the child will be released. If you car pool, we will need a list of all the children in the car pool and the individuals who are authorized to transport the children. When picking up your child, be sure a staff person is aware that you are taking the child and remember to sign the child out. You must come into the Center to pick up your child. Children may become quite apprehensive if a parent is late. Be sure to call us at 945-8260 if you find yourself in an emergency situation and must be late.

Children must be picked up from the Preschool program at the agreed upon time. Failure to do so will result in the assessment of a late fee of \$1.00 per minute for the as long as child remains after the designated time.

Release of a Child to an Intoxicated/Impaired Person

The Children's Center staff will make every effort to be sure that all children are in safe hands as children are released at pick up time. We will attempt to protect the child from getting into a car with an adult who seems to be impaired in any way. Actions taken include calling the other parent or the emergency contacts. If a parent or other authorized person insists on taking the child in the car, the staff will immediately report the incident to the local police and the child abuse hotline.

Non-Custodial Parent Policy

Without a court order, we cannot refuse to release a child to his/her biological parent. If you have a custody agreement prohibiting pick-up or any other restrictions on contact by a biological non-custodial parent, that court order must be on file at the Children's Center.

When there is a parental dispute between divorced parents/guardians about the child in relationship to the Center, this issue should immediately be brought to the attention of the director. The director will make every attempt to work with the parents/guardians so the transition from home to school can be a smooth one. The center will only follow what the court order states. If updates were made to the orders please ensure that the center receives a copy of the documents for the child's records.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Children's Center Office: (570) 945-8260
Children's Center Fax: (570) 945-8018
Keystone College: (570) 945-8000 (for weather related information)

FORMS

The following forms must be on file at the Children's Center:

Application

Child Health Report

Health Care Information

Allergy Information (if necessary)

Medication Form (if needed for staff to administer medication to your child)

Policies and Procedures Acknowledgement

***Any applicable court orders must also be on file.**

Registration

Authorization to Release/Access Information

Parking Information

***Child Care Agreement**

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

All children's files are carefully protected. Parents must sign a written request for the Center to release information to specified individuals or agencies. At the same time, a child's records are always available to parents, legal guardians, regulatory authorities and administration and staff.

WEATHER EMERGENCY SCHEDULE

The Children's Center will follow Keystone College's schedule for school delays, early dismissals, and closings due to inclement weather.

If Keystone College is following a compressed schedule the Children's Center will open at 10 am. It is important to note that on days when the College is following a compressed schedule, families and children should not arrive at the Center until 10:00am. It is imperative that we maintain mandated staff/child ratios. Since the College opens at 10:00am, the full complement of staff will not be available until that time. The afternoon session will follow their regular schedule. If the College is closed, the Children's Center will also be closed. Should Keystone College announce an early dismissal due to the weather, the afternoon session will not be held on that day. The Center will close at the time the College closes.

Keystone College along with Sodexo (grounds maintenance) decides whether to close, delay or continue with a regular day. The Staff at the Children's Center does not have any control over whether the center is closed or delayed. Our only advice to everyone is to make your own best judgment and decide for yourself if it is safe to drive to school. Attendance is important but due to safety concerns, you will not be penalized for missing school.

We wanted to remind families about all the ways to look for weather-related delays or closures. We have the WENS notification system (Keystone College controls this) all news outlets (look for KEYSTONE COLLEGE), the Remind app(@6hefc8), the Children's Center Facebook Page, and the voicemail message on the Children's Center phone (570-945-8260). Keystone College will have it on their website (www.keystone.edu), on the Keystone College Facebook page and on the main campus number (570-945-8000). Unfortunately, some of these technologies can fail so please make sure you check other sources to see if the Children's Center is closed, delay or running on a regular schedule.

ADDITIONAL SERVICES

Often parents may desire or need assistance beyond the capabilities of the Children's Center. The Children's Center has a resource list of various community agencies that may be useful to our families. Please let us know if you are seeking additional services and we will be glad to assist you.

FINAL THOUGHTS

We are always interested in learning more about better ways to serve you and the children you have entrusted to our care. We take this responsibility very seriously. Please let us know how we are doing. If there is something you do not understand or do not like, tell us right away. We cannot always make changes to accommodate everyone, but we are willing to try. If you are happy with our Center, tell us that too, and tell everyone else as well!

NOTES