

# Waisman Early Childhood Program

2020-2021

FAMILY HANDBOOK AND POLICY MANUAL



**WAISMAN CENTER**  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities

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# I. HISTORY & BASIC INFORMATION

The Waisman Early Childhood Program (WECP) began in 1979 as a result of state legislation allocating funding for a preschool program for children with disabilities at the Waisman Center. Over the years, WECP became a licensed and accredited preschool and child care program for families, while adhering to its mission of inclusion of children with special needs in a regular education setting. With the completion of the Waisman Center's expansion and remodeling project in 1999, WECP grew to its present capacity of 100 children.

Today, the WECP is a model inclusive program licensed for children from age 1 to 6. Six classroom programs offer early education and care year-round. Open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., WECP maintains its commitment to providing high quality, developmentally appropriate programming. WECP is a state licensed program, is accredited by the City of Madison Child Care Unit, and is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). It has received 5 stars from Young Star, the State of WI quality child care system. A Policy Agreement Statement is included in enrollment contracts, wherein parents/guardians indicate they have read the Family Handbook, understand the purpose and goals of the WECP, and will cooperate with the stated policies, procedures, and program requirements. Please be sure to read this Family Handbook thoroughly so you are aware of the policies with which you are indicating your agreement.



## II. PURPOSE & PHILOSOPHY

WECP is affiliated with the University of Wisconsin through the Graduate School. Designed to meet the needs of a developmentally diverse group of young children, it also provides a site for university research and training.

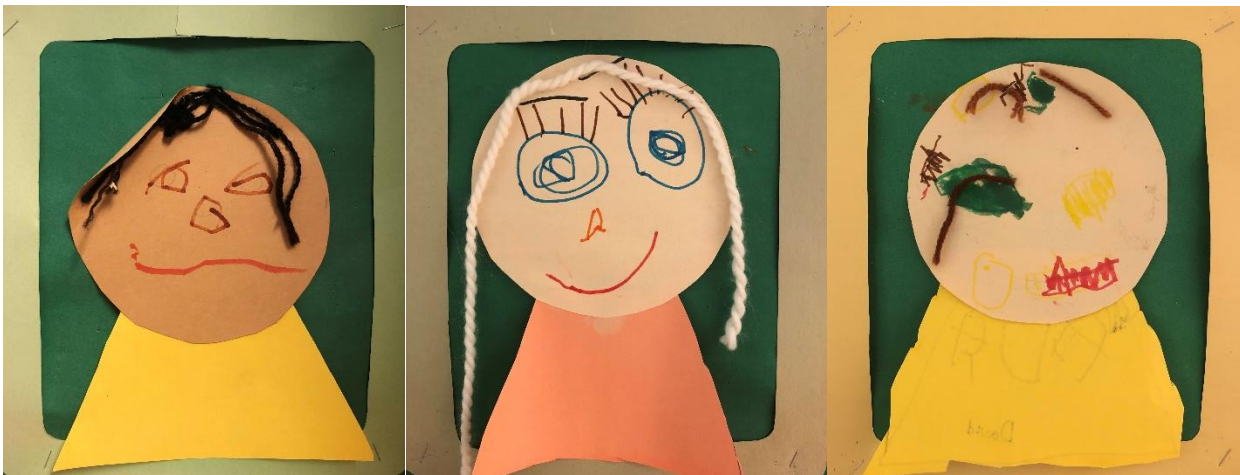
Our program goals are:

1. **Service:** to provide an exemplary inclusive child development program for children developing typically and for those with special needs.
2. **Training:** to provide disciplinary and interdisciplinary training to university students.
3. **Research:** to provide a research setting in which relevant educational and developmental issues can be studied.
4. **Outreach:** to provide community consultation and professional development opportunities about early childhood development, education and inclusion to programs and individuals.

The goal of the WECP is to provide a supportive and enriching environment that will foster each child's social-emotional, cognitive, language, and physical development. The program incorporates the nurturing aspects of a home environment, and social and learning opportunities provided in a group early education setting. The typical day provides opportunities for discovery, constructive and imaginary play; language arts and literacy; music, art and creative projects; and science, technology and math experiences. Grounded in the belief that children learn through play, there are many opportunities for children to direct their own activities, explore the environment and follow their interests.

WECP promotes positive emotional and social development. Children are encouraged to express their ideas and feelings, respect the feelings of others, and to grow in self-confidence and independence. Everyday activities and routines encourage children to develop self-help skills, a sense of responsibility for oneself and their classroom, and decision-making skills.

As an inclusive program, up to 30% of the enrolled children may have special needs and are in classrooms with children who have typical needs. All areas of WECP—indoors and the playground—are accessible. In addition, the WECP program serves children from diverse backgrounds and families and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, national origin, handicap, sexual orientation, or any other basis. If you need translation of any of the WECP documents, including this Handbook, please let the Program Director know. Our program strives to create an atmosphere of acceptance and respect among all children, families, and staff through activities and materials that celebrate diversity: cultural, racial, ethnic, or ability level. A basic belief of this program is that each person is an important member of the WECP community.





### III. POLICIES & PROCEDURES

#### **Enrollment, Contract Times and Fees**

The Waisman Early Childhood Program is licensed to serve children ages one through six. To enroll, children should be 12 months by September 1. They may attend up to the year during which they turn six. While general ages for classrooms are designated in our application materials, the exact age range of children in a specific classroom may vary from year to year.

Families may choose to enroll their child within the hours listed on the Contract Times/Fee (available in the WECP office) and are asked to sign a contract prior to the beginning of their child's enrollment period. All programs are five days per week. Eligibility for enrollment does not depend on need for financial assistance.

Equal monthly tuition fees are charged with the exception of August, for which a half month payment is due. Tuition bills are not sent out, but payments are due the first of every month and must be kept up to date to ensure enrollment. An email reminder will be sent or a reminder or a note posted at the WECP entrance prior to the 10th of each month. Fees are paid to the Program Assistant in the School Office (S-101). If payment has not been received by the 10th of the month, a late charge of \$40 will be added. Checks will not be held for deposit beyond the date that is written on the check. You are responsible for paying tuition monthly, regardless of your child's attendance. There will be a \$25 fee assessed for any check returned for any reason.

Initial enrollment contracts may begin mid-June (summer session) or late August/early September (fall session) and extend until the following mid-June. Re-enrollment contracts cover an entire year, from June to June, and families are responsible for the contract as stated. We require signed contracts with a deposit equal to your September tuition bill to be returned before children may attend. Your deposit will be applied toward your September tuition assessment.

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Children may enroll for a summer contract time that is different from that of their academic year contract, but it is expected that summer enrollment will be for the entire summer session (eight –ten weeks, depending on the year) and for five days per week.

If you choose not to have your child attend the summer portion of the contracted year, but wish to return for the academic year, a fee of \$500 will be charged. Summer holding fees are due on July 1, and they are not applied to any regular tuition payment. We will consider enrolling children for one semester only due to sabbatical on a case by case basis. Please discuss this with the Director at contract signing time.

#### **Contract Changes**

Although families may request a renegotiation of their contract during the school year, requests may be difficult and sometimes impossible to accommodate. Staffing patterns are set on the basis of the amount of time for which families have initially contracted. Please prepare your initial contract carefully and submit any requests to the Program Director.

Requests for schedule changes must be submitted in writing to the Program Director. Schedule changes, if approved, will go into effect on the first of the following month, and no schedule changes will be allowed the first month of enrollment. An exception may be made if either increasing or decreasing enrollment time is due to an intentional individualized educational plan for a specific child, as determined by both WECP staff and the family.

If there is an outbreak (defined by the Department of Public Health and with guidance from UW Madison, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families) and WECP must close, you are still held responsible for paying full tuition for up to 10 business days. After 10 business days, WECP will work with families in order to maintain the classrooms of enrolled children by offering sliding scale fees. Our health policy, however, states that if WECP is open and if your child has an extended illness or your family is on vacation during your contract period, you are still responsible for paying full tuition.

The use of WECP facilities and equipment (e.g., gym, playground, library, classrooms, kitchen and snack items, and toys) is reserved only for WECP enrolled children during the hours in which they are contracted to attend. Wisconsin State Licensing rules and our liability insurance require a staff member to be present and responsible for enrolled children only during their contracted time.

### **Tuition Assistance**

Families may indicate their interest in applying for a scholarship when they complete their application to the program, or during the enrollment/re-enrollment period in spring. Scholarship awards vary in support and cover the contracted period of enrollment. Information about the scholarship application policies, as well as applications, are available in the office. Typically, decisions about awards are made before enrollment contracts are due back, and cover the period of time from September to mid-August.

Other sources of help include:

- The City of Madison offers a child care tuition assistance plan for qualifying families. Call (608) 267-4996 for more information about this program. (Families with a child with special needs may also call this number for tuition assistance.)
- Dane County also offers tuition assistance; their contact number is (608) 242-7441. Eligibility may be determined over the phone, or you may be asked to set up an appointment.
- The University of Wisconsin Office of Campus Childcare & Family Resources offers childcare assistance for UW student parents. For more information, you may call (608) 265-9662 (CCTAP Program).

### **Withdrawal from the Program**

If this is your child's first enrollment in WECP, you may withdraw within the first month only without penalty. Otherwise, families withdrawing their child from the program, for whatever reason, are responsible for payment of tuition for the time specified in their enrollment contract. If we are able to enroll a child from our waiting list, the family holding the original contract will be responsible for tuition only up to the time the new child begins attending school. Withdrawal notices must be received in writing.

While we make every effort to maintain a child's enrollment in WECP, when we (WECP staff) determine we are not able to serve the individual needs of a child and/or their family, the Program Director may ask a family to reduce their enrollment time and/or seek outside therapeutic services to remain enrolled. We may also ask a family to withdraw their child if they cause injury to themselves, another child, or to a staff member. Such termination will be made only after consultation among the child's family, teachers, and the Program Director. The family will be given a two-week period to make other childcare arrangements, and will be financially responsible only for the portion of enrollment time that their child is in attendance. Other circumstances related to observing WECP policies may result in a family being asked to withdraw their child. These include, but are not limited to, failure to:

1. Pay tuition as indicated on the enrollment contract, and other fees as assessed.
2. Submit the required health and immunization record forms.
3. Adhere to the rules of the program relating to arrival, departure and attendance.
4. Provide two accurate and up-to-date local emergency contact persons.
5. Adhere to WECP Health Policy, including administration of medication and timely pick up of a sick child.
6. Provide information regarding a medical treatment plan or an educational intervention plan that a WECP child receives from a health care provider or an outside therapist/program that we deem necessary to have in order to provide a consistent, high quality program at WECP.
7. Adhere to WECP parking, social media and security policies.
8. Interact with WECP staff in a respectful manner.

### **Extended Care (\$15/hour)**

Occasionally, families may find that they need additional hours because of an unusual circumstance (this applies only to currently enrolled children). If you know in advance that you will need to extend your child's day beyond your contracted time, please follow these procedures:

1. Contact the Program Director to determine whether we can accommodate your request. A request for an extended day must be received before the day you need it. (Otherwise, the Late Pick-Up Fee will apply; see page 12.)

2. A fee of \$15.00 per hour (or any part of the hour) will be charged for pre-arranged extended care.
3. If you have requested extended care more than 4 times during the month, you may be required to change your contracted pick up time.

#### **Emergency Care or Late Pick-Up (\$30/15 minutes)**

1. In case of emergency, a fee of \$30 per 15-minutes (or any part thereof) will be charged. This applies to requests to extend your child's day on the day you need it.
2. If at all possible, please call to let us know you have had an emergency or you will be late.
3. Your child will be able to remain at WECP until you or a designated person arrives. If this occurs at the end of the day (after 5:30), we will attempt to call you. If we are unable to reach you after 15 minutes, we will call your emergency contact to come pick up your child.

#### **Parking**

Parking permits (laminated hang tags) are made available to families and designated care providers to park in the stalls marked for use by "clients and visitors" (designated with blue lines) in Lot 82. They are intended to be used exclusively for dropping off and picking up children enrolled in WECP. The following regulations apply:

- The UW Office of Transportation Services requires that permits be displayed during drop-off and pick up. Permits must be hung on the rear view mirror (with the date facing outward). If your parent permit is not hung correctly, the Office of Transportation Services may issue a citation or tow your car.
- These permits may be used only during the dates indicated on the tag. (You may receive a second permit if you need it.)
- Parking time is limited by the Office of Transportation Services to 15 minutes for drop-off and pick-up, and for times needed to participate in special school events, such as family conferences, school-wide activities, or classroom family activities.
- These permits are not to be used for half-day or all-day parking in the client/visitor stalls, elsewhere in Lot 82, or in any of the campus lots.
- If you work in a department on campus, including the Waisman Center, University Hospital, or the American Family Children's Hospital, you may not park in the blue-lined stalls other than during drop-off or pick-up of your child(ren) enrolled in WECP.
- If you have a UW parking assignment in Lot 82 in addition to your WECP hang tag, please be sure to move your car to a parking stall marked with yellow lines (staff parking) in the parking lot after you have dropped off your child.
- If your parent permit is used inappropriately, the Office of Transportation Services will issue a parking citation and/or tow your car.

**Please remember:** Children must be directly supervised by a parent/guardian at all times in the parking lot. Never leave an unattended child in a car.





## IV. HEALTH & SAFETY POLICIES

It is important that WECP provides a safe and nurturing environment for children. This is a difficult task if sick children come to school. Therefore, we require that each family helps to maintain our health policies. As always, WECP staff are available to discuss concerns and health issues concerning your child on an individual basis.

### Health Policies

All children must have a written immunization record and a Child Health Report signed by their health care provider on file before attending WECP. If a family does not have their child vaccinated, WECP must have a completed waiver form that lists the reason for not vaccinating. For information about acceptable reasons please contact the Program Director. For their own safety, children who have not been vaccinated will be excluded if there is an outbreak of a specific communicable disease.

Our experience has been that there is inconsistency among local pediatricians regarding the period of contagion and return dates for children who have contracted a communicable disease. For this reason, we find it necessary to request that families adhere to the WECP Health Policy, as described **below**. We have developed this health policy by consulting with the Wisconsin Department of Public Health and Dane County Public Health, and compliance with State licensing regulations and UW-Madison Legal Affairs:



1. Fever (100.4F° and higher), sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea (unrelated to medication), earaches, rashes, inflammation of the eyes, headaches, stomach aches, persistent cough, severe runny nose or fatigue and general irritability are signs of illness that need special care. Please do not send your child to school if he/she is exhibiting any of these symptoms.
2. Children may not attend the WECP if they require fever-reducing or cough-reducing medication, or general pain-reducing medication. Children requiring these medications will not be comfortable at school or able to participate in their typical routines. You may request an exception to this rule—for pain medication only—by speaking with the Program Director before your child is dropped off. Before WECP staff can administer any medication:
  - A physician's note is required for your child to attend WECP if pain medication is needed. You will need to submit a doctor or health care provider order form signed and dated by your child's physician's indicating that your child be given this type of medication; and
  - You must submit a parent/guardian consent form signed and dated giving WECP staff permission to administer this medication. Under no circumstances will a child be allowed to attend WECP if pain medication is required for more than three days.
3. Children will be checked upon arrival for signs of illness by staff. Any indication that your child is experiencing one or more of the above symptoms at school, or is too ill to participate in the daily routine (including outdoor play) will result in you being asked to take your child home. At times your child may act completely healthy at home after you have been asked to pick him/her up from school. In those cases it is still our policy to have your child remain at home the following day. We are obligated to all families whose children attend WECP to maintain as healthy an environment as possible.
4. If your child develops any of the symptoms described in #1 while at school, you will be called to come pick up your child. He/she may not return to school the following day to make sure others remain healthy in the classroom. Children should be picked up within 30 minutes of being called. Please make sure your emergency contact knows that he/she may be called if you cannot pick up your child within 30 minutes.
5. We recognize that it is very disruptive if you are asked to take your child home. However, if you disagree with a teacher's decision regarding your child's illness, please talk to the Program Director at that time. If she is not available, please take your child home and the director will follow up with you as soon as possible.

## **Other Communicable Diseases**

1. Children may not come to school if they have untreated conjunctivitis, impetigo, ringworm, or scabies. A full day of treatment following the first dose of antibiotics or medication must occur before returning to school. This means your child must remain at home the day following the first administration of medication.
2. When a child is reported as having a communicable disease or condition such as, but not limited to, chicken pox, German measles, infectious hepatitis, measles, mumps, fifth disease, scarlet fever, whooping cough, diphtheria or meningitis, or other diseases as required by Dane County Public Health, we will notify the Dane County Public Health nurse.
3. Following contracting a communicable disease, your child may return to school when he/she has been absent for the period specified by the Madison Department of Public Health and/or with a Doctor's clearance. This information is available on the Fact Sheet posted outside your classroom door, as well as in our binder, Health Talks, located on the WECF Health Board near teacher offices.

## **Lice**

Please note that the WECF follows a no-nit policy. If there has been an identified instance of head lice in a classroom, we will check your children daily upon their arrival for two weeks for lice and nits. We will ask you to take your child home if there is evidence of either lice or nits, even after treatment. Please consider purchasing a nit comb for use at home and check your child daily before coming to school.

## **Warts**

If your child has one or more warts, we will ask you to provide written documentation of treatment, which can be a home treatment or one provided by your child's health provider. We will also ask you to cover them while your child attends school to prevent spread to others.

## **Rashes**

Children may not attend school if they have a rash (reddened, small to larger bumps on one or more parts of the body) of unknown origin. Attendance is possible only with a signed and dated note from your child's health care provider indicating that the rash is not contagious. If it is not contagious, please cover the area (e.g., clothing, band-aid, etc.) for your child's comfort and to prevent further irritation from contact.

If your child develops a rash during the school day, a teacher will call you to pick up your child. He/she may return when we receive a signed and dated note from your child's doctor indicating that the rash is not contagious, or the rash is no longer present. Please note: in cases of Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease, we have experienced inconsistency in physician's guidance regarding contagiousness. Because of this, our policy regarding this condition is that a child may return to WECF when all of the spots are crusted over. If your child has a diaper rash that persists for more than 5 school days, notwithstanding topical treatment, you will be asked to take your child to see his/her doctor to rule out a yeast, staph, or other infection. Since these conditions are serious and contagious, you will need to keep your child home until the rash is completely gone. If the diaper rash is not contagious, you will be required to provide written documentation from your child's health care provider, signed and dated, stating the diaper rash is not contagious before your child can return to school.

## **Sick Child Procedures**

If your child becomes ill while at school, we will make him/her comfortable while isolated or separated from the other children in the room, and we will call you or your emergency contacts to come and take him/her home. Please be sure that the phone numbers you have provided are current, local, and that we can reach you or a substitute at all times. You are required to provide two such contacts. In addition, family or emergency contacts must be able to pick up their child within a half-hour of being called. Our late fee policy applies if your child is not picked up after 1/2 hour of being notified. We are obligated to exclude your child from WECF until you provide this information.

Should your child be exposed to any communicable diseases at school, we will inform you by posting a note (Health Alert) outside each classroom door along with an information sheet about the specific disease. We

request, in turn, that you inform us of exposure that may have occurred outside of WECP. In the event of a communicable disease, please follow the Updated Addendum Health Policy.

### Additional Information

1. Therapy will not be provided if a child receiving services is absent from school because of illness, or must leave school because of illness.
2. You do pay tuition for the days that your child may be absent for any reason.
3. For parents attending a campus childcare program, sick childcare is available from a contracted program through the UW Office of Campus Childcare. Information about sick child care may be found at [www.occfr.wisc.edu/kids-kare.htm](http://www.occfr.wisc.edu/kids-kare.htm).
4. For children with special needs who are not able to communicate verbally, it is sometimes difficult to determine illness. In conjunction with families, teachers will develop a number of agreed- upon “benchmarks” for individual children relative to their baseline behavior, such as (but not limited to):
  - an inability to attend to activities or show interest in them
  - irritability and not responding to typical strategies to soothe or calm
  - refusal to eat
  - unusual fatigue
  - extremes in mood or behavior

Determination of illness will be made by WECP staff according to individual, pre-determined benchmarks decided by staff and families, and we will call you to pick up your child if deemed appropriate. While we believe strongly in our inclusive policy, inclusion in WECP means participating in educational activities with peers. If your child is receiving one-on-one support for all or part of the school day, this support is intended to facilitate educational inclusion. We recognize that teachers perform caregiving tasks with all children, but if your child is not able to participate in his/her educational program because of illness—and requires that only his caregiving needs be met at school—we will ask you to keep your child at home.

If your child has been hospitalized or has had surgery, we require a physician’s note stating that he/she is able to return to WECP and resume typical activities, including outside play. Following hospitalization or serious surgery, we do require that children remain at home for at least one day after being released from the hospital.

**Please note:** The exclusionary policy for communicable diseases takes precedence over all other considerations.

### Hygiene and Toileting

Children (and those dropping off children) must wash their hands upon entering WECP classrooms. Automatic hand sanitizers are located at the entrances of the classrooms at child height, and children may use these in addition to classroom sinks. The solution in the hand sanitizers is approved for use with young children. Children must also wash their hands before and after toileting, and before and after handling food.

It is not necessary for children to be toilet trained to attend WECP. Staff will not begin toilet training procedures until families and staff collaborate on timing and process, after determining that the child is ready to begin the process. Families and staff together will determine a procedure, which will be suited to the needs of individual children, and which can be applied consistently at home and at school. Individual toileting procedures for each child are posted (discretely) in the bathrooms and changing areas,



so that all staff are able to maintain this consistency during the day. Families can be very helpful to the staff by sharing their knowledge of their child’s usual schedules, behavioral cues indicating toileting is needed, words used in connection with toileting, and special comforts and routines at toileting times. If your child is not yet toilet trained and you would like to begin to work on that, please arrange to meet with the teachers to establish a consistent routine between home and school. There are specific signs that indicate when your child is ready, so a discussion is necessary before any procedures begin at school.

Families of children in diapers may bring either disposable or cloth diapers. If you bring cloth diapers, please also send along plastic bags so that wet diapers can be safely stored in the child's cubby. We also require that diaper wraps be replaced each time a child is changed, so please bring a daily supply. We ask that families also provide diaper wipes or disposable wash cloths for their child. The WECP staff will not apply any non-prescription powder, lotion, or salve at diapering times unless the family makes a written request; a prescription salve must be accompanied by both a physician-signed form indicating the need, and a parent-signed form granting authority to WECP to administer it. Teachers will indicate diaper change times in daily notes to families, and will note the application of prescription salves in the classroom Medical Log. If your child has a toileting "accident" during the day, wet or soiled clothing will be changed promptly. In addition, wet nap mats will be washed immediately with soap and water followed by a disinfecting solution. Otherwise, children's mats will be washed and disinfected weekly.

A change of clothes may be provided from the WECP's extra clothes supply, but since our supply is limited, it is preferable that at least one set of extra clothing be sent from home and left in your child's cubby. Remember, the younger the child, the more sets of clothing needed!

## Medications

WECP staff will administer prescriptive or non-prescriptive medications to your child only under the following conditions:

1. A signed and dated authorization form from the child's health care provider is on file.
2. A signed, dated, written authorization from the parent/guardian for WECP staff to administer the medication is on file each time a child requires a new medication or new cycle of a previous medication.
3. Prescribed medication must come to school in the original bottle with the name of the child, name of the drug, dosage, date and name of physician (if by prescription) on it. The date on prescription medication must be current. Medication prescribed more than one year ago should be accompanied by a currently signed physician statement indicating the appropriateness of the current use of this dated prescription. Medication will be stored in a locked box placed in the classroom refrigerator or on a child-inaccessible shelf. We cannot keep medication that is "expired" as listed on the dates on the prescription bottle.
4. WECP staff will not administer non-prescribed medication that reduces fever, high temperature, or significant pain. If a child requires this type of over-the-counter medication, he/she must not attend WECP.
5. As with prescription medication, a non-prescribed medication must come to school in the original bottle with the child's name, name of the drug, dosage, date (which must be current). We will need a signed and dated physician's authorization form before we administer this type of medication to your child, as well as a form from you granting permission for WECP staff to administer the medication. Under no circumstances will a child be allowed to attend WECP if pain medication is required for more than three days.
6. We prefer to give medication at lunch. If possible, please time home administration so that lunchtime is the appropriate administration time. This avoids the potential of double dosing of medication during staff changes during the day or if staff forget. If individual accommodations need to be made, please consult in advance with staff. We recognize that some medications must be administered as needed or according to a different schedule. Inform your child's teacher about medication and give the medication to a staff member directly (please do not leave it in your child's lunch box). She is in charge of ensuring that forms are in order and medication is given.
7. The staff person administering the medication will record the type of medication given, dosage, time and date in the Medical Log for both prescribed and over-the-counter medications.
8. Staff will make every effort to administer medication. However, in instances when a child exhibits extreme distress, staff may be unable to administer medication. We will call you if such a situation arises.





9. Families are welcome to come to the program to administer their child's medication if they would like.
10. Please inform your child's teacher if your child is receiving medication(s) that we are not administering at school. We will need this information if an emergency arises or if there may be a possible side effect (e.g., diarrhea and this will be logged into the Classroom Medical Log).

## Safety

### Concealed Weapons

Per WI Department of Children and Families, DCF251.06 (2)(c), firearms, ammunition and other potentially dangerous items are not allowed on WECP premises, indoor and outside.

### Access to WECP

All WECP families must use the main entrance to WECP, which is across from the parking lot. If you are employed in the Waisman Center, we request that you use the main entrance as well.

The main entrance to WECP is locked and accessible only by keycard. Since we have been advised by the UW Police and have installed a security system in WECP, we expect all families and their designated pick-up people (grandparents, nannies, etc.) to use their keycards. The names of all those who may have access to WECP are sent to the UW Police Department. Only after they receive approved names will keycards be issued.

The cost of each keycard issued by the police department is \$16.

Families who are affiliated with UW-Madison (faculty, staff and students) will have their WisCard coded for the main entrance by the UW-Police. You do not need to go to the police station to have this done, and there is no charge for having an existing WisCard coded. WisCards may be swiped at the keypad outside the main door. If affiliated families wish to have additional keycards for designated pick-up people, these must be purchased from the UW Police Station on Monroe Street, across from the football stadium. It is the responsibility of the WECP family to pay for additional keycards at the time of obtaining their cards. The fee for each card is \$16.



**Non-UW-affiliated families also must purchase their access card(s) from the UW Police Station on Monroe Street, and they must go to the police station to be issued their card and to pay the fee. Again, the fee for the keycards must be paid at the time of obtaining the card.**

Once you have obtained your access card, be sure to bring it with you each time you drop off or pick up your child. While you may gain access by ringing the buzzer on the key pad at the WECP entrance, before entry we will request a picture ID if we don't recognize you. We will refer to our approved pick up list of people to make sure you are listed. This will take additional time, so we strongly request that you use that **in cases of emergency only**. Staff are not always available to let people in and we will not allow access to those who are not known or recognized. We make every effort to ensure your child's safety while at WECP, and it is a condition of enrollment that families comply with the purchase and appropriate use of an access card.

**Failure to use a WisCard more than once per month, will result in a \$5.00 fee for each additional incident, which will be automatically added to your account.**

## Arrival

Enrollment hours at the WECP are from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. **Children should not arrive at school before 7:30.** Prior to this time, staff are not available to supervise children. For safety reasons, children are expected to be escorted to their classrooms. Please help your child remove outerwear and leave it in their cubby since teachers are unavailable to help in this manner. In addition, please be sure that your child is in the classroom (and does not follow you out), and that a teacher has acknowledged their arrival before you leave. **You must sign in your child on the Attendance Log in the classroom** (no children signing in please). This is an extremely important State Licensing requirement.

If your child will be arriving later than 9:30 or will be absent, please call the school office (608-263-5760) or your child's classroom by 9:30. If we do not hear from you by 9:30, you will be called and asked about your child's attendance for the day; this is another State licensing requirement.

## Departure

Please pick up your child in an area designated by your child's teachers (their classrooms, gym, library, etc.). Persons other than parents or legal guardians who are authorized to pick up your child must be listed on your child's Emergency Contact Form. If someone other than an already authorized person is to pick up your child, please contact the Program Assistant in the office to add this person's name to your child's emergency contact form and inform the teachers in writing in the Family Communication Notebook located in your child's classroom. The WECP staff will not release a child to a person about whom they haven't been informed.

**You also must sign out your child on the Attendance Log in the classroom after you leave the room with your child (no children signing out please), not when you arrive to pick up your child. You risk receiving a late fee charge if your child leaves the room later than your contracted departure time.** Again, this is an extremely important State Licensing requirement. Please be aware that when you are picking up your child, once you have them in your care and have signed them out, you are responsible for your child's care and safety. WECP staff will continue to attend to other children. Please work with your teachers to create a healthy pick-up plan for your child. It is difficult and can be disruptive if children begin to run around, run away from or play with other children who are not being picked up in the hallway or other common areas. Please keep hold of your child's hand if it is likely that he/she will run out of sight. If you are unable to find your child, we will alert the Waisman Center's administrative offices and the building will be locked down. Needless to say, it is a serious matter to have that happen!

## How Teachers Keep Track of Children

We use a "Clothespin System" to ensure we know where each child is located during his/her day at WECP. Teachers write each child's name on a clothespin and hang it on a rope located by the classroom entrance. If children leave their classroom with a therapist or researcher, they will sign the child out of the classroom and take the child's clothespin. If a teacher takes one or more children out of the classroom to do a small group activity with them, will take those children's clothespins, as well. The remaining clothespins indicate those children who are remaining in their classroom. When all children go outside, the staff will take their attendance clipboard to indicate the children in their care. If any children from the classroom are elsewhere, the staff will take the clothespins of those children they have outside with them rather than their attendance clipboard so as to maintain an accurate count. Please do NOT allow your child to do the task of moving the clothespin.



**Again, at pick-up time after you have left the room with your child, you assume responsibility for the whereabouts of your child.** In the hallway, please be sure to keep a close watch over your children. Please review the purpose of the handicap door opening devices. We will go over this with all children in the classroom in order to teach the expectations. The handicap opening devices are intended for person who are unable to open doors as non-handicap persons. Please do not allow your child(ren) to bang on or repeatedly push the handicap devices near the door. This is both a safety issue (as children can then easily make their way into the parking lot) and a respect of property and access issue. Please also review the STOP poster on the front door with your family.

## Late Pick-Up Policies

It is important that children be picked up on time. If you arrive past your contracted time to pick up your child, you will be assessed a late fee. If there are more than three late pickups within a month, you may be required to extend your contract time. Please call and alert staff that you will be late and the time you are likely to arrive, or who (if not a parent) will be picking up your child. Please remember that you must identify any person other than yourself who may pick up your child on your Emergency Contact Form and inform the teachers in writing in the Family Communication Notebook located in your child's classroom. You must also inform the school office in writing if there is an additional person allowed.



If you are late and we do not hear from you, the teachers will wait 15 minutes and call your home or work phone number. If there is no answer, a teacher will then call one of the people listed as authorized to pick up your child. If we are unable to reach you or a designated emergency contact within 15 minutes, you will find a note with information posted on the program door. **Please be aware that your KEY CARD does not work after 5:30 or before 7:30. Late fees of \$30.00 per child will be charged for every 15-minute increment (or any part of) past your contracted pick-up time.** The late fee will be based on the actual time you leave the room with your child, according to cell phone time. **We no longer allow a 5-minute grace period.** If you have a 5:30 p.m. contract and are late picking up your child more than one time per month for three consecutive months, we reserve the right to:

- terminate your contract, or
- increase your late fee to \$60.00 per 15 minute increment, or any part thereof.

### Babysitting Policy

From time to time, families request the names of students we hire as classroom assistants to contact them about babysitting in their homes. Sometimes WECP staff are asked to provide individual childcare outside of WECP, as well. While their work in WECP is supervised, we cannot be responsible for students or staff who work outside of WECP. We will not release names and contact information of our student and teaching staff for these purposes. However, you may reach out in your own way to request such opportunities.



### Emergency Procedures

WECP has a written emergency plan, developed with the UW Campus Police. It includes procedures for evacuating the WECP area to both a location within the Waisman Center and an off-site location (Meeting House Nursery School at the First Unitarian Church on Highland Ave. or Nielson Tennis Stadium) and is coordinated with overall emergency procedures for the Waisman Center.

From April to November, we practice monthly tornado drills, and we conduct fire drills monthly throughout the year. Smoke detectors are automatically tested monthly, and each classroom has a carbon monoxide detector. Twice a year, children practice evacuation procedures and or lock-down procedures.

All staff must have current certification in Infant and Child CPR and the use of an AED. Staff also receive training in Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (if they work with children ages two and under), Shaken Baby Syndrome, First Aid, Administration of Medication, and use of a fire extinguisher. We keep documentation of this training in individual WECP staff personnel files.

When a WECP child has a medical condition that requires additional attention or procedures, individual teachers will decide whether or not they are able to administer those procedures. We require that each teacher receive specific training by the child's health care provider before WECP staff may provide these services. Training must also include troubleshooting steps should any difficulties arise. We will post these procedures discretely in the classroom. We keep documentation of these trainings in the staff personnel files, as well. Examples of such procedures include the use of an EpiPen, managing asthma and allergies, monitoring diabetes, g-tube feeding, or managing seizures, among others.

### Bad Weather

We expect that children will participate in outdoor activities daily if the weather permits. **We are unable to make individual exceptions to our daily outdoor program. If your child is unable to play outside or you prefer they stay indoors, we will ask you to keep your child home. You may discuss individual exceptions to this policy with the Program Director.** There may be occasions when the outdoor weather is inappropriate for outdoor play, such as when the temperature outdoors is above 90°F with the heat index, or below 0° with the wind chill factor. Children under two years of age may not go out if the outdoor temperature is below 20°F with the wind chill.

**We will always close when UW Madison Campus closes OR when the Madison Public Schools (MMSD) are closed due to bad weather.** Our closing will also be posted on Channel 27 (ABC) and Channel 15 (NBC). Watch for school closings scrolling at the bottom of the screen under “Madison Schools” on ABC, and under Waisman Early Childhood Program on NBC. At other times, if we find it necessary to close for the day because of inclement weather or another serious reason (even if MMSD does not close), you will be informed via text. Please believe that we try to limit our closing as much as possible. On rare occasions, WECP may close before the end of the day (5:30). You will receive a text, e-mail and/or a phone call by 1:00 p.m. if that occurs.



### **Air Quality Advisory Policy**

Air quality information is available on line at <http://airnow.gov/index.cfm>. Occasionally, the Department of Natural Resources issues an “Air Quality Advisory” indicating that area ozone and/or particle pollution levels are elevated. An advisory level “Orange” indicates the air quality may be unhealthy for certain people in sensitive groups (those with heart and lung disease.) Higher levels are Unhealthy, Very Unhealthy, and Hazardous, respectively.

Staff will follow these procedures:

1. If the Air Quality Index is forecast to reach the orange level or above, the Program Director or Program Assistant in the building will alert teachers and monitor the situation via the website.
2. The teachers will use the advisory information to determine if and when to adjust outdoor activity for children. Options may include having the children playing outside at a different time of day when levels will be lower, limiting the length of time outdoors, reducing the level of strenuous activity, (i.e., digging in the sandbox instead of running and climbing), or deciding to remain indoors for the day. Teachers will also monitor children carefully for symptoms like coughing or wheezing and adjust their activities accordingly.

### **Accident Procedures**

Each child must have a signed permission slip for emergency medical treatment in his/her file before beginning the program. For your protection and peace of mind, please **UPDATE THIS INFORMATION AS CHANGES OCCUR.** In the event of an accident, the staff will follow procedures described.

#### **For accidents requiring medical attention, a teacher will:**

1. Apply basic first aid.
2. If necessary, consult with Waisman Center staff for recommendations.
3. Notify the family.
4. Assist the family in getting medical treatment with their own physician or hospital.
5. In the event we are unable to contact you quickly and immediate medical attention is required, we will call 911 to have Emergency Medical Responders take your child to the University Children’s Hospital Emergency Room with the Emergency Medical Treatment Consent form you have signed. We will continue to try to get in touch with you.
6. Fill out an accident report for the family to sign. This report will be recorded in the classroom Medical Log and filed in the school office.

#### **For minor injuries, a teacher will:**

1. Apply basic first aid.
2. Consult with Waisman Center staff to check child, if necessary.
3. Fill out accident report for parent/guardian to sign. Report will be filed in the office and recorded in the classroom Medical Log.



The Waisman Early Childhood Program does not carry individual child accident insurance. If an accident should occur because of staff or program negligence, the University of Wisconsin does carry liability insurance for WECP.

### Child Abuse and Neglect

Child care providers are required by law to report if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child seen in the course of duty has been or may be abused or neglected. The Department of Social Services office will be contacted (608-242-6200). WECP Staff receive biannual in-service training about child abuse and neglect, and written guidelines are included in the Staff Handbook. You may request a copy of these guidelines and the reporting procedures we follow.

All staff and student assistants have gone through a Wisconsin State Department of Justice Criminal and Caregiver Background Check as well as being finger printed to ensure they have no criminal record affecting their care of children. Any staff member who is suspected of abuse will be removed from the classroom immediately and the incident will be investigated by the proper authorities. If confirmed, decisions regarding that person's employment status will be handled according to University policy and child abuse laws.

If a family has a concern about a staff member abusing or neglecting a child at school, the concern must be brought to the immediate attention of the Director. If the concern is about the Director, the family member must tell the Director's Supervisor immediately.

### Visitors

The Waisman Early Childhood Program has observation rooms adjacent to the classrooms. For security and other reasons, we keep our observation room doors locked, and we ask that visitors follow these steps:

1. **schedule an observation** with the Program Director or Program Assistant
2. complete the appropriate paperwork
3. sign the **Visitor Register** in the School Office
4. wear a visitor identification tag
5. and observe from the observation room

This applies to parents, other family, visitors from the community and to students.

We also ask that everyone, including WECP family members and staff members, sign the **Observation Record Sheets** located in the Program Office with the Director or Program Assistant. If you need assistance operating the sound system in the observation rooms, please ask the Program Assistant or Director for help. Please do not ask the classroom teachers, since they must be in the classroom with children. Observations will be permitted in alignment with our policy regarding confidentiality. That is, it is not permissible for a family to intentionally observe a child other than their own, or seek information about a specific child. **Cell phone use, photographs and videos are not permitted, as well.**

### Telephone Calls

The WECP office phone number is **263-5760**. The Program Director's number is **262-4718**. You will receive your child's classroom phone number by the first day of school.

Please call your child's classroom first thing in the morning if your child will be absent. You may call the classroom number for other information- giving or emergency purposes, as well. If teachers are unable to answer the phone, please call the Program office number to report your child absent or share the reason you are in need of support. If there is an urgent situation ask the person answering the office phone to transfer your call immediately to the person with whom you wish to speak. If no one is available to take your call, leave a message on the voice mail system. Messages will be taken from the machine





frequently. If you need to speak directly to someone, you may call the Program Director at 262-4718, or dial 263-1656 to speak with the Waisman Center Business Office.

## Food and Clothing

### Food

In compliance with child care regulations, the WECP serves two nutritious snacks each day. If you have questions about snacks, please check in with your classroom teachers first. If you continue to have questions, please reach out to the Program Director at any time. Snack consists of a fruit or vegetable with a whole grain product and/or dairy product. We serve reduced fat rGBH-free milk at lunch (1-year-olds receive whole milk), and when we serve juice, we provide 100% juice products only. WECP does alternatives to traditional snacks when possible, as requested by the family and **as guided by the child's individual needs regarding allergies or other medical concerns**. WECP does not serve snack items that are choking hazards.

**Children bring their lunches to the WECP. Please tape your child's name and date on the outside of the lunch box/bag every day.** When packing your child's lunch, please choose nutritious items that your child likes. State licensing requires that we request that families provide children's lunches that contain one-third of their daily nutritional requirements. Information about children's nutrition (e.g., portion sizes) and meal and snack suggestions are located in the WECP kitchen. National Accreditation Standards require that we do not offer the following foods to children younger than age 4: hot dogs (whole or cut into rounds); whole grapes, nuts, popcorn; raw peas; hard pretzels, chunks of raw carrot; peanut butter that children are meant to spread themselves; or meat cut into chunks larger than that which can be swallowed whole. If your child is younger than age 4, please do not include these items in your child's lunch; teachers will not serve them to your child and they will be sent home. For children under age 2, please cut food into pieces no larger than a ½ inch square.



During lunch time, the staff emphasizes self-help skills, **so please pack foods that your child can manage with minimal assistance and that do not require preparation (i.e., mixing, peeling)**. In other words, food must be prepared and ready to eat, although staff is able to re-heat items in the classroom microwave. We will allow exceptions to this, if medically needed. Teachers will send home uneaten unopened food.

### Clothing

Please send your child in play clothes so that they can feel free to participate in all the activities-- including outdoor play---without worrying about getting their clothing dirty, as well as in clothes that are easy to get on and off. Families must provide the following items for their children:

1. Extra Clothes—underwear or diapers, socks, shirt, shorts or pants.
2. Summer—bathing suit and towel.
3. Winter—extra mittens, boots (preferably ones that go on without shoes) and snow pants.
4. Nap items—crib size sheet, blanket, stuffed animal or lovey if needed, etc.

**All items must be clearly labeled, including shoes.** Missing items (including barrettes and other small items) without labels cannot be our responsibility. Lost and Found items are located in the front Lobby (and you child's classroom may also have a classroom Lost and Found). Unclaimed items will be "recycled" to our clothing supplies in the laundry room or collected for donation to Good Will at least twice yearly.

### Toy Policy

In the spirit of inclusion and positive problem solving, we choose toys, books and activities for our classrooms that avoid gender/race/class stereotypes and that foster verbal and constructive conflict resolution skills. Since there are so many high quality educational videos and materials for young children. In the event that your child wishes to bring in special items from home, they need to be labeled. Please help your child understand the importance of sharing these and other items. Your child should be aware that sometimes the best place for their special item is in their cubby. WECP does not allow toys that are or can be played with as weapons.

## **Screen Time**

Classrooms typically have a lap top computer and an iPad. These are used primarily by teachers for their work (writing newsletters, photo storage), but may be used for educational purposes (e.g., watching nesting eagles on public sites). These times are limited to about 10 minutes and occur infrequently. We do want children to be familiar with technology, but we also assume that enough screen time occurs when children are at home. We may utilize the Wasiman Center Theater to show classroom and/or center wide events that are developmentally appropriate.

## **Pets and Animals**

WECP complies with all State Licensing Regulations (HFS 46) regarding pets and animals on school premises. Classroom pets are limited to caged animals, including but not limited to gerbils, hamsters, hermit crabs, and fish. If there are any children who are allergic to a classroom pet, the animal will be removed. Occasionally, a staff member or child may bring in a pet (for example, if he/she is “Child-of-the-Week”) to the classroom. In those instances, all families enrolled in WECP will be notified in writing before the pet arrives. Typically, this is a notice at the school entrance indicating the type of animal and date of “attendance”. If a child in the particular classroom is allergic to the animal, the pet may not be brought in. If a child in a different classroom is allergic, the animal will be restricted in its allowed area so as not to come in contact with that child.

## **Additional Services**

### **Developmental Screening**

As recommended by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), we may use a variety of standard screening instruments that include parent questionnaires. The Program Assistant will send you a consent form for screening with your enrollment materials. Information obtained from screening will be used for curriculum planning; if there are any questions about this, please contact the Program Director.

Teachers will also conduct on-going developmental monitoring, that is, noting if children are making progress in each developmental area. Monitoring is documented through photos, written anecdotes, and collecting samples of children’s work. This documentation is collected and given to parents as part of their child’s portfolio to discuss at family conferences.

### **Therapeutic Services**

WECP may provide therapy (direct, consultation and evaluation) to WECP children with identified special needs. We also may provide initial Occupational and Speech/Language evaluations/assessments, if requested. For children who do not have an identified special need but for whom there may be a developmental concern in a particular area/skill, it is also possible for your child to receive assessment and/or ongoing therapy services (consultation or direct). Families whose children receive these services need to investigate third-party payment (private pay, insurance, medical assistance) to cover the cost of these therapies, as these services are provided on a fee-for-service basis. Information about therapy is located in the school office.

Families of children receiving therapy from WECP therapists receive a Therapy Information Packet, which outlines the WECP therapy policies. As part of this, they will be asked to sign a Therapy Contract, which describes their child’s services. The Therapy Contract is effective for the current academic year through the end of the summer program (mid-August). Only those children receiving therapy during the academic year may continue during the summer. While we will consider requests to begin a new therapy program during the summer, it may not be possible due to the therapists’ ongoing caseload. We do not provide therapy service for children attending WECP for the summer only, or who have left WECP.

Individual therapy services provided by WECP therapists may be delivered one-on-one, in a small group, or in a classroom, and are available only to children enrolled in the program. The format for services is determined through planning meetings with WECP staff and families. For children who are new to WECP, the planning process begins during the In-service Week in August prior to the beginning of the academic year. At this time, preliminary needs and billing issues are discussed and an initial plan of action is determined. In October, families of children receiving WECP therapy will again meet to formulate a Developmental Plan (DP), which is similar to an IFSP (Birth to Three Programs) or IEP (public school Early Childhood Programs). Part of the DP will

include therapy goals and how they will be implemented and monitored throughout the school year. Subsequent review meetings will take place as needed.

Children who are typically developing may participate from time to time in therapy sessions with children who have a special need. Please also be aware that therapists often work in the classroom with children they are seeing individually. Your child may be a part of the play situation that naturally occurs during this therapy time, in either a large group or small group situation.

If it becomes evident during the school year that a child who is not being seen for therapy may benefit from evaluation, consultation or direct services, families may make a request to the Program Director. We will work with the family to determine the best plan of action.

### **Occupational, Speech and Language Therapy**

The WECP staff includes an Occupational Therapist and a Speech & Language Therapist. It is expected that children with identified special needs will utilize the WECP therapy services (OT and S/L) as much as possible. This facilitates the provision of therapeutic services that are closely coordinated and integrated with educational programming. As stated above, families whose children receive these services need to investigate third-party payment (private pay, insurance, medical assistance) to cover the cost of these therapies, as these services are provided on a fee-for-service basis. Families should be aware that there can sometimes be difficulties in obtaining approvals for insurance funding if services are duplicated in other environments. Please obtain more guidelines for our therapy billing policies from the school office.

### **Physical and OTHER Therapy**

WECP does not provide physical therapy services, but we can work with families in need of this service by presenting some choices for obtaining them, such as through the outpatient therapy clinics or private providers in the community, through the Madison Metropolitan School District's Itinerant Therapy Program, and through neighboring school districts' early childhood programs. When itinerant services are provided, the therapist may come to WECP to work with a child and deliver therapy on-site. The WECP staff can work with families to arrange for evaluations or therapies to be delivered at WECP. These may include:

- vision and hearing programs through MMSD
- services to children with autism and sensory issues
- City of Madison Birth to 3 Program (Bridges for Families)
- Dane County Birth to 3 Program (Connections)
- other private therapy providers

### **Financial Responsibility for Therapy:**

Families of children receiving therapy from the WECP therapists are asked to sign a "Reimbursement for Therapy" form before therapy begins. This form states that our policy that families will ultimately be responsible for providing at least a portion of the cost of WECP therapy services (evaluation, consultations and direct services) in the event that we are unable to secure third party payment using standard billing practices.

## **V. PROGRAM**

### **Schedule**

Teachers post a daily schedule outside their classroom and include activities in which all children will be able to participate. A copy of the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards is located outside each classroom; teachers plan activities with these standards and our curriculum areas (below) in mind. Each day includes large group and small group experiences, as well as child- and teacher-directed activities. Stories, songs, sharing, and creative learning activities are part of the group experience. Children also spend time in interest centers that focus on a variety of areas: art and music, language arts and literacy, imaginative play, mathematical reasoning, science and discovery. With both a playground and a gym, there are many opportunities for large motor activities (running, jumping, swinging, tumbling, and climbing). There are also scheduled snack times and rest periods.



**We have an open-door policy** and welcome you to plan a visit to see how your child's day and classroom are structured.

## Curriculum

Staff at WECP are regularly trained in the most updated and evidence-based Early Childhood Curricula. At WECP we use components from the original WECP-created Curriculum: Changing, Learning, Growing. We also utilize Creative Curriculum and The Kindness Curriculum. There are several premises upon which our learning and teaching standards are based:

- all children have the potential to learn
- emotional well-being is the foundation for learning
- play offers enormous opportunities for learning
- effective early childhood teaching practices are intentional and take into consideration children's interests
- children's experiences during early childhood set the stage for later attitudes about learning and feelings of competency as a learner
- learning itself is interesting and rewarding, and should emphasize curiosity and the process of information gathering (which is a useful life-long skill) rather than just facts (which are likely to change with increasing knowledge).
- Activities in each of the classrooms are embedded in a developmental framework as supported by WI Model Early Learning Standards. One assumption made by this approach is that typical child development is a blueprint for suggesting early childhood curricula. Another assumption is that children learn as a result of becoming involved in a wide range of activities and projects through play. An emphasis is placed on active learning and making choices.



**The role of the teacher in WECP is three-fold:**

- 1. To structure and prepare the environment to maximize opportunities for learning**
- 2. To apply specific interaction strategies that support development, such as commenting, asking open-ended questions, encouraging reflection, and positive problem solving**
- 3. To create children's learning experiences: (e.g., visual learner, auditory learner, perseverance) and ensure that all children are able to participate in activities (e.g., materials, topics) to the best of their abilities.**

As teachers participate in the children's activities, they may offer suggestions and materials, encourage and model participation, and facilitate successful social interactions. Teachers also help children solve problems, share and extend ideas in play, and serve as language models. Activities in the program are designed for facilitating development in five developmental areas: social, emotional, cognitive, communication/language, and motor. Typically an activity integrates many of these.

For example, making play dough animals incorporates:

- emotional development: feeling competent and productive, coordinating one's needs and wishes with those of the other children, focusing on the task, and practicing being a group participant to work toward a group goal.
- cognitive skills: following a picture recipe, measuring ingredients, sequencing events, observing and discussing physical changes in the ingredients.
- communication/language: using words to convey one's needs and desires, learning the vocabulary for the materials used and the actions performed, and associating the recipe pictures and words with the actions performed and the product produced
- social skills: turn-taking, sharing, and communicating with others
- motor skills: measuring, sifting, stirring, kneading or twisting

## Four-Year-Old Kindergarten (4K) at WECP

Children who turn 4 by September 1 are enrolled in the WECP 4K Program. If space allows, some older 3-year-olds may also be placed in a 4K classroom, but they may not be officially enrolled as 4K students. WECP has a contract with the Madison School District (MMSD) to provide a 4K program. Our 4K teachers are licensed by the Department of Public Instruction. There are many similarities between the WECP 4K program and those offered by the school district in elementary schools:

- WECP follows the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards.
- WECP does screening in phonics twice a year, aligned with MMSD.
- WECP completes MMSD Progress Reports twice a year.
- WECP distributes MMSD Monthly Activity Calendars and Book Bags to each 4K child.
- There are 437 hours in the 4K “School Year”.
- The “official” 4K time is 2 ½ hours in the morning (9:30-11:30), Monday through Friday during the academic year.

There are also differences between the WECP and MMSD or surrounding community public school 4K programs. Some of these are:

- WECP charges tuition for the different enrollment options. While time other than 4K is sometimes called “wrap-around care”, we consider it part of the 4K day with planned activities.
- WECP classes have fewer children than those held in elementary schools, and there are at least 2 teachers per classroom. MMSD classrooms have 1 teacher with an assistant, with up to 20 children in a classroom.

As in other WECP classrooms, 4K classrooms follow a play-based routine and are inclusive.

Activities address developmental objectives (e.g., social, motor, communication), as well as learning objectives in specific content areas (e.g., social studies, science, math and literacy).

To enroll in 4K in WECP, families must first ensure that their child has a spot in WECP, and then register on-line at the MMSD website. For families living outside of the Madison School District, there is a slightly different process in which you “transfer” to MMSD from your home school district for your child’s 4K year. This is done through on-line registration with the Department of Public Instruction during “Open Enrollment”. Directions for enrolling in 4K in WECP are given to families in January before the date for official 4K registration. It is expected that your child will be registered in the MMSD 4K program while attending 4K at WECP.

## Child Guidance

We believe that a genuine caring relationship between children and adults, as well as among children themselves, provides a foundation for feeling safe and secure so that children are able to learn. In other words, we base our approach to child guidance on the principle that **fostering healthy emotional development** (i.e., positive relationships, self-esteem, confidence, and a feeling of competence) and **independence** (including regulating one’s emotions) are primary goals for early childhood educators. When children feel nurtured, we are able to help them understand their feelings and those of their peers; they are better able to understand the effects of their actions on others, as well as others’ points of view; and the opportunities for problem solving (both social and cognitive) and negotiation are more meaningful. Our focus on building relationships leads us to emphasize proactive strategies that involve reasoning and prevention rather than reactive strategies including: how the classroom is arranged; how the day’s routines are planned and the order of activities; establishing an emotionally and intellectually safe environment; emphasizing exploration and experimentation.

If a child is having a difficult time behaviorally, we do use strategies that may include:

1. Waiting for the child to calm down and then discussing the situation and alternative actions that he/she may have taken;
2. Problem solving with all the children involved in an incident under the guidance of a teacher;
3. Offering a place away from the activity so that the child can gather himself with a teacher present. We call this “time away”. WECP does not use physical restraint, time-out or coercion as strategies, nor do we withhold food to gain a child’s cooperation;
4. Consulting with other WECP staff experts to determine next best steps;
5. Collaboration with the child’s family in creating positive behavioral intervention strategies and responses.

## Family Involvement

We rely on you to help us provide the best program for your child. Beginning with enrollment materials, we will ask you to let us know what types of activities your child prefers, what they might struggle with, how your child approaches activities, and the like. We hope to work with you to make sure your children's needs are met so that they continue to grow and learn. Families have been wonderful resources for WECP, sharing their skills, knowledge, materials, and enthusiasm with the children. We also invite families to participate in their children's program in any way they can. Parents are always welcome to join in the activities or come for lunch. We have had parent volunteers who regularly come one morning a week, or come in to do a special project. Classrooms also have special events, such as performances, lunches, potluck dinners or "Child of the Week" activities in which families can participate. In addition, participating in PTO events, whether it be coming to a monthly meeting, sharing pizza at the fall and spring school picnics, being a classroom PTO representative, organizing a T-shirt sale, or helping during a Parent Work Day are all ways for parents to connect with each other and to support our school.

## Inclusion of All Children

Embedded throughout our curriculum is the notion of inclusion. This involves providing a visual environment, materials and activities that demonstrate a respect for diversity represented by cultural/ethnic backgrounds, age and varying ability levels. We believe that all members of the WECP community contribute to and are important to its identity. Successful inclusion of all children does not happen incidentally. It requires carefully considered plans and strategies. Several factors that contribute to this include:



### 1. Teachers value diversity and cooperation

- Each child is unique, and children benefit from learning about the special qualities, events and customs of others, as becoming a member of a global community and valuing that membership begin in the early years;
- Young children enjoy helping each other; assisting someone who needs it is very natural and should be encouraged;
- All children, regardless of challenges, have the opportunity to become both leaders and helpers;
- Teachers give all children the opportunity to demonstrate their strengths and special skills, emphasizing opportunities for everyone to demonstrate and celebrate themselves each day and contribute to their classroom and the larger WECP community.

### 2. Knowledge and Understanding

- Children are often curious about differences, and teachers provide information at each child's level of understanding;
- Understanding is a gradual process that occurs by example through small daily interactions, role modeling that people are different in some ways and alike in some ways, that we all have the same basic needs, and that each of us is special and all of us need to be accepted for who we are.

### 3. Behaviors

- Children need adult guidance in learning the skills necessary to play with one another such as complimenting play skills, modeling verbal exchanges, interpreting behaviors and labeling feelings and understanding empathy.
- Teachers acknowledge and discuss children's negative feelings and behaviors in a supportive and understanding manner.

## Monitoring Children's Progress

As part of the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards, WECP uses performance monitoring to keep track of children's growth and development. Sometimes referred to as "authentic assessment" or "portfolio development", this approach involves documenting examples of development in each of the five domains over time for each child. Rather than a pull-out, one-time assessment or checklist, performance monitoring is a

process. During the course of a semester, teachers write down illustrative anecdotes, collect art work, take photos and gather other items to place in each child's portfolio. Documentation strategies are determined by classroom teams, and are focused around WMELS. This documentation is used in preparing a written parent-teacher conference report, which is the child's portfolio and is given to the family at the time of the conference.

## Holidays and Birthdays

Since WECP is an inclusive program, we want to make sure everyone feels welcome and respected. However, the subject of holiday celebrations based on religious beliefs is challenging in several ways:

- WECP teachers are not religion teachers; we believe religious instruction is the role of families and religious organizations.
- While we want to be welcoming, we recognize that talking about a holiday at the time of the year when it is being celebrated often feels and looks like a celebration, not education.
- What is a cultural aspect of a holiday to some may be a religious aspect to others. We do not want to trivialize the meaning of anyone's practice of their religion.

Therefore, as a non-sectarian program, we do not celebrate holidays that are primarily of a religious nature, including Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, Ramadan, Hanukkah, Easter and Passover. We do encourage children to share their families' traditions, for instance, through a book, song or family pictures. We are interested in learning about diverse family traditions and will support a child's individual interest in any holiday.

Celebrations at WECP do include: Welcoming the Seasons (Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer), Fall Festival in October, Day of Thanks/Gratitude in November, Friendship Day in February, Family Day, 100th Day of School, Week of the Young Child, Teacher Appreciation, and various Fun Weeks throughout the year.

Birthdays are a big part of a child's life and we enjoy celebrating these moments with children and families. If you send in a birthday treat, please keep in mind nutritional guidelines. Mini-muffins, fruit kabobs and nutritional cereal mixes are enjoyed by all children. Sometimes families plan a special lunch for their child's class. Staff will keep in mind families' dietary preferences or needs (e.g., allergies), and let you know when something other than the foods listed on the posted snack menu in the kitchen will be served. All classrooms have allergy warnings outside of their classroom doors and also daily snacks are posted in the same area. You will receive a list of birthdays of the children in your child's classroom. We welcome the opportunity to help celebrate your child's birthday in school. If you choose to send in a birthday treat, please follow these guidelines:

- Please plan simple treats; elaborate party favors are not encourage or necessary. If your child wants to, you may think of giving a present to the classroom, which may be a small item on the teachers' ongoing wish list (they would be happy to share this with you).
- Please let teachers know the week before your child's birthday if or when you plan to bring in a treat. This will allow them to inform families about the upcoming event in their newsletter so that families are able to provide substitute items if they need or want to.



**We also ask families who are having a birthday party outside WECP with a small number of friends to send their invitations through the mail rather than distribute them at school. Hurt feelings are inevitable when children who are classmates and their families discover they have not been included.**

## **WECP Traditions**

Several events take place over the school year that have become traditions. Some are organized by staff, others by the PTO and have included:

- Classroom Visiting Days: Organized by classroom teachers, families have the opportunity to bring their children to meet the teachers and classmates during our in-service week, which takes place during the third week in August;
- Fall Festival Celebration in Gym and Waisman Center Fall Festival Parade (children can wear costumes);
- Beginning-of-the-year Family Picnic the second or third week in September: This event, sponsored by the PTO, is an opportunity for families to meet and socialize, and talk informally with their children's teachers or to ask questions;
- End-of-year Family Picnic: The PTO plans this event during May. Typically held at the end of a school day, it is a combination pizza-pot luck get-together;
- Staff Appreciation Lunch: The PTO organizes a special lunch that is either catered or prepared by families for the teaching staff. This usually takes place during the planning days between spring and summer semesters;
- Staff Appreciation Week— when families provide their children's teachers special treats and recognition;
- Week of the Young Child special events in April

## **Field Trips**

Classrooms take field trips and/or walks to give children first-hand relevant experiences within the community. (Special consideration is given to planning the number and type of field trips taken by the youngest classrooms.) Children will visit places and people; they will also go on picnics and "hikes," trips that are related to classroom activities. All children must have signed permission slips, emergency and health forms on file in order to participate in the field trips.

You will be notified in advance of the date, time, and destination of the trip, either via a newsletter and/or a sign on your child's classroom message board. Please check this information each week in case of any special preparation you might want to make. Families are very welcome to join us on trips. Spontaneous walking field trips may be taken, as well. In that case, a note stating location and time of return will be posted outside the classroom.

Field trip transportation may be by foot, city bus, or chartered bus. The WECP staff follow these procedures on field trips:

1. Teachers will bring the attendance chart and a cell phone with them.
2. Each child will wear a tag having WECP identification.
3. Teachers will take along an emergency pack containing basic first aid supplies, and individual children's health and emergency phone numbers.
4. At a minimum, we will maintain a ratio of one adult per four children. Each adult is responsible for their designated children.
5. When waiting for a campus or city bus, children will stand a distance of three feet from the curb.

## **Communicating with Families**

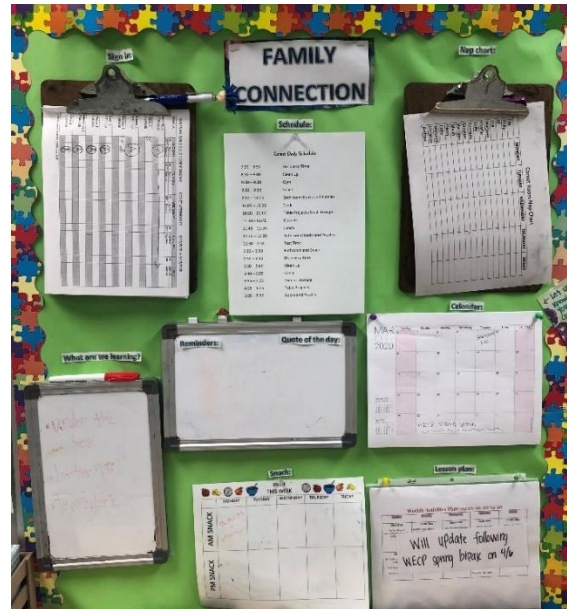
Letting families know how their children are feeling and what they are doing while at school is a priority. If you need translation services, please let the Program Director or Program Assistant know. Families and staff share information about the child and the program through a number of formal and informal mechanisms:

- Family conferences are held twice during the school year, generally in November and May. In addition, a "mini-conference" can be scheduled any time to discuss any concerns or questions families may have. Brief, informal comments can be made on a day-to-day basis during arrival and departure times, but more lengthy conversations often require an appointment. Staff have time available in the middle of the day to meet with families, or they will work with families to make other individual arrangements.
- During the week prior to school opening, we invite families and children to participate in Visiting Days to meet their child's teachers and other children and their families in their classroom. In addition, each



classroom holds an Open House to describe their programs, review program policies, and to answer questions about the curriculum or the daily schedule. During the year, classrooms plan other daytime and evening events at which children can share favorite activities and projects with their families.

- In each classroom, you will find a Family Communication Notebook in which you may communicate important information to all classroom staff (i.e., “Luke’s grandmother is picking him up today” or “Anna should take a long nap because she was up late last night”). This notebook is located in your child’s classroom. Obviously, many people may read this notebook, so please do not relay confidential information.
- Daily notes about classroom activities are found either on the white board outside your child’s classroom or in your child’s mailbox. Children’s projects will be placed in their cubbies and provide further insight into what and how the children are doing at school. Children are eager to take their treasured work home and share the excitement of accomplishment with families every day.
- WECP newsletters are another source of information for families. Classrooms send out bi- weekly or monthly newsletters, and the Program Director distributes program newsletters throughout the school year. Program newsletters contain information about what is going on at school, about changes in policies or procedures, and about noteworthy community events. Families may suggest items for the newsletter by contacting the Program Director. In addition, we post information about community events on the bulletin board opposite the teacher office area.
- For children with special needs who have Individualized Family Service Plans (birth to three programs), Individualized Educational Plans (public school early childhood programs), or Developmental Plans (WECP format), a conference involving families, teachers, and therapists is planned prior to the child’s fall enrollment date, and/or shortly after school begins. The purposes of these meetings are to review developmental and educational objectives and to discuss programming issues at WECP. Following these initial meetings additional conferences may take place to discuss progress. Families, WECP staff, or members of community agencies may request these. (All parents may request a conference at any time.)
- As relationships develop, there is often the need to communicate from parent to parent. For individual information-sharing between one or two families, it is fine to use family mailboxes. However, family mailboxes are intended primarily for PTO and staff-to-family communication.
- If you would like to distribute letters or notices to other WECP families, please check with the Program Director before doing so. It is more appropriate to send some items through the mail or make a personal call. For example, if only a few of the children in your child’s classroom are invited to his/her birthday party, please use the US mail. If all the children are invited, families are welcome to distribute invitations via the family mailboxes. Another example may be sharing a grievance with another family. In that instance, families should follow the WECP Grievance Procedures.



## Grievance Procedure

At times when a family has a concern about a situation in which their child has been involved, we ask that you take the following steps:

- Communicate the concern with the teacher or therapist most directly involved. This may mean speaking informally with that person or it may require making an appointment so there is enough time to discuss the situation.
- If the concern cannot be resolved through informal or formal discussion with the teacher or therapist, contact the Program Director, who will work with the family and staff to help resolve the problem. This may involve meeting with the Director alone and/or with staff members.
- If either the family, staff or director feels the concern cannot be resolved through this process, each



person may contact other mutually acceptable professionals to continue the problem-solving process.

- Please refrain from e-mailing all parents to express a grievance. You may contact your PTO room rep to request that a program-wide concern be placed on the agenda of the next PTO meeting.

## Family Style Diversity

We try to be sensitive to the families we serve. If a family is divorced or separated and sharing custody and there is a way our program can help make this easier or avoid making the situation more difficult, please let us know. Our policy is as follows:

1. At the time of enrollment, we will ask if there are any legal custody arrangements. We ask parents to provide a copy of legal document pages specific to the child's living arrangements. Please know that our center is neutral territory. If there is no reason to prohibit parent access, we welcome both parents and ask them to work out any issues they may have between themselves outside of the school setting.
2. If custody of the WECP-enrolled child is unclear to us, we will request to have a copy of any custody agreements, drop off or pick-up agreements, or court orders pertaining to the child in the child's confidential file. We will also ask parents to provide a schedule of drop-offs and pick-ups, and inform us of any changes.
3. Both custodial parents may have access to their child's records, but the records may not leave the WECP office area. If one of the parents is noncustodial, we will discuss and resolve this issue with the custodial parent to the child's benefit.
4. Both parents must sign the child's WECP enrollment contract.
5. Both parents must agree to each other's authorization of a WECP access card for self and others by signing a written form.
6. We urge parents to attend parent/teacher conferences together, but will conduct separate conferences if requested.
7. Unless prohibited by court order, both parents are welcome to attend all-school and classroom events.
8. We cannot presume one parent has more or fewer rights than the child's other parent without a legal document (i.e. copy of custody settlement or restraining order).
9. Each parent will be assigned a classroom mailbox and will receive copies of newsletters and other written materials, unless prohibited by law.
10. Both parents will be included in group program and classroom e-mails and other electronic notices, unless prohibited by law.
11. In situations that are unclear, we will contact UW-Madison Legal Services for advice.

## Confidentiality

All information about children enrolled in the WECP is confidential and all WECP staff receive training in HIPAA regulations. This means that children's records, including general information, classroom performance reports, and therapy notes and reports are accessible only to each child's families and current teachers, unless written parent permission to do otherwise has been given. In addition, discussion of educational and/or behavioral programs or issues concerning a specific child are held in private with only the relevant staff and family present. We do not share sensitive information about children and families with other WECP children or families. Please also see our Visitor Policies (page 14) about observing other families' children.

Families receive consent forms to sign authorizing WECP to use photos or videos of their child for WECP/Waisman Center purposes. We maintain a file of consent forms so as to adhere to each family's preferences. **We require, in turn, that families refrain from posting photos/videos and tagging photos of WECP children other than on their own in social media formats** (e.g., FaceBook, blogs, web pages, etc.). We also ask families to refrain from posting photos/videos and tagging photos of WECP staff members without their permission. WECP, along with other campus affiliated early childhood programs, has a social media policy that is posted on the Family Bulletin Board. See page 32 for the Social Media Policy.

## Transitions

### Within the classroom.....

During the day, children will be asked to transition from one activity to the next, following the classroom daily routine. Teachers are very sensitive to children's needs for having enough time to get involved with activities

and to finish activities. They are also sensitive to individual children's ease or lack of ease in switching activities, and they generally try to limit the number of transitions so that the day flows easily. To help children make smooth transitions, they also provide many cues. These include environmental cues (lowering lights or blinds, playing music), verbal cues ("foreshadowing" changes in routine with reminders), and physical guidance (e.g., gentle hand around the shoulder).

#### **Within WECP.....**

For those children who move from one classroom to another one, decisions as to next classroom placement are made with much care and discussion among all the staff members. Discussions about this begin in each classroom team, and then take place with all the WECP staff present. Some of the factors taken into consideration include each child's personality, friendships, personalities of children already in another classroom, learning styles, teaching styles, age and gender (so that classrooms are as balanced as possible), and family input. Family input involves indicating two children you would like your child to be with on your re-enrollment form distributed in February. Discussions of this process may be initiated by teachers or families, and typically occur during the spring family conference. Classroom changes occur at the beginning of the summer or the beginning of the fall session, and depend on such factors as developmental needs of the child, availability of openings in the next classroom, and enrollment hours desired.

Since teaching teams may change from time to time, we cannot accept requests for specific teachers. Fall class lists with both children and staff are posted in August. Please do not ask your child's teacher about classroom placements since these decisions are not finalized until August.

Strategies for facilitating a child's transition include informal interactions between classrooms during the school day, observing and visiting other classrooms, welcoming activities (such as being introduced at circle time), and talking about these changes at school by teachers and with you at home. We also invite families to observe the new classroom and attend an informational meeting. We want to work with families to make each child's transition a successful and happy experience.

#### **Transitions from WECP.....**

Similarly, when children are ready to leave WECP, teachers (and therapists, if relevant) will help in any way possible to make the transition to the next setting a positive experience. This includes providing an opportunity to talk, meeting with kindergarten or elementary school personnel, and gathering information that may be useful. Teachers may present an informal "Kindergarten Conversation" during the spring for parents whose children are going to Kindergarten the following academic year.

#### **Services to Children with Special Needs**

We develop a written educational plan (Developmental Plan or "DP") for each child with identified special needs. This may be an adaptation of a child's IFSP or IEP and serves as an outline for how we will meet a child's developmental and educational goals within the WECP day. The family and WECP staff first meet in August before the academic year begins, and then again in October to create the DP.

Diagnostic and therapeutic services may be provided in conjunction with the Clinical Services Programs at the Waisman Center. We also work with area Birth to 3 Programs, and Madison area school districts (MMSD, Verona, Middleton, etc) to create a comprehensive and coordinated plan. Families are active participants in the planning of all programs for their children. Throughout our years of operation, families have asked a number of questions about the provision of services to both children with disabilities or delays in development and children who are typically developing in the same program. Some of the more commonly asked questions include:

- **What are the special needs or disabilities that the children may have?**

First, we consider that children with special needs are children first, and that children are more alike than different. We use the terms "special needs" and "developmental differences" in relation to a child whose development is different or delayed in some way. The types of challenges in development children have may range from mild to severe. A developmental concern may be in one

area such as “speech production,” or in more than one developmental area such as communication and motor skills. Some children have disabilities that have names such as cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, or autism. When we say a child has special needs, we mean the child needs special educational or therapeutic services to facilitate their development and/or to facilitate their participation in classroom activities.

- **How many children with special needs are served?**

Up to 30% of the total number of enrolled children may have special needs. That means that there may be several children with special needs in each classroom.

- **How can you serve children with very different needs in one program?**

Our program is made up of many components. Teaching teams are comprised of those trained in child development, early childhood education, early childhood special education, and we have speech/ language and occupational therapists on staff. Classroom teams meet weekly to discuss upcoming activities and children’s progress. When planning classroom activities, teachers follow the principle of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). This means that we plan each activity so that all WECP children are able to participate. This benefits everyone.

While children are all enrolled in the same program, they may receive different specialized services. Some children with special needs may receive one-on-one support for all or part of their day. This support is provided to facilitate a child’s participation in the school program. In addition, while children are playing or working together, they may be learning and practicing different skills, as well as similar ones. The flexible programming, the curriculum approach of UDL, and the training and number of staff allow us to meet needs on an individual basis. In fact, our approach to every child is governed by our observations of her/his unique needs.

- **How will I know about the other families and children in the program?**

Families can get to know the other children by coming to classroom and PTO-sponsored family events, observing through the one-way mirror, and getting to know the other families involved. However, for reasons of confidentiality, WECP staff may not discuss a specific child’s needs with anyone but the child’s parents or teachers.

- **What is the benefit of having my child in a program like this?**

Preschool children are developing concepts and attitudes related to themselves and to others. With the inclusion of children who have special needs, their perspectives expand. Including children with special needs affords the opportunity for all children to learn, play and live together, and to develop into adults who accept, respect and appreciate each other. In addition, typically developing children benefit from the enriched language and communication activities present in their classroom (for example, learning sign language). Moreover, many of the adaptations provided for children with special needs enhance the learning opportunities for everyone (such as specific large motor equipment, and art materials). Overall, we see diversity contributing to an expanded curriculum and added learning opportunities.

- **What if I want to know more about special needs?**

Some printed materials are available in the school office. The Program Director will also be happy to talk with you.

## **VI. DAILY ROUTINES**

### **Beginning a New Program**

For some children, coming to WECP will be their first experience away from home without the security of their family. Many will have no adjustment problems, while others may have a more difficult time leaving their family. If you have a calm, trusting approach, it is more likely that your child will, too. Here are some suggestions for introducing this experience:

- talk about “going to school” at home in a relaxed atmosphere.
- discuss how your child will get to school.
- explain that the day includes playing, snack, and more playing before you will come to get them.
- visit the program with your child before they actually are enrolled.

## The First Few Days

For the first days of school your child might feel more comfortable with you around. Some families spend a little time playing and then say good-bye as their child becomes interested in the surroundings. Other families stay until snack time. Still other families whose schedules allow may plan to stay for the entire day either watching or participating. Some families make their child's first few days shorter than the contractual agreement and gradually increase the time. The choice is yours; you will be able to "read" your child's cues and decide when the best time for leaving occurs. However, it is important that you tell your child when you are leaving and say good-bye, give them a kiss and a hug, and leave just once. Coming and going when you depart actually creates more anxiety for children. For some children, bringing a favorite toy from home can also add an extra touch of security.

The first day at a new school may be difficult for parents, too. Please discuss with your child's teachers or the Program Director for use of the observation room if you feel the need to learn more about how your child adjusts to their day after drop-off. Teachers will keep you posted as to how your child is adjusting during the first few days. However, teachers' time for conversation is limited when they are with children, so for more extensive information ask the teacher for a phone call or e-mail, or make an appointment to talk longer.

## Suggestions for Arrival

Arrival can be a busy, confusing time for everyone. There are lunches, coats, messages, and hugs to take care of. You might follow the steps listed below to simplify arrival time:

- Drop off child's lunch in the designated refrigerator in the WECP kitchen. (Please remember to label your lunchbox ON THE OUTSIDE with your child's name).
- Place child's possessions in their cubby (i.e., extra clothing, special toys, and blanket).
- Hang outerwear in your child's cubby and place boots on the bottom shelf. (Please remember to label all items.)
- Take your child to the appropriate classroom.
- **An adult must sign in on the classroom attendance sheet.** It is very important that you remember to do this. It is a mandatory licensing requirement and we are checked frequently for compliance.
- Tell a staff member that your child has arrived. Please make sure your child stays in the classroom; never leave your child unattended.
- Inform staff of special urgent information (i.e., early pick up, medications, or of an incident at home that may affect your child at school) both verbally and with a written notation in the classroom Family Notebook that can be shared with all staff.
- If you arrive after group activities have begun, please be sensitive to the program in progress. Please keep in mind that your child is more likely to receive a warm greeting and feel a part of activities if arrival occurs prior to the beginning of group activities.



Some children do have difficulty leaving their families no matter how carefully you may have planned. If this does occur, the teacher will set aside some time to spend with you to work out a plan to help your child feel comfortable. Please remember that arrival time gets easier as the year progresses and that children may periodically pass through different phases in managing separation at the beginning of the day. Again, staff are happy to support you in working through these changes.

## Suggestions for Departure

When you come to the Center at the time of departure for your child, it is suggested that you follow the procedures below and remember certain routine checks:

- Please plan to arrive at least 5 minutes before your contracted pick-up time. We do charge a late fee if

you depart after your scheduled time; we use cell phone time when determining late pickups and there is no grace period. Check whiteboards and your child's mailbox for any news/information before taking them from the classroom.

- Create Routines for your child.
- Locate your child and prepare them for departure (i.e., "We'll leave at the end of this story" or in "5 minutes.")
- Be sure a staff member knows your child is leaving for the day.
- Remember to sign out on the classroom attendance sheet, when your child actually leaves the classroom. Please do not sign out when you sign in, or before picking up your child in the classroom. Again, this is very important.
- Collect possessions, artwork, lunch box, etc. from cubbies.
- It is the family's responsibility to clean out their child's cubby daily.
  - On Fridays, nap items need to be taken home for weekly washing, as required by State licensing regulations.
- Should you need to inform staff of special or urgent information, please verbally notify a staff member and provide us with a written notation in the classroom Family Communication Notebook. AM and PM staff share these messages. This includes information about a different person who will be picking up your child.
- At times, end-of-day transitions can be even harder than arrival time. If you need help or are in a hurry, please notify a staff member of this need. If leaving is a consistent problem no matter how carefully you have set it up, staff would be very willing to set aside time to work out a plan for a daily routine that leaves everyone feeling good or at least better!
- Persons appearing under the influence of drugs/alcohol will not be permitted to pick up children from WECP. An authorized person indicated on a child's enrollment form will be contacted and/or the University Police may be contacted.

## **Nap and Rest Time**

State Licensing regulations require that all children enrolled in the program have a rest time after lunch. For children under the age of 5, the minimum time required by State licensing regulations is 30 minutes. We have some children who sleep and others who rest or play quietly. Children's napping and resting schedules are flexible within the 12:30-2:30 time. While we will try to accommodate family preferences about the length of time their child may sleep, some requests will not be possible to fulfill within a group setting.

For rest time, children should bring a small sheet (crib size is best) and a blanket for their cot or mat. Families of children who do bring favorite "comforters" daily must be responsible for their return home at the end of the day. Sheets, blankets, and pillow cases must be laundered each weekend and returned to school on Monday. Please watch for classroom-specific information in the first newsletters of the year.

## **VII. FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

### **General Participation**

Families are welcome to visit the program, either joining in usual activities in the classroom or just observing. Children are particularly delighted when families join in at lunch time, in special events such as birthday parties, and on field trips. Families may volunteer to do a special activity in the classroom such as playing a musical instrument, showing a hobby, or sharing a family tradition. These activities enrich the experiences of children and staff. Every classroom also needs at least one helper. This volunteer supports the teaching staff in a variety of ways such as participating in field trips, arriving early at a family event to help set up the room, or serving as the PTO Classroom Representative.



## **Parent-Teacher Organization**

All families and staff are members of the Waisman Early Childhood Program Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO). The PTO meets monthly during the academic year, September through May, and agendas for PTO meetings are publicized in advance, typically via e-mail. The PTO is governed by a Parent Board, which includes the positions of President, Treasurer, Secretary, Parent Classroom Representatives, and WECP Staff Representatives. Board membership is solicited from the PTO membership. The PTO bulletin Board is located outside and to the left of the main office.

## **Purpose of the Parent-Teacher Organization**

The purpose of the WECP PTO is to promote the quality of educational experiences provided in the WECP. This may be accomplished in a variety of ways:

- The PTO provides a forum to discuss program-wide issues. In this way, families may provide input regarding program policies.
- The PTO provides an opportunity for families to discuss subjects of interest to them in the areas of early education, child development and inclusion, and other topics of interest.
- The PTO also sponsors fund-raising events, such as t-shirt sales and coffee and gift sales; and it solicits tax deductible contributions. Funds raised by the organization have helped to pay for equipment (bicycles, water tables, toys), enrichment activities, and staff continuing education costs.
- The PTO sponsors several WECP programs, such as the beginning and end-of-the-year all-school picnic and the staff-appreciation activities.

## **Responsibilities of PTO Board Members**

### President

- Organize and conduct WECP PTO meetings; prepare and disseminate agendas.
- With the WECP Program Director, plan or facilitate information/education programs presented at the PTO meetings.
- Coordinate fund-raising activities for PTO-sponsored WECP events, such as the End-of-the-Year Picnic, family fun days and t-shirt sales.

### Secretary

- Prepare and disseminate minutes from meetings via e-mail to WECP families and staff.
- Maintain files of minutes, other documents or materials.
- Follow up with relevant correspondence, such as thank you notes.

### Treasurer

- Oversee PTO bank account including making deposits, writing checks and balancing account each month.
- Report to PTO as to status of bank account during meetings.
- Distribute petty cash to classrooms.
- Distribute and monitor education funds for WECP staff.
- File simplified tax form as required by IRS annually.

### Classroom Representative

- Bring issues, concerns, questions related to program policy and practice from classroom families to PTO for discussion.

### Staff Representative

- Respond to issues, concerns, questions related to program policy and practice raised by families.
- Report to the WECP staff meetings about concerns or issues raised by families, staff rep or Director.

In addition, each member of the Parent Board is responsible for providing her/his incoming replacement an "orientation" to the duties of the specific PTO Board position. An attempt to fill upcoming vacancies to the Parent Board will be made during the spring and summer prior to the academic year. Interested parents may nominate themselves for a vacant position. If a vacancy occurs during the school year, interested parents may contact the PTO President or Program Director to volunteer to fill the position.



## VIII. STUDENT TRAINEES

WECP serves as a training site for University students from many disciplines. Students from other colleges and technical colleges receive training in our program, as well. Student teachers majoring in special education or early childhood education often spend a semester in one of our classrooms for their final practicum, as well as students in occupational and physical therapy, communicative disorders, art therapy and genetics. Qualified staff supervise all trainees. Typically, a WECP staff person is an on-site supervisor, but a faculty or staff member from the student's department also is involved on a regular basis.

At times, a student trainee may have a class assignment that involves parent participation. In those cases, you may be asked to sign a consent form asking for your permission to contact you or to work individually with your child for a specific project. If you have questions about a particular trainee's role, please talk with her/his WECP supervisor. The classroom teachers will know who this is. Please check the message board outside your child's classroom for a note from each trainee with her/his photo.

University students may also use the observation facilities at WECP to fulfill classroom assignments. Observations by students are scheduled through the Program Director or Program Assistant. Students are required to sign in each time they observe and to adhere to the WECP observation guidelines and confidentiality policies. The Program Assistant or Director also schedules and conduct tours of WECP.

## IX. RESEARCH

### **Policy for Conducting Research with Children in the WECP**

Research is an integral part of the WECP mission. The WECP serves as a site for University of Wisconsin faculty who are Waisman Center investigators and their graduate students to conduct research projects that examine aspects of child development. Thanks to the collaboration of WECP families who have allowed their children to participate in studies, these investigators have helped us to better understand the children's development in the areas of speech and language, hearing, thinking and learning processes, and their understanding of emotions.

The Waisman Clinical Translation Core facilitates the participation of WECP children in approved research projects. Each project that involves taking a child out of the classroom for activities that are unrelated to the regular WECP program requires parental consent. The CTC also connects families with research opportunities outside of class time. The CTC distributes information explaining the studies and consent forms to families via parent mailboxes at WECP or through mailings to their homes. The CTC also monitors children's participation in research projects to ensure that no particular child or family is asked to participate in too many studies within a short period of time.

### **There are several guidelines for research that is conducted in WECP**

- University of Wisconsin-Madison must review and approve all research projects.
- Prior to beginning a study, the research staff meets with the WECP Director and/or the classroom teachers.
- Research staff visit the classroom so that children become familiar with the research team.
- As required for other staff and students at WECP, research project staff are required to have a criminal and caregiver background check on file with the WECP and CTC.
- When researchers work with a child outside of the classroom, they must record the child's name and time they leave the room on the classroom sign-out sheet. Upon returning the child to class, the researcher must record the time on the sign-out sheet and inform the teacher.
- When research is conducted in a room with no observation mirror, there must be two adults present in the room with the child.
- Even if parents have signed consent forms, children always have the right to refuse participation in a research project at any time. Children are made to feel comfortable expressing when they do not wish to participate in a study, and the child's wishes are respected.

**The Family Bulletin Board** across from the teacher office area has information summarizing the research projects being conducted each semester. Teachers may also include information about a study in their classroom newsletter and right outside of their individual classrooms. When a project is completed, researchers share results of their study with WECP families and staff in either a mailing or poster. Families may contact the WECP Director, or individual researchers if they have questions before, during, or after their child's participation.

Although the WECP encourages families to participate in research projects, participation is voluntary and does not affect services that you or your family receive at WECP or the Waisman Center. If you have any questions or concerns related to a research project, you may also contact the Waisman Clinical Translation Core (608-263-5192).

## **X. A FINAL NOTE**

We hope this Family Handbook has helped you learn about WECP policies and practices. We are happy to have you as part of the program and hope you will become an active participant. We look to you for support as we work with your children, as well as a source of ideas for helping WECP continue to be a model for inclusive early education and care.



# APPENDIX

## XI. Social Media Policy

UW- Madison Campus Children's Centers Technology/Social Media Policy May 1, 2014

The early education and care centers of the University of Wisconsin-Madison recognize the benefits and challenges of using technology (e.g., tablets, computers, digital cameras and camcorders). The following guidelines are in place to ensure appropriate use of these tools, and applications thereof (including but not limited to cell phones, digital cameras, web pages, blogs, social media such as facebook, etc.) to protect the integrity and best practices of each center, and the confidentiality and well-being of each center's families, children and staff.

### Statement of Commitment to Confidentiality:

Adults who are working, observing, conducting research, and training within campus centers are informed that they may become privy to confidential information regarding children and families. Therefore, all adults will read and sign the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct and will abide by all State of Wisconsin Childcare licensing rules regarding confidentiality.

### Photography and Images:

The use of photos and videos within the classroom setting are to enhance learning, share experiences with peers and families, assist with authentic assessment of the child's development through play and activities, and contribute to the sense of community that the children build with one another. Such images shall never be used for monetary gain by any party; nor will they be created without the signature permission of children's parents/guardians. We ask that families understand that photograph and video images are a standard and routine occurrence within campus programs, especially in those that utilize photographs for authentic assessment. Therefore, all campus programs will obtain parental permission at the time of enrollment.



Centers will also seek additional authorization for using photographs or videotape images for educational and/or publicity purposes.

No personal identification will be used in any publication or educational use of children's images. However, for individual portfolios documenting progress that are created for each child, identifying information will be used. These portfolios will be kept in confidential files on site in each center. According to federal legislations, families may have access to these files whenever they wish.

### **Social Media Use in the Classroom:**

- a. Each center will have a technology statement in their Family and Staff Handbooks that outlines the goals and objectives of the use of social media and screen time in the classroom as it pertains to the programming provided for children.
- b. The statement will outline the reasons for using social media (parent communication, internet presence to inform public, a learning tool for children, etc.), and it will describe how social media may be used.
- c. Adults within the classroom should use technology to communicate with families only during planning times and not as a part of their ongoing time in the classroom in order to prevent distraction from interactions with the children. As stated in the UW Academic Staff Policies and Procedures, "Violation of applicable laws or UW Policies may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination."
- d. All centers will use social media in a respectful way that does not disparage the University, the center, staff, families or children.

- e. Staff receive training in creating and maintaining different types of social media, and they are aware that they are representing the UW and the center.
- f. All staff, student employees and trainees will abide by their center's policies regarding confidentiality and will be responsible for content they create. Content should be brief, professional and focus on the educational goals and objectives that the center has established.
- g. Staff and families are not allowed to store pictures, video or sound on their personal devices. Student teachers will be directed to immediately delete any photos, sound or video information collected for course requirements at the conclusion of the semester, and will agree to do this in writing.
- h. Technology may be used to enhance the classroom curriculum (e.g., research a topic on the internet; participate in on-line streaming of an educational nature; use an application to provide individualized instruction for some children; communicate with friends in different parts of the world on education-related topics).

**Staff Guidelines:**

- a. All staff involved in the use of social media, whether for personal use or use within the center as a part of their work, will be knowledgeable about and adhere to this Social Media Policy, and the views and opinions of the families with whom they work and the UW.
- b. All staff will be aware of the possibility of all content being shared with extended family, co-workers, parents and staff from other classrooms within the center. Therefore, all information disseminated will be consistent with the professional standards of the UW Early Education and Care Centers as expressed within this Social Media Policy and the center's policy and procedure handbooks.
- c. Staff will use digital technology and social media in accordance with any existing policies of the University. Violation of applicable laws or UW policies may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Any communication or content published that causes damage to the reputation of the center, employees, families and children may be considered misconduct and could lead to termination.

**Family Guidelines:**

- a. The Social Media Policy will be described in the center's Family Handbook, will be publicly posted and will be made readily available to each family in the center. This will outline how video and photographs will be used by the program, and each center will have a signed consent form on file at the center. Families seeking an exception to this policy must address the issue specifically and individually with the Program Director, and a written exception may be implemented.
- b. Lack of adherence to the center's policies regarding social media and confidentiality may result in termination of enrollment.



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