

# UC Merced Early Childhood Education Center Family Handbook



*Home of the Bobcat Kittens*



On behalf of the UC Merced Early Childhood Education Center (ECEC) Staff, I would like to extend to you a sincere and warm welcome. The ECEC is here to provide a high quality educational program for the children we serve. We offer parent support through our Parent Participation program and various other resources and referrals.

If you ever have anything that you'd like to discuss with us, please feel free to stop by the front office or email us at [eccec@ucmerced.edu](mailto:eccec@ucmerced.edu).

Our program operates with the concept that staff and parents are partners in the development of children. We believe that parents are the child's first teacher and we respect the values and the teachings that come from home.

We look forward to a wonderful program year together.

Sincerely,

Danielle J. Waite, Ed.D.

UC Merced Early Childhood Education Center Director

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## **Section I**

### **Mission Statement**

The UC Merced Early Childhood Education Center is a high-quality program for young children of UC Merced parents and local community. We respect each individual while providing a safe, happy, creative and nurturing environment. We provide developmentally appropriate engaging activities and natural learning experiences for children in order to instill an enthusiastic attitude for knowledge.

### **Philosophy**

The UC Merced Early Childhood Education Center (ECEC) provides a warm, interesting, nurturing and developmentally appropriate environment where each child can explore and grow. Each classroom has been designed to be a welcoming environment to the children and families, as well as provide a comfortable place for the teachers to work in. We do not use flash cards, letters of the week, thematic topics, or cookie cutter (all children produce similar) art projects, which is often found in child care programs. We use our education, experience, and expertise to provide opportunities to stimulate your child's engagement in learning. Classroom teachers and families will partner together to ensure that communication between home and the ECEC is continual, for this dialogue is for the child.

With the ECEC as a part of the child's life, there is the invitation to all families to participate at the center throughout the year during daily activities or special events. Conferences are held upon enrollment and at least twice a year, or more frequently at parent or teacher request. All parents are members in the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC), which meets monthly and provides parent input regarding the center, as well as is a forum for parenting issues.

Using Floorbooks as our foundation for an emergent child initiated curriculum, we provide an environment in which we support enabling children to meet the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) measures and the California Infant/Toddler and Preschool Learning and Development Foundations and Frameworks. The Floorbook processes encourages our teachers to individualize and make the learning experiences more relevant by framing learning in the children's interests. This learning and development is documented and new lines of inquiry are discovered in our Floorbooks, where the teachers and children work together to reflect on their experiences, and note their thinking while planning future opportunities of exploration.

With infants, each teacher is working with a primary care giving group of four infants. A strong nurturing relationship between the care giver and child is essential, as well as that between the care giver and the family. With the partnership formed, the child is the focus. Each routine and care giving ritual is individualized for that specific child, his/her temperament and needs. Language and non-verbal communication are both key in the infant classrooms. Children are responded to and their needs addressed individually as the child dictates. The care givers work together to plan and implement a variety of activities for the children to develop their whole selves. Each infant's routines and family practices from home are incorporated as much as possible into the care giving at the ECEC. This consistency of the

routines, schedules, transitions and practices from home to the ECEC helps the infants establish security and keep their patterns consistent and predictable.

The toddler classroom: where everything is something worth exploring. These classrooms are filled with activities and materials for the children. The toddlers are given many activities and materials that are open ended, to allow them to explore concepts and relations of materials to one another. The toddlers are also in small primary groups, one teacher to every six toddlers. This ensures that all routines and transitions are smooth. Routines such as dressing, self service of meals, napping, and toilet training are integrated throughout the classroom. The toddler is independent and learning how to negotiate this want of being independent and satisfying their personal needs with the other children and their wants and need within the classroom. This becomes a primary task, of how to negotiate materials and space with peers. The toddler classroom is also rich in language. This is when adults spend much of their time role modeling language for the children, giving them the language for them to be able to communicate their needs better on their own.

The preschool classroom is where exploration becomes more formalized. They have mastered the milestone of initiating toileting on their own and are ready for more advanced physical, social, and cognitive skills. The children are learning basic skills they will need for Kindergarten: familiarity of routines, social skills in a group setting, math concepts, language arts, cognitive skills, fine and gross motor skills, and problem solving within a nurturing environment designed just for them. The children will be studying an interesting topic, such as insects or balls, and while exploring this topic, be exposed to different planned activities and materials that encourage their development in all developmental domains and areas. This planning is carefully thought out by their teachers. Each teacher in the classroom is the primary care giver to a group of approximately ten children. The teacher's responsibility is to develop activities and provide materials in the classroom that will encourage each child's individual developmental needs in his/her primary group, as well as meet the needs of the classroom overall with the other teachers. Each activity, from playdough, playing with others making sand cakes to building a city in the block corner, provides the child with many developmental growth opportunities.

### **Continuity of Care**

The ECEC practices "continuity of care". Every August, a teacher moves to the next classroom with a group of children who are age eligible. This allows for children and parents to have a relationship with a teacher for two years. An infant teacher will move to the toddler room, a toddler teacher would move to the prek and a prek teacher would move into the infant room. If your child is age eligible prior to August, they may move prior to the teacher transition. There is the possibility that you and your child are already familiar with one of the teachers in the next age classroom. Parents may also have the choice to wait for the teacher to move. Tuition rates are based on the classroom, not the age of the child. Continuity of care is considered in the early childhood education field to be a "best practice" and we take pride in offering this to our families.

## **Program Goals**

A primary goal of the program is to offer a high quality ECEC that permits the children to discover and learn, to become decision makers and problem solvers, and to feel good about themselves. The ECEC uses the National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NAC) accreditation criteria throughout all components of the program.

Additionally, other program goals for the children are for them to develop in the areas of cognition (thinking), language arts (talking), literacy (reading), social/emotional (relationships) and physical development (moving and doing).

The program supports children's social and emotional development by: building trust, planning routines and transitions so they can occur in a timely predictable and unhurried manner, and helping children develop emotional security and facility in social relationships. The program provides for the development of each child's cognitive and language skills by using various strategies: including experimentation, inquiry, observation, play and exploration, ensuring opportunities for creative self-expression through activities such as music, movement, and dialogue, promoting interaction and language use among children and between children and adults, and supporting emerging literacy and numeracy development. The program promotes each child's physical development by providing sufficient time, indoor and outdoor space, equipment, materials and guidelines for active play and movement.

Other program goals are:

- Ensure a high quality integrated interactive child centered early childhood education program for the families of UC Merced and the Community of Merced.
- Provide an on-site quality early care and education program for staff, students and faculty of the UC Merced campus. This resource is to help recruit and retain parents of young children.
- Respect each child as an individual, who is an integral part of their family.
- Create a warm, interesting, nurturing and developmentally appropriate environment for each child.
- Provide each family and child with responsive caregivers who are qualified educated experienced early childhood professionals.
- To maintain individual creativity while learning to work cooperatively with others.
- Encourage social, emotional, intellectual and physical growth through daily interaction with adults and children other than family members.
- Embrace the diversity and the richness of multitude of cultures represented at UC Merced and the families served at the ECEC.
- Meets the adult needs of the parents whenever possible.
- Provides a program that is developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate.
- Be inclusive of children with special needs.
- Encourages the respect for the feelings and rights of others.
- Promotes and maintains practices that are healthy and safe.
- Provides access for research with parental informed consent.

## **Classroom Environment**

The classroom environment is fundamental to your child's experiences and learning while in the program. We strive to make the classrooms a welcoming place for both the children and family, with home-like touches.

The rooms are for the children to freely explore and experience, the only limitation being one of safety. Age appropriate materials that are interesting to the children are at the child's level, for easy and accessible self service.

The classroom is divided into strategically located interest areas, so learning experiences do not interfere or interrupt one another. Noisy activities (blocks, dramatic play) are separate from quiet activities (book reading, writing, and art).

The staff will rotate materials often to keep the children interested in all areas, as well as increase the difficulty to challenge them mentally and physically.

## **Outdoor Environment**

This environment serves as an outdoor classroom for the children to explore and learn in. The teachers use this environment not only to allow the children to play and run around in, but they also plan activities that extend the learning from the classroom to a different environment and to include different elements. There are active and quiet activities outside, as well as opportunities to "get a little messy".

Gardening is seasonal activity for the children outside. There are ongoing discussions about leaving blossoms on the fruit trees so they can mature into edible fruit and how to best care for the vegetables and flowers growing in our planter boxes.

## **Curriculum**

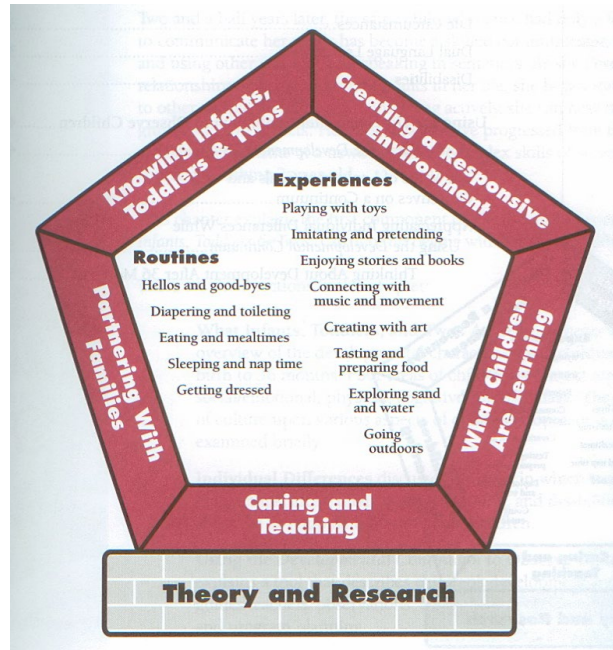
The curriculum that the UC Merced Early Childhood Education Center is using is a mixture of different philosophies and practices. The Creative Curriculum has been used as the guide for the teachers in the classrooms. The Creative Curriculum is designed to be a blueprint for our teachers to plan and implement a developmentally appropriate program for your children, while introducing them to topics that are interesting to them. This process is captured in our classroom Floorbooks where the teachers plan, reflect and document their learning continually. The Floorbooks also link the learning experiences to the DRDP assessment and the Frameworks and Foundations.

The Creative Curriculum is based on different child development theorists and current research as to how children learn. The curriculum also takes into account the following: individual interests and uniqueness, gender, temperament, learning styles, life experiences, culture, special needs and second language learners. Teachers are trained to recognize these aspects of each child and welcome them into the classroom.

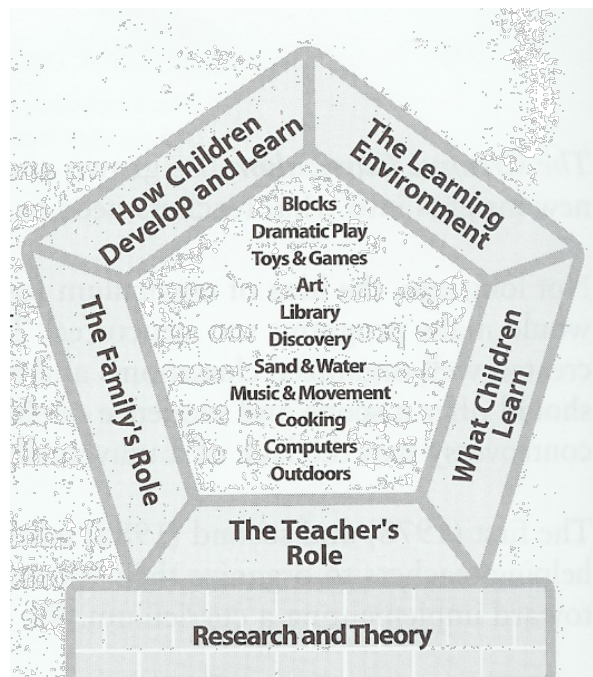


The Creative Curriculum has different components that are interrelated to support each child in his/her learning and development.

For the infants and toddlers, these components are illustrated below:



With children ages 3-5 years, these components are illustrated in the following manner:



Using the Creative Curriculum as our foundation provides a thorough curriculum that supports the children in meeting the Desired Results and the Early Learning Foundations, which are

mandated by the California Department of Education, Child Development Department. The Creative Curriculum also encourages our teachers to individualize and make the learning experiences relevant to the children in the classroom. The intentional planning of activities and experiences begins in our infant room with our youngest children and continues throughout your child's attending our program to enter Kindergarten. These processes are documented and created through the Floorbook interactive process. Teachers and children together plan the direction of the curriculum through hands on activities, reviewing the work completed, and having small group discussions with objects, photos, and the Floorbook itself.

Throughout our curriculum, the partnership between the family and the teachers is the most important component to the successful foundation for the children to best prepare him/herself for future learning.

### **Assessment System**

As a research based assessment system developed from the California Department of Education, Early Education and Support Division. We implement the Desired Results Developmental Profile 2015 (DRDP-2015) assessment system and integrate it fully with our curriculum and Floorbooks. It is an assessment continuum with specific measures and developmental areas that has been specifically designed for children (ages birth – 35 months and 36 months – Kindergarten entry). The DRDP-2015 has been used in the field with young children throughout California and corresponds with the California Preschool Foundations, which is aligned with the California Department of Education K-12 Standards. Using the DRDP-2015 as the assessment will give the teachers a viable tool to assess the children and plan for their immediate developmental success, as well as prepare the children for Kindergarten and beyond.

### **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

During orientation, the teacher in the classroom will start as your child's primary care giver will meet with you personally. This will be the time the teacher will review the Family Questionnaire and you can share your desires for your child within our program. This is an information sharing session and will help transition your child into the classroom and ECEC. The primary teacher can shift over time with staffing rotations.

Conferences are scheduled two times a year or more, depending on the age of your child and personal need. The first formal assessment conference will be within 60 days of your child beginning the program and the second will happen during our fall (late October) and spring (early May) conference times. In these conferences, you will meet with your child's teacher to discuss your child's strengths and appropriate developmental goals.

### **Discipline Statement**

We believe that children learn acceptable behaviors by modeling those around them– the other children and staff when they are in school and their parents and others at home. We have established a few basic rules which will help your child enjoy a security that will enhance his/her learning. In addition, we have adopted Conscious Discipline to also provide language

and strategies for teachers and children to work through situations.

We will not allow a behavior to continue if it appears that your child will hurt him/herself or someone else or that property will be damaged. We expect our teachers to implement this policy with the constructive techniques listed below:

- Redirecting the child's attention from the disruptive behavior to an acceptable activity.
- Discussing the outcomes of negative behavior, with teacher sitting or kneeling at the child's level.
- Talking it out—the teacher would sit down and help the children put their thought/emotions into words.
- "Cool off" time when needed, for a minute or two, before talking with the teacher and/or other child.

Discipline methods such as time out, exclusion, send to the office, threats to call parents or any forms of corporal punishment/violation of personal rights will **not** be allowed in the ECEC.

Staff will ask to conference with you if behaviors have escalated or if we need parent partnership to assist with your child's behaviors at the ECEC.

### **Biting Policy**

The UC Merced ECEC will implement the policy according to the age of the child, developmental level and number of incidents.

Biting is more of a concern in children ages 3 years and higher. Any instances of biting in preschool aged children will result in meeting with the biter's family to discuss the circumstance of the incident and to determine if outside resources need to be contacted.

In children from infant through the age of 3 years, the following procedures will be followed. Biting is not uncommon in the early ages, but will be documented and tracked. Staff will be responsible to inform the biter's family of the incident(s) immediately. The teachers will pay close attention to the biter to determine the cause of the biting and to attempt to deter any future incidents. Most young children will bite on occasion, but the severe biter (chronic, routine, frequency over time or hard biter) will have the following procedures:

- Meeting scheduled with the parent to discuss the situation.
- Depending on the severity – the following may happen:
  - Biter is asked to go home for the day.
  - Suspension for a period of time.
  - Outside support/resources brought in to assist.
  - Possible eventual termination, due to injury of other children.

The victim of the biter is also attended to in the following manner for all ages. Parents will be informed upon arrival that their child has been bitten and be given a completed accident report. The name of the biter will not be released to the parent by the Center staff, as we do not want

something that is within the range of normal behavior used against the biting child. At the time of the incident, the victim will be treated (bite area washed and iced) and comforted. The biter will participate in this (if age appropriate) to help them develop empathy and an understanding that they were the reason for the response of the victim (crying, hitting back, etc.). If the victim instigated the bite (example: stole a doll, wherein the other child bites her to get the doll back), the staff will discuss this with both children to illustrate the reason she was bitten, but also letting the biter know that there are more appropriate methods in getting her doll back.

## **Daily Schedule**

### **Infant Classroom**

7:30	Classroom Opens/Greetings
Morning	Following the Infants Individual Schedule Explore Indoor and Outdoor Environment Feeding, Diapering, Hand Washing, Napping, Cuddling, Activities, Songs, Stories and Personalized Care
Afternoon	Tooth Brushing (wiping gums with wet gauze) Following the Infants Individual Schedule Explore Indoor and Outdoor Environment Feeding, Diapering, Hand Washing, Napping, Cuddling, Activities, Songs, Stories and Personalized Care
5:30	Classroom Closes/Have a Good Evening

*Infants that have teeth and are eating table foods, begin to follow the toddler classroom schedule more closely than the infant classroom schedule. The meals and naps become more regular and predictable.*

### **Toddler Classroom**

7:30	Classroom Opens/Greetings
Morning	Explore Indoor and Outdoor Environment Diapering, Toileting and Hand Washing, Activity Time, Circle Time and Story Time
9:00	Morning Snack
12:00	Lunch and Tooth Brushing
Afternoon	Naptime Wake Up and Cuddle Time Diapering, Toileting and Hand Washing Afternoon Snack Explore Indoor and Outdoor Environment Read Stories or Quiet Play
3:30	Afternoon Snack
5:30	Classroom Closes/Have a Good Evening

### **Preschool Classroom**

7:30	Classroom Opens/Greetings
Morning	Explore the Indoor and Outdoor Environments

	Group Time, Choice and Activity Time, Story Time, Toileting and Hand Washing
9:00	Morning Snack
12:00	Lunch and Tooth Brushing
Afternoon	Nap/Rest Time
	Wake Up, Quiet Time, Toileting and Hand Washing
	Afternoon Snack
	Explore Indoor and Outdoor Environments
	Read Stories or Quiet Play
3:30	Afternoon Snack
5:30	Classroom Closes/Have a Good Evening

*All Classroom Schedules are subject to change depending on the needs and interests of the children in the class.*

With two classrooms per age group, there will be a “community time” at the beginning and the end of the day, utilizing one classroom. The classrooms will switch being the A and B classroom monthly. Odd months will open in Classroom 1 and even months will open in Classroom 2. This allows for only one classroom of children to use the yard during the morning schedule and combining of classrooms during drop-off and pick-up times.

7:30-8:30	Class A opens and welcomes all children
8:30	Class B lines up after cleaning up what they were working with – Class A keeps working
8:35	Class B goes to their classroom – has a group or reading time
9:00	Snack Time
9:30-10:30	Class A goes outside for yard time – Class A sets up outside activities and materials
10:30	Class A comes indoors to work
11:00-12:00	Class B goes outdoors
Before 12:00	Class A washes hands prior to a group or story time
At 12:00	Sinks available for Class B to come in to wash

We alternate which group is outside during the first and second morning times, to allow for children who arrive later in the morning to benefit from the formal and informal indoor instructional times. Both the indoor and outdoor times offer a variety of social learning experiences and structured activities for children. We hope that this alternating of schedules allows for children to benefit fully from their time here at the ECEC. Children who benefit the most are those who experience both on a daily basis.

After wake-up and snack (3:30 start time) – around 4:00 p.m. both classrooms outside weather permitting. Class B welcomes all children for indoor activities prior to closing.

## **Hours of Operation and the Program Year**

The ECEC is open five (5) days per week from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The ECEC operates around the UC Merced Campus calendar, observing many of the same closures the Campus observes.

The ECEC operates serving children from 8:30-4:30, the First Friday of each month. The First hour of the day from 7:30-8:30 will be used for an all staff meeting/training. These First Friday meetings are during the months without finals or other training closures. There is an early closure the day before Thanksgiving, an additional half-day closure during Spring Break and three full-day closure days in August. The program calendar is posted on the ECEC website.

## **ECEC Staff**

The UC Merced Early Childhood Education Center has taken great care in finding educated, talented professionals to work in each classroom. All the teachers have a minimum of an Associate's degree or the required experience and units to qualify for the California Department of Education, Commission on Teacher Credentialing Child Development Teacher permit or higher.

All the staff will be required to maintain their Child Development permit status through further education or professional growth activities. This is the requirement from the California Department of Education for their permit and for NAC Accreditation.

ECEC Student Aides are students who are hired by the ECEC to maintain child:adult ratio during teacher break times. They are never left unsupervised with any child and do not participate in child toileting/diapering.

ECEC staff, teachers, student aides and student volunteers all are required to show proof of Pertussis and Measles immunizations and must update their Flu Shot status annually.

ECEC staff, teachers, or student aides are not allowed to babysit after work hours or care for the children of families enrolled at the ECEC. This has been determined to be a potential conflict of interest.

## **Parent Participation**

Parents/guardians are a vital part to our program. We expect you to be an active part in your child's ECEC through a variety of ways. If you have any talents or skills that you would like to share, please feel free to share them with your child's teachers and they will help you plan activities. Children enjoy having a parent work in the classroom and the opportunity to share experiences with them. It gives you an opportunity to see your child interact with his/her peers and learn who his/her friends are. Through your participation in the classroom, you will also learn from our ECEC staff on different strategies for conflict resolution and how to support children's learning.

The Parent Advisory Committee Meetings are held monthly at the ECEC or another location on

campus. This is a time when ECEC information and events are shared, a professional may do a parent training, fund-raising events are planned, and it is an opportunity to network with the other parents in the program. All parents are invited and encouraged to participate during these PAC Meetings. Please attend these meetings and make it a practice that will continue through your child's educational years.

The UC Merced ECEC Advisory Council is a committee that convenes a minimum of twice a year with a parent representatives from the ECEC. In addition to the parents, there are representatives from UCM staff, faculty, an undergraduate student and a graduate student, as well as representatives from local community programs. The parent representatives are appointed. The parent advises on issues related to the families and children who attend the ECEC and bring back the information to the PAC Meetings.

## **Section II**

### **Enrollment Information**

The UC Merced Early Childhood Education Center offers child development services to families with young children six-weeks through five years of age (until First Grade entry). The program does not discriminate on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, or mental or physical disability, in determining which children are served.

The ECEC intends to serve as many families as possible; however, priority will be given to siblings of children currently enrolled in the program and UC Merced families. Siblings (twins included) will also be eligible for a 10% reduction in tuition for the oldest sibling. A \$50 one month discount will be deducted from your tuition for referrals for any newly enrolled family.

The waitlist for enrollment is maintained by the ECEC. This list will be updated and reviewed periodically. Your name will be placed on the waiting list upon submittal of the UC Merced ECEC Wait List Application online and payment of your application fees. Your child will be on the waiting list and prioritized by date received. Please realize that children who are on the waiting list less time than your child may be admitted prior to you. We need to enroll children depending on the age of the child and the slot/classroom that is available.

### **Immunizations**

California State Law requires children entering school be fully immunized at the time of enrollment. Students lacking one or more required doses, but who are not currently due for a dose, may be conditionally admitted until the remaining dose or doses are due. Immunization is not only for the individual receiving the vaccination, but for the community that they are participating in. At the ECEC, we require all families to have their children immunized.

Students who are not adequately immunized will not be admitted to school. The law (SB 277) allows for physician elected medical exemptions.

### **Annual Updates**

We encourage parents to update their family file as any changes occur. At least once a year, parents will be asked to review certain portions of their files to review and make any updates as necessary. **Parents must inform the program immediately of a change of:** address, phone number, work/training status or schedule.

### **Contract Hours Needed for Services**

Full time contract hours are available and part time hours may be available on a limited basis. Part time hours will be allowed if there is another child that we can coordinate your needs with. Full time children will have priority over part time children. UCM students who have been granted a part-time contract will be guaranteed these hours for the duration of the current semester. We cannot guarantee that specific part-time schedules will have a match for future semesters. Priority is given to UCM full-time families. Part-time contract holders will have the



first option to move to full-time depending on their enrollment date.

### **Fee Information**

Tuition payments are due in full as per your agreed upon schedule (monthly or bi-weekly). There are no discounts for holidays, vacations, sick days or closures of the ECEC. The tuition has been pro-rated as monthly, so tuition amounts are the same for short months as for long months.

**Students:** Students will receive a discount in tuition through the support of the ECEC Student Fee. To qualify for the student discount, the student must be a currently enrolled student of UC Merced. Upon graduation the tuition rate will revert to the standard UC Merced rate (pre-discount). The student discount is available year-round, as long as the student is enrolled. For periods of time between semesters, the discount is still applicable as long as the student parent is enrolled for the next consecutive session. It is not available during the summer months if the parent is not enrolled in a summer session. Should a student withdraw from courses, they will be responsible for the full tuition for the affected months of care in order to qualify for future student discounts.

**Subsidized Families:** Families receiving subsidy for services from an alternative payment (AP) program will be responsible for all tuition costs and other acquired fees not paid for by the AP program. For UC Merced student families, the student fee discount may cover what the AP program does not cover and you will be notified should you have any payments that you need to address.

**Late Fees:** Payments are due on a monthly basis and are due by the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> day of being posted in CashNet. If payment is received between the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> day after posting, there is a late fee of \$25, which will be posted to your next month's tuition. If payment has not been received in full by the 10<sup>th</sup> day, you will be refused services and a letter will be issued informing you of your termination for failure to pay. Bi-weekly (following UC Merced bi-weekly pay schedule) payments are due within two business days (the following Friday) of the pay date. A late fee of \$25 will be assessed if tuition is paid after midnight on the Friday, which will be posted to your next month's tuition. If payment has not been received in full by the end of business Monday, a letter will be issued informing you of your termination for failure to pay. Late payment will only be accepted three times, the fourth will result in the loss of services.

### **Children's Trial Period**

In order to meet your needs and that of your child, the program will implement our child trial period policy. This policy, effective upon program acceptance, is applicable to ALL children and will be implemented on a case by case basis.

The Director has the right to place your child on a trial period at any time, if there is a need. The purpose of the trial period is to assess if the program can meet your child's individual needs and to find out if this is the best place for your child based on his/her unique needs.

During this period, we will observe your child and confer with you on a regular basis. **Each child and his/her needs will be addressed individually.**

The program's intent is to assist each child and his/her family. All actions and meetings will be documented with our Family Action Plan, where we will document discussions and plans to assist your child's success in our program. If we cannot meet the child's needs, and/or if your child has needs that exceed this program, then we will assist you in finding other child care services, as well as provide a community service agency listing.

### **Attendance**

Please call the center or let a staff member know if your child is going to be absent or off of your regular routine. You can also email [ecec@ucmerced.edu](mailto:ecec@ucmerced.edu) and let the front office staff know of your child's absence or late arrival. We communicate changes in schedules, illnesses and other absences to the teachers. If you plan on picking your child up early, please also inform the teachers. This is to ensure that they haven't gone on a campus walk and are here at the ECEC when you arrive.

Please make sure that your child attends the program regularly. Following your schedule gives your child a sense of predictability and a daily routine.

### **Sign In and Out**

Each child must be signed in and out every day in his/her classroom for every scheduled program day. **Full signatures and times are required on sign in/out attendance sheets.** **These daily signatures must be the same as you sign all your legal documents.** Failure to sign in/out will follow the monetary penalty. Teachers will review the sign in/out sheets twice a day looking for parents/guardians who failed to sign in the appropriate place. The first time they will take a highlighter to mark the missing signature area for the parent to sign. This is the first and only warning. The next three (3) missing signatures will be a \$5 fine each. The fourth (4) and any additional missing signatures will be a \$50 fine each.

We do not allow for signing children in or out during campus walks. Teachers do not take sign-in/out books with them on walks.

A nursing mother who uses the Lactation Room or parent who wishes to take their child from the classroom during the program day must sign their child out and then back in. Licensing mandates that when a child has been signed in, they must remain under the visual supervision of a staff member. Thank you for being conscientious of this requirement.

Please make sure a staff member in the room recognizes your arrival or departure. If you are unable to pick up your child he/she will be released only to adults (18 years or over) designated on the **emergency release form** or other adults you designate in writing in advance. Please inform all designated adults that photo identification is required, as well as proper child safety seats.

Those parents who may have custody issues should consult with an attorney regarding legal protection for their children. Parents must provide us with any court orders so that we can enforce your legal rights, should the need arise.

### **Arriving and Leaving**

When you arrive at the ECEC with your child, please allow for some time to spend with a little routine or a special moment. At pick up time, take a few minutes to allow your child a chance to clean up what he/she was working on or to show you the painting or discovery of the day. When you sign out your child, you acknowledge that you are now responsible for him/her.

Children are not allowed to open any of the doors. The doors of the ECEC are heavy and often there is a vacuum effect which makes the doors slam unpredictably. We do not want any children's fingers injured.

Please do not let your child leave the ECEC without you, even after signing him/her out for the day, even if there is someone waiting for them in the front office or parking lot, keep them with you.

### **Late Pick-Up**

Your child learns the routine of the day and when his/her classmates are picked up in relation to when you arrive. If you think that you may be late in picking up your child, please call the ECEC immediately, so we can reassure your child.

All late fees will be assessed to your next month's tuition billing. You will see them when you log into your family account.

For half-day children, you will be considered a late pick-up if you arrive after 12:30 p.m. We want half-day children to be leaving before 12:40, so those children who nap can settle down into their afternoon routine. Parents leaving after 12:40 will be charged a late fee as the families after 5:30. The fee will be \$15 for leaving between 12:40-12:50 p.m. and an additional \$2 per minute thereafter.

For full-day families, late pick-up are instances where you leave the ECEC after 5:30 p.m., so please ensure that you arrive at the ECEC prior to 5:30. This is so you can collect your child, his/her belongings and sign out prior to the closure of the ECEC. **The front desk voice mail may not be checked after 5:00 p.m.** The staff are in the classroom with the children and will not come to the front desk to call until 5:30 p.m. Cat Cards are used to "time stamp" your departure from the ECEC. One teacher will be up front to let you in (the door locks automatically at 5:30) and the other teacher will be in the classroom with your child. Upon arriving in the classroom you will sign a statement acknowledging your tardy pick up, sign your child out and leave with your child and belongings. As you leave the ECEC, pass your Cat Card over the reader at the front door to "time stamp" the accurate time of leaving the facility. The teachers will also Cat Card out when they leave. If you fail to Cat Card out, your official

time you leave the ECEC will be the teacher's departure time. Your late fee is based on the time that you leave the ECEC, not when you arrive.

On your third (3) late departure, you will be required to meet with the Director to review your needs and schedule.

Late departure after day (5:30 p.m.) closure will result in a fee of \$15 for the first 10 minutes and an additional \$2 per minute thereafter. This charge is to be paid, even if you have called the ECEC and informed staff of your late arrival. At the assigned closure time, staff will begin to call from your child's authorized list to find an adult, if they had not heard from you. If no authorized adult can be found, the UCM Police Department will be called. When you pick up your child after hours, you will be asked to sign a **Late Fee Agreement Form**. This is an acknowledgement of your late time and what fee is required. This form will be delivered to the front office and payment will be discussed with you. Failure to pay late fees will lead to termination of services.

*The staff at the ECEC are considered "off work" at 5:30. All late fees are used to compensate the teachers for their extra work hours.*

### **Loss of Child Development Services**

The following are reasons for loss of Child Development services at the center:

- Five (5) consecutive days absent without notification.
- Delinquent fees.
- Failure to submit required documentation/paperwork when required.
- Inappropriate adult behavior that disrupts the ECEC.
- Inappropriate child behavior that disrupts the ECEC or endangers self or others.
- Domestic problems, which interfere with the ECEC's operations.
- Inability to locate the parent while the child is in care.

Prior to termination of services, with the exception of extreme circumstances, the Director will meet with you to discuss the potential of losing services. We will give you up to a two (2) weeks notice of your termination date and this will allow you to make other arrangements. Upon receipt of your written notice, you may request a hearing. Once your services have been terminated from UC Merced ECEC, you will not be eligible for services for six (6) months.

### **Withdrawing from the ECEC**

If you choose to withdraw your child from the ECEC, you will be required to give a one month written notice (email meets this criteria). During that time period, we will assist you in preparing your child for the upcoming transition. If you need to leave suddenly and are not able to give the ECEC a one month notice, you will be required to pay the tuition for that one month.

If you are interested in withdrawing from the ECEC services for a minimum of 30-days up to one semester, you lock in your space by paying 50% of the tuition. Another option for a break

in service is to be put back on the Waiting List. Families who received services and are on a temporary break receive a higher priority than new families on the waiting list. Should there be another family interested in your child's spot, you will have first option to pay 50% tuition to keep your child's spot for your return. We will not give away your child's spot during the break of service without giving you first option to pay 50% tuition and hold it. For this long break of service, we need a 30 day written notice of your interest in this arrangement, your departure date and anticipated return date.

If you need further explanation of the waiting list and prioritizing of children to enroll, please feel free to ask.

### **Fieldtrips**

The children will take periodic nature/community walks, which are often on campus or the surrounding neighborhoods. If we go off campus, you will be notified regarding the specifics of the fieldtrip and you will be asked to sign a permission slip for this event. Please complete the Fieldtrip Permission form when requested by ECEC staff.

If your child's class went on a campus walk and you were late that morning, your child is welcome to stay in another classroom until they return. When there is a scheduled off-campus fieldtrip and you do not feel as though you'd like your child to participate, your child is welcome to go to another classroom as a "special visitor" while your child's classroom is off-campus. We understand that some parents are hesitant about off-campus trips.

### **Health and Safety**

Every morning staff will check your child's health status upon arrival to the ECEC. This health check is informal, but if your child appears to be showing signs of illness, he/she may not be admitted to the program. If your child becomes ill while at the ECEC, you or other authorized persons will be called and required to pick up your child promptly depending on the severity of symptoms.

We cannot accommodate requests from parents to keep their children indoors, because we must maintain staff-child ratio. Children will be dressed warmly in inclement weather and will not be permitted outside in the rain, except for under patio/covered areas or with proper rain gear to cover them with. In warm weather, children will be encouraged to play in water and in the shade areas, to help keep them cool. Daily schedules will change due to the weather. We may go outside earlier with warmer weather or stay indoors during a rain storm.

Merced County has a number of days where the air quality is unhealthy for children. We will closely monitor the air quality by the color flag posted at the front of the campus, as well as checking the internet for updates. A reduction of outdoor time and encourage less strenuous activities on unhealthy days for sensitive groups days (orange flag), since children are part of that group. On red flag days we only go outside in the early morning for a brief walk onto the campus or enjoying quiet activities for a short limited time - but we will stay indoors on the

purple or maroon days. These procedures may change depending on the population of children and how many children with asthma we have.

The staff has been certified in first aid and pediatric CPR procedures. They will fill out accident reports for any incident, both minor and major. If your child is in need of immediate medical/dental attention and you cannot be reached by phone, your child will be taken to the doctor or hospital, which is designated on your emergency release form. In the event of an emergency, we will call 911 and you will be immediately contacted. Up to date contact information is very important so we can always reach you. **Please make sure we know where you are at all times while your child is in our care. Make sure the Emergency Release form is updated and accurate.**

Staff are trained in procedures to maintain a healthy environment through cleaning and hand washing, as well as with universal precautions. However, it is impossible to completely prevent the spread of disease in any setting, though we will do our best to limit it.

Children may not attend the program if any of the following symptoms are present:

Contagious Condition: such as, measles, RSV, mononucleosis, staph, chicken pox, mumps, whooping cough, hand/foot and mouth, and streptococcal infections need a physician's diagnosis. Please inform the ECEC of the official diagnosis. Influenza does not to be diagnosed by a physician, but we will treat it as we do all other contagious conditions. We will notify other parents of the disease exposure and the symptoms, while keeping your child's name confidential. The child may return when he/she is no longer contagious. For these contagious conditions, as well as those not listed in the handbook, a physician's clearance may be required, as well as implementation of best practices to ensure minimal exposure at the ECEC.

Fever: A child with a fever (oral 101 degrees or higher, armpit 100 degrees or higher) cannot attend the program. A child sent home with a fever of 101 degrees or higher will be excluded from the ECEC the next consecutive program day. Your child must be fever free without medication for 24 hours prior to returning to the program.

Lice: Hair must be washed with medicated shampoo and be free of all nits (eggs) and lice (insects) before returning to the ECEC.

Eye infection/discharge: Pink eye or other eye infections are highly contagious. The child will be sent home immediately and may return with a doctor's release that he/she is no longer contagious, proper medication has been applied and the discharge cleared.

Rashes: A doctor must diagnose unidentified rashes or skin conditions (ringworm or allergies included) and the child may return with treatment and a release. If the child is uncomfortable due to a rash (diaper rash included), we may ask that you keep them at home until they have healed adequately and can comfortably participate in the program.

Coughing: A child should remain home with a cough accompanied with a fever or when having difficulty breathing (due to cough or asthma). The child may return when symptoms disappear.

Diarrhea: Loose bowel movements, twice (2) in one day, we require the child to stay home

until the symptoms clear. Children that have one (1) loose bowel movement after returning to the ECEC after staying home due to diarrhea will be sent home immediately. If your child is irritable, uncomfortable or has a fever, we will call you to pick up your child early. If your child is teething, has food allergies or is on medication that may cause a loose bowel movement, please provide this information to the staff.

Vomiting: If your child has forceful vomiting with other symptoms or is unable to eat, you will be notified and the child may be sent home.

A child who has been absent five (5) or more consecutive days due to illness **must have a doctor's note or documentation of pre-release (may return after "x" number of days) before returning to the program.**

Parents must make every effort to pick up their child when notified regarding illness. Please be timely in picking up your child to make him/her more comfortable and to lessen the exposure to the other children and adults in the classroom.

It is our goal to keep the children in our program as healthy as possible, but there are times when your child will have to stay at home when ill. Illnesses are very common when your child first enters a school setting and at the beginning of the year. As your child's immunity increases, the amount of time being ill will decrease.

### **Medications and Incidental Medical Services Plans**

Over-the-counter and prescription medications will be administered by staff **only with a doctor's written instruction or as prescribed.** Your child's name must be on the original container and we can only administer medication as directed on the label for your child's age/weight, unless a doctor provides other written directions. Parents must fill out a medication form and give the form and medication directly to the staff for proper storage. **Never have your child possess any medication.** If you are able to administer the medication yourself, we encourage you to do that. ECEC staff will not administer the first dose of a medication (except emergency medications – e.g. EpiPen Jr.).

Topical ointments, such as diaper rash cream or powders, will also need a medication form filled out and signed by the parent.

At this time, the ECEC staff will provide Incidental Medical Services (IMS) for the following with proper training from professionals and parents: administering inhaled medication, EpiPen Jr., and EpiPen. At this time, the following will not be administered: blood-glucose monitoring, glucagon administration, gastrostomy tube (G-Tube), emptying an ileostomy bag, insulin administration, or emergency anti-seizure measures. If there is need for any of these IMS services not currently provided, the ECEC is willing to further consider this as treatments and medical technology is constantly changing. For any IMS, there will be additional paperwork required and documentation needed in order for the ECEC staff to implement for your child.

Asthma and Nebulizers – For children with breathing difficulties that is documented on the physician's form, an inhaler/nebulizer must be kept at the ECEC in case of need. For the ECEC staff to administer any type of inhaled medication, the following must be present. The original packaging or the doctor's instructions must have the following information documented:

- Specific indications (such as symptoms) for administering the inhaled medication in accordance with the physician's prescription.
- Potential side effects and expected response.
- Dose form and amount to be administered in accordance with the physician's prescription.
- Actions to be taken in the event of side effects or incomplete treatment response in accordance with the physician's prescription. This includes actions to be taken in an emergency.
- Instructions for proper storage of the medication.
- The telephone number and address of the child's physician.

There is also an additional form that needs to be filled out at the ECEC, besides the medication form. This form is required by Community Care Licensing.

### **Sunscreen**

The ECEC provides children's sunscreen for afternoon re-application. Please ensure that you put sunscreen on your child in the morning before arriving at the ECEC. If you need to bring in personal sunscreen for your child, due to sensitivity or allergic reactions to certain brands, please make sure that the sunscreen is given to a teacher and a medication form has been filled out.

### **Food Allergies/Personal Preferences**

If there are any serious food allergies in your child's classroom, those foods will not be allowed in your child's lunch either. The ECEC is a Peanut Free facility. Other nut butters are permitted. This is to keep all the children safe. You will be notified in writing if there are any additional allergy restrictions in your child's room.

The ECEC will purchase drink and food alternatives for snacks and milk lunch service for physician diagnosed allergies. Personal preferences or parental choice alternatives must be supplied by the parent. Some foods may be able to be stored at the ECEC, but other personal preferences will have to be supplied daily.

### **Snacks**

For children eating table food, the food is prepared in the ECEC twice each day. Classrooms will offer a mid-morning snack and an afternoon snack. We serve snacks family style. Each snack is designed within guidelines for a balance of foods and enough servings for each child. We encourage children to try all components of the snack, not to fill up on one item. Every child is encouraged to clean up after the meal. For your convenience, monthly menus will be posted in the ECEC and emailed monthly. Menu changes do happen on occasion, but they will



be posted on the classroom parent board.

All children's allergy requirements are taken into account in snack preparation and service. Every effort is made to provide a diverse menu, allowing for the children to try a variety of foods.

**All snacks must be eaten in its entirety or disposed of where they are served. No food or drinks are to be taken home.**

### **Lunches**

For Infants – Parents are responsible to bring all formulas and/or breast milk, cow's milk (older infants), bottles, and infant foods (cereals, jarred baby food/home prepared baby food). There is limited storage for shelf stored foods and the refrigerator is only to be used for breast milk, cow's milk, and open infant food container storage. The ECEC will supply infant bowls, bibs, cups, and utensils. Teachers will meet with you regularly to update documentation regarding the new foods you are introducing to your infant.

All Table Food Eating Children – Parents are responsible to bring a nutritious lunch. The ECEC will supply organic milk (whole milk for infants and reduced fat for all others). Milk for lunch is included in your child's tuition and will be served daily at lunch. Milk for infants drinking bottles is not provided. We ask that you do not pack additional juices or drinks in your child's lunch. We want to encourage all children to drink milk.

Microwave services or other warming options are not available in any of the classrooms, with the exception of infant bottles. There are no refrigerators available for lunch storage.

There may be times when certain foods may be disallowed from entering the ECEC, depending on food allergies of children enrolled. Please ensure that your child's lunches follow the restrictions when we have them.

The children will be given cups, plates, bowls, napkins and utensils to use during lunchtime. All contents of your prepared lunch will be placed on the plates and the children will eat together. Trading foods will not be allowed. All uneaten food (except for single serve yogurt or fruit cup containers) will be returned to your child's lunchbox, so you can monitor how much your child has eaten that day. If you serve your child nut butter, crunchy nut butter is encouraged at school. Crunchy nut butter is not as much of a choke hazard because children naturally chew it better because of the nuts. If you put the nut butter in a container, we can provide utensils for your child to use to spread it on crackers or bread. This allows for a fine-motor skill to be developed. Also buying tupperware containers for items such as yogurt, cottage cheese, and applesauce will produce less waste than single servings and will also be cheaper for you.

Lunch suggestions:

- Dairy Products - Yogurt, string cheese, cottage cheese, cheese cut into new shapes (wedges, strips, etc.), cream cheese (On celery, bagels, or rice cakes.)
- Fruit- Grapes (cut length-wise to prevent choking), melon chunks, apple chunks (with nut butter!), dried apricots or apples, fruit salad combo, applesauce (no sugar added), or trail mix with dried fruit.
- Meat or Alternative- Chicken or turkey dogs (cut lengthwise to prevent choking), shredded meat, beans and rice, tofu, chunky nut butter, tuna, hard-boiled egg, chicken drumsticks.
- Vegetables- Steamed carrot, broccoli, or cauliflower, celery (remove thread fibers), cucumber, or zucchini sticks (cut length-wise) with a small container of dip (cottage cheese with seasoning or salad dressing), snap peas, corn on the cob, stuffed celery, bean salad.
- Breads- Rice cakes or mini rice cakes, dry chow mein noodles, tortillas, mini bagels, mini muffins, pasta, pancakes, crackers (with cheese or nut butter), rice.
- Instead of Sandwiches- Quesadilla (tortilla with melted cheese), burritos, pasta salad, wrap-sandwiches, cold pizza, sandwiches cut into fun shapes.
- In a Thermos- Soup, pasta (bite sized- no long spaghetti), rice dishes, or other meals.

<b>“NEVER” FOODS:</b>	<b>CHOKING HAZARDS: “NEVER” FOODS</b>
<p>The following foods are not allowed at school. Your child will be asked to save them to take home.</p> <p>Soft drinks Candy Gum Cake Donuts Jello (no nutritional value) Cookies Chips Sugared drinks Sugared cereals</p> <p>All choking hazard foods (see list)</p>	<p>These foods are choking hazards for children 4 years and under.</p> <p>Nuts Popcorn Whole grapes Whole hot dogs or cut in chunks Raw peas and raw vegetables Hard pretzels Meat no larger than can be swallowed whole Cubed meat or cheese Long spaghetti noodles Fruit roll ups</p>

### Section III

#### **Clothing**

Your child will play, climb, paint, glue, get covered in sand and water while in the program. We ask that you dress your child in outfits that will allow him/her to fully experience all the activities that we provide at our ECEC. Shoes should be sturdy and closed toed (sandals that provides foot and toe protection are allowed). Children also have occasion to fall while playing in the yard, long pants provide protection from scraped knees and also comfort while sitting on the floor. If staff notices that your child is having a difficult time participating (because of style or size) in the daily activities due to clothing or shoes, they will bring it to your attention and ask for you to remember these guidelines.

Dress up clothes (princess dresses, tutus, capes, etc.) also will be changed out of and stored in your child's cubby, unless it is a "dress up day" at the ECEC. Children play differently when dressed up and some clothing limits their play activities. We provide clothing and accessories for children in the dramatic play areas, if they feel the need to pretend to be someone different than themselves.

Each child must have at least two extra sets of clothing and underwear at the ECEC; this is to ensure your child can change after water play or a potty accident. Please mark all of your child's clothing with permanent ink or name labels. This includes: hats, gloves, coats, underwear, socks, pants, shirts and sweaters. **We encourage children to take care of their clothing, but we cannot take responsibility for clothing or other personal items that are lost or damaged at the ECEC.**

Wet Bags are required for your child's wet clothing. Please ensure that there is a wet bag in your child's cubby basket with their extra clothing. We will send your child's wet/soiled clothing home in them. The ECEC does have some extra wet bags for loan for days your child has numerous outfit changes. For safety reasons - *No plastic bags can be stored in your child's cubby.*

The ECEC maintains extra "loaner" clothing. They are clearly marked with permanent ink. If your child is wearing "loaner" clothing at the end of the day, it means that there was a need to change your child and there were no extra clothes available. We ask that you wash and return these clothes, so we have them if the need arises again. If you have clothing to donate for extras, please inform the staff. Clothing items needed: shirts, shoes, pants (sweats), sweatshirts, and socks.

#### **Jewelry**

We do not encourage jewelry on children at school. These items can injure your child while they are playing and all instances of injury are at your own risk. Children often lose jewelry or even give these items to other children; the ECEC does not take any responsibility for any damaged, lost, stolen or given-away jewelry.

### **Toys from Home**

We do not allow items from home and will ask for you to take them with you if they are noticed upon arrival. We will have any toys kept in cubbies or in the teacher's custody if your child brings them un-noticed by you. We are not responsible for any damaged, lost, or stolen items.

If your child needs a special "lovey" or "blanky" from home, we will attempt to have the child keep it in his/her cubby and use it primarily for nap times or when they just need it for comfort.

We do encourage children to bring books from home. These can be shared with the whole class during daily story time. If your child wants to bring something, have them bring a book to read or an interesting rock or other natural item that can be incorporated into the classroom.

### **Naptime Bedding**

Children are given a nap time on a daily basis, to either rest or nap after lunch. We ask that you bring a labeled blanket and sheet from home; many children like to sleep with bedding that is familiar to them. The blanket and sheet should be a crib/infant size. These should be taken home on a weekly basis and washed. Most families take the bedding home on the weekend, but if this does not fit your laundering schedule, take it home on another evening. Please bring it back for the next school day, so your child will have a restful nap time. The ECEC does maintain a number of extra cot sheets, crib sheets and blankets in case you forget one morning.

Infants, who are not fully mobile or cannot fully pull themselves into a standing position nap in a crib. Once the infant is mobile, we move them onto mats, which we also use in the toddler and preschool rooms.

### **Diapers/Pull-Ups**

Until your child is potty trained, you must make sure that there are enough diapers/pull-ups and wipes for your child at the ECEC. You are responsible to check daily to insure that your child will not run out of diapers/pull-ups or wipes. Teachers will also leave you a note on your sign in/out sheet when you are running low on any of these items.

### **Tooth Brushing and Toothpaste**

It is part of our daily routine to have the children brush their teeth prior to nap time. We ask that you provide a simple, child size toothbrush that will fit into our toothbrush storage boxes. We will inform you when your child is in need of a new toothbrush. Upon enrollment, you will be asked to bring in a single tube of children's toothpaste. We use a single tube for all the children in the classroom. We do not allow personal toothpaste tubes for children. If your child does not like the toothpaste flavor, we will encourage them to brush with water only.

### **Children's Restrooms**

Because of the ages of the children we serve at the ECEC, we do not provide separate **boy's restrooms** or **girl's restrooms**. Children are requested to use the restroom closest to the staff member on hand, to provide supervision and be available if the child is in need of assistance.

## **Birthdays**

If you do not celebrate birthdays, we ask that you let us know. We invite you to bring in a cooking activity or healthy snack to celebrate your child's birthday. Cooking activities such as: a cake mix, fruit smoothies, pizza making, ice cream making or one of your child's favorite foods. Healthy snacks such as: juice, fruit, mini bagels, crackers, or granola bars.

All ingredients must be in original packaging. Arrange what you'd like to do with your child's classroom teacher. **No pre-made treats, cakes, or cupcakes will be allowed.**

## **Holiday Celebrations**

Through many cultures, holiday celebrations are a time to get together with family and share traditions. With the many cultures represented with the families at our ECEC, we have developed the following philosophy on holidays:

- Holiday are not the focus of our curriculum, but will recognize them should a child talk about them, a student club do an activity, or family want to share their culture.
- We want the children in our program to be exposed to as many different cultures and their celebrations as possible. Without demeaning or trivializing them, we will recognize and honor different cultures and their traditions.
- We ask that all traditions shared be honored; however personal faiths and religions are to be shared in the home. There is no religious instruction or worship at the ECEC. It is our goal to recognize the diversity we have at the ECEC without offending anyone.

Celebrations with campus organizations and parents will be encouraged when they have a focus on literacy and more age-appropriate events that all children can participate in.

## **Section IV**

### **Fire Drills**

The ECEC conducts fire drills approximately every six weeks evacuating to the play grounds. This is to get the children used to the sound of the alarm, the flashing lights and how to safely exit the building. The ECEC does take care to try to conduct drills when parents are not in the process of dropping children off. Should you be subject to one of our drills, please join us for our evacuation, so the children learn that it's important to stay together in these instances.

### **Evacuation Procedures**

Should there be a reason that we need to evacuate the ECEC facility, we will relocate at the Yablokoff Wallace Dining center, the Lantern (ground floor Kolligian Library) or any other location UC Merced Safety Services wants us to go. Should we need to relocate for any period of time, we shall be calling you to pick up your child at our new location.

### **Lock Down Protocol**

In case of a "lock-down" anywhere on the main UC Merced campus, we here at the ECEC will automatically go on lock down. We will move into the classrooms and lock all our doors. The front door CatCard reader will not activate for any individual with the exception of the UC Merced Police. We will not open the door for any individual. In case of lock down our priority is to keep the children within our facility safe and that means no admittance to any individual (student, staff, parent, grandparent or other authorized individual). This lock down status will be maintained until we receive an "all-clear" from Safety Services.

## **Section V**

### **Classroom Observers/Graduate/Faculty Study Projects**

The UC Merced ECEC allows observers in the classroom: students, professionals and prospective parents. Observers are required to schedule their observation time and check in with the ECEC staff. These students will remain under a staff member's constant supervision and not be left alone with any child.

If a program from UC Merced requests to conduct a study that your child is a candidate for, you will be given detailed information regarding the study and a written permission slip for you to fill out from the persons completing the study. You are not required to give your child permission to participate and you also have the right to withdraw your child during the study at any time. We will not allow your child to be left with a student or faculty member without supervision of an ECEC staff member.

Local colleges offer classes where students need to observe young children and they often prefer to come to a campus affiliated center to do these observations. We expect to receive students from programs such as: CSU Stanislaus, Fresno State, Merced College, Fresno Pacific University and Brandman University. Your child's identity will remain anonymous in any written observations made by the student.

### **UC Merced ECEC Complaint Process**

If you, as a parent/guardian, have any complaints or concerns regarding the UC Merced Early Childhood Education Center, we require you to follow the center's process to address these issues.

These complaints or concerns can be regarding any of the following:

- Allegations of unlawful discrimination regarding actual or perceived sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, mental or physical disability, or age or on the basis of a person's association with a person or group with one or more of these.
- The physical condition of the ECEC and the materials therein.
- Services that your child receives while attending the ECEC.
- Interactions that you've had with an ECEC Staff member.
- Interactions that you've had with other parents/guardians.
- Any other concerns as you deem fit.

All complaints are to be addressed to Danielle Waite, Early Childhood Education Center Director, who is responsible for receiving, investigating and resolving the complaint. We ask that you follow our complaint process if you feel that the Director did not satisfy you. If this complaint is regarding Danielle Waite, please address it to Brian Powell, Interim Vice Chancellor of Business and Administrative Services.

Any complaint that you present to the Director in person or in writing will be investigated and the Director will be required to respond in writing. When under investigation, all documents

and other evidence you feel deem necessary must be submitted to the Director if related to the allegations of the complaint. You may file an appeal in writing within 15 days upon receipt of the Director's written response to Brian Powell, Interim Vice Chancellor of Business and Administrative Services for further resolution if you find the decision of UC Merced Early Childhood Education Center Director to be incorrect.

Contact number and information:

Brian Powell, Interim Vice Chancellor of Business and Administrative Services

Phone: 209-355-4991, [bpowell2@ucmerced.edu](mailto:bpowell2@ucmerced.edu)

**Staff Rights**

- To be appreciated for all the hard work of providing the best care for your child by being given a smile and a "thank you" on a regular basis.
- To be free to develop activities and experiences that are age appropriate based on UC Merced Early Childhood Education Center guidelines.
- To be listened to, talked to, treated and respected as a professional early childhood educator by other staff, parents and children.
- To work in a pleasant environment.

**Licensing Office**

Our Centers is licensed by the California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division. The Center is operating two licenses, one infant and one preschool aged. The local agency information is listed below:

Community Care Licensing—Fresno Office

13140 E. Shaw Avenue

Fresno, CA 93710

559-243-4588

[www.cclld.ca.gov](http://www.cclld.ca.gov)

**UC Merced Early Childhood Education Center Licenses**

Infant - # 243808513

Preschool - # 243808514

**State of California Licensing Agency**

The State of California Licensing Agency monitors the UC Merced Early Childhood Education Center and has the following authority:

To interview children or staff and to inspect the child or facility records without prior consent.

To observe the physical condition of the child or children, including conditions which could indicate abuse, neglect, or inappropriate conditions or placement and to have a licensed medical professional physically examine the child(ren).

*Child Protective Services has the same authority.*



### **Child Abuse Policy**

The California Penal Code states that all staff members in licensed childcare center are mandated reporters. If a staff "suspects" abuse or neglect, he/she is mandated to report to the police or Child Protective Services. Failure by our staff to report suspicious situations within 36 hours is a misdemeanor for the staff member, which is punishable by 6 months in jail and/or a \$1,000 fine. Parents whose children have birthmarks or any other distinctive markings should communicate this to staff to avoid unnecessary reports.

### **Car Seat Law**

California Law effective January 1, 2017: Children under two years of age shall ride rear-facing. Exceptions: the child is over 40 pounds or over 40 inches in height. Young children will then transition to a forward-facing car seat with a harness until the age of eight (8) in the back seat of the vehicle. Children are required to be properly secured in an appropriate child passenger restraint (booster seat) until their eighth (8) birthday OR they reach 4'9" in height. <https://www.chp.ca.gov/programs-services/programs/child-safety-seats>

### **Shaken Baby Syndrome**

Twenty to thirty percent of all shaken infants die and many more than that have some form of permanent damage caused by shaking. For more information and support for when you are frustrated with a crying infant <http://www.dontshake.org/index.php> or talk to the Director immediately.

### **Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)/ Crib Death**

The UC Merced Early Childhood Education Center will only sleep infants on their backs due to SIDS. For more information regarding SIDS, please refer to the following website: [www.sids.org](http://www.sids.org).

### **Smoke Free Cars**

There is a \$100 fine for smoking in a vehicle with a minor (under the age of 18) - H&S Code 118947 (2007). For more information visit the CA Department of Public Health website.

January 2018

UC Merced Early Childhood Education Center

This is to acknowledge the receipt of:  
UC Merced Early Childhood Education Center  
Family Handbook

**January 2018**

I understand that I am responsible for reviewing this document and adhering to all the policies and procedures outlined therein. \_\_\_\_\_(initial)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_hard paper copy

\_\_\_\_\_via internet

[www.ecec.ucmerced.edu](http://www.ecec.ucmerced.edu)