

Children's Center

Effective: January 2004

General

Mission

The Children's Center mission is to complement the service and education objectives of the university by:

- Providing education, care, and nurturing for the children of students, staff, faculty, and community members
- Utilizing culturally and developmentally appropriate practices
- Serving as a role model of child care excellence for the community at large.

Philosophy

At the Children's Center, our philosophy is to provide the best possible environment for the care, education, and development of your child/children. We believe that your child/children are entitled to the best that modern knowledge makes available about the education, care and guidance of children. Our philosophy is expressed in a curriculum that encourages:

- Programs that are designed to be different, flexible, and encourage active hands-on learning because all children are unique with individual skills and interests
- Freedom and opportunity to develop physical, cognitive, and social skills at a child's own pace
- A warm relationship with adults that gives children a feeling of support while developing a sense of self-worth and independence
- Consistent and understanding adult guidance, which supports needs yet limits actions and promotes a child's gradual growth towards responsibility and self-control.

Licensing Regulations

New Mexico Tech operates its Children's Center under state regulations for the licensing and operation of a children's care facility, including a provision adopted in 2003 requiring background checks and employment history verification. The State of New Mexico has four documents regulating child care health and safety as outlined in the table below. **They are current as of March 10, 2004** and can be accessed online from the following website: <http://nrc.uchsc.edu/STATES/NM/newmexico.htm>

New Mexico has four different documents regulating health and safety in child care:	Effective Date
Title 8 Social Services Chapter 8 Children, Youth and Families General Provisions Part 3: Governing Background Checks and Employment History Verification	10/30/2003
Title 8 Social Services Chapter 15 Child Care Assistance Part 2: Requirements for Child Care Assistance Programs for Clients and Child Care Providers	1/16/2004
Title 8 Social Services Chapter 16 Part 2 Child Care Centers, Before and After School Programs, Family Child Care Homes and Other Early Care and Education Programs	11/1/2002
Title 8 Social Services Chapter 17 Non-Licensed Child Care Part 2 Requirements Governing Registration of Non-Licensed Family Child Care Homes	11/1/2002

Policies

Celebrations

As a publicly funded institution, New Mexico Tech must be exceptionally careful in not appearing to promote a religion. However, because of the diversity of the families we serve, we try to recognize all kinds of holidays at the Children's Center. We believe that this teaches children tolerance and a better understanding of different people's culture and way of life. We also encourage each family to celebrate their holidays at home in the way that is most appropriate for their children. We encourage children to engage in discussions related to a holiday they observe, we listen respectfully and provide time and space for an activity if necessary.

Birthdays are a special time in our programs. We are always happy to celebrate your child's birthday. If you have a birthday tradition that you would like to share with us, please make arrangements with your child's teacher. An idea we recommend for celebrating this special occasion is to have your child donate a book to the Children's Center library. We will write your child's name and birth date on the inside cover. Each time the book is read your child's contribution to the program is remembered.

Field Trips

The Children's Center does not participate in any field trips off of the New Mexico Tech campus. All field trips in which children and staff do participate are "walking" field trips on campus. At no time will children be transported in any vehicle for a field trip.

Training Programs

To improve the quality of early childhood care and education, New Mexico Tech Children's Center cooperates with qualified child development training programs.

We strive to facilitate training in ways that are the least disruptive to children's experiences in our programs. We will not permit or participate in training programs that could in any way hinder the education, development, or well being of children. Family's rights to confidentiality will be upheld at all times.

All visitors are required to sign our Visitor Registry.

Rest Time

In our Early Childhood Program, we have a rest time from approximately 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. The Children's Center provides children with a mat for rest time. To make your child more comfortable, you are asked to bring a crib-size fitted sheet, small blanket, and pillow. All items should be marked with your child's name. The Children's Center will launder bedding weekly. During this quiet time, children are read stories and listen to quiet music. Children who do not sleep will rest for 45 minutes and then be allowed to get up and do quiet activities, such as puzzles, books, etc., for the remainder of the rest time. We determine which children must nap according to the individual needs of the child and the guidelines set by New Mexico State Child Care licensing regulations.

Service Learning Projects

Our Children's Center's families and staff are encouraged to participate in a variety of service learning projects throughout the year. These projects vary in scope, including individual commitments of staff to serve on community agency advisory boards, our annual *Giving Tree* in December, and clothing and food drives.

Recreational Swimming

The Children's Center is fortunate to have access to New Mexico Tech Swim Center's facilities. We routinely schedule recreational *Swim Days* for the children. When weather permits, staff members take children in the older pre-k/k class swimming at the Swim Center. Parents/guardians will be notified of *Swim Days*. We ask that you provide advance notice if you do not want your child to participate. Please be sure that your child keeps a swimsuit, towel, and sunscreen at the Children's Center for our *Swim Days*.

Water safety is a top priority and concern. Therefore, children enrolled in our program, who participate in *Swim Days*, are required to attend a Water Safety Awareness class taught by the Swim Center lifeguards

Use of the New Mexico Tech Swim Center is a privilege. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the children to follow Swim Center rules and be respectful to employees.

If a child does not abide by Swim Center rules and/or is disrespectful to Swim Center staff, the following will take place:

- The child will be given one warning by the Swim Center staff
- If the child still refuses to modify his/her behavior, the following will occur:
 1. He/she will be removed from the pool and the Children's Center manager will be notified of the child's removal
 2. The Children's Center manager will escort the child back to the main Center
 3. The child will call his/her parent/guardian and notify them of the incident
 4. The child will lose swimming privileges for an amount of time to be determined by the Swim Center manager, Children's Center manager, and the parents/guardians.

Our younger preschool class enjoys water play in a wading pool on hot summer days. Please provide a swimsuit, towel, and sunscreen for these splish-splashy days.

Immunization Requirements

All children must have a current immunization record on file with the Children's Center before they can attend. If you request to be exempt for religious or conscientious reasons, the Children's Center must have a certificate verifying that fact. This certificate must be renewed every nine months. Exemption forms are available from the Children's Center manager. A ***Recommendation for Immunizations Schedule*** is available from the manager or your health care provider.

Food Service

Nutrition Program

Our program serves a nourishing breakfast and afternoon snack. We participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program and the Family Nutrition Bureau monitors our menus. All children will be offered the same meals without physical segregation or other discriminatory action against any child because of race, color, age, national origin, sex, or handicap. A monthly menu is posted at the Children's Center and is provided in the monthly newsletter. In the event that your child has a documented allergy, an alternative can be provided or other arrangements can be made with the family.

Food Guidelines for Lunch

Guidelines are provided by the New Mexico Child and Adult Food Program

Meal Pattern Requirements for Children

Food Product	Servings for ages 3 through 5 years	Servings for Ages 6 through 12 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bread or ▪ Biscuit, Muffin, or ▪ Cooked Pasta, Noodle products, or ▪ Rice, Cooked Cereal or Grains or ▪ Tortillas (corn 6") or taco shells or ▪ Tortillas (flour 8-9") 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ½ slice ▪ ½ whole ▪ ¼ cup ▪ ¼ cup ▪ 1 whole ▪ ½ whole 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1 slice ▪ 1 whole ▪ ½ cup ▪ ½ cup ▪ 2 whole ▪ 1 whole
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fruits and/or Vegetables (2 or more) and/or 100% juice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ½ cup total 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ¾ cup total
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meat (lean), Fish Poultry, Cheese or ▪ Eggs or ▪ Cooked/Dry Beans, Peas, Lentils or ▪ Nuts and Seeds or ▪ Peanut Butter or Other Nut Butters or ▪ Cottage Cheese or ▪ Yogurt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1 ½ ounce ▪ 1 egg ▪ 3/8 cup ▪ ¾ ounce ▪ 3 Tbsp. ▪ 3/8 cup ▪ ¾ cup 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2 ounce ▪ 1 egg ▪ ½ cup ▪ 1 ounce ▪ 4 Tbsp. ▪ ½ cup ▪ 1 cup
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Milk, fluid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ¾ cup 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1 cup

Lunch Maker – Suggested Foods for Lunch

For a well-balanced meal you need to select a bread, 2 fruits/vegetables, meat and/or meat alternate, and a beverage using the suggested portions from the *Meal Pattern Requirements for Children* located in the table above.

Breads

- Bagel • Corn Bread • Crackers
- Croissant • Dinner Roll • Fry Bread
- Garlic Bread • Hamburger Bun • Hoagie
- Pita Pockets • Rice Cakes • Rye
- Tortilla • Whole Wheat

Bread Alternates

- Macaroni • Rice • Spaghetti

Fruits and Vegetables

- Apple • Applesauce • Avocado
- Banana • Bell Pepper • Carrot Curls
- Celery Sticks • Cherries • Green Chile
- Kiwi Fruit • Lettuce • Melons
- Nectarines • Orange • Peaches
- Pears • Plums • Strawberries
- Tomatoes

Salads

- Carrot Raisin Salad • Cole Slaw • Green Bean Salad
- Garden Salad • Potato Salad

Meat and Meat Alternatives

- Canadian Bacon • Cheese Pizza • Chicken Patty
- Chicken Roll • Chicken Salad • Ham
- Hamburger • Pork Roast • Roast Beef
- Tuna Salad • Turkey Ham • Turkey Roll

Cheese and Meal Alternatives

- American • Cheddar • Co-Jack
- Colby • Cottage Cheese • Monterey Jack
- Mozzarella • Muenster • Provolone
- Swiss

Beverages

- 2% Milk • Chocolate Milk • Whole Milk

Visitors

Open Door Policy

We encourage parents/guardians to drop by the Children's Center for a visit. We want to share with you the exciting educational programs your child participates in and we also want you to know how well your child is cared for. All visitors must sign our Visitor Registry at the Children's Center office. Additionally, if you or anyone is not yet well-known to our staff, we will ask for picture identification. It is an important security measure for your child and our staff.

Releasing Child/Children to Authorized Persons

If anyone other than the parent/guardian is to pick up your child, even if his or her name appears on the emergency pick-up list, a **Pick-Up Pass** must be completed by a parent/guardian and given to your child's teacher prior to release of the child. In case of an emergency, a phone call will be accepted before the adult arrives. If we do not recognize your voice, you must identify yourself with your "Code Word" before we will confirm anyone else picking up your child. All visitors are required to see the Children's Center manager at the Early Childhood Program before signing a child out. The adult must present picture identification. We **will not** release a child to anyone who has not been authorized to pick him or her up.

Releasing Child/Children Into Potentially Dangerous Situations

In accordance with the Public Health Licensing Authority and the Children's Code of the State of New Mexico, all staff at the New Mexico Tech Children's Center are required to report any incidents that may fall within the definition of child abuse and neglect. We are therefore mandated to use discretion and precaution in releasing a child into the custody of an adult who exhibits physical impairment due to the influence of alcohol or other substance. Our first obligation is to the safety of all children in our care. Releasing a child into a potentially hazardous situation would constitute child endangerment. Therefore, it is our policy that we will not release any child to a person whom we deem too impaired to safely transport and/or care for that child. We will make every effort to locate an alternate person to pick up the child from the emergency numbers provided by the parents/guardians. If an angry or hostile situation occurs, we reserve the right to contact the New Mexico Tech Campus Police to ensure the well being of our staff and children.

Parking*

For the safety of the children arriving and departing, please use the designated parking areas. You may park in the small parking area in front (east) of the building. If that area is full, please park in the lower north parking lot.

Children are not allowed in the parking lot or in cars unattended. Do not leave your keys in the ignition. It is important that your child be secured in a child safety seat or seat belt when being transported to and from our programs. Failure to provide for your child's safe arrival and departure may cause us to deny you the opportunity to continue in our program.

*Handicap parking is available.

Clothing and Personal Items

Clothing

All clothing should be labeled with your child's first name or initials, including hats, mittens, and boots. Always dress your child/children for the weather, as the children participate in outdoor activities daily. Clothing should fit properly. Clothes that are too tight or too long many inhibit or obstruct play. Shoes should fit well. We recommend comfortable close-toed shoes. Sunscreen, when provided, will be use to protect children when they are outdoors.

Personal Items

New Mexico Tech Children's Center is not responsible for personal items brought to our programs. Personal items such as coats and backpacks should be labeled with the child's name. We discourage children from bringing toys from home. Toys from home are unwelcome at our program. We have an ample supply of play equipment and materials that belong to all of us. Toy weapons (guns, knives, swords, etc.) are not allowed in our program. Any such toys brought to the Children's Center will be placed in the office and can be claimed by parents/guardian at the end of the day.

Child Guidance

Our staff views child guidance as a means of teaching children what is acceptable behavior and helping the child to develop the self-control needed to function as positive productive individuals. We also emphasize that the behavior, not the child, is unacceptable or inappropriate.

Rules and limits are established for the safety and well-being of the children. The rules are few and simple and are followed by both children and adults.

Enforcement of rules and limits is done in a positive manner. Child guidance is always used with the goal of self-discipline in mind. An effective technique of positive guidance is telling children what to do instead of what not to do. Saying "no" constantly loses its effectiveness. We believe in being gentle, yet clear and firm.

Consistency is a must and allows children to know what is appropriate and expected. Redirection, logical consequences, and problem solving are techniques we use to guide children. Acknowledging children's feelings and giving them acceptable ways of expressing negative emotion helps children learn appropriate social skills.

A supervised separation apart from the group is used as a last resort when a child is out of control or hurting people or equipment. We try to allow children to regulate themselves whenever possible by letting them decide when to rejoin the other children. We will help the child regroup positively and make sure

he/she knows what is expected of him/her. Each separation will be documented in the child's record. If there is a situation where several separations apart have had no effect on changing or modifying the undesirable behavior, we will call the parent/guardian for a conference to develop a plan to help the child.

Management of Disruptive and Aggressive Behavior

When disruptive or aggressive behavior persists and we can find no effective way to modify the behavior, we will take one or more of the following steps:

- Require a parent/teacher/manager conference
- Invoke a one-week suspension from our program
- Invoke involuntary withdrawal from our program
- Children may be suspended or withdrawn from the program immediately for major infractions where the safety of the aggressor, the staff, or other children is compromised. A major infraction is recognized as the following:
 - Intentionally harming, physically or verbally, another individual
 - Intentionally damaging program and/or individual property
 - Unauthorized departure from program and/or facility without parental and/or staff consent.

Health

Injury

Our staff makes every effort through the physical arrangement of our indoor and outdoor learning environments and through the supervision of children to prevent accidents and injuries. In the event that your child has a minor injury, the adult in charge will take one or more of the following actions:

- Wash area with soap and water
- Apply a bandage
- Apply a cold pack
- Monitor the injured child
- Comfort the injured child.

The adult in charge will notify parents of the injury and complete an Injury Report. One copy will be placed in your child's daily file for your retrieval and one will be kept on file in the office. If your child arrives at his/her program with an injury that happened at home or away from the Children's Center, please inform us or we will be contacting you to inquire.

If your child has a serious injury, requiring immediate medical care, we will first call 911 and then contact the parent/guardian.

Incidents

Your child may experience or witness an event that leaves no physical signs but may have a psychological impact (e.g. witnessing a traffic accident). If this occurs while your child is at the Children's Center, you will be notified in writing of the incident. If this occurs when your child is not in attendance at the Children's Center, please notify us of the incident.

Allergy and Sensitivity

Please let us know if your child has an allergy or sensitivity to food or other substance. Furthermore, we must be informed if your child has a history of allergic reactions. We should be

aware of the situation so we may take appropriate precautions to protect your child's/children's health.

Illness

Our goal is to ensure that every child and staff member has a safe and healthy environment. Because of this, we have developed the following policies:

- In the event that a child becomes ill at the Children's Center, his/her parents will be notified and asked to pick their child up
- A child will not be allowed to attend the program when he/she has a sign or symptom of an illness that requires exclusion from our programs (see Exclusion from Care List p. A-3) and may not return without a signed statement from a physician indicating the child is no longer contagious
- If your child is not well enough to be outdoors, he/she is not well enough to be at the Children's Center.

Medication

The New Mexico Tech Children's Center will not dispense or store any prescription or non-prescription medication, including over-the-counter, naturopathic, homeopathic, or herbal supplement for any child enrolled in our programs.

If a child requires any of the above medication during the day, the parent/guardian must come to the Children's Center and administer the medication to the child.

Missing Child

In the event that a child should become missing, while in our care, the following policy has been developed:

- Our staff will conduct a thorough search of our facilities, within the first five (5) minutes after your child has been reported missing
- If your child cannot be located after the five (5) minute search by the staff, the Children's Center manager or the staff member in charge will notify both you and the New Mexico Tech Campus Police.

Important

This procedure does not apply to children who fail to show up or whose parent/guardian fails to notify us that their child will be absent from the program that day.

Recommendations on Exclusion from Care

Recommendations are provided by the New Mexico Health Department.

Exclusion from Care List

Childhood Illness	Exclusion Recommendations
Chicken Pox	Excluded until 6 days after onset of rash or until all sores have dried and crusted
Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)	Excluded until 24 hours after start of treatment
Diarrhea	Excluded until diarrhea ceases for 24 hours
Giardia	Excluded until diarrhea ceases for 24 hours
Head Lice	Excluded until 24 hours after start of treatment

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hepatitis A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Excluded 1 week after jaundice appears ▪ If no jaundice appears, excluded 2 weeks from onset of symptoms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hepatitis B 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No exclusion unless: ▪ Child shows aggressive behavior like biting or scratching or ▪ Has open wounds or drawing skin lesions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hepatitis C 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Same as the recommendation for Hepatitis B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Herpes (Primary herpes with sores inside of mouth) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Child should be excluded until fever is gone and the child is not drooling with sores present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Impetigo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Excluded until 24 hours after start of treatment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mumps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Excluded until 9 days after onset of parotid gland swelling
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oral Temperature (100.4° F or above) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Excluded until fever-free for 24 hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pertussis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Excluded until child undergoes 5 days of antibiotic treatment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rash 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Excluded until health care provider determines it is not contagious
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ringworm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Excluded until treated for 1 week
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rubella 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Excluded until 7 days from appearance of rash
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rubeola 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Excluded until 5 days from appearance of rash
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Salmonella 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Excluded until diarrhea ceases for 24 hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scabies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Excluded until 24 hours after start of treatment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Shigella 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Excluded until child has 1 negative stool
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Shingles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Excluded until sores have crusted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strep 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Excluded until 24 hours after start of treatment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tuberculosis (Active) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Excluded until TB control officer determines otherwise
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vomiting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Excluded until vomiting ceases for 24 hours

Children's Center Employment Policy

The New Mexico Tech Children's Center employment policy follows the regulations in ***Title 8, Social Services; Chapter 8, Children, Youth and Families General Provisions; Part 3, Governing Background Checks and Employment History Verification***. To view the regulations online, please access the following site: <http://www.newmexicokids.org/Educators/> The eight-page document is in a PDF format.