

THE CHILDREN'S ENRICHMENT CENTER

ORIGIN AND PURPOSE

In September 1972, Oak Hills Presbyterian Church dedicated itself to the development of a program that would teach children more about themselves, their environment, and relationships with others--all under the guidance of a mature, capable, dedicated staff. It was their intent to emphasize and provide the best in childcare and learning experiences. Special emphasis was given to child-adult relationships. As the center began, the church and center's personnel defined and developed the administration, leadership, and program of The Children's Enrichment Center (CEC).

Why would a church enter the early childhood development field and why should a church identify its program as part of its mission? We at OHPC established the CEC for a simple theological reason: We believe that the relationships of care and love a young child experience form the determinative basis for his later religious perception and commitment, whatever it happens to be. We believe it is possible to build a healthy "personal theology" on an adequate foundational experience. Early childhood is the starting point for the lived experience of freedom, love, and growth that are the ingredients of what we in the church are committed to as Christians. While we are pleased to be a part of the ministry of Oak Hills Presbyterian Church, we also adhere to the Presbyterian tenant of ecumenism. We believe that no denomination has a corner on virtue and faith. Consequently, we celebrate the contributions of all religions and cultures in our society, and we encourage all CEC children and parents to share their heritage. God's kingdom is inclusive, and we strive to reflect this.

GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The Children's Enrichment Center is governed by the CEC Board, which is a subcommittee of the Christian Education Committee of Oak Hills Presbyterian Church. The chairman of the Christian Education Committee is a member of the Session, the governing body of OHPC, and reports directly to the Session. The Session has final authority under the Presbyterian form of government.

The CEC Board is made up of the CEC Director and Bookkeeper, OHPC Pastor, as well as parent representatives elected by the Board and OHPC representatives. They meet monthly and set all policy and procedures, program goals, and budget for the center. Names and phone numbers of Board members are made available the first week of school. Feel free to contact Board members at any time with questions or concerns.

Open School is held shortly before school begins each fall. It is a time for you and your child to visit the teacher, meet the staff and get acquainted with your child's classroom and school grounds. We ask that at least one parent or family representative attend to insure

that policies and procedures, special events, and the school calendar are understood. Board members are available at Open School to meet with parents.

The Children's Enrichment Center does not discriminate against staff or students on the basis of color, race, physical ability and/ or creed.

The Children's Enrichment Center meets and exceeds all standards set by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS) and is fully licensed as required by state regulations. Much of the information contained in this handbook has been cited from information published by Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. From 1990-2008, the Children's Enrichment Center was accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), a national, voluntary, professionally sponsored accreditation system for schools and childcare centers. Recognizing the importance of compliance with early childhood education professional standards, during the 2008-2009 year the CEC family will undertake a search for an accrediting body closely aligned with The CEC's educational philosophy and curriculum.

PHILOSOPHY

Children develop and acquire skills through a predictable sequence of stages. At The Children's Enrichment Center, we provide a learning environment that allows a child to build upon existing skills. Children accommodate new information by interacting with concrete materials and experiencing the environment through their senses.

Curiosity is an important method of learning for a preschooler. Children can learn best when they are given the opportunity to ask questions and find different solutions to a problem.

Repetition and Imitation is necessary for learning to occur. As a preschooler repeats actions, songs, words, and routines, he/she increases skills and understanding. He/she observes and imitates others who model attitudes and actions.

The needs of young children are best met by providing a wide variety of enriching activities that include many tactile and sensory experiences. The CEC philosophy stresses learning in three basic areas: (1) The child him/herself, (2) The world around him/her and (3) The other people in his/her world.

We believe that Discovery Learning at the CEC consists of:

- 1) Learning by discovery in a developmentally appropriate setting,
- 2) Encouraging children to be spontaneous and creative while at the same time teaching respect for others,
- 3) Allowing children to manage their own learning,
- 4) Knowing that children learn what seems important and interesting to them,

- 5) Providing a broad spectrum of activities within the child's chronological and developmental age,
- 6) Involving the whole child in the learning process -- physical, emotional, intellectual, and social, and
- 7) Taking time to reflect on what is happening in the midst of a learning experience.

CURRICULUM

Themes

Theme units are chosen to fit in with seasonal events such as holidays or appropriate areas that young children benefit from, such as the five senses, family, animals, etc. Some examples of theme unit titles are: "All About Me", "The Land Before Time", "Critters At The Creek", and "Sunshine, Lollipops and Rainbows". Teachers plan activities to encourage language development, socialization skills, emergent literacy and math, and creative expression.

Discovery Centers

We offer a developmental interaction approach to learning through the use of discovery centers. Every day, there are one or more teacher-directed discovery centers that involve one-to-one or small group discovery. The remainder of the class time involves child-selected learning at a variety of centers including:

- Block building • Writing Center • Water, Sand, or Sensory Table
 - Book Center • Counting Games • Manipulatives • Art
- Dramatic Play • Outdoor Play • Science/Discovery Center • Gross Motor
 - Woodworking • Music • Spanish

The centers are changed often to reinforce current themes and units of study. Centers are labeled to enable children to appreciate the need for printed material to provide information.

Math and Reading Readiness

The teacher's role at CEC is to foster reading and math readiness in the following ways:

1. Provide experiences that help to meet all the child's developmental needs -- physical, social, emotional, as well as intellectual.
2. Encourage children to talk about their experiences with others and about their activities in the classroom.
3. Involve children in self-selected activities that are interesting and meaningful to them.
4. Provide the following opportunities to interact with letters and numbers in meaningful contexts such as:
 - a. Listening to stories.
 - b. Dictating stories to teacher and hearing them read back.
 - c. Making his/her own books.
 - d. Observing the teacher making shopping lists, reads recipes, checks birthday charts, writes notes to parents, etc.
 - e. Helping the teacher write thank-you notes for field trips and other written communication.
 - f. Noticing classroom labels and print in learning centers.

Animals

Small animals, such as hamsters and guinea pigs can be kept in the classrooms, and will be vaccinated if deemed necessary according to state and local guidelines. Enclosures and cages will be cleaned regularly. Plans will be made to care for the animals on weekends or holidays when the school is closed. These small animals will not leave their cages in the presence of the children. Parents will be notified of the presence of animals.

Gym-Jam

This addition to the CEC day incorporates the basic concepts of music, dance, drama and motor skills development through a variety of creative activities and movements to satisfy the gross motor and arts appreciation needs of the developing child in a *spirit of play*. Our trained professional has a creative and FUN curriculum that follows the school theme calendar and is developmentally appropriate for each age group and individualized to meet the needs of each class. Check the ArtsPlay bulletin board outside the office each day for information about the day's activities and the concepts related to those activities. Our Gym-Jam teacher will be at Open School and will be available on pre-scheduled conference days, as well as for appointments upon request.

Spanish

The CEC offers a unique program in Spanish; children attend Spanish class weekly for twenty-minute sessions. Tailored to the developmental levels of the children in each class, instruction focuses on colors, numbers, shapes, basic words and songs. Children also learn about Mexican food, music, clothing and dance. At Fiesta time, the children are ready for the celebration of our city's Hispanic heritage, the great Box Parade and MIOSA, and all the festivities that make San Antonio such a special place.

Special Guests

Special guests are invited to come share a theme-related hobby, craft, or talent. Some examples may include a scientist, artist, police officer, firefighter, dentist, physician, or musician. Parents with special skills are always welcome for presentations. Please make these arrangements with your child's teacher.

Field Trips

Age-appropriate field trips are planned to expand the child's awareness of our themes. Information about the field trip will be posted at least 48 hours prior to the event. Field trips are within the San Antonio city limits. Children in the four-year-old classes can be transported to the field trip by his/her own parent or legal guardian or by a volunteer driver selected by the child's parent or legal guardian. A "Field Trip Travel Release" must be on file for each child four years and older. Children in the three-year-old classes must be driven to the field trip by his/her own parent or legal guardian; therefore, it is not necessary to have a "Field Trip Travel Release" on file. Volunteer drivers for field trips are required to provide a copy of their driver's license and current liability insurance to office personnel. The vehicle to be used for the field trip must have a current inspection sticker affixed to the window and have working seat belts in the back seat. CEC maintains no responsibility for the driving of the volunteers. Siblings are discouraged from attending, as

this is a special time for the parent to spend with the preschool child. Per the State of Texas Regulations:

Children younger than 8 years of age or less than 4'9" in height must be secured in a child passenger safety seat system in the back seat of the vehicle.

TUITION & FEE SCHEDULE 2010-2011

General Information

Registration, tuition and supply fees are set by *the CEC Board*. Registration priority is as follows: staff children, OHPC families, currently enrolled children, siblings of children currently enrolled, previous CEC families and general public families. Children from 18 months - 3 years may be registered for a MWF session or a TTh session. Classes may not be combined. Children 4 years old may be registered for a MWF session, a TTh session or a M-F session. *After in-house registration is complete and after the Orientation Tour for public registration is finished, spaces in the MWF/TTH 4-year old class can be filled with a 4-year old who desires to attend Monday through Friday.*

Registration Fees

A registration fee of \$100 is due at the time of registration and is non-refundable unless we are unable to place your child in a class. There is a 10 % discount for registration of a second child. Registration fees are pro-rated after November 1st. **Re-Enrollment:** If a child is withdrawn from the program and his/her parent later wishes to re-enroll the child*, a re-enrollment fee equivalent to the pro-rated registration fee will be due in order for the child to begin attending classes again.

PM Pals - Initial enrollment in PM Pals is included in the Registration fee. However, if a child is withdrawn from PM Pals after 30 days and his/her parent later decides to re-enroll the child in PM Pals, a re-enrollment fee of \$20.00 will be charged. Subsequent withdrawals and re-enrollments are subject to the same fee.

*Special circumstances subject to Board approval.

Supply Fees

The supply fee is equivalent to one month's preschool tuition and is due by June 15th of the previous school year. If this fee is not paid by June 30th, the child may lose his/her space in the fall program. The supply fee is non-refundable. The supply fee will be pro-rated for children entering the program late.

Tuesday/Thursday classes.....	\$200.00
Monday, Wednesday, Friday classes.....	\$247.00
Monday through Friday classes.....	\$356.00

Monthly Tuition Fees

For parent convenience, the year's tuition is divided into nine equal monthly payments. Unfortunately, absences due to illness, vacation or holidays are not deductible from monthly fees. Tuition payments hold your child's place in our program. There is a 10% discount on tuition (this does not include the registration fee or supply fee) for OHPC families.

One month's advance notice of withdrawal of a child must be given to the Director in writing. You are responsible for tuition charged during the notification period whether or not the child attends.

Make checks payable to CEC. Please deposit tuition payments in the box labeled "Tuition" in the office.

Preschool:

Tuesday/Thursday classes	\$200.00/month
Monday/Wednesday/Friday classes	\$247.00/month
Monday through Friday classes	\$356.00/month

PM Pals:

One session per week	\$58.00/month
Two sessions per week	\$116.00/month
Three sessions per week	\$173.00/month
Five sessions per week	\$289.00/month

Early Birds:

Tuesday/Thursday class	\$30.00/month
Monday/Wednesday/Friday class	\$44.00/month
Monday through Friday class	\$75.00/month

PM Pals

After the morning preschool classes, children can enjoy lunch, naps (rest time), and more activities with their friends. PM Pals runs from 11:45 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Children should bring their lunch.

There are no additional *registration* fees for PM Pals. Please see the Tuition Fee Schedule listed above. PM Pals is available only on the days that your child attends preschool. Additional information about PM Pals is available in the CEC office.

Early Birds

Children can enjoy early morning play from 8:00 a.m. - 8:45 a.m. before preschool classes begin. The teacher will take your child to his/her assigned preschool class at 8:45 a.m.

There are no additional *registration* fees for Early Birds. Please see the Tuition Fee Schedule listed above. Early Birds is available only on the days that your child attends preschool. Additional information about Early Birds is available in the CEC office.

Drop-In Care

On a space-available basis, drop-in care is an option for care for PM Pals or Early Birds sessions. The PM Pals fee is \$20.00/session and the Early Birds fee is \$10.00/session. You are required to contact the office in advance to confirm space availability and to pre-schedule requested drop-in care. Drop-in care is only available on the days which your child attends preschool. You are also required to sign the “Drop-In Care Form” at the time of drop-off/pick-up. **Please do not pay for drop-in service on the day of care; include this payment with your next month’s tuition payment.** Drop-in care charges will be assessed and billed at the end of each month and are due by the 10th day of the following month. Please see the updated “Fee Payment” policy. Due to insurance liability, children who are not currently enrolled are not eligible to use the drop-in service. In addition, there is no drop-in option for preschool hours.

Scholarships

One-year scholarships are available for families requiring tuition assistance. Scholarship parents provide volunteer services at the school, such as babysitting during meetings. Please see the Director for scholarship criteria and availability. Scholarship applications for the upcoming school year are due by March 1st. In order for scholarship families to be eligible for a scholarship during a subsequent year, scholarship volunteer hours must be fulfilled.

Late Payment Charges

Tuition is due on the first of each month. After the 10th of the month your tuition payment is considered late and a \$15.00 fee will be charged.

If tuition payments have been delinquent for three months consecutively, a certified letter will be sent. After 30 days past due (with a 7-day grace period), your child may be dropped from the program (unless special arrangements are in progress).

If a check is returned NSF (non-sufficient funds), you will be notified of re-deposit. If you request that CEC not re-deposit the check, payment in the form of cash or money order will be required on the next day that your child attends CEC. If a check is re-deposited and returned a second time, payment in the form of cash or money order will be required on the next day your child attends CEC.

If you require special arrangements for tuition payments, you are encouraged to discuss this with the Director.

Late Pick-Up

Children not picked-up at the stated release time are taken to the office. If you are late picking-up your child, there will be a five-minute grace period. After that period, a \$5.00 late fee will be charged for every 5 minutes or portion thereof (maximum \$20.00). After 30

minutes, CEC staff will refer to your emergency contact list in order to secure a person to pick up your child. Then, before your child can be picked up, the “Late Pick-Up Release Form” in the office will be completed. **Please do not pay late fees on the day of care. Include this payment with your next month’s tuition.** Late pick-up charges will be assessed and billed at the end of each month and are due by the 10th day of the following month. Please see the “Fee Payment” policy.

Fee Payment

Please note the fees and payment policy for “Drop-In” or “Late Pick Up” fees. Any additional charges will be assessed and billed at the end of each month and are due by the 10th day of the following month. Please do not pay fees until this time so we can ensure that your payment is credited appropriately.

Absences

If your child will not be attending class on any given day, please notify the school as soon as possible. If we do not hear from you by 9:30 a.m., we will try to contact you. Please advise us if your child has any communicable illness that may potentially affect other students in your child’s class.

HOURS OF OPERATION, HOLIDAYS, CLOSURES

The CEC school year runs from the Tuesday following Labor Day through the Friday before Memorial Day. Please note that Open School days are held the week before the Memorial Day week-end. CEC does follow the Nothside ISD calendar for holidays and school closures; a CEC calendar is published yearly in August after considering the Northside ISD calendar.

STUDENT DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP POLICIES

Hours

Early Bird hours - 8:00 - 8:45 a.m.

Classes offered on the mornings your child attends preschool classes.

Preschool hours - 8:45 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.

Classes offered on the following days:

Monday, Wednesday, Friday

Tuesday, Thursday

Monday through Friday (4-year olds only)

PM Pals hours - 11:45 a.m. - 2:30p.m. or 2:45 p.m.

Classes offered on the afternoons during which your child attends preschool classes.

Please arrive for Preschool between 8:45am-9:00am. We ask your cooperation in adhering to these drop-off and pick-up times, as classes will not be open until the class is scheduled to begin. The teachers need time to gather materials and set up for the day. If you do arrive early, please wait with your child on the front playground or porch or in the library until school begins. Please do not drop children off at the CEC or playground gate, in the parking lot, or in the classroom before the teacher arrives. State licensing requires that children must be left in the presence of a staff member. Always make contact with the teacher when you drop off your child.

And, please pick children up promptly after school. Children become anxious and worried when they see their classmates being picked up and they are left waiting. Always make contact with the teacher when you pick up your child at the end of class, especially when the class is on the playground. Children who are not picked up by 11:45 or 2:30 or 2:45 will be taken to the office to await arrival of their parent or other designated person to pick them up. If you are late picking up your child, you must go to the office to sign your child out. For additional information, see the Late Pick-up Policy above.

To ensure the safety and security of our children, please do not utilize the playground areas after school pick up. These areas are reserved for children under the supervision of CEC personnel only

School Closings

In case of emergency, the Director has full authority to cancel classes. CEC will observe bad weather closings according to the Northside Independent School District. Additionally, CEC will be **closed** should N.I.S.D. **delay** the opening of their schools. In this event, parents are asked to listen to news programs to determine if school will be closed. Should the school need to be closed for other reasons (i.e. physical plant problems) parents will receive a call from either their child's teacher or classroom coordinator. There are no make-up school days scheduled into our calendar for school closings, nor is tuition pro-rated for this rare occasion.

Parking

Parents and car pool drivers are asked to park their cars and walk children to and from classrooms. Please do not park along the red curb as this is a fire lane and/or in the handicapped spaces. Reminder: **Texas law prohibits leaving children in unattended cars**, so bring those sleeping babies inside with you! Parents are asked to drive slowly and carefully in the parking lot and be watchful for children walking to and from cars. Also, set your emergency brake!

In addition, please do not leave purses or valuables in your vehicle during drop-off, pick-up or anytime you are visiting the CEC.

CAR SEATS (10.D.06)

Injuries suffered while riding in cars are the number one preventable cause of death in young children. Here are guidelines to follow to keep your child safe in the car:

- The rear seat is the best seat for children 12 years or younger.
- All car passengers must wear a seat belt. Be sure that you wear a seat belt, because children learn by example.
- Children under 2 years of age are required to use a child restraint device. Children older than 4 but under 8 years of age are required to use a booster seat.
- Never hold a child in your arms or lap while traveling in the car.

Car Pools

If children are brought to school in car pools, it is recommended that the group be limited to two or three children. The extra time required to pick up many children often makes both drivers and children feel tense by the time they reach school. Each driver is responsible for checking the classroom and office bulletin boards on a daily basis and reporting any necessary information to those in the car pool. Teachers or other staff members are not allowed to transport children to or from school.

Release Authorization for Student Pick-Up

An authorization form that designates persons authorized to pick-up your child is kept on file. If anyone other than those persons listed is scheduled to pick up your child, please notify the school, in advance, in writing. Please include your contact number at the time of pick-up should there be any issues or concerns. The individual picking-up your child will be required to show picture identification.

School Visits by Parents, Grandparents or Relatives

Parents, grandparents or relatives are free to visit our school at any time during our hours of operation to observe classrooms, visit with the office personnel or attend special activities. We will do our best to accommodate these special visitors. Please coordinate a classroom visit with the teacher. Upon arrival at CEC, visitors should report to the office to receive a Visitor badge and to sign our guest book. This alerts personnel at the school that a visitor is present. When the visitor leaves, please go to the office to return the badge and sign-out.

Contact Information

Please notify the office of any changes in address, phone (work & mobile) or persons authorized to pick up your child. Keep your emergency contacts updated!

Solicitation on School Grounds

Commercial products and/or services are not to be displayed, sold or distributed to families or staff while on school or church property. Any bulletins or flyers must be approved by the Director before posting on bulletin boards. Distribution of bulletins or flyers to staff or parents is strictly prohibited without the approval of the Director.

Requirements Regarding Gang-Free Zones For Child Care Centers As a result of House Bill 2086 that passed during the 81st Legislature, Regular Session, Chapter 42 of the Human Resource Code includes section 42.064, effective September 1, 2009. This new statute requires that information about gang-free zones be distributed to parents and guardians of children in care at licensed child care centers. The following is a tip sheet to assist in complying with the new law. This information may be posted at your child care operation or copies may be provided to parents.

What is a gang-free zone?

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

How do parents know where the gang-free zone ends?

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

What is the purpose of gang-free zones?

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

What does this mean for my day care center?

A child care center must inform parents or guardians of children attending the center about the new gang-free zone designation. This means parents or guardians need to be informed that certain gang-related criminal activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of your center is a violation of this law and is therefore subject to increased penalty under state law.

When do I have to comply with the new requirements?

The law is already in effect, so providers should begin sharing information regarding gang-free zones immediately. Licensing staff will offer technical assistance to facilitate compliance until rules are proposed and adopted, which is estimated to occur in March 2010. In the meantime, providers should update their operational policies and procedures to include providing the information mandated by this law to the parents or guardians of the children in care.

For further information please contact your licensing representative or your local licensing office.

CLASS RATIOS, DAILY PLANS, NEWSLETTERS

THE CHILDREN'S ENRICHMENT CENTER OFFERS PRESCHOOL CLASSES FOR CHILDREN AGES 2 TO 4 YEARS AND TODDLER CLASSES FOR CHILDREN AGES 18 MONTHS TO 2 ½ YEARS.

In order to qualify for the Toddler classes, children must be 18 months by September 1st of the year they attend. We do not discriminate against students on the basis of color, race, physical ability and/or creed.

The maximum number of children in each class is:

Early Birds (multi-age group).	8 children
18 months to 2 years.	5 children
2 - 2 ½ year olds.	5 children
2½ - 3 year olds.	8 children
3 years.	10 children
4 years.	10 children

The maximum number of children in each PM Pal class is:

18 months to 2 years.	5 children
2 ½ - 3 ½ year olds.	8 children
3 year olds.	10 children
4 year olds.	10 children

Daily Program Postings

Each teacher posts a brief note describing the activities for the day, important reminders, or a summary of the theme unit. Please take a few minutes to read the note daily, as it is our best form of communication with parents. Some teachers also send notes home, reminders, snack calendars, etc., so check your child's tote bag daily. A Gym-Jam bulletin board outside the office describes that program's daily activities as well. The CEC personnel will also post reminders and notes on bulletin boards as needed. Feel free to bring in articles or newspaper clippings that relate to early childhood, and we will post appropriate ones on the bulletin board.

A parent's bulletin board is located on the porch outside the CEC office. Information regarding school activities, parent events and helpful articles on early childhood is posted.

Newsletters and Calendar of Events

A monthly newsletter and calendar of events will be sent via e-mail or a hard copy sent home with the eldest child in each family. Please refer to the calendar for reminders of important upcoming events. We try to include a brief review of the month's activities, songs, articles about childcare, etc. for you to refer to. Together with the teacher's notes and daily information, we hope to provide you with a good idea of the activities your child has been exposed to at CEC. The CEC school calendar is set at a spring Board meeting for the next school year.

GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE, CONFERENCES AND DAILY STUDENT SUPPLIES

Guidance and Discipline Philosophy

Early childhood is a time when step by step the ego is strengthened and made secure. Ownership and domination come before sharing and cooperation. The concept of "me and mine" comes before the concept of "yours and ours." When a child feels good about him/herself, it increases his ability to learn, live, and love. When a child's honest feelings of anger, hate, and fear are experienced, adults should hear and acknowledge those feelings. Only when a child knows that adults have heard him and understand him will he come to accept and respect his own feelings and those of others.

Guidance and Discipline

Discipline and guidance of your child will be consistent and based on an understanding of his/her individual needs and development. *NO PUNISHMENT OF A PHYSICAL NATURE WILL BE USED.* We will use re-direction and positive reinforcement whenever possible and your child's positive behavior will be recognized and encouraged. If your child's behavior should threaten the health and safety of others, he/she will be isolated from the group for a short time and talked to about the behavior.

Serious and Ongoing Problems

More serious and ongoing problems than those described above will be brought to the attention of the parents and the Director. Initially, guidelines will be developed to help the teacher and parent work with the child to improve the behavior. If, after implementation of these guidelines and a period of observation (to be determined on a case by case basis) the behavior does not improve, the Director and/or teacher may approach the CEC Board and ask for permission to dismiss the child from the program. If the Board approves dismissal, the family will be given 2 weeks notice regarding the child's last day. For cases involving dismissal due to a behavior problem, the pro-rated supply fee will be refunded.

Conferences

Conferences, called "parent conversations", are held twice each year to update you on your child's progress and to get to know you better. We ask you to make every effort to meet

with the teacher on the scheduled conference days. The well being of each child is maintained only as parents and teachers work together with a singleness of purpose-- providing for the total growth and family needs of the young child. Early Birds, Preschool and PM Pal classes will not be held on conference days (see school calendar for dates). Additionally, parents may request conferences as needed with the teachers (outside class time) or with the Director.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is integrated into the course of each day as ongoing teacher observation of the group and individual development. This information is used to adjust the program to better support the progress of both individual children and the group as a whole. At times, this may indicate the need to alter the classroom environment, changing the focus of the units or trying new teaching strategies. If concerns regarding individual children arise and are not remedied through classroom adaptations, teachers will seek advice and support from colleagues and parents to plan approaches to make the classroom experience a positive one for all children.

Twice per year parent conversations are scheduled. Fall parent conversations provide the opportunity to learn more about the child from the parents as well as share our observations of the child here at school. Spring conferences provide a more detailed process using portfolios and a narrative description of the child's progress.

Most of the assessment at CEC is informal with direct observation by teachers as the primary method. Staff members document observations in their own unique way, though most record anecdotes, take photographs, and collect samples of the children's artwork and other projects. CEC teachers occasionally conduct more formal individual assessments focused primarily on determining what a child knows or can do. Whenever possible, these assessments are designed as a typical classroom activity and are distributed throughout the year. Examples of this include using puzzles or other manipulatives to check a child's knowledge of shapes, colors, counting ability, etc.

Data from both informal and formal assessments are incorporated into the narrative sections of conference reports written by the child's teacher in March for the preschool. For conference reports that include checklists, teachers then rate the child's development of skills such as making independent choices, cooperating with peers, participating in conversation, throwing and catching bean bags, etc. as either consistently demonstrated, beginning to emerge, or not yet evident (as explained in the conference report statement below).

CEC's assessments and conference forms are sensitive to diversity in the following ways. Assessments involve only activities that are familiar to the children, and every effort is made to eliminate verbal directions that might not be understood by a child with a language disability or limited English proficiency. Teachers may eliminate from the conference report any items that cannot be fairly assessed because of the child's language abilities

Outdoor Play

The CEC children enjoy our outdoor classroom every day, weather permitting. Please dress children accordingly; avoid heavy clothing on hot days and include a hat and mittens on cold, windy days and socks and shoes for days the grass is wet. Layered clothing is helpful on those “changeable weather” days. All coats, hats, mittens, etc. should be labeled with the child's name.

On those sunny hot Texas days, please apply sunscreen with an SPF 15 or higher onto your child before dropping him/her off. At this time, our area is not designated by health authorities as high-risk of insect-borne disease; but if that changes, we will use daily application of repellent containing DEET when parents provide written authorization and appropriate repellent .

Outdoor Classroom Rules

1. Adults must actively supervise children at all times on both playgrounds. In addition, children must be accompanied by an adult when entering or leaving the playground.
2. Children may play on the front (small) playground before school only. The back playground is reserved for Early Birds and PM Pals classes. After 11:45 a.m., both playgrounds are reserved for students under the supervision of the CEC personnel only.
3. Please keep all gates to both playgrounds locked at all times.
4. Children must wear shoes on the playground at all times.
5. Children must not jump off trees or non-designated play structures.
6. Riding toys and sand toys need to remain on the ground.
7. Please make sure all water faucets are turned off - on the playground and in the outdoor bathroom.
8. Please throw trash in appropriate containers.
9. Only climb trees if they are designated for climbing.
10. No climbing on roofs of playhouses or forts.
11. Please keep the bathroom door locked at all times.
12. Sand is not for throwing- throw balls instead.
13. Please return riding toys to fenced enclosures when finished.

Daily Supplies

Tote bags will be provided at Open School for new families. All students should bring their CEC mesh tote bag to school everyday (no backpacks, please!) labeled with the child's name. Please send a change of clothes in your child's tote every day, including extra socks and underwear. Older children occasionally need extra clothes as well, due to a spill or enthusiastic participation in a messy activity. **If a child is toilet training, please send at least two extra sets of clothes and include extra socks and shoes.** Disposable diapers and wipes should be in the tote bags for those who use them. Please ensure all items are labeled with your child's name.

Toileting

During each class (particularly in the 3 and 4 year old classes), each child works directly with the teacher and participates in small group activities. In order to capitalize on “teachable moments” and to ensure the safety of all children, teachers must maintain awareness of the entire classroom environment and be able to respond to each child. Their effectiveness is limited when they need to address toileting and self-help needs. Although the CEC does not require children to be toilet-trained by a specified age, we strongly suggest that children are able to use the potty by themselves by their 3rd birthday. Please discuss potty training progress with your child’s teacher.

Clothing

Play clothes are the best for school as we do encourage active participation in messy art and outdoor play in sand. In addition, clothing that is easy to put on and take off encourages independence at bathroom time (belts, buttons and overalls can cause difficulty for some children). For safety, children should wear athletic shoes or other rubber soled shoes. **Children should not wear sandals, flip flops, dressy shoes or cowboy boots as they interfere with safety when participating in activities.** For further information, please see the “Daily Supplies” section.

Messy Activities

We encourage children to discover the surroundings that have been prepared for them each day. Often, these surroundings include crayons, markers, paint, glue, glitter and other, sometimes-messy materials. Because of this, we ask that you send your child to preschool in clothing that can sustain a lot of creativity. Although most of our supplies are washable, occasionally your child may come home “creatively decorated”. If you have any concerns regarding this, please speak to your child’s teacher or to the Director.

Toys

We ask that no toys, balloons, money, or candy be brought to school. Personal toys may be brought for “show and tell” only. The toys are put back in the child’s tote bag after “show and tell” is over. Fragile or favorite toys should be kept at home as they can be lost or broken when shared and played with among friends.

Lost and Found

The Lost and Found is located in the CEC office.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parent participation is a fundamental part of the CEC program. Each year, we ask each parent to participate in a minimum of one primary activity and one secondary activity.

There are many opportunities for participation in primary and secondary activities. In addition, everyone is expected to help with class parties and fundraisers and attend special events, such as New Family Orientation, the Thanksgiving Feast, and the End-of-Year Sing-a-Long & Picnic. In addition to helping the school, parent participation provides opportunities for friendship and communication with other parents and valuable time with the children. Please review the Parent Participation Form and complete accordingly.

Parents need specific opportunities for their own growth as well as their families' and the CEC offers various means through which individual needs of parents can be met. As parents involve themselves, they gain better understanding of the function and goals of the center. Parents are welcome to visit the school and classrooms at any time.

Our teachers and Director welcome comments, ideas, questions and concerns. If there is an item to address, you are encouraged to make contact with your child's teacher first. If for some reason you are uncomfortable discussing an issue with your child's teacher, please do not hesitate to contact the Director. If you feel an issue is still unresolved and not being properly addressed, you are encouraged to also contact a Board member.

We also ask for your cooperation in being aware of and familiar with information being sent home. We ask that you empty your child's folder and/or tote bag on a daily basis. This is a means to communicate important information!

Events

Everyone is encouraged and expected to help with class parties, field trips, and fundraisers and to attend special events throughout the year. Scheduled workdays are designed for parents, staff and OHPC members to spruce up the school, and they are wonderful ways for parents to get involved and get to know each other. Each parent should participate in at least one workday. Each year, parents should participate in at least one primary activity and one secondary activity (see Parent Participation Form). In addition, parents should plan to work at Jubilee, typically held on the first Saturday in May.

HEALTH PROCEDURES

Health Procedures

You may review a copy of the Texas *Minimum Standards for Licensed Child Care Centers* at any time; a copy is located in the CEC office. You may also request to see our preschool's most recent Licensing Inspection Report. If you would like to contact our local Licensing Office, the number is 210-337-3254.

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS) child abuse hotline number is 1-800-252-5400. Their website is www.tfps.state.tx.us. Texas Law requires caregivers to report any suspected child abuse or neglect. Please feel free to contact this agency if you have any questions.

Medical Form

In order for your child to be admitted to class on the first day of school, completed health forms need to be turned in to the office personnel. As required by state law, each child must have a current medical form on file in the office; the date of the physician's examination on the form must not be older than one year. Whenever you take your child to the doctor for a check-up, please get a new medical form from the CEC school office and return the completed form to the CEC office.

Immunizations and Screenings

The Health Department requires that your child's immunizations be kept current, including a varicella test and appropriate HIB vaccines and Hepatitis A. There is space on the medical form for an immunization record.

All four-year-old children are required to have their vision and hearing screened. We will offer this service for a nominal fee in October. If you prefer that your doctor do the screening, he/she should note the results on the medical form.

Illness

Per the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, children cannot attend school if one of more of the following conditions exists:

1. The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities.
2. The illness results in a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health, safety and supervision of the other children.
3. The child has any of the following:
 - a. fever (armpit temperature of 99.4 degrees or greater) accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness
 - b. symptoms and signs of a severe illness such as lethargy, uncontrolled breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea, vomiting (two or more episodes in 24 hours), rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, wheezing, behavior change, or other unusual signs.

A child must be free of symptoms of illness--temperature, diarrhea or vomiting--for at least 24 hours prior to returning.

If a child becomes ill while at school, the child will be isolated and cared for in the office until picked up by a parent or authorized individual.

Communicable Illness

If a child has been diagnosed with a contagious disease, the child may not return to school until a medical evaluation (doctor's note) determines that the child is no longer communicable and is able to participate in daily activities. Please notify the school if your child develops any communicable illness, as we are required to notify other program members. Parents will be notified in writing if their child has come in contact with a communicable illness (i.e. chicken pox, strep throat, pink eye, head lice, etc.).

Special Health Needs

Please notify the office in writing of any health conditions your child has that may require special attention.

Emergency Procedures

Our CEC staff is trained and remains current in CPR and First Aid. Should a child receive a minor scrape or cut, the area will be treated with soap and water and an accident report form will be completed. One copy will be sent home with the child and one will remain in the child's file.

Should a serious emergency occur, staff will address the immediate situation as they have been trained. You will be notified of an incident involving your child, and depending on the circumstances, may be asked to check on or pick up your child. In extreme situations, 911 will be immediately called and you will be notified. The CEC personnel are not allowed to transport children to doctor's offices or hospitals.

Medication

Although we don't encourage parents to send medication to the school, we will abide by the policy/procedure set by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services:

1. Parents must sign an authorization and include times for designated CEC personnel to administer each medication according to label directions;
2. The medication must be in the original container labeled with the child's full name and the date brought to the CEC;
3. The medication will be administered in amounts according to the label directions or as amended by a physician;
4. The medication will only be given to the child for whom it is intended;
5. The medication will not be administered after the expiration date.

Liability Insurance

The school carries liability insurance and has a group accident policy that covers injuries to children that occur at school.

Emergency Evacuation Procedure

Severe Weather: The Director will blow one long whistle blast, repeated after a short time. Any class on the playground will be instructed to return to the building. Children will be evacuated from their classrooms to the ramp in the ArtsPlay hallway. Teachers will take attendance. Children and adults will sit on the floor with their knees up and heads down between their knees. The Director will notify classes when it is safe to return to their classrooms.

Fire: The Director will ring the fire alarm. Children will evacuate the building to either the front playground or the back parking lot (whichever is closer). Attendance will be taken to see if everyone is accounted for. Director will notify classes when it is safe to return to class. Any class on the playground will be instructed to stay away from the building.

Gas Leak: the Director will ring three short blasts. Teachers will take class backpacks, which are supplied with emergency phone numbers of children's parents, snacks and water. After taking attendance, children will walk from the front parking lot to 4302 Little Lane that has been assigned as a safe house. If necessary, oncoming traffic will be stopped while children are near the street. The Director will call 911 to report the emergency. Parents will be called from 4302 Little Lane to pick up their children.

Lock Down: Office personnel will notify teachers if there is a stranger on the premises. Teachers will lock their doors and turn off the lights. A red or green banner will be placed in the classroom windows (i.e. green if all children are safe). The entrance door from the back parking lot is kept locked between the hours of 9:15 - 11:15 a.m. and 12:15 - 2:15 p.m. daily.

Child Abuse/Neglect

As a licensed facility, we are required by law to report any suspicions of child abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services.

FOOD AND REST POLICIES

Snacks

CEC parents take turns providing the snack for the class. The Health Department does not allow homemade snacks to be shared at school, so it is necessary that food brought from home either be whole fruit or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory sealed containers. We ask that parents supply snacks that require no preparation (unless requested by the teacher as a group activity). If a snack requires preparation (such as heating, cooking, etc.), we request that parents prepare the snack in advance or return before or during snack time for preparation in the school kitchen. Snacks must include food from two food groups. Your child's teacher will have a snack schedule for the year. Please review the Fun Healthy Yummy Snacks handout for suggestions.

Staff do not offer children younger than four years these foods: hot dogs, whole or sliced into rounds; whole grapes; nuts; popcorn; raw peas and hard pretzels; spoonfuls of peanut butter; or chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole.

Staff cut foods into pieces no larger than 1/2-inch square for toddlers/twos, according to each child's chewing and swallowing capability.

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Note: CEC is aware that some children have serious allergies to peanut products. Therefore, to ensure the safety of all students, CEC has adopted a policy that its personnel will NOT serve any snack containing a peanut product. CEC also requests that parents do NOT bring any item containing peanut product as a snack. Your efforts are greatly appreciated.

Lunch

Parents supply lunch and an afternoon snack for children attending PM Pals. As required by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, our state licensing agency, a child must have a milk product in their lunch box if they are at school for 6 hours. Please pack a nutritious simple lunch and make sure that your child's lunch provides at least half of his/her required protein and fruits or vegetables as well as a bread or cereal. The lunch should be easy for your child to eat. Label all lunch boxes, thermoses, and eating utensils. Parents of toddlers should send finger foods, labeled cups, and bibs. Please do not send candy or soda in your child's lunch. The CEC personnel are not be able to heat items in the microwave or oven for individual lunches. If you are concerned about perishable items in your child's lunch, please include a cold pack in the lunch box.

Note: 90% of fatal chokings occur in children younger than four years of age. Examples of foods that present a risk of choking include hot dogs sliced into rounds, whole grapes, hard candy, nuts, seeds, raw peas, dried fruit, pretzels, chips, peanuts, popcorn, marshmallows, spoonfuls of peanut butter, and chunks of meat larger than can be swallowed whole.

Birthdays

Birthdays are special to the children, and we love helping with the celebration. We encourage you to arrange a special snack with the teacher to celebrate your child's birthday. Celebrations are held in the classroom with your child's classmates. We do not allow specialty items such as, but not limited to, piñatas, clowns, elaborate favors, and balloons. If you would like your child's teacher to distribute birthday party invitations to your child's class, the whole class should be invited. If this is not possible, please mail invitations rather than distributing them at school. Suggested birthday snacks are small muffins, cookies, or lightly iced cupcakes. Although the Health Department does not allow homemade snacks, we are able to make an exception for birthday treats; however, store bought items are still preferred. Please send 100% juice if you send a drink.

Children with summer birthdays should check with the teacher to schedule a special "unbirthday" celebration at a convenient time during the year. A birthday bulletin board is located next to the office. Each child's picture is taken and displayed on the board during his/her birthday month.

Naps

As required by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, children who stay more than five consecutive hours in a child care/preschool setting must rest after lunch. They are required to rest/nap for one hour. Many four year olds and some three year olds may not nap, but they are required to rest or read quietly on their rest mats. Once children reach Kindergarten, schools in the Northside Independent School District require that five year olds have a rest time built into their full day. This is a district policy. Please send any items necessary for napping (pillow, favorite blanket, cover for mat, special stuffed toy, etc.) Rest mats are available for purchase at Open School. Rest mats and/or covers should be taken home weekly for cleaning.

Administrative Information

Licensing

CEC is licensed by the State of Texas, and exceeds state standards in many areas, especially in Child/Staff ratios, class size and staff qualifications. The Department of Family and Protective Services inspects our school annually. All inspections and a copy of the Minimum Standards are available for review in the office.

The local TDFPS office may be contacted at (210)337-3399 or at P.O. Box 23990, San Antonio, Texas 78223-0990 or on their website at www.txchildcaresearch.org. The child abuse hotline is 1-800-252-5400.

There are many events that are a part of the traditions here at CEC. These special ways of participating in the CEC program give all of us a chance to be active in your young child's school career and helps us all to know each other better.

Open School: Held before school starts, this is a time for you and your child to visit the teacher, meet the staff, and get acquainted with the classroom and school grounds. You may ask questions, turn in completed forms, pay September fees, pick up tote baskets, and familiarize yourself with the program. The teacher will notify you of the time to attend.

Workdays: Held twice a year to spruce up the rooms and playground. Each parent should participate in at least one of the workdays. Babysitting is provided. This is a good way to meet new friends and help the school.

Spaghetti/Family Dinner: Held in the fall, this is a deliciously wonderful opportunity to meet other CEC and OHPC families during a fundraising dinner. It is a very casual and relaxed evening.*

Class Parties: Christmas, Valentine's Day and Easter class parties are usually held at snack time or during the last 30 minutes of class before a holiday. Parties are low key--a time for sharing and fun conversation. Parents sign up to help. Please no balloons, piñatas, or lavish treats.

Fall Festival: Held during the week of Halloween, the children are invited to wear "friendly" costumes to school. Families are invited to share a morning of outside games, a costume parade, and fall fun.

Thanksgiving Feast: A musical sing-a-long featuring the preschool children and held in the church sanctuary is followed by a potluck lunch. All family members are invited. Sign-up sheets are posted before the feast. We request that at least one family member attend to enjoy the program and eat lunch with their child. PM Pals is not offered during Thanksgiving Feast days.

The Nativity Story: Gathered around the Christmas tree, the children hear the Nativity Story and sing Christmas carols with the Oak Hills Pastor.

La Posada: Following the Mexican tradition, the children travel from classroom to classroom, looking for room in the inn for Mary and Joseph. Finally finding room in the ArtsPlay room, all the classes gather for chocolate milk, bunuelos, and singing.

Story of the Windows: Each month, individual classes may go to the church sanctuary to share the story of one of the stained glass windows and sing songs. The event is age-appropriate and informal.

Project ABC: Each December, the CEC sponsors a family provided by Project ABC (Any Baby Can). Sign-up sheets are posted for NEW clothing, NEW toys and food for the family. This helps children realize the importance of the Christmas Spirit by providing items for those less fortunate.

Box Parades: During Fiesta Week, each child decorates a mini-float at home to bring to our mini-fiesta. Children have fun eating and playing after the "box float" parades at MIOSA (Morning in Old San Antonio). Parents and siblings are invited to come and enjoy the morning with their child.

Staff Appreciation: In August the CEC Board determines when combined classes will prepare "Thank You Luncheons" for the staff. Each class will be asked to provide lunch for the staff once during the year. The Classroom Coordinator coordinates this event.

Family Jubilee: Held the first Saturday in May, this major fundraiser of the year provides many extras that the CEC children enjoy. Similar to a carnival, Jubilee is geared to our preschool children and their families. Classes and OHPC members sponsor game or food booths. Tickets are sold for a nominal fee; the main goal is to have fun together. Parents donate supplies and seek contributions for the live and silent auctions; children and teachers also make crafts for auction. Each parent should participate in Jubilee on the day of the event.*

Conferences: Held twice a year, individual meetings between you and your child's teacher provide an opportunity to update each other on your child's progress. Babysitting is provided. Preschool, Early Birds and PM Pals are not offered on these days.

Spirit Days: Children and staff are encouraged to wear CEC T-shirts on Thursdays or Fridays each week.

Year-End Picnic and Sing-a-long: Held the last scheduled school day in May. After an informal sing-a-long, we move to the playground to eat with other classmates, parents and teachers. Families bring their lunches, visit with others, and celebrate the wonderful year they have shared. It is a time to thank your child's teacher and say good-bye to those who are moving on. The 4-year-old graduation is included on this day following the Sing-a-long. No PM Pals or Early Birds this day.

***10 % OF FUNDS RAISED ARE DONATED TO CHARITY**