

## ***WELCOME!***

Dear Families,

Welcome to the University of Michigan Towsley Children's House Early Childhood Program.

It is a pleasure to have your child/ren enrolled in our program. We look forward to having your family as a part of our community and we hope to make your arrival as smooth as possible. We are proud of the exemplary early childhood programming and enthusiastically welcome you to our community.

This handbook will provide program policies and procedures as they relate to your child/ren and family and your role within the Program. The history, research and training mission, philosophy and curriculum of the Program is explained along with many other items. Please read the entire handbook, as it will provide much information and answer many of the questions you may have about us.

If you have further questions or concerns, we are always available to assist you. We look forward to being a part of the growth of your child/ren and welcome your participation as a member of the University of Michigan Towsley Children's House.

Sincerely,

Beth Ann Blanchard  
*Director*  
*UM Towsley Children's House*

Revised August 2008

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*Please note:* This Parent Handbook contains information pertaining to both UM Children’s Centers. Center-specific items are delineated with shaded references as follows:  
UMCC = U M Children’s Center, 400 N. Ingalls  
UMTCH = U M Towsley Children’s House, 2800 Plymouth Rd.

**PARENT AGREEMENT TO POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:**  
Please note that each family must sign and return the form entitled “Parent Agreement to Policies and Procedures” at the time of the child’s enrollment, agreeing to the policies and procedures related to the UM Children’s Centers and found in this handbook.  
*(The form will be provided as part of the enrollment packet)*

## **University of Michigan Central Campus Children's Centers, including the UM Towsley Children's House**

### **Mission Statement**

The University of Michigan Children's Programs are committed to providing exemplary early childhood care and education for children of University faculty, staff and students; to collaborating with and serving as a resource for the University faculty's educational, research and service missions; to providing students interested in the development of young children with a setting for observation, participation and research and to partnership among parents, early childhood teachers and researchers to achieve these goals.

### **Philosophy Statement**

Our program is dedicated to providing a safe, supportive, consistent, challenging and holistic environment for young children and their families. Each child's day has an individual rhythm, as well as, a predictable flow and structure. To ensure this balance, we provide a warm, nurturing setting that encourages children to learn through hands-on interactive exploration. A play based approach is implemented to provide a child centered and teacher guided curriculum, in which children are encouraged to construct their own knowledge. We are committed to creating a nurturing learning environment in partnership with parents to develop a sense of belonging and high self-esteem in each child. Staff receive comprehensive ongoing professional development to keep current with the unique needs of young children and their families.

*We believe this philosophy represents the foundation on which to begin a life long learning process and to launch a positive sense of self, others and the world around them.*

### **We strive to....**

- Nurture positive self-esteem by providing an environment for successful experiences.
- Provide an inclusive environment meeting the unique and special needs of all children.
- Provide opportunities to develop social skills.
- Encourage emotional development through verbal expressions of thoughts and feelings, finding acceptable ways of expressing feelings, and learning to recognize and accept emotions in others.
- Foster responsibility for oneself in self-help, health, safety and interpersonal areas and to facilitate appropriate independence.
- Encourage the physical development of large motor skills through outdoor and indoor activities as well as fine motor development through the use of manipulative toys, blocks and puzzles and other small tools and writing utensils.

- Enhance creativity by offering many kinds of materials and experiences in music, art, dramatics and literature.
- Develop language, literacy skills and multilingual skill and appreciation through stories, music and songs, dramatic play, problem solving, group discussion, and a print rich environment.
- Facilitate cognitive development by broadening the child's experiences to increase their knowledge base, concepts and skills acquisition.
- Promote cross-cultural understanding and respect by providing children with experiences in diversity through multi-cultural and anti-bias curriculum.
- Stimulate divergent thinking by offering ample opportunity for hands-on experience in problem solving and exchanging ideas.

## **History**

The UM Towsley Children's House, established in 2008, is rich in history although new in establishment. This program is the result of the evolution of the past UM Children's Center for Working Families (established 1980) and UM Pound House Children's Center (established in 1976) merging together. The combination of these two former programs brings more than 50 years worth of early childhood experience to this program.

## **Operating Budget**

The primary source of funding for the Program is generated from parent tuition with additional support through the University General Fund. The University provides many sources of indirect support such as physical space, insurance, utilities, and custodial service.

## **Program Overview**

Towsley Children's House is a program serving children from 3 to 18 months, (with a toddler program addition in 2009) and 2 1/2 to 5 years old with both part-day and full-day programming. The Program provides young children with an exemplary early childhood education program while serving as a resource for the University faculty's scholarly agenda and providing University students interested in the development of young children with a setting for observation, participation and research.

The full day program offers a full week or part week option. The half day program offers 5 days per week only, either morning or afternoon for 3- 5 year olds. All programs provide healthy snacks and full day preschool children also receive a hot lunch. Parents are welcome to join their child for this meal.

Program	Age Group	Hours	Operation Months	Class Size
Full-day	Infants 3 – 18 months	7:30am – 5:30pm	September - August	8-12 children
Full-day	Ages 2 ½ - 5	7:30am – 5:30pm	September - August	16 – 18 children
Morning Part-day	Ages 3 - 5	9:00am - 12:15pm	September - June	18 children
Afternoon Part-day	Age 3 - 5	1:15pm - 4:30pm	September - June	18 children

## Research and Training

The primary mission of the UM Early childhood programs is to provide observation, training and research opportunities for faculty and students. These individuals come from a variety of disciplines including psychology, education, social work, nursing, pediatrics, and psychiatry. The training and research activities at the Center are a positive addition to the program, and provide information on the development of children to the research community at large. Extensive information regarding the Research and Training mission is available on our website ([www.childcare.umich.edu](http://www.childcare.umich.edu)) including forms and procedures.

## Procedures

The UM Early childhood programs have developed careful procedures regarding children's participation in these research programs. Each project is evaluated by the University Human Subjects Review Board for approval, and then approved by the Research/Training Coordinator.

Upon enrolling, parents are provided with a summary of research procedures. The Children's Centers utilize an *active consent* procedure. This requires that parents give an affirmative statement allowing each child to participate in a study. A letter describing each research project will be sent for your consideration. In the active consent procedure, parents must sign and return the portion of the form indicating whether “yes” or “no” the child will be given permission to participate in the project. Even if a parent has signed an affirmative response, **participation by each child in that project is completely voluntary and never is a child coerced into participating.** Parent cooperation and responsiveness in facilitating this permission system is greatly appreciated. When a child has participated in a particular study, a note confirming his/her participation will be put in each child's (family) mailbox.

All researchers are required to spend several hours in each classroom establishing rapport with the children prior to their involvement. Consequently, the children are usually eager to participate in research projects. The children in the Centers are involved in several studies per year. These projects typically study children's learning styles, social interactions and cognitive capacities.

The confidentiality of each child is protected.

Throughout the year, summaries of research conducted at the Center are posted on the bulletin board in the office area. Questions regarding any particular study should be directed to the Research/Training Coordinator.

## **Quality Assurance**

The Children's House is professionally staffed and each dedicated classroom includes a team of teachers comprised Teachers and Associate Teachers. Many of these teachers have advanced degrees in Early Childhood Education (ECE) and/or Child Development, and all are University of Michigan employees. The retention of professional staff is exceedingly high and many staff members have celebrated ten or more years of working within the UM Early Childhood Programs.

The Teaching teams are complemented by university students. Undergraduate practicum placement students, temporary student employees, or graduate student researchers are routinely involved with each classroom of children. The adult to child ratio ranges between 1:3 and 1:7 within the programs.

The professional teaching staff and university students work as a team. The addition of university students' participation in the program adds to the dynamic and stimulating environments within the Center.

## **State Licensing**

The UM Towsley Children's House is licensed by the State of Michigan and operate in compliance with the rules and regulations. The rules indicated set forth the minimum standards for the care and protection of children attending Michigan's child care centers and nursery schools.

## **Staff Screening**

In order to comply with licensing regulations, and in the best interests of children, all staff is screened by Michigan State Police and Michigan Protective Services, for any substantiated criminal history on file within our state.

Additional screening procedures include:

1. Individual interview
2. Reference on file
3. Personal certificates of no history of unsubstantiated child abuse
4. Documentation of work history

## **Ongoing Training for Staff**

Training in the areas of Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), First Aid, Bloodborne Pathogens and Identifying Abuse and Neglect occurs routinely for staff, and in accordance with state guidelines. Use of fire extinguishers and knowledge of evacuation procedures is also training that staff receive annually.

Professional development opportunities for teachers are supported by the Center and occur throughout the year including attendance at Early Childhood Conferences, and In-service opportunities within the routine school year for all UM Early Childhood Programs. Participation by the teaching staff is organized in advance, thoughtfully and strategically by Center Directors so as to maintain the consistency of the classrooms for the children.

### **Annual Program Evaluation by Families**

All parents will be asked each year to complete a family survey concerning the program. This survey will be an adapted version of the NAEYC accreditation Family Questionnaire. This survey will give parents a chance to evaluate the program and session in which their child is enrolled. This feedback component is utilized in each staff member's annual performance evaluation.

### **Negotiating Difficulties**

If a problem arises, please do inform the staff, as we are interested in and committed to responding to any concerns. Depending on the nature of the concern, the program staff will either respond, or assist in redirecting the matter to the appropriate staff person within the Centers. Program staff will use a variety of techniques to negotiate difficulties that may arise with families, and will make arrangements to use these techniques in a language the family can understand.

Parents may always contact the Director with any issues or concerns or to negotiate difficulties.

## **Personnel**

### **Administrative Staff**

#### **Director**

The Director is responsible for the daily operation of the UM Towsley Children's House. In so doing, the Director is responsible for a variety of aspects of the operation of the program, some of which include: insuring the State of Michigan Licensing Rules for child care centers are met and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation standards are met; supervision of enrollment of the program, overseeing collection of parent fees; evaluating staff annually; informing parents about program events and Center related information, overseeing the research and training within the program; insuring that policies and procedures are current and available; monitoring and developing annual budget projections; providing for staff development and organizing training opportunities, providing guidance and direction to teaching staff in support of a well-planned play based curriculum; providing staffing and overseeing hirings; supervising the physical plant including all building and grounds.

The Director is available to discuss any concerns regarding the philosophy and policies of the Center, or to negotiate difficulties.

### **Program Assistant**

The Program Assistant provides support to the Director on any number of projects and tasks needed to operate the program. The Program Assistant is responsible for the coordination and implementation of the undergraduate practicum course, program assessment tools, and auxiliary programs such as parent education and social events.

### **Billing and Finance Coordinator**

The Billing and Finance Coordinator provides assistance on behalf of many UM Early childhood programs as the M-Pathways lead user, prepares budget reports and reconciles accounts, prepares personnel documents, and various ad hoc reports at the request of the Director. The Billing and Finance Coordinator supports the program with tuition collection. This position provides support for the Child Care Tuition Grant Program under the auspices of the Tuition Grant Coordinator and on behalf of the Office of the Provost.

### **Research and Training Coordinator**

The Research and Training Coordinator acts as a liaison between University researchers and trainees and the Early Childhood Programs. This involves attracting research and training projects, introducing new researchers to the Programs, facilitating the smooth running of research projects, and compiling statistics on the types and amount of research and training in the annual report.

### **Administrative Assistant**

The Administrative Assistant coordinates all of the day-to-day communication within the Children's House. Additionally, this person assists the parents, students, staff, and program director in various aspects of program operation which may include: typing, phone calls, filing, copying, and providing tours and program information, assisting with enrollment and various aspects of program operation.

### **Cook**

The cook prepares and serves a hot lunch daily for the children in the program. A well-balanced nutritious menu is planned according to guidelines developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) as well as the Children's Nutrition Council. Families receive a printed copy of the children's lunch menus (typically in the newsletter).

### **Teaching Staff**

Each classroom is staffed with at least two professional teachers, sometimes three depending on the group size and age of the children. The teaching staff has paid planning time (or non-contact time) as part of their dedicated work day. The schedules of contact and non-contact time vary to accommodate the degree of supervision and participation in program activity that is associated with each teacher level.

### **Teacher**

The Teacher is responsible for developing and teaching pre-school curricula in accordance with developmentally appropriate practices in an educational laboratory setting. Teachers are responsible for daily and ongoing communication with parents, supervision of Associate Teachers and University students, facilitating research and training activities of interdisciplinary departments and supporting the administrative, educational and operational activities of the Center in collaboration with the Director. In some cases, a Teacher may be designated as the Head Teacher of a classroom, and assume the lead role of the team.

### **Associate Teacher**

The Associate Teachers are responsible for teaching pre-school curricula in accordance with developmentally appropriate practices in an educational laboratory setting, and to assist in the research and training activities of interdisciplinary departments.

### **University Students**

#### **University Undergraduates**

The UM Early Childhood Programs are laboratory preschools serving as interdisciplinary research and training sites for the university. Each semester, university undergraduates are involved in practicum placements for various departments such as Psychology and Nursing. These courses are field placements for students interested in the growth and development of children.

Each academic semester the Psychology practicum “Directed Experiences with Children” is offered through the UM Early Childhood Programs as a field placement for students interested in the growth and development of children. Students are supervised within each classroom placement by the designated classroom teachers.

#### **University Student Employees**

The UM Early Childhood Programs employ university students who work as support staff with the teachers and throughout the programs. These student employees often elect to return semester after semester throughout their undergraduate careers, providing long term work experience for the student and continuity of staffing for the Centers.

## **Health and Illness Policies**

### **Health and Wellness**

The policies and practices of the UM Towsley Children's House are designed to promote the health and wellness of all of its participants. Gross motor and outdoor play are prioritized on a daily basis, with these times of active play balanced with quiet activities and rest. The physical environment is maintained in a clean and sanitary condition. Policies are in place to make certain that children and staff will be safe, and the sharing of a contagious illness will be kept to a minimum. Careful records are kept documenting regular health check-ups and immunizations. We encourage children to practice and develop good hand washing habits to prevent the spread of germs. We encourage an understanding of good nutrition and exercise for the development of healthy bodies. All full-time staff are trained and currently certified in First Aid, CPR, and Blood Bourne Pathogens.

Our program supports health and wellness in an environment designed to minimize stress and maximize relaxed interactions and activities. Parents and teachers are challenged to work together in the best interests of the children. When your child has a contagious illness, we ask that you notify the teachers so that they and other parents in the room can know to be aware of signs of the illness. Only the illness will be posted on the door; family and children's confidentiality will be maintained.

Every effort will be made by Center employees to keep children safe, healthy, and able to fully participate in the activities of the Center. Teachers are very open to concerns of parents in this effort. In return, teachers will be proactive in bringing any indications that children may be ill or injured or any information regarding accidents that may have occurred during her/his time at the Center to the attention of parents. It is our intention to ensure children are able to participate healthily, happily, and wholeheartedly in the activities of the Center. Infants six months of age and younger may be excluded if caregivers observe that they are not eating, or drinking normally. Parents will be asked to consult their child's physician before returning their child to the Center.

### **Illness**

Our illness policy is that if your child is well enough to be in the Center, he/she is well enough to go outdoors and participate in all activities. However, if your child has an existing health condition that requires him/her to stay inside or excludes them from participating in certain activities, a doctor's note should be kept on file. We have this policy so that we are able to maintain high teacher/child ratios throughout the day.

For the safety and well being of the children, families, and staff, it may not be appropriate for an ill child to remain at the Center. The following are some indicators of illness:

- significant changes in a child's activity level or behavior that prevents the child from comfortably participating in routine activities while at the Center
- symptoms of illness, such as excessive coughing, breathing difficulties, diarrhea, vomiting, loss of appetite, *etc*
- significant change in how the body temperature feels to the touch
- significant change in the child's appearance
- comments or complaints from the child indicating illness

## **Conditions for Exclusion from The Center**

If your child exhibits any of the symptoms listed below at home, keep your child at home until child is well and contamination of others is not a concern. Please notify the center of an absence as well as any identified symptoms so we will not expect your child that day and staff can be alert to possible contagions.

### **Fevers**

Elevated body temperature may or may not be an indication of illness. The following policy will be used to determine whether a child with a fever shall be excluded from participation at the Center. A child's temperature will be taken if staff members observe one or more of the previously listed indicators of illness. Staff members will give careful consideration to factors that might affect body temperature to avoid readings due to influences other than illness.

If the child's temperature is 100.5 degrees or greater, the parent or authorized person will be alerted that there is a fever concern for the child. The child's temperature will be checked again after an interval of 15 minutes, and not more than 30 minutes. During this time interval, the child will be observed for the following signs or symptoms of illness: (Consideration will be given to each child's own typical, individual habits.)

- A need for more sleep than usual: drowsiness, longer or frequent rest periods, or difficulty in waking up
- Significant change in behavior, such as: persistent or uncontrollable crying, excessive clinging to caregivers, or refusal to play at their normal activity level
- Difficulty breathing: uncontrolled coughing, wheezing, runny nose, *etc*
- Significant change in appetite, such as: refusing to eat or drink, or drinking more than usual
- Flushed or pallid skin;
- Complaints or comments that indicate illness.

**For children under six months of age:** If the second temperature reading is also 100.5 degrees, or greater, the child's parent will be notified, and exclusion from the center will be required. No other indications are necessary for exclusion for this age group. This policy is based on the concern that in young infants, mild fever may be the only sign of a serious illness.

**For children over six months of age:** If any of the above signs are observed in conjunction with a fever up to 101 degrees, exclusion from the center may be necessary, and the parent will be notified. If a child's temperature is measured at 101 degrees or higher, the parent, or authorized person will be notified and exclusion from the Center will be required.

### **Vomiting**

Caregivers will be careful that vomiting is not mistaken for "spitting up" or other mild digestive disturbance. The parent will be informed after the first incidence of vomiting is observed. The child will be observed closely for other signs or symptoms of illness. A vomiting illness requires that the child is excluded from the Center after two or more episodes of vomiting occur within a 24-hour period.

### **Diarrhea**

A diarrhea illness is characterized by an increased number of stools compared with a child's normal pattern or an increase in stool water and/or lack of formed substance in stool consistency. The parent will be informed after the first incidence of diarrhea is observed. The child will be monitored for other signs or symptoms of illness. If the child is observed to have two diarrhea stools within a 24-hour period, the parent will be contacted to remove the child from the center. We realize that children, especially infants, may have incidents of diarrhea that are not necessarily a sign of illness and this will be taken into consideration when evaluating exclusion from the Center. However, diarrhea that leaks out from diapers and clothing presents a health hazard regardless of the cause. Children may be excluded because of this alone.

### **Rash**

A rash with fever or behavioral changes is cause for exclusion from the program. If your child's physician notes that the rash is not infectious, the child may return to the center.

### **Head Lice**

A very common social nuisance is head lice. While they do not represent a serious health threat to children, they are very unpleasant, cause itching, and are sometimes hard to eliminate. They are highly communicable and are not a sign of poor hygiene. No family or child will be made to feel embarrassed by this condition. As always, confidentiality will be maintained.

Prevention of infestation is the best way to deal with head lice. Children will be discouraged from sharing combs or brushes, hats, and other headgear. Policies will be followed carefully to prevent the spread of head lice.

If head lice are discovered at home, parents are asked to inform the child's teacher so that other parents can be alerted. If lice or nits (eggs) are discovered at the Center, parents will be contacted immediately and required to pick up their child. Parents are required to contact a physician, treat their child's hair with an appropriate delousing medicated shampoo, and remove all nits from the hair before the child may return to the Center. Recommendations on cleaning the child's clothing, personal belongings, and surroundings will be provided upon request.

### **Other Illnesses**

Exclusion will be required for the following illnesses when symptoms are identified at the Center. This list is representative, but not all-inclusive.

Bacterial meningitis	Mumps	Chicken pox
Pertussis	Fifth disease	Purulent Conjunctivitis
Giardiases	Impetigo	Hemophilus Influenza Type
B		
Hepatitis A virus	Respiratory Illness	Roseola
Hepatitis B virus	Rubella	Herpetic
gingivostomatitis		
Hepatitis Non-A	Scabies	Influenza
Hepatitis Non-B	Shigellosis	Shingles
Strep Throat	Measles	Thrush
Mouth sores with drooling	Tuberculosis	

The source for the preceding policy guidelines is *Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and School*, a resource manual for health and safety standards for child care providers published in 2005 by the National Academy of Pediatrics.

### **Exclusion period**

Children will be excluded until they have been free of symptoms for 24 hours, without medication. A child exhibiting no symptoms may return within 24 hours **IF** a health care provider signs a statement determining the illness to be non-communicable, the child is not in danger of dehydration, and the child is well enough to participate in child care activities. If your child is diagnosed with an ear infection and has no signs of discomfort or fever after they have been on the medication for at least 12 hours, they may return to the Center. In implementing this and all exclusion policies, the focus of concern is on the needs of the ill child and the ability of our staff to meet those needs without compromising the care of other children.

### **Medication Procedures**

We will NOT give medications in bottles/food. Please give medication to your child's teacher, do not leave in child's cubby. Medication can be given at the Center if the following criteria are met:

- It is not the first dose
- Medication is in the original bottle and clearly labeled for a named child
- Dosage matches bottle information
- Medication Administration Form is completed with both the parent's and physician's signature.

Tip: In cases where medication will be administered at home and school, a parent may wish to request from their pharmacist or physician a second container for the convenience of having medication in both places.

### **Contingency Plans For Child Care In Case of Illness**

We recommend that you arrange a few contingency plans for the care of your child in the event of an illness that prevents her/him from attending the Center for a few days.

### **Inadequately Immunized children:**

If a case of measles, mumps, rubella, pertussis or polio occurs in the Center, children who are not completely immunized will be excluded for the communicable period to prevent further disease spread. For information on current immunization schedules, please see the following website: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/schedules/child-schedule.htm>.

**Recommended Immunization Schedule for Persons Aged 0–6 Years** — UNITED STATES • 2008  
*For those who fall behind or start late, see the catch-up schedule*

Vaccine ▼	Age ►	Birth	1 month	2 months	4 months	6 months	12 months	15 months	18 months	19–23 months	2–3 years	4–6 years
Hepatitis B <sup>1</sup>		HepB	HepB		<i>see footnote 1</i>	HepB						
Rotavirus <sup>2</sup>				Rota	Rota	Rota						
Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis <sup>3</sup>				DTaP	DTaP	DTaP	<i>see footnote 3</i>	DTaP				DTaP
Haemophilus influenzae type b <sup>4</sup>				Hib	Hib	Hib <sup>4</sup>	Hib					
Pneumococcal <sup>5</sup>				PCV	PCV	PCV	PCV				PPV	
Inactivated Poliovirus				IPV	IPV	IPV						IPV
Influenza <sup>6</sup>						Influenza (Yearly)						
Measles, Mumps, Rubella <sup>7</sup>						MMR						MMR
Varicella <sup>8</sup>						Varicella						Varicella
Hepatitis A <sup>9</sup>						HepA (2 doses)						HepA Series
Meningococcal <sup>10</sup>												MCV4

Range of recommended ages  
 Certain high-risk groups

**Necessary health records for each child enrolled at the Centers:**

1. Immunizations: All children enrolled in a preschool program are required by the State of Michigan to have a record of immunizations on file at the Center. The Center MUST have this information at the time each child enters the program.
2. Physical Exam: (Green Form: Section III):  
 Within thirty (30) days after a child’s first enrolled day at the Center, a record of physical exam must be submitted to the Center. This is in accordance with State of Michigan licensing requirements. It is essential that the record be complete so that the Center staff is alerted to any special health needs of your child.

\*For children under 18 months, the physical must be updated every year.

\*For children 18 months and older, the physical must be updated every 2 years.

3. Child Information Card (Emergency Card): All children upon entering the program must have a signed child information card on file, consistent with State of Michigan requirements.

\*\*No child will be permitted to stay until this CHILD INFORMATION card is returned.\*\*

**Injury**

Any injury requiring physician attention necessitates parental contact and a request that a child be taken home may be made. Physician permission to return to the Center as well as physician guidelines for activities and care are requested after serious injury.

## **Emergency**

In the case of an emergency, efforts will be made to contact parent/s. If the parent cannot be reached, a staff member will call 911 and the child will be transported to an emergency facility immediately.

## **Blood Borne Pathogens (BBP)**

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has issued a rule on bloodborne pathogens. Bloodborne pathogens are pathogenic microorganisms that are present in human blood and can cause disease in humans. These pathogens include, but are not limited to, Hepatitis B virus and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).

Because health and safety of the children is always our first concern, these rules, while perhaps cumbersome in their implementation (i.e. using gloves, etc), are designed with the children's and staff's best interests in mind. Incidents "where blood is present", include everything from a minor nosebleed to a severe laceration.

As a Center, we have developed an Exposure Control Plan, to be implemented in cases where there may be incidents where blood is present. This Exposure Control Plan (kept on file in the office) identifies the way that the Center will respond to incidents whenever blood is present according to OSHA regulations. The Center's staff members receive annual training under the bloodborne pathogens standard that covers the specifics of the procedures. In the event of an incident where a child or staff member has had a direct exposure of blood to the mouth, eyes or non-intact skin, an attempt will be made by the Center to arrange for a blood sample from the source of the exposure incident so that the blood can be tested for Hepatitis and HIV. Additionally, all staff are trained in first aid and CPR procedures annually.

## **Hand Washing Procedures**

Hand washing is the most important means of interrupting transmission of infection to children and staff. The following is an appropriate hand washing procedure.

1. Use warm water only-not hot, not cold.
2. Wet both hands and wrists well before applying soap.
3. Apply liquid soap to palms first (about 1 tsp).
4. Lather well; spread lather to back of hands and wrists.
5. Continue scrubbing, paying careful attention to fingernails and between fingers. The scrubbing time should be a minimum of 15 seconds.
6. Rinse hands and wrists to remove all soap and detergent.
7. Dry completely
8. Turn off faucet using disposable towels when there is no knee control or remote sensor.  
This prevents recontamination of hands.

## **Fire Safety**

Fire Safety is a regular theme of the children's curriculum. Evacuation routes and actual staff responsibilities during evacuation are posted in each room.

## **Evacuation Drills**

Fire, tornado and evacuation drills will be held for both children and staff throughout the year.

## **Health, Safety and Nutrition Curriculum**

Children practice safety and hygiene habits in the classroom, such as hand washing and coughing into their elbows instead of hands. Snack and lunches are served family style. Teachers sit with the children and have table conversation about food and nutrition. Children learn to serve themselves and they learn about the foods that other children are eating.

## **Nutrition Policy**

The UM Children's Centers use the Children's Nutrition Council as well as the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) guidelines in determining items for snacks and lunch. It is requested that parents also follow the stated guidelines for meals or snacks (i.e. birthday's) brought to school. {Please read the section on "Food Allergies".}

Children are encouraged to taste all foods served. If they do not prefer a certain food, children will not be required to eat that item. (NOTE: Alternate meals will not be provided except in the case of food allergies).

## **Food Allergies and Food Restrictions:**

### **Food Allergies:**

As part of the routine health information for each child, parents must inform the Center in writing of any food allergies or dietary restrictions. Staff will work closely with each family regarding these allergies or restrictions.

Please note that due to serious food allergies, **Nuts, nut products, peanut butter, or any products with peanut or nut ingredients are not served and may not enter the premises of the Centers.**

All families will be notified in writing by the Center Director if additional food exclusion policies are put into place (due to the changing needs of those within our community) and parents will be expected to adhere to the policy.

Consistent with NAEYC guidelines, the program protects children with food allergies from contact with the problem food. The program asks families of a child with food allergies to give consent and then, if consent is given, posts information about that child's food allergy in the food preparation area, and in the areas of the facility the child uses as a visual reminder to all those who interact with the child during the program day.

### Food Restrictions:

Program staff do not offer children under the age of 4 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.

There is no unpasteurized apple cider or pork served at the Centers.

As indicated above, all families will be notified in writing by the Center Director if additional food exclusion policies are put into place (due to the changing needs of those within our community) and parents will be expected to adhere to the policy.

### **Snacks:**

Nutritious snacks are part of the routine morning and afternoon programs. In accordance with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) requirements for nutrition, a daily snack will be provided that meets the requirements described below. At least two of the following groups will be provided at each snack:

- Milk (2%)
- Vegetables and Fruit (juice, fresh fruit, etc.)
- Bread and Bread Alternates (pasta, cereal, crackers)
- Meat and Meat Alternates (cheese, eggs)

### **Lunch:**

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) suggests that lunch consist of the following:

- Milk (skim or low fat)
- Vegetable (carrots, celery, etc.) and/or fruit (apples, oranges, juice, etc.)
- Bread/bread alternate (bread, rolls, pasta, cereal, etc.)
- Meat/meat alternate (cheese, meat, poultry, fish, eggs, etc.)

### **Enrollment**

The University of Michigan Towsley Children's House is open to the public while providing priority to families currently affiliated with the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, as students, staff and faculty. Available spaces are filled based on a waiting list system which includes enrollment priority criterion as described below.

Enrollment occurs on an annual basis beginning in the late winter for the following fall, and as openings may occur within a school year in the event that a family leaves the Center.

The waiting list provides a first-come, first-serve, age-eligible process using the enrollment priority criterion to determine the order in which families will be contacted. ***Please note that children need not be toilet trained to be eligible to enroll at the Center for any age group.***

In all matters of enrollment:

- a family is expected to act in compliance with UM Children's Centers policies and procedures (for example, timely payment of fees, cooperation with all center guidelines and procedures.) Failure to comply with these policies and procedures could result in the termination of services.

- the unique and special needs and circumstances of children are considered reasonably accommodated;
- the Director maintains final discretion.

Following is a detailed description of the enrollment priorities and procedures. These are divided into two areas: A) Families currently affiliated with the UM Children’s Centers, and B) Families on the waiting list.

**ENROLLMENT PRIORITY:**

**A) Families currently affiliated with the UM Children’s Centers:**

**1. Children whose parents are regularly employed at Towsley Children’s House.**

These children will automatically be enrolled in conjunction with the work schedule of the employee. The child's placement in a class is guaranteed even if the class is oversubscribed.

**2. Children presently attending the UMCC or TCH who will continue to be age-eligible.**

3. Children presently enrolled in the Centers are guaranteed a space in that same Center in the forthcoming school year in an age-appropriate classroom.

**\*\*\* NOTE: Enrollment is not guaranteed for the UMCC kindergarten class. Enrollment for the UMCC kindergarten is a separate process from the preschool sessions and is announced each year in January.**

**4. Children of families on leave.**

When a family goes on leave within the school year (minimum of 3 months) and wishes to return within the same school year, their child is assured of the next opening in an age appropriate class if 50% of the tuition is paid during the time of absence. With full payment of tuition the child's placement is secured in the original class.

**5. Siblings of children currently enrolled in the Towsley Children’s House:**

A sibling of a currently enrolled child or former enrolled child is given priority on the waitlist.

**6. Children attending the “sister” Children’s Center:**

Children enrolled in the UMCC or TCH who wish to transfer to the other Center have priority for transferring to the “sister” program. (for example, if a child is currently enrolled at UMCC, and the family wishes to switch to TCH, they have priority, and vice-versa).

**B) Families on the Waiting List**

**Families currently affiliated with the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor campus have priority over non-UM affiliated families on the waiting list in the following order:**

**7. UM Priority: CCAMPUS Pell Grant Families**

Families who are eligible for the CCAMPUS Pell Grant have priority over other families who are currently affiliated with the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

**9. UM Families currently affiliated with the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor campus:**

Families who are currently affiliated with the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, have priority on the waiting list. This includes students, staff and faculty.

**10. Non-UM-affiliated Families:**

Families who do not have a current UM affiliation are considered “Non-UM Families” .

**11. Underrepresented groups:**

If after all of the above priorities are taken into consideration, a class with an opening appears to have a great imbalance of gender (less than 1/3 of either gender) or an under-representation of minority groups, children of those underrepresented groups may be admitted out of the sequence of the waiting list order for the purpose of correcting the imbalance. These names would still be determined on a first-come, first-serve age-eligibility basis.

**12. Miscellaneous:**

a) **Twins.**

In the event of twins applying for class spaces, twins will be entered as individual names on the waiting list, and responded to on an individual basis.

b) **Readmission of families on leave.**

If a family has been on leave (according to the previous definition) and wishes to enroll their child/ren for the following September, their child/ren has(have) the same status as a currently enrolled child, provided the entire age group does not then become oversubscribed.

c) **Achieving full enrollment:**

In the event that either Center is unable to subscribe classes from the above mentioned groups (waiting list eligible and siblings), a child could be admitted to the Center chronologically, starting with those closest to the designated age-group for a session. This range will not move beyond a two-month interval (i.e. if the age-group is 2 years 6 months, the lowest age to be considered will be 2 years 4 months, and this lowest age will be reached in descending order of birthdates. These names would still be determined on a first-come, first-serve age eligibility basis.

**For Currently Enrolled Children and Siblings: REGISTRATION**

Each year in late winter, parents will be given registration information for children currently enrolled in the programs. This registration will include information for processing children for the following school year including information regarding the registration fee and tuition-applicable deposit.

NOTE: If you wish to have a NON-Attending SIBLING enroll, you must complete a separate *Sibling Registration Form*, even if the sibling is on the waiting list.

**Agreement to Policies and Procedures**

All parents enrolled in the UM Children’s Centers will be asked to sign a statement agreeing to the policies and procedures in the Parent Handbook.

**Discontinuation of Enrollment Policy**

Lack of compliance with the UM Children’s Centers policies and procedures as stated in the Parent Handbook, may necessitate discontinuation of enrollment within the programs.

**Tuition Applicable Deposits:** *(See Payment Policies and Early Withdrawal Procedures sections)*

In order to secure a child's space for the upcoming school year, a tuition-applicable registration deposit must be paid. Further details are indicated in the previous sections.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION (See Payment Policies for further information)

- **Registration fees are not refundable.**
- The annual registration fee for families with Triplets, Quadruplets, or Quintuplets shall not exceed the registration fee for twins (two children).
- Families eligible for financial assistance who wish to make a payment plan for their registration fees may discuss this with the Director.

**Early Withdrawal Procedures**

Occasionally, a family must leave the program prior to the end of the school year. A parent must complete an early withdrawal form and submit it to the Director to indicate dates for leaving the program. (These forms are available through the Secretary or Director). Strict attention is paid to the specific deadline dates.

**Early Withdrawal Policy**

A parent may withdraw a child from Towsley Children's House and be exempted from the remainder of the payments for the twelve (12) month year when following the parameters below:

1. **Late August and before March 1<sup>st</sup>:** *(through the last day of February)*

**A parent must complete the Early Withdrawal Form and submit to the Director  
A minimum of six weeks prior to the requested last date** (not including Center Closed dates);

*Note: A child may still remain enrolled, but notification of future withdrawal is required by the last day of February.*

2. **However, as of March 1<sup>st</sup> and through August:**

**A parent will be required to complete all payments for the remainder of the school year through August**, as stated in the original financial agreement with the Towsley Children's House.

## Payment Policies

### Tuition

Tuition Payments are due prior to service rendered and payment in full is due on the first day of each month according to the annual tuition schedule. Tuition statements are emailed or mailed directly to each family, on a monthly basis prior to the tuition due date. Payment of fees may be made by personal check, money order, cashier's check or UM Direct Payroll Deduction. Payments may be mailed directly to the office:

UM Work/Life Resource Center  
Rm. 2072 Admin. Service Bldg.  
1009 Greene St.  
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

or submitted at the designated tuition box in the Center office. Billing questions may be addressed to the Center Director or the Billing Coordinator.

**Note: No cash deposits can be accepted at the Center.**

### Late Tuition Payments

Tuition payments received after the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month (i.e. March 10<sup>th</sup>, April 10<sup>th</sup>, etc.) are considered late payments and will be charged a late fee on the upcoming monthly tuition bill. A late fee will be charged for no payment or partial payment.

### Financial Assistance

Following are several available sources for families who may be eligible for financial assistance. For more information families may contact the Center Director.

#### UM Children's Centers Scholarship Program:

The UM Children's Centers have had a long-standing commitment to families who may demonstrate financial need through the support of the Children's Centers scholarship program. There are partial tuition financial assistance programs for eligible families who are enrolled at either Children's Center and for UM-affiliated and Non UM-affiliated families.

*Note: Families who are students applying for the CC Scholarship must first have completed their application process for the Child Care Tuition Grant (CCTG) program to determine eligibility. This information must appear on the CC Scholarship application. CCTG award dollars will be deducted from the eligible amount determined by the CC Scholarship, and if remaining need, this amount will be supported by the CC Scholarship.*

UM –Affiliated Families: Child Care Subsidy (CCS): Undergraduate and Graduate Students enrolled at UM may be eligible to receive the Child Care Subsidy through the Office of Financial Aid. (Families eligible for the CCS must apply for this source PRIOR to applying for the CCTG).

UM-Affiliated Families: Child Care Tuition Grant (CCTG): Supported by the Provost's Office, the UM offers a discount to families who are enrolled in one of the four UM Ann Arbor Campus programs. Eligibility is determined using Washtenaw County Housing and Urban Development (HUD) guidelines. *Note: Families who are students applying for the CCTG must first have completed their application process for the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) program to determine eligibility. This information must appear on the CCTG application. CCS award dollars will be deducted from the CCTG amount, and if remaining need, this amount will be supported by the CCTG Program.*

Non-UM Affiliated Families: The UM Children's Centers (UMCC and UMCCWF) have a scholarship program available to families who are eligible according to Washtenaw County Housing and Urban Development Guidelines (HUD).

Change in Status Families receiving tuition assistance whose family size or income change are responsible for updating their application forms in a timely manner. The revised information will be reviewed to assure that the support matches the level of eligibility. Please see the Director to make any changes in status, or with any further questions.

**UM Employees: Payroll Deduction:**

A program is available for all UM employees utilizing UM-related children's programs, whereby the tuition for the child's care may be taken as a payroll deduction. The UM transfers funds directly from the employee to the Children's Centers account.

This arrangement must be made directly by each employee by completing a written form indicating the UM Center information, as well as tuition amounts and further payroll related information. For a Payroll deduction to be discontinued, this process must also be initiated by each individual employee. Further information regarding this service may be obtained from the UM Payroll office.

**Flexible Spending Account:**

A program is available by employers whereby expenditures related to Dependent Care may be non-taxed. Employees must initiate enrollment in this program each year of their participation. Please submit any forms involved in Flexible Spending Accounts to the Center office for processing by the Center Director.

**Registration Fee**

In order to secure a child's space in either program at the time of enrollment, a non-tuition applicable, non-refundable registration fee is charged. Registration fees are not refundable.

**Parent Late Pick-Up: Daily Fines**

The Centers understand that unforeseen circumstances may occasionally prevent a parent from picking up his/her child on time. If a parent knows they will be late on any given day, they are expected to make arrangements in advance to have their child picked up by an authorized adult, and inform the Center. Parents who are habitually late inconvenience the Centers staff, as well as cause concern for their child.

Fines will be assessed for late daily arrivals to pick-up children at the end of the session. Pending emergency circumstances (as described), reaching a third late fee will result in the termination of services indicated by the original signed agreement.

**Advanced Tuition**

In February of each year, the Center begins enrolling for the upcoming fall. A *tuition applicable deposit* is required to reserve a currently enrolled child in a space for the future school year. This advanced tuition deposit is tuition applicable for last month tuition bill.

This advanced registration process allows the Centers to assure a space to currently enrolled children for the upcoming school year, as well as to accurately assess the number of spaces available for our waitlisted families to enroll in the programs.

### **Outstanding Balance/Tuition**

If at any time the tuition arrears for any family exceeds one-month (four-weeks) equivalent, the outstanding balance must be paid by the first day of the fifth week. During the month of arrears, the Billing Coordinator and Director will make every effort to contact the family regarding the situation.

Failure to pay the outstanding balance will result in the termination of services.

### **Safety and Security**

#### **Release Authorization for a Child**

In compliance with State of Michigan rules, the Center may only release a child to the parents or guardian or an adult authorized by the parent or guardian. An authorized adult is one who is designated on each child's emergency card (*Child Information Card*). Any time another adult will be picking up a child, **the Center must have prior written parental authorization. The Center staff will not release a child to anyone without previous written notification by a parent or legal guardian.**

Please be reminded that it is the standard procedure for Towsley Children's House to require photo identification for any individual unknown to the staff prior to releasing a child from the program. This is our routine practice and any authorized individuals who are being sent to the Center by a parent should be prepared to show photo identification to the staff.

**Severe Weather Schedule**

UMCC and TCH (Towsley Children’s House) operate on an abbreviated schedule on severe weather days, as follows:

Center:	Severe Weather Schedule:
UMCC 400 N. Ingalls	*MORNING SESSIONS:----- BEGIN at 9:30 a.m.—PICK-UP: 12:00-12:15 pm *AFTERNOON SESSIONS:----- BEGIN at 1:15 p.m.—PICK-UP: 3:45 - 4:00 pm. *Children who attend full-day:-----BEGIN at 9:30 a.m.-- PICK-UP: 3:45- 4:00 p.m. (For children attending full-day, lunch would happen as usual) *NO AUXILIARY SERVICES PROVIDED (Early Bird/Lunch Bunch or Late Bird)
TCH 2800 Plymouth	ABBREVIATED SCHEDULE-----OPEN: 9:30 a.m.---CLOSE: 4 p.m.
*In the event that the University of Michigan should close due to severe weather, the Centers would close.*	

*Please note that this represents a change from previous years in which the UM campus programs would close in accordance with the severe weather closings of Ann Arbor Public Schools.*

When severe weather occurs during the business day, we ask that parents please allow additional time to travel to the centers for timely pick-up at the end of the day and a safe drive home. An early dismissal time may be announced by the Centers and parents could be contacted and requested to accommodate an early pick-up, depending on the severity of the weather.

If the arrival of a staff member becomes delayed for reasons beyond their control, your patience will be appreciated while waiting for the staff member to arrive to the building. On severe weather days, each Center Director will be planning strategically with staff, to provide the arriving children with optimal class ratios and groupings, and to maintain the routines and schedules of a ‘typical’ day’ in the program. We understand that some families and staff may find it difficult to get in during severe weather. We do not wish to jeopardize the safety of anyone and trust the judgment of each individual to determine whether to come to campus.

How to know if the Centers are operating on a severe weather schedule:

\*When there are local news announcements for school closings for severe weather in Ann Arbor Public Schools, the severe weather schedule will be in effect EXCEPT when the Ann Arbor Public Schools are closed due to low temperatures, the Centers will remain open and conduct indoor activities for the children.

\*When Ann Arbor Public Schools may not be in session (i.e. conference days/scheduled vacation), and there is severe weather (excluding low temperatures)in the area, the severe weather schedule will be in effect;

\*The Centers will announce on their respective answering machines if the severe weather schedule is in effect.

\*The two campus children’s centers will declare severe weather schedules in coordination with one another.

## Notes for Families

- Please do not leave children unattended in the car.
- Walk your child all the way to their classroom to drop off directly to the teachers and to sign-in.
- Please be sure to sign-in and out every day.

## The First Days

The first few weeks at the Center are considered a time of adjustment for both parents and children. Many factors, such as a child's age, family experiences and past group experience influences the rate of adjustment. Some parents will find they can leave their child immediately, while others will feel more comfortable staying for a few moments at the beginning of each session for a couple of weeks. The teachers will have suggestions as to how to ease each child into the group and make the first few days as smooth as possible.

## Observation/Visitors to the Centers

*Parents are WELCOME in the Center at any time!* Parents are welcome to observe their child/ren through the classroom windows whenever they like. Please be aware that your child or their classmates may notice you stand there. Parents are also encouraged to participate in their child's classroom activities (e.g. field trips, parties) through prearranged scheduling with the teacher. Family celebrations, holidays and traditions are encouraged to be shared.

Visitors are to report to the office, or check in with a staff member when arriving for an observation or a visit.

## Communication

### Daily communication

Daily communication with your child's teachers allows for information to be shared. This information is pertinent to both you and the staff in better understanding your child. Working in partnership and communicating regularly can achieve mutual understanding and greater consistency. Any information that parents may give to the staff regarding changes in a child's normal routine is appreciated. These changes often affect a child's behavior, and if the staff is aware of these changes, greater sensitivity can then occur.

Since pick-up and drop-off times are always busy for both the teacher and the children, it is important that information be communicated in writing as well as verbally. This will assure that important details are conveyed as accurately as possible.

Parents may call the Center at any time to inquire about their children. If a parent requests a specific phone call with a teacher, it is advisable to pre-arrange such calls during the teacher's daily *non-contact* time (so as not to interrupt their classroom, child-contact time). If the teacher is unavailable at any particular time, calls will be returned as soon as possible.

### Parent mailboxes

Each child's family will be assigned a Center mailbox located in his/her classroom. Information regarding Center events, activities, policies and other announcements will be placed in the mailbox. It is your responsibility to check your child's mailbox regularly as it is an important means of distributing information.

The Center request that these mailboxes be used for CENTER RELATED CORRESPONDENCE ONLY. Because the mailbox space is limited and there is a variety of

mail between teachers, researchers and the center, it is requested that this space be utilized for Center related correspondence only.

Further, social correspondence may be a source of hurt feelings if some are included and others are not. Sensitivity to this matter is appreciated.

### **Parent-Teacher conferences**

Parent-Teacher conferences provide an opportunity for parents and teachers to share information about each child in a private meeting time. These conferences are held twice yearly. At any time, either you or your child's teacher may schedule additional conferences.

### **Parent Handbook**

The Parent Handbook provides comprehensive information regarding policies and procedures for the Centers. Parents are asked to read the complete handbook and agree to its policies and procedures when they enroll in the programs.

### **Information for the Classrooms**

Each classroom teacher will provide parents with information pertaining to his/her session. Following are many general areas of information that are meaningful for all participants.

#### **Clothing guidelines**

- It is important that your child come to school dressed appropriately for the weather:  
Winter clothing includes a coat, hat or hood, snow pants, boots, and mittens.  
Summer clothing includes sunscreen, hat, shorts, and play shoes.  
Since outdoor activities are scheduled daily, it is important to dress your child appropriately.
- Safety recommendations include choosing clothing that does not contain drawstrings (i.e. for hoods, etc.).
- For safety purposes, children will not be allowed to ride the tricycles while barefoot or wearing sandals or flip-flops (open-toed shoes), and instead shoes covering the toes need to be provided.
- All clothing likely to be removed should be clearly labeled with your child's name using an indelible marker, to help identify their belongings and prevent mix-ups.
- An extra change of clothing is often requested by the classroom teacher. Be sure to mark these clothes with your child's name, and consider the seasons.
- Clothing may become soiled as a natural process of play. For example, even though smocks are available for painting not all children will wear them or if they do, paint may end up on a sleeve, or pants. Therefore, it is suggested that children are sent to school in something that is easily washed, or that a parent will not mind having soiled through the sometimes 'messy' process of play.

#### **Outside play**

Since outdoor activities are scheduled daily, it is important to dress your child/ren appropriately. Outdoor activities are an integral part of the program providing children with the opportunity to develop large motor skills and an awareness of their world. Teachers consider the

wind chill factor and heat index and temperature when deciding whether to go outside and how long to stay outside.

### **Sunscreen and Sun-block Application**

It is the family's responsibility to apply sunscreen to their child before s/he comes to school and provide permission for program staff to reapply sunscreen or sun block with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher to exposed skin to full-day children in the afternoon and, if needed, to half-day children. (See Appendix)

Suggestions for the minimizing of exposure to the sun include wearing hats, visors, shirts with sleeves, and long shorts or pants.

### **Water Play**

To temper summer heat, a sprinkler or hose may be used to provide water play for the children. This type of water play is in compliance with the recommendations of the State of Michigan Licensing Rules.

### **Allergies**

Children's allergies of any type including drug or food allergies or dietary restrictions, must be noted on the written emergency information, and also communicated to staff by the parent/s. In addition, the Individualized Medical Application Plan (IMAP) form must be completed by families for each child with special health care needs or food allergies or special nutrition needs. The child's health provider gives the program an individualized care plan that is prepared in consultation with family members and specialists involved in the child's care.

The Center may have certain food restrictions depending upon the community of children at any given time. This information will be distributed to families in writing by each Director each year.

The program protects children with food allergies from contact with the problem food. The program asks families of a child with food allergies to give consent and then, if consent is given, posts information about that child's food allergy in the food preparation area and in the areas of the facility the child uses as a visual reminder to all those who interact with the child during the program day.

### **Birthday celebrations**

Each classroom teacher will have guidelines and suggestions for celebrating children's birthdays in the classroom. We do ask that no outside food comes into the building due to allergy concerns. Please notify your child's teacher prior to a birthday, to coordinate plans.

Families may also wish to bring a new book to donate to the center library. Children in the past have enjoyed giving a book to the Center as a part of their birthday celebration. Then we make a notation on the inside cover of the book that it is a birthday book donation. The children love to see this information, that a child from the past gave a book to their Center.

### **Toys from home**

All classrooms are equipped with toys and equipment appropriate to the developmental stages of the children. As a general rule, therefore, toys from home should not be sent to school unless the teacher has requested them. Together, teachers and parents will consider each child's unique needs and circumstances and create a plan if a toy or object is to be included at school.

The exception to this is in the infant and toddler classrooms since very young children may need the security of a familiar toy or object when away from home for the first time.

**No play guns, weapons or similar violent toys are permitted at the Center.**

### **Field trips**

During the school year teachers arrange a variety of field trips as an enriching part of the program. Parents will be informed in writing in advance of all planned field trips. Often these trips are within walking distance of the Center. In other cases children may use the University bus system for transportation, and/or parent volunteer drivers. Seatbelt use is required in all parent driven vehicles. All parents will be notified in advance of each trip. Occasionally children will take spontaneous supervised neighborhood walks without prior notification. The *Child Information Card* (emergency card) grants permission for a child to participate in field trips with her/his class.

### **Holiday celebrations**

The Towsley Children's House recognizes that Ann Arbor has a pluralistic culture with many different religious practices and beliefs. Discussion of religious holidays and practices are on a nonsectarian basis. As a basic policy, the Center does not present material that fosters or hinders religious beliefs among children. Holiday celebrations are developed around being compassionate toward other human beings. The Center welcomes families, students and staff to share their family customs and traditions.

### **Parent Participation**

Parent participation is welcomed within the Center. Information is distributed to parents regarding involvement with particular classrooms and involvement on parent committees.

### **Parent Library**

The Towsley Children's House maintains a resource of information for parents as a center-library. Parents are welcome to borrow books from this library. Please be timely in the return of all borrowed materials.

### **Video Policy**

The Towsley Children's House attempts to meet the varied needs and interests of all children by providing a wide variety of experiences for them during the hours they are with us. Staff are constantly on the lookout for resources, ideas and materials that will provide for the continually changing energy levels, interests and interactions that evolve in the classroom. We believe that it is appropriate for the center to be mindful of technology and to incorporate experiences into the program that provide extended educational opportunities for children.

Just as listening centers, and computers are used to enrich the experiences of children, the use of videos in the classroom is another form of technology from which teachers may select. Considerable care is given to the content of those videos that are part of the Center library. All

videos are screened for their length, content and relevance to children. Staff recognize that videos serve as valuable supplements to the activities planned, for they enhance learning exposure in areas such as literature, language arts, music and movement, and provide yet another opportunity to increase background knowledge in specific thematic areas. Additionally, videos provide opportunities for the development of memory skills and recall as follow up discussions take place with the children.

It is the policy of the Towsley Children's House that the frequency of video use will be thoughtfully considered and conservatively used. When a video is shown in a classroom, children will have the opportunity to choose viewing or participate in some other non-disruptive activity. Staff are selected because of their educational training and professional status, and staff are expected to consider age appropriateness, relevancy, and the need for pacing the activity level within each classroom, recognizing that there are times when children need the opportunity to relax, enjoy and mentally engage in a quiet learning experience.

### **Smoking Prohibited**

According to State and University guidelines, and in compliance with NAEYC Accreditation criteria, smoking is prohibited in all licensed child care centers and child caring institutions, and the facility and outdoor areas are entirely smoke free. The ban includes the grounds and related buildings of covered facilities. This law was enacted to protect and promote children's health by reducing their exposure to the toxic substances in environmental tobacco smoke.

### **Pesticide Notification: Integrated Pest Management Program**

As part of the University of Michigan Children's Centers pest management program, pesticides are occasionally applied by the University. Information is provided in advance prior to any pesticide application made to the center grounds and building. Advance notice will be given in two ways:

- 1) A notice posted on the entrance to the premises;
- 2) An email or phone call providing information

In the event that a parent wishes to be notified by first-class mail, prior written notice of this request must be given to the Center office staff so that the mail is postmarked 3 days before the application.

## **Guidance and Discipline Policy**

The basis of the guidance and discipline policy within the Center is to provide support and encouragement of positive behavior. Since children generally desire positive attention from the adults around them, negative behavior is greatly diminished when those adults provide a supportive, nurturing environment.

Our classroom ratios and group sizes allow for the teachers to provide small group interactions and direct supervision. Transitions are purposefully planned and guided to best support children. Due to our ratios and group sizes the teachers are able to individualize their response to a child's behavior in relation to the individual and the situation.

For children with persistent, serious, challenging behaviors, we have the teachers, families, and other professionals work as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success.

- Teachers observe child/ren carefully to determine possible causes for difficult behavior.
- Teachers then teach child/ren new skills rather than focus on the difficult behavior or discipline.
- Teachers guide and support children self-regulation to manage their own behavior.
- Teachers focus on teaching the child social, communication, and emotional skills and use environmental modifications, activity modifications and other teaching strategies to support the child's appropriate behavior.

Teaching staff help children manage their behavior in the following ways;

- by guiding and supporting children to persist when frustrated
- to play cooperatively with other children
- to use language to communicate needs
- to learn turn taking skills
- to gain control of physical impulses
- to express negative emotions in ways that do not harm others or themselves
- to use problem-solving techniques
- to learn about self and others.
- to become independent from adult support.

Parents will be informed personally and privately the same day if a child is hurt. Parents will be given a copy of our incident form.

## **Center-wide Events**

### **Parent Education Programs**

The Children's Centers conduct programs periodically on topics of general interest to parents. Directors plan the topics based on input from parents year to year. Parents from UMCC and TCH may attend these programs.

### **Annual School Photos**

Each year, in the fall, the Center arranges with a local photographer to take school photographs of the children. Participation is voluntary. You will be notified when the photographer has been scheduled and of the cost of the photo packages.

### **Annual Fundraiser**

Each year the Center sponsors annual fundraisers. Raising funds on behalf of the programs assists in providing support for various areas such as Children's centers scholarships, enhancing playground and classroom equipment, and other purposes. Parent participation in these efforts will be coordinated by the Director.

### **Center-wide Picnic**

On the first Tuesday of June the Centers hold their annual center-wide picnic. All families and alumni of both Centers are invited to attend. This is a traditional social event.

### **Center Newsletters**

The Center has a newsletter providing the parent community with information regarding the program. Newsletters are available on our website. [www.childcare.umich.edu](http://www.childcare.umich.edu)

## **Afterward**

The Parent Handbook is intended to provide the basic information and orientation of the Towsley Children's House, policies and procedures.

If you have any specific questions or need more detailed explanations at any time, please contact your child's teachers or the Director.