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 our 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 are 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
U-M Towsley Children’s House

Revised: April 2017
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PARENT AGREEMENT TO POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:
Please note: each family must sign and return the Policy Acknowledgement (part of the permissions form) at the time their child enrolls, agreeing to the policies and procedures related to the U-M Early Childhood Education and Care programs and found in this handbook. The permissions form will be part of the enrollment process.
Mission Statement
The University of Michigan Early Childhood 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 receives 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 lifelong 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 f 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.
Core Values

Community
We foster relationships between children, adults, and families to create an inclusive environment where individuality and differences are embraced.

Play
We believe play is essential to children’s growth, development, and understanding of the world around them.

Nature
We provide children with connections to nature to experience all of Earth’s wonders.

Inquiry
We create an environment where children are encouraged to ask questions, investigate, collect information and represent their understanding.

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.

Program Overview
Towsley Children’s House is a program serving children from 3 months to 5 years old with full-day programming. We also provide a school age summer camp program for children that have completed kindergarten through fifth grade. 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. Healthy snacks and a hot lunch are provided for children once they are eating solid foods. Parents are welcome to join their child for this meal.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Class Size</th>
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<tr>
<td>Infants</td>
<td>3- 18 months</td>
<td>9 children</td>
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<tr>
<td>Toddlers</td>
<td>19 months- 2 ½ years</td>
<td>12 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Preschool</td>
<td>2 ½ - 3 ½ years</td>
<td>16 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>3 ½ - 5 years</td>
<td>18-21 children</td>
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The Multi-Age Preschool Level Classroom

The multi-age classroom is designed to foster acceptance of differing abilities and ages. It allows the children to experience leadership and nurturing skills and creates a real-life community where children grow together at their own rate and ability level. In Evergreen, Maple, Oak and Sycamore the children remain in the same classroom from year to year until they leave the program.

Curriculum

Alongside a play-based curriculum, TCH incorporates The Project Approach to guide learning and development. The Project Approach refers to a set of teaching strategies that enable teachers to guide children through in-depth studies of real-world topics. Projects have a complex but flexible framework where teaching and learning are seen as an interactive process. When teachers implement the Approach successfully, children can feel highly motivated and actively involved in their own learning and produce work of high quality.

A project, by definition, is an in-depth investigation of real-world topic. Projects have a beginning, middle and end. The study may be carried out with an entire class or with small groups of children. Projects typically do not constitute the whole educational program; instead, teachers use them alongside other approaches. Topics of study are based on children’s interests, the curriculum, things happening in the environment, etc.

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.

Research and Training

A primary mission of the U-M Early Childhood Education and Care 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 programs 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 ([https://sites.google.com/a/umich.edu/u-m-early-childhood-education-and-care-research-and-training/](https://sites.google.com/a/umich.edu/u-m-early-childhood-education-and-care-research-and-training/)) including forms and procedures.

Research Procedures

The U-M Early Childhood Education and Care programs have developed careful procedures regarding children's participation in these research programs. Each project is evaluated by a U-M Internal Review Board for approval, and then approved by the Research/Training Coordinator.

U-M Early Childhood Education and Care programs utilize an active consent procedure. This requires parents to give an affirmative statement allowing their 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 form indicating whether they consent to or decline permission for their child to participate in the project. Then, even if a parent has signed an affirmative consent, participation by each child is completely voluntary and children are never
**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 mail folder.

All researchers are required to spend time 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 programs are typically 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 programs are posted on the bulletin board in the office area. Questions regarding any particular study should be directed to the Research/Training Coordinator.

**Supporting Inclusion**  
NAEYC: 1.E.01

Being inclusive is central to our philosophy and mission to provide individualized care. There are children with special needs in each center. Within each center, each classroom provides curriculum activities for children that are informed by our routine child assessments, and it is customary to include all children in all activities at a level that corresponds with their individual abilities. A child with special needs is not excluded or singled out in the curriculum planning process; rather, the curriculum is planned by assessing where each child in the group is and deciding what activities and teacher scaffolding are necessary to promote any given child’s developmental progress. Likewise, all children at our center are placed in classrooms according to chronological, not developmental, age.

If teachers and families consider that a child may benefit from evaluation from outside consultants, a protocol has been established for making the determination.

If a child is working with outside specialists such as speech, physical, or occupational therapists, our teachers will typically request written permission from the family to contact the specialists to discuss the child’s goals in therapy, at home, and in the classroom. We find that this family-specialist-teacher collaboration model best promotes the achievement of developmental goals. Specialists such as speech, physical, or occupational therapists are able to conduct sessions in a child’s classroom, if desired by the family and therapists.

**Confidentiality Statement**

The U-M Early Childhood Education and Care programs recognize and support each child’s and family’s right to confidentiality. Teaching teams will discuss and record observations and developmental accomplishments for a child as a part of the assessment process. To assure that information about each child is confidential, the program’s teaching and administrative staff:

- Share a child’s assessment only with the child’s parents or legal guardian.
- Maintain each child’s file containing health and assessment information in a locked file in the center’s office. These files can only be accessed by the center’s teaching and administrative staff or the child’s parents or legal guardians.
Parents or legal guardians must complete and sign the form *Consent for Release of Confidential Information* to allow the teacher or director to discuss or share information about their child with another designated person. A copy can be picked up from the office.

**Quality Assurance**

Towsley 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 U-M Early Childhood Education and Care 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.

**Non-Discriminatory Policy**

The U-M Towsley Children’s House, as part of the University of Michigan, complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding nondiscrimination and affirmative action. The University of Michigan is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on basis of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, height, weight, or veteran status in employment, educational programs and activities, and admissions.

**State Licensing**

The U-M Towsley Children’s House is licensed by the State of Michigan and operates 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.

**Negotiating Difficulties**

If a problem arises we are interested in and committed to responding to any concerns. Please inform staff of your concern when children are not present. Confrontations in front of children are not acceptable. 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; 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 hiring; 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 Director**
The Program Director provides support to the Director on any number of projects and tasks needed to operate the program. The Program Director 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 U-M Early Childhood Education and Care 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 U-M Early Childhood Education and Care 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 snacks and 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. A printed copy of the menu is posted in the center and an e-mail is sent to families with the monthly menu attached.

Teaching Staff

The classroom teaching staff consists of teachers, associate teachers, student staff and psychology students. At least two professional teachers, sometimes three depending on the group size and age of the children, are on with children along with student support. This model allows for: a low child to adult ratio, more one-on-one interactions, closer social/emotional and behavior support, and small group activities.

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 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.

Associate Teacher

The Associate Teachers are responsible for teaching 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 U-M Early Childhood Education and Care programs are laboratory schools 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, Education and Nursing. We work in collaborations with neighboring universities and colleges who place students at Towsley for early childhood practicum purposes. These courses are field placements for students interested in the growth and development of children.

Each academic semester the Psychology 307 practicum “Directed Experiences with Children” is offered through the U-M Early Childhood Education and Care programs as a laboratory class 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 U-M Early Childhood Education and Care 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.

**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, Blood borne 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 program and occur throughout the year including attendance at Early Childhood Conferences, and In-service opportunities within the routine school year for all U-M Early Childhood Education and Care programs. Participation by the teaching staff is organized in advance, thoughtfully and strategically by program Directors so as to maintain the consistency of the classrooms for the children.

**Enrollment Policies and Procedures**

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 program. 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. Families can access the waitlist application online at [http://hr.umich.edu/childcare/application/application.php](http://hr.umich.edu/childcare/application/application.php).

*Please note that children need not be toilet trained to be eligible to enroll in the program for any age group.*

In all matters of enrollment:
- A family is expected to act in compliance with U-M Early Childhood Education and Care programs policies and procedures (for example, timely payment of fees, cooperation with all program 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.

Enrollment Priority
1. Siblings of children currently enrolled at TCH.
2. Children currently enrolled at a U-M Early Childhood Education and Care program who want to enroll at a different U-M Early Childhood Education and Care program.
3. Families currently affiliated with the University of Michigan: This includes students, staff, and faculty.
4. Non-U-M-Affiliated Families: Please note: Families who do not have a current U-M affiliation are considered “Non-U-M Families”.

Registration Fee and Security Deposit
In order to secure a child’s space at the time of enrollment a non-refundable registration fee is charged. The security deposit, also due at this time, will be refunded 60 days after the child’s last day of attendance provided that the withdrawal policies were followed.

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.

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.

Discontinuation of Enrollment Policy
The program may terminate your child’s enrollment under the following circumstances:

1. Non-payment for child care services and/or lack of adherence to tuition payment policies.
2. Parents falsify information on enrollment forms or otherwise knowingly falsify information.
3. Parents do not agree or do not follow and comply with the policies set forth in this Handbook.
4. Lack of parental cooperation with the program’s efforts to resolve differences and/or to meet the child’s needs through parent/staff meetings or conferences.
5. Inappropriate or abusive behavior and/or verbal abuse or threats by parents, relatives, guardians or other parties toward the program staff, other parents or children.
6. Inability of parents to deal in a professional manner with program personnel or other parents and children in the program.
7. The continued enrollment of the child poses a risk to the health and/or safety of other children, parents or center staff members or continued enrollment of the child constitutes an undue burden on the program’s resources.
PROCEDURES FOR TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT
Step 1: If appropriate given the circumstances, the Center Director will provide the Parents a verbal warning notifying them of the circumstance above that warrants termination and providing them an opportunity to correct the situation.
Step 2: If the parent fails to correct the situation in a timely manner or the circumstances warrant immediate termination, the Center Director will notify the Parents in writing, as well as provide the opportunity for a face-to-face meeting, that the child’s enrollment will be terminated.

Under most circumstances the Center will provide four weeks written notice of enrollment termination. However, where particular circumstances warrant, the Center reserves the right to terminate enrollment immediately or less than four weeks’ notice.

Agreement to Policies and Procedures
All parents enrolled in the U-M Early Childhood Education and Care programs will be asked to sign a statement agreeing to the policies and procedures in the Family Handbook.

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 Administrative Assistant or Director). Strict attention is paid to the specific deadline dates.

Withdrawal Policy
When the time comes for you to withdraw your child from the program, please complete the “Withdrawal from Program” form available on the parent documents website and at the front desk. Upon receiving this notice, the center will begin the process of filling the vacancy, so extensions to the date listed on the withdrawal form may not be available.

Your security deposit, if any, will be refunded if the following are met:

1. Written notice is submitted at least 6 weeks prior to your child’s last day of attendance
2. Your account balance is $0.

Refunds are processed monthly and will be mailed.

Payment Policies

Tuition
Tuition Payments are due prior to service rendered and payment in full is due on the last day of each month according to the annual tuition schedule. Tuition statements are emailed 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, ACH or student account.

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

Automated (ACH) Transfer from your bank account
This option is available to all families with a bank account. It provides the most convenience as the Early Childhood Education and Care Centers process the payment directly. After you submit the authorization form and a voided check, we take care of the rest. Your child’s tuition and other fees are withdrawn automatically from your bank account on the last day of each month. Authorization forms are available at the center and on the parent website.

University Student Account
This option is available to all U-M affiliated families (faculty, staff and student). Payments will be processed through the University Student Accounts office. You will be able to make payments to your account via electronic check, directly to University Teller Services with a check, money order or cash. If you do not currently have an account, we will create it for you- all we need is your UM ID number.

Processing Fee
Due to the cost involved in processing payments there is a $10 per month processing fee for payments made at the center. Please note that there is no processing fee for initial enrollment payments (registration fee, tuition deposit, and tuition due during your first month of enrollment).

Late Tuition Payments
Tuition payments received after the due date each month (i.e. the last business day of each month for the next billing cycle) are considered late payments and will be charged a late fee on the next tuition bill. A late fee will be charged for no payment or partial payment.

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.

Financial Assistance
A number of financial assistance options are available for families who qualify. Please visit http://hr.umich.edu/worklife/childcare/moneymatters.html for the most up-to-date information.

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.

Outstanding Balance/Tuition
If at any time the tuition in 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.

**Health and Illness Policies**

**Health and Wellness**
The policies and practices of the U-M 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.

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. Parents will receive an incident report at pick-up the day of the injury. 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 wellbeing 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 degrees or greater and another symptom is present, the parent or authorized person will be alerted to pick up the child. Below are some of the other 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 a second temperature reading is also 100 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 100 degrees, exclusion from the center may be necessary, and the parent will be notified. If a child’s temperature is measured at 100 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bacterial meningitis</th>
<th>Mumps</th>
<th>Chicken pox</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pertussis</td>
<td>Fifth disease</td>
<td>Purulent Conjunctivitis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giardiasis</td>
<td>Impetigo</td>
<td>Hemophilus Influenza Type B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis A virus</td>
<td>Respiratory Illness</td>
<td>Roseola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis B virus</td>
<td>Rubella</td>
<td>Herpetic gingivostomatitis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis Non-A</td>
<td>Scabies</td>
<td>Influenza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis Non-B</td>
<td>Shigellosis</td>
<td>Shingles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strep Throat</td>
<td>Measles</td>
<td>Thrush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mouth sores with drooling</td>
<td>Tuberculosis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 2008 by the National Academy of Pediatrics.

**Blood Borne Pathogens (BBP)**
The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) have issued a rule on blood borne pathogens. Blood borne 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 blood borne 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 is trained in first aid and CPR procedures annually.

**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.

**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.

**Resources:**
- U-M Kids Care at Home [http://hr.umich.edu/worklife/kidskare/](http://hr.umich.edu/worklife/kidskare/)
- Additional Child Care Resources: [http://hr.umich.edu/worklife/childcare/childcareref.html](http://hr.umich.edu/worklife/childcare/childcareref.html)
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/schedules/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/index.html).

**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 29 months and under, the physical must be updated every year.*

   *For children older than 29 months, the physical must be updated every 2 years.*

3. **Child Information Record (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 RECORD card is returned.**

---

### Required Immunizations for Michigan Childcare/Preschool Attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age → Vaccine**↓</th>
<th>Birth through 1 month</th>
<th>2 months through 3 months</th>
<th>4 months through 5 months</th>
<th>6 months through 15 months</th>
<th>16 months through 18 months</th>
<th>19 months through 4 years</th>
<th>5 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>1 dose DTaP</td>
<td>2 doses DTaP</td>
<td>3 doses DTaP</td>
<td>3 doses DTaP</td>
<td>4 doses DTaP</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pneumococcal Conjugate (PCV7 and/or PCV13)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>1 dose</td>
<td>2 doses</td>
<td>3 doses</td>
<td>4 doses OR age appropriate complete series</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. influenzae type b</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>1 dose</td>
<td>2 doses</td>
<td>3 doses</td>
<td>1 dose on or after 15 months of age or appropriate complete series</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polio</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>1 dose</td>
<td>2 doses</td>
<td>2 doses</td>
<td>3 doses</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measles,* Mumps,* Rubella*</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>1 dose on or after 12 months of age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis B*</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>1 dose</td>
<td>2 doses</td>
<td>2 doses</td>
<td>3 doses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varicella* (Chickenpox)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>1 dose on or after 12 months of age OR current lab immunity OR reliable history of disease</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Current laboratory evidence is acceptable instead of immunization with that antigen.
*Hepatitis B may be administered as early as birth.

This table represents the minimum required immunizations for childcare centers.

Rev: March 31, 2014
Chronic Illness
The Individualized Medical Application Plan (IMAP) form must be completed by families for each child with special health care needs or nutritional 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. If medication is required in the IMAP a Medication Administration Form must also be completed by the physician.

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.

Managing Food Allergies and Food Restrictions

Food Allergies: Food allergies can be life threatening. The risk of accidental exposure to foods can be reduced at the center if staff, parents, children and physicians work together to minimize risks and provide a safe environment for food-allergic children. Consistent with CDC guidelines, the center works to protect children with food allergies from contact with the problem food.

Please note that due to serious food allergies outside food is not allowed at the center. 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.

Family’s Responsibility (All Families)
- Be sure outside food does not enter the premise of the center. Keep snacks/breakfast from home in vehicles.
- Wait until you are outside before giving your child a snack at the end of the day.
- If you or your child eats nut products before arrival, please wash hands and brush teeth before entering the building.
- Wash hands with soap and running water for 20 seconds upon arrival to the classroom for everyone’s health and safety.

Family Responsibility (If child has an allergy)
- Notify the center of the child’s allergies.
- Work with staff to develop a plan that accommodates the child’s needs throughout the day.
- Provide written medical documentation, instructions and medications as directed by a physician using the Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan (FAAECP) as a
guide, as well as, the **Medication Administration Form**

- The plan should include:
  - Written instructions about food(s) to which the child is allergic and steps that should be taken to avoid that food.
  - Names and doses of medications and how they should be used
  - Specific symptoms that would indicate the need to give one or more medications or contact emergency services

- Provide center with one/two epinephrine auto-injectors to use in food allergy emergencies if the use is called for in the medical plan.
- Help educate the child in the self-management of their food allergy including:
  - Safe and unsafe foods
  - Strategies for avoiding exposure to unsafe foods
  - Symptoms of allergic reactions
  - How and when to tell an adult they may be having an allergy-related problem
- Review policies/procedures with the staff, child’s physician and child (if age appropriate) after the reaction has occurred.
- Provide emergency contact information

**Center’s Responsibility**

- Review health records submitted by parents and physicians.
- Include food-allergic students in center activities.
- Assure that all staff who interacts with the children with allergies, on a regular basis, participates in trainings on food allergies. The trainings should help them understand food allergies, how to recognize symptoms, know what to do in an emergency, and how to work with other staff to limit (eliminate) allergens in the allergic student’s meals and classroom activities.
- Teaching team will review and practice the Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan.
- Keep copies of children’s FAAECP plan in a secure place that can be accessed quickly in an emergency.
- Ensure that medications are appropriately stored and easily accessible.
- Contact parents immediately after any suspected allergic reactions. Also contact parents immediately after a child ingests a potential allergen or has contact with a potential allergen, even if an allergic reaction does not occur. If the child needed treatment, recommend that the parents notify the child’s primary care provider or allergist.
- If epinephrine is given, contact EMS, tell them when epinephrine was administered, and have the child transported to an emergency room by ambulance. Contact the parents to tell them the child’s location and condition.
- Review policies/prevention plan with the core team members, parents/guardians, and physician after a reaction has occurred.
- Discuss field trips with the family of the food-allergic child to decide appropriate strategies for managing the food allergy.

**Food Restrictions**
Program staff does 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.

**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**

In accordance with The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (section 8316 of 1994 PA 451, MCL 324.8316), the University of Michigan Early Childhood Education and Care programs (including the Health System Children’s Center, North Campus Children’s Center and Towsley Children’s House) have developed and implemented Integrated Pest Management Plans in cooperation with U-M Plant Building and Grounds Services.

From time to time, as needed, pesticides may be used in or around the Early Childhood Education and Care programs. This is your annual notification that when pesticide application (other than bait or gel formulation) is planned, you will receive notification including the target pest or purpose, approximate location, date of application, center contact information and a toll-free number for a national pesticide information center recognized by the Michigan Department of Agriculture (also listed below) at least 48 hours prior to the application by:

1. A notice posted on the entrance door to the center
2. Email

Should an emergency arise that requires pesticide application without sufficient time for prior notification, you will be promptly notified after the application.

Applications are made by trained, certified applicators adhering to all label directions and using extreme care and caution.

Parents or guardians may also request to be notified by first-class U.S. mail, postmarked at least 3 days prior to the application. A form to request notification by U.S. mail is available at the front desk.

**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.

**Hand Washing Procedures**

Hand washing is the most important means of interrupting transmission of infection to children and staff. Everyone should wash their hand upon arrival and departure. 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 20 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.

**Nutrition Policy**

The U-M Early Childhood Education and Care programs 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. 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).

**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 (Infant/Toddler- Whole Milk) (Preschool- 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 (Infant/Toddler- Whole Milk) (Preschool- 2%)
- Vegetable (carrots, celery, etc.) and/or fruit (apples, oranges, bananas, etc.)
- Bread/bread alternate (bread, rolls, pasta, cereal, etc.)
- Meat/meat alternate (cheese, meat, poultry, fish, eggs, etc.)

**Safety and Security**

**Reporting Incidents**
If an injury occurs at school, a form will be filled out for parents. A staff member will verbally review the form with parent(s) who will then be asked to sign the form acknowledging the incident. A copy of the injury form will be given to the parents for their personal record.
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.

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.

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.

Building Access
Parent/legal guardians are issued access using an MCard (those without a MCard will be issued a building access card) during Center hours. Please bring your access card to access the building daily and to ensure everyone’s safety.

Visitors to the Center
Visitors are to ring the doorbell to communicate with front desk staff for entry. All visitors should check-in at the front desk and fill out a visitor’s badge when arriving for an observation or a visit.

Notes for Families
- Do not leave children unattended in the car.
- Walk your child all the way to their classroom to drop off directly with teachers.
Winter Weather Policy for U-M Children’s Centers

Severe Winter Weather Policies
In the event of severe winter weather that is treacherous but does not result in an official reduction in operations, the centers will be open, however, **may need to delay opening until 10:00 am in order to assure adequate staffing to receive all children.** Families will be notified of delayed openings the evening before, if at all possible, via email and a message on the primary phone line of each center. If conditions develop rapidly this notice may not go out until early in the morning. **Families are encouraged to check e-mail for delayed openings.**

Emergency Reduction in Operations
The University never totally “closes” due to the continuing need for services to patients, students, public safety and sensitive research projects. However, in the rare event of extreme winter weather, the administration may call for a **“Reduction in Operations”**. This status would be posted on the U-M home page and sent to any U-M faculty, staff or student who signs up for emergency alerts.

**In the event of a reduction in operations, the Children’s Centers will only be open to those U-M staff and faculty who are considered “critical staff”. Lunch will NOT be provided during a reduction in operation. Children will need to bring their own lunch. This status should be communicated to you by your unit/department director so that you are clearly informed of your expected attendance during a reduction in operations.**

The Centers **will not be able to provide care to families who are not considered critical staff in the event of University-wide reduction in operations.** Due to the emergency and extremely rare nature of such a partial closing, tuition will not be refunded for the day of care. For those who are not critical and worry that they may still need care in such a situation, the University has some resources for you to consider. For more details, please visit [https://hr.umich.edu/benefits-wellness/family/work-life-resource-center](https://hr.umich.edu/benefits-wellness/family/work-life-resource-center)

1. **Family Helpers** – a listing of University students and benefit-eligible retirees who are interested in providing child care. We recommend finding a caregiver before you need it in an emergency so you have an existing relationship with a caregiver.

2. **Kids Kare at Home** – this service may be able to send a caregiver to your home. The program does require pre-registration. Kids Kare will prioritize those who are critical to the University first, but may be able to serve others depending on demand and available caregivers.

3. **Care.com** – this community program may be able to help you find a caregiver at short notice. This is not a U-M service, it is available to the community. A fee is required.

We do our best to continue services to families throughout our snowy Michigan winters! We have put these exceptions in place to protect the safety of our staff when traveling to work and to support families who must report to work to keep the University safe. Please contact your center director with any questions you may have. Thank you for your support of your Children’s Center community during winter weather.
Other Severe Winter Weather Policies
In the event of severe winter weather that is treacherous but does not result in an official reduction in operations, the centers will be open, however, **may need to delay opening until 10:00 am in order to assure adequate staffing to receive all children**. Families will be notified of delayed openings the evening before, if at all possible, via email and a message on the primary phone line of each center. If conditions develop rapidly this notice may not go out until early in the morning. Families are encouraged to check for delayed openings by calling the center’s phone line for messages.

We do our best to continue provision of services to U-M faculty, staff and students throughout our snowy Michigan winters! We have put these exceptions in place to protect the safety of our staff when traveling to work. Please contact your center director with any questions and to let them know that you will be considered “critical” to your department in the event of a reduction in operations. Thank you!

Emergency Closing Policy
If the Center needs to close during the day for any emergency (such as mechanical failure or other unexpected dangers) parents will be notified by telephone to pick up their children as soon as possible. If neither parent can be reached by telephone, the Center will contact those individuals listed as emergency contacts on the child’s Child Information Record.

Parent Engagement and Involvement

Observation
*Parents are WELCOME in the Center at any time!* 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.

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.

**Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment and Communication Tool**
The Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG) tool enables teachers and parents to communicate about their child’s development and learning. Observations are made, throughout the day, during everyday classroom activities. Teachers collect samples of children’s work, written observations of what they see and hear, videos, photographs or voice recordings. The tool allows for exchanges between parents and teachers to gain a complete picture of the child and to ensure the child is progressing. The information is used to support your child’s learning and meet individual needs, both at home and at school. Along with dialog about your child’s development, the tool allows for families to keep up-to-date on classroom/center events (calendar), receive weekly newsletters on topics relevant to your child’s classroom, and have access to developmentally appropriate activities.

**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.

**Family Handbook**
The Family 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.

**Classroom Participation**
The Towsley Children’s House recognizes that Ann Arbor has a pluralistic culture with many different beliefs, cultural and religious practices. The Center welcomes families, students and staff to share their family customs and traditions. Parents and families are encouraged to share, participate, and engage in activities with their children in the classroom. Families may want to participate by sharing stories, songs, clothing, celebrations, recipes, drawings and experiences of their linguistic and cultural background. Discussion of religious holidays and practices are on a nonsectarian basis.

**Parent Involvement Committee**
The Parent Involvement Committee is an opportunity to volunteer, take on a leadership role and provide input about our program. Primarily, the group will provide a parent perspective on providing a quality program and the interests of the families. The Parent Committee helps plan family events, teacher appreciation and fundraisers. It is helpful to have representatives from every classroom so we can hear the voices of parents from all ages within our program.

**Annual Program Evaluation by Families**
All parents will be asked each year to complete a family survey concerning the program. 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.
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 the U-M Early Childhood Education and Care programs may attend these programs.

Center-wide Picnic
The center holds center-wide picnics in Fall and Spring. This is a social event for children, families and staff.

Center Newsletters
The Center has a newsletter providing the parent community with information regarding the program. Newsletters are sent electronically throughout the year.

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.

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 influence 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.

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, swim suit, towel and play shoes.
- 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 consider the season when providing extra clothing.
- Be sure to mark clothes with your child’s name.
- 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 in the afternoon.

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. Children should bring swim suits and towels for water play.

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 Parent Agreement, Permissions and Acknowledgement Form includes a section where parents grant permission for a child to participate in field trips with her/his class.

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.

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.

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.**

**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 is 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 is selected because of their educational training and professional status, and staff is 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.

**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’s 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.

Rough and Tumble Play
Here at Towsley Children’s House, we believe in the value of exuberant, boisterous, rough-and-tumble play to a child’s overall development. This vigorous body play allows children opportunities to use language – both verbal and nonverbal—and learn how to negotiate, take turns, wait, compromise, sometimes take the lead and sometimes hold back, and make and follow rules. They are learning about cause and effect and developing empathy. Rough and tumble play also supports optimum physical development because it is so vigorous and because children—since they enjoy it so much—tend to engage in it for an extended amount of time.

To support the use of big body play, we do the following:
• Provide training to all staff on the importance of rough and tumble play and how to supervise it
• Prepare both indoor and outdoor environments for this play style
• Establish classroom and playground rules with the children to keep them safe and help them know what to expect
• Encourage staff to use big body games with the children
• Supervise the play constantly, which means ensuring an adult is watching and listening at all times
• Model appropriate play; coach children as they play so that they are able to interact comfortably with each other in this way
The following indoor and outdoor environment features of our program support rough and tumble play:

- At least 50 square feet of usable indoor play space per child, free from furniture and equipment so that children can tumble and move
- At least 100 square feet of usable outdoor play space per child, free from fixed equipment so that children can run, jump, tag, roll, twirl, fall down, and chase each other
- Safety surfaces indoor under and around climbers
- Safety surfaces outdoors under and around climbers, balance beams, and other elevated surfaces from which children might jump

Biting Policy
Our program recognizes that biting is, unfortunately, not unexpected when toddlers are in group care. We are always upset when children are bitten in our program, and we recognize how upsetting it is for parents. While we feel that biting is never the right thing for toddlers to do, we know that they bite for a variety of reasons. Most of these reasons are not related to behavior problems. Our program does not focus on punishment for biting, but on effective techniques that address the specific reason for the biting. When biting occurs, we have three main responses:

1. Care for and help the child who was bitten.
2. Help the child who bit learn other behavior.
3. Work with the child who bit and examine our program to stop the biting.

Our teachers express strong disapproval of biting. They work to keep children safe and to help the child who bit learn different, more appropriate behavior. When there are episodes of ongoing biting, we develop a plan of specific strategies, techniques, and timelines to address it. We do not and will not use any response that harms a child or is known to be ineffective.

We give immediate attention and, if necessary, first aid to children who are bitten. We offer to put ice on the bite if the child is willing. If the skin is broken, we clean the wound with soap and water. If children are bitten on the top of the hands and the skin is broken, we recommend that they be seen by their healthcare provider.

When children bite, their parents are informed personally and privately the same day. When children are bitten, their parents are informed personally that day and given a copy of our incident form. When we experience ongoing biting in a toddler room, we develop a written plan with specific strategies, techniques, and timelines to work on the problem. This written plan is shared with all parents in the room.

Biting is always documented on our standard incident report form. It is completed and signed by a teacher and an administrator. It must also be signed by the parent. One copy is given to the parents, and the other copy is kept on file in the office.

We keep the name of the child who bit confidential. This is to avoid labeling and to give our teachers the opportunity to use their time and energy to work on stopping the biting.
In addition, we have current resources on biting available for staff and parents. We encourage parents to bring their concerns and frustrations directly to the teachers.

Afterward

The Family 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.