Dear Families,

As we begin the new year in January, we start to plan for the new school year that will start in August 2017. We will provide information about tuition as well as the calendar so please keep an eye out for this communication near the end of January.

In February, we will be asking all families to let us know about any plans to leave before August or stay with us into the new school year. If you plan to withdraw before August, please be aware that if you are interested in future re-enrollment your child’s name will be placed on the wait list based on the date the withdrawal notification is submitted. The earlier you can tell us about a withdrawal the better. Our policy does require at least a 6 week written notice of withdrawal in order to receive a security deposit refund. Security deposit refunds will be returned within 60 days after leaving our program.

Notification of withdrawals allow us to plan when siblings of currently enrolled families can be offered a space. When I am notified that a child will be leaving I review information to determine if a space can become available for a younger child of a current family. To do this, I review the ages of children in the infant/toddler classrooms to see if anyone is old enough to transition to an older classroom. If so, I then consult with the teachers to find out if they know of any reason a child should not transition. The families of those children are also involved in this discussion. Once everyone is in agreement that a child is ready to transition to an older room, then a transition schedule is planned. I then notify current families of the opening based on their wait list application date to offer a space. If there isn’t a fit for a currently enrolled sibling, I refer to the wait list to fill the space. We do our best to allow for a 4-6 week advance notice for transition, however, sometimes life surprises families so we only have a week or two notice. I will work with families if timing is an issue. A typical time for mid-year transitions is at the end of UM semesters as well as June or July.

As always, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Beth Ann

UM Towsley Children’s House Center Director
734-763-3400
bablanch@umich.edu

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Important Dates:

♦ Optional Care Days
  (Prearranged)
  Dec .20-21

♦ Center Closed
  Winter Break
  Fri., Dec. 22–Tues. Jan. 2

♦ Center Closed
  MLK Day (Professional
  Development)
  Monday, Jan. 15th

♦ Center Closed
  (All UM Children’s
  Centers In-service)
  Monday, February 26th.

♦ Parent Teacher Con-
  ferences– March

♦ Center Closed
  (TCH Professional De-
  velopment)
  Monday, April 30
Winter Weather Policy for UM Children’s Centers

With winter weather soon upon us, we want to update you on closing policy for the U-M Towsley Children’s House. Given the very severe weather we experienced last year, the University has reviewed and revised policies about how the University will operate during extreme weather.

**Emergency Reduction in Operations.** The review confirmed that 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. ([http://spg.umich.edu/policy/201.27](http://spg.umich.edu/policy/201.27))

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”. 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.

We ask that any parent who is deemed “critical” to their unit in the above circumstances please inform the front desk staff member of your center so that we can plan for staffing in the event of a “reduction in operations”. The Children’s Centers will staff each center so that we can care for children of critical staff members only.

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.

**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 checking for e-mail messages or 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 pro-

*** Lunch is NOT provided when the University declares Emergency Reduction in Operations. You must provide a lunch. (Reminder: No nuts or nut products)
Join us: Tuesday, January 23rd from 4:15-5:15

Nutrition and Dietary Tips for Young Children

A presentation by expert speaker, Sarah Ball, MPH, RD, Assistant Dietetic Internship Director, Department of Nutritional Sciences on nutrition and dietary tips for young children. The presentation will also include a Q & A session.

Save the Date:

Tuesday, February 13, 2018 from 8:30am-9:30am Kindergarten preparation and transition, facilitated by Jasmine Boster, Towsley Children's House Program Director

Thanks to all that joined us on

Tuesday, December 5th from 8:30-9:30

Speech and Language Development for Birth-5: What’s 'Typical' and when not to 'Wait and See'

- Speech/Language milestones by age
- Signs of a speech/language delay
- Concerns? What do to next
- Tips/Tricks for supporting my child’s communication development at home

Presented by: Kate Jurevicius, MA CCC-SLP
Speech Language Pathologist
Previously worked for Ann Arbor Public Schools
Now in private practice: communicate with Kate, LLC
Professional development days are vital to the quality of care we are able to provide for children. Staff needs dedicated time, without children present, where everyone can discuss and receive trainings on relevant early childhood topics. This time also allows us to build community among staff.

This Fall and Winter we participated in trainings that focused around unconscious bias and the importance of nature for children’s development.

Monday, January 15th, staff will participate in the University’s MLK Day events on campus. We will attend the keynote address by Hill Harper and other break out sessions throughout the day.

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
STUDENT TEACHERS

Fall and Winter semester we often welcome EMU Student Teachers to Towsley. The student teachers are completing their degree at Eastern Michigan in Early Childhood Education. As part of their training and certification, student teachers spend time in classrooms under the supervision of an experienced mentor teacher.

The experience is similar to other professionals in medicine, law and architecture where students have opportunities for internships that allow them to apply their academic knowledge to real world experiences. Student teachers have the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skills and values of the teaching learning process where ideas can be performed and tested. We hope each candidate has an enriching experience that they can take away a new appreciation and understanding of the teaching profession.
As winter and cold weather approaches, children’s play is often limited to the indoors. Adult fears about safety and negative attitudes toward exposure to cold weather are the barriers that prevent children from accessing play in winter months. It is common to hear adults say that “my child will not like being in the cold weather,” or “the cold is too dangerous to play in,” or “there’s nothing to play with.” It is up to adults to focus on the importance of children’s play, regardless of the season. After all, play should not be restricted to warm weather. Let’s welcome this upcoming winter season with a playful attitude.

HOW SNOWY, COLD WEATHER BENEFITS CHILDREN’S DEVELOPMENT AND HEALTH

When the weather drops into the single digits, it is common for parents to want their children to stay indoors to play. Before you go and curse the cold weather for keeping your playful children indoors all winter, let’s consider all of the benefits that cold weather has when it comes to children’s health, development, and well-being.

1. CHILDREN GET TO SEE THE OUTDOORS THROUGH A NEW LENS

During the summer months, children become used to the warm, green climate that the season has to offer. After the change in season or the first snowfall, children view their environment through a different lens: fallen leaves, brown grass, snow, ice. This new lens enables them to imagine the outdoors differently and to be creative and play in different ways.

2. INCREASES IN EXERCISE AND USING DIFFERENT MUSCLES

The winter months provide us with different ways of moving our bodies, such as sledding, walking up a snow hill, or building a snowman. Our larger muscles are put to great use in the winter months due to the challenges that snow provides. This large-muscle use and increase in physical activity support children’s gross motor development and overall health.
3. GETTING FRESH AIR AND AVOIDING BACTERIA
Most adults associate the winter months with getting colds and illnesses such as the flu. However, it is not the cold weather that necessarily causes colds and flus – it is increased exposure to indoor environments where bacteria and viruses live. For example, during the winter months, you turn on your home’s heating and venting systems. The bacteria and viruses within your home are continuously being moved around inside. Adults and children who spend long periods of time in a heated and poorly ventilated home, without exposure to fresh air, can easily pass germs to each other.

4. NEW CHALLENGES AND PROBLEM-SOLVING
Weather that we consider “messy” provides environments and materials that are inspiring and fun for children; for example, patches of ice, large snow hills, and trees covered in snow. These environments provide children with opportunities for new challenges, such as sliding down the ice patch and climbing a snow hill. Engagement with outdoor environments in the winter provokes new problem-solving skills – “How can I slide down this ice patch without falling?” “How fast can I run up this snow hill?” “Can I climb this tree using a branch as a snow pick?” The ever-changing environments that the winter months have to offer provide children with the challenges that they so often crave.

5. VITAMIN D EXPOSURE
When we stay indoors during the winter, we are not only missing out on play, but also on necessary vitamins that the outdoor environment gives us. Children get vitamin D through sun exposure, and absorb it even though the sun is not as warm in the winter. Vitamin D helps regulate mental and emotional moods, doing so by increasing serotonin levels in the brain. Serotonin plays an important role in
Five Outdoor Winter Activities

1. Shoveling Snow

Simple ideas are sometimes the best. Nothing inspires children like a “work project,” and snow can provide a wonderful outlet for extra energy. Shovel paths in the yard, or even a whole area of the yard so you can play a game. All you need are some sturdy child-sized shovels and enthusiasm. Add a wheelbarrow or wagon for hauling, and you’ll have a wealth of cooperative and imaginative play!

2. Create Snow Sculpture

Why is it that everyone always makes snow men? Why not snow creatures, snow dinosaurs, or snow cars? The possibilities are limitless! Use natural materials such as sticks, pebbles, or leaves to add details. Fill a spray bottle with diluted food-color to "paint" the creations. If the snow is too fine for sculpting, try drawing pictures in the snow with a stick. This is "process art" at its best.

3. Observe Birds

Once you start bird watching, you’ll be amazed how much can be learned by observation. Put up a bird feeder outside your window. A tree near the bird feeder gives the birds a safe place to hide, and you’ll find they stick around. Brave little chickadees can be lured to your hand with some sunflower seeds. Borrow a few bird books from the library and keep a list of all the birds you see. You could even make some binoculars to extend the project.

4. Nature Walk

The natural world of winter is amazing when observed with all the senses. Talk with the children about what they might see, hear, feel, smell, or taste in winter. Then, on your nature walk, ask them to point out interesting nature objects or phenomena. When you get back inside make a list of the things you noticed. Make pictures or find out more from books.

- **Sights:** Shapes of snow drifts, colors in the snow (you’d be amazed!)
- **Sounds:** Sound of the whistling wind, the quiet of the snow falling, roar of a snowplow
- **Feel:** The downy touch of snowflakes, soft (or spiky) pine needles or the rough bark of a tree
- **Smell:** Fresh-cut pine, wood smoke, cocoa!

5. Winter Scavenger Hunt

Make colored ice cubes by adding a few drops of food coloring to water. Hide them around the play yard and let the children hunt for them.

Adapted from Community Playthings : Ten Outdoor Winter Activities

Click here to see full article.
GREAT SLEDDING HILLS

Ann Arbor is home of hidden gems—great sledding hills! This winter, bundle everyone up and take your sled to some great locations.

**Big Hills:**
Huron Hills Golf Course (3465 E. Huron River Drive)
Rolling Hills County Park (7660 Stony Creek Road)
Veteran’s Memorial Park (Maple Road)
Slauson Middle School field (Crest Street)
Hunt Park (Sunset between Spring and Daniel)
Burns Park (between Granger and Wells)
County Farm Park (Platt Road)
Leslie Park (Dhu Varren)
Riverside Park (Ypsilanti –Depot Town)

**Bunny Hills:**
Crary Park (Washtenaw at Cambridge)
Mushroom Park (Between Waltham and Saxon)

WHO’S WHO AT TOWSLEY

**Infant/Toddler Classrooms**

- **Seedling:** Brigid Williams, Leslie Thompson and Kate Proctor
- **Sprouts:** Denise Pelky, Kim Hull, AT TBD
- **Sassafras:** Heather Sandweiss, Sonja Whitehouse, Samantha Huff and Beca Torres-Davenport
- **Magnolia:** Angelique Rudolph, Erin Goatley, Darius Cobb and Clara Younglove

**Preschool Classrooms**

- **Willow:** Serena Simmons, Charlotte Maurer and Raana Aminlari
- **Birch:** Bayan Alnizami-Uluyol, Sarah Chaffee and Cyndy Steward
- **Oak:** Melissa Joling, Heather Rickard and Christian Boyer
- **Sycamore:** Kellie Chestler-Root, Amanda Matthews, and Derek Whitten
- **Maple:** Sarah Barth, Jodi Stratton and Emily Frensley
- **Evergreen:** Korinn Kulinski, Elizabeth Powers and Laura Roumell

**Support Staff**

- **Beth Ann Blanchard:** Center Director
- **Jasmine Boster:** Program Director and Psych. 307 Instructor
- **Cathy Hendrix:** Administrative Assistant
- **Katie Rosander:** Resource Teacher
- **Emily Palmer:** Program Associate Teacher
- **Brittney Rankin:** Program Associate Teacher
CLOSED - Labor Day Holiday .......................................................... Monday, September 4
First Official Day of School .......................................................... Tuesday, September 5
October ......................................................................................... Parent Teacher Conferences throughout month
CLOSED (UM Fall Break) (Professional Development) .......... Monday - Tuesday, October 16-17
CLOSED - Thanksgiving Holiday ........................................... Thursday & Friday, November 23-24
Last Day for Children (before Winter break) ............................... Tuesday, December 19
OPTIONAL CARE DAYS - ADDITIONAL TUITION REQUIRED .................................................. December 20-21

THE CENTER WILL BE CLOSED FROM
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22 THROUGH TUESDAY, JANUARY 2.
PLEASE ARRANGE ALTERNATE CHILDCARE FOR THIS TIME.

Children Return from Winter break ........................................... Wednesday, January 3
CLOSED (MLK Jr. Day) (Professional Development) ............... Monday, January 15
CLOSED (Professional Development) ......................................... Monday, February 26
March ......................................................................................... Parent Teacher Conferences throughout month
CLOSED (Professional Development) ......................................... Monday, April 3

CLOSED - Memorial Day Holiday ............................................. Monday, May 28
CLOSED - Independence Day Holiday ...................................... Wednesday, July 4
Last day of 2017-2018 school year ............................................ Friday, August 24
CLOSED (Professional Development) ....................................... Monday-Friday, August 27-31

CLOSED - Labor Day Holiday ................................................. Monday, September 3
First day of 2018-2019 School year ........................................... Tuesday, September 4