The Phyllis and Richard Leet Center
Northwest Missouri State University

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# Leet Center's Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Program Parent Handbook

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**USING THIS HANDBOOK**

Dear Parents and Families,
Welcome to the Phyllis and Richard Leet Center for Children and Families program. Our goal is to provide a welcoming, safe and developmentally appropriate environment for every child.

This handbook is designed to ensure that your family has a rewarding experience with the program. In the handbook we have tried to anticipate many of your questions about the program. The purpose of this handbook is to outline the program's policies and procedures. We strive to work closely with parents in a partnership that will facilitate the transitions between home and your child's first years of school. Daily communications and a sense of trust between parents and teachers are vital.

Our goal is to provide the highest quality care and education for children and to ensure that your family is valued and respected. To accomplish this we depend on families to be responsible and active child care consumers. We expect parents to read this handbook, follow the policies and procedures outlined, provide us with all the necessary information, and be open and honest with us regarding your feedback about the program. We welcome your comments, questions, concerns and suggestions about your child's experience and the program. We understand that nothing is more important than your child's early education and care experiences.

Given the nature of an ever-changing quality early education and care program, this handbook is a "living" document. You will be notified of formal policy changes during the year via a written policy notice through email. In addition, the handbook will be updated as needed.

Come and talk with us should you have any suggestions, questions or concerns, or visit our website at nwmissouri.edu/horacemann/leet.

Leet Center is a full-day teacher training childcare center in the School of Education. It is licensed by the State of Missouri and accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Each room is staffed with at least one master teacher. In addition, Northwest Missouri State University students work as teacher's aides (TA). A variety of child and family needs are met through the Center, while university educators from several departments are learning through first-hand experience how to become model teachers.

Leet Center serves approximately 90 families with children from twelve months through six years of age for early childhood as well as after school care. Promoting high quality early care and education in a model setting is a primary goal.

# Our History

The Northwest Missouri State University Early Care and Education Laboratory Center started in 1968. The first director, Dr. Peggy Miller, a graduate of Northwest Missouri State University, was the first lead teacher at the newly established Child Development Laboratory. The ECEL Center was located on West 9th Street, east of campus, in a residential area.

In 1984, Dr. Miller drafted a proposal to expand the ECEL Center School as an auxiliary effort supported by fees collected for child care. This allowed for expanded access for Northwest Missouri State University faculty and Maryville residents. In 1986, a plan was developed to share space in Brown Hall with the Horace Mann Laboratory School. The program was moved and re-named the Early Childhood Center, sharing space with the Horace Mann Kindergarten program.

The program provided a model for students pursuing the two-year Child Care Administration certificate and for Child and Family Studies majors. In addition, Dr. Miller initiated and received grants to implement both a school-age program and a Practical Parenting program. She worked to bring the first Project Construct training workshops to Northwest Missouri in 1990. Implementation of the Project Construct Curriculum Framework in the Early Childhood Center began in 1991.

In 1992, Mrs. Phyllis Leet donated funds to construct another room and two offices for the program for use by the extended care program. The room was expanded in 2000 to accommodate a full-day pre-kindergarten program.

The Early Childhood Center became licensed by the State of Missouri Child Care Licensing Bureau in 1997. Dr. Miller had worked toward this goal for many years.

In 2002, after 33 years of service to Northwest Missouri State University, Dr. Miller retired. Ms. Susan Baker served as the Director from 2002 – 2005. She worked diligently to attain accreditation for the program. The program received accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children in 2005.

In light of the changing needs of the community, the program now includes extended care from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. for children ages 3-12. In 2006, the program's name was changed to the Early Care and Education Laboratory Center in order to better reflect all aspects of the program.

In 2011, plans developed by then directors Courtney Holt, began to relocate the center to the main floor of Brown Hall in the existing library space. In 2012, director Cindy Rouner began overseeing construction with a second donation from Phyllis and Richard Leet to construct three new classrooms, office spaces, and a kitchen for the Leet Center Children. The donation also provided funding to create a kitchen, a new library, and a café for Horace Mann children from Kindergarten to sixth grade to enjoy. The center's name was changed to **Phyllis and Richard Leet Center for Children**

**and Families**. The Leet Center is now located on the first floor of Brown Hall and includes a Nature Explorer Accredited Outdoor Classroom.

In 2020, a grant was written by the current director Cindy Rouner, and was approved by the current dean, Dr. Tim Wall; for the addition of an infant and toddler space as well as additional outdoor classroom for infants and toddlers. The infant and toddler center was opened in July of 2021, with 21 spaces of availability for infants from 6 weeks to 36 months of age.

**MISSION STATEMENT**

The Leet Center embraces the most current practices in Early Childhood Education and values whole child development through child centered interest and project-based curriculum. Our teachers and university students are committed to providing a safe and loving environment in which children explore, discover, learn and play.

**PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY**

The Leet Center and its staff believe that children learn best in a supportive, loving, school family environment where they are encouraged by caring adults who observe and learn beside them. We believe that children should be given time, appropriate materials, and engage in meaningful interactions to develop intellectually and emotionally, with the environment as the 3rd teacher.

The educators in our center are advocates for children who love and encourage them to develop academically and socially. As they listen and learn with each child, they assess and guide the learning process and empower children to make sense of their world.

Children are provided with appropriate materials in our beautiful sunlit rooms. The environment is carefully thought out and room arrangement reflects a child centered view. Materials are displayed in a functional yet inviting manner which nurtures the child's inner creativity. Children's varied abilities are accounted for in the preparation of the provocations in the inspired learning centers. Tools and props are rotated frequently to reflect the needs and interests of the group. Each teacher has visited Reggio Emilia Italy.

Families and culture are celebrated at the Leet Center. The role of families in our center is vital. The involvement and family connectedness is an integral piece of what makes our program strong. Families are frequently visible in and around the center, sharing life and what they love with the children. Their role in informing and working together with their child's teacher is the glue that keeps our center in place.

**PROGRAM GOALS**

The Phyllis and Richard Leet Center for Children and Families aspires to meet the needs of ALL children and families. We provide care and developmental stimulation through play-based academic growth opportunities for young children as well as educational opportunities for families through our parent resource center and family nights. Teachers at our center see themselves as researchers, learning about each child's development and simultaneously furthering their own pedagogical knowledge. They specialize in developing and implementing the newest techniques based on the growing body of research that shows positive correlations between home-like indoor environments and strong interpersonal

relationships and the ability to concentrate. In our indoor and outdoor classrooms, we spend large amounts of time "Discovering and Caring Together!" Our space is patterned after beliefs held by educator research in Italy.

The young child is a member of his/her family. It is our aim to work with each family to create the best possible environment for their child while in our program. The staff and University students of Leet Center focus on the total and unique growth and development of each child. We promote:

**Cognitive Development:**

- Learning to solve problems and form concepts
- Discovering and exploring the near environment

**Social-Emotional Development:**

- Developing self-esteem and personal adjustment skills
- Achieving self-confidence in relationships
- Developing a sense of responsibility and persistence in completing tasks

**Physical Development:**

- Developing hand and body coordination
- Learning physical skills
- Learning good health habits

**Language Development:**

- Express wants and needs using words
- Develop communication skills with adults and peers

**Creative Development:**

- Expressing ideas through creative skills
- Expressing self through creative media
- Developing the ability to think and act in different and unique ways

**FACILITY**

The preschool center is located in Brown Hall on the campus of Northwest Missouri State University in room 120 and 123. The infant and toddler center is located in Brown Hall on the campus of Northwest Missouri State University in room 122.

**CENTER OFFICE**

The preschool office is located in 135 Brown Hall. It is located in the main office suite of Horace Mann on the first level of Brown Hall.

**ACCREDITATION AND LICENSING**

The Phyllis and Richard Leet Center for children and families has been accredited by the National Association of Young children since 2005. The standards and criteria held by the Association are separated into ten categories, or the ten **Standards of Excellence**, as described below:

1. Relationships
2. Curriculum
3. Teaching
4. Assessment of Child Progress
5. Health
6. Teachers
7. Families
8. Community Relationships
9. Physical Environment
10. Leaderships and Management

A copy of the *Standards and Criteria* is made available in the director's office. All new staff will be required to read the information within the first two (2) weeks of employment.

*for more information regarding NAEYC, please go to naeyc.org.

The Center is also licensed by the Division of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) through the state of Missouri.

**Brightwheel**

Brighwheel is the program used by the Leet Center. Each teacher will have Brightwheel uploaded on their classroom iPad and the app on their phones. Families will be given information on how to download this app on their phones as well, so that they have access to their child's profile. This program is what the Leet Center uses to primarily communicate with our families. On this program families will be able to see photos of their child's day, documentation of work they are doing, and find messages from the director and teachers. Brightwheel will store emergency information on children for quick retrieval, show who can pick up the child, document eating habits, learning, and pottying (changing and accidents). Brightwheel is also how we keep attendance and bill families based on our tuition policy.

**CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT**

For an updated NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct please go to naeyc.org. Copies of the Code of Ethical Conduct are also available in the Center office and all staff will receive an updated copy.

**NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

The Phyllis and Richard Leet Center for Children and Families does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, marital status, national origin or sexual orientation.

**RATIOS**

Appropriate ratios are kept according to the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services licensing manual. The appropriate ratio varies with the age of the children enrolled. The ratios for the center are as follows: Mixed ages 3-5-years old 1 adult to 10 children; mixed ages 5 years and older: 1 adult to 16 children; Infants 1 adult to 4 children; Toddlers 12months to 24months 1 adult to 4 children; 24months to 36months 1 adult to 8 children.

**PART II**

## Enrollment Policy

Enrollment at the Northwest Missouri State University Phyllis and Richard Leet Center for Children and Families is open to all University affiliates as well as the community. Families may contact the center or complete an online application by visiting our website at nwmissouri.edu/horacemann/leet to be considered for admission to the center. All families will be put on our waiting list that is updated continually. Leet Center staff will contact the family by phone and/or email to see if the family still intends to attend the Leet Center. If the family plans to attend a tour will be set up. The family will also be responsible for a registration fee at the time enrollment paperwork link is sent. Families are encouraged to read the parent handbook in the initial process to ensure there is an agreement about how the Leet Center operates.

Priority for enrollment at the Leet Center is determined by the following means, in this order:

1. Children who are currently enrolled will move up to the succeeding classroom when they are of age, are developmentally ready, and a spot is available.
2. Siblings of currently enrolled children.
3. Children of the community members, according to their dated request for admission.

**NOTE:** Openings at the Leet Center are by age group, as the center is required to maintain balance and comply with licensing and accreditation standards. As such, the wait for a particular age group may be longer or shorter than another age group, based on enrollment numbers for each group.

In order to meet the needs of the families served, the Leet Center offers a number of options for child attendance. The Leet Center serves children from 12 months up to 3-years-old in the infant & toddler center and children 3-6 years old in two multiage preschool classrooms.

**Hours of Operation Infant and Toddler –** The Leet Center infant and toddler classrooms are open from 7:00 am – 5:30 pm. We currently have one 1-year-old classroom, and one 2-year-old classroom. For these classrooms we will only be offering a 5-day option to create consistency for our littlest Bearcats. We will accommodate the families pick up and drop off needs during our hours of operation. The infant and toddler center follows a separate childcare calendar with extended days not currently offered for preschool.

The Infant and Toddler classrooms enroll up to 24 children per day. Enrollment is open to children who are 12 months of age up to three-years-old. The infant and toddler waiting list for the current year is used to determine who will be accepted for enrollment. Parents will be called to see if they are still interested in their child attending Leet Center. The waiting list is organized on a first to apply first on the list basis. Parents are given official notification of acceptance into the program by the director. Applications for enrollment will be accepted throughout the year, and our waitlist can be found through our website.

**Hours of Operation Preschool –** Leet Center is open from 7:30 am – 5:30 pm. We currently operate two classrooms for children ages 3 to 5. Preschool parents have two options from which to choose, based on availability. These options include attendance for 5-day attendance per week with the following schedule choices:

Full-Day: 7:30 am – 5:30 pm
School-Day: 7:30 am – 3:00 pm

Leet Center is open from 7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. during the school year. Childcare will not be available during inclement weather, winter and spring breaks.

**The Preschool Classrooms** enroll up to 20 children per day each. Enrollment is open to children who are three years of age. Children must also be potty trained. The preschool waiting list for the current year is used to determine who will be accepted for enrollment. Parents will be called to see if they are still interested in their child attending Leet Center. The waiting list is organized on a first to apply, first on the list basis.

**TUITION**

Tuition is set by Northwest Missouri State University's Board of Regents from the recommendation made by the Chair of the Department of Professional Education. These are due on the 15th of each month. Late payments of fees are applied by the University.

Upon enrollment, families will be required to set up a 919# for billing as well as sign a tuition and financial agreement. This agreement states the start date of the child and the account to be charged. There will be no refunds for unforseen closures that Northwest Missouri State University and the Leet Center may experience. Families may make arrangements to pay fees in installments or in one payment. The payment schedule will be arranged with the school at the time of enrollment and may be changed at the beginning of a new session. A child must be enrolled on a continuous basis to hold a space. Children who are absent for part of a session must pay for the entire session to maintain enrollment.

If a child is enrolled for a session and does not attend the first three days of that sesion and no payment has been made beyond the enrollment fee, the school will consider this a notice of withdrawal. It is therefore very important that parents make the first payment on time if the child will not be in attendance the first week. If a child is withdrawn because of non-attendance/non-payment, the parents will be charged one full installment.

The University and Leet Center requires that families be current in all accounts in order for children to attend. If parents have unsettled accounts with the University or Leet Center they will be notified that the child may no longer attend the program until the account is settled. It is important families ensure billing information with the University and Leet Center is accurate in order to maintain their account. Accounts are paid through the Northwest Missouri State University website or at the Cashiering office located in the Administration office on campus.

Please be aware that the Leet Center does not always receive advance notice when accounts are past due and we must follow University policy regarding late payments. We are periodically sent lists of people with instructions that they may not use services until their accounts are settled. This is especially difficult when we are expected to turn your children away from their school. If you are not being billed or think there might be a problem with your account, please contact Northwest Missouri State University Financial Department immediately so we can help resolve the problem before we receive such a notice.

**Bearcat Club:**

Bearcat Club is the Leet Center program that provides after school care for children. The intent of the program is to encourage and support the development of each child, and to provide a positive alternative for non-school hours that will enhance the child's development. The program is located in the infant/toddler and preschool classrooms of the Brown Hall. The program also uses the Horace Mann gym, as needed. Bearcat Club is considered to be a more relaxed atmosphere with the opportunity to choose from self-selected or planned activities (outdoor or indoor games, art activities, reading, crafts, etc.).

**CHILDREN'S HEALTH RECORDS AND OTHER RECORDS**

A complete set of paperwork must be on record for children to attend at the Leet Center. Parents and guardians are responsible for updating information as needed. Forms to be completed include:

- Child Enrollment Form
- CACFP Enrollment Form and Income Eligibility Form
- Emergency Contact Form
- Child Medical Examination Report
- Agreement Forms

It is very important that the Leet Center office have up-to-date contact information for all children and families. Please notify the Leet Center if you have a change of address, phone number, or any other information. The Leet Center will ask you to fill out an updated contact information packet quarterly to ensure all information is accurate.

All children are required to have completed a physician's examination form, a physical exam and all immunizations up to date at the time of enrollment. Immunizations are to be kept up to date thereafter following the Missouri guidelines schedule.

Immunizations are an important public health policy affecting children. As a matter of state law, children in the program must:

- Be fully immunized, or
- Be in the process of becoming fully immunized according to the approved schedule, or
- Have a physician's statement that immunization is not needed for medical reasons or a note from the parent stating that the child is not immunized due to religious beliefs.

Your child's file is kept in a file cabinet in the Leet Center office on the first floor of Brown Hall. This office is locked unless center personnel are present. Your child's file is considered confidential and only a limited number of individuals have access to view it. Parents may request to view their child's file at any time. Please contact the classroom teacher or the Leet Center Director to make arrangements to view the file.

The Director will have access to review the file so that medical and family information is correct and up to date. Lead teachers have access to review files to see what individual/special needs your child has. This information will help with planning and goal setting for your child. The school nurse will view records to check that immunizations are up to date.

When the program is being reviewed for relicensing, the licensing representative has access to the files that are required by the state. These forms would include but are not limited to: child enrollment, medical forms, and special instruction plans for allergies if one is appropriate.

When Leet Center teachers want to review your child's file they will sign, date, and give reasons for viewing the file. This file will remain in the Leet Center office during this review. Contact information for the family is located in the Leet Center office so that teachers are able to contact parents or family when needed.

A list of individuals that may view student records will be found in a folder in the front of the file in which your child's records are kept. Only those individuals listed may view the records without separate written consent. The individual must sign, date and give reason for viewing of the records. The written permission form may be obtained from the Leet Office (135 Brown Hall). All educational files are kept confidential and have limited access.

**LATE FEES**

The Leet Center closes at 5:30 p.m. Leet Center staff members work very hard each and every day and want to feel confident that they can leave at 5:30 p.m. Many staff members have evening commitments. Parents who arrive late often interfere with these plans. There will be a late fee assessed if children are picked-up after 5:30 p.m.

Examples of the late pick-up charge policy is as follows: $1 for each minute late, per child. That is, if a parent arrives at 5:35 p.m. 5 minutes late = $5.00 late fee will be applied (per child enrolled), 5:44 p.m. 14 minutes late = $14 (per child enrolled).

**WITHDRAWAL INFORMATION**

In order to withdraw, families must provide the Director of the school a 30-day written notice of their intentions. Fees must be paid to the end of the month of withdrawal. Failure to give notice will result in fees being assessed for the time period involved, even if the child is not in attendance.

If a child is dismissed by the Center, no prorated refund will be made for the remainder of the month in which the child is dis-enrolled. However, a refund of prorated fees will be made if the family has paid for the entire year.

**Termination of Services**

Services may be terminated under the following circumstances:

1. Failure to provide the necessary and accurate paperwork may be cause for termination from the program. We are obligated by licensing and accreditation standards to maintain current records on our children in order to provide for their safety. It is essential that we have accurate information about their health and emergency contacts.
2. Failure to make fee payments in a timely manner. Parents must take the initiative to make special arrangements if experiencing temporary financial difficulties.
3. When a child is unable to adjust to the program, we will work with the parents to find solutions to the problem. In most cases, by working together, we find a satisfactory resolution and the child does well. However, sometimes we determine that our program is not the right fit for the child. In these situations, the Director may request that the parent seek a different type of care for the child.
4. Sometimes, children eligible for kindergarten outgrow the Leet Center's social, cognitive, and physical environment, and the Leet Center will work with the parents to meet the child's needs; if the Director determines that this program cannot provide an appropriate environment for the child, two weeks notice will be given to terminate enrollment.
5. If a child's behavior is disruptive, the Leet Center will follow the procedures for the disruptive behavior policy. If it is determined that the Leet Center is not able to meet the needs of the child, the Director will give the family notice that we must discontinue services. We will provide the family with 2 weeks notice, except in a case where allowing the child to remain in attendance would create a safety concern.
6. Under emergency or extenuating circumstances the decision of a 2 week notice will not be adhered to and in certain cases immediate dismissal of a child may be required.

**Confidentiality**

The Leet Center adheres to the Family education Rights to Privacy Act. Families have the right to have information regarding their child treated in a confidential manner. Written, informed consent from parents will be required before releasing any information or documentation regarding children attending the Center, except in the case when authorized officials are reviewing files for purposes of licensing or accreditation. The children's personal files are kept secure by the Director. Teaching staff and students are required to sign confidentiality consent forms once employed by the center Records are kept in a secure area with limited access except by authorized personnel.

- Information obtained and collected by the program will be shared with other staff only on a "need to know" basis.
- Practicum students are not included in discussions of children and assessment/screening results unless the information is relevant to the practicum experience.
- Parents and guardians may ask to view screening and assessment results through asking the classroom teacher or the director.
- All information compiled during screenings and assessments will be used to promote the healthy developmental growth of the child. As appropriate the classroom teacher, the parents, and other essential personnel will be involved in making goals for the child or a referral in cases of developmental delays.
- No information shall be shared with an outside agency without the written consent from the parent or legal guardian.
- On request, regulatory authorities (Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services) shall have access to confidential materials.

**Policy on Legal Disputes**

We consider the Leet Center to be a place of consistency and safety for the children in our care. In an effort to maintain our neutrality and support for the children, we do not participate in parental disputes. Should either parent, family members, guardians, or caregivers bring the school, its records or staff into legal dispute over custody, that parent runs the risk of jeopardizing their child's enrollment. The Leet Center holds the right to discharge a child or children under these circumstances.

**FAMILY ORIENTATION**

Before the school year begins, each family will receive emails through the summer. Schedule times will be arranged for center tours before school begins, or before the child begins at the center. Your family will come to the center, meet the teachers, and see the classroom. An orientation night will be scheduled for families to participate in an orientation meeting to help in becoming acclimated with some of the daily procedures. During this time the family will have the opportunity to ask questions about the program with the teachers and director.

**PART III**

**ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

Arrival and departure is a busy time in the Leet Center. Parents are asked to walk their child to their classroom. Please be sure that your child is checked in on Brightwheel at arrival and checked out of Brightwheel at departure at the iPad located inside the door.. For **Billing and attendance purposes, parents must be sure that their child is checked in and out on Brightwheel. Families will need to mark hot, cold or no lunch, or send a message through Brightwheel to the classroom teacher by 8:15**. If the child is not signed out you could be charged for extra time.

**INFANT/TODDLER ARRIVAL**

During arrival it is still very important to set up a routine that your family can follow every day. This provides your child with a sense of security. Please be sure to communicate with your child's teacher about your child's health, mood, eating habits, family situations, or anything you think might affect your child's behavior at school. In order to keep our floors free of debris that may be harmful to the children on the floor we ask that you drop off your child and all of things at our designated check in area. Your child's teacher will welcome your child with open arms and store all of their items for them.

When it is time for the person dropping the child off, to go, tell the child you are leaving, and say, "Good-bye". If your child is having a difficult time separating, please know that the teacher will help them to get settled and feel safe. Feel free to call later or message us through Brightwheel, to check in and make sure your child is calm and enjoying his/her day.

**PRESCHOOL ARRIVAL**

During arrival it is very important to set up a routine that your family can follow every day. This provides your child with a sense of security. Please keep teachers informed about your child's health, mood, eating habits, family situation, or anything you think might affect your child's behavior at school. We recommend that you help put away items in their cubby, walk your child into the room, greet the teachers and friends, help wash their hands and assist your child in selecting a toy or joining an activity.

When it is time for the person dropping your child off to go, tell the child you are leaving, if your child is having difficulty separating, signal a teacher for assistance. Feel free to call or message us on Brightwheel later if your child is upset when you leave, and we will let you know how he or she is doing.

**Some Tips for When it's Hard to Say Good-bye**

Your child is entering a different world of new toys, adults, and children - a whole new environment. He/She is leaving the familiar: you and the home he/she knows, to establish himself/herself as a member of a group in a new setting. If your child meets these new experiences successfully we can expect self-confidence to build. This feeling of security contributes significantly to healthy personality development. Together, we will work to achieve this goal. Listed below are some tips to keep in mind during your child's adjustment period.

1. Be sure to tour the Center with your child ahead of the first day so that your child has seen their classroom and knows where they will be going.
2. Don't overpromise. Tell your child they will make some new friends and that his/her teacher will take good care of them. They will have lots of new toys to play with at the center. If you tell them this is the most exciting thing that will ever happen and talk too much about it, it will probably just build anxiety. Keep it simple.
3. If your child is especially attached to a stuffed animal, blanket, or another object, let them bring it.
4. Please keep in mind that your child may be anxious when you leave. For example, you might offer to stay for five minutes or long enough to read a story. When the time is up, tell your child calmly that it's time for you to go, and then leave. Prolonging the separation at this point is very hard on children. Be firm and pleasant about saying good-bye. Tell the teacher when you are leaving so that she can help by holding and comforting your child if necessary.
5. Always say "good-bye" to your child. It may seem easier to sneak off while your child is involved in pay, but it's traumatic for a child to suddenly realize a parent has disappeared. In the long run saying good-bye helps your child build trust with you.
6. Ask for help if you have trouble separating from your child. Our staff has been through this hundreds of times and we are glad to help. Sometimes we have to physically remove the child from the parent so the parent can leave. While this is hard for everyone involved it is our experience that in the long run it is much easier on the child than having the parent continue to stay a little longer in hopes that the child will then let them leave without a scene. In many cases the child cries for a short time then becomes involved in play. Other children may take a longer period to adjust. Feel free to call to find out how your child is doing. We will be honest about his/her adjustment.
7. We encourage families to bring photographs of the family for the child to place in the room. Children often carry these around when they feel sad or miss people in their home, or just to feel comforted. Some older children benefit from a note reminding them when the parent will return.
8. Tears are not unusual. Expect them. Sometimes a child will separate easily the first few days and then have difficulty later in the week. Adjustments may last several weeks. Talk to your child's teacher or to the director if you are concerned. Avoid trying to convince your child through talking and re-talking that he/she will have a good time. Children seem to adjust better if they're allowed to express the very real feelings that they have. Be reassuring and upbeat, but accepting of your child's emotions. Let them talk about how they feel. Assure them that it is normal to miss Mommy/Daddy and that you miss them too, but that it will be easier with time.
9. Let your child know that you have a job to do during the day and so do they - to attend school.
10. During periods of adjustment children will test you to see if you will change your mind about them attending. Do not change your arrangements even for one day during adjustment periods. Your child will learn that his/her behavior can persuade you to keep him/her at home and you will have a real battle on your hands in the future.
11. During adjustment periods, the routine of eating, toileting, and sleeping may regress, your child may be more aggressive as well. This will pass.
12. Some signs of readjustment may occur after the weekend, after an illness, when a new sibling is born, after a vacation or when the child has had visitors. Let your child's teacher know if these things are occurring so she can help.
13. Some children separate easier from one parent than the other. If you have having a really hard time, you might try changing who drops off your child. It can make a big difference in some cases.

**TRANSITIONING NEW CHILDREN**

We prefer to have new children ease into the room and routine. If a child enters the program in the middle of the year, we recommend a few short visits, gradually lengthening the visit time, prior to full-day enrollment. This helps your child become familiar with the environment and also helps us get acquainted.

Each child is unique in his/her patterns and ease of adjustment to new situations. Be sure to talk with the staff daily during the transition phase. A consistent daily schedule (arrival and departure routines) also helps children adjust to a new routine and environment.

When transitioning your child into our classrooms during the initial visit, we ask that you stay with your child as they will not be officially enrolled and are not included in the teacher-child ratio. It is suggested that visits last, on the average, 2 - 3 hours. If you would like your child to experience different times of the day, schedule your visits accordingly. For liability purposes, parents may not leave their child unsupervised during visits.

Adjustment is a slow, gradual process. Taking into account the child's age and previous experience away from the family, parents and teachers together work out the best adjustment plan for each newly enrolled child. With infants and toddlers, it may be advisable to "ease" the child in over a two or three day period, gradually lengthening the stay.

Additionally more time may be needed in adjustment for non-English speaking children. We encourage one member of the child's family to attend a few times with the child. Having a parent to translate can make the child feel more secure. Also, in some cases it helps if the child attends for only part of the day, the first few days.

Keep in mind that all our children and parents have gone through these periods of adjustment. While your child may not experience difficulty in adjustment, we do want you to be aware of situations that can occur and be prepared to handle them. We regard the adjustment period as a normal, healthy, time for the child.

**Treasures/Possessions**

Any educational artifacts that your child wishes to share may be brought in to show their friends, in the share bag when it is their turn. For example, your child might bring in a leaf that has changed colors or a postcard from a traveling relative. Items of this nature could spark a week-long discovery process for the children in the classroom about the fall season or the travel site. We ask that all toys be kept in the car or at home. For young children, transitional objects, such as a favorite blanket or a doll, may be needed at the beginning of your child's experiences at the Leet Center and we encourage the use of objects that make children feel more comfortable . Please talk with your child's teacher about your child's individual needs.

**Unacceptable Items**

At the Leet Center, we request that the following items not be brought to the child's classroom; guns, violent toys, gum, candy, or money. Please do not send juice in bottles with toddlers, as we are unable to let children drink juice from bottles, in keeping with our health policy. **Under no circumstances should you put medication in your child's backpack.** There have been instances at other centers where parents have done this and children have taken the medication. If you are transferring your child to another party who will need to give your child medication, please give the medication to the child's teacher for safekeeping and transitioning. The safest way to handle medication drop off is with our school nurse or with the office manager.

**DEPARTURE**

If someone we do not know is to pick up your child, please inform the teacher. This person must be listed as "authorized to pick-up your child" on the enrollment paperwork. Remind the authorized person that we may ask for picture identification to insure your child's safety. We are not allowed to release your child to an older school aged sibling.

If there are any changes in emergency contact information or individuals who are authorized to pick up your child, please fill out a Change of Information Form immediately. You may have up to three (3) different people who are authorized to pick up your child in the emergency directory. We strongly encourage families to have at least two (2) authorized people listed.

During departure, it is also important to follow a set routine. We recommend that when you arrive, you greet your child and the teachers, and let your child know how much time he or she has to wrap up the ongoing project or activity. While your child is finishing up it is a good time to talk with the teachers to discuss your child's day, but this is not the time to have a full conference with the teachers. If you feel the need for a conference, please ask the teacher to set a separate time for you to meet. On the way out, check your child's mailbox and cubby. Be sure and say, "Good-bye" to your child's teachers, so they know you and your child are leaving, so that they can check your child out on Brightwheel.

Once you have reunited with your child and begun departure, the Leet Center is no longer responsible for your child's safety. Please be sure he/she remains with you both inside and outside of the building. Please use the sidewalk when going to your vehicle in the circle drive.

**Arrival and Departure for Students with Disabilities** - There is a handicapped entrance located in the circle drive of Brown Hall and handicapped parking is at the end of the sideway leading into the building. There is an elevator on the first floor of Brown Hall (South wing of the building).

**Signing Out of Bearcat Club** – Signing your child out on Brightwheel is required for billing. Timely check in/out affects the cost of your child care.

**ATTENDANCE**

If your child is scheduled to attend The Leet Center and will be absent, please notify the teachers by 8:00 am either through Brightwheel or by calling (660) 562-1233. This will assure that teacher assistants are taking lunch counts for each classroom, so the center does not order and charge for an extra or not enough lunch for the class.

**ACCESS TO THE BUILDING/PARKING**

Families that are arriving at the Leet Center will enter the new vestibule entrance on the southwest side of Brown Hall facing the circle drive.

Parking on the Northwest campus is limited, restricted, and controlled by the University Campus Safety Office. The Leet Center is aware of the limited space involved in drop-off and pick-up of children through the circle drive. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause you in bringing and picking your child up. We are doing the best we can to work through the situation. Campus Safety is doing its best to stop unauthorized parking in the circle drive. We ask for your patience and cooperation.

**Parking-** We realize that many parents are sharing a few parking spaces. Infant and Toddler families will be utilizing the circle drive (lot 56) for pick up and drop off making sure that the family is in and out of those spots as quickly as possible. The official University Policy is to ticket anyone parked in the circle drive for longer than the designated time period. Curbs painted red are 15-minute parking only and curbs painted yellow are NO parking.

**Parking Hangtag Permits-** All Leet Center families may obtain a Horace Mann Laboratory School parking tag from the Horace Mann office. You will fill in the information for your Horace Mann parent parking hangtag(s) on the forms provided during enrollment. When you turn in your car license plate number, you will be issued a hangtag for your car's rear view mirror. Hangtags will need updated yearly in August to receive the current Horace Mann pass. If someone else brings your child, please explain the parking privileges and responsibilities.

The Horace Mann parking permit hang tag allows parents to park on campus between 7:30 am and 5:00pm, in any lot (including the 15-minute circle drive spots when there is availability) except disabled, when visiting, picking up, or dropping off your child. The hangtag is to be used for Horace Mann business only. Cars with hangtags may not be left in the circle drive or other campus parking lots while parents attend class, work, or run personal errands. You may receive a parking ticket if these guidelines are not followed. If you receive a ticket you may appeal your ticket at the Campus Safety Office. Any questions or comments may be directed to the Horace Mann or Leet Center Office (660) 562-1233 or Campus Safety (660) 562-1254.

Please do not leave children unattended in cars while dropping off or picking up children. Safety seats are required in the State of Missouri until the age of 8. We require that a child be delivered from a car seat and be belted into one when they leave our facility. Walk with your child on the walkway at all times. Walking in the driveway behind cars is dangerous. Help your child learn "parking lot safety" and avoid accidents. If you are transporting several children and need help, call the office and ask for assistance. We are mandated reporters and are required to report any families whose children are not properly restrained within proper child safety seats.

**PART IV**

**OUR TEACHERS**

Director: Breanne Poston

Leet Center Assistant Director: Adrienne Bell

Lead Teachers: Mrs. Julie Michaelsen, Mrs. Erika Yocom, Mrs. Racheal Wood, Miss Tiffany Kribbs, Mrs. Mariah Jones

Instructional Assistants: Mrs. Alexandra Gallagher, Miss Maggie Graham

Leet Center prefers Lead Teachers to have a Master's Degree in Early Childhood. As a part of the Leet Center Professional development plan the Leet Center teachers will participate in current professional development opportunities to match current trends in early childhood education. The Leet Center teaching staff will meet weekly and have professional development opportunities on a regular basis. Your child's teachers present at conferences nationally and work on publications.

**CURRICULUM**

The Leet Center's Laboratory School has followed a constructivist model since 1991, using Project Construct as our curriculum model. This curriculum is child-initiated, providing opportunities for the children that support and enrich their development, learning, and growing independence. Curriculum development provides the framework for planning and carrying out work with young children and their families. The Leet Centers Laboratory School curriculum is child-centered, interest-based, and hands-on to encourage each child's growing independence. Although planned projects may be used on occasion, children's interests are considered and the curriculum is adapted as directed during family meeting times.. Each room is designed with interest centers (blocks, dramatic play, manipulatives, art, sensory, library, music & movement, science, etc.) and children choose from a variety of developmentally appropriate activities throughout the day to play and work with. Each program includes a balance of child- and teacher activities designed to actively engage children in learning throughout the day and promote their creative expression. Assessment is an integral part of curriculum planning. Monitoring and documentation of children's participation within the learning environment is on-going. Children's interests, strengths, and needs are used to shape curricular decisions.

In 2018 the first 2 Leet Faculty flew to Italy for a study tour in Reggio Emilia Italy. This has enhanced the process of exploration and the understanding of how children move. These classrooms are rich in language opportunities and experiences. Such opportunities include but are not limited to: stories, finger plays, poems, labeling of items in the classroom, visiting with the students during free play, family style dining, special times for children to share ideas and thoughts. The children will have opportunities to have a special time to share things from home. The children will be given classroom responsibilities. Children will have opportunities to give their desires for topics to be studied.

Inclusive technologies will be offered to students and families for whom English is a Second Language. For example, children will use pictures in developing scheduling charts etc. If needed, a university with training in ESOL will be consulted to help the children and family adjust to the language barrier.

The community plays a large part in the child's world. Community perspectives are a consideration in planning activities and curriculum. Community personnel often come to the center to share with the children. The university community is used in curriculum planning; through visiting museums, people sharing job duties, and talking with our school neighbors we learn new ideas.

Curricular decisions are closely linked and are shaped by the on-going assessment gathered by the staff daily. Such decisions are based on the fundamental concepts of being age-appropriate, individually-appropriate, culturally relevant, and use of anti-bias practices reflected in the program in dialogue with the families of the children. Theory and research in child development, family studies, and early childhood, and early childhood special education guide the curriculum and assessment practices of the programs.

**DAILY SCHEDULE**

Each classroom has a daily schedule that is posted on the parent bulletin board inside each classroom, but the following are some components that will be incorporated into each day:

| **Activity:** | **Staff Responsibility:** |
|---|---|
| **Arrival:** wash hands | |
| **Choice Time/Indoor Explorations** – children select from a variety of activity areas including: Art, House/Dramatic Play, Reading, Science, Math, Writing, Sand and Water Table, Games and Puzzles or Project work. | **Supervise all areas, assist children with choices when necessary, discuss and motivate cooperation, creativity and peer interactions. Encourage children to help keep choice time areas organized and neat.** |
| **Group Time** – large group activity which begins the day with introductory songs, events of the day, news, sharing and discussion of project work. | **Participate in singing, focus children's attention on teacher directing activity, and encourage participation of all children.** |
| **Morning Snack –** nutritious snacks are provided for the children with milk and water. | **Supervise hand-washing, wash tables with three step method before and after snack. Encourage self-help skills and assisting with clean up after snack. Sit with children at tables and encourage conversations.** |
| **Outdoor Explorations –** Outdoor play on playground with a wide variety of age appropriate equipment, games and materials.<br>**We will play outside in the rain if lightning and thunder are not present. | **Check that all children are properly dressed before going out. Check all equipment and toys prior to use. All areas of playground must be supervised. Avoid personal conversations with other staff. All equipment must be stored in proper places.** |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Family Circle –** Sing songs, discuss any social issues that need to be discussed, or read a book aloud to the children. | **Encourage children to participate in singing and discussion. Help focus children on the story. Quietly redirect children and avoid calling out names. Sing along! Learn the songs, share a new song, play and instrument, or teach a finger play.** |
| **Family Style Lunch –** Children will have lunch. They will be served family style if eating hot lunch at school or they will get out their lunch boxes if eating a cold lunch from home. | **Supervise hand washing. Supervise and help as needed with lunch. Sit with children and engage children in conversations at the table. Assist with clean up after lunch. Staff offer alternative activity for those finished eating** |
| **Rest Time –** Children will assist getting rest cots ready by putting on crib sheet, blanket, pillow and stuffed animal. Children will rest quietly on rest cots. | **Help distribute rest cots, remembering to leave space between each child. Help settle children and avoid conversation. Staff offers alternative quiet activity for children who have rested after a certain period of time.** |
| **Choice Time/Indoor Explorations** – children select from a variety of activity areas including: Art, House/Dramatic Play, Reading, Science, Math, Writing, Sand and Water Table, Games and Puzzles or Project work. | **Supervise all areas, assist children with choices when necessary, discuss and motivate cooperation, creativity and peer interactions. Encourage children to help keep choice time areas organized and neat.** |
| **Afternoon Snack –** nutritious snacks are provided for the children with milk and water. | **Supervise hand-washing, wash tables with three step method before and after snack. Encourage self-help skills and assisting with clean up after snack. Sit with children at tables and encourage conversations.** |
| **Music and Movement –** Children will be given opportunity to have a music and movement experience. | **Participate in singing, focus children's attention on teacher directing activity, and encourage participation of all children. Learn the songs, share a new song, play and instrument or teach a finger play**. |
| **Outdoor Explorations –** Outdoor play on playground with a wide variety of age appropriate equipment, games and materials.<br>**We will play outside in the rain if lightning and thunder are not present. | **Check that all children are properly dressed before going out. Check all equipment and toys prior to use. All areas of playground must be supervised. Avoid personal conversations with other staff. All equipment must be stored in proper places.** |

**TODDLER AND PRESCHOOL NAP/REST TIME**

Nap time is an important opportunity for growing, active children to rest and re-energize. This is also a time for teachers to regroup, clean, do paperwork, discuss the day's activities, and plan future curriculum for the class.

All toddler and preschool children rest in the afternoon. Children are asked to rest but are not required to sleep. Children are helped to relax by a variety of methods: darkened room, soft music or story tapes, rubbing backs, etc. We will try to accommodate parent's requests to individualize children's rest routines. Please discuss specific accommodations with your child's teacher.

We ask that parents bring a small soft blanket, a crib sheet and a pillow or soft toy. We will send these items home weekly for the parent to launder and return to school the first day the child attends in the following week.

**ASSESSMENTS**

Child assessment is a vital and necessary component of all high-quality early childhood programs. Assessment is important to understand and support young children's development. Each classroom completes screenings and authentic assessments that encompass all areas of development; sensory, language, cognitive, gross-motor, fine-motor, and social-emotional. Results will be shared through the portfolios occasionally and face to face during the parent teacher conferences. Assessment is also essential to document and evaluate how effectively programs are meeting young children's educational needs, and to inform of program improvement.

**Child Development –** Children do not just grow in size. They develop, evolve, and mature, mastering ever more complex understanding of the people, objects, and challenges in their environment. There is a general pattern or sequence for development that is true of most children. However, the rate, character, and quality of development vary from child to child. Culture influences development in different ways, and the goals for children differ from culture to culture.

Quality assessment looks not only at what is happening within the child, but also to the care that the child requires in order to thrive. For a child to develop and learn in a healthy and normal way, it is important not only to meet the basic needs for protection, food and health care, but also to meet the basic needs for interaction and stimulation, affection, security, and learning through exploration and discovery.

All staff are trained in the use of assessment in an early childhood program which includes the purpose and value of assessment and appropriate assessment tools. Leet Center staff work closely with university faculty and through discussions at center staff meetings to have a continuing process of evaluating the effectiveness of the assessments tools and program.

**Assessment Results –** The information gained during all screenings and assessments will be used to develop curriculum, parent education, and evidence for referral.

- Lead teachers use the information gathered during the assessment process, identifying children's interests and needs and use this in planning a curriculum that best meets the needs of all children. When appropriate the information is used in planning for individual student needs.
- If there is an indication of a developmental delay the teachers will use the information gathered for referral for further diagnostic screenings and assessments. As needed the Local Education Agency will be involved in further diagnostic screenings and assessments.

**OBSERVATIONS AND PORTFOLIOS**

During each child's day teachers will utilize observations and interactions to gain knowledge about each child and their learning. Each observer will use guidelines on how to observe children and record their observations.

Child Portfolios-tools may include checklists, social inventory, anecdotal records, self-reflections, progress reports, samples of work, drawings, paintings, writings, stories and photographs, etc. **Parents are welcome to view their child's portfolio at any time.

**MEETING INDIVIDUAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN**

**INFANT AND TODDLER DIAPERING**

Parents will be responsible for supplying wipes, diapers, and diaper cream/powder for their child/ren. All supplied materials will be labeled with the child's name and stored within the diapering area. Disposable wipes will be used to

cleanse the child. The diapering table will be cleaned thoroughly after each use. NO child will be left unattended at any time while on the changing table. Diapers and wet clothing will be changed promptly. Wet or soiled diapers will be placed in an airtight container located in the changing area.

Families who choose to use cloth diapers will need to supply those as well. Soiled cloth diapers will be placed into an airtight gallon ziploc baggie, unless something specific is supplied by parents. The soiled diapers will be returned to parents when they pick up their child.

**POTTY TRAINING**

No effort to toilet train a child will be started without consent from the parents. We work with our families to provide information about the transition from diapers to underwear. When the child appears that they are ready both the parents and the center will visit and decide if they feel it is appropriate to begin toilet training. We will follow the parent's lead in this process and encourage the use of the potty at school. When you feel your child is ready to try underwear at home, we will try underwear at school. The routine for toilet training will be discussed with the parents so that the same method and language will be used. Hopefully, the process continues with very few accidents, however if several accidents are occuring, the decision might be made to place your child back in diapers for sanitary purposes. Please be aware that potty-training is a process. Children will NOT be punished, berated, or shamed for accidents. Parents will be responsible for providing extra clothing for their child in case of an accident. We will keep working with your child and eventually we will all reach our goal of having your child potty trained.

Our NAEYC guidelines do not allow us to rinse underwear that has been soiled by urine or feces. These will be placed in a plastic bag and sent home for laundering.

**PRESCHOOL POTTY/TOILET TRAINING POLICY**

When a child begins enrollment, he or she must be completely potty trained. The child should be in cloth underwear and not in diapers, pull-ups, or training pants. Children are expected to use the toilets and clean up properly without assistance from teachers or teacher assistants. Assistance with hand washing reminders and clothing fastening will be given if necessary.

In the event the child is found not to be fully potty trained as indicated by three "accidents" (inability to reach the toilet on time, wetting or soiling undergarments), at the discretion of the teacher, the child will be asked to take a 2-week leave from the center to work towards readiness or the parents will come to the center to change the child. If upon returning the child still is not trained as indicated by one or more accident(s) the child will be asked to take a month long leave. The month-long leave will be repeated until the child returns fully potty trained. During the times of leave the parents will be billed as if the child were attending as enrollment will be reserved for their child. Parents have the option to decline the enrollment reservation, which would mean the child's name would go on the Leet Center enrollment waiting list if requested by the parent. The Leet Center will not automatically remove a child from enrollment, so parents must notify the center if they choose to drop enrollment.

Soiled garments will be placed directly in a Ziploc bag with a note attached, to be sent home. The Leet Center at Northwest is not equipped or staffed to meet Missouri licensing standards and health requirements to diaper or assist in the toilet training process, because of this parents of a child who has soiled their clothing through a bowel movement will be asked to come aid their child in changing.

**MEALS AND SNACKS**

We consider mealtimes an important part of our curriculum. They give children opportunities to learn about food, social skills, and language skills. Meals are served family style, and teachers sit at the table and eat with the children. Meal

times are opportunities for us to model good eating habits that children will carry with them throughout their lives. They also serve as a time for teachers to engage children in conversation and social sharing. Adults interact with children in casual conversation during meal times making this both a pleasant experience and a time for learning more about each other. We provide families a daily record through Brightwheel, documenting the type and quantity of food consumed for all infants, toddlers, and children with dietary restrictions.

**TODDLERS AND PRESCHOOL**

The Leet Center follows the guidelines of the USDA food program and children are served an approved mid-morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack. Menus are available online and are posted in each room. The cost for snacks and lunch is included in the tuition rates. If you choose, children may bring a sack lunch from home. Milk is provided for the children at lunch. We ask that sack lunches be well-balanced meals that meet the USDA recommendations for young children.

Lunch menus are planned by the University Dietician and meet the USDA food program standards. Your child will be encouraged to sample all foods served, but will never be forced to eat. Morning and afternoon snacks are planned in cooperation with the Nutrition and Dietetics Department at Northwest Missouri State University. The snacks are minimum prep items. Every effort is made to provide a variety of snacks that meet the standards and encourage children to try new and different food items.

Parents that have children with food allergies must notify the Leet Center with a written doctor's statement at the time of diagnosis or at enrollment. If, for any reason, your child cannot eat a certain food, please provide a written notice from your physician and discuss this issue with your child's teacher. Food service may be able to accommodate most different dietary needs (e.g., vegetarian, vegan, lactose intolerant). If this is not possible, foods may need to be sent with the child on a daily basis. Please talk to the teacher or director if you have any questions. Lunch menus are posted on a monthly basis and snacks menus are posted weekly.

**If your child is not here by 8:30 a.m., but will be here for lunch - please call your child's teacher so that a correct lunch count can be obtained.** Also, if you are planning on joining your child for lunch, please let us know by 8:30 a.m. so that food service can prepare the correct amount of food. Adult lunches are $5.50.

**PART V**

**GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE**

One goal of the Leet Center is to help children develop a positive self-image. We hope to encourage children to be self-directed, exhibit self-control, and become problem-solvers. A philosophy based on providing a positive, supportive environment that focuses on prevention and the teaching of appropriate behaviors guides the staff in their interactions with children. We use the Conscious Discipline Philosophy of Dr. Becky Baily and welcome you to seek out information on the philosophy online, on YouTube, or in the parent resource library.

Young children, due to their developmental age, are not capable of understanding the consequences of many of their behaviors. Therefore, children need to be encouraged to make good choices and to be prevented from harming themselves or others. This can best be accomplished through close supervision, gentle guidance, and most importantly, redirection.

Children need to learn to identify and express their feelings. However, often this requires the caregiver to acknowledge the child's response to the situation, and help him/her use appropriate strategies. For example, if we see a child about to hit another child for taking a toy away, we will prevent that child from hitting the other and say, "It looks like you want to keep the truck", and provide an alternative to hitting. We will also help the child understand the other child's point of view. "I see that Tommy is playing with the truck you had. It looks like he wants it too. Can you tell him that you are playing with it?" Through this method, children can begin to learn about the intentions of others and the way we hope to prevent one child from hurting another and at the same time help that child to learn to identify feelings and verbalize expectations.

Small children are very egocentric. As a result, they are not yet capable of understanding the concept of sharing and taking turns. Therefore, it is our responsibility to lend guidance through redirection to other activities when conflict situations occur.

As every parent knows, caring for young children requires a lot of patience. Children require ongoing guidance and support as they learn about themselves and others. Dealing with challenging behaviors is a process of teaching rather than punishment and control. Children are reminded what TO DO, rather than what NOT TO DO. For example, instead of, "DON'T run", children are told, "Walk to the door". Through this strategy: (1) children know what you expect, (2) a more positive classroom climate is promoted, and (3) children and adults form supportive relationships.

An additional strategy used with older preschoolers and school-age children is to help them learn how to solve their own problems and resolve conflicts. Teachers provide support and guidance as children develop and practice these skills. The staff at the Leet Center recognizes that similarities in principles at home and at school make children more successful in their experiences.

**Use of Corporal Punishment and Harsh Language**

The use of corporal punishment is forbidden in the center. The discipline philosophy of the center is to help children develop a positive self-image. We hope to encourage children to be self-directed, exhibit self-control, and become problem-solvers. A philosophy based on providing a positive, supportive environment that focuses on prevention and the teaching of appropriate behaviors guides the staff in their interactions with children. Children are re-directed and given choices to encourage appropriate behaviors. The use of threats and derogatory language by staff is not accepted behavior in handling children that misbehave.

**Discipline Strategies Used by Leet Center Staff and Students**

- Maintaining realistic expectations of children based on knowledge of child development.
- Providing clear and simple limits.
- Planning an environment that facilitates a caring atmosphere.
- Providing appropriate activities that keep children engaged to prevent challenging behaviors
- Modeling appropriate and respectful behaviors.
- Redirecting inappropriate behaviors toward desired outcomes.
- Giving children choices between two appropriate alternatives.
- Encouraging children to work together to solve problems.

- Encouraging children to use their words to solve problems or to elicit peer cooperation.
- Providing logical and natural consequences for children's actions.
- Guiding children away from the situation until they are able to calm down and address the problem.
- Conflict resolution (for older preschoolers and school-age children).

Limits may be explained to children in the following ways:

- We use safe hands/feet
- We need to keep ourselves safe
- It is our job to be our classrooms safe keepers, if we break our materials we will not be able to use them anymore

Sometimes a child exhibits challenging behaviors that are not resolved through the usual classroom interventions that the teachers use. Challenging behaviors are considered any behaviors that interfere with children's learning, development and success at play are harmful to the child, other children, or adults; and/or puts a child at a high risk for later social problems or school failure. Of particular concern are behaviors that are hurtful or unsafe to any of the children in our care. Unacceptable behavior at the Leet Center includes physical and emotional harm to other people, destruction of the learning environment or materials, and safety violations. In addition, children are expected to be respectful of others' feelings and needs. In these situations, the following steps for disruptive behavior are followed.

1. The teacher discusses the situation formally and/or informally with the parent(s) to examine possible causes and solutions.
2. The teacher meets with the center director to ask for further guidance.
3. Staff observe the child to give a clearer picture of the behavior, filling out an ABC chart, focusing on the environment, transitions, activities, schedule, peer interactions, adult interactions, and strategies.
4. Using the information collected the teaching team (consisting of the Leet Center Lead teachers and Director) will construct a plan to aid the child in being successful.
5. If the problem is not resolved, the teacher and director will meet together with the family and documentation to discuss concerns and observations.
6. A plan will be developed that may involve seeking support from other agencies, community services or outside evaluations. All involved will work as a team to support the child and family.
7. The new plan will be implemented for a predetermined amount of time.
8. If the results of an outside evaluation determine the child needs accommodations for special services, the center will work with the family to find and secure resources for the special services. The center may be able to provide these, as long as they don't create undue hardship for the program.
9. If it is determined that the Leet Center is not able to meet the needs of the child, the center will give the family notice that we must discontinue services. We will provide the family with 2 week's notice, except in a case where allowing the child to remain in attendance would create a safety concern.

**Biting Policy**

We feel it is important to address biting and our response to biting. The following section is from the book No Biting by Gretchen Kinnell and reflects our understanding, philosophy, and policy on biting.

Biting is unfortunately not unexpected in toddler groups and can be very emotionally charged. There are many reasons toddlers may bite. Sometimes the biting is related to teething. Sometimes toddlers bite to express feelings they can't

express with words yet. We have seen children bite when they are frustrated, and we have seen them bite in the excitement of a happy moment. No one can predict which children will bite, but we are ready to help toddlers who do bite to learn other behavior. We are also ready to give treatment, sympathy, and advice to children who are bitten. Here are ways we work to prevent biting and how we respond to it when it does happen.

First, we try to program the day to avoid boredom, frustration, or overstimulation. We provide a calm and cheerful atmosphere with a mix of stimulating, soothing, age-appropriate activities and multiple of favorite toys. We also work to model acceptable and appropriate behaviors for the children, helping them learn words to express their feelings and giving them tools to resolve conflicts with our help.

Second, if a bite does occur, we help the child who was bitten. We reassure him or her and care for the bite. If the skin is not broken, we use a cold pack. If the skin is broken, we follow medical advice and clean the bite with soap and water. If it is likely the bite may get dirty, we will cover it to keep it clean. If your child is bitten, we will notify you through Brightwheel, to let you know about the bite. The teachers will fill out an accident report. We also respond to the child who did the biting. We show the children strong disapproval of biting. Our specific response varies by circumstances, but our basic message is that biting is the wrong thing to do. We also help the child who bit, learn different, more appropriate behavior, and we let his or her parents know there's a problem so we can work together to solve it.

Third, the teachers and administration analyze the cause of ongoing biting. We develop a plan to address the cause of the biting, focusing on keeping children safe and helping those who are stuck in biting patterns. When we need to develop such a plan, we share the details with parents so they know specifically how we are addressing this problem.

Fourth, parents are notified if their child starts to bite. We ask parents to keep us informed if their child is biting at home. Children who bite in our program do not necessarily bite at home. But if your child is biting in both places, it is important for all of us to be consistent in dealing with it. Communication is very important in order to help your child stop biting.

We wish we could guarantee that biting will never happen in our program, but we know there is no such guarantee. You can count on us to deal appropriately with biting so it will end as quickly as possible. We will support your children whether they bite or are bitten. We want the best for all the children in our program. If you want more information on biting or have any questions or concerns, please let us know.

Although biting is a distressing issue, we recognize that it is a stage that some toddlers go through on their way through normal development. Because of this, our goal is to assist them, their families, and all parties involved through the process. If a particular biting situation becomes a major safety concern for the classroom teachers and children, the disruptive behavior process will be initiated to assist in the issue.

**Health and Safety**

To ensure the most optimal learning environment for children and provide a model program for future teachers, the Leet Center is licensed and inspected by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services - Bureau of Child Care and accredited through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

We also receive annual inspections by the State Fire Marshal's Office, Health and Sanitation inspections by the Nodaway County Health Department, and inspections by Northwest Missouri State University Environmental Health and Safety director.

These inspections ensure that all fire, health, and safety regulations are met and that the Leet Center adheres to high quality standards regarding teacher requirements, adult/child ratios, curriculum, nutrition, and other administrative practices.

Regular maintenance of the facility and the equipment falls under the University maintenance department. Regular inspections are made of facilities and inspection records are kept in the office of the University Health and Safety supervisor. If Leet Center staff finds a concern or if during a routine inspection by the representative of Missouri licensing authority there is found to be a concern the following steps are taken: 1) The Leet Center director shall notify the appropriate department on campus for repair. 2) The department will make a visit to the center as soon as possible to assess the work needed to be completed. 3) Depending upon the work needed to be completed the department will make repairs immediately or when the parts required are secured. 4) If the latter is the case the equipment in question will be removed or blocked from child use until the needed repairs are made.

The University makes every effort to ensure the safety of students from environmental hazards and pollution through the use of environmentally friendly supplies and spraying for insects is not done when students are present and is done in a timely manner so that no students will be in the area immediately after treatment. All chemicals and cleaning agents are kept in locked cabinets or closets. The building has been free of asbestos since the renovation of 1987.

**Emergency Procedures**

- Emergency phone numbers are clearly posted by all phones.
- The parent/guardian provides, in writing, the names and phone numbers of persons to contact if the parent/guardian cannot be reached.
- In case of an emergency, a faculty/staff member may go with the child to the emergency room and remain until a parent/guardian arrives.
- Teachers report in writing any injuries that may occur while the child attends the Leet Center, through Brightwheel.
- Teachers notify the parent/guardian of any injury requiring first aid treatment, through Brightwheel.
- Teachers report serious injuries to the Director immediately.
- Fire drills are practiced once each month and tornado drills every three months, to prepare children in the case of an emergency. Shelter-in-place (lockdown) drills are held at irregular intervals throughout the year.
- Emergency evacuation plans are posted in each room, the hallway, and outside the Leet Center office.
- The signal for fire, tornado, and/or shelter-in place is part of the University alarm system.

**General Safety Practices**

- Background screenings are conducted, and all teachers, students, and volunteers are included in the Family Care and Safety Registry.
- Teachers, students, and volunteers are required to have a TB test and a health form on file.
- All staff members are mandated to report any suspicion of child abuse/neglect.
- Children are supervised at all times and appropriate child: staff ratios are maintained.
- Authorized pick-up information is on file and in the emergency directory.
- If we are not familiar with the authorized pick-up person we will ask to see identification and will match the person's ID with the emergency directory information provided by the parent(s).
- Each room is equipped with a first-aid kit.
- Teachers take roll and monitor the number of children in their care.
- Teachers move throughout the play yard to ensure adequate and appropriate supervision.
- The play yard is monitored closely for safety and improvements.
- Safety mats are used under climbing equipment indoors.

- Staff are trained in CPR, First Aid, and Choke Saving/Rescue Breathing.
- Medicines are stored out of children's reach and administered only with written permission of parent/guardian.
- Individuals who serve food wear gloves when handling ready-to-eat foods.
- Cleaning supplies are stored out of children's reach.
- Teachers fill out documentation for accidents, incidents, and health-related situations. Parents receive copies of accident/incident forms, through Brightwheel.
- Teachers follow universal precautions for blood-related accidents and incidents.
- Choke tubes available to test if toys are too small.
- Latex "free" gloves are available in each room for emergencies.
- Toys are checked frequently and broken toys are discarded.
- Leet Center administration works with parking operations to improve parking lot safety - extra stop sign, caution signs, etc.
- Parking lot safety tips are shared with parents.
- Emergency numbers and first aid kits are included in fanny packs for walking and field trips.
- Parents are informed in advance of all field trips.
- Teacher-child ratio is adjusted for field trips to ensure that there is a higher ratio of adults to children.
- On field trips children must stay where teachers can see them at all times.
- Health and safety information is incorporated into the curriculum and taught to the children on a regular basis.

**Handwashing Procedures for Adults and Children**

Handwashing is of primary importance in the prevention and spread of disease. Because of this, we follow strict hand washing procedures at the center.

Children wash their hands when arriving for the day before beginning play. We ask parents or other accompanying adults to help them remember this practice. Other times we wash hands include the following:

- After diapering or using the toilet
- After handling body fluids
- Before meals or cooking activities
- After playing in water that is shared by two or more people
- After handing pets or other animals
- Before and after feeding a child
- After assisting a child with toileting
- After handing garbage or cleaning.

**HEALTH POLICY**

Each child must have a copy of the current health form with immunization history signed by a physician on file at the Leet Center. Classroom teachers will notify parents when certain communicable diseases are present and we ask that you notify the center when your child is out with a communicable disease.

**ALLERGY POLICY-** When children are diagnosed with an allergy or there is a known allergy at the time of enrollment the parent must notify the Leet Center with a written doctor's statement. This would include food or other allergies (such as bee stings). If there is a doctor's plan for care of the child due to the allergy, this must be given to the center and must have the doctor's signature to meet licensing standards.

If, for any reason, your child cannot eat a certain food, please provide a written notice from your physician and discuss this issue with your child's teacher or the director. Food service may be able to accommodate different dietary needs

(e.g. vegetarian, lactose intolerant). The Leet Center will provide food substitutes to the best of our ability. The Leet Center will always be able to provide alternative beverages (100% juice or water).

A list of the children with allergies to various foods will be posted in the kitchen for those that prepare snacks and lunch to use in providing alternate selections. Parents will be asked to complete a release form allowing the center to post identified allergies. This form will be available from the Leet Center office (135 Brown Hall).

**CPR/FIRST AID TRAINING FOR STAFF**

The school nurse is CPR and First Aid trained. Each year, training in CPR and first aid are made available to staff and student employees at no cost to the individual. Classroom teachers, Instructional Aides, and Student Employees are required to have the training.

**CLASSROOM FIRST AID KITS**

Each classroom will have a backpack of First Aid supplies. This pack is to be taken with the class whenever leaving the room for outdoor play or taking a "field trip" to a destination on campus. The kit will contain the following items: CPR Mask, gloves, antiseptic wipes, and alcohol wipes, antibiotic ointment, band aids, gauze pads, Kleenex, paper towels, and germ-x. The classroom teacher should keep the school nurse informed when supplies need to be replaced.

**Children with the following may NOT be brought to the Leet Center:**

- Chicken Pox
- Conjunctivitis
- Whooping Cough
- Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease
- Lice
- Measles
- Scabies
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Scarlet Fever
- Flu

Unusual behaviors will be monitored closely and parent(s) will be contacted if other symptoms develop. These behaviors include, but shall not be limited to:

- Cranky or less active behavior than usual
- Crying more than usual
- Feeling general discomfort or seeming unwell
- Loss of appetite

The Leet Center has limited isolation space, children developing any symptoms that require dismissal shall be picked up by the parent/guardian as soon as possible. Children will be kept in the Nurse's Office on the first floor of Brown Hall until the parent/guardian comes. The child will be supervised at all times while in the Nurses' Office either by the nurse during her regular hours or by office staff if the nurse is not on duty.

If the child is well enough to come to school, he/she is well enough to participate in the regular program, including indoor and outdoor activities.

**Children may remain at the Leet Center if they have ONE (<u>but not more than one</u>) of the following symptoms:**

- A child with a temperature of up to one hundred degrees Fahrenheit (100° F) by mouth or ninety-nine degrees Fahrenheit (99°F) under the arm.
- After an illness has been evaluated by a physician, medication has been prescribed, and any period of contagion has passed as determined by a licensed physician.
- When it has been determined that a child has a common cold unless the director and the parent(s) agree that isolation precautions should be taken.
- When a child has experienced vomiting only one (1) time with no further problems or symptoms.
- When a child has experienced loose stools only one (1) time with no further problems or symptoms.

Please know that the decision for the child to remain is based upon the teacher's discretion. For example, if the child vomited only one time but seems cranky, tired, or unwell; the teacher may recommend the child be picked up. In these situations, the child can return the following day if the reasons for concern are no longer present.

**Children with (1) ONE OR MORE of the following symptoms may <u>NOT</u> be brought to the Leet Center or <u>will be sent home</u> if these symptoms occur –**

- Diarrhea: More than one (1) abnormally loose stool
- Headache or stiff neck
- Severe coughing
- Unusually dark, tea colored urine
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Gray or white stool
- Severe itching of the body or scalp, or scratching of the scalp. These may be symptoms of lice or scabies.
- Fever over one hundred degrees Fahrenheit (100°F) by mouth or ninety-nine degrees Fahrenheit (99° F) under the arm.
- Pinkeye-tears, redness of eyelid lining, irritation, followed by swelling or discharge of pus
- An infected skin patch(es)-crusty, bright yellow, dry or gummy areas of the skin
- Unusual spots or rashes
- Vomiting
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing
- Yellowish skin or eyes

Also, the child may not be brought to the Leet Center if he or she is taking an antibiotic prescribed within the last 24 hours – children must be on antibiotics for 24 hours before returning to school.

**Children Sent Home for Illness**

Children sent home from the Leet Center due to illness shall not return to school the following day. A child who is feeling ill needs to be in a quiet place where he/she can rest and have lots of attention and tender loving care.

If children develop a fever while at school they will be isolated and cared for in the Nurse's office on first floor until the parent or emergency contact person can pick them up.

Children may return to school 24 hours after the disappearance of all symptoms, including the disappearance of fever, fever-reducing medicine free. Children returning with any of the previous symptoms or illness will be excluded from the Leet Center immediately. The decision is at the discretion of the staff. Your child's physician may be called if staff members have questions concerning your child's condition.

**Children Returning After Illness**

When your child is ready to return and medication is required, a "Medication Authorization" form must be signed by the parent and placed on file so that the school nurse or if the nurse has gone for the day the classroom teacher can administer the medication.

**Medication Authorization**

All medication will be given to the child only with the dated, written permission of the parent(s) stating the length of time the medication may be given.

Prescription medication shall be in the original container and labeled with the child's name, instruction for administration, including the times and amounts for dosages, and the physician's name. This may include sample medication provided by the physician.

All nonprescription medication shall be in the original container and labeled by the parent(s) with the child's name, and instructions for administration, including the times and amounts for dosages.

Medication Authorization forms are available for short-term (two weeks or less) and long-term (daily medications). If the Leet Center will be administering medication daily or over a long period of time, a physician's signature is recommended. Parents must also update the form monthly by initialing and dating the form. Parents are asked to take home medications once they are no longer administered at the Leet Center.

**Accident and Illness Policies and Procedures**

If a child is injured after arriving at school, the parent will be called. The Parent Information Sheet requires home, office, and emergency phone numbers. It is the parent's responsibility to update the family's emergency contact numbers. If we cannot reach a parent, the emergency contact will be phoned.

If the child is injured during the day, the parent will be contacted to pick up the child. If we cannot contact a parent, we will call the emergency contact. The emergency contact must be someone who can be available in case of mild illness, to provide temporary care for a sick child, and has transportation to the Leet Center. If the child would require treatment in the Emergency Room, the parent will be contacted and arrangements will be made for transporting the child to the Emergency Room.

If a child needs immediate medical attention, the teacher will call 911. Then the parent or the child's physician will be called. If we cannot reach the parent, the emergency contact will be phoned. The teacher who witnessed the emergency situation will accompany the child to the hospital, bringing records and all parent permission forms.

**Parents will be notified of all known minor injuries through Brightwheel.**

**CHILD ABUSE POLICIES**

**Mandated Reporting**

As professionals in contact with young children and their families, we at the Leet Center are required by law to help the DFS become aware of children who may be abused or neglected. According to the law, public or private school teachers, educational administrators, guidance or family counselors; as well as day care/child care workers, are mandated reporters. Thus, it is policy of the Leet Center preschool program to report any and all suspected cases of child abuse

and/or neglect to DFS immediately by telephone and to follow up in writing within 24 hours the same information as reported by telephone. Our school will offer full cooperation of its staff during the investigation of the reported incident.

**INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY**

**Leet Center Announcements Regarding Hours of Operation –** Decisions made in the early morning hours will be relayed to KNIX, KXCV, KFEQ and KQ2TV.

**Leet Center Policy Guidelines for Inclement Weather –**

A. *If the University is CLOSED, the Leet Center will be Closed*- When the University is closed due to inclement weather; the Leet Center will be closed.

B. *If Maryville Public School is closed* at the start of the day, the Preschool Programs will be closed, but the Infant and Toddler center will remain open.

C. *If the Leet Center is Open, with Threat of Inclement Weather*
When the Leet Center opens as usual, but inclement weather becomes a serious threat, the Director will determine if an early closing time is necessary.
When University offices close early due to inclement weather the Leet Center will also close early. Parents will be notified through email, telephone calls, and announce on the radio that the Leet Center will be closing early. The Bearcat Club supervisor will remain at the Leet Center until all children are picked up.

**OUTDOOR PLAY**

Outdoor play is an important part of the early childhood curriculum, and we consider the outdoors an extension of the indoor classroom. Toys, materials, and activities are also available outdoors to enhance the children's play experience. Typically, children go outside twice each day. If your child is not well enough to play outdoors, he or she is not well enough to attend the Center.

It is important for parents to provide the appropriate clothing and outerwear for the weather conditions (e.g., coat, snow pants, boots, gloves, etc.). During the cold weather months, the Center has a few extra hats and mittens, but not enough for everyone.

In warmer weather, the shade trees often shelter our playground from the hot sun. Parents are encouraged to provide sunscreen (medication form must be signed for staff to apply sunscreen). Children are also encouraged to get plenty of drinks to replenish body fluids. Typically, the length of time spent outside is reduced and often the children wait to go outside until late in the day or early morning when the sun is less intense.

**Outdoor Temperature Policy**: The Leet Center uses the following general guidelines when determining if the children and staff will go outside:

**Winter –** If temperatures fall below 35°F wind chill, staff will keep children indoors. As temperatures approach 35°F wind chill, staff will monitor the latest weather conditions. Staff will also check our playground wind factor and for snow accumulation and water puddles.

Typically, staff members wait until later in the day to take the children outside when temperatures are warmer. Children spend a shorter amount of time outside in cold temperatures and are monitored closely. Please make sure your children are dressed appropriately for outdoor play – boots, mittens, hats, warm coats, etc.

**Summer –** As temperatures/heat index approach 100°F, staff will monitor the latest temperature and weather conditions. Children often participate in water play activities outside in shady areas of the playground.

**CLOTHING**

Children go outside to play every day unless prohibited by dangerous weather. We believe the adage "there is no bad weather, only bad clothing**."** However, of course, we keep children inside when there is lightning or dangerously cold temperatures. To ensure warmth the children should wear dry, layered clothing in cold weather. Shaded areas are provided on sunny days and children should wear sunscreen with UVA and UVB protection of SPF 15 or higher. If you wish you may send your children with sunscreen already applied as it takes time for it to take effect. You will need to sign the permission form to allow staff to apply sunscreen to your child.

In order to foster independence and self-help skills, we ask that you send your child to the Leet Center in clothes that he/she can manage independently. Active indoor and outdoor play is a regular part of our school day. Please dress your child in clothing that is suitable for running, climbing, and other vigorous activity, and that is appropriate for the weather. Because the children work with paint, clay and other messy materials, they should wear clothes that can be laundered easily.

- Tennis shoes or shoes with rubber soles are required. For your child's safety we recommend that you do not send your child in flip flop shoes.
- A complete change of clothes is essential for any messes, please have at least one complete set of clothing for your child. The extra set of clothing will be stored in a Ziploc baggie at school. Please be sure to mark your child's name on the outside of the baggie as well as the extra clothing.

We do not routinely use insect repellents on children. However, if, and only if, public health authorities recommend and DFS licensing approves the use of insect repellent due to a high risk of insect-borne disease, repellents containing DEET will be used. Non-aerosol repellents will be used in keeping with our licensing standards, only with the written permission of parents and only on children ages two months and older. Repellents will be applied no more than once a day under any circumstances.

**SMOKING**

Smoking is not permitted on the grounds of Northwest Missouri State University.

**FIELD TRIPS**

Parents must give permission for children to attend field trips. Each classroom plans its own field trips and parents are informed of each trip. Infants/Toddlers and Preschool age children do not leave campus. Their field trips consist of walking excursions on campus.

If you do not wish for your child to attend an outing, please make alternative child care arrangements. We do not have the staff to care for a child that is not able to attend an outing. Parents are always welcome to join the class on field trips.

A cell phone is available for all field trips as needed.

**Classroom Pets and Animal Visitors**

We sometimes include healthy household pets that present no danger to children as part of our curriculum. We ensure that these animals are properly housed, fed and maintained and that the children are supervised when handling the animals. Teachers are responsible for supervising the care of classroom pets. Families who wish to bring in family pets or other animals to share with their classmates should consult the teacher first.

We have had wonderful experiences when children have brought family pets or an insect they have found, so we don't hesitate if you have the opportunity to do this. However, we do have a few restrictions. A parent or guardian must accompany the pet and take it with them when they leave. Temperament of the animal should be discussed in regards to whether this is an appropriate animal to have around children. Some animals are not suited to the classroom environments and pets that show fear or aggressive tendencies (growling, hissint, etc.) should be immediately removed from the classroom. No animal that has ever bitten should be brought into the center.

No live wild mammals may be brought into the classrooms, except as part of a program conducted by wildlife professionals.

Reptiles are not allowed in the center because of the risk of salmonella infection. This is both a licensing standard and criteria of NAEYC accreditation. Because of this, children may not bring turtles or snakes to school to visit.

Any animals or insects collected by children or adults should be released at the end of the day in the same place they were found. All animal cages should be cleaned by adults only.

When a child is allergic to an animal, staff should make sure that the child is not exposed to that animal. Please inform us if your child has an allergy to a specific animal and have your doctor complete an Allergy Action Plan so we can best protect your child.

**PART VI**
**KNOWING AND UNDERSTANDING OUR PRESCHOOL FAMILIES**

Families and culture are celebrated in the Leet Center. The role of parents is vital. Family involvement and connectedness is an integral piece of what makes our program strong. Families are frequently visible in and around the center, sharing life and what they love with the children. Their role in informing and working together with their child's teacher is the glue that keeps our center in place. It is important to us that we develop skills and knowledge to work effectively with our diverse families. Our staff will use a variety of formal and informal strategies (including conversation) to become acquainted with and learn from families about their family structure, their preferred child-rearing practices, linguistic, racial, religious and cultural backgrounds. Program staff will actively use information about families to adapt the environment, curriculum and teaching methods to the families we serve.

**PARENT PARTICIPATION**

You are invited to observe anytime. Observing allows you to note age and individual related behavior patterns and to watch your child as he/she interacts in a social environment.

If you have questions about what you observe (i.e., children's behavior, use of materials, teacher's behavior, etc.), please ask the teacher about it. When observing, people often see only a snapshot in time and may not clearly understand the context surrounding a certain action in the classroom.

Your participation is eagerly welcomed in the programs. Your involvement can take many forms, and we hope that all parents will find meaningful ways to participate in their child's Laboratory experience. Some ways in which you may choose to participate include, but are not limited to:

- Field trip supervision
- Assistant teaching (occasionally or on a routine basis)
- Leading or assisting in special projects (carpentry, sewing, music, cooking, science experiments, cultural experiences, etc.)
- Construction or collection of materials for Leet Center use such as paint aprons, raw materials for art projects, dress-up clothes, dramatic play props, carpentry materials, etc.
- Attending or planning parent workshops
- Eating a morning snack, lunch, or afternoon snack with your child – The Leet Center must know by 8:00 a.m. of the day in advance if you will be eating lunch with your child, so an appropriate number of lunches can be ordered.

**FAMILY ARRANGEMENTS**

The Leet Center recognizes that all families are not structured similarly and that some families may live apart due to a variety of circumstances.

The Leet Center teachers and staff are sensitive to the needs of children in these situations and will work to support the entire family. We are happy to provide duplicate information in the child's mailbox to accommodate both parents' need for information.

If information is needed by the Leet Center staff regarding custody, child pick-ups, etc., please provide us with the formal paperwork. Unless we have the appropriate paperwork, we cannot keep a child's biological mother and/or father from picking up his or her child.

**PARENT COMMUNICATION**

Daily posts to Brightwheel will keep you connected to the Leet Center (with more frequent communication in the toddler rooms). It is helpful for you to review activities planned for the day with your child. This is a great way to talk with your child about his/her day. You may find if you ask your child, "What did you do today?", you might hear, "Nothing". If you know about specific activities that occurred, you can ask more direct questions: "Can you tell me about the picture you painted today?" Because the curriculum is planned in advance, some changes based on spontaneous learning opportunities, children's interests and needs can be expected.

We encourage you to provide the Leet Center with an e-mail address. This can facilitate timely communication and notification of special classroom and Leet Center events. The teachers may also use email to send newsletters and weekly project work descriptions to you.

**PARENT AND TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Individual parent-teacher conferences will be offered at least twice during each school year. Parent Conferences for the school year will be held in October and March. During the conference, you will review and receive a copy of the Developmental Summary on your child.

Ongoing, informal communication of parent or teacher concerns and the sharing of special joys, sorrows, and accomplishments in the child's life are important. Please feel free to speak with your child's teacher during arrival/departure, or schedule a time to talk privately.

**PARENT RESOURCES**

The Leet center provides families with books on a wide variety of topics for families to use. These resources are available in the Preschool Parent Lending Library. Please ask the director about any questions that your family may have about the resource library.

If families would like to review any of the licensing regulations regarding childcare, both classrooms have a manual available. Please contact your child's teacher if you are interested in reviewing the child care licensing manual. Parents may also have access to their child's classroom files, family registry forms, accreditation materials, etc. For access to these materials, please contact the director.

**PARENT BOARD**

**The Leet Center Advisory Committee** was established to address concerns of the center. The committee is made up of center parents, community leaders, university personnel from the Early Childhood department, officials from the local school district, and staff members from the Leet Center and the center's NAEYC representative. The committee meets twice a year.

The purpose of the committee is not to make policy but to give opinions and advice. The committee looks at needs of the center, examines possible ways of auxiliary funding for the center, and other issues that pertain to the center.

**Horace Mann/Leet Center Parent Advisory Council (PAC)** expresses their individual and collective opinions on issues affecting *Horace Mann Laboratory School & Leet Center* policy and student life. All parents and teachers are members of PAC. The PAC board is made up of parents elected to the offices of President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Publicity Chair, and Volunteer Chair. The goal is to promote and maintain positive attitudes among the community, parents, students, faculty, staff and administrators while allowing for input and advice on school policy and procedures.

**PROGRAM/CENTER EVALUATION**

Leet Center conducts evaluations through parent input (informal visits/conferences and a formal parent survey), licensing requirements and NAEYC accreditation standards.

**PART VII**

Leet Center is a part of the Professional Education Department within the School of Education. Each year approximately 100 students receive direct practicum experience teaching at the Center. Most students are Elementary Education and Early Childhood Education majors. Students participate in activities and routines as they learn how to care for young children in a supervised setting. Some students are also responsible for observing the development of a child in their Center placement (**focus child**).

**Focus Children –** Most children enrolled in the Center will be focus children at least one semester each year. Each college student selects one child to follow over the course of the semester. The student focuses on that child for observations and homework assignments. The student then writes a developmental summary.

Developmental Summaries are written records of development based on observations and assessment for each Focus Child/Families prepared by the student teachers over the course of the semester. A copy of the developmental summary is kept in the children's files and the parent(s) receive a copy at the end-of-the-semester conference. Children also have a Portfolio of their development at the end of the semester. The Portfolios typically include: written documentation of the child's development, art work samples, and samples of writing, photographs or other types of media documentation (e.g., audio, video).

**Focus Families –** Students are encouraged to get acquainted with the family of the child they are observing. They may ask you questions or write notes to you about your child.

PSY 410 students completing a minor in EC and a major in Psychology also observe family interaction and will be required to involve themselves more with the focus family. The student may ask to conduct a home visit, participate in a family outing, or interview you regarding your family time.

**Early Childhood Practicum Students –** Students participate in the daily routine of the classroom during their practicum hours. Students will be responsible for observing, interacting, and supporting children throughout the day. In addition, students are required to plan and implement developmentally appropriate activities. Toward the end of the semester blocks, students become responsible for a majority of the classroom routine. This provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate and implement all they have learned during the course of the semester. During this time, Leet Center faculty observes at the side of the room and takes notes in order to provide students constructive feedback.

**Teacher-Student-Parent Conferences –** At the end of the semester, parents of children who have been Focus Children may receive an end-of-the-semester conference with the child's teacher and the student teacher. During the conference the student teacher informs the parent(s) about the child's development as observed over the course of the semester and uses the time to set goals and answer questions. During the conference, parent(s) receive a copy of the Developmental Summary on their child.

**Student Observations/Participation –** Occasionally, we have students from other classes observe and participate with the children. You will be informed of any research projects or other events needing your attention or awareness. All students are required to wear photo identification.

**PART VIII**

**HOW TO HANDLE A PROBLEM OR COMPLAINT**

If a parent has a problem or complaint, the policy of the center is to be directed to the attention of the head teacher or Director. If the response is unsatisfactory, parents may speak to the Coordinator of Early Childhood Programs and if needed, to the Dean of the School of Education. Parents are encouraged to make suggestions about preschool policies and programs.

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Leet Center Director
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**VOLUNTEERS**

Volunteers in the classroom are welcomed. You, a grandparent, an uncle or aunt, or other significant family friends are welcome to come to the classroom and share special skills, interests and experiences with the children. Possibilities include but are not limited to:

- Read a book
- Tell a story
- Assist with a special art lesson in drawing, painting, sculpture (no arts/crafts project)
- Do some science or math experiments
- Show photos from a past trip

- Tell about your job, hobbies, etc.
- Cooking activities, holiday foods, ethnic recipes, healthy snacks
- Play an instrument, teach new songs
- Teach a dance or exercise program, yoga
- Share information about your culture/country, teach a language
- Talk about your favorite artists, musicians, bring examples of their work
- Gardening and planting

Classroom volunteer hours will be coordinated with the lead teacher of the classroom. If you are interested in volunteering on a regular basis, please indicate that interest.

Visitors will be asked to check in at the main desk of the Horace Mann Lab School in Brown Hall.

**BIRTHDAYS**

If you would like your child's birthday to be celebrated, you are welcome to bring a snack to share. We recommend that you select a nutritious snack to share. Check with your child's teacher for suggestions on fun and nutritious snack ideas. Due to child care licensing regulations, all snacks must be pre-packaged. Please make arrangements with your child's teacher at least two days prior to the birthday.

**CLOSING STATEMENT**

A strong home and school environment is essential when building a good environment for young children. All of our staff will try to do our very best to keep you informed and involved in our preschool program. Clearly, ongoing communication and support from both families and staff make the connection between home and school a two-way street. Please share with us information about your child and report any changes especially during a major crisis. Anything you share with us will be held in confidence. We hope to nurture mutual trust and respect at every opportunity. There will be many ways for parents to become involved in the Phyllis and Richard Leet Center for Children and Families. We look forward to getting to know you and your family.