



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
Charlotte Sharp
Children's Center

Family Handbook

Charlotte Sharp Children's Center
1411 Hensel Street
College Station, TX 77840
(979) 458-6836

Family Handbook is subject to change. You will be notified of any
changes or updates to the Handbook.

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Contents

Charlotte Sharp Children’s Center	5
Texas A&M University	5
Internal	7
External	7
Administrative	7
Classroom	8
Licensing	9
Inclusion Statement	9
Confidentiality Statement	9
Texas Penal Code	10
Enrollment	10
Affiliation	10
Waitlist Policy	10
Enrollment Policy	11
Classroom Assignments	12
Parent Orientation	12
Withdraw	12
Termination	12
Fees and Billing	12
Tuition/Billing	12
Late/Decline Fees	13
3rd Party Payments	13
Curriculum and Assessment	14
Ready to Advance Early Learning Curriculum	14
Wonders K-5 Reading Program	15
Nutrition and Physical Education	15
Learn the Signs. Act Early.	15
Breastfeeding Policy	16
Children with Special Needs	16
English Language Learners	16

Wellness Policy	17
Nutrition & Physical Activity	17
Food Preparation and Services	18
Environments	18
Indoor	18
Outdoor	18
Risky Play	18
Schedules and Routines	19
Special Activities	19
Special guests.	19
Pets & animals.	19
Water play.	19
Celebrations.	19
Behavior Management	20
Positive Guidance	20
Safety Plan	20
Referral Process	20
Dismissal	21
Arrivals and Departures	22
Parking	22
Signing in and out	22
Daily Health Checks	22
Security	22
Video surveillance	23
Saying Goodbye and Hello	23
Communication	23
Face-to-Face	23
Procure Family Engagement App	23
Emails	23
Phone Calls	24

Family Communication Board	24
Newsletter	24
Conferences	24
Absences	24
Family Partnerships	24
Open Door Policy	24
Family Advisory Board (FAB)	25
Providing Feedback & Grievances	25
Health & Safety	26
Illness	26
Medication	27
Sun Safe Policy	28
Medical Emergencies	29
Immunizations	29
Vision and Hearing Screening	30
Accidents and Incidents	30
Emergency Plans and Drills	30
Supervision	31
Handwashing	31
Diapering & Toileting	32
Apparel	32
Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect	32

Welcome

Welcome to the Charlotte Sharp Children's Center (CSCC). We are a licensed early childhood education facility on the campus of Texas A&M University. The Charlotte Sharp Children's Center operates under the Division of Academic & Strategic Collaborations and is also supported by the University.

The Charlotte Sharp Children's Center is located off Hensel Street and is on the Aggie bus route. We are licensed for up to 200 children ages toddler – school age. CSCC has 12 classrooms plus a multipurpose room. The Charlotte Sharp Children's Center is open year-round M-F from 7:15 AM – 6:00 PM. We follow the Texas A&M University staff calendar in addition to our professional development and family conference days. Beginning in summer, 2023, CSCC will contract enrollment on a semester basis (fall, spring, and summer).

History

The Charlotte Sharp Children's Center joined Texas A&M University on August 21, 2023, becoming the second child care center under the university's purview. The children's centers will collaborate with Texas A&M University Institute for Early Childhood Development & Education to provide students in the Texas A&M School of Education and Human Development with a real-world demonstration and training ground, while providing children at the centers with access to the latest in early childhood educational best practices.

Mission Statement

Charlotte Sharp Children's Center

The mission of the Charlotte Sharp Children's Center is to provide high quality, affordable, and accessible early childhood care and education to the children of affiliated Texas A&M University faculty, students, and staff as well as the local community establishing a solid foundation for a lifetime of learning. We support and contribute to Texas A&M University's mission, goals, and values.

Texas A&M University

Texas A&M University is dedicated to the discovery, development, communication, and application of knowledge in a wide range of academic and professional fields. Its mission of providing the highest quality undergraduate and graduate programs is inseparable from its mission of developing new understandings through research and creativity. It prepares students to assume roles in leadership, responsibility and service to society. Texas A&M assumes as its historic trust the maintenance of freedom of inquiry and an intellectual environment nurturing the human mind and spirit. It welcomes and seeks to serve persons of all racial, ethnic and geographic groups as it addresses the needs of an increasingly diverse population and a global economy. In the 21st century, Texas A&M University seeks

to assume a place of preeminence among public universities while respecting its history and traditions.

Aggie Core Values

Howdy! We understand the importance of being an Aggie! We incorporate many of the traditions throughout our program, especially the core values listed below.

We learn from Karen Stephens that **Respect** is a verb and not a noun, we

- Help children develop respect and put it in to practice and through positive social skills

We show **Excellence** through our

- Program philosophy
- Developmentally appropriate practice
- Focusing on the whole child
- Giving children authentic experiences
- Focusing on child-directed and inquiry-based activities
- Using practices based on research
- Promoting curiosity and questions
- Social emotional growth
- Physical health and development
- Literacy
- Ongoing evaluation and assessment, and
- Interpersonal relationships

We develop **Leadership** skills by

- Teamwork
- Jobs in the classroom and
- Positive reinforcement

We display **Loyalty** by

- Building strong relationships with our family and our friends

We teach **Integrity** through

- Critical thinking
- Empathy
- Proactive teaching and
- Leading by example

We demonstrate **Selfless Service** by

- Looking at the insides and not just the outsides of others
- Accountability and community service

Academic Connections

Internal

The Charlotte Sharp Children's Center serves as a location for Texas A&M students and faculty as well as others in the community to support educational and professional goals. We work closely with different academic departments to provide educational opportunities and experiences for students. This includes observations, projects, and field experiences including but not limited to practicums, internships, student teaching, informal research, developmental testing, observations, active participation, group discussions, activities, etc. Some of those may include collecting work samples, photographing, videotaping, and dictating children's sounds and words. If research falls under jurisdiction of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Human Subjects Research, we will notify families of the research and IRB approval number. We will obtain parent/guardian permission for activities that include photographs or videotaping, or anything we feel needs parental permission. We will not permit any activity that we feel will cause undue distress, physical or psychological harm. All participants will complete a background check prior to beginning any type of child interaction as well as an orientation from an administrator.

We are committed to providing these experiences for students, faculty, and our community. If you feel strongly your child should not participate in these activities, another early childhood program may be a better fit for your family.

External

In order to meet the needs and support of all our children we may need the expertise of an external entity. We work collaboratively with College Station ISD, Bryan ISD, and Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) to aid in the implementation of an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). A copy of an IFSP or an IEP will be kept in the child's file. We also work collaboratively with private therapists and consultants. Services may be rendered at the Charlotte Sharp Children's Center.

Our Team

Administrative

The Charlotte Sharp Children's Center is led by a director and supported by the administrative coordinator and instructional coach.

Director

The director is responsible for the overall operation of the Charlotte Sharp Children's Center as well as being a leader in the early childhood field.

Administrative Coordinator II

The administrative coordinator is responsible for the business and administrative functions of the Charlotte Sharp Children's Center.

Front Desk, Student Employee

We have several part time student employees that provide administrative support and perform front desk responsibilities.

Classroom

The classroom team is led by an Instructional Coach. Classrooms are led by an early childhood teacher and supported with an early childhood assistant teacher. Early childhood teaching assistants support as needed in classrooms.

Instructional Coach

Coordinates CSCC early childhood teaching and education programs. This position provides technical support and services including coaching, training, mentoring, quality assurance, and teamwork.

Early Childhood Teacher

All our Early Childhood Teachers have at least a CDA; most have obtained a degree of higher education. Their role is to develop and implement the curriculum and assessments as well as monitor their classroom staff.

Early Childhood Assistant Teacher

Their role is to assist the Early Childhood Teacher with the development and implementation of the curriculum and assessments as well as mentor teaching assistants.

Early Childhood Teaching Assistant (Student Employee)

We have several part time student employee teaching assistants. Their role is to support the daily operations in the classroom.

Hours of Operation

The Charlotte Sharp Children's Center is open **year-round**, M-F from 7:15 AM – 6:00 PM.

We will be open except the following holidays as set forth by Texas A&M University

- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving and the day after
- Winter Break (see Texas A&M Holiday Calendar for specific dates)
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Spring Break (see Texas A&M Holiday Calendar for specific dates)
- Memorial Day
- Emancipation Day
- Independence Day

Professional development days, family conference days, and other closings related specifically to the Charlotte Sharp Children's Center will be listed on the semester contract. These dates may vary year-to-year.

If the Office of the President or Human Resources announces early release, the Charlotte Sharp Children's Center will close unless classes will be in session.

If Texas A&M University is closed due to inclement weather, the Charlotte Sharp Children's Center will be closed as well.

Our Program

Licensing

The Charlotte Sharp Children's Center is regulated by the Texas Department of Health and Human Services, Child Care Licensing Division. Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers is available at the following link:

http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/documents/Standards_and_Regulations/746_Centers.pdf

Copies of the most recent Licensing inspection report can be found in the front lobby on the bulletin board.

Inclusion Statement

Texas A&M University is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equality of opportunity and human dignity. To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, Texas A&M encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality, diversity, pluralism and the uniqueness of the individual within our state, nation and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees should be based on applicable law and individual merit.

Texas A&M University, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

It is the policy of Texas A&M University not to discriminate based on gender, age, disability, race, color, religion, marital status, veteran's status, national or ethnic origin, or sexual orientation. Harassment of a student in class, i.e., a pattern of behavior directed against a particular student with the intent of humiliating or intimidating that student will not be tolerated. The mere expression of one's ideas is not harassment and is fully protected by academic freedom, but personal harassment of individual students is not permitted.

Confidentiality Statement

Information exchanged between families, teachers, administrators, staff, and other professionals, if applicable, is considered private. Obtained information is only shared with those we believe are in "need-to-know" status.

Formal and informal assessments, child file contents, including all health and medical information, food program documents, etc. are considered confidential. Only permitted individuals with proper authority can access this protected information. Permitted individuals may include, but not limited to, CSCC employees; special educators; therapists; licensing, accrediting, grantors; local ISDs and state representatives.

A release of information or court order must be signed by the responsible parent/guardian before any information about a child or their family is disclosed.

Confidential information is locked in filing cabinets. Administration and front desk employees monitor access. All CSCC employees are informed of our confidentiality policy.

Photographs and videos are only shared when written permission is obtained. This form is maintained in the child's file.

Texas Penal Code

Under the Texas Penal Code any area within 1,000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to a harsher penalty.

Enrollment

Affiliation

The Charlotte Sharp Children's Center offer priority to Texas A&M System Member Employees.

Waitlist Policy

The Charlotte Sharp Children's Center maintains a waitlist for all our age groups. By adding your child to the waitlist, you understand policies, procedures, and/or fees may change by the time your child is offered enrollment.

Complete one application per child. If applying for an unborn child, please put your expected date for the birthdate.

Bi-annually an email will be sent out to confirm your waitlist status and provide an opportunity to update contact information if applicable. It is very important your information is correct for when we contact you regarding enrollment.

You will be notified via email first and via phone secondly when a space for your child has become available. You will have 48 hours from the time of the email to accept the enrollment. If you decline the first time, you will be placed back on the waitlist with the decline date instead of the application date. If you decline for a second time, you will be removed from the waitlist. We log all communications regarding the waitlist. It is very important to notify us of any changes in email addresses or phone numbers.

The wait time to become enrolled can range from 1-12 months. We encourage families to get on the waitlist as soon as possible.

How to Complete Waitlist Application

1. Take a tour of the Charlotte Sharp Children's Center.
2. Complete online application.

Waitlist Priority

1. Current CSCC staff and siblings that are currently enrolled at CSCC, and United States Military Veteran.
2. Affiliated students, faculty, and employees.
3. TAMU alumni.
4. Community.

All prioritization is based on the date of your completed waitlist application submission.

Enrollment Policy

Once you have accepted enrollment, a parent/guardian will complete the following:

- Contract (updated every semester – starting Summer 2023)
- Admission form
 - You must list at least one emergency contact (cannot be parent/guardian)
 - You must list at least one local authorized pick-up (cannot be parents/guardians)
- Certificate of health and immunization records
 - Vision and hearing screening for children 4 years of age or older
- Appearance form
- Family Questionnaire
- Parent text messaging system form (optional)
- Automated payment processing form (optional)

To maintain continuous enrollment, you must sign a contract every semester. If you do not sign a contract by the posted due date, your child will not be enrolled the following semester and you will be asked to fill out a withdrawal form.

When you sign a semester contract, you are agreeing to pay for the entire designated time period. You may not break a contract mid-semester. If an unforeseeable event occurs and you cannot fulfill your contract notify administration immediately. You will be responsible for payment for the duration of the contract unless administration can enroll a child in your child's place. This is not a quick process, nor does it ensure we can find someone to complete your contract. You are responsible for payment until another family begins paying.

Classroom Assignments

Classroom assignments are determined by age and consultation with teachers. All relevant information is considered to make the best decision for placement.

New classroom assignments occur every August. Teachers begin building a relationship with their new children a few weeks before starting in their new classroom.

Parent Orientation

Every new parent/guardian will be given a virtual orientation to learn about our program before your child starts at the Charlotte Sharp Children's Center. Every fall semester, we have a large virtual family orientation before the start of our school year. We offer smaller sessions in the spring and summer semesters. New parents/guardians will be notified of orientation dates through the enrollment process.

Withdraw

Withdraw forms are available toward the end of each semester. Remember, you are enrolled and responsible for payment for the dates listed on the semester contract.

Termination

The Charlotte Sharp Children's Center reserves the right to terminate a contract. Below are a few examples of reasons we can terminate a contract. See Dismissal section for a more detailed list of behaviors that may lead to dismissal from the Charlotte Sharp Children's Center.

- Noncompliance with center policies and procedures.
- Fraudulent information provided to the center.
- Failure to complete and turn in required documentation or forms.
- Delinquent account.
- Other.

Fees and Billing

Tuition/Billing

Every semester parents/guardians must sign a contract for continued enrollment. You are responsible for full payment during the dates listed on the contract. Tuition is posted to your account on the first of every month. You have until the fifth day of the month to make payment (Bi-monthly plans are the fifth and twentieth). If you are signed up for automatic payments, they will be scheduled on the fifth day of every month. Tuition payments may be paid by check, money order, payroll deduct (for those who qualify), electronic withdrawal, or by credit card (credit cards have a \$25 fee per transaction). Electronic payments are only available for full monthly tuition. No pro-rations of payments are given for unexpected closings, absences, etc.

A \$75.00 material/supply fee per child, per semester will automatically be added to your account and is due on or before the fifth day of the months of September, January, and June. If a child is enrolled mid-semester, the supply fee is paid with the first month's tuition.

If you do not have a student or employee ID card issued by Texas A&M University with a magnetic strip, you will need to request a building access card. Access cards are \$25 per card.

Late/Decline Fees

A \$5.00 late payment fee is assessed for each day and for each type of payment received late (after the fifth of the month). Bi-monthly plans will be considered late after the fifth and/or twentieth of the month. For example, if tuition is received 5 days late, a \$25.00 late fee will be assessed to your account. If the due date falls on a day the center is not open (i.e., weekend or holiday) the due date will be the first day the center is open following the due date.

A late pickup fee is assessed per child who is picked up past our closing time of 5:30 p.m., or time of early closing.

- Minute 0-5 late, \$10 fee will be assessed per child.
- For every 5-minute increment thereafter, an additional fee of \$5 will be assessed per child.
- After 15 minutes, UPD will be called, unless we have heard from parents.

A \$30.00 returned check/credit card decline fee is assessed for insufficient funds or decline of payment. We cannot accept another check as repayment of the initial returned check. We can accept a Cashier's Check, Money Order, or Cash.

In the event of non-payment of tuition during the contracted period Texas A&M University has the authority to disclose information about the delinquent account to any credit bureau, collection agency, or attorney for the purpose of collection of any delinquent amount. Past due accounts will be subject to late payment fees as well as any additional fees incurred by Texas A&M University such as but not limited to court costs, attorney's fees, and reasonable costs for collection. All delinquent accounts will be referred to Texas A&M Debt Collections. If you are a student, any unpaid balances will be charged to your Texas A&M University account as well as class registration being blocked. Services will be terminated for accounts which are 2 months past due.

3rd Party Payments

We accept 3rd party payments through other organizations such as Child Care Aware. Talk to our Administrative Coordinator about any 3rd party payments you are expecting to receive.

Curriculum and Assessment

The Charlotte Sharp Children’s Center utilizes a variety of approaches to offer the best developmentally appropriate curriculum for our center. We apply research and evidence-based curriculums focusing on the whole child.

Ready to Advance Early Learning Curriculum

The preschool curriculum for 2-year-old children at CSCC is “under construction” and in draft form. The 2-year-old curriculum is aligned with Texas Infant and Toddler Guidelines. It is designed to develop foundational skills for self-regulation, respectful communication, social-emotional learning (SEL), and emergent pre-academic tasks.

The preschool curriculum used at CSCC for our 3-year-old children is called Foundational Learning. The curriculum is aligned to the Texas Infant and Toddler Guidelines for children ages 36-48 months. It is a comprehensive program, meaning that all ten academic domains approved by the Texas Education Agency are incorporated into daily learning and play activities.

The prekindergarten curriculum for 4–6-year-old children is called *Ready to Advance (RTA) Early Learning Curriculum (or RTA PreK4)*. The national research- and evidence-based curriculum was published in 2018. A Texas edition of RTA PreK4 was created for the 2020-2021 Texas PreK Adoption by Texas Education Agency. RTA is aligned with the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines that were revised in 2015 and are currently used in all public PreK schools in Texas.

All CSCC curriculums include hundreds of books, instructional supports and materials, games and technology for discovery and extending learning about 10 themes during the academic year. The content and skills are integrated into ten learning domains approved by the Texas Education Agency and State Preschool Guidelines. You may review our curriculum in any classroom and obtain a RTA Program Guide in the CSCC office.

Children will follow another instructional curriculum written for Texas, the *We Can Early Learning Curriculum*. *We Can* is a 12- month curriculum for 4–6-year-old children. The summer units of study entitled, Freshwater Animals and Environments and Saltwater Animals and Environments/Biomes.

The activity plan is a lesson plan that includes an overview of daily and weekly content and skills that will be introduced or practiced in lessons. All activity plans provide instructional guidance for teachers and support staff at CSCC staff, and they inform caregivers and visitors about content and skills and practice activities in our classrooms. Monthly Activity Plans are posted in each classroom.

Wonders K-5 Reading Program

The Kindergarten class uses a comprehensive English Language Arts curriculum entitled, the *Wonders K-Grade 5 Reading Program* published by McGraw Hill. *Wonders* is on the Texas Education Agency adoption list. CSCC uses resources from the kindergarten and grade 1 *Wonders Program*. The program is sold nationally and used in public and private educational schools in Grades K- 6. The program provides comprehensive coverage of state standards/TEKS for social studies, science, language and literacy development, reading, writing and spelling instruction. The math and science program follow the same content/skills as RTA and the Texas TEKS for mathematics and science.

Nutrition and Physical Education

Children will be provided at least 90 minutes of active playtime each day including 45 minutes of structured physical activity (age-appropriate activities guided by the teacher) and at least 45 minutes of unstructured physical activity (active/free play). Inactive time is limited to less than 15 consecutive minutes excluding nap/rest time. Screen time of educational/movement material is limited to no more than 30 minutes per day. Children under the age of two are not exposed to screen time.

- Children are never forced, bribed, or rushed to eat.
- Food, beverages, active play, and screen time are not restricted nor used as a reward or punishment.

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Beginning in Fall 2024

The Administration for Children and Families, Administration for Community Living, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Medicaid and Medicare, Health Resources and Services Administration, Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration at the Department of Health and Human Services as well as the Office of Special Education Programs at the Department of Education have partnered to launch Birth to Five: Watch Me Thrive!, a coordinated effort to encourage developmental and behavioral screening and support for children, families, and the providers who care for them.

Before family conferences, families will be given the appropriate age screening tool (Learn the Sign. Act Early) to complete and return. The screening tool is short and provides a quick snapshot of a child's health and developmental status and indicates whether further evaluation is needed to identify potential difficulties that might necessitate interventions or special education services.

For more information please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html>

Breastfeeding Policy

We welcome breastfeeding mothers. Lactation spaces are available at CSCC. Breastfeeding resources are available in the front lobby.

Children with Special Needs

The Charlotte Sharp Children's Center is an inclusive program. Children with a wide range of abilities benefit from sharing classrooms together. All children are encouraged to participate to their fullest potential.

If your child has an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) serving birth through age 2 or an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) serving ages three and above please provide us with a copy that will be placed in the child's file. This will enable our staff to better meet the individual needs of the child and work with the education team to aid in reaching benchmarks and goals.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a law that makes available a free appropriate public education to eligible children with disabilities throughout the nation and ensures special education and related services to those children.

The IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities.

Infants and toddlers, birth through age 2, with disabilities and their families receive early intervention services under IDEA Part C. Children and youth ages 3 through 21 receive special education and related services under IDEA Part B.

For more information visit <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/>

English Language Learners

The Charlotte Sharp Children's Center wants to make communication as easy as possible for children. We encourage children to use whatever language they speak. The classroom environments will reflect the languages of the classroom community. Classroom teachers will use pictures and familiar objects whenever possible to communicate with children who currently do not speak English. We encourage families to continue to speak the child's first language at home; over time they will learn English.

Wellness Policy

Everyone has a role in helping to create and support healthy eating patterns in multiple settings nationwide. Over 30% of children are overweight or obese and those numbers have persisted for more than two decades¹.

We help our young children learn how to make healthy choices among foods, beverages, and physical activity as part of their daily lives. This lays the groundwork for a lifetime of healthful eating². We work with our families to promote healthy habits for life.

Teachers model our wellness policy by consuming the same foods as children. Teachers lead and participate in active play in both indoor and outdoor settings.

To achieve these goals, we have adopted the following policies.

Nutrition & Physical Activity

The Charlotte Sharp Children's Center provides a healthy AM snack and a PM snack daily. Parents/Guardians are responsible for providing a daily lunch for their child(ren). 1% milk is served to children two years of age or older. Water is available at all meals, classrooms, and outside at all times. We do not serve pork, peanut products, juice, processed meats, high sugar items (more than 6g sugar per serving), flavored milk, or fried/baked pre-fried food items. Vegetarian, protein-based, options are available for families who request a vegetarian diet in writing.

Children will be provided at least 90 minutes of active playtime each day including 45 minutes of structured physical activity (age appropriate activities guided by the teacher) and at least 45 minutes of unstructured physical activity (active/free play). Inactive time is limited to less than 15 consecutive minutes excluding nap/rest time. Screen time of educational/movement material is limited to no more than 30 minutes per day. Children under the age of two are not exposed to screen time.

- Nutrition education will be provided to children through formal and informal means such as meal time discussions about the taste, smell, and texture of foods as well as the benefits of eating healthy foods.
- Children are never forced, bribed, or rushed to eat.
- Food, beverages, active play, and screen time are not restricted nor used as a reward or punishment.

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. *2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. 8th Edition. December 2015. Available at <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/>.

² Nemours. *Nemours Child Care Wellness Policy Workbook: Creating an Environment for Preschoolers to Develop Healthy Habits for Life*. January 2012.

Food Preparation and Services

- Lunches are checked upon arrival each day and lunches/items that need refrigeration are placed in a refrigerator.
- Label lunch and individual items with the child's name, date, and contents (allergy reasons).
- We can heat foods in a microwave but cannot bake or cook due to regulations.
- Leftover food is thrown away daily.
- Eating utensils are provided by CSCC.

Environments

Indoor

The classrooms will contain several well-defined interest areas including but not limited to the following:

- Art Area
- Block Area
- Book and Writing Area
- House Area
- Music and Movement Area
- Sand and Water Area
- Toy Area

Our environments are enriched with materials that are real, reflect children's interests, developmentally appropriate, open-ended, support different types of play, reflect unbiased diversity and cultures, stored in an organized manner, reflect community, and are innovative.

Outdoor

Children will have the opportunity to go outdoors twice daily, weather permitting.

Outdoor classrooms have plenty of space for children to actively and physically play. Children explore nature and their bodies, have many opportunities for social play, and abundantly learn while outside.

Risky Play

Risky play allows children to take healthy risks and test the capabilities of their bodies with adult guidance/supervision. Risky play develops the prefrontal cortex and aids in the development of decision making, processing feelings, executive functioning, and self-regulation effectively making connections and learning (Keeler, 2020). Children who engage in risky play are climbing, jumping, running, tumbling, balancing, hanging/swinging, and cycling sometimes at high speeds as well as engaging with a variety of tools such as sticks.

Reference: Keeler, Rusty. (2020). *Adventures in risky play: What is your yes?* Exchange Press.

Schedules and Routines

Daily schedules and routines are predictable yet flexible and provide structure. The preschool and toddler schedules vary based on the developmental levels of those age groups.

Special Activities

Special guests.

Special guests enrich and enhance children's learning. Special guests may include new experiences for children such as music, dance, magic, and theatre to name a few.

Pets & animals.

Some classrooms may have a classroom pet or have a visitor/field trip that involves animals. Families will be notified of classroom pets or any animals the children will have access to. All animals and pets must be current on their vaccinations or a statement of health provided by a veterinarian. All children and staff must wash hands before and after touching an animal or pet. Children must not have contact with chickens, ducks, and reptiles, such as snakes, turtles, lizards, iguanas, and amphibians, such as frogs and toads while at CSCC.

Water play.

Children will have daily access to water both indoors and outdoors in their learning environments. Water used for daily play will be fresh and dumped at the end of each day.

Splash days in the summer may include wading pools and sprinklers. Wading pools will be drained, sanitized, and stored out of children's reach after each use. Sprinklers are not used on hard, slippery surfaces.

Celebrations.

There are many celebrations throughout the year. Celebrations are planned around what is celebrated by the classroom community culture.

We are happy to share birthday celebration invites with the whole class. Due to safety and allergy concerns, candles (or anything with fire) or balloons cannot be used in any celebrations at the Charlotte Sharp Children's Center.

Behavior Management

Positive Guidance

One of our jobs as early childhood educators is to help guide children's behavior. The Charlotte Sharp Children's Center currently uses two sources, *Classroom Management for Early Learning* and *Teaching Responsibility and Respectful Communication*. The Charlotte Sharp Children's Center center-wide expectations are Be Kind, Be Safe, & Communicate (*coming soon*). Based on the center-wide expectations, classrooms develop rules at the beginning of the school year. The children, if applicable, help create these rules. Children are taught the expectations and rules by classroom staff. Typically, children will have to be reminded of the expectations and rules. That is the first step in responding to challenging behavior is to restate the expectation. If the child complies, they continue with their classroom engagement. If the child is having trouble complying, the classroom staff will reteach the skill the child is having difficulty complying with, such as modeling walking feet inside, showing the child gentle or soft hands, etc. If the child continues to struggle complying with the expectations, classroom staff will redirect the child to another activity.

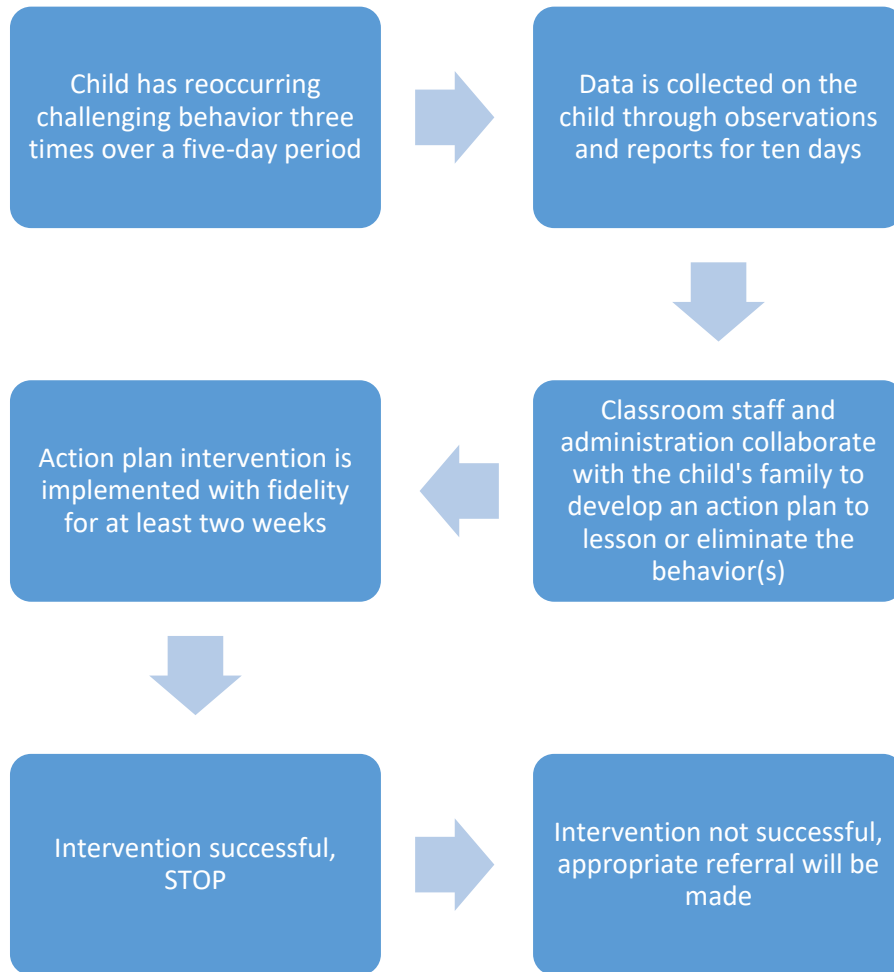
Expectations are stated clearly and positive. Classroom staff are trained to avoid using negative words such as, "no," "stop," and "don't." Children typically hear the last word in a sentence or phrase; "no hitting" and "stop running!" The child is hearing hitting and running so the behavior continues. If the child happens to stop with a negative statement, they are often confused on what they can do. Therefore, instead we state what we want the child to do; "nice touches please" and "walking feet."

Safety Plan

Although we have plans in place to guide children's behaviors, sometimes the child is not responsive to the above techniques. If a child is not operating in the executive part of their brain, other techniques will be used. If a child is having an emotional response to a situation, we will place the child in a safe place in the classroom and give them time to calm down. After the child is calm, we will engage in the problem solving approach. If a child is displaying destructive behavior, we will remove any potential harmful materials away from the child and move the other children to a safe place in the classroom or have them exit the classroom with staff. At this point, administration will be called to aid in the situation. We will wait for the child to calm before engaging with the child. Parents/guardians will be notified of the situation.

Referral Process

If a child has a recurring challenging behavior, we will start the referral process which is outlined below.



Dismissal

The Charlotte Sharp Children's Center makes every attempt to meet the needs of all our children and families. That may not always be possible. Below are some but not all examples of dismissal from the program:

- Noncompliance with Charlotte Sharp Children's Center and Texas A&M policies, regulations, and rules.
- Fraudulent information provided to the Charlotte Sharp Children's Center.
- Failure to provide requested documentation.
- A child unable to adjust to the classroom setting after referral process.
- Failure to pay.
- Failure to meet the needs of a family after attempts are made.
- Cannot meet the needs of a family after applicable attempts are made.
- Behavior action plan unsuccessful.

- Disruptive behavior from a child or family that has the potential to compromise the emotional or physical wellbeing of children or staff.
- Other

Arrivals and Departures

Parking

Parking is available in the front of the building for patrons of the Charlotte Sharp Children's Center. Please drive slowly and remain alert as many children are being loaded and unloaded from vehicles.

Signing in and out

It is mandatory you sign your child in and out every day at the front desk (Procare kiosks coming soon). When Procare kiosks are ready, you may register at the front desk if you have not done so. If there is a glitch in the system and you are unable to sign in or out your child, please notify the front desk immediately as they will be able to perform this task for you. If our systems are down, sign your child in or out on the designated clipboard. Once the system is back up and running those times will be entered. You will receive an email warning if you continue to forget to sign in or out your child.

The Charlotte Sharp Children's Center will only release children to authorized persons listed in the child's file. The authorized person will have to bring in photo identification. A copy will be made of the identification and will be placed in the child's file.

We cannot legally prevent a parent or legal guardian from picking up or having access to their child without proper court documentation. We must have documentation on file of any custodial arrangements made through a court of law. It is your responsibility to give us documentation as well as provide documentation of any changes to the court order. We will not make deviations from court orders. University Police Department will be notified of failure to comply with court orders.

Daily Health Checks

A daily health check will be performed on your child before you leave during drop off. You must be present during this quick process. During a health check, the teacher is taking a visual or physical assessment of a child to identify potential concerns about a child's health, including signs or symptoms of illness and injury, in response to changes in the child's behavior since the last date of attendance. The teacher will document the health check.

Security

The Charlotte Sharp Children's Center is a secure building. Only authorized personnel and families have access to the building (*coming soon*). It will be mandatory you use your authorized card to swipe in the building. If you are not associated with Texas A&M University, you may purchase an access card at the front desk. This ensures only

authorized individuals gain access to the building and keeps a record of who is in the building at any given time. This is imperative during an emergency. You will receive a warning if you forget your card. Please do not hold open doors for other patrons; everyone entering the building must swipe their authorized identification card.

Video surveillance

By January 2024, security cameras will be located throughout the Charlotte Sharp Children's Center campus and record 24 hours a day.

Saying Goodbye and Hello

Separating from our family can be very difficult for a child and reuniting with our families can be a joyous occasion. During both of these times it is important for your child to have your undivided attention. Having a well-established routine will make difficult drop-offs easier over time. Please refrain from bringing toys from home as this will cause a more difficult separation. Children may bring a lovey or book from home to help with the morning transition. Avoid being on your cell phone during goodbyes and hellos. Be sure to include handwashing into your routines and, if you have time, plan on reading a book to your child before leaving.

Communication

Face-to-Face

Face-to-face communication is the best way to exchange information with the teacher about your child. This short exchange works best during drop-offs and pick-ups. If you need extended time with your child's teacher, please schedule a time to meet with them at a convenient time for both parties.

Procure Family Engagement App

Coming Soon

The mobile app allows parents to be immersed in their children's day-to-day activities, including sharing photos and videos as well as establishing two-way communication.

Emails

Classroom teachers will use Procure or email to contact you about any classroom updates, reminders, or to share child specific information with you.

Administration uses email to notify parents of missing documents, warnings, changes to the menu, newsletter, fees, surveys, events, and changes to the program to name a few.

If you are not receiving emails, please make sure we have the correct email on file. Email addresses will be kept confidential in bulk mailings.

Phone Calls

The Charlotte Sharp Children's Center will contact parents/guardians with the phone numbers listed in their file for emergencies, illnesses, major injuries, and incidents, and if the child is not picked up by closing to name a few. Notify the front desk of any updates to phone numbers. If we cannot reach you by phone in an emergency, we will contact the persons you listed as the emergency contact in your child's file.

Family Communication Board

Every classroom has a family communication board located near the entry of the classroom. This board contains the following important information:

- Lesson plans
- Emergency evacuation information
- Other important information

Newsletter

Families will be emailed a newsletter monthly. Newsletters contain but not limited to the following information:

- Updates from administration
- Upcoming events & closures
- Healthy recipe
- Let's Move calendar
- Parenting article

Conferences

The Charlotte Sharp Children's Center will hold in-person family conferences during the fall and spring semesters. Progress reports will be sent to families in the fall and summer semesters. Your child's developmental profile will be shared during conferences and progress reports as well as pictures, videos, and your child's work.

Absences

If your child will be absent notify your child's teacher or the front desk. We will call you if your child is absent without notification for more than two days.

Family Partnerships

Open Door Policy

Families are welcome and encouraged to come and go throughout the school day. We especially encourage active participation in your child's classroom as an expert, during special events, field trips, and volunteering during work time. Talk to your child's teacher if you would like to volunteer.

Family Advisory Board (FAB)

The Family Advisory Board will be established during the 2024 academic year. FAB is comprised of minimally eight parents representing the diversity of CSCC, a representative of CSCC teaching staff, and administration. The FAB term of service is one-year minimum with four meetings per year to discuss and make decisions on topics related to the goals listed below.

Mission: The Family Advisory Board, representing all CSCC families, seeks to provide world class practice for child care, create positive family experience for all families, act as a sounding board for family concerns, and provide advice to CSCC administration when requested.

Goals:

- Support the mission of the Charlotte Sharp Children's Center:

The mission of the Charlotte Sharp Children's Center is to provide high quality, affordable, and accessible early childhood care and education to the children of affiliated Texas A&M University faculty, students, staff, and community establishing a solid foundation for a lifetime of learning. We support and contribute to Texas A&M University's mission, goals, and values.

- Promote a relationship in which family members and professionals work together to ensure the best services to children and families.
- Facilitate open communication for families.
- Respect confidentiality.
- Maintain realistic expectations.
- Work to enhance the Charlotte Sharp Children's Center experience for all children and professionals.

If you are interested in serving on the Family Advisory Board, please notify the Director.

Providing Feedback & Grievances

If you have a concern regarding your child talk to your child's classroom teacher. If you are unable to satisfactorily come up with a solution you may take up your concern with the administration team.

If you have a concern regarding the center, please discuss your concerns with CSCC administration. If you are unable to come up with a solution, the Vice President of Academic & Strategic Collaborations oversees CSCC.

Feedback is always welcome as we strive for continuous improvement. Feedback may be given directly to your child's teacher, administration, or beyond. You are welcome to phone, email, or ask for a face-to-face meeting.

Health & Safety

Illness

The Charlotte Sharp Children's Center is only equipped to provide care for well children. If your child is unable to participate fully and comfortably during activities, including outdoor play, or meets one of the conditions for exclusion, your child may not attend our program until they have met the condition for returning.

	Condition for Exclusion	Conditions for Returning
	Axillary temperature of 100°F or higher and behavior change or other signs and symptoms	Free of fever for 24 hours (without using fever-reducing medicine)
	Acute change in behavior including lethargy/lack of responsiveness, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, uncontrolled coughing, noticeable (spreading) rash, or other sign or symptoms of illness	Symptom free or physician's written approval for return
	Breathing – labored, rapid, wheezing	Symptom free or physician's written approval for return
	Uncontrolled diarrhea, that is increased number of stools, increased stool water, and/or decreased form that is not contained by the diaper until diarrhea stops; blood or mucus in the stools not explained by dietary changed, medication, or hard stools	Free of diarrhea for 24 hours
	Vomiting illness, upset stomach two episodes in a 24-hour period	Free of upset stomach and vomiting for 24 hours and able to eat solid foods or until a health care provider the illness to be non-communicable or child in danger of dehydration.
	Abdominal pain that continues for more than two hours or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs or symptoms of illness	Symptom free of physician's written approval for return

	Purulent conjunctivitis (red or pink conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge)	Physician's written approval for return or 24 hours after treatment has started
	Rash with a fever or behavior change	Physician's written approval for return
	Untreated scabies, head lice, or other infestation	After treatment and free of lice and nits
	Mouth sores with drooling	Physician's written approval for return
	Untreated Tuberculosis	Physician's written approval for return
	Known contagious diseases while still in the communicable stage (chicken pox, streptococcal pharyngitis, rubella, pertussis mumps, measles, hepatitis A)	Physician's written approval for return
	Other	Explain

If your child becomes ill while in care, the parents/guardians will be notified to come and pick up the child. If a parent/guardian cannot be reached, we will contact the persons listed as the emergency contact. You have 30 minutes to pick up your child. Upon pick-up you will need to sign the Illness Report Form.

Medication

If your child needs medication administered while at the center:

1. Fill out Authorization for Dispensing Medication located at the front desk
2. Prescription medication must be:
 - a. In its original container with pharmacy label
 - b. Name of the child for whom it was prescribed
 - c. Date the prescription was filled
 - d. Name of healthcare professional who prescribed medication
 - e. Medication expiration date and storage information
 - f. Instructions on administration
3. Over-the-counter (OTC) medications must be accompanied with a health care professional's statement that includes the following:
 - a. Child's first and last name
 - b. Name of medication
 - c. Time medication should be given and how often
 - d. Criteria for the administration of the medication
 - e. How much medication to give
 - f. Manner in which the medication shall be administered (oral, topical, etc.)
 - g. Medical conditions or possible allergic reactions

- h. Length of time the authorization is valid
- 4. Medication will not be given:
 - a. Medication is not in its original container
 - b. Medication is past the expiration date
 - c. Medication does not have written authorization
 - d. Without the written instructions provided by the physician or other health care professional legally authorized to prescribe medication
 - e. In any manner not authorized by the medical care professional
 - f. For non-medical reasons, such as to induce sleep
- 5. Receipt, storage, and disposal
 - a. All medications brought in to the center will be given to the front desk for review and approval
 - b. Medications will be stored in a locked container inaccessible to children
 - c. Medications will be stored at the temperature recommended for type of medication
 - d. The Charlotte Sharp Children's Center is not responsible for disposal of medication; all medication will be returned to you to dispose of properly
- 6. Medications for allergies
 - a. In addition to the above, an allergy action plan must be filled out and signed by a health care professional
- 7. Exceptions
 - a. Epi-pens will be kept out of reach of children and follow the child it is prescribed for
 - b. CSCC maintains and will administer unassigned epinephrine auto-injectors to use when a child in care has an emergency anaphylaxis reaction.
 - c. Non-prescription diaper creams, sunscreen, and bug spray are exempt from the above authorization (make sure to label with your child's name)

Sun Safe Policy

We encourage parents/guardians to provide hats with wide brims that protect the face, neck and ears, for your child to wear whenever they are outside. We also encourage parents/guardians to provide articles of sun-protective clothing, when temperatures are reasonable, for your child to wear whenever they are outside.

Sunscreen will be applied by staff to child's exposed skin, except eyelids, following manufacturer's instructions before exposure to the sun and every two hours while in the sun. Children will be encouraged to use available areas of shade for outdoor play activities.

Adapted from the California Early Childhood Sun Protection Curriculum (1998-revised), California Department of Health Services.

Medical Emergencies

For an illness or injury that requires the immediate attention of a health-care professional, the following procedure is followed:

1. Contact emergency medical services
2. Administer first-aid treatment or CPR if needed
3. Contact the child’s parent or guardian
4. Contact the physician or other health-care professional identified in the child’s record if directed to do so by EMS personnel

Immunizations

2022 - 2023 Texas Minimum State Vaccine Requirements for Child-Care and Pre-K Facilities

This chart summarizes the vaccine requirements incorporated in the Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Title 25 Health Services, §§97.61-97.72. This chart is not intended as a substitute for consulting the TAC, which has other provisions and details. The Department of State Health Services (DSHS) is granted authority to set immunization requirements for child-care facilities by the Human Resources Code, Chapter 42.

A child shall show acceptable evidence of vaccination prior to entry, attendance, or transfer to a child-care facility in Texas.

Age at which child must have vaccines to be in compliance:	Minimum Number of Doses Required of Each Vaccine							
	Diphtheria / Tetanus / Pertussis (DTaP)	Polio	Hepatitis B (HepB) ¹	<i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> type b (Hib) ²	Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) ³	Measles, Mumps, & Rubella (MMR) ^{1,4}	Varicella ^{1,4,5}	Hepatitis A (HepA) ^{1,4}
0 through 2 months								
By 3 months	1 Dose	1 Dose	1 Dose	1 Dose	1 Dose			
By 5 months	2 Doses	2 Doses	2 Doses	2 Doses	2 Doses			
By 7 months	3 Doses	2 Doses	2 Doses	2 Doses	3 Doses			
By 16 months	3 Doses	2 Doses	2 Doses	3 Doses	4 Doses	1 Dose	1 Dose	
By 19 months	4 Doses	3 Doses	3 Doses	3 Doses	4 Doses	1 Dose	1 Dose	
By 25 months	4 Doses	3 Doses	3 Doses	3 Doses	4 Doses	1 Dose	1 Dose	1 Dose
By 43 months	4 Doses	3 Doses	3 Doses	3 Doses	4 Doses	1 Dose	1 Dose	2 Doses

↓ Notes on the back page, please turn over. ↓

Rev. 03/2022

Please refer to the following for more information:

Department of Family and Protective Services:

www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/documents/Standards_and_Regulations/746_Centers.pdf

Texas Health and Human Services Immunization Unit School and Child-Care Immunization Requirements: (<http://dshs.texas.gov/immunize/>)

Vision and Hearing Screening

As part of [Health and Safety Code, Chapter 36](#), the Vision and Hearing Screening Program requires that all children enrolled for the first time in a Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) licensed child care center in Texas must be screened or have a professional examination for possible vision or hearing problems. Children who are 4 years old by September 1 of the current school year must be screened within the first 120 days of admission. Parents/guardians must provide the results to the center. The center is required to report results to the Child Health Reporting System by June 30 of each year.

<http://www.dshs.texas.gov/vhs/vision-require.aspx>

<http://www.dshs.texas.gov/vhs/require.shtm>

Accidents and Incidents

If your child is injured or involved in an incident while at the Charlotte Sharp Children’s Center an Incident Report Form will be filled out and a parent/guardian will sign upon pick-up or your earliest convenience. The parent/guardian will receive a phone call regarding moderate to severe injuries or incidents, including any injury above the child’s shoulders.

Emergency Plans and Drills

The Charlotte Sharp Children’s Center has an emergency preparedness plan including detailed information. The plan informs staff of the steps to be taken, how to ensure the safety of toddlers with limited mobility, emergency information, kits, supplies, notification, and reunification. The Charlotte Sharp Children’s Center performs the following drills:

Drill	How Often
Fire	Monthly
Tornado	Quarterly
Stay Safe	Quarterly

During a fire drill the alarms will sound. Children and staff will exit the building and wait for the all clear. During a tornado drill a message to take cover will be announced over the intercom. Children and staff will go to their designated area and cover their heads. The children will resume normal activities when given the all clear message. During a stay safe drill a silent notification system will alert the building.

In the event we have to evacuate the building and move to a secondary location parents will be notified once we are securely at our destination of the Garden Apartments Community Center.

Supervision

Children are supervised by sight and sound at all times while at the Charlotte Sharp Children's Center. We maintain a lower teacher to child ratio and group size than state child care minimum standards.

Handwashing

Proper handwashing reduces the risk of transmission of infectious diseases to themselves and to others. Classroom staff teach children the proper hand washing procedure and assist and monitor to ensure it is done properly.

Hand Washing Procedure:

1. Turn on the faucet
2. Wet hands
3. Apply soap
4. Rub hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds (about the length of time it takes you to sing your ABCs), be sure to include between fingers, under nails, wrists, and the back of your hands
5. Rinse hands in running water
6. Grab a paper towel and dry hands (keep water running if it does not shut off automatically)
7. Turn off faucet using a paper towel (if not hands free)
8. Open door using paper towel, if applicable, and throw the paper towel away in a hands-free, lined trash can

When Children Wash Hands:

- Upon arrival in the classroom
- After diapering or toileting
- After blowing or wiping their nose
- After coughing or sneezing in hands
- Before and after meals and snacks
- Before and after playing in water or sensory items (including sand)
- After handling pets/animals
- After playing outside
- Before going home (**parent/guardian complete this step**)

In addition to the above, staff will wash hands:

- After diapering/toileting
- After handling bodily fluids
- After blowing or wiping a child's nose
- Before preparing or serving food

- Before and after administering medication
- After handling garbage
- After removing gloves
- After cleaning

Diapering & Toileting

Parents/guardians will provide disposable/cloth diapers and cleaning wipes. Children will be checked at least every two hours when awake to see if soiled. All staff are trained and follow best practices when changing a diaper.

Children are not required to be independently toilet trained to be in any classroom. All children develop readiness at different times. When you feel your child is ready to start toilet training, set up a meeting with your child's teacher.

Readiness Signs:

- Does your child remain dry for several hours during the day and through the night/nap?
- Are bowel movements regular and/or predictable?
- Does your child know when they are wet?
- Can your child undress and dress with limited help?
- Does your child ask to use the toilet?
- Are there any major changes occurring at home?

If your child isn't showing readiness signs, they might not be ready to toilet train quite yet and you will want to reassess in a couple of months. Once the decision is made to start toilet training bring lots of extra clothes, underwear, socks, and easy to clean shoes. It is important for the child have consistency with toilet training from home to school.

Toilet training should never be a stressful process. We will never bribe or force a child to sit on the toilet. We will never make a child feel shameful if an accident occurs. Accidents are part of the learning process.

Apparel

Children should wear comfortable clothing that washes easily. Clothing should be easy for children to get on and off independently for successful bathroom trips and on the occasion, they have to change themselves. Children must wear shoes that contain an ankle strap; close-toe shoes are preferred. Make sure to always have an extra set of clothing available for accidents.

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

The Charlotte Sharp Children's Center staff are mandated reporters. Mandated reporters are required to report child abuse or neglect as follows:

According to the Law

Texas has both civil and criminal laws to protect children from abuse and neglect. If you suspect that a child is being abused or neglected, the law requires that you report it. [Texas Family Code Section 261.101 (a)]

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) is the agency to call if the suspected abuse or neglect involves a person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child or someone who lives in the home with the child. Child Protective Services (CPS), a division of DFPS, is responsible for conducting civil investigations of alleged abuse or neglect by caregivers or household members. You may also report suspected abuse or neglect to any local or state law enforcement agency. Law enforcement agencies are responsible for criminal investigations, which focuses on figuring out who committed a crime. The CPS investigation is a civil court matter that focuses on the welfare of the child and family.

You are protected by law from liability when you make a report or provide information in good faith during a CPS investigation. However, you are not protected from civil or criminal liability if you report your own abuse or neglect of a child or intentionally file a false report against someone else. (Texas Family Code, Section 261.106).

Failure to report suspected child abuse and neglect is a criminal offense (Texas Family Code, Section 261.109).

To report to DFPS, call the 24-hour, toll-free abuse hotline at 1-800-252-5400 from anywhere in the United States to report abuse or neglect that happened in Texas. The important thing is to call and report what you suspect. You will be given a call ID number to prove that you made the call. You can call back and use the call ID number to give additional information about the same case. Anonymous callers are welcome, but they will not be given a call ID number. The identity of the reporter is confidential and is not revealed to anyone but law enforcement, unless disclosure is ordered by a court (Texas Family Code Section 261.201).