



Becky Gates  
Children's Center

# Family Handbook

Becky Gates Children's Center  
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Family Handbook is subject to change. You will be notified of any  
changes or updates to the Handbook.

Last Updated  
7-7-2023

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## Welcome

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

The Becky Gates Children's Center is located across from the Garden Apartments off Hensel Drive and is on the Aggie bus route. We are licensed for 200 children ages 12 months – school age. BGCC has 12 classrooms plus the multipurpose room for summer school age for the children of Texas A&M University students, staff, and faculty. The Becky Gates Children's Center is open year-round M-F from 7:30 AM – 5:30 PM. We follow the Texas A&M University staff calendar in addition to our professional development days. BGCC contracts enrollment on a semester basis (fall, spring, and summer).

## History

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After a 20-year effort to establish a campus child care facility, the then named, Children's Center was opened on August 31, 1998 with 149 children. In 2006, Texas A&M University's Children's Center received over a \$1 million endowment made by Arthur and Dorothy McFerrin. On May 26, 2006, the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents decided to rename the center after Becky Gates, spouse of former University President Robert M. Gates, who has a lifelong interest in the education of young children. Mrs. Gates became involved with the center after a tour of the facility and later served on its board. "When both parents have to work, good childcare becomes very important," she said. "I have a couple of children who are adults now, but if I hadn't had good child care when they were young, it would have been much harder, if not impossible, for me to work in my profession."

On September 23, 2006 the Texas A&M University Children's Center was renamed the Becky Gates Children's Center as well as a groundbreaking for the 3,000 square-foot multipurpose building addition.

*"The littlest Aggies need the best care." ~Becky Gates*

## Statue

The figure of Becky Gates represents a teacher leading children into the realm of education, represented by the gates.

The symbols woven into the gates are as follows:

The support panels attached to the gateposts contain numbers and the alphabet, the foundation of all learning. The gates include those items that children first use to express their vision and knowledge of the world, paintbrushes, scissors, crayons, building blocks, etc.

A world has been placed in the center of the gates because it is the world of education which provides the foundation and skills to the diverse student body of Texas A&M University, thereby allowing each student to become a steward of the world. The children at play represent that learning is fun and that it is just as important to condition the body as the mind. The children portrayed are Brad and Eleanor Gates, children of Becky and Bob Gates, and Alexandria McFerrin Bohner, granddaughter of Dorothy and Artie McFerrin. The teacher reaching for the gates at the level of the stars symbolizes the responsibility to teach the students that the future is limitless and they too, should reach for the stars. Finally, the gates are topped with possibly the highest art form, music, and this music happens to be the first two measures of the Aggie War Hymn. The statue is a gift from the McFerrins to Texas A&M University and the Becky Gates Children's Center.

Bill McGlaun (1948-2015) was an award-winning sculptor from Cleveland, Texas.

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### **Mission Statement**

#### **Becky Gates Children's Center**

The mission of the Becky Gates 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 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.

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### **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 show **Excellence** through our

- Program philosophy

- Developmentally appropriate practice
- Focusing on the whole child
- Giving children authentic experiences
- Focus 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 teach **Integrity** through

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

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 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 demonstrate **Selfless Service** by

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

## **Philosophy**

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The Becky Gates Children's Center philosophy aligns with the HighScope Curriculum. We believe children learn best through active participatory play which is how children construct their knowledge. Active learning is at the core of adult-child interactions, the learning environment, daily routines, and assessment/observation. Active learning uses all the child's senses. Children have a variety of interesting materials that they can manipulate freely. Children have the opportunities to set their own goals, select their own materials, activities, and play partners. Children communicate verbally and nonverbally, what they are



doing and understand. Adults support children's current level of thinking and challenge them to advance to the next stage by talking with them about what they are doing, by joining in their play, and by helping them learn to solve problems that arise. Children thrive with positive, authentic relationships in a supportive environment. A supportive environment is one where control is shared between adults and the children. Where children's strengths are the focus. Where adults form authentic relationships with children. Where we support children's play. Where we use encouragement instead of praise, and adopt a problem-solving approach to social conflict.

The Becky Gates Children's Center uses the HighScope's horizontal approach to education. The horizontal approach is based on the developmental principle of identifying what children can do and using that as the starting point for teaching. The teacher provides many experiences in which the child can use and build on recently acquired skills as well as the opportunity to move to a new skill level when ready. The following is an example.

1. The teacher uses child development information to help her understand the sequence of development.
2. Nora's teacher recognizes that tearing comes before using scissors.
3. In order to help facilitate Nora's development, the teacher will support and build upon Nora's current abilities by giving her tearing opportunities. She will focus on what Nora can do. In this context she will also extend Nora's tearing by introducing scissors at the appropriate time.

### **Academic Connections**

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#### **Internal**

The Becky Gates 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**

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 Becky Gates Children's Center.

## **Our Team**

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### **Administrative**

Becky Gates Children's Center has two administrators who share many responsibilities and one administrative coordinator.

#### *Director*

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

#### *Assistant Director*

The assistant director is responsible for the supervision and training of the teaching staff and day-to-day operations of the center.

#### *Administrative Coordinator II*

The administrative coordinator is responsible for the business and administrative functions of the Becky Gates 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 Education & Curriculum Coordinator. Most classrooms have a teacher, associate/assistant teacher, and teaching assistants while other classrooms have a teacher and teaching assistants.

#### *Instructional Coach*

Coordinate Becky Gates Children's Center early childhood teaching and education programs. This position provides technical support and services including coaching, training, mentoring, quality assurance, and teamwork.

### *Early Childhood Teacher*

We have 12 Early Childhood Teachers. All our 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*

We have 10 Early Childhood Assistant Teachers. 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.

## **Kitchen**

### *Cook*

We have one full time cook who plans and prepares nutritious meals and snacks in accordance with the Child and Adult Care Food Program and USDA.

### *Kitchen Assistant, Student Worker*

We have several part time student workers that provide support to the cook and kitchen operations.

## **Hours of Operation**

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The Becky Gates Children's Center is open **year-round**, M-F from 7:30 AM – 5:30 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 Becky Gates 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 Becky Gates Children's Center will close unless classes will be in session.

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

## **Our Program**

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### **Licensing**

The Becky Gates 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](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 display case.

### **Accreditation**

The Becky Gates Children's Center has met the criteria for educational quality established by the Cognia Accreditation Commission. The Becky Gates Children's Center has been given the Certificate of Accreditation by the NCA Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement, the Northwest Accreditation Commission, and the SACS Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement.

Cognia has 5 standards:

1. Purpose and Direction
2. Governance and Leadership
3. Teaching and Assessing for Learning
4. Resources and Support Systems
5. Using Results for Continuous Improvement

Within each Standard are Indicators and Criteria. The Standards are research-based and support an education process that is visionary; characterizing how early learning schools should operate to promote a culture of continuous learning that is fluid.

### **Texas Rising Star**

Texas Rising Star is a quality-based child care rating and improvement system for early childhood programs participating in the Texas Workforce Commission's subsidized child care program. The Becky Gates Children's Center has met the highest-level criteria, a Four-Star Certification.

The 5 Categories are:

1. Director and Staff Qualifications and Training
2. Caregiver-Child Interactions
3. Curriculum
4. Nutrition and Indoor/Outdoor Activities
5. Parent Education and Involvement

### **The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)**

The Becky Gates Children's Center participates in the CACFP. It is a federal program that provides reimbursement for healthful meals and snacks served to children and adults. See Wellness Policy for more information about our meal service.

### **NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment**

The Becky Gates Children's Center adheres to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment.

[https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/position-statements/Ethics%20Position%20Statement2011\\_09202013update.pdf](https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/position-statements/Ethics%20Position%20Statement2011_09202013update.pdf)

#### **Statement of Commitment\***

As an individual who works with young children, I commit myself to furthering the values of early childhood education as they are reflected in the ideals and principles of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct. To the best of my ability, I will

- Never harm children.
- Ensure that programs for young children are based on current knowledge and research of child development and early childhood education.
- Respect and support families in their task of nurturing children.
- Respect colleagues in early childhood care and education and support them in maintaining the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct.
- Serve as an advocate for children, their families, and their teachers in community and society.
- Stay informed of and maintain high standards of professional conduct.
- Engage in an ongoing process of self-reflection, realizing that personal characteristics, biases, and beliefs have an impact on children and families.
- Be open to new ideas and be willing to learn from the suggestions of others.
- Continue to learn, grow, and contribute as a professional.
- Honor the ideals and principles of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct.

\* This Statement of Commitment is not part of the Code but is a personal acknowledgment of the individual's willingness to embrace the distinctive values and moral obligations of the field of early childhood care and education. It is recognition of the moral obligations that lead to an individual becoming part of the profession.

### **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, BGCC 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 BGCC 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

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### Affiliation

Affiliation with Texas A&M University is not required to place a child on the waitlist; however, it is required for enrollment. Proof of enrollment and employment via UIN will be required once accepted. Affiliation will be verified every semester. Failure to maintain Texas A&M affiliation will result in disenrollment.

### Waitlist Policy

The Becky Gates 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 averages around 1-1.5 years. We encourage families to get on the waitlist as soon as possible.

#### How to Complete Waitlist Application

1. Take a tour of the Becky Gates Children's Center.
2. Complete online application.
3. Pay \$50.00 non-refundable waitlist fee.

#### Waitlist Priority

1. Current BGCC staff and siblings that are currently enrolled at BGCC, and United States Military Veteran.
2. Affiliated students, faculty, and employees.
3. Nonaffiliated Texas A&M employees.

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

## **Enrollment Policy**

Once you have accepted enrollment, affiliation with Texas A&M will be verified.

Parent/Guardian will complete the following:

- Contract (updated every semester)
- 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
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) enrollment form
- 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 Becky Gates 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 Becky Gates 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 Becky Gates 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**

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### **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 \$50.00 (\$25.00 for the Toddler 1 classrooms) 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.

### **Student Discount & Graduate Student Scholarship**

Verified Texas A&M University students will be eligible for a \$100-\$125 per month student discount based on qualifying tier. Student status will be verified after the drop/add date for the semester and must be maintained throughout semester to qualify. Once verified, your account will be credited. It is important to note, since you will not receive the discount until verification of student status, you will be responsible for paying the first month of every semester in full. For example, since tuition is due at the beginning of the month, you will pay September tuition amount in full while waiting for student verification. Once verified (after drop/add date), your account will reflect both September and October discount.

There is an additional scholarship for graduate students, who qualify, awarded through The Association of Former Students (AFS). To qualify for the Becky Gates Children's Center Graduate Student Scholarship, your family income must be between 130% - 180% of the federal poverty guidelines. This information is listed on the Child and Adult Care Food Program Eligibility Form. Priority will go to those who qualify based on the 130% federal poverty guidelines. If you meet the income guidelines, submit a letter of need to the Director at the beginning of the fall and/or spring semester. Your graduate student status will be verified. You must reapply every semester.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Party Payments**

We accept 3<sup>rd</sup> party payments through other organizations such as Workforce Solutions and Child Care Aware. Talk to our Administrative Coordinator about any 3<sup>rd</sup> party payments you are expecting to receive.

## **Curriculum and Assessment**

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The Becky Gates Children's Center utilizes a variety of approaches to offer the best developmentally appropriate curriculum for our center. We apply emergent, 21<sup>st</sup> century, and research-based curriculums focusing on the whole child.

### **HighScope Curriculum**

#### **Preschool.**

See Appendix for *The Highscope Preschool Curriculum: What, How, and Why*

#### **Infant and Toddler.**

See Appendix for *The Highscope Infant-Toddler Curriculum: What, How, and Why*

Infants and toddlers will be assigned a primary teacher. A primary teacher forms a close, reliable, affectionate relationship that sustains children while away from home. When children have a secure attachment, it reduces the considerable stress on infants and toddlers. The primary teacher is not the exclusive caregiver for your child. Your child will have secondary caregivers who know your child well.

### **Letter Links**

Letter links is a literacy learning tool that builds on children's natural interest in reading and writing their own names. Each child's name is paired with an image for a word that has the same first sound as his or her name – the name and image together are called a letter link. Letter links are used throughout the day and throughout the classroom as children learn the alphabetic principle and develop phonological awareness and other literacy abilities.

### **Project Approach**

A Project Approach, a specific kind of project-based learning which brings several advantages to any classroom and represents best practices in 21st-century education. It fits securely within both a long history of innovative teaching and learning practices—dating back, at least, to the 16th century—and within the framework of today's growing body of research on what students need to find success and fulfillment in the current (and future) world.

Project, inquiry-based learning refers to a set of teaching strategies that enable teachers to guide students through in-depth studies of real-world topics. Projects have a complex but flexible framework within which teaching and learning are seen as interactive processes.

When teachers implement the approach successfully, students feel highly motivated and actively involved in their own learning, leading them to produce high-quality work and to grow as individuals and collaborators.

A project, by definition, is an in-depth investigation of a real-world topic worthy of a student's attention and effort. The study may be carried out with an entire class or with small groups of students—most often at the preschool, elementary, and middle school levels. Projects typically do not constitute the whole educational program; instead, teachers use them alongside systematic instruction and as a means of achieving curricular goals.

Retrieved from: <http://projectapproach.org/about/project-approach/>

### **Studio Spaces**

Studio spaces, adapted from an *atelier*, are productive places for children to individually explore projects connected with experiences planned in the classrooms to extend learning. Children will have time during the fall and spring semester to explore studio spaces with tools, techniques, and materials to study, analyze, and reflect on hypotheses (Gandini, 2015). The teacher's role in the studio space is to be an organizer, interpreter, co-organizer, and collaborator (Gandini, 2015).

Reference: Gandini, L., Hill, L., Cadwell, L., & Schwall, C. (Eds.). (2015). *In the spirit of the studio: Learning from the atelier of Reggio Emilia*. Teachers College Press.

### **COR Advantage**

COR Advantage is built on 36 items that are proven by research to best prepare children for school success. With the fewest items of any early childhood assessment, COR saves teachers time and keeps them focused on what matters most. Teachers use the valuable insight they put in the tool to create individualized lesson plans and detailed reports on child and classroom progress. The online tool's in-the-moment support increases the accuracy of teacher's scores, delivering consistent data administrators can rely on to meaningfully guide their program to the next level.

Criterion-referenced and research-based COR Advantage has been proven valid and reliable through rigorous validation studies. COR Advantage is aligned to the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, Common Core State Standards, and early learning state standards and can be used with any developmentally appropriate curriculum.

### **Learn the Signs. Act Early.**

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>

### **Kaymbu and Daily Notes**

Kaymbu's technology is designed to support collaborative partnerships, allowing teachers to share learning and updates from school, and families to share learning and updates from home. Through this technology, moments such as photos, videos, and notes can be shared as well as portfolios and storyboards. Teachers can share reminders or urgent messages with families by text, email, or the dedicated parent app.

Daily Notes are used with our infant and toddler classrooms logging naps, meals, and more.

All communication sent to families, including learning moments, messages, storyboards, or full portfolios can be automatically translated into 100 different languages.

### **Anti-Bias/Multicultural Education**

The Becky Gates Children's Center has adopted the Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves (Derman-Sparks L. & Edwards, J., 2010) four core goals:

1. Each child will demonstrate self-awareness, confidence, family pride, and positive social identities.
2. Each child will express comfort and joy with human diversity; accurate language for human differences; and deep, caring human connections.
3. Each child will increasingly recognize unfairness, have language to describe unfairness, and understand that unfairness hurts.
4. Each child will demonstrate empowerment and the skills to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and/or discriminatory actions.

### **Nutrition and Physical Education**

See Wellness Policy

## **Breastfeeding Policy**

We welcome breastfeeding mothers. We have a designated lactation room located in the multipurpose building. The private room is equipped with comfortable seating, electrical outlets and flat surfaces for a breast pump, as well as a sink, refrigerator, and microwave. For your convenience there are small bottles of water and healthy snacks. Breastfeeding resources are located in the lactation room in addition to the main entrance.

## **Children with Special Needs**

The Becky Gates 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 Becky Gates 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

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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 decades<sup>1</sup>.

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 eating<sup>2</sup>. 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 Becky Gates Children's Center rotates two, six-week seasonal menus, updated annually including family feedback. We offer a variety of fruits and vegetables, lean proteins, whole grains, and culturally diverse foods. We use locally sourced items when available. 1% milk is served to children two years of age or older; children under two are served whole milk. 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.

- Teachers participate in orientation and professional development activities two or more times per year to effectively teach children about nutrition.
- 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.
- Nutrition education opportunities will be offered to families at least twice per year.
- Children are never forced, bribed, or rushed to eat.

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

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

- Food, beverages, active play, and screen time are not restricted nor used as a reward or punishment.

### **Family Style Meal Service**

The Becky Gates Children's Center provides a healthy breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack daily. We participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. "USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."

The CACFP provides nutritious meals to children and helps them develop good eating habits which they will retain in later years. Both nutritional goals can be effectively pursued through family-style meal service.

Family style meal service, where teachers and children sit together, allows children to serve themselves from common platters of food with assistance from the teachers. Each child is equipped with child-sized eating and serving utensils, and is encouraged to take some amount of each required component. This allows children to make choices in selecting the size of the servings. Children are taught to eat appropriately for age and developmental ability<sup>3</sup>.

Serving family style is a great way to teach children independence while also developing many skills. Children can learn and practice many social skills, such as taking turns, passing food to others, saying please and thank you, and helping set the table. They will be able to replicate these skills at home. Family style also helps the picky eater. Children often want to try new foods when they see other children and adults eating them. When children sit together and serve themselves, a child may see others accepting foods and want to try the foods as well. It often takes ten or more times of sampling a food before a child learns to like it<sup>4</sup>.

Families are encouraged to volunteer/participate in mealtimes.

**Please see APPENDIX for information about outside food (food bought from home or store)**

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## **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

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<sup>3</sup> Child and Adult Care Food Program. *Administrative Handbook*. September 2015.

<sup>4</sup> National Food Service Management Institute. *Mealtime Memo for Child care*. No. 8. 2006.



- House Area
- Music and Movement Area
- Sand and Water Area
- Toy Area
- Woodworking 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.

Our 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.

Outside areas may include but not limited to:

- Nature Art Area
- Open Area for large-motor activities
- Climbing/Crawling Area
- Messy Materials Area
- Building Area
- Music and Movement Area
- Garden Area
- Gathering Area
- Sand and Water Area
- Dirt-Digging Area
- Wheeled-Toy Area
- Swings or other dynamic equipment

According to Nature Explore (2018), children & adults in nature:

- Increases critical thinking and problem solving.
- Increases science and math.
- Increases language and literacy.
- Increases visual-spatial thinking.
- Increases construction and engineering.
- Gardening and health teach individuals how to take care of things and develop healthier eating habits.
- Outdoor classrooms increase environmental stewardship.

- Outdoor classrooms help develop emotional intelligence and heal from trauma.
- Spending time outdoors makes you happier, relaxed, less impulsive, increased focus, more creative and increased desirable behavior.

## **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. The Becky Gates Children's Center models our schedules and routines based on the HighScope Curriculum.

### **Preschool.**

#### Greeting Time/Message Board:

Teaching staff welcome children to the classroom and help them enter into the program day. Message board is a time to share announcements, discuss things that are happening in the classroom that day, and whole-group problem solving.

#### Large-group Time:

Adults and children get together to play games, tell and reenact stories, sing songs, do finger plays, dance, play musical instruments, exercise, or reenact special events. Large-group time brings children and adults together for brief periods to exchange information and do things as a group. This experience builds a sense of "we" and "us."

#### Small-group Time:

The teacher meets with 6-10 children to work on an activity planned and introduced by the teacher. Small-group time builds on children's strengths, introduces children to materials and experiences they might otherwise miss, and provides adults with an intimate setting in which to observe and learn about individual children on a daily basis.

#### \*Planning Time:

Children indicate what they plan to do during work time. The planning process involves a variety of mental tasks. Children establish a problem or goal; they

imagine and anticipate actions; they express personal intentions and interests; they shape their intentions into purposes; they deliberate; and make ongoing modifications. It is important for adults to encourage children to express their intentions before carrying them out.

\*Work Time:

Children work with any of the materials in any of the interest areas, starting with their plan. During work time children initiate, work on, modify, complete, and change their plans; children play in a variety of social contexts; children engage in different types of play; children problem solve; and children carry on conversations. Adults observe, participate, converse, encourage problem solving, learn from, and support children's play.

\*Cleanup Time:

Children are expected to return materials and equipment to their storage space and find space to display personal creations. Cleanup time brings work time to an end. During cleanup time children problem solve and play put-away games. Adults maintain realistic expectations.

\*Recall Time:

Children are encouraged to talk about the children they played with, what they built or pretended to be, or the problems they encountered during work time. During recall time children remember and reflect on actions and experiences; children associate plans, actions, and outcomes; children talk with others about personally meaningful experiences; children form and then talk about mental images; and children expand consciousness beyond the present. Adults provide materials and experiences to maintain children's interest at recall time. Adults converse with children about their work-time experiences such as contributing and supporting children's co-narratives and conflicting viewpoints and noting connections between children's recall narratives and plans.

*\*Planning time, work time, and recall time happen in a sequence and as a unit is called plan-do-review time or plan-work-review time.*

Outside Time:

Children are physically active, they pretend, invent, make, build with others and by themselves, and solve problems independently or with the assistance of other children and adults. Outside time is a healthy and unconstrained time for children. Children have contact with nature and have opportunities for social play. Adults participate in children's play; converse with children; encourage children's problem solving; and observe nature with children.

Eating/Resting:

Meals and snacks are times for children and adults to enjoy healthy food in a supportive social setting. Children and adults sit, eat together, and engage in social interactions in a relaxed setting. Resting is a time for sleeping, or quiet, solitary, on-you-own-mat-play.

#### Transitions:

Transition times are crucial events for children who often react strongly to them. To make transition times easier for children, adults will establish a consistent daily routine; keep the number of transitions between activities, places, and caregivers to a minimum; start new activities right away; limit wait times; plan enjoyable ways for children to move from place to place; alert children to transitions, and offer appropriate choices to individual children before a transition.

### **Infant/Toddler.**

#### Arrival and departure:

Children and adults experience warm welcomes and good-byes enlarging the scope of trust. This time is also used to exchange information and child observations with the family.

#### Choice Time:

Choice time is a sustained block of time when children can investigate; explore materials and actions; and interact with their peers and caregivers. A great deal of learning occurs during choice time. Toddlers engage in increasingly complex exploration and play as well as growing in awareness of themselves and others. As children are ready (they can form mental images) teachers plan and recall with individual toddlers to help them start the transition to the preschool plan-work-review. Adults observe children; tailor their actions and responses to follow children's leads and ideas; engage in communication give and take with children; support children's interactions with peers; use a problem-solving approach to children's social conflicts; offer older toddlers opportunities to plan and recall; and encourage toddlers to put materials away after choice time.

#### Outside Time:

Outside time allows infants and toddlers to extend their exploration and play to an outdoor setting. Outside time is rich in sensory-motor experiences for constructing new knowledge. Time spent outdoors in all seasons positively affects the way children eat, sleep, and feel. During outside time, children observe, explore, and play on their own or with others at their own pace and level of interest and development. Adults provide loose materials for children's comfort and play and observe nature with children during outside time.

#### Whole Group with Music and Movement:

Group times are caregiver-initiated parts of the day that include opportunities for children to engage in active learning. During whole group with music and movement children will be singing and moving, exploring movement, building a repertoire of songs and rhymes, and experiencing a steady beat. Adults will plan and provide active group experiences; respect children's choices and ideas about using the materials; comment briefly and specifically on what children are doing; interpret children's actions and communications for other children.

Group Time with Materials:

Group times are caregiver-initiated parts of the day that include opportunities for children to engage in active learning. During group time with materials, children will be introduced to new materials, master familiar materials, or extend their knowledge by trying out slight variations on what they already know. Adults will plan and provide active group experiences; respect children's choices and ideas about using the materials; comment briefly and specifically on what children are doing; interpret children's actions and communications for other children.

Mealtimes:

Mealtimes are a relaxed and social time for children. Children are involved in mealtime conversations and like to explore new foods in a supportive setting. Adults join toddlers at the table and include older toddlers in mealtime setup and cleanup.

Bodily Care Routines:

Bodily care occurs frequently and fairly regularly throughout the day. Through the gentle, one-to-one interactions involved in bodily care, children have an opportunity to build trusting relationships with caregivers and gain a sense of security in their classroom. Toddlers begin to sense how their own bodies can bend and move during bodily care routines. This is a nurturing time of day that increases self-help skills. Adults fit bodily care around the child's exploration and play; focus on the child at hand during the care routine; give the child choices about parts of the routine; and encourage the child to do things for her- or himself.

Naptime:

During naptime children sleep and rest which are necessary for children's growth and development. Sleep reenergizes children physically and emotionally. Adults can help children settle down for nap; provide quiet alternatives for non-sleepers; and provide for children's various styles of waking up.

Transitions:

Transitions vary from child to child. Some children handle transitions more easily than others, any shift in tempo or focus can be stressful on bodies and minds already deeply engrossed with everything around them. To aid in transitions, adults

minimize the number of transitions; create an overall daily schedule that is predictable yet flexible; and incorporate active learning, including adult support, into each event and caregiving routine.

## **Special Activities**

### **Field trips.**

Field trips greatly enhance our program by providing children with hands-on real experiences. Field trips are planned based on curriculum content, children's interests and developmentally appropriateness. Families will be notified at least 48 hours in advance of a field trip and sign a permission form. When children are away from the facility, safety is our top priority. During a field trip, attendance is taken at minimum prior to leaving, upon arrival, before leaving, and upon return. At a minimum two staff will be present per classroom (ratios vary depending on ages and group size of children). Every classroom has a bag equipped with emergency equipment, including a first aid kit that goes with the classroom. At least one staff person per classroom will carry a cell phone and all staff are CPR and First Aid Certified including AED.

Children who are at least four year of age and weigh 40 pounds or more may use the AggieSpirit Bus for field trips around campus. All of the above applies.

### **Special guests.**

Special guests enrich and enhance children's learning. During our project investigations many guests will be invited into the classroom to teach the children about their chosen project topic. Special guests may also 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 BGCC.

### **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. The teachers use the information provided on the "Family Questionnaire" form at the beginning of the school year or at time of enrollment to plan celebrations. Celebrations with food must comply with the wellness policy unless administration declares an exception for a learning opportunity.

Celebrations also include holidays. Every classroom will celebrate their community culture special holidays listed on the "Family Questionnaire" form. Parents/guardians will be notified of celebrations in advance.

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 Becky Gates Children's Center.

## **Behavior Management**

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### **Positive Guidance**

One of our jobs as early childhood educators is to help guide children's behavior. The Becky Gates Children's Center has the following center-wide expectations.



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 or rule. 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."

Classroom staff are also trained on encouragement instead of praise. We want children to be intrinsically motivated instead of extrinsically motivated. This means we avoid using praise such as, "good job" and "that's pretty." Instead, we use specific descriptions to encourage children; "you stacked 12 blocks to make a tall tower" and "I see you used yellow and green paint on your painting."

### **Problem Solving Approach to Social Conflict**

The Becky Gates Children's Center has adopted the HighScope problem-solving approach to social conflict. As a normal occurrence, conflicts will arise in an early childhood classroom. Children need to develop these skills rather than be punished. Below are the six steps staff follow when a conflict arises:

Steps in Resolving Conflicts with Young Children

- 1. Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions.**
- 2. Acknowledge children's feelings.**
- 3. Gather information.**
- 4. Restate the problem.**
- 5. Ask for ideas for solutions and choose one together.**
- 6. Be prepared to give follow-up support.**

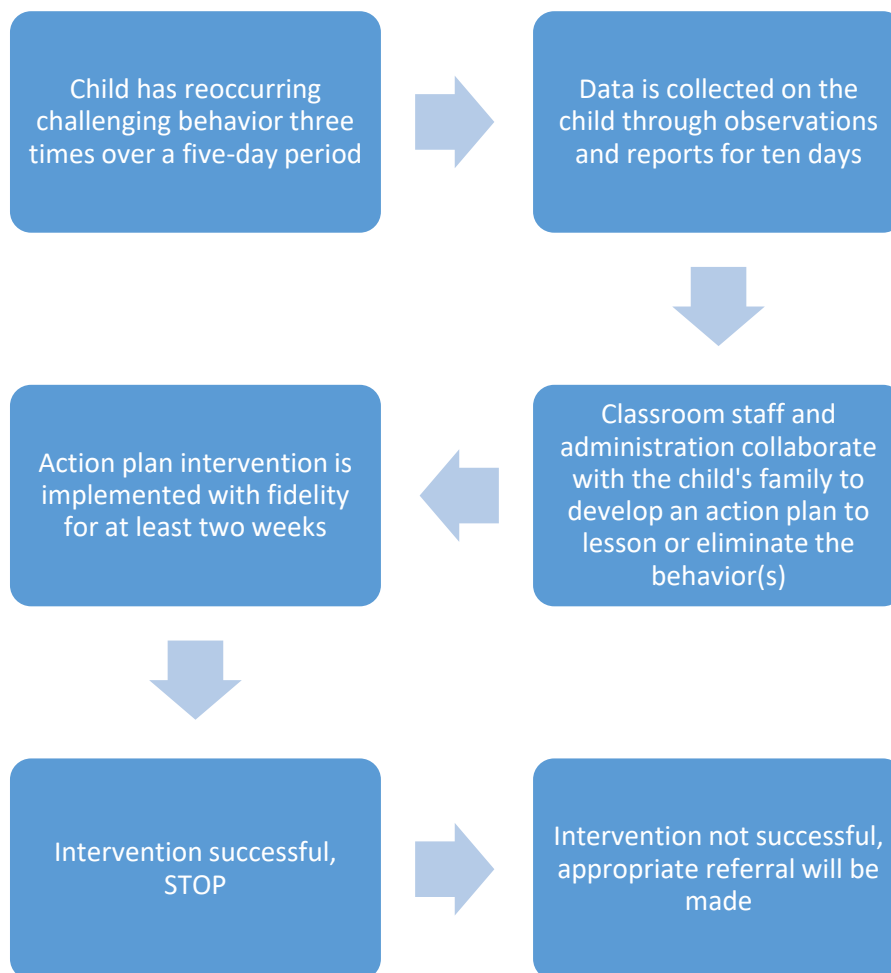
### **Safety Plan**

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 Becky Gates 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 Becky Gates Children's Center and Texas A&M policies, regulations, and rules.
- Fraudulent information provided to the Becky Gates 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**

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### **Parking**

Parking is available in the front of the building for patrons of the Becky Gates Children's Center. The side lot is reserved for those with lot 90 permits. Please drive slowly and remain alert as many children are being loaded and unloaded. Please reserve the closest spaces for families with multiple children.

### **Signing in and out**

It is mandatory you sign your child in and out every day at the Procure kiosk. The two kiosks are in the main entryway. 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 Becky Gates 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 Becky Gates Children's Center is a secure building. Only authorized personnel and families have access to the building. It is 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**

Security cameras are located throughout the Becky Gates 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 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**

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### **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.

### **Kaymbu**

Kaymbu is our communication technology allowing teachers to share photos, videos, notes, emails, portfolios, and weekly storyboards. Reminders or urgent messages can be shared with families by text, email, or the dedicated parent app.

### **Daily Notes**

Notes about your toddler's day will be given daily. Notes will include information about your child's day such as diapering, meals, and naps. Preschoolers do not receive daily notes since they are able to communicate information about their day. If you have special concerns about your child, please talk with your child's teacher to make accommodations.

### **Emails**

Classroom teachers will use Kaymbu 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 Becky Gates 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:

- Teaching assistant information
- Lesson plans
- Question of the day/week or conversation prompt
- Menu
- 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 Becky Gates 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

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### 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 formed during the 2017-2018 academic year. FAB is comprised of minimally eight parents representing the diversity of BGCC, a representative of BGCC 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 BGCC 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 BGCC administration when requested.

### Goals:

- Support the mission of the Becky Gates Children's Center:

*The mission of the Becky Gates 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 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 Becky Gates 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 instructional coach, or administration team.

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

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 Becky Gates 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 Becky Gates 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. BGCC 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

### 2018 - 2019 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 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 or public or private elementary or secondary school in Texas.

Age at which child must have vaccines to be in compliance:	Minimum Number of Doses Required of Each Vaccine							
	DTaP	Polio	HepB	Hib	PCV	MMR	Varicella	HepA
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 <sup>1</sup>	3 Doses <sup>2</sup>			
By 16 months	3 Doses	2 Doses	2 Doses	3 Doses <sup>1</sup>	4 Doses <sup>2</sup>	1 Dose <sup>3</sup>	1 Dose <sup>3</sup>	
By 19 months	4 Doses	3 Doses	3 Doses	3 Doses <sup>1</sup>	4 Doses <sup>2</sup>	1 Dose <sup>3</sup>	1 Dose <sup>3</sup>	
By 25 months	4 Doses	3 Doses	3 Doses	3 Doses <sup>1</sup>	4 Doses <sup>2</sup>	1 Dose <sup>3</sup>	1 Dose <sup>3</sup>	1 Dose <sup>3</sup>
By 43 months, but before Kindergarten entry	4 Doses	3 Doses	3 Doses	3 Doses <sup>1</sup>	4 Doses <sup>2</sup>	1 Dose <sup>3</sup>	1 Dose <sup>3</sup>	2 Doses <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A complete Hib series is two doses plus a booster dose on or after 12 months of age (three doses total). If a child receives the first dose of Hib vaccine at 12 - 14 months of age, only one additional dose is required (two doses total). Any child who has received a single dose of Hib vaccine on or after 15 - 59 months of age is in compliance with these specified vaccine requirements. Children 60 months of age and older are not required to receive Hib vaccine.

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

Rev. 02/2018

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](http://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 Becky Gates 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 Becky Gates 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 Becky Gates Children's Center performs the following drills:

<b>Drill</b>	<b>How Often</b>
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 Becky Gates Children's Center. We maintain a lower teacher to child ratio and group size than 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 Becky Gates 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).

## APPENDIX

### Outside Food and Beverages

Foods brought from home must meet the Child and Adult Care Food Program meal patterns listed below:

Breakfast	Lunch	Snack (only 2 components required)
Milk	Milk	Milk

Vegetable, fruit, or both	Meat/Meat Alternate	Meat/Meat Alternate
Grain	Vegetable	Vegetable
	Fruit	Fruit
	Grain	Grain

**Cereals and yogurt must contain no more than 6 grams of sugar**

- Families must clearly label all food brought from home including the child's full name, date, and type of food.
- Outside foods are stored at appropriate temperatures until they are eaten.
- Outside foods for one child are not shared with other children.
- Foods labeled with "Contains: Peanuts/Tree Nuts," "may contain peanuts/tree nuts" or "made in a factory with peanuts/tree nuts" **may not** be brought into the center.
- Foods that do not meet the program's standards for nutrition and food safety are returned home and the center will provide a substitute.

Outside Food **Examples:**

Meat	Meat Alternate	Vegetable	Fruit	Grain
Chicken	Yogurt	Any Fresh, Frozen, Canned, or Prepackaged Vegetable	Any Fresh, Frozen, Canned (in light or 100% juice), or Prepackaged Fruit	Grains with less than 6g of sugar per serving
Turkey	Real Cheese			Whole Grain Breads
Eggs	Cottage Cheese			Corn/Rice Chex
Tuna	Sunbutter (Nut Free)			Cheerios, Kix, Life, Dora, & Rice Cereals
Beef	Beans & Legumes			Frosted Mini Wheats
	Tofu			Any Rice
				Any Pasta

Outside Food **Non Examples (does not follow policy – keep at home):**

Meat	Meat Alternate	Vegetable	Fruit	Grain
Chicken Nuggets	Velveeta	French Fries	Packaged in Heavy Syrup	Any item over 6g of sugar
Hot Dog	Canned or Jarred Cheeses	Tater Tots		Cookie items
Pepperoni, Salami, and Bologna	Yogurt with more than 6 grams of sugar	Breaded & Fried Vegetables		Sweet Pastries like donuts and pop tarts
Breaded Fish Sticks				

**Sample Meals Brought From Home:**

Breakfast: Cheerios, packaged diced pears in 100% fruit juice, and milk

Lunch: Turkey and cheese sandwich on whole grain bread/tortilla, petite carrots sticks, banana, and milk

Snack: Goldfish crackers and milk

Breakfast: Bagel with cream cheese, fresh blueberries, and milk

Lunch: Macaroni and cheese, broccoli florets, sliced grapes, and milk

Snack: Yogurt (less than 6g of sugar per serving), granola, and water

Breakfast: Whole grain pancake/waffle with no sugar added applesauce and milk

Lunch: Lunchable (turkey, cheese, and whole grain crackers), apple slices, cherry tomatoes, and milk

Snack: Cheese stick, whole grain cracker, and water

**Other Activities**

Celebrations, including birthdays, are hosted with activities or nutritious foods such as fruits, vegetables, and other healthy snacks. Please see chart below for healthy alternatives and food options:

Non Food	Food
Scavenger hunt	Vegetable tray
Arts & crafts	Fruit tray
Games (especially outdoor games)	Fruit cups packed in 100% juice

Party take-home bags with pencils, bubbles, stickers, tattoos, chalk, and etc.	Cheese
Read a book	Whole grain waffles topped with fruit
Create "Celebrate Me" book	Whole grain bread sticks, bagels, or soft pretzels
Special birthday crown and sash	Vegetable pizza on whole grain crust
Dance party	Turkey or chicken roll-ups
	Yogurt parfait
	Cereal mix with less than 6g sugar per serving

The HighScope Preschool Curriculum: What, How, and Why



## THE HIGHSOPE PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM

*What, How, and Why*



### WE ENGAGE. WE PLAY. WE ENCOURAGE.

Our research-based, active learning curriculum has been carefully designed to promote independent, creative thinking; decision making; and problem solving in children from birth through kindergarten. The HighScope Curriculum focuses on providing engaging classrooms and routines that support children's play with a variety of learning opportunities, and encouraging adult-child interactions.

By applying intentional teaching methods that engage young children based on their level of interest and development, HighScope takes the learning process beyond traditional academic subjects while preparing them for later schooling and future success in life. This child-focused approach to early education achieves powerful, positive results.



Visit our website at [highscope.org](https://highscope.org)

## WHAT WE TEACH

In the HighScope Preschool Curriculum, learning is focused on the following eight content areas, which are based on the dimensions of school readiness identified by the National Education Goals Panel. HighScope's curriculum content areas are

- Approaches to learning
- Social and emotional development
- Physical development and health
- Language, literacy, and communication
- Mathematics
- Creative Arts
- Science and technology
- Social studies

### KEY DEVELOPMENTAL INDICATORS

Learning in these eight areas is guided by 58 key developmental indicators (KDIs) that meet all state standards. Each KDI is linked to one of the dimensions of school readiness, and each is a statement that identifies an important learning goal for young children.



Each KDI is a statement that identifies an observable child behavior, reflecting knowledge and skills in areas such as language and literacy, math, creative arts, and physical development. HighScope teachers keep these indicators in mind when they set up the learning environment and plan activities.

### APPROACHES TO LEARNING

Young children approach learning in different ways, each bringing a unique set of attitudes, habits, and preferences to their interactions and explorations. Approaches to learning is the foundation that affects how children learn in every other content area.

By understanding how to support this area of early development, adults can foster children's creativity, curiosity, confidence, independence, and initiative as they carry out their intentions, solve problems, and engage in a variety of learning experiences.



All the components of the curriculum — the daily routine, the arrangement of the learning environment, and its adult-child interaction strategies — work together to encourage the abilities of approaches to learning.

## **SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The HighScope approach gives adults the tools they need to help children develop strong and positive relationships with adults and peers. Teachers learn how to create a positive climate in the classroom as a foundation for social learning. The social skills children develop in HighScope programs contribute to their readiness for school and their ability to meet a variety of challenges throughout their lives.

Creating a warm and nurturing environment in preschool not only helps children form trusting relationships with others but also promotes learning in all areas. Surrounded by a positive and supportive classroom climate, children are likely to become engaged and motivated learners.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT AND HEALTH**

Preschoolers are physically active, and although children grow and develop on their own, they need the support of adults who teach intentionally to develop physical abilities and healthy habits to the fullest extent possible. Learning personal care skills and acquiring habits that foster lifelong health are an important part of this curriculum and children's physical actions can also be used as a gateway to learning in other curriculum areas.

## **LANGUAGE, LITERACY, AND COMMUNICATION**

Learning to read and write is a developmental process that begins at birth and builds on children's basic need to communicate. In HighScope classrooms, children develop literacy skills by engaging in meaningful language and literacy experiences through a combination of child-initiated learning and intentional teacher guidance.

## **MATHEMATICS**

As young children explore their environment, they begin to notice relationships that are the foundations for mathematics. In HighScope classrooms, children acquire math skills and concepts through adult-guided experiences that respect children's concrete thinking and need to learn through exploration. Learning activities are based on children's natural interests and offer children the time and freedom to construct math ideas.



### CREATIVE ARTS

Art should be an integral part of every early childhood program. Arts experiences in preschool not only contribute to children's artistic and creative development but also to a wide range of skills in other areas, including perceptual, cognitive, language, and social skills.

### SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Young children are experimenters and testers from birth. If we observe young children as they explore their world, we will see them using science processes such as observing, classifying, experimenting, predicting, drawing conclusions, and communicating their ideas to others. We call these processes the preschool scientific method because they are the early forms of abilities adult scientists use.

### SOCIAL STUDIES

Children learn about their social world from the moment of birth, and observing and interpreting group behavior in preschool is an important part of this. After their family, the classroom is the first society that young children belong to. Participating in the classroom community allows them to practice the decision-making process and discuss ways to handle shared problems to acquire the basic knowledge, skills, and attitudes children need to live as contributing citizens in a complex society.



## HOW WE TEACH

The HighScope Preschool Curriculum includes intentional teaching methods that enable educators to create effective and engaging early childhood programs. Three topics are particularly important for teachers who want to strengthen their programs — adult-child interaction, classroom layout and materials, and the daily routine.

### ADULT-CHILD INTERACTION

Adult-child interaction is the process of working alongside children and communicating with them both verbally and nonverbally to encourage learning. A key strategy for adult-child interaction is sharing control with children. Additional strategies include supporting children's play, using encouragement instead of praise, and taking a problem-solving approach to conflict.

### THE CLASSROOM

HighScope settings are divided into interest areas stocked with a stimulating range of materials designed for specific types of play. Examples include house area, art area, block area, small toy area, computer area, reading and writing area. Materials are arranged in consistent places and the shelves are tagged with child-friendly labels so that children can get out and put away materials themselves.

### THE DAILY ROUTINE

In HighScope programs there is a consistent framework for the day that provides a balanced variety of experiences and learning opportunities. Children engage in both individual and social play, participate in small- and large-group activities, assist with cleanup, socialize during meals, develop self-care skills, and exercise their small and large muscles. The most important segment of the daily routine is the plan-do-review sequence, in which children make choices about what they will do, carry out their ideas, and reflect upon their activities with adults and other children.

## The HighScope Infant-Toddler Curriculum: What, How, and Why

# THE HIGHSCOPE INFANT-TODDLER CURRICULUM

What, How, and Why



WE ENGAGE. WE PLAY. WE ENCOURAGE.

Our research-based, active learning curriculum has been carefully designed to promote independent, creative thinking; decision making; and problem solving in children from birth through kindergarten. The HighScope Infant-Toddler Curriculum focuses on providing engaging classrooms and routines that support children's play with a variety of learning opportunities, as well as encouraging adult-child interactions.

By applying intentional teaching methods that engage young children based on their level of interest and development, HighScope takes the learning process beyond traditional academic subjects while preparing them for later schooling and future success in life. This child-focused approach to early education achieves powerful, positive results.



Visit our website at [highscope.org](https://highscope.org)

## WHAT WE TEACH

How do you provide care for your youngest while nurturing their growth and development? The answer is often found in the curriculum. The curriculum you choose, and the quality of how you implement that curriculum, affects the quality of care for those infants and toddlers. Choosing a curriculum that fits the needs of your infants and toddlers, their families, and, of course, you, is an important decision that requires careful consideration.

Research based and child focused, the HighScope Infant-Toddler Curriculum uses a carefully designed process of learning through discovery, called active participatory learning. During active learning, caregivers encourage infants and toddlers to discover the world around them by exploring and playing. Learning and development are anchored by long-term, trusting relationships with caregivers, who are close at hand to support children as they play. In the HighScope I-T Curriculum, learning is focused on the following six content areas that correspond to state and national standards

- Approaches to Learning
- Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development and Health
- Communication, Language, and Literacy
- Cognitive Development
- Creative Arts

## HOW WE TEACH

Taking care of very young children involves more than just meeting their physical needs. Today, caregivers see themselves as responsive professionals concerned about all aspects of children's development. By using the clearly defined practices of the HighScope Infant-Toddler Curriculum, caregivers develop close, supportive relationships with the children in their care.

In a HighScope program, caregivers support children's natural desire to be active learners. Creating an active learning environment for infants and toddlers means consciously considering all their needs — their social and emotional, physical, cognitive, and sociolinguistic needs.

### PRINCIPLES OF ACTIVE LEARNING

- Infants and toddlers learn with their whole body and with all their senses.
- Infants and toddlers learn because they want to.
- Infants and toddlers communicate what they know.
- Infants and toddlers learn within the context of trusting relationships.



The principles of active learning guide the decisions caregivers make about:

- Adult-child interaction
- Arrangement of the room and physical environment
- Daily schedules and routines
- Observations and planning for children (how to evaluate what children are learning and plan from there)

## ADULT-CHILD INTERACTION

Infants and toddlers are explorers — Their interactions with trusted adults provide the emotional fuel these very young children need to puzzle out the mysteries of the social and physical world. HighScope provides a range of strategies caregivers can use to create supportive interactions with infants and toddlers.

Because trusting relationships are so important, caregivers strive to ensure that each infant or toddler in a child care center or home has the same primary caregiver throughout enrollment, whether that be for six months or three years. In settings with multiple caregivers, each caregiver is the "primary" for only a small group of children, and the caregivers form a stable team that provides long-term continuity of care for children and families.



Guided by practical theories of child development, caregivers attempt to see things from the child's point of view, encourage rather than thwart children's efforts and communications, take cues from children rather than impose their own ideas, and assume a problem-solving approach to children's interpersonal conflicts rather than punish children or solve their problems for them. Caregivers strive to form positive, reciprocal relationships with children by establishing a psychologically safe environment, where children's initiatives are regarded as purposeful rather than naughty or bothersome for adults.

Very young children are just formulating a sense of themselves and an understanding of what the rest of the world is all about. Children's interactions with parents and caregivers significantly influence the life-long conclusions they draw from their experiences. Parents' and caregivers' supportive interactions help shape children's perceptions of themselves as capable, trusted, and trustworthy human beings.





## THE ROOM

In a HighScope infant-toddler program, the physical space is safe, flexible, and child oriented to provide comfort and to accommodate children's changing developmental needs and interests. Providing an active learning environment means considering infants' and toddlers' needs to look, listen, wiggle, roll, crawl, climb, rock, bounce, rest, eat, make noise, grasp or mouth or drop things, and be messy from time to time.

HighScope caregivers are trained to stock the setting with a wide variety of materials that infants and toddlers can reach, explore, and play with in their own way at their own pace. Materials appeal to children's senses and have varied properties (including wood, metal, and textured materials; found materials; and natural materials). The storage of materials is consistent, personalized, and accessible so that infants and toddlers can reach or get to the materials they see and want to explore.

The space and materials are organized into play and care areas that serve the needs of infants and toddlers. For example, the toddler block area includes a good supply of small and large blocks for satisfying stacking and balancing experiences.

## PLAY AND CARE AREAS

The care and play areas are distinct and organized with children's activities in mind and often include the following areas:

- Eating and food preparation
- Sleeping and napping
- Bodily care
- Infant indoor play
- Toddler movement
- Toddler sand and water
- Toddler book
- Toddler art
- Toddler block
- Toddler house
- Outdoor play

It is recommended that specialized areas with fixed purposes, such as the diapering, block, eating, and napping areas, are organized around the perimeter of the room with the middle space left open for active play. Movable furnishings, equipment, and storage containers are recommended to accommodate multiple uses. There should be easy access to an outdoor play yard.

The physical environment, in short, is secure and inviting. Within its boundaries, infants and toddlers are free to move about, explore materials, exercise creativity, and solve problems.

## DAILY SCHEDULES

In HighScope settings, caregivers maintain the overall routine as consistently as possible, while flexing it to accommodate individual children's natural rhythms and temperaments. Each child's individual schedule is anchored around a primary caregiver who strives to understand the child's individual temperament and assists with smooth transitions between segments. Having this caregiver as a "home base" provides the very young child with a sense of security while away from home.

Although each HighScope program decides on the routine that works best for its setting, schedule, and children, the segments described below are always included during the day. It is up to the program to decide the length and order of the segments, whether particular segments will be repeated, and the content of the experiences in each segment.

## PARTS OF THE DAILY SCHEDULE

- Arrivals and departures
- Choice times
- Group times
- Outside time
- Caregiving routines
- Transition times
- Team planning time

## ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Caregivers work with parents to ensure that arrivals and departures are pleasant and reassuring for children. These times allow children to extend the bonds of trust they have with their parents to the caregivers in the program. The physical locations where arrivals and departures take place depend on the needs of children and their parents.

## CHOICE TIMES

During this part of the daily routine, caregivers are attentive and offer emotional and physical support to children as the children play and explore their environment at their own pace. Caregivers tailor their responses to children's ideas, engage in give-and-take communication with the children, imitate children's actions, support children's play with other children, and assist children in problem solving. They also support older toddlers in planning and recalling their choice-time activities.

## GROUP TIMES

In small groups of older infants and toddlers, caregivers provide a particular set of materials for children to explore in a common activity. In these group times, children remain in close contact with the caregiver while having a shared experience with other children. Although the adults introduce the activities, children remain free to make choices about materials and how to use them. Adults follow the children's cues (e.g., deciding how long the activity lasts, based on children's interest levels).



## OUTSIDE TIME

This segment of the day allows infants and toddlers to explore the outdoor world. Using strategies similar to those used at choice time, adults support children's exploration and interests, providing open-ended materials and a variety of experiences. Young infants who are not yet crawling may spend time on a blanket lying on their backs and looking around, reaching for objects, and feeling the sun and air. Older infants sit and explore toys and natural objects, crawl, and pull themselves up to a stand. With assistance, they may swing or go for a wagon ride. Toddlers will use the open area of the play space for a wide range of physical movements, simple games, and problem solving as they pursue their interests.

## CAREGIVING ROUTINES

In addition to strengthening bonds with children during meals, rest, and bodily care routines, caregivers also use these care giving routines as opportunities to share control by finding ways for the children to play an active role. Caregivers fit these times around children's exploration and play. Frequency of naps is based around each child's individual needs, with quiet alternatives provided for non-nappers. Adults also accommodate children's individual styles of waking up. Similarly, adults take cues from children about feedings and diaper changes rather than asserting control to make the schedule more convenient for themselves.

## TRANSITION TIMES

The timing of transitions is flexible, based on children's needs and engagement in their play, and the shift in events or activities should be kept low-key and comfortable. Caregivers organize the parts of the day in a logical fashion, just as one would do in one's personal routine. They strive to avoid unnecessary transitions, such as having children remove all their outdoor wear after playing outside and then putting it back on again to go home after a brief indoor group time. Instead, caregivers might schedule their daily routine so outside time occurs prior to departure time.

## HOW WE EVALUATE

Research tells us that the best programs consistently measure how well caregivers do their jobs and whether children are developing as they should be. They use the results to continue what is working and improve what is not; for example, to decide whether to provide more training to caregivers or to redesign infants' and toddlers' play areas.

HighScope has developed two infant-toddler assessment tools to carry out this process of assessing children's development and reviewing and strengthening programs.

### TEAM PLANNING TIME

Teachers observe and collect anecdotes for the COR to use with daily team planning time. This happens every day in a HighScope program. It can occur during children's naptime, before children arrive, or after they leave. The teaching team meets to discuss their observations of children's developing abilities and interests, focusing on these observations as

### COR ADVANTAGE

COR Advantage is HighScope's birth-to-kindergarten child assessment, which evaluates children's learning in nine content areas. Each day, teachers and caregivers document brief written descriptions, or anecdotes, that objectively describe these very young children's behaviors. They use these notes to evaluate children's development and then plan activities to help infants and toddlers and the program as a whole progress.

### PROGRAM QUALITY ASSESSMENT

The Infant-Toddler Program Quality Assessment (PQA) evaluates whether teachers and agencies are using the most effective classroom and program management practices. Each area of classroom teaching and program operations is rated to identify strengths and areas for improvement. (Also available are versions of the PQA for evaluating preschool or family child care programs.)

## WHY HIGHSOPE

The HighScope Curriculum was designed in result of extensive research that supports our belief that children learn best when they actively participate in the learning process through direct experiences with people, objects, events, and ideas as they discover the world around them.

More than 40 years of research has proven that the HighScope Curriculum advances the development of children and helps them to build lifelong skills that positively impacts their future success. National research conducted with children from different backgrounds has shown that those who attend HighScope programs score higher on measures of development than similar children enrolled in other preschool and child care programs.

HighScope has a long history studying Infant-Toddler development including The Ypsilanti-Carnegie Infant Education project, Parent-to-Parent Home Visit project, and the Case-study follow-up of the Parent-to-Parent Dissemination Project. HighScope is perhaps best known for the HighScope Perry Preschool Study that established the lasting human and financial value of early childhood education by comparing children who attended our program with those who did not. As adults, preschool participants had greater high school graduation rates, higher monthly earnings, less use of welfare, and fewer arrests than those not enrolled in the program.

Not only did the study prove the benefit of early education on the individual who attended preschool, the results show that preschool education also benefits the community. Preschool education leads to savings for taxpayers: for every dollar invested in high-quality early childhood education, society saves \$13 in the cost of special education, public assistance, unemployment benefits, and crime.

The HighScope approach is consistent with the best practices recommended by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Head Start Program Performance Standards, and other guidelines for developmentally based programs. The HighScope Infant-Toddler Curriculum meets all state standards that have been published. You can view the map on our website for more information.

