



Children's Center

FAMILY HANDBOOK

Cuesta College Children's Center Programs

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ABOUT OUR CENTER

Welcome to the Cuesta College Children's Center!

The Cuesta College Children's Centers programs are laboratory schools that support students in many fields of study and offer hands-on experience in early learning classrooms. Cuesta College has two children's lab programs, at the San Luis Obispo campus, and at the North County campus in Paso Robles. These programs are licensed, planned, facilitated, and operated by early care and education professionals.

We accept children from age 18 months to 5 years. Our children's programs are based on the educational philosophies taught in Cuesta's Child Development and Family Services degree program. Within the context of the program, we meet the physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and language developmental needs as well as early literacy, math, science, discovery and creative interests of each child enrolled.

The Children's Center follows the Cuesta College academic year, and is closed for holidays, flex days, and other breaks observed by the college. Our programs are open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. until 5:15 p.m., our part day program ends at 3:00 pm. During the Summer our program is open for the 6-week session Monday - Thursday.

Cuesta College students attending courses on campus have priority for enrollment. We accept Cuesta College staff & faculty, and community families into our programs. The Board of Trustees of the San Luis Obispo County community College District affirms that no person shall, on the basis of race, color, religious beliefs, gender, national origin, ethnicity, age, mental or physical disability, veteran status, sexual orientation or marital status, be unlawfully subject to discrimination under any program or activity of the San Luis Obispo County Community College District.

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

Play is the greatest avenue for learning in early education. The sense of wonder, discovery, curiosity, inventiveness and spontaneous energy of young children are sources from which a lifetime of learning should develop. The opportunity to participate in creative play is the highlight of the early years and our objective is to provide as many of these experiences as possible. All children, regardless of ability, ethnic background, race, religious beliefs, or family lifestyle are equal and are encouraged to participate in our non-discriminating environment.

Our teachers seek to create environments that inspire learning for children, parents, and Child Development and Family Studies (CDFS) degree students. We are constantly learning ourselves as we advance in our own professional growth as life-long learners. We are a lab school that grows and changes as new research leads to new practice. We are proud to have been enhancing children's lives for over fifty years.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Our children's programs follow the base philosophies of two nationally known early childhood organizations, the [National Association for the Education of Young Children](#) (NAEYC) and the California Department of Education & WestEd's [Program for Infant and Toddler Care](#) (PITC). We are a demonstration site for the [Outdoor Classroom Project](#). We have studied and are strongly influenced by the teaching and learning practices from the programs of Reggio Emilia, Italy, through the [North American Reggio Emilia Alliance](#).

- We believe* All children have the right to feel good about themselves and that it is the responsibility of all teachers to nurture the child's self-esteem.
- We believe* That our educational and guidance decisions for children must be based on our knowledge of child development, while promoting skills for self-help, problem solving, and negotiation.
- We believe* That each person is a unique individual and has his or her own needs. Each person has a right to meet this need in his or her own way and in his or her own time. One of the responsibilities of having rights is recognizing and respecting the rights of others.

- We believe* That everyone is entitled to feelings, "positive" and "negative," as well as the trial-and-error process for self-learning. It is important to understand these emotions rather than deny them.
- We believe* In appreciating and supporting the close ties between the child and family and that children are best understood in the context of their family, culture, and society.
- We believe* Creativity and curiosity are self-expressions of individuality and should be encouraged to develop in all people.
- We believe* In helping children and adults achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on trust, respect, and positive regard.
- We believe* That each child and family is due the respect for personal privacy demonstrated by professional ethics.
- We believe* That all children learn best through authentic experiences that lead to competent social behaviors, all children must make mistakes in order to learn what is acceptable and we give them the opportunity to practice this at all levels of development.

There are many kinds of learning:

- Creative expression: art, carpentry, painting, music, movement, journaling, and dramatic expression
- Social relationships: small and large group activities and dramatic play
- Communication skills: group time, reading aloud and sharing about the day, learning to negotiate difficult situations
- Math: Number recognition, readiness and conceptual skills: cooking, multi-material construction, block building, sorting, and matching activities
- Language and Literacy: Letter recognition, writing, reading, story-telling experiences, connecting vocabulary and written words
- Science: Discovery, exploration and environmental/science, awareness and care of animals, nature, bugs and plants, study of the natural world
- Motor skills: movement, climbing, rhythm, dancing, constructing, drawing, painting, and manipulating many media materials in many ways
- Visiting the campus community at large and inviting visitors from the community to provide enriching educational experiences.

OPERATIONAL INFORMATION

LICENSING INFORMATION

The State of California's Department of Social Services, Title 22, Community Care Licensing Bureau licenses the Children's Center. We meet or exceed all State, County and City regulations for health, sanitation, safety, and teacher/child ratios. The Center is regularly inspected, and some Center policies are based on licensing requirements. You can visit the Community Care Licensing website (<https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/child-care-licensing>) for more information.

OUR CLASSROOMS

SAN LUIS OBISPO CAMPUS:

Toddler Program – Ages 18 – 36 months: Up to 12 Children Enrolled
 Preschool 1 Classroom – Ages 2.6 years – 4 years: Up to 14 Children Enrolled
 Preschool 2 Classroom – Ages 3.9 – 5 years: Up to 16 Children Enrolled

NORTH COUNTY/PASO ROBLES CAMPUS

Toddler Program – Ages 18 – 36 months: Up to 12 Children Enrolled
 Middle Littles Classroom – Ages 2 years – 3.6 years: Up to 12 Children Enrolled
 Preschool Classroom – Ages 3.9 – 5 years: Up to 16 Children Enrolled

Our toddler classrooms maintain a ratio of 1 teacher to every 4 children. The middle classrooms maintain a ratio of 1 teacher to every 6 to 7 children, depending on the number of children in diapers. The preschool classrooms maintain a ratio of 1 teacher to 8 children.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS STAFFING

The Director oversees all administrative aspects of the Children's Center programs. The Assistant Supervisor leads the preschool classroom and oversees operational duties at the North County Campus in Paso Robles.

Each Lead Teacher oversees the curriculum and functions of the children's classrooms. Assistant Teachers partner with Lead Teachers for all functions and curriculum planning for the children's classrooms.

Student Employees allow CDFS majors to increase their experience as they complete their degrees in CDFS at Cuesta College. They may be assistants and subs in each classroom. All interns and substitutes meet the minimum requirements through Community Care Licensing and have been fingerprinted. Paid interns help with breaks and closing the classrooms at the end of each day.

CDFS Lab and observation students are not fingerprinted (unless interning also) but are under direct supervision of Master Teachers and Teachers. Lab and observation students are NEVER left alone with children and do not help diapering or bathroom supervision. These students help prepare the environment, daily experiences and activities, and support the teachers in maintaining a supportive and engaging classroom environment.

OTHER STUDENT SUPPORT AT THE CUESTA CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

As an institution of higher learning, we support various majors and certifications that are offered at Cuesta College.

Each year Paramedic Students complete required pediatric training time by visiting the children's programs to learn, understand, and gain experience working with young children for their certifications. Additionally, Nursing Students spend two days each spring observing and learning about the behaviors and abilities of the different ages and stages of children as part of their nursing studies at Cuesta College.

ENROLLMENT

SEMESTER CONTRACTS

A new contract and enrollment fee is due each semester. We have two types of contracts - for Children in Diapers and for Children Out of Diapers and the rates reflect the level of care needed for the different needs. To be moved from the diapering rate to the non-diapering rate, the child must be self-sufficient at toileting for two weeks, per their classroom teacher. Student parents must take at least 6 units at Cuesta College each semester to get the student rate (Summer student rates require 3 units). **To receive this rate the parent must provide a copy of their college class schedule each semester, due prior to the first week of school. In addition, enrollment checks will be performed mid-semester to ensure student parents have maintained enrollment in their classes.**

- a. Contracts are due by the stated due date to secure your child's spot. Contracts that are turned in after the due date will be considered as space allows.
- b. A non-refundable enrollment fee is due with a new contract for each school year. If we do not receive an enrollment fee with your contract, we may not be able to hold your spot and are not able to guarantee your requested days.

- c. The guardian signing the contract is fiscally responsible for any fees incurred. Any alternative payment arrangements are the responsibility of the individual that signed the contract. The Children's Center staff will not bill multiple family members.
- d. Once your child is enrolled, they are guaranteed a program spot if they are continuously enrolled each semester. If you take summer semester off, we cannot guarantee placement for Fall.
- e. All new families must attend the New Family Orientation and Information Session at the beginning of the school year. In the event a family is not able to attend or enrolls after the orientation, it is their responsibility to watch the recorded orientation. Families are responsible for following all policies outlined in the New Family Orientation and Information Session.
- f. Student Parents MUST turn in a copy of their schedule to be charged at the student rate. Schedule checks will also happen mid semester. Students must be enrolled in at least 6 units ALL semester to qualify (short term classes are an exception).
- g. Changes to rules, regulations and procedures may occur as needed, or if directed by Cuesta College Administration, Community Care Licensing or the Public Health Department
- h. Changes made to children's schedules must be made in writing by submitting a new contract 30 days in advance. If you are reducing days, you will be held responsible for any fees based on your child's previous schedule for the full 30 days, regardless of when the schedule change takes effect.

Priority for Enrolling:

1. Pell Eligible Student - CCAMPIS Participant (Full Time. $\frac{3}{4}$, Part Time)
2. Students participating in CaFE programs (CalWORKs, EOPS, Foster Youth)
3. Full Time Student
4. Part Time Student
5. Faculty and Staff
6. Community

Our waiting list is first come first served, and enrollment is based upon priority. We make every attempt to also serve CalWORKs and families with special circumstances.

If you are not attending for summer semester: We cannot guarantee that you will have a spot for fall semester. We expect to enroll for summer until we are full. Families enrolled for summer semester will have the first opportunity for enrollment for fall semester.

Parents who have children enrolled in the previous spring semester will have second priority for fall enrollment, then we will enroll families from our waiting lists.

IF YOUR CHILD HAS A SPECIAL NEED OR CIRCUMSTANCE:

You must inform us if you have an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individual Education Plan (IEP) for your child. We require a copy of your child's IFSP or IEP with their enrollment paperwork.

- a. If your child is receiving special services like speech or occupational therapy, we must know before enrolling them. We want to partner with you to provide the best possible care for your child.
- b. Some children with special circumstances may need one-on-one assistance. It is of the utmost importance to speak to us about these circumstances before enrolling so we can make sure we can make accommodations. Accommodations will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

- a. If your child's individual plan requires one-on-one assistance, you must make sure that these services are provided before your child begins our program.
- c. If, during your enrollment at the Children's Center, your child receives special services, that information must be communicated with your child's classroom teacher. If your child receives a new or updated IEP/IFSP, a copy of that documentation must be provided to the school.
- d. Occasionally children may display behavior that can't be accommodated in the group setting. If this is the case with your child, you will meet with the teachers to decide an immediate plan of action for the child.
- e. We work closely with each family for the best interest of their child, and for the best interest of all children, families, and teachers in our program.

SUPPLIES TO BRING

Please remember to label EVERYTHING!

- Lunch (see Nutrition section for more information)
- Blanket and small pillow or small stuffed animal for rest time (storage space is limited)
- Change of clothes - (shirts, pants, underwear, hat, sweatshirt, and yes, even socks) to keep in your child's cubby.
- **Sunscreen – We use Coppertone Water Babies with your written permission, or you may choose to bring a brand of your own and we will use that only on your child.
- **Toothbrush - We brush once daily, after lunch or after dinner. From time-to-time outside agencies donate brushes for us...inquire with your child's teachers. We do not use toothpaste.

*Sunscreen (applied daily when going outside) will be administered with your written permission indicated on the Lab School Participation Agreement form.

** Sunscreen and Toothbrushing protocols will be implemented as health and safety regulations allow.

FEE AND CONTRACT POLICIES

- 1) Monthly fees are due the first operating day of the month, due dates are on the contract you signed.
 - a) Fees paid after the 5th of the month will incur a \$25 late fee.
 - b) Fees paid after the 20th of the month will incur a \$50 late fee.
 - c) If fees are not paid by the 1st of the following month, the childcare contract will be suspended.
- 2) When fees are not paid, a hold will be placed on your account through the campus cashier's office and may limit your ability to register at Cuesta College or to request transcripts. Unpaid balances may be collected through tax returns.
- 3) We offer a 5% discount for families that pay for the semester in full, either one lump sum payment (due the first week of school in August) or two semester payments, (due the first week of school in August and January).
- 4) If you have more than one child in our program, you will receive a 5% discount for the total sum of your children's monthly fees.
- 5) Fees will not be refunded or credited due to unscheduled closures or closures that result from events out of our control.
- 6) You are considered late after 3:00 or 5:15 pm (the time you indicated on your contract) and will be charged a \$1 per minute late fee. This late fee will be reflected in your next monthly fees.
 - a) Childcare subsidy assistance does not cover late fees.

CAPSLO - CCRC Child Care Subsidy Assistance

Community Action Partners of San Luis Obispo, Child Care Resource Connection (www.capslo.org) allocates child care subsidies for qualifying families. For more information about CCRC please call 805-541-2272.

If you are already enrolled in CCRC *please...*

- a. MAKE SURE TO SIGN CCRC **AND** Cuesta College ATTENDANCE RECORDS DAILY!
- b. SIGN YOUR FULL NAME, not initials.
- c. Your signature is needed at the top, for each time you sign in AND out. Your in and out time MUST be specific to the minute, 8:03 not 8:00.
- d. Sign ALL absences. Illnesses must be specific, not sick or ill, but fever, vomiting, rash, cough, etc., Also sign for all absences, or center closures as some of these are initiated by us, such as Flex Days, Thanksgiving and Board holiday closures.
- e. ALL Attendance Records MUST be completed by the last day of each month.
- f. The enrolling parent is responsible for any fees not covered by CCRC.
- g. You are expected to maintain consistent communication with your CCRC Family Resources Specialist and provide them with any information pertaining to your child's enrollment and schedule at the Children's Center.

If you are enrolling in CCRC...

- a. You are responsible for all payments until CCRC is in effect.
- b. You must inform the Director of your intent to enroll in CCRC
- c. You are not considered fully enrolled until the CCRC Family Resources Specialist has contacted the Director to confirm your child's enrollment AND provided the Children's Center with an Attendance Record.

CCAMPIS Grant Participation

Student families may be eligible for subsidies through our CCAMPIS program. To be considered, students must provide their Banner ID (Cuesta ID #) and their Class Schedule every semester. Priority will go to full time students, then to $\frac{3}{4}$ time students, then to $\frac{1}{2}$ time students.

CCAMPIS Sliding Scale

Pell-eligible students taking 12 + Units (full-time) = 100% fee reduction

Pell-eligible students taking 9-11 Units ($\frac{3}{4}$ time) = 75% fee reduction

Pell-eligible students taking 6-8 Units ($\frac{1}{2}$ time) = 50% fee reduction

UNFORSEEN CLOSURES

On rare occasions, we may be required to close with little to no notice. Examples of circumstances requiring closure could be power outages, water shut off, staff illness, guidance from state agencies, etc. In those circumstances, we will do our best to communicate with families and construct a timeline for reopening.

In any event of unforeseen closures, we will not be able to provide refunds, credit, or make-up days.

UNENROLLING FROM THE PROGRAM

Once you have enrolled your child in our program, we expect you to be with us for the entire semester. If you terminate your child from our program in the middle of a semester, you will be charged for the remainder of that month, whether or not your child attends until your termination date. We require that you give us 2 weeks notification.

If you terminate without appropriate warning, we may not accept you back onto the waiting list and if you leave without making parent fees, a hold will be on your account at Cuesta College.

TERMINATION

Failure to follow center policies could be cause for termination. If for some reason problems arise, please talk with us as soon as possible. Some reasons that are cause for termination are as follows:

- Failure to respect and follow Center policies
- Failure to pay parent fees
- Providing false information on any paperwork
- Providing false information regarding health and safety
- Three unexcused late drop-offs
- Three late pick ups
- Leaving a child unattended in a vehicle
- Family/Child needs or circumstances (behaviors, needs, special supports) disrupts daily routines within the classroom and accommodations cannot be reasonably made
- Posting pictures of children other than your own on social media
- Behavior by any family member that presents a risk to children and/or staff including but not limited to use of profane language, threats, verbal/physical aggression
- Attendance is inconsistent and is a result of unexcused absences or absences that are not communicated to staff
- The specific needs of the child cannot be met by the program after intervention efforts. Referrals for community resources will be made available to assist the parent.

****This list is not comprehensive. Other factors will be discussed with families as they arise.**

No person shall, on the basis of race, color, religious beliefs, gender, national origin, ethnicity, age, mental or physical disability, veteran status, sexual orientation or marital status, be unlawfully subject to discrimination or terminated from the Children's Center programs.

Please know that it is never our desire to terminate a family from our program. In any event that would require termination from the program, we will clearly communicate the reasons for termination. If termination from the program becomes necessary, we will try to help you find alternative care options for your child.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ARRIVALS, DEPARTURES and ABSENCES

All children must arrive between 7:30 – 9:00 a.m. unless previously arranged.

Consistent late arrivals without prior arrangements may result in termination (see Termination information above).

- a. No children will be admitted after 9:00 am. If you cannot get your child here by 9:00 am, you must arrange with your classroom teachers to determine if a late drop off is possible for the day. It is up to the discretion of the classroom teacher to determine if accommodation can be provided.

- b. If your child is in ongoing therapy or special services that causes him or her to be late on a regular basis or if your child will be late due to a medical appointment, please make sure you have made arrangements with your child's teachers. We cannot always accommodate late drop offs.
- c. *ALWAYS* say good-bye, even if your child is upset or crying. Please do not sneak out on your child.
- d. Call, email, or message to let us know when and why your child is absent.
- e. When you are late to pick up your child, you will be charged \$1.00 per minute that you are late and must sign a confirmation note agreeing to pay the late charge. You are considered late if you come after 3:00pm for the part-day option, 5:15 pm for the full-day option, as based on the pickup time reflected in your contract.

Children benefit the most when they have time to get involved with the entire program. Arriving late can cause your child to have more difficulty acclimating to the day and they miss time to participate fully in some of the activities. This can be hard socially and emotionally on your child. If your child is having separation anxiety PLEASE come early, stay awhile, and allow your child to be ready for you to leave.

Teachers prefer to spend a few minutes at arrivals and departures to talk with you about how your child's night was or how the morning is going, and how their day was at pick up. If you need to talk with teachers, please arrive a little early, as they may be able to give you their attention before the day gets too busy. At the end of the day, be prompt and come a little early if you need time to talk with the teachers. Please remember that all conversations in front of children should be appropriate for ALL children's ears.

If you need to have an extended or specific/confidential discussion with your child's teacher, you may request a meeting with them. For urgent matters please contact the director.

If you are going to ask a friend or relative to pick up your child, please make sure their name is on your child's emergency card. Please let us know, at the beginning of the day, if someone new is picking up your child.

NOTE: Please refrain from idling your vehicle in our parking areas unless the temperature is extremely hot or cold outside and your vehicle's interior or engine needs to maintain temperature.

Never leave a child unattended in a vehicle, not even for a moment to run inside "really quick." We must call Public Safety if there is ever a child left in a vehicle without an adult.

SIGNING YOUR CHILD IN AND OUT DAILY – Required by Licensing

Community Care Licensing and Cuesta College liability insurance require that you sign your child in and out daily. This is a requirement of anyone who picks up or drops off your child. Please be diligent in making sure this happens during every drop off and pick up.

Any person picking up a child from the program must be listed on the child's emergency card and have a valid photo ID available upon request.

*If you are receiving subsidized childcare from CAPSLO/Child Care Resource Connection you MUST sign in and out on two papers, once for CCRC and once for CCCC.

WE WILL ASK FOR IDENTIFICATION from anyone who is not a familiar face.

Please warn your friends and family ahead of time to always have their ID available to show to staff. In any circumstance during which someone refuses to show our staff their ID, campus police will be contacted.

CUSTODY ARRANGEMENT POLICY:

Only individuals listed on your child's "Identification and Emergency Information" card are authorized to pick up your child at any point. If a family has a court ordered custody arrangement, we require a copy for our files in order to effectively and legally implement the custody agreement.

Issues regarding custody and pick up must be arranged by the parents outside of the Children's Center and can only be legally upheld with court ordered documentation. In the event of a custody dispute we will default to the paperwork submitted during enrollment and may ask Campus Safety Officers for support.

BUILDING SECURITY AND ACCESS

San Luis Obispo:

Our front desk at the Children's Center in San Luis Obispo is staffed by the Division Assistant and by student workers. They are available as a resource to students and families entering the building and are also there to make sure the building is secured appropriately. Other security measures are implemented by the Cuesta College Public Safety department, as necessary.

North County:

The Children's Center in North County is locked at all times. Families are given a code to allow them access to the building. All families must sign an agreement to never release this code to those who have not been authorized to enter the children's program. Other security measures are implemented by the Cuesta College Public Safety department as necessary.

GUIDANCE

At the Children's Center, the term "guidance" is used for several reasons. It is a positive term and implies working WITH the child to develop internal control of her/his behavior. Our goal is to encourage the children to become creative, independent, responsible and socially mature human beings. We guide them to gain the skills of self-discipline and self-confidence. This involves learning to make responsible choices and accepting the consequences of such choices. We help them learn problem solving and negotiation.

GUIDANCE TAKES SEVERAL FORMS:

1. *Environment* - A place designed for children. The furniture is child-sized, with lots of opportunity for hands-on experience.
2. *Logical Rules* - Such as taking care of the learning environment and respecting how we treat others. These are discussed with the children and why such rules are needed.
3. *Curriculum* - Is developmentally appropriate, based on the children's interests and level of readiness.
4. *Promoting Positive Behavior* - We reinforce positive behaviors by modeling them.
5. *Positive Reminder* - Telling the child what we want them to do, rather than using "no" or "don't".
6. *Redirection* - Interesting a child in another activity can eliminate a potential difficulty. We might ask a child to participate in an activity in another area or dialogue with them about ways they can deal with difficult situations.
7. *Problem Solving* – Staying with children during conflict, teaching, guiding and negotiating appropriate solutions

8. *Renewal Time* - Occasionally a child needs to be removed from the situation for a brief time to calm down before rejoining group activities. This is different from "Time Out" because it is used as an opportunity to practice emotional regulation and is accompanied by gentle adult support. "One Person Areas" are offered throughout the classrooms for children to utilize independently when they feel they need some space.

Ongoing disruptive/harmful behavior will be discussed with the parents to ensure a cooperative approach to helping the child. Together we will plan and implement ways to direct acceptable behavior. If a child's behavior progresses to the point of disrupting the normal flow of the classroom or interfering with the safety of others, the following procedures will be followed:

- a. Immediate and natural consequences, including removal from the activity or project, or loss of privilege will occur. We will review our expectations with the child and inform the parents of the situation. We will inform the parents of what is being done in the classroom to help with the situation and ask that the parent reinforce the concepts at home.
- b. If the behavior persists, the parents will be required to meet with program staff. A plan of action will be developed. This agreement will include a time frame for behavioral change, parent action or program action. At this time, consultation with a specialist, such as a child or family therapist, resource center or another agency may be suggested or required.
- c. If the child needs to be physically restrained from hurting others or themselves on a continuing basis or needs to be continually separated from the group, one or more of the following options will be implemented:
 - i) A parent may need to be called during the day and asked to pick up the child if the behavior is out of control (meaning unsafe for the child or other children in the program).
 - ii) A shorter day/schedule may be implemented.
 - iii) A parent or other designated adult will need to attend the program with the child.

Please feel free to discuss any questions or concerns.

NOTE: *No corporal punishment will be allowed. This is defined as the use of negative physical touching (spanking, slapping, pinching, etc.). No unusual punishment will be allowed, such as humiliation, ridicule, threat, or coercion.*

NUTRITION

As part of our educational goals, we have set a high priority on the importance of eating nutritional foods and developing appropriate eating habits for young children. We will not serve anything that lacks nutritional value, including lunch items that were brought from home. If a child's lunch includes something that is deemed "non-nutritional" it will be removed from their lunch and sent home. If this happens more than once, we will set up a time to discuss nutrition and expectations.

For more information follow this link for nutritional health <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/> and ask for specifications.

We serve morning snacks, with two or more foods from the five basic food groups including Grains, Vegetables, Fruits, Dairy and Proteins. We do not serve juice or any other form of beverages beyond milk and water.

It is extremely important for us to know if your child has food allergies, or if you have special dietary requirements. In the event of severe food allergies, we may ask that all families refrain from bringing that type of food to the center.

Note- If we hear or are notified of a Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) product recall we will send out an email to all families about the item(s) that were recalled and any information or instructions.

PARENT SNACK DONATIONS – A Vital Part of Our Program

All families are asked to make donations for snacks. If you have more than one child, plan to donate to each classroom. If your child attends full time, we ask that you donate twice a month. Look for snack sign-up sheets in classrooms or near sign in and out binders. Check in with your child’s teacher if you have any questions or concerns.

We ask that you *READ LABELS* for nutritional information, avoiding overly processed foods, and those using hydrogenated oils. Due to sanitation reasons, all foods, other than fresh fruits and vegetables, must come in unopened original packages. Fresh muffins, breads, etc. must be made at the center.

YOUR CHILD’S LUNCH

All children who will be attending between 11:30 am - 12:30 pm must bring a lunch, *clearly marked with their name*. Bring “ready-to-eat” healthy non-processed food for your child’s lunches. Please read further for foods we prefer to see in your child’s lunch (and for things we will discard).

If you want your child to have **warm food**, please send it **in a well-sealed thermos** as we are not able to heat up lunches. We store lunch containers in classroom refrigerators and in cubbies after lunch.

*Processed foods, such as *Lunchables*, are not healthy, we give one “*please don’t bring*” warning. If this happens more than once, we will set up a time to discuss nutrition and expectations.

Please consider the following in planning your child's lunch:

Grains/Bread/Cereal - Preferably organic whole wheat bread or crackers

Protein/Meats – Sliced chicken, lunchmeat, sun butter sandwiches, cheese

Vegetable/Fruits – One of each, and a variety

PLEASE DO NOT SEND THE FOLLOWING:

You will get a notification if the following items are sent to school and will be asked to review the nutrition policy. The item will be removed from your child’s lunch and sent home.

Gum	Pirates Booty	Lunchables
Candy	Desserts (donuts, cookies, etc.)	Nutella
Soft Drinks	Fast Food	Jell-O or Pudding
Gummy Snacks	Chips	Juice / Drinks other than Water

Samples of Nutritional Lunch Suggestions

Ham Strips	½ Roast Beef & Cheese Sandwich
Small Bran Muffin	Small green Salad
Pineapple Tidbits	Apple (cut for toddlers)

Mini Pita with Hummus & Lettuce	Cheese Pizza Wedge
Orange Wedges	Snow Peas
Cheese Squares	Avocado
Cottage Cheese	½ Sunflower Butter & Banana Sandwich
Bread Sticks	Broccoli Florets, Ranch Dip
Zucchini Rounds	Mango
Cheese Strips	½ Tuna Sandwich
Whole Wheat Crackers	Cucumber Circles
Tomato Wedges	Strawberries (cut in ½ for toddlers)
½ Turkey Sandwich	Cold Macaroni & Cheese
Carrot Sticks (steamed for toddlers)	Sweet Peas
½ Banana	½ Pear

If a child in the program has a severe food allergy (such as peanuts, strawberries, etc.), we may ask families to refrain from sending any food items that contain the allergen. In this case, the restriction will be center-wide, and the child’s identity will remain strictly confidential.

HEALTH AND ILLNESS

The Cuesta College Children's Center and Lab School is a place for children to learn, grow, explore and engage. For everyone in our classrooms (both children and adults) to participate in our daily experiences, we require everyone in our programs to work together to ensure that illness stays out of the classrooms. Children may not attend school while they are ill or have any symptoms that could be contagious.

Your child's health is a matter of major importance to all of us and the reason why we keep such stringent policies. Community Care Licensing Administrative Code 101226.1 requires that children stay home if there is a possibility of contagious illness. Despite all our best efforts, your child will occasionally get sick, and unfortunately, may be sent home. If we suspect anything that could be contagious, you must have your child examined by a physician. Please have a backup plan for child care in the event of illnesses.

Each day upon arrival, a teacher will complete a brief health check. Your child may be sent home if she/he appears to have symptoms of illness.

When the following symptoms arise, we ask that you keep your child at home. These symptoms will also require your child to be picked up for school if they present during time of attendance.

- ****are not well enough to participate in center activities****
- have a fever of 100 degrees or more.
- have a cold that is less than three days old.
- have been taking antibiotics for 24 hours or less.
- have an uncontrollable or unusually heavy nasal discharge.
- have a constant cough or sneezing.
- have diarrhea more than twice in a 24-hour period.
- vomited in the previous 24-hour period.
- are fussy, cranky, lethargic, and generally not himself/herself.
- have head lice - must be treated at home and checked for nits by a staff member before they can return. We have a NO NIT POLICY.
- have pinkeye/conjunctivitis. Must be on medication for at least 24 hours prior to returning.
- have a rash. We will require a doctor's note to return.
- have symptoms of a possible communicable disease or infectious illness. (Cough, sniffles, reddened eyes, sore throat, rashes, headache, abdominal pain, and fever.)

***Please notify us at once if your child is diagnosed with a communicable disease (Covid-19, head lice, chicken pox, whooping cough, croup, hand, foot and mouth etc.). Certain circumstances require us to notify the San Luis Obispo County Dept of Public Health and/or Community Care Licensing.

***If your child is absent from illness for three or more days, we may require verification from a doctor that your child is no longer contagious.

REQUIREMENTS TO RETURN TO SCHOOL AFTER ILLNESS

Whether your child presents symptoms at home or at school, they will be required to stay home until 24 hours after symptoms have ceased. If your child had a fever, they must be fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of any fever-reducing medication. Depending on the circumstance, your child may be required to be examined by a physician before returning to school.

Staff will follow the Cuesta College Administrative Policies in any circumstance of illness.

We ask for your understanding regarding these policies as we know that it can be frustrating to have to keep your child at home. We create these policies not only to keep your children healthy, but to ensure that our teachers stay healthy as well. In addition, our program strives to create an environment that promotes a love for learning and opportunity for success. When children are not feeling well, they are not able to be successful in their daily routines.

WHEN YOUR CHILD BECOMES ILL WHILE IN OUR PROGRAM:

To help prevent the potential spread of illness your child may be isolated from the other children in the program if they become ill while at school. This may be done by giving your child the option to lie on their rest mat while other children are at table activities, having your child play inside while other children are outside, or having your child rest in the Director's office.

During the enrollment process, you must fill out an Emergency Information Form. This form gives us contact information for those you permit to pick up your child from school. In case of illness, we will try to reach the parents first. If that is not possible emergency contacts will be called. We do expect that an adult from the emergency contact will make every effort to pick up an ill child immediately upon notification.

Please ensure that everyone on the emergency contact list has consented to pick up the child in the event of illness or emergency and that we always have the most up-to-date contact information for all adults listed on the form.

Cuesta College Students, Staff and Faculty: If we cannot reach you or someone on your emergency list, we may contact campus public safety to find you in your class or expected location on campus.

For your own peace of mind, take a few minutes to make arrangements with a friend or relative that you can call for emergency childcare when your child is ill. This helps if your child gets sick at the Center and helps eliminate the panic when your child wakes up sick in the morning and you have an important exam or meeting. Please add backup names and phone numbers to your child's emergency card and remind these emergency contacts that we will ask for photo identification when they arrive to pick up your child.

MEDICATIONS:

Special arrangements must be made for any medication to be given at the center. Please ask for a "Medication Consent Form" if your child needs to take a prescription medication while at the center. We may require more information about your child's illness or medication before they can return. Staff must be fully trained (by you or by a medical professional) on the administration of your child's medication before they can give it to your child. The medications given to us will be stored in a locked drawer that only the teachers will have access to.

We do not administer over the counter medications. If you feel your child needs cough syrup, aspirin/Tylenol etc., then your child is not healthy and should stay home for the day.

If your child is prescribed **any new medication** or **antibiotics**, they must have taken them for at least 24 hours before returning to school. We may require a doctor's note upon their return clearing them to participate in the program.

ALLERGIES:

In the event of allergy related symptoms, a letter from a medical professional is required. The note must state the specific allergies that a child has, what symptoms to expect and when, and how long the reaction is expected to last. At that point we will look for changes in "baseline". We will observe to see if the child presents symptoms that do not align with the medical evaluation information or do not present as usual.

Example of a note:

Child A has been diagnosed with seasonal allergies that can present with runny nose and itchy eyes. Most symptoms will occur during or after outside play. Symptoms are expected to last through the entirety of the spring season.

Child A is on _____ (daily medication) to alleviate symptoms.

We reserve the right to use our best judgement regarding the health and safety of everyone at the Cuesta College Children's Center and Lab School. With this, please understand that we may not be able to accommodate a child even if a medical professional has deemed them ready to go back to school.

VISION AND HEARING SCREENING:

Your child's ongoing health is important to us. Once a year we will invite local health professionals to come to our centers to do a vision and hearing screening of your child. You will be notified before the screening and asked to fill out a permission form for your child to participate. While participation is encouraged, it is not mandatory, and you can opt out if you prefer. More information will be shared as screenings are scheduled each year.

PROCEDURES FOR ACCIDENTS AND ILLNESS

These steps will include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Attempt to contact the parent or guardian.
 - a. Please make sure we have current cell phone numbers.
 - b. Campus Police may be contacted to find you in class if we cannot reach you after several attempts. Please make sure we have your *up-to-date* class schedule in case of emergencies.
2. Attempt to contact others from the emergency numbers listed in the child's file.
3. If we are unable to reach you through these steps, we will do any or all of the following:
 - a. Contact the child's physician.
 - b. Call an ambulance
 - c. Transport the child to an emergency center in the company of a staff member.
4. Any expenses incurred from ambulance transport will be borne by the child's family, using information you provided for us at enrollment on the pink insurance info form.
5. Cuesta College Children's Center will not be responsible for anything that happens as a result of false or incomplete information given at the time of enrollment.
6. The Center will not be responsible for a child who has not been properly signed-in for the day.
7. Please be sure you have given us proper information on the Emergency Consent Form (LIC 700) at time of enrollment. If any information changes, it is your responsibility to update this form in our files. We ask parents to check these cards each semester.

REST & NAP TIME

We provide a quiet rest or naptime beginning at approximately 12:30 for toddlers and at 1 pm for preschool children. If a child does not sleep, we ask that they rest quietly while others are falling asleep. They may be offered a book or quiet activity, and then may participate in quiet projects or play table games until others awake. Non-sleepers often do special projects or go outside for creative play.

While we do our best to accommodate each child's sleep needs you will need to discuss any accommodations with both the teacher and director. We are not able to keep children awake during naptime based on parent preference. We also cannot wake a child up from sleep. If a child is sleeping past the end of nap (between 3:00 and 3:30), we may raise curtains, turn on lights, turn off rest music, etc.

Needed For Naptime

Bring a blanket and small pillow clearly labeled with your child's name, either to be taken home regularly for cleaning or washed at the center. *We provide nap mats and sheets, sanitized and cleaned weekly. You may choose to bring a small stuffed animal as a comfort object.*

TREASURES AND POSSESSIONS FROM HOME

Each child has a specially marked "cubby" for jackets, extra clothes, nap blankets and most treasured articles. Please check your child's cubby each day for items that may need to be taken home.

Sometimes, children like to bring special toys or newfound treasures to school to use as a "bridge" between home and school. On these occasions we will work with you and your child to make it a positive experience. If your child is uncomfortable sharing the item throughout the day, we will ask them to return it to their cubby. Please help your child to store these special items in the cubby or car if they may have a hard time-sharing the item. Teachers may request that items be kept at home if they make it difficult for your child to participate in the daily routine.

IMPORTANT: There are some things that **MUST** remain at home; toy weapons or toys that are marketed to encourage aggressive and unsafe play, gum, play masks, candy, and coins.

Please note that Children's Center staff is not responsible for lost or damaged items.

CELEBRATIONS AND HOLIDAYS

We attempt to model behavior that is culturally respectful of all family practices and beliefs. Every family does not celebrate in the same way. We also incorporate practices that model philosophies being taught through our Child Development and Family Studies classes.

We believe:

- Children should be supported in spontaneous conversations around their own family holidays and traditions
- In celebrating classroom activities to mark the passage of time
- Creating opportunities for families to share important family traditions, example: bringing in family foods for potlucks, reading a book at group time, presenting an activity in the classroom
- Holidays can be discussed and recognized, but not initiated with a tangible celebration
- Everyone deserves to be recognized with respect to their own beliefs

Our celebrations at the center are eclectic. Our goal is to show respect for all children, families and staff by limiting "traditional" holiday celebrations, such as Christmas and Easter. We believe in celebrating with family-Center get-togethers that focus on recognizing and fostering friendships with children, family, staff and faculty.

We recognize that children often consider birthdays as important personal events. While we do not have formal birthday parties for children, we support their conversation and acknowledge birthdays as a tangible way for children to measure growth and development. We do not celebrate birthdays by providing cupcakes, cookies, or other treats.

EXCURSIONS AND WALKS

We take walks around the campus to observe nature, collect materials for artwork and observe all the wonderful people and places at Cuesta College. Please watch for us, and if possible, invite us to visit in your area of campus. This creates a sense of community for young children.

If we plan an excursion away from the Cuesta College Campus, you will be notified in advance. You may be asked to help and to sign a permission slip. Parents can join us any time – and are often welcomed. This is a good activity for Parent Participation.

PARENT INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Your PARENT POCKET is located in the Sign In & Out book/clipboard. Ask your teachers where this is located for your child's classroom. Check for invoices, receipts, etc.

CENTER EMAIL NEWS is sent out regularly from the director. Please stay informed by reading what is going on at the Center through these emails to parents.

With your permission we will set up LEARNING GENIE parent access for you. This is where your child's teacher will write individual messages, post photos of your child and share special things that your child is doing while participating in our program. Parents will receive messages, ranging from daily to bi-weekly, as required by our licensing agency (Toddlers are required to receive a daily message).

IF CONCERNS ARISE

- If any circumstance arises regarding your child that concerns you, we encourage you to immediately reach out to your child's teacher to set up a time to talk. Please use discretion when talking about concerns while children are present.
- If there is an issue that occurs between your family and the program staff, reach out to your child's lead teacher to have a conference regarding your concerns.
- If the concern or difficulty continues, you and/or the Children's Center teachers may reach out to the Director or Site Supervisor.
- If you suspect child abuse or child neglect has occurred, it is urgent that you report this to the Director. The Director will then report the concern to Community Care Licensing and Cuesta College. The staff and your family's rights will both be protected.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

For your child to attend our program you must participate as a parent. Each family is asked to participate 4 hours per semester in a classroom activity, center activity, or program activity. When you participate your child sees that you are involved with things that concern them, you have fun together, and you contribute to our Children's Center community. *Helping with fundraising events supports all of us.*

We invite all parents to share in your child's classroom activities. We look forward to building strong home to center bonds and relationships with families. We all learn from each other. Throughout the year we have potlucks, celebrations, family outings, etc. We ask that you attend at least one of these family events per semester.

More ways to participate and get involved

- Volunteer or help with fundraisers
- Participate in the monthly parent meetings
- Participate in a center work day, once a semester
- Oversee ordering of Scholastic Books

- Attend a classroom or center event
- Provide snack donations for your child's classroom
- Do a special project – *please consult director or teacher first*

Please talk with the director or classroom lead teachers if you have other ideas or questions about Parent Participation. You are responsible for recording your participation activities on the form in the sign in and out books.

**If you would like to participate in the classroom at any point you will be required to provide immunization clearance. Please ask the director for information.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CELL PHONE POLICIES

Parents, staff and students must keep their cell phones put away while at the Center. We want to ensure that children have our full attention and model best practices to all around us.

Occasionally you may take a picture of your child at the Center or during a Center function. If you happen to get other children in your picture, please know that we forbid parents from posting pictures of children other than their own on any social media outlet. Any incident of this can result in termination from the program.

ASSESSING YOUR CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT

Ages and Stages Questionnaire - parent driven screening tool

During the time that your child attends the Cuesta College Children's Center we will ask you to complete an [Ages and Stages Questionnaire \(ASQ\)](#) assessment at different time periods, or as the need arises. The ASQ screeners are sets of valid, reliable, and age-appropriate questionnaires that are filled out by the true expert on your child—you! There are two screeners in the ASQ family: ASQ®-3, which looks at key areas of early development such as language, cognitive development, and motor development, and ASQ®:SE-2, which focuses on social-emotional development. You will receive the one closest to your child's birth month. Once we read these, we may schedule a conference with you to discuss plans and goals for your child while in our program.

Desired Results Developmental Profile

For each semester (after the first) we use the California Department of Education, Child Development Division [Desired Results Developmental Profile – Revised \(DRDP-r\)](#) for ongoing developmental assessment. The DRDP assesses developmental areas such as language, cognitive, gross motor, fine motor, and social and emotional development.

Conferences

We request that families meet for a conference to discuss their child's progress each semester. As stated above, we use the Ages & Stage Questionnaire and the Desired Results Developmental Profile to inform or support the information that is provided in these meetings. We will work with families to create a written assessment and "snapshot" of your child's developmental stage. If questions or concerns come up for you at any time, please request a conference with your child's lead teacher and the director.

Assessing Our Program

ERS (Environmental Rating Scales)

These rating scales are designed to assess process quality in an early childhood or school age care group. Process quality consists of the various interactions that go on in a classroom between staff and children, staff, parents, and other adults, among the children themselves, and the interactions children have with the many materials and activities in the environment, as well as those features, such as space, schedule and materials that support these interactions

CLASS Program Assessment Tool

This tool uses research-driven insights to assess and improve how teachers interact with children every day to cultivate supportive, structured, and engaging classroom experiences.

Lab and Observation Students

The Cuesta College Children's Center program is a laboratory for students enrolled in the Child Development & Family Studies program and children may be studied and photographed by CDFS students, faculty and staff. Although we do not share confidential information about your child without your permission, with our lab students, we do want our CDFS students to be exposed to various assessment tools they will need for jobs after graduation. In addition to the two assessment tools listed above, CDFS students, faculty and staff use the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scales (ECERS) and the Infant and Toddler Environmental Rating Scales (ITERS).

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES FOR THE CENTER

DRILLS

Monthly drills (fire, earthquake, lock down) are conducted to familiarize the children with the routine and provide opportunities to discuss such events in a developmentally appropriate way. Evacuation plans are posted by each exit for your information. Please note that in the event of a Lockdown (drill or real) no one will be allowed to enter the building until we get the all clear from our Campus Police Department.

EVACUATION KITS that you provided for your child at enrollment are stored outside away from the building.

ON-CAMPUS EMERGENCY

In an on-campus emergency, we will evacuate our classrooms to a designated location on campus (the location will be kept confidential). Depending on the circumstance, and direction of Cuesta College Police Department, we will contact parents to inform them of the situation and to come pick up their children.

OFF-CAMPUS EVACUATION PLAN

In case of a disaster in San Luis Obispo requiring an off-campus evacuation:

1. The staff will remain at the Center as long as it is deemed safe to permit parents to pick-up their children.
2. If you are off-campus or unable to get to the Center, we will transport your children to:

Cuesta College – North County Campus

2800 Buena Vista Dr,

Paso Robles, CA 93446

805-591-6200

3. Care will be provided until someone on the emergency list arrives to pick them up.

In case of a disaster in Paso Robles requiring an off-campus evacuation:

1. The staff will remain at the Center as long as it is deemed safe to permit parents to pick-up their children.
2. If you are off-campus or unable to get to the Center, we will transport your children to:

Cuesta College - San Luis Obispo Campus

Hwy 1

San Luis Obispo, CA 93405

805-546-3100

3. Care will be provided until someone on the emergency list arrives to pick them up.

This Family Handbook specifies the rules and regulations by which we will make decisions and helps us to treat all families fairly and impartially. Your decision to remain enrolled in the program indicates that you agree to follow these rules.

Thank you for allowing us to be a part of yours & your child's life.

Cuesta College Children's Center Staff