

William Paterson University

child
Development
center



Family Handbook



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Welcome

Dear Families,

Welcome to the William Paterson University Child Development Center. We are pleased to partner with you in nurturing your child's growth, relationships, and overall well-being within a warm, responsive, and intentionally designed learning community. We view children as capable, curious learners whose ideas, questions, and relationships drive the learning process, and we value environments that invite exploration, creativity, and collaboration. Families are an essential part of our community, and your communication, involvement, and partnership help us curate meaningful, high-quality learning experiences that honor each child's individuality and support their growth across all areas of development.

—The William Paterson University Child Development Center Staff

About the Child Development Center

Vision

Our vision is to provide a high-quality early learning program for children ages 2.5–6 that nurtures curiosity, creativity, and a deep love of learning. We believe children thrive best in a collaborative community where families, educators, and community partners work together to support exploration, inquiry, and meaningful engagement with the world.

Mission

Our mission is to offer a safe, inclusive, and nurturing environment where each child's development is supported across all domains—social, emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, and math. We honor diversity and individuality, value children's voices, creativity, and interests, and foster strong, respectful relationships among children, families, and staff. Through intentional teaching, engaging environments, and ongoing collaboration, we support children become confident, capable learners.

Philosophy

Our program is grounded in the belief that children actively participate in their own learning, using curiosity, relationships, and exploration to construct understanding. Through a Reggio-inspired approach, teachers design rich environments and learning experiences that emerge from children's interests while intentionally aligning with the New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards and Kindergarten Learning Standards, as well as developmentally appropriate practices. We believe children learn most deeply through active exploration, meaningful relationships, and hands-on experiences driven by their natural curiosity. Teachers act as thoughtful guides and collaborators, carefully observing children, listening to their ideas, and using open-ended questions and intentional interactions to extend learning and deepen understanding. Our curriculum is informed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), ensuring learning experiences are purposeful, responsive, and supportive of each child's strengths, interests, and needs.

Equity and Confidentiality

The Child Development Center is committed to creating a welcoming and respectful environment for all children and families. We value diversity and do not discriminate based on race, color, age, sex, religion, creed, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability. All information shared with the Center about your child and family is handled with care and confidentiality, in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), to protect privacy and build trust with every family.

Family Partnerships

We view families as essential partners in their child's learning and development. Families support this partnership by completing the admission application, Home Language Survey, and Family Questionnaire; participating in regular family engagement events and activities; and joining quarterly Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) sessions, where their ideas and feedback help shape the Center's programming. Families also attend two scheduled family-teacher conferences each year, with additional meetings available upon request to discuss their child's development, interests, and questions. We value family perspectives in every part of our program, and your involvement helps strengthen the connection between home and school, enriching each child's learning experience.

Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC)

The Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) is a collaborative advisory group consisting of parents, Child Development Center staff, university representatives, and community partners dedicated to supporting the education and well-being of children at the Center. ECAC provides a platform for families and community members to share their perspectives, identify needs, and offer ideas that help strengthen the program.

The Center uses insights from ECAC meetings and feedback to promote continuous improvement. Each year, the Center reviews its program effectiveness by gathering input from families (both current and alumni), staff, and ECAC members. This information helps the Center evaluate how well it is achieving its mission, providing developmentally appropriate curriculum and instruction, and supporting high-quality learning experiences for children. The findings inform ongoing planning and improvements across classrooms and the entire Center.

University Partnerships

The Child Development Center is an integral part of William Paterson University's College of Education and plays a key role in advancing the University's mission of teaching, learning, and service. As a model early childhood program, the Center collaborates closely with University faculty and academic departments to support research, professional learning, and the training of future educators. Faculty, graduate students, and pre-service teachers often observe classrooms as part of their coursework or professional development, gaining insights from the high-quality practices implemented at the Center. Undergraduate and graduate students may also undertake projects or research activities involving observing classroom experiences such as language development, play, motor skills, hygiene routines, or outdoor learning. General classroom observations do not require family permission. However, if an activity involves direct interaction with an individual child, families will be asked to provide written consent, and children will only participate with parental approval. All observations and student activities are conducted under the supervision of Child Development Center staff.

Licensing, Staffing, and Program Oversight

The Center is licensed by the New Jersey Department of Children and Families and undergoes annual reviews to ensure compliance with all state health, safety, and program standards. This includes staff qualifications, background checks, emergency preparedness, curriculum implementation, supervision, and child protection policies. Staff-to-child ratios meet New Jersey requirements of 1:8 to ensure safe, attentive, and responsive care. All teaching staff hold valid New Jersey teaching licenses and engage in ongoing professional development to sustain high-quality instructional practices. Additionally, all staff complete required DCF health and safety training, including CPR, first aid, child abuse prevention, and emergency procedures.

Curriculum & Learning

Reggio Emilia-Inspired Approach and Emergent Curriculum

Our program draws inspiration from the Reggio Emilia approach, which views children as capable, curious thinkers and active participants in their own learning. Children are encouraged to explore, ask questions, and share their ideas as they investigate the world around them, using many ways to express their thinking. The classroom environment—often described as the “third teacher”—is intentionally designed to support inquiry, creativity, collaboration, and independence, with carefully selected materials and learning spaces that children can access, use, and help care for both indoors and outdoors. Learning is guided by an emergent, child-centered curriculum that develops from children’s interests, conversations, and questions, and aligns thoughtfully with the New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards and the Kindergarten Learning Standards. Teachers use ongoing observation, documentation, and reflection to plan meaningful experiences that support children’s development across all learning domains and ensure that play, exploration, and academic learning are purposefully connected.

How Young Children Learn

Play is a central and powerful way children make sense of the world. Through play, children explore ideas, test theories, express emotions, develop relationships, and build skills across all areas of development. Our classrooms are intentionally designed with rich, developmentally appropriate materials and open-ended props that invite children to engage in imaginative play, problem solving, and active investigation throughout the day. Children are encouraged to initiate their own ideas and explore materials in ways that are meaningful to them, rather than copying a model or aiming for a predetermined outcome. When children understand their work is not being judged or compared, they feel safe to take risks, try new approaches, and express themselves through various forms—such as art, construction, dramatic play, movement, and conversation. This process-oriented approach nurtures creativity, confidence, and a strong sense of competence and achievement. Our classrooms function as learning communities where children of different ages collaborate, support each other, and learn through shared experiences. Teachers observe carefully, listen to children’s ideas, and use documentation and reflection to design learning experiences that extend children’s ideas while also aligning with developmental goals and early learning standards. In addition to meeting all licensing requirements and the standards of the New Jersey Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood, our curriculum and policies are guided by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) position

statements and best practices. Together, these frameworks ensure children’s play, exploration, and inquiry are purposeful, developmentally appropriate, and aligned with high-quality early learning standards.

Children’s Learning in Action

In our classrooms, learning emerges from children’s questions, ideas, and interests, creating a dynamic and responsive curriculum. A simple observation or curiosity can develop into extended projects, in-depth investigations, and creative problem-solving over time. For example, a child’s interest in how a small “scribble bot” moves across paper might lead to building and redesigning robots, testing different materials, measuring how far they travel, and drawing or mapping their paths. Teachers carefully observe, document, and reflect on children’s learning to design experiences that build on what children already know and are eager to explore, while also intentionally supporting developmental goals and early learning standards. Children engage in a wide variety of learning experiences—including art, construction, science, dramatic play, and collaborative inquiry—revisiting and expanding their thinking as their understanding deepens. This emergent approach ensures that learning is meaningful, personalized, and connected to each child’s curiosity, strengths, and growth.

The Arts and Creativity

In our Reggio-inspired program, the arts serve as a meaningful language through which children communicate their thoughts, emotions, and ideas. Children are viewed as capable creators, and artistic experiences are woven throughout the day as part of learning, exploration, and communication—not as isolated activities. Great value is placed on the creative process rather than on producing a final product. Children are encouraged to explore materials freely, experiment with techniques, take risks, and revisit their ideas over time. A wide range of open-ended materials—such as paint, clay, wire, collage materials, drawing tools, and natural objects—are intentionally offered to invite inquiry and imagination. Teachers observe closely, ask thoughtful questions, and document children’s work to better understand their ideas and support next steps. Art experiences often connect to ongoing projects and investigations, offering children multiple ways to represent and reflect on their learning. Displays of children’s work and documentation honor the process, making learning visible to children, families, and the community.

Children as Stewards of the Environment

Children are encouraged to be thoughtful stewards of their environment and the natural world. Through daily routines and meaningful projects, children learn to care for their classrooms, outdoor spaces, plants, animals, and shared materials with respect and responsibility. Children actively participate in activities such as recycling, composting, gardening, feeding birds, observing seasonal changes, and protecting living things in their surroundings. These experiences help children develop an understanding of how their actions impact the environment and cultivate a sense of responsibility, empathy, and connection to the natural world while strengthening their role as caring members of the community.

Authentic Assessment

Through ongoing, authentic observation, teachers carefully document children's learning using Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG), a research-based assessment system that tracks development across key areas including social-emotional growth, language, literacy, cognitive skills, and physical development. Teachers observe children during their everyday activities, recording meaningful interactions and noting each child's interests, strengths, and emerging skills. These observations create a rich, individualized picture of each child's growth over time.

Assessment is embedded in daily routines—during play, exploration, group projects, and hands-on learning—so that children's learning is captured in natural, meaningful ways. This approach allows teachers to focus on each child's unique development rather than making comparisons between children.

The information gathered through observation and documentation guides curriculum planning, helping teachers design experiences that build on what children already know and are ready to learn next. Families are essential partners in this process, and we offer twice-yearly family conferences to share observations, celebrate growth, and collaborate to support each child's ongoing learning and development.

Family Engagement and Communication

Daily lesson plans and reflections are posted outside each classroom, and monthly calendars, updates, and messages are shared through email and Procare to keep families informed and connected. Teachers are available for brief check-ins during drop-off and pick-up and respond to messages through Procare as their schedules allow, as their main focus during the day is to engage with and support the children. Longer conversations are best scheduled outside of instructional time so teachers can remain focused on the children. Families are invited to participate in frequent family engagement activities throughout the year that strengthen partnerships and celebrate children's learning, and they are also welcome to arrange classroom visits with their child's teacher.

Our Daily Rhythm

A consistent daily routine helps children feel safe, secure, and prepared to engage positively with teachers and peers in their learning environment. While individual classes may vary the order of activities to maximize outdoor learning, all classrooms include these core components.

Arrival & Handwashing

Children are warmly greeted by staff and encouraged to wash their hands upon arrival. This promotes healthy hygiene habits and signals the start of the school day. When teachers personally greet each child, it helps them feel recognized, valued, and ready to begin learning.

Children's Learning in Action: What This Might Look Like:

A teacher kneels to greet a child by name, asks if they noticed any butterflies on the way to school, and walks with them to wash their hands before checking on the classroom monarch habitat together.

Morning Meeting / Large Group Gathering

Each day begins with Morning Meeting, a language-rich gathering where children come together as a whole group to share, explore, and connect. This time fosters a strong sense of belonging and community, ensuring each child's voice, ideas, observations, and questions are valued. Teachers guide the meeting with high-quality children's literature, curiosity, and open-ended questions, connecting new concepts to the children's interests and ongoing inquiries. Morning Meeting encourages children to practice communication and listening skills, build confidence, and take ownership of their learning while engaging responsibly in a collaborative classroom environment.

Children's Learning in Action: What This Might Look Like:

After reading a book about monarchs, children observe their caterpillars, determine which instar they are in, and share predictions about when each might form a chrysalis, using details from their observations and the story to explain their thinking.

Choice Time

During Choice Time, children engage in self-directed exploration within a thoughtfully prepared learning environment. Guided by their curiosity and emerging interests, children investigate materials, ask questions, test theories, and construct understanding through hands-on experiences. Teachers act as partners in learning—observing closely, listening deeply, and extending children's thinking with open-ended questions and meaningful conversations. Children's learning becomes visible through documentation such as photographs, anecdotal notes, and displays of children's work, allowing teachers and families to reflect on the learning process together. This time fosters autonomy, collaboration, creativity, and problem-solving, while honoring each child's voice and the many ways children express their ideas, thoughts, and understanding.

Children's Learning in Action: What This Might Look Like:

Children use a wide variety of open-ended materials to represent their ideas—some carefully layer collage pieces to design detailed butterfly wings, others build garden habitats with blocks and loose parts based on their knowledge about pollinators, while another child uses cardboard and tape to construct a house, following their own imaginative vision.

Small Group

Small Group is a planned, intentional part of the day where teachers concentrate on targeted learning experiences aligned with the New Jersey Preschool and Kindergarten Teaching and Learning Standards. During this time, educators work with small groups of children to introduce, reinforce, and expand on key skills and concepts in areas such as language and literacy, mathematics, science, and the arts. Lessons are informed by ongoing observation and assessment, allowing teachers to carefully scaffold learning and personalize instruction to meet each child's individual needs. Through hands-on materials, guided discussions, and intentional interactions, Small Group Time encourages deeper understanding, active engagement, and meaningful progress toward developmental and learning goals, all while valuing children's voices and interests within a supportive group setting.

Children's Learning in Action: What This Might Look Like:

Children use small cubes to measure the height of their indoor milkweed plants, carefully counting and recording their results on a shared chart, then comparing and discussing the differences they observe with friends.

Outdoor Experiences

Outdoor time is viewed as an extension of the classroom. Children explore nature, develop gross motor skills, and engage in purposeful play on the playground and campus trails. Outdoor learning spaces include materials and activities that align with curriculum goals, such as science investigations, creative art, sensory experiences, and cooperative play. Teachers engage with children by asking questions, guiding exploration, and fostering curiosity.

Children's Learning in Action: What This Might Look Like:

Children carefully search for monarch eggs and caterpillars in the pollinator garden, observe butterflies visiting flowers, and notice other insects on the milkweed. Then they head to the playground, where some children invent their own games, climb, run, and creatively use the space in ways that reflect their individual interests.

Lunch, Snack, & Social Mealtime

Mealtimes are a shared opportunity for connection, conversation, and fostering independence, while also encouraging healthy habits. Children practice self-help skills as they build friendships and engage in meaningful dialogue with peers and teachers. Staff sit alongside children to model respectful social interactions, promote polite manners, and support discussions about children's experiences, interests, and daily discoveries. Children are encouraged to eat independently and explore nutritious foods at their own pace, fostering positive attitudes toward healthy eating while always respecting each child's preferences and comfort levels.

Children's Learning in Action: What This Might Look Like:

As children eat, they talk about how much their caterpillars eat and compare it to their own lunches, sharing observations and ideas, while other children discuss their favorite foods, what they helped cook at home, or stories from their day, creating a lively and meaningful conversation around the table.

Rest / Quiet Time

All children have designated rest or quiet time to support their physical and emotional well-being. While children are never required to sleep, we encourage them to rest and recharge, as sleep promotes healthy growth and development. Children may rest quietly on their cots or engage in calm, quiet activities that enhance focus, reflection, and fine motor skills. Families can provide a small blanket, a crib-sized sheet, and a personal comfort item for their child, all clearly labeled with the child's name. All children are closely supervised during this time, and bedding is sent home for weekly laundering to ensure a clean, comfortable environment.

Children's Learning in Action: What This Might Look Like:

Most children fall asleep on their cots, while others quietly look through books or draw as soft instrumental music plays and gentle twinkle lights create a calm, soothing atmosphere for rest.

Read Aloud

Children engage in two daily read-aloud sessions featuring high-quality, developmentally appropriate literature. These shared reading experiences are carefully selected to spark curiosity, support language and early literacy development, and introduce rich vocabulary, ideas, and diverse perspectives. Through stories, informational texts, poetry, and visual narratives, children enhance their comprehension and listening skills, cultivate a love for books, and engage in meaningful conversations with teachers and peers. In addition to these scheduled read-alouds, teachers also read informally with children throughout the day—sharing books during small, quiet moments and individual interactions to enhance learning and encourage a love of reading. Read-alouds are woven into the day as opportunities for connection, reflection, and inquiry, fostering both academic growth and a lifelong appreciation for reading.

Children’s Learning in Action: What This Might Look Like:

A teacher reads a nonfiction book about monarch migration while children lean in, point to maps and photographs, and ask thoughtful questions about where the butterflies travel, how far they go, and what they might encounter along the way. Later, during Choice Time, a teacher sits beside a small group of children at the cozy reading area, sharing a book one-on-one and responding to children’s questions and ideas as they turn the pages together.

End-of-Day Reflection

The day ends with a group meeting where children reflect on their experiences. Teachers guide children to recall what they engaged in during the school day, describe their discoveries, and share ideas. This routine encourages critical thinking, enhances memory skills, and fosters a sense of achievement. Teachers also introduce upcoming activities to spark excitement and motivation for the next day.

Children’s Learning in Action: What This Might Look Like:

Children share how much milkweed the caterpillars ate during the day, discuss their plans to build onto or redesign their block structures, and talk excitedly about a new clay tool that will be available tomorrow.

Dismissal

Children are released to their families or authorized caregivers at dismissal. Parents are asked to arrive on time and notify the Center if they will be late, as young children may feel anxious while waiting. Children who stay for an extended day are smoothly transitioned by staff to the afternoon program, where they continue to participate in meaningful, developmentally appropriate activities in a safe and supportive environment.

Children’s Learning in Action: What This Might Look Like:

A child shares what they explored or created during the day with a teacher while gathering their belongings from their cubby before going home or transitioning to after-care.

Policies and Procedures

Admission Policy and Required Paperwork

The William Paterson University Child Development Center serves children and grandchildren of university students, faculty, staff, and alumni, and is also available to families in the broader community. To ensure a smooth start, all required enrollment forms must be submitted by a child's first day of attendance. Families returning for a new school year are asked to provide updated paperwork whenever there are changes to their information. Children may begin attending once all required documentation, including current physical and immunization records, has been received and reviewed by the Center. Medical records must remain up-to-date and are typically renewed each year.

Admissions and Enrollment Agreement

At the start of each school year, families review and sign an Admissions and Enrollment Agreement that details the child's schedule, tuition, and program policies. This agreement promotes clear communication and shared expectations between families and the Center.

In rare situations, enrollment may be affected if the terms of the agreement are not met, such as when required paperwork or tuition is not submitted on time, or when early drop-offs or late pick-ups happen repeatedly without prior arrangements. Our goal is always to work cooperatively with families to address concerns and support ongoing enrollment whenever possible.

Tuition Payment Policy

Tuition rates are determined by a child's enrollment schedule. At the time of enrollment, each family's annual tuition is calculated and divided into ten equal monthly payments.

Payments are due at the beginning of each month. Any balance not paid by the 14th may incur a \$10 weekly late fee unless arrangements have been made with the Center. As outlined in the Admissions and Enrollment Agreement, tuition payments are non-refundable and cannot be applied to future months.

We understand that circumstances can arise, and we encourage families to contact the Center if they have questions or concerns about their account. To ensure the program's continued operation, accounts must remain current for children to attend and to be eligible for re-enrollment for the next school year or summer program.

Program Schedule and Times

The Child Development Center is open Monday through Friday during the school year. Families are given a full-year calendar at the start of each school year, along with detailed monthly calendars that highlight important dates, events, and activities throughout the year. During the summer months, the Center operates Monday through Thursday, closing on Fridays.

Early Care: 7:30 a.m. – 8:50 a.m.

Full School Day

- Arrival Window: Begins at 8:50 a.m.
- School Day Begins: 9:00 a.m.
- School Day Ends: 3:00 p.m.

Half School Day

- Arrival Window: Begins at 8:50 a.m.
- School Day Begins: 9:00 a.m.
- School Day Ends: 12:15 p.m.

Late Afternoon Care: 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

To ensure children have a positive and consistent start, the school day begins promptly at 9:00 a.m., allowing full participation in morning meeting and classroom routines. Children must be signed in by 9:15 a.m. Arrivals after 9:30 a.m. must be pre-arranged when necessary.

The arrival window provides families with a brief, flexible period to drop off children while helping maintain smooth classroom routines. This window allows teachers to greet children, maintain supervision, and ensure that learning activities continue uninterrupted. Following these times helps establish a calm, predictable start to each child's day.

While we understand that schedules may change, we ask families to notify us as early as possible about early- and late-afternoon care needs to ensure adequate staffing. Unannounced drop-ins will incur a \$20 fee for early-morning care and a \$25 fee for late-afternoon care. Children not signed out of school by 3:10 p.m. will be transitioned to extended day, and families will be charged the drop-in rate. Our main goal is to keep all children safe, supervised, and always accounted for.

Arrival and Departure (Procare Sign-In and Sign-Out)

To ensure the safety and accountability of all children, families are asked to sign their child in and out each day using Procare, either on the tablet in the vestibule or on a personal device. When you arrive, please check your child in, help them place their belongings in their cubby, and confirm with a staff member that your child has arrived. The same process should be followed at pick-up to facilitate a smooth and secure transition. For safety and record-keeping purposes, Procare sign-in and sign-out must be completed by a parent or authorized caregiver.

Policy on the Release of Children

For the safety of all children, the Center only releases children to parents, guardians, or individuals listed on the child's authorized pick-up list. Families must inform the Center in advance if someone not regularly listed will be picking up their child. If a staff member does not recognize the person picking up a child, photo identification will be required before the child is released.

All individuals picking up a child must be at least 18 years old. A child will not be released to anyone who

appears impaired or under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or any substances that could impair their ability to care for the child safely. If there is a legal restriction regarding a parent or guardian's access to a child, the Center must have a current, court-issued order on file. A copy of the court order must be provided to the Center and will be kept in the child's confidential record. Without a court order, the Center is required by New Jersey DCF regulations to release a child only to either parent listed on the child's records.

Weather and Emergency Closings

The Child Development Center will close for inclement weather or emergencies whenever the University is closed. Families will be notified of closures and schedule changes through Procare as soon as the information is available.

Clothing, Outdoor Gear, and Rest-Time Materials

Children learn best through active, hands-on experiences that encourage movement, exploration, and a connection with the natural world. We go outside in all safe weather so children can run, play, investigate, and experience the changing seasons as part of their learning. Please dress your child in comfortable play clothes and weather-appropriate outerwear from home, including coats, boots, hats, mittens, and neck warmers as needed, so they can fully participate in outdoor activities. Please also send a complete set of extra clothes labeled with your child's name (shirt, pants, underwear, socks, and, when possible, extra footwear). These are stored in the classroom so children can change easily and continue enjoying their day.

The Child Development Center provides each child with a protective outer layer to wear over their clothing during outdoor play. Families are asked to provide rain boots for their child, which are kept at the Center, so children are always ready to explore puddles, mud, and wet surfaces safely. Sneakers and socks are recommended for active play.

For rest time, families are asked to provide a small blanket and crib-sized sheet, clearly labeled with the child's name. To support cleanliness and comfort, rest-time materials are sent home each week for laundering.

Personal Belongings at School

To foster a calm, focused, and collaborative learning environment, toys from home are not allowed in the classroom. Personal toys can be difficult to share, may become lost or damaged, and can distract children from engaging with the rich materials and experiences available at school. Our classrooms are thoughtfully designed with open-ended materials that promote creativity, problem-solving, and shared exploration.

For rest time, children may bring one small comfort item, such as a stuffed animal or special blanket. These items are kept with the child's rest materials and used only during quiet time to help them feel secure and relaxed.

If families have special items related to a family tradition, culture, or meaningful experience they would like to share, we warmly welcome this. Please connect with your child's teacher so the item can be thoughtfully incorporated into the classroom in a way that supports learning and respects all children.

Food Safety and Healthy Lunches

The Child Development Center is a nut-free environment to ensure all children, including those with serious allergies, feel safe and cared for. Foods containing peanuts or tree nuts are not permitted, and families are encouraged to send nut-free alternatives such as sunflower seed butter. Each day, teachers gently review lunch containers to maintain safety and comfort for everyone. Families are asked to provide healthy, nourishing lunches that support children's energy, focus, and well-being. Mealtimes are a key part of the day—children practice independence, enjoy conversations with friends, and develop positive eating habits. Healthy options might include fresh fruits and vegetables, yogurt, cheese, whole-grain breads or crackers, rice or pasta, beans, lean proteins, and sandwiches with nut-free spreads. Please avoid sending glass containers, gum, candy, or soda. Any uneaten food is sent home so families can see what their child enjoyed. All items should be labeled with your child's name. To help families, staff can refrigerate and reheat food as needed. For health and safety reasons, staff cannot mix, assemble, or prepare food beyond warming it, so lunches should arrive ready to eat. Children also have opportunities to participate in simple cooking and food preparation experiences in their classrooms as part of their learning. These activities help children explore where food comes from, practice measuring and mixing, and build independence and confidence around healthy eating.

If your child has a food allergy or special dietary need, please inform the Center. With a physician-completed medical plan and an updated Universal Health Form, staff can support your child safely and ensure they can fully and comfortably take part in all classroom activities.

Healthy Lunch Examples (Nut-Free)

Fruits & Vegetables

- Apple slices, bananas, grapes (cut in half), berries
- Carrot sticks, cucumbers, bell peppers, cherry tomatoes (cut in half)
- Applesauce or fruit cups (in juice or water)

Proteins

- Chicken, turkey, or bean wraps
- Hard-boiled eggs
- Yogurt or cheese
- Hummus (nut-free)

Grains & Carbohydrates

- Whole-grain bread, tortillas, or rolls
- Crackers or pretzels
- Rice, pasta, or quinoa

Sandwiches & Mains

- Turkey or cheese sandwiches
- Sunflower seed butter and jelly
- Bean or cheese quesadillas

Drinks

- Water
- Milk or milk alternatives (if appropriate for your child)

Celebrations

Birthdays are meaningful moments for many children and families. If you would like to send a simple, nut-free treat, please coordinate with your child's teacher in advance. Our Center is a diverse learning community, and instead of celebrating specific holidays, we honor the traditions and experiences of our families. Families are invited to share songs, stories, art, or cooking experiences that reflect what is meaningful to them. We also offer curriculum-aligned celebrations—such as a Fall Harvest Festival or a Winter Solstice event—that allow children to explore traditions, community, and seasonal changes in an inclusive and joyful way.

Health, Injury, and Emergency Care

Children's health and safety are always our top priorities. If your child has a minor injury, such as a small scrape or bruise, staff will care for them and provide an injury report for you to review at pickup. If an injury involves the head, neck, or face, or is more serious, families will be contacted immediately. In the event of a serious injury or emergency, the Center will make every effort to contact parents or guardians using the information on file and will reach out to your child's physician when appropriate. If immediate medical care is needed, an ambulance or Campus Police will transport your child to the nearest emergency room, and families will be notified as soon as possible. By enrolling your child and completing admission forms, families authorize the Child Development Center to provide first aid and seek emergency medical treatment for their child if necessary. Hospitals and medical personnel are authorized to provide any emergency care deemed necessary by the attending physician. Families are responsible for any costs related to emergency medical treatment.

Care Routines: Diapering, Toileting, and Hand Washing

Diapering, toileting, and hand washing are essential care routines that are approached with care, respect, and close attention to each child's comfort and well-being. These moments are unhurried and nurturing, helping children feel safe, supported, and respected throughout the day.

Children are encouraged to participate at their own developmental pace. Teachers use calm language, consistent routines, and gentle guidance to support growing independence, including assisting with clothing, diaper changes, and hand washing, while always maintaining privacy and dignity.

Families are responsible for providing diapers and wipes for their child and are asked to keep supplies stocked and labeled. Health and hygiene procedures are carefully followed, and families and teachers work in partnership to support continuity between home and school as children build confidence in their self-care skills.

Positive Guidance and Relationship-Based Behavior Support

At the Child Development Center, children's behavior is guided through positive, respectful, and developmentally appropriate practices that support social-emotional growth, self-regulation, and strong relationships. We believe children learn to manage their behavior through connection, clear expectations, and consistent support, not punishment.

Teachers intentionally model kindness, problem-solving, and empathy. When challenges occur, staff use redirection, coaching, and supportive language to help children understand their feelings, make safe choices, and repair relationships. Adults speak with children at eye level, listen carefully, and focus on teaching skills rather than assigning blame. Our goal is to help children feel safe, understood, and capable as they learn to navigate social situations.

Children are never punished, shamed, or isolated. Time-out is not used. If a child needs support to calm their body or emotions, a teacher stays nearby in a quiet, supportive space until the child is ready to rejoin the group. Food, rest, outdoor play, and emotional connection are never withheld as discipline. Physical restraint is used only in rare emergency situations to prevent injury and only by staff trained in approved safety procedures.

What this might look like in our classrooms:

- *“Let’s think about what might help solve this problem.”*
- *“You may choose to keep building or move to the art table.”*
- *“I noticed you waited your turn—that was kind and respectful.”*
- *“What could we do to help our friend feel better?”*

Through this relationship-based approach, children learn to identify feelings, regulate their behavior, express needs, and develop empathy, building the foundation for lifelong learning and positive relationships.

Contact Information

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Child Development Center
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University Police/Public Safety 973-720-2300

Division of Children and Family Services

Bureau of Licensing..... 1-877-667-9845
Child Abuse Hotline..... 1-800-792-8610

Websites

William Paterson University Home Page..... www.wpunj.edu
William Paterson University Child Development Center..... www.wpunj.edu/child-development
New Jersey Department of Education..... www.state.nj.us/education
NJ Department of Children and Families, Office of Licensing..... <https://www.nj.gov/dcf/about/divisions/ol/>
National Association for the Education of Young Children..... www.naeyc.org

Parent/Guardian Endorsement of Handbook

This page of the Handbook must be on file at the Child Development Center

Please initial your acknowledgment below

I have read the William Paterson University Child Development Center Family Handbook.

I have received the admissions application packet as required by the State of New Jersey Bureau of Licensing, Division of Children and Families.

I understand that I have the right to discuss any concerns or recommendations with the CDC director and staff.

The Admissions Application includes

Application for Admission

Monthly Tuition Rates and Regulations

Requested Schedule

Information to Parents

Health, Developmental, and Emergency Care Information

Sun Safety Permission

Walking and Hiking on Campus Acknowledgment

Photographs and Video Permission

Security Camera Acknowledgement

University Observation and Participation Acknowledgment

Policy on the Release of Children Acknowledgment

Policy on the Use of Technology and Social Media Acknowledgment

Policy on the Management of Communicable Diseases Acknowledgment

Suspension and Expulsion Policy Acknowledgment

Family Receipt of Information included in the Application for Admission and Family Handbook

Child's Name _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian Name _____ Signature _____

Director/Designee Signature _____ Date _____