

**Mercy Co-worker
Children's Center
- 12727 Old
Tesson**

**Parent
Handbook**

PARENT HANDBOOK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- **Welcome**
- **Application, Enrollment**
- **Our Program**
 - **Staff/Child Ratio**
 - **Class Placement**
 - **Curriculum**
 - **Acceptance of Child with Special Needs**
 - **Early Intervention-Developmental Screenings**
 - **Classroom Behavior Management**
 - **Dismissal From the Program**
- **Child Orientation**
 - **Preparing for School**
 - **What to Bring From Home**
 - **Dressing Your Child for School**
 - **When to Call**
- **Arrival/Departure**
- **Health**
- **Illness/Re-admission to School**
- **Medication**
- **Nutrition**
- **Safety**
 - **Who May Pick-Up Your Child**
 - **Entering-Exiting the Center**
- **Injury**
- **Nap/Rest Time**
- **Other Information**
- **Volunteering Your Time**
- **Resource Material**
- **Payment/Invoices/Fees**
- **Extended Leave**
- **Utilization**
- **Scheduling**
- **Exchanging Care**
- **Cancellations**
- **Vacations**
- **Holidays**
- **Low Census Days**
- **Discontinuing Care**
- **Separated /Divorced Parents**

Revised: July 2018

WELCOME

Welcome to Mercy Co-worker Children's Center!! Our purpose is to provide a service and quality care for children of Mercy co-workers and the community. It is our goal to provide an enriching and positive experience for each child. The program is based upon the following ideals:

- To provide a warm, nurturing, sensitive and stimulating environment responsive to the needs of individual children in which they grow and enjoy learning.
- To provide a creative atmosphere to encourage social, physical, intellectual and emotional development of each child.
- To provide a good foundation for learning by helping children develop problem-solving skills, curiosity, observation, questioning and listening skills and some degree of abstract thinking rather than rote skills and facts.
- To help the children we serve, 6 weeks through 5 years, develop a positive self-image, which is basic to the development of a self-directed learner.

We welcome the opportunity to work with parents to foster a greater understanding of your child's growth and development. When children are cared for away from home, it is essential that there be mutual feelings of trust and sharing between parents and teachers. There are opportunities for brief daily contacts with center staff as well as scheduled conferences throughout the school year. The teachers are qualified professionals and are here to help you and your child in any way they can.

This handbook has been designed to provide you with important information about the center practices, policies and procedures that affect you and your child. If you ever have questions, do not hesitate to ask.

Application

- Co-workers/community families may apply by sending a completed application form with a non-refundable application fee per family. This application fee is used to secure placement on the waiting list. Upon notification of acceptance, it will be necessary to complete enrollment forms and return them along with an enrollment fee.

Application-Priority

- Once a family has one child in the program, additional children of the family receive a priority status. Their placement into the center will occur prior to non-priority families (with advance notice of no less than 6 months). However, it will be necessary to complete an application. The application fee is waived for priority status families.

Enrollment

- Enrollment is open to the community; however, a Mercy co-worker will receive priority placement over a community family. Openings within the center are handled on a “first come, first served basis.” If space is not immediately available in the appropriate age group, the child will be placed on a waiting list until a slot becomes available. The center will not discriminate on any basis, including religion, race or sex.

Enrollment Requirements

The enrollment packet, provided prior to the start date, is to be completed in its entirety and returned to the center at least 2 weeks prior to the child’s orientation day. The packet consists of:

Enrollment Packet

- Office Records/Child History Form
- Medical Examination/Health Information Form
(Medical Examination form must be signed by the physician indicating freedom from communicable diseases and record of immunization. This form must be submitted on or before the child’s first day of school.)
- Parent Agreement
- Child – Family History and Information
- Feeding Information (Infant-Toddler)
- Infant Safe Sleep Policy – Infant Sleep Routine
- Utilization Form
- Direct Payment Option Form
- Rate Schedule/Billing Cycle Sheet

Class Placement:

The following outlines the anticipated grouping of children by age. Infant/Toddler and Young Preschool are an approximate age grouping. A child could move prior to the time indicated or later depending on space availability and age of the child. Tuition rates are assessed based on the ratio being maintained. Decrease in tuition will occur when a child moves to “the next oldest” component, i.e.: toddler to young preschool, young preschool to older preschool.

- **Infant** 6 weeks to approximately 12 months, staff/child ratio 1:4.
- **Toddler** 12 - 24 months, staff/child ratio 1:4.
- **Young Preschool** 2 - 3 year olds, staff/child ratio 1:8.
(this grouping could be composed of only 2 year olds or a combination of 2 & 3 year olds)
- **Older Preschool** 4 - 5 year olds, staff/child ratio 1:10.
(this grouping could be composed of 3-4-5 year olds)

Curriculum

The child's growth, development and self image are the most important aspects of our curriculum. We believe each child grows through nurturing, patience and respect. The child is seen as an individual who needs social cultivation to grow into a unique and special person.

Each of the classrooms offer a variety of learning centers and experiences that help promote cognitive development, conceptual thinking, problem-solving skills, eye-hand coordination, creative thinking, language skills and many other life-long developmental skills.

Our program is based on the theories of Project Construct, which is founded on the belief that children learn most readily when they are actively and directly involved in experiences that are meaningful to them.

The aim of Project Construct is to create learning environments in which children gain some degree of autonomy as they learn to make choices and regulate their own behavior within the social environment. Exchanges of ideas and feelings are an important part of this process, insofar as the exchanges grow out of a sense of mutual respect. During small group time children are encouraged to share their ideas, personal experiences and feelings through discussions about a theme. As their ideas are shared within the group, they expand and clarify their thinking and their ability to solve problems.

Each class plans activities around a theme. The activities are incorporated in the different learning centers, large and small group experiences, language activities and in the literature that is read to the children.

During "Work Time" children choose one of many areas of play that include: sensory, science, art, workbench, music, blocks, manipulatives, dramatic play, reading and writing. When children have opportunities to plan and select their own activities, they acquire not only knowledge and skills in the process, but the inclination to use them.

In addition to implementing Project Construct, we also follow Developmentally Appropriate Practices as recommended by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Curriculum

Every effort is made to provide a program addressing children “where they are” in their development. Children are enrolled in classrooms according to age and developmental level. Children with special needs are included in classrooms with their typically developing peers. It is our belief that all children benefit by being a part of a diverse group. Children with developmental delays develop faster and go farther when they have typically developing peers as models. Typically developing children learn tolerance and accept differences in an inclusive setting.

Mercy Co-worker Children's Center, in compliance with the ADA (Americans With Disabilities Act) must attempt to meet the needs of children who are physically, emotionally, or developmentally delayed. Mercy Co-worker Children's Center is not equipped to care for all children with special needs. Cases are addressed individually by the manager/designee of the center after conferring with the parents and in some cases the physician of the child. The child must be able to participate and substantially benefit from the program without constraining the child's development or the development of other children.

*Please see the section “Acceptance of a Child With Special Needs.”

Acceptance of a Child With Special Needs

The acceptance of a child with special needs will be determined by a review committee consisting of: parents, manager of the center/designee, physician (either personally attending or contacting center manager by phone or letter), physician advisor of the center and any appropriate consultants such as speech-language pathologist, pediatric neurologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, etc.

Purpose of the Committee

Evaluate the special needs of the child and the special care/equipment required for the child. Review of an existing individual family service plan (IFSP) or individual education plan (IEP) will be necessary.

Evaluate the age/developmental placement of the child.

Discuss the ability of the center to meet those special needs. If not, to provide recommendations of other facilities.

Upon consideration from the committee, the manager/designee will make the final decision whether the center can provide the appropriate special needs of the child.

Procedures for Acceptance of a Child With a Special Needs

If it is decided the center can provide for the individual needs, a meeting/orientation will be arranged with the following people: parents, child, manager/designee, teachers and other specialists acquainted with the child.

Objectives of the meeting: To acquaint parents and child with the center; acquaint child care staff with the child and his/her special needs prior to attendance; make any special arrangements necessary for care of the child.

*Follow up meetings will be scheduled as deemed necessary by parents and/or center staff. It is important the center staff be invited to attend any IFSP/IEP meetings.

ALL RECORDS ARE COMPLETELY CONFIDENTIAL.

Early Intervention-Developmental Screenings

Developmental screenings assess growth in the areas of fine and gross motor skills, speech and language abilities, cognitive skills, and social development. Typically, we encourage this screening at age 3 and/or when developmental milestones are in question. Talk to your child's teacher or center manager for more information.

Classroom Behavior Management

Children mature and develop at their own pace. The center philosophy supports providing a positive, nurturing and safe environment in which children learn to respect themselves and one another.

The teachers play a vital role in establishing an appropriate physical environment and curriculum in addition to getting to know the child through one-on-one interaction.

Children can learn best from the program when there is an understanding of classroom routine and rules. Setting limits, positive encouragement and reinforcements are utilized consistently with children as a means to build self esteem and develop self control. The following are examples of how to build this cooperative community:

- **Model and role play appropriate behavior, cooperation and teamwork.**
- **Look for the positive behaviors and give genuine praise often.**
- **Give children opportunities to work in pairs and small groups.**
- **Give children responsibilities in the classroom.**
- **Have children participate in creating room rules and consequences.**
- **Make sure children understand the task.**

When disruptive behavior occurs or a child struggles with self control, the result may be a logical consequence (listed below) with the goal of validating the child's feelings.

- Assure the child it is ok to feel how he/she is feeling.
- Find an alternate activity to help the child work through the feelings and/or the behavior.
Example: Tell the child, "Take a deep breath and blow out the mad." "How can I help you?"
Example: Have the child work out the anger by hammering or squeezing playdough.
Example: Assist the child with using the Peace Chairs, if appropriate.
- Tell the child what he/she can do and if necessary redirect to another activity. Example: "Blocks are for building; let's build a garage for the cars together."
- Remind children of the classroom rules in a positive way.
- If another child was involved, have him/her help the injured child in some way. Example: "Johnny needs help holding the icepack on his hand." "Susie needs help to build the tower again."
- If these alternatives have been implemented and are not effective, the child will be removed from the group with a teacher present to assist the child in calming down and/or working through feelings. When the child has regained control to rejoin the group, reminders will be given to the child of the behavior that is expected.

Classroom Behavior Management

The teachers will always present to parents all situations that require some method of classroom behavior management. Parents are encouraged to ask teachers questions regarding child guidance/behavior management techniques. The home/school relationship is an integral piece that contributes greatly to a positive experience for the child and family.

The best interest and needs of the individual, group and the parent is viewed as priority. We will work in partnership with parents to address the needs of their child. Communication is extremely important. The staff will inform the parents regarding their child through written notes, telephone conversation, and discussions during drop off/pick up time. There may be occasions when conferences between parents, teachers and/or center manager is needed to review the necessary adaptations, procedures and resources that must be in place to maximize the child's success.

Dismissal From the Program

Mercy Co-worker Children's Center makes every attempt to meet the continuing needs of each child. The goal is for each child to have a positive experience. At times, it may not be possible to meet the needs and changes of each child or continue to provide a positive experience in this environment. When this occurs, it is our procedure to discuss this concern with the parents. At that time, the learning style of the child is reviewed as it relates to the learning environment. Adaptations and intervention strategies are discussed. A mutually agreed upon plan of action is implemented that includes reviewing the most appropriate placement and programming for the child. Follow up conferences are set to review concerns, effectiveness of adaptations/intervention strategies. If over time the needs of the child can't be successfully met with the use of adaptation techniques and intervention strategies, referral to another, more appropriate placement will be made. The center manager will provide parents with advance notice of dismissal. Upon request, assistance locating resource and referral services will be available to the family.

Child Orientation – Preparing for School

When a child enters our program, it is important for us to get to know the parents as well as the child. The forms you complete are a great help, but we need to become familiar with the personal manner in which you interact with your child. We like to learn as much as we can from you in order to facilitate your child's transition and make his/her experience at our center as rewarding as possible. We want each child to feel as comfortable as possible. We encourage parents to visit the center along with their child to meet the teachers and learn more about the program.

In the first few days allow enough time to help your child make the adjustment from home to the new environment. Please NEVER "sneak out" and always say good-bye. You may find the adjustment goes quickly or it may take a little longer. Relax and try not to worry. Your child will respond to your anxieties and react accordingly. Most children cry in the beginning, and this is appropriate. It is helpful to get the child interested in a book, puzzle or similar activity before you leave. In addition, a teacher will greet each child. This helps them feel more comfortable and facilitates their adjustment. After these efforts have been made to acclimate your child, we would appreciate you leaving promptly after saying good-bye. Please ask your teachers for help; they are a good source of ideas to make the transition easier.

What to bring from Home

Infant/Toddler - diapers, wipes, ointment, change of clothes, prepared bottles, baby food, sleep sack, pacifier, etc.

It is necessary to label each bottle, containers of food, clothes, blanket and pacifier with child's first and last name.

Car Seat Storage - There is limited space for car seat storage in our building. State fire codes do not permit storage in the hallways or on the floor. It is much appreciated if you make arrangements to keep your child's car seat stored in your car. For those instances when this is not feasible, the following limited option is available:

- The car seat storage area is to the left as you enter the center.
- It is the parent's responsibility to place car seats in the storage area.
- It may be necessary to stack car seats.
- Many car seats are the same make/model. Please label the car seat with your child's first/last name.

Older Children - diapers, wipes, ointment, change of clothes including underwear, children (12 months and older) child-size blanket, pacifier, sleep toy if desired, etc.

REMINDER:

- Label everything.
- Clothes need to be replaced seasonally.

Remember the following when dressing your child for School:

- We do get messy, please wear clothes that can get dirty.
- We play outside, shoes should be appropriate for outside play.
- Weather can be unpredictable, be prepared with a sweater, jacket or long pants.
- We do go out in the cold and sometimes the snow, bring boots, mittens and a hat.
- We have water play in the summer, bring swimsuit, towel and swim shoes.

For the safety of the children, enclosed toe shoes must always be worn when children have accomplished the milestone of walking. This includes children that have begun taking steps but not mastered walking

When to Call

Please feel free to call to inquire on your child anytime. Longer telephone calls during program time can interfere with care and optimal classroom learning. For those instances, the best time to call is between 1:00 and 2:30 when teachers can provide their undivided attention.

Arrival

For the safety of all, children must be escorted into the building by an accompanying adult

- Each day the child should be checked for signs of any illness before leaving for school.
- If the child is ill upon arrival, the teacher will ask that the child be taken home. The center cannot accept responsibility for a child who is ill, nor in good conscience expose other children to the illness.
- Teachers arrive prior to the opening of the center. This time is allocated to opening procedures for the room/center.
- Please make eye contact with the teacher and be sure you make confirmation of your child's arrival.
- Initial the "in" time on the sign in/out sheet. If the child is sent with someone other than a parent, that person should be advised of the arrival procedures.
- Once your child is acclimated, prompt leaving after say good-bye would be appreciated. Please don't hesitate to ask your teachers for help, they are a good source of ideas to make the transition easier.

Departure

- Be sure to make eye contact with the teacher and advise them of the departure. Initial the “out” time on the sign in/out sheet.
- These measures help assure the safety of the children as well as maintain a calm, peaceful departure.
- If someone other than the usual person is to pick up a child, the center should be advised beforehand in writing. The child will not be released until the center has been given permission to release the child.

Health - The health guidelines described below are for the benefit of the children as well as the staff.

- Missouri Licensure of Day Care Centers requires a “Care Plan” be on file regarding allergies, special diets, health concerns and special needs. This plan requires documentation by the physician that outlines the purpose and action of the care plan.
- Signed documentation by the pediatrician regarding your child’s health status and immunizations must be on file prior to a child starting the program.
- Immunization records must be updated after receiving any shots. Please provide a copy of the shot record to the personnel at the front desk.
- You may inquire at the front desk to receive information regarding immunization exemptions filed for children enrolled at the center.
- A release for emergency care signed by the parent or guardian. (This is found on the Parent Agreement Form.)

Criteria used to Determine Illness as Outlined by Licensure

- Fever (over 100 degrees F.)
- Lethargic
- Presence of vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Red, weeping eyes
- Sore Throat
- Rash
- Open, draining skin lesions
- Productive Cough
- Pain
- Contagious illness
- Any combination of cold, low-grade temperature, cough, etc.

Illness

- Any child suspected of being ill, based on the above criteria, will be assessed on an individual basis. The center manager or designee will determine whether a child should be excluded from the center.
- Parents are requested to keep their child home in the event of any of the above symptoms.
- At least 1 school day away from the center for any illness will be required. The child will be accepted into class when he/she has been free of any or all of these symptoms, has not required fever/pain medication for a minimum of 24 hours, and has resumed a normal diet for a minimum of a 24-hour period.
- The parents of an ill child will be notified as soon as possible regarding the child's illness. Ill children must be picked up from the center as quickly as possible. The child will be separated from the group to the best of our ability until the child can be picked up. In the event of a potentially serious, contagious illness affecting the center as a whole, letters will be sent to parents offering guidelines for dealing with the illness.
- If a child is exposed to or contracts a communicable disease, it is essential this information be reported to the center manager. Information of possible exposure to a communicable disease will be posted.

Re-admission to School From Being Ill

- Children must be evaluated by the center manager/designee prior to taking children into the classroom. Please stop by the front desk prior to drop off.
- **Medication - Tylenol will not routinely be administered at school. If Tylenol was administered at home prior to drop off, please review the status of your child with the center manager/designee before taking your child to the classroom.**
- Prescription (unless medically necessary) and non-prescription medication must be administered at home.
- Medically necessary prescription medications will be administered for on-going conditions such as Asthma.
- Contact the center manager regarding any medication administration questions/requests.

Prescription Medication Administration

- A medication authorization form must be completed to administer medication
- Must be in the original container and labeled with the child's first and last name
- Name of medication
- Dosage amount
- Time medication is to be given, ex: 10:00 a.m.
- Start and End date for medication administration
- Purpose for taking the medication
- Parent Signature Required
- Sample bottles of medication require the above information to administer medication
- Dispensing syringe, spoon or cup must be brought from home.
- Medication Authorization Forms are effective for one week. If your child requires medication past a week, you must complete another form.
- For on-going dispensing of medication (such as inhalers) please update the start/end date weekly and initial the dates. **Please refer to the previous Health section for the Care Plan required for on-going medications.**

Nutrition-Infants

Nutrition services for infants will be provided on an individual basis. Teachers will ask parents to complete a daily menu for their child, which will include the amount and time that bottles and baby food are to be given.

Parents are responsible for bringing:

- Prepared bottles that indicate the child's first and last name, (glass bottles with protective rubber casing are the only glass bottles permissible).
- Unopened containers (plastic please, no glass) of baby food that indicates the child's first and last name.
- It is permissible to provide prepared baby food from home. The food must be placed in a plastic container with a lid. The container must list the name of the food and the child's first and last name.
- Any food not eaten by the child will be disposed the day the food was brought from home and/or thawed for use, or sent home.
- When your child switches to table food and cow's milk (drinks from a cup) the center will resume meal responsibility. *At this time, you need to update the Infant-Toddler Feeding Information Form authorizing the transition to table food.

Parental visitation is welcomed and encouraged!!!!

Nutrition-Older Children

- Breakfast: will consist of a variety of cereals, bagels, muffins, fruit breads, pancakes, waffles, fruit, yogurt, juice, milk, etc.
- Breakfast:
Toddler - 7:45-8:15 (children must arrive no later than 8:10 for breakfast).
Young Preschool (Rainbow) 8:00-8:30
Older Preschool (Purple) 8:00-8:30
*Young and Older children must arrive no later than 8:25 a.m. to receive breakfast. *For children that arrive past the expected arrival time, food will be available for the parent to provide their child in the staff lounge.
- Snacks: consist of fruit, juice, crackers, cheese, breads, muffins, etc.
- Lunch: consist of at least one-third of the daily food and nutrition requirements for the appropriate age.
- Lunch: Toddler 11:00 - Young Preschool (Rainbow) 11:30 - Older Preschool (Purple) 11:45
- For children who eat table food, we ask that food never be brought to school by you or your child. We have pre-planned menus and have determined what should be consumed by the child during the day. Any other food brought into the classroom can cause problems with the children.
- For birthdays and special occasions, it is permissible to bring a special treat to the class. Please notify the teacher of your plans at least one day in advance.
- It is permissible to substitute food due to allergies and/or religious beliefs. This must be reviewed by the center manager prior to bringing substitutions from home. Please provide instructions in writing from your child's physician outlining specific allergies so this can be kept on file. ***Refer to the Health "Care Plan" section.**
- Food substitutions must closely resemble items on the menu.

- Due to extreme allergic reaction in some children, the Child Care Center will not serve or allow **PEANUTS OR PEANUT PRODUCTS**.

Safety

Every effort is made to ensure the safety of all children. To accomplish this, children, parents and teachers must all work together.

Who May Pick Up Your Child

- Only the persons listed on the Office Records Form that you submit may pick up your child.
- Verbal and/or written notification must be given to the center when someone other than the parent will be picking up your child.
- If someone is not listed on the Office Records Form, a signed note or verbal notification from the parent will be required; otherwise your child will not be released.
- It is important to notify the center if you may be reached at a number or location that is different than those indicated on the Office Records Form.
- The Office Records Form must be updated in cases of change of address, change of email address, work extension, home telephone, area code, etc. Please review this regularly to make certain the revised information is reflected.

Entering/Exiting the Center

- **Parents must escort their child in/out of the building. Keep your child close to you and/or hold their hand if necessary. *Please, under no circumstances allow your child to enter/exit the building without you present.**

Injury

- In the event a child is injured, the parent will be notified. The supervising teacher will provide details of the injury. If we feel the child needs further assistance, we will ask you to come as soon as possible. If the injury is serious, we will make every attempt to reach you before the child is taken to the emergency department for treatment.

Nap/Rest Time – Infant Sleep Policy Statement

The purpose of the Safe Sleep Policy is to maintain a safe sleep environment that reduces the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and sudden unexpected infant deaths (SUIDS) in children less than one year of age. Missouri law requires all licensed child care facilities that provide care for children less than one year of age to implement and maintain a written safe sleep policy in accordance with the most recent safe sleep recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Missouri child care licensing rules require licensed child care facilities to provide parent(s) and/or guardian(s) who have infants in care be provided a copy of the facility's safe sleep policy.

Infant Safe Sleep Policy - Safe Sleep Practices

All staff, adults, volunteers and others who care for infants in the center should follow these required safe sleep practices as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP):

- 1. Infants, less than (1) year of age, will always be placed on their backs to sleep. When, in the opinion of the infant's licensed health care provider, an infant requires alternate sleep positions or special sleeping arrangements that differ from those set forth in this rule, the provider must have on file written instructions, signed by the infant's licensed health care provider, detailing the alternative sleep positions or special sleeping arrangements for the infant. Caregivers will put the infant to sleep as specified in the written instructions.**
- 2. When infants can easily turn from their stomachs to their backs and from their backs to their stomachs, they shall be initially placed on their backs, but shall be allowed to adopt whatever positions they prefer for sleep. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that infants are placed on their back to sleep, but when infants can easily turn over from their back to their stomach, they may adopt whatever position they prefer for sleep. We will follow this recommendation by the American Academy of Pediatrics.**
- 3. Sleeping infants shall have a supervised nap/sleep period. The caregiver shall be positioned where he or she can hear and see the infant. The caregiver shall physically check on the infant frequently, (every 15 minutes and document) during napping or sleeping and shall remain in close proximity to the infant in order to hear and see them if they have difficulty napping/sleeping or when they awaken.**
- 4. Equipment such as a sound machine/radio may not interfere with the caregiver's ability to see or hear a child who may be distressed.**
- 5. Steps will be taken to keep infants from overheating by regulating the room temperature, avoiding excess bedding, and not over-dressing or over-wrapping the infant. Infants should be dressed appropriately for the environment, with no more than (1) layer more than an adult would wear to be comfortable in that environment. Caregivers will conduct physical checks of the infant to ensure the infant is not overheated or distressed.**
- 6. The lighting in the room must allow the caregiver/teacher to see each infant's face, to view the color of the infant's skin and to check on the infant's breathing and place of the pacifier (if used).**
- 7. All caregivers will receive training on infant safe sleep based on AAP safe sleep recommendations. This training must be completed within 30 days of employment and will be completed every three years.**

Infant Safe Sleep Policy - Safe Sleep Environments

- Room temperature will be kept at no less than 68 degrees and no more than 85 degrees when measured two feet from the floor. Infants are supervised to ensure they are not overheated or chilled.
- Bibs, necklaces, and garments with ties or hoods will be removed.
- Infants' heads and face will not be covered during sleep. Infants' cribs will not have blankets or bedding hanging on the sides of the crib. **We may use sleep clothing (i.e. sleep sack, sleepers) that is designed to keep an infant warm without the possible hazard of covering the head or face during sleep/nap time.**
- No blankets, loose bedding, comforters, pillows, bumper pads, toys, stuffed animals or any object that can increase the risk of entrapment, suffocation, or strangulation will be used in cribs.
- **With written parent consent, pacifiers will be allowed in the infants' cribs while they sleep. The pacifier cannot have cords or attaching mechanisms.**
- Only an individually-assigned safety-approved crib with a firm mattress and tight-fitting sheet will be used for the infant napping or sleeping. Only one infant may occupy a crib at one time.
- Sitting devices such as car safety seats, strollers, swings, infant carriers, infant slings, and other sitting devices will not be used for sleep/nap time.
- Infants who fall asleep anywhere other than a crib must be placed in the crib for the remainder of their sleep or nap time.
- No person shall smoke or otherwise use tobacco products in any area of the child care facility during the period of time when children cared for under the license are present.
- Home monitors or commercial devices marketed to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) shall not be used in place of supervision while children are napping and sleeping.
- After awakening, an infant may remain in the crib as long as he/she is content, but never for periods longer than thirty (30) minutes.
- Children will transition to sleeping on a cot at 12 months of age. Parents will be notified prior to the transition to provide permission for their child to rest/nap on a cot.

Nap/Rest Time -Toddler & Preschool

- Nap and rest time is provided for all children as outlined by Missouri State Licensure
- A nap and/or rest period is essential for each child. Please do not ask center staff to reduce or eliminate the nap or rest period for your child.
- If a child does not sleep after the allotted rest period, children will be allowed to play quietly on their cot by reading a book, playing with a puzzle or provided with a "nap" bag from the teacher.
- Children will not be forced to nap or remain on the cot for extended periods of time without napping or having a quiet play time.

Other Information

- **PTO** - The primary focus is to provide a link between parents and teachers of the center. The PTO has many fundraisers during the year for the purpose of providing the program with additional toys, supplies, etc. The PTO also organizes Teacher Appreciation and Family Events.

Resource Material

- The center has a variety of resources materials that offer several aspects of child development. Please direct your inquiries to your child's teacher or center manager to access these materials.

Volunteering Your Time

- You are always welcome to volunteer time to assist with classroom activities, projects and parties. Please talk with your child's teacher to receive more information regarding how you may be of assistance.

Payment/Invoices/Fees

- Upon center orientation, which is scheduled a minimum of one week prior to starting the center, the enrollment fee and 2 weeks tuition fee is due. These fees are NON-REFUNDABLE.
- The annual enrollment fee is assessed at the beginning of each fiscal year, July-June. If your child will be leaving the center in July/August/September or if you just started the center in April/May/June, the annual enrollment fee will be waived.
- Billing Cycles are in two week increments. Copies of billing cycles are available at the front desk.
- Tuition is due the last day of the billing cycle (Friday) in conjunction with the Mercy payday. Please refer to the billing cycle sheet indicating billing cycles and pay dates.
- Payment is made by check or money order. Sorry, cash cannot be accepted.
- Payment should be placed in the "Tuition Slot" located at the front desk counter.
- Billing Invoices will be emailed at the end of each billing period. This will serve as a reconciliation statement. *Based on your utilization, your charges will be constant. Therefore, you will know your charges each two weeks. If you should add a day or request a vacation day those charges or credits can easily be determined to provide you with the amount due.
- Please keep your email address current with the center. Keep emailed invoices as they can be used for DSA and tax purposes. Frequent duplicate statement requests for each billing period could result in a processing fee of \$5.00 per billing period.
- Year End Invoice - will be emailed to you no later than the last day of January. Please keep the year end statement. A duplicate copy request could result in a \$10.00 processing fee.
- If tuition is not received or not paid in full after the close of business on the last Friday of the billing cycle (pay Friday) a \$15.00 late fee will be assessed.
- A late fee of \$5.00 per child will be assessed for any portion of each 1 minute increment after the center closes. The parent or authorized person must complete and sign a late pick up form. Please contact the center anytime you will be late to pick up your child, 314-543-5995.
- Please contact the center Coordinator or Manager with billing and payment questions at 314-543-5995.

Extended Leave

- Families may have the need to be gone from the center for a period of time but want placement for their child upon return. An extended leave (not less than 3 weeks or greater than 8 weeks) may be requested in a 12 month rolling period. Half tuition, based on current utilization status, will be assessed during the extended leave period.
- If during the extended leave you drop from the program, full tuition based on the utilization status prior to the leave will be billed for the last 2 weeks of attendance.
- Should you need to complete paperwork indicating an extended leave, please contact front desk staff.

Utilization

- There is a minimum (2-day/week) utilization requirement.
- A completed **Utilization Form** indicating the number of days your child will use in each 2-week billing period will be required. The number of days indicated on the form is the number of days you will be charged each billing period.
- Should you need additional days email Jenny, Jennifer.Bentrup@mercy.net and she will confirm space availability, or call the front desk at 314-543-5995.
- If a scheduled day occurs on a holiday or a day when the center is closed, a charge could be incurred based on your utilization. You may be able to exchange that day for another day within the billing period if space is available. Or, you can request a vacation day. *Expenses continue in cases of closed days of the center; therefore tuition is expected.
- Absences due to illness will not be deducted from your tuition payment. Please notify the center of your child's absence at 314-543-5995. Also, refer to exchanging a day of care or vacation section for more information.

Scheduling

- If you have a full-time or part-time set schedule child care need, indicating this on the utilization form is sufficient. Please provide the time that will closely resemble the drop off/pick up time of your child.
- If you have a flex schedule need, you must provide the needed schedule a minimum of two weeks in advance. Please email your schedule to Jennifer.Bentrup@mercy.net Or call the child care center office at 314-543-5995.
- **It is important to adhere to the scheduled in/out time you provide.** The staff schedule is closely related to the in/out time indicated on the child's schedule. Deviations from the scheduled time you provide could jeopardize the staff/child ratio therefore placing the center out of compliance with licensure. If a child arrives earlier than the scheduled "in time" parents may be asked to stay until the schedule in-time to ensure a safe staff/child ratio. If you need to make a change to the schedule, please contact the center at 314-543-5995.
- Emergency "Drop-In" care for enrolled children will be accommodated if space is available. "Drop-In" care must be pre-arranged prior to bringing your child to the center.
- For optimal programming and care, children must arrive prior to 10:00 a.m.
- When scheduling doctor appointments, etc. during a day when your child attends, please avoid a return to group care during naptime between 12:30-2:30. In consideration for all, we want to ensure that children can rest without the disruption.
- NO REGULAR SCHEDULES WILL BE TAKEN OVER THE TELEPHONE. Emergency only "call-ins" for enrolled children and/or exchanges will be accepted over the phone.
- FAXED SCHEDULES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.
- Mercy Co-worker Children's Center is designed to accommodate the need of the working parent. Priority will always be given to the working need of each family. If you request care for a non-work purpose, your request may not be granted or guaranteed and cannot be processed until all requested work needs are met.
- Care for a (non-work) need will be scheduled 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Cancellations

- In the case that care isn't needed, you may exchange the scheduled day for another day within the same billing period without incurring additional charges.
- Payment is expected for your scheduled days. Refer to (**Exchanging a Day of Care**). You may also request a vacation day. Refer to (**Vacation**).
- There are times when a family adds a day that exceeds their scheduled utilization. Added days may be cancelled with a one week's notice.

Exchanging a Day of Care

- Exchanges of days are permitted for illness, change of work schedule or work need, holiday, or low census days.
- When exchanging a day of care, you must contact the center within two hours of your scheduled arrival time. After the two hour period, you will not be eligible to exchange a day of care.
- Exchanges must be made within the same billing period.
- Exchanges are available provided space is available in your child's room.

Vacation

- Each child is eligible for vacation determined by the utilization status indicated on the completed **Utilization Form**. This is the number of days you may choose throughout the year for which you will not be charged tuition. Please refer to the **Vacation Chart**.
- At the time of enrollment, vacation days may be pro-rated based on the actual start date in the program.
- Vacation requests: advance notice is appreciated.
- Vacation requests may be used for sick days, absent days, cancellations, etc.
- Vacation days renew the first billing period of the fiscal year in July.
- Children who leave the center in July/August/September will NOT renew vacation time.
- Pre-K children (children going to Kindergarten in the Fall) do not renew vacation in July as they are leaving. It is permissible for the Pre-K child to "roll over" unused vacation days from the previous year that ends in June.

Holidays

- Typically, the center is closed 7 holidays and two floating holidays each year. Charges will be assessed for holidays based on utilization status/schedule. The holidays are:

New Year's Day

Good Friday

Memorial Day

Independence Day

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Day & Day After (Floating Holiday)

Christmas Day & (either Christmas Eve or the day after Christmas/Floating Holiday)

- We will notify you in advance of the floating Holidays.

Low Census Days

- On occasion, day(s) before/after a holiday there is little or no request for care. In cases of little care requested, but sufficient need to remain open, like age groups may come together in the age appropriate room.

Discontinuing Care

- A two-week notice of a plan to leave the center is required.
- A drop form must be completed which is available at the front desk.
- Vacation credit may not be utilized when notice of leaving the center has been given.
- Payment (based on the completed utilization form) is expected for the last two weeks of attendance.

Separated and Divorced Parents

- Mercy Co-worker Children's Center will honor all legal documents regarding child custody and parental visitation. If one parent is to have limited access to a child, we must have a copy of the custody ruling on file. Mercy Co-worker Children's Center will not intercede on behalf of one parent if the custody decision has not been specifically defined. We cannot refuse a parent the right to take a child from the center unless that parent has been legally denied permission to do so. In case of an emergency, both parents will be notified.
- Although both parents will be notified in an emergency, the custodial parent will receive the first call.
- Parents who do not pick up their child at the center may request to have information sent to their home.
- Responsibility for tuition payments will be the custodial parent. Please do not ask Mercy Co-worker Children's Center to intercede and request payment from an ex-spouse.
- Upon enrollment or anytime during your stay, please notify the center manager regarding a separation or divorce to ensure the proper paperwork/procedures are in order.

See the Center Manager for More Information Regarding:

Missouri Licensure of Child Care Centers

Staff Child Abuse/Neglect Screening

Children's Developmental Records

Lesson Plans

Extended Leave

Behavior Concerns

Sleep Issues

Toilet Learning

Cloth Diaper Procedure

Transition to a Sippy Cup

Transition to Table Food

