



Child Development Center

Parent Handbook

2026-2027



MCC Child Development Center & Lab School
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<https://www.mclennan.edu/child-development-Center/>

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1. Welcome Letter

Dear Families,

Welcome to the MCC Child Development Center & Lab School. We are honored to partner with you in your child's early learning and care. Our Program blends play-based, child-Centered experiences with warm, responsive relationships and strong family partnerships. We value curiosity, kindness, and outdoor exploration, and we work closely with the McLennan Community College Department of Child Studies and Education to ensure a safe, inclusive, and high-quality learning environment.

As part of McLennan Community College, our work advances the College's mission to educate students while improving lives and enriching our community. Our Child Development Center also serves as a laboratory school, providing a supervised learning environment for MCC students preparing for careers in early childhood education. These students bring fresh perspectives, new ideas, and research-informed practices into our classrooms under the guidance of experienced educators.

The MCC Child Development Center is a play-based, nature-rich Program that emphasizes language development, social-emotional learning, and hands-on exploration. Teachers thoughtfully design learning environments with inviting Centers, small-group experiences, music and movement, and daily outdoor learning. Children's growth is documented through ongoing observation, portfolios, and family conferences so Families can see progress over time and partner in goal-setting.

Our practices align with Texas Child Care Licensing Minimum Standards, Texas Rising Star, and NAEYC quality standards, with a strong emphasis on safety, developmental appropriateness, equity, and respectful relationships. We look forward to a joyful and collaborative year together. Please reach out at any time—we are here to support you and your child.

Warmly,

MCC Child Development Center & Lab School Team

2. Mission, Vision & Philosophy

Mission

The mission of the MCC Child Development Center & Lab School is to operate as a laboratory school that provides exemplary Programs for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers while developing future professionals and advancing the teaching and service missions of McLennan Community College.

To achieve this mission, the MCC Lab School:

Provides high-quality Programs for young children and their Families grounded in developmental science, equity, and best practices, ensuring safe, inclusive, and culturally responsive environments supported by strong family partnerships.

Delivers holistic, play-Centered education in child-directed, inquiry-based classrooms that are language-rich, nature-rich, and relationship-driven, emphasizing safety, connection, problem-solving, and self-regulation.

Serves as an exemplary learning environment for MCC students, offering supervised opportunities to observe and interact with young children; apply, analyze, and reflect on coursework; and engage in mentorship with experienced practitioners across disciplines.

Functions as a living context for continuous improvement, supporting ethical practitioner inquiry and research collaborations that deepen understanding of children, Families, and early learning, always with appropriate consent and privacy protections.

Cultivates a collaborative and respectful professional community where educators partner with Families, mentor college students, contribute to Program evaluation, and engage in ongoing professional learning aligned with national quality standards.

Provides robust supports for educators, including protected planning time; instructional coaching and reflective supervision; paid professional development and credential pathways (e.g., CDA, Texas Director, and NAEYC-aligned training); equitable staffing and float coverage to maintain safe ratios; classroom materials budgets; and wellness supports.

By continually striving for excellence in each of these areas, the MCC Lab School models evidence-based, relationship-Centered practice that prepares children for lifelong learning, equips college students for impactful careers, and strengthens the well-being of the greater Waco community.

Vision 2025–2026

At the MCC Child Development Center, our vision is to nurture a thriving community where Families, children, and the wider community grow together.

- Families will feel welcomed, supported, and empowered. We will strengthen connections so that Families achieve their dreams, volunteer with confidence, and know they are a vital part of the MCC family inside and outside the Center.
- Children will thrive in a safe, loving, and equitable environment. We will build their confidence, support their development, and guide them in learning self-regulation, respect, and emotional expression so they grow into capable and caring individuals.
- Community will see MCC CDC as a model of quality early childhood education and family engagement. We will create opportunities, share resources, welcome diverse cultures and values, and give voice to Families so that together we foster strong, productive citizens for the future.

Philosophy

At the MCC CDC & Lab School, children are viewed as curious, capable, and full of potential. Learning is understood as a relational process that unfolds through play, inquiry, and meaningful experiences connecting school, family, and community. The principles below reflect how this philosophy is translated into daily practice across classrooms and guides our work with Families, MCC students, and colleagues.

Our Image of the Child: Every child is viewed as competent, curious, and eager to learn. Learning environments and experiences are intentionally designed to invite choice, agency, and problem-solving, while honoring children’s ideas and perspectives. Curriculum grows from close observation, active listening, and children’s questions and interests, allowing learning to unfold in ways that are meaningful, engaging, and developmentally appropriate.

Relationships & Attachment: Secure relationships form the foundation for learning, growth, and well-being. Daily practice emphasizes warm, responsive interactions in which children are known, valued, and supported. Educators intentionally greet each child by name, model and coach emotional language, and maintain consistent, nurturing routines that foster trust, belonging, and a sense of safety within the classroom community.

Play & Inquiry: Play is the primary engine of learning in early childhood, supporting cognitive growth, language development, creativity, and social connection. Classrooms are intentionally equipped with open-ended materials—such as blocks, art media, dramatic play props, and loose parts—and teachers facilitate small-group experiences and inquiry-based projects. Through these experiences, children are encouraged to plan, experiment, revise their thinking, and share ideas, building confidence as active learners and problem-solvers.

Equity & Anti-Bias Practice: All children belong in their community school and deserve meaningful access to learning, relationships, and participation alongside their peers. To support this commitment, we individualize care and instruction by partnering closely with Families, collaborating with specialists when appropriate, and thoughtfully adapting environments, routines, and teaching strategies. Individualized plans are developed to balance each child's participation, comfort, challenge, and safety, while honoring family priorities, developmental needs, and Program capacity.

Inclusion & Individualization: All children belong in their community school and deserve meaningful access to learning, relationships, and participation alongside their peers. Supports are individualized through close collaboration with Families and, when appropriate, with specialists. Plans are thoughtfully developed to balance each child's participation, comfort, challenge, and safety, while honoring developmental needs, family priorities, and the Program's ability to provide appropriate care.

Environment as the “Third Teacher”: The physical environment plays a powerful role in shaping how children learn, interact, and make meaning. Classrooms are intentionally designed to be calm, inviting, and accessible, with clearly defined learning areas, child-sized tools, and visual supports that promote independence and engagement. Documentation of children's work and thinking is thoughtfully displayed to make learning visible and to support reflection, conversation, and connection between children, Families, and educators.

Outdoor & Nature-Rich Learning: Frequent outdoor learning supports children's attention, well-being, physical development, and sense of wonder. Outdoor experiences are intentionally prioritized each day, weather permitting, and may include gardening, observing wildlife, building structures, and exploring cause-and-effect through hands-on interaction with the natural environment. These experiences are planned to be developmentally appropriate, supervised, and responsive to weather and safety conditions.

Language & Early Literacy: Language develops through rich conversation, storytelling, music, and meaningful social interaction. Daily practice includes reading aloud, singing and chanting, and engaging children in thoughtful dialogue that builds vocabulary and comprehension. Educators intentionally model new language and share learning highlights with Families so that conversations, stories, and songs can be extended and reinforced at home.

Social-Emotional Learning & Guidance: Social-emotional skills such as self-regulation, empathy, and collaboration are intentionally taught and supported in developmentally appropriate ways. Educators use positive guidance strategies, visual supports, coaching, and restorative problem-solving practices to help children learn to navigate emotions, relationships, and conflicts. Practices that are harmful or inappropriate—including corporal punishment, humiliation, or discipline related to food, toileting, or rest—are never used.

Family Partnership: Children thrive when home and school work together in shared partnership. Communication is ongoing and two-way through ProCare and regular classroom updates, and Families are invited to participate in two conferences each year to discuss growth, goals, and support strategies. Opportunities for cultural sharing are welcomed, and simple at-home connections are offered to help Families extend learning and strengthen continuity between home and school.

Assessment & Documentation: Ongoing observation informs responsive teaching and supports meaningful understanding of each child’s development. Educators use developmentally appropriate screening tools (such as ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE-2), authentic daily observations, and the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) to document learning as it occurs within everyday routines and play. Portfolios include photographs, work samples, and anecdotal records that highlight growth over time. Assessment information is used to celebrate progress, guide instructional planning, and identify next steps in partnership with Families.

Professional Culture & Teacher Support: High-quality early childhood Programs are built on supported, reflective, and well-prepared educators. The MCC Child Development Center invests in teacher well-being and professional growth by providing protected planning time, instructional coaching and reflective supervision, paid professional development and credential pathways, equitable staffing and float coverage to maintain safe ratios, classroom materials budgets, and wellness supports. These structures ensure consistency, quality, and continuity of care for children and Families

Health, Safety & Wellbeing: Children learn best when they feel safe, healthy, and emotionally secure. Daily practice prioritizes robust health and safety measures, including proper handwashing, sanitation, and infant safe sleep practices, as well as maintaining required staff-to-child ratios and consistent sight-and-sound supervision. Calm, predictable routines are intentionally designed to reduce stress, support regulation, and create an environment in which children can confidently explore, learn, and grow.

Technology: Early learning is most effective when it is hands-on and rooted in meaningful relationships. For this reason, screen use is not part of the learning experience for children under five during the school day. Technology may be used by educators for planning, documentation, and communication with Families, but it is not used for child entertainment or instruction.

3. Program Calendar & Hours

The MCC Child Development Center & Lab School operates in alignment with the McLennan Community College academic calendar, with limited additional closures specific to the Lab School to support staff development, Program quality, and licensing requirements.

Hours of Operation

- The Center is open Monday–Friday when MCC is in session.
- Operating hours are 7:15 a.m. – 5:15 p.m.
- Children may arrive beginning at 7:15 a.m. and must be picked up no later than 5:15 p.m.

Attendance & Communication Expectations

- Families must notify the office if a child will be absent or will arrive after 9:00 a.m.
- Families must contact the office if they anticipate a late pick-up after 5:15 p.m., in accordance with the Late Pick-Up Policy.

- Consistent arrival times support children’s routines, learning experiences, and classroom continuity.

Closures & Schedule Updates

- Closure dates follow the MCC academic calendar, including college-recognized holidays.
- In addition, the Lab School will have 3 planned closures per academic year dedicated to staff professional development and Program improvement.
- Families will receive advance notice of these staff development days.
- All closures, schedule changes, and emergency notifications are communicated through ProCare and will be posted at the lobby and community board.

Families are encouraged to review the MCC academic calendar regularly and remain attentive to Center communications for updates.

4. Regulations & Quality Systems

Reviewing Texas Minimum Standards & Licensing Inspection Reports

Our Program is licensed and regulated by Texas Health and Human Services (HHS), Child Care Regulation (CCR). Licensing oversight exists to protect the health, safety, and well-being of children and to ensure that child care Programs meet state-required expectations.

This section is intended to help Families understand Texas Minimum Standards, licensing inspections, and how to read inspection reports available to the public.

Texas Minimum Standards

Texas Minimum Standards are **state regulations with the force of law** that all licensed child care Programs must follow. These standards establish minimum requirements related to:

- Child supervision and safety
- Child-to-teacher ratios and group sizes
- Staff qualifications, background checks, and training
- Health, sanitation, and safe sleep practices
- Emergency preparedness
- Child guidance and discipline
- Reporting suspected abuse or neglect

Minimum Standards apply every day during the hours of operation of our Center.

Licensing Inspections

Child Care Regulation conducts licensing inspections to monitor compliance with Texas Minimum Standards. Inspections may be:

- Unannounced monitoring visits

- Scheduled inspections
- Follow-up visits
- Complaint investigations

During an inspection, a Child Care Regulation (CCR) Licensing Representative may observe classrooms, review records and documentation, interview staff, and assess health and safety practices throughout the Center.

As part of the inspection process, Licensing Representatives are authorized to speak with children while they are in care. These interviews do not require prior parental consent. If a child is interviewed, Families will receive written notification from the CCR Licensing Representative after the visit. Parents or guardians may also be contacted or interviewed if additional information is needed.

Inspections are a normal and expected part of operating a licensed child care Program in the State of Texas and are conducted to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of all children in care.

Licensing Inspection Reports

After each inspection, CCR generates an official inspection report. These reports are public and can be accessed through the Search Texas Child Care website. The most recent CCR reports are posted at the parent board at the lobby.

Inspection reports document:

- Which standards were reviewed
- Whether standards were met
- Any deficiencies identified
- Required corrective actions and timelines

How to Read a Licensing Inspection Report

Licensing reports use regulatory language. The following explanations are provided to help Families interpret the information accurately.

Key Parts of the Report

- **Standard Number:** Each item references a specific Texas Minimum Standard from the Texas Administrative Code.
- **Standard Description:** Explains what the rule requires (for example, supervision, documentation, or training).
- **Finding:** Indicates whether the standard was met or not met at the time of inspection.
- **Corrective Action:** If a standard was not met, this section describes what steps must be taken, the timeline for correction, and whether follow-up is required.

Understanding Deficiencies

A deficiency means a specific standard was not fully met at the time of inspection. All deficiencies must be corrected and verified by Child Care Regulation.

Understanding Weight (Severity) Categories

Each deficiency is assigned a weight category to reflect the potential level of risk.

- **High Weight** deficiencies involve standards that could pose a **serious risk to children's health or safety** if not corrected promptly. These items require immediate corrective action and follow-up.
- **Medium Weight** deficiencies relate to standards that impact **child safety, care, or Program integrity**, but are not considered immediately dangerous.
- **Low Weight** deficiencies are typically administrative or technical in nature and do not pose a direct risk to children.

Child Care Scholarships (CCS) & Texas Rising Star (TRS)

MCC CDC partners with the Texas Workforce Commission to serve Families who receive child care subsidies (CCS) and participates in the Texas Rising Star (TRS) quality rating and improvement system.

Through TRS participation, the Center engages in:

- Ongoing coaching and professional development
- Classroom observations and feedback
- Continuous quality improvement activities

These efforts support the maintenance and advancement of our TRS rating and reinforce our commitment to high-quality early childhood education.

NAEYC Accreditation

The MCC Child Development Center & Lab School is proud to hold accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the nation's leading organization for early childhood Program quality.

NAEYC accreditation reflects our commitment to excellence, equity, and continuous improvement in early childhood education and care.

NAEYC Accreditation Status

Our current NAEYC accreditation is valid through: **May 2, 2030.**

NAEYC Standards in Practice at MCC CDC

To bring NAEYC standards to life in daily practice, the MCC Child Development Center & Lab School:

1. Builds positive relationships among children, Families, students, and staff so every child experiences belonging, feels valued, and learns to contribute as a caring community member.
2. Implements a coherent, research-based curriculum aligned to Program goals that promotes learning and development across all domains, including cognitive development, language and literacy, social-emotional development, physical development, and approaches to learning.
3. Uses effective, developmentally, culturally, and linguistically responsive teaching practices, including scaffolded play, small-group instruction, inquiry-based learning, and meaningful conversations that connect to each child's strengths, interests, and home language and culture.
4. Employs ongoing assessment practices—both formal and informal—to understand each child's development, inform instruction, strengthen communication with Families, and guide continuous Program improvement, always with sensitivity to culture, context, and individual differences.
5. Promotes children's health, nutrition, and safety by maintaining robust health practices, safe sleep procedures, sanitation protocols, and indoor and outdoor safety measures that protect children and staff from illness and injury.
6. Recruits, supports, and retains qualified staff, providing ongoing professional development, coaching, reflective supervision, and mentorship to sustain high-quality teaching and strong family partnerships.
7. Builds collaborative partnerships with Families that honor family composition, language, culture, values, and goals. Families are recognized as co-educators and essential partners in children's learning and development.
8. Engages community resources, including MCC departments and local agencies, to enrich learning experiences, support Families, and meet Program and instructional goals.
9. Maintains safe, well-equipped indoor and outdoor environments with developmentally appropriate materials and thoughtfully designed spaces that support exploration, learning, and well-being for children, Families, students, and staff.
10. Operates with strong leadership and effective systems, including clear policies, equitable staffing practices, and sound fiscal and Program management, to ensure stable, high-quality experiences for all members of the learning community.

What Accreditation Means for Families

NAEYC accreditation assures Families that the MCC Child Development Center & Lab School meets nationally recognized standards of quality in early childhood education.

For Families, this means:

- Your child is cared for in a safe, nurturing, and well-organized environment that prioritizes health, safety, and emotional well-being.
- Teaching practices are developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive, supporting each child's learning, identity, and growth.
- Curriculum and assessment are intentional and meaningful, helping educators understand your child's strengths and needs while supporting progress across all areas of development.

- Teachers are qualified and continuously improving, engaging in ongoing professional development, coaching, and reflective practice.
- Families are valued as partners, with open communication, collaboration, and opportunities to share goals, values, and cultural traditions.
- The Program is committed to continuous improvement, regularly reflecting on practices and using professional standards, data, and feedback to strengthen quality.

NAEYC accreditation reflects our promise to Families that we are committed to providing a high-quality early learning experience that supports children’s development today and their success in the future.

Staff Responsibility

Every MCC Child Development Center staff member is responsible for engaging fully in professional practices that uphold Texas Child Care Regulation (CCR) licensing requirements, NAEYC standards, and Texas Rising Star (TRS) expectations. In addition to supporting children and Families, staff serve as professional role models for MCC students, demonstrating ethical practice, respectful communication, reflective teaching, and adherence to Program policies and procedures. This modeling supports student learning while maintaining a safe, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate environment for children.

Laboratory School & Student Participation

As a laboratory school of McLennan Community College, MCC CDC prepares future professionals in early childhood and related fields. MCC students participate in multiple ways:

- Observation & Coursework Integration. Students observe development and teaching practices in classrooms or designated observation areas and connect what they see to course concepts.
- Guided Interaction. In some courses, students plan and facilitate short, teacher-approved activities under direct supervision by MCC CDC teachers.
- Practicum/Work Student. Select students’ complete placements with daily attendance and share responsibilities alongside mentor teachers.

5. Admissions & Enrollment

The MCC CDC & Lab School provides early learning Programs for infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children in accordance with Texas Child Care Regulation (CCR) Minimum Standards and McLennan Community College policies. As a laboratory school, enrollment decisions balance the needs of children and Families with staffing, ratio requirements, classroom composition, and the educational mission of the College.

Enrollment is offered based on space availability and the Program’s ability to meet each child’s developmental, safety, and care needs.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The MCC Child Development Center admits children without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, language, disability, family structure, or socioeconomic status. The Program is committed to equitable access, inclusion, and respectful partnerships with all Families, consistent with state and federal regulations.

Application & Enrollment Process

MCC Child Development Center & Lab School follows a structured enrollment process to ensure each placement is appropriate, safe, and successful for the child, family, and classroom.

Overview of Enrollment Approach

The MCC CDC & Lab School follows a structured, step-by-step enrollment process designed to:

- Ensure children are placed safely and appropriately according to their needs.
- Maintain compliance with staff-to-child ratios and supervision requirements.
- Support Families through informed decision-making.

Enrollment decisions are based on Program capacity, staffing, licensing requirements, and the Center's reasonable ability to meet a child's needs, and are not disciplinary in nature. CCR does not regulate application or waitlist procedures; however, the Center ensures that all practices are non-discriminatory and aligned with licensing capacity and ratio requirements.

Submitting an application does not require payment and does not guarantee enrollment. The Center does not charge enrollment fees or offer a space until we confirm that a classroom opening exists and that the Program can meet the child's needs within licensing requirements and Program capacity.

Step 1: Inquiry & Program Information

Families may submit an inquiry to receive Program information and request a tour when available. Tours are optional and are not required for application or enrollment but are highly recommended.

Step 2: Application Submission: Families submit an enrollment application and preliminary information for consideration. No payment is required at this stage.

Step 3: Waitlist (When Applicable) If no space is available, the child is placed on a waitlist by age group. Waitlist placement is based on Program availability and enrollment priorities outlined in this handbook.

Step 4: Parent Visit / Classroom Observation (No Care Provided)

When a potential opening is anticipated, Families and the child may be invited to participate in a scheduled classroom observation prior to any enrollment offer.

Parent visits are designed to:

- Help Families observe classroom routines, environments, and interactions
- Provide an opportunity to ask questions and better understand the Program's approach, to review classroom routines, Program expectations, and communication systems.

Transition schedules are coordinated with Families and may be adjusted based on the child's developmental needs, classroom readiness, and Program capacity.

During a parent's visit:

- The parent or legal guardian remains fully responsible for supervising their child at all times
- The child does not participate in care, instruction, or classroom activities
- The child is not counted in staff-to-child ratios
- Center staff do not assume supervisory responsibility for the child

Visits are scheduled in advance, are time-limited (typically one hour), and are conducted in a manner that does not disrupt classroom routines, supervision, or licensing ratios.

Participation in a parent's visit does not guarantee enrollment and does not require payment.

Step 5: Pre-Enrollment Review & Transition Planning

Following the classroom observation, the Center reviews classroom availability, and Program capacity to determine whether enrollment may be appropriate. If appropriate, Families are invited to proceed with transition planning.

At this stage, Families are asked to submit required enrollment documentation to support transition days and licensing compliance.

Step 6: Completion of Required Enrollment Documentation

Before a child may participate in transition days, Families must submit the following required and all enrollment documentation:

- Completed enrollment forms and parent agreements
- Emergency contact information
- Immunization records or an approved exemption, in accordance with Texas Child Care Regulation
- Current health statement or physical examination, as required by licensing
- Hearing and vision screening documentation, when age-appropriate
- Authorization forms, including but not limited to:
 - Emergency medical care
 - Sunscreen and insect repellent use
 - Medication administration plans, when applicable

- Signed acknowledgment of receipt and understanding of the MCC Child Development Center & Lab School Parent & Family Handbook

Step 7: Transition Days

To support children's well-being and ensure appropriate placement, children may participate in transition days prior to finalizing enrollment.

Transition days are designed to:

- Support a gradual, developmentally appropriate transition
- Allow the child to experience classroom routines and relationships
- Allow educators and Families to collaboratively observe how supports, supervision, and routines align with the family and child's needs

Transition days may include partial-day or full-day attendance, as determined by the Program and family.

Important notes about transition days:

- Participation does not guarantee final enrollment
- No enrollment fees or tuition are charged until enrollment is confirmed
- During transition days, children are considered present for licensing purposes and all CCR supervision, ratio, health, and safety requirements apply.

Step 8: Enrollment Decision

During the enrollment process the Director meets with the family to:

- Share observations and discuss how the transition progressed
- Review supports or accommodations used or needed
- Confirm classroom placement

Program capacity must be considered. The Center must be able to meet each child's developmental, supervision, and care needs safely and appropriately, including the enrolled and upcoming students.

Step 9: Acceptance of Enrollment Offer

If enrollment is confirmed, families formally accept the enrollment offer and confirm their intent to enroll.

Step 10: Tuition & Fee Processing

After enrollment is confirmed and documentation is completed, the family completes tuition and fee arrangements through the MCC Business Office in accordance with college procedures.

Payment of applicable enrollment fees and tuition is required prior to the child's first regular day of attendance.

Step 11: Start of Care

Enrollment is considered complete once documentation, transition planning, and tuition arrangements are finalized. The child begins attending on the confirmed start date.

Enrollment Priorities

The MCC CDC & Lab School serves as both an early learning Program for children and a laboratory school supporting the educational mission of McLennan Community College. Classroom composition, instructional goals, student supervision requirements, and continuity of care are considered as part of enrollment decisions.

Priority Groups

When space is limited, enrollment priority may be given in the following order:

Priority Group 1

- Siblings of children currently enrolled at the MCC Child Development Center & Lab School
- Children of full-time MCC Child Development Center (Lab School) employees

This priority supports continuity of care for Families already enrolled in the Program and recognizes the operational needs of the Lab School workforce.

Priority Group 2

- Children of full-time McLennan Community College faculty or staff
- Children of currently enrolled McLennan Community College students

This priority supports MCC's institutional mission by promoting student success, workforce participation, and strong partnerships between the College and the Child Development Center.

Priority Group 3

- Children of MCC alumni who have completed a Level 1 certificate or higher
- Immediate relatives* of full-time MCC faculty or staff
- Immediate relatives* of MCC retirees
- Children of part-time or adjunct MCC faculty or staff

This priority acknowledges extended MCC community connections while balancing access with Program capacity and instructional needs.

Priority Group 4

- Community applicants

Community enrollment supports broader access to high-quality early learning and strengthens relationships between MCC and the surrounding community.

*Immediate relatives may include children, grandchildren, or legal dependents, as defined by MCC policy.

Continued Interest & Priority Review

To promote equitable access and ensure waitlist responsiveness, Families in Priority Groups 3 and 4 who remain on the waitlist for an extended period may receive additional consideration.

- Families in Priority Groups 3 and 4 who have remained on the waitlist for at least twelve (12) consecutive months and who confirm continued interest may be considered alongside Priority Group 2 applicants when a space becomes available.
- Continued interest must be expressed in writing or through direct communication with the Center prior to annual waitlist review.
- Additional consideration does not guarantee placement and does not override licensing, staffing, classroom composition, or Program capacity requirements.

This process is intended to balance accessibility, fairness, and Program sustainability while maintaining safe and appropriate learning environments.

Placement Considerations

The following factors apply to all enrollment decisions:

- **Priority status does not guarantee placement.** Enrollment offers depend on classroom availability, age group openings, staffing levels, and licensing ratios at the time a space becomes available.
- **Waitlist order matters.** Within each priority group, placement is generally considered based on the date of application and confirmed continued interest.
- **Program capacity must be considered.** The Center must be able to meet each child's developmental, supervision, and care needs safely and appropriately.
- **Laboratory school needs may influence placement.** Classroom composition, instructional goals, student supervision requirements, and continuity of care are considered.
- **Equity and non-discrimination apply at all times.** Admission decisions are made without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, language, disability, family structure, or socioeconomic status, in accordance with state and federal law.

Waitlist Management

When classrooms are full, applicants are placed on a waitlist by age group. Families will be contacted by the Director when a space becomes available. Enrollment offers are time-sensitive and must be accepted within the timeframe communicated.

Families are responsible for maintaining current contact information and for communicating continued interest in remaining on the waitlist.

Enrollment Decisions

Final enrollment decisions are made by the Director in accordance with Program policies, licensing regulations, staffing capacity, and McLennan Community College requirements. Enrollment decisions are not made on a first-come, first-served basis alone and are not used as a disciplinary action.

Right to Review and Update Enrollment Priorities

The MCC Child Development Center & Lab School reserves the right to review and adjust enrollment priorities as needed to remain compliant with Texas Child Care Regulation, McLennan Community College policies, and best practices in early childhood education. Families will be informed of significant changes to enrollment priorities.

Required Enrollment Documentation

Before a child may attend, Families must submit all required forms, including but not limited to:

- Completed enrollment forms and parent agreements
- Emergency contact information
- Immunization records or approved exemption
- Current health statement/physical examination
- Hearing and vision screening documentation, when age-appropriate
- Authorization forms (e.g., emergency medical care, sunscreen/insect repellent, medication plans)

Families are responsible for keeping enrollment records current and for notifying the office promptly of changes to contact information, custody arrangements, or authorized pick-up persons.

Ongoing Enrollment Expectations

Enrollment at MCC CDC is a partnership. Families are expected to:

- ✓ Follow Program policies and procedures
- ✓ Maintain respectful communication with staff
- ✓ Attend scheduled conferences and required meetings
- ✓ Collaborate on support plans, screenings, or referrals when recommended

Failure to meet enrollment expectations may result in a review of enrollment status in accordance with MCC policy and applicable regulations.

Changes to Enrollment Status

Families must notify the office in writing of:

- Schedule changes
- Withdrawal from the Program
- Changes in custody or authorized pick-up
- All family communication preferences or restrictions—including limited or emergency-only contact with specific individuals—must be formally documented and shared with staff to ensure alignment, prevent misunderstandings, and maintain an equitable, non-discriminatory environment.

Notice requirements and timelines are outlined in the Tuition & Withdrawal section of this handbook.

Right to Amend Enrollment Policies

The MCC Child Development Center reserves the right to update admissions and enrollment policies as needed to remain compliant with licensing regulations, college requirements, and best practices. Families will be informed of significant changes.

6. Tuition & Fees

The MCC CDC & Lab School operates as a Program of McLennan Community College, and all tuition and fee policies are administered in accordance with MCC fiscal procedures and Texas Child Care Regulation (CCR) Minimum Standards. Tuition and fees support qualified staffing, instructional materials, facilities, and the daily operation of the Program.

Tuition Structure

- Tuition rates are established annually by McLennan Community College.
- Tuition is based on the child's age group and enrollment schedule.
- Annual tuition is divided into scheduled payments as determined by MCC.
- Families are responsible for tuition payments regardless of attendance.

Payment & Billing

- Tuition payments are made through the MCC Business Office in accordance with College billing procedures.
- Payment due dates are set by MCC and communicated to Families.
- Tuition is due as scheduled and is not prorated for absences due to illness, vacation, or other reasons.

Center Closures & Holidays

- The Child Development Center follows the MCC academic calendar and published Program calendar.
- No tuition is refunded or credited for scheduled holidays or Center closures that are part of the published calendar.

Fees

Families may be responsible for additional fees, including but not limited to:

- Non-refundable enrollment/registration fees
- Annual supply or materials fees
- Late pick-up fees, assessed in accordance with MCC CDC policy
- Fees for replacement of lost or damaged Program property

All fees are non-refundable unless otherwise stated in writing.

Late Payment & Delinquent Accounts

- Tuition accounts are considered delinquent if payment is not received by the MCC-established due date.
- Delinquent accounts may result in late fees and/or suspension of services.
- Continued non-payment may result in termination of enrollment in accordance with MCC procedures.

Schedule Changes

Requests for changes to a child's enrollment schedule must be submitted in writing and are subject to approval based on classroom availability, staffing, and ratio requirements. Approved changes may result in adjusted tuition beginning with the next billing cycle.

Withdrawal & Required Notice

Families who choose to withdraw their child from the Program must provide written notice at least ten (10) operating days in advance, consistent with MCC policy. Tuition remains due during the notice period, regardless of attendance.

Failure to provide the required notice may result in additional charges. More information and details about withdrawal processes can be found in the section "Transitions, withdrawal & changes" section of this handbook.

Financial Assistance & Third-Party Funding

Families utilizing tuition assistance, scholarships, or third-party funding are responsible for maintaining eligibility and for any balance not covered by approved funding.

Family Responsibility

Families utilizing CCS or other third-party funding remain responsible for:

- Maintaining ongoing eligibility with the funding agency
- Completing all required paperwork, renewals, and verifications on time

- Communicating promptly with both the funding agency and the Center regarding changes in eligibility, authorization, or family circumstances
- Paying any parent share of cost, co-payment, or tuition balance not covered by approved funding

Failure to maintain eligibility or authorization may result in a temporary interruption or loss of funding.

Authorization & Attendance Requirements

Enrollment under CCS or third-party funding is contingent upon receipt of a valid authorization from the funding agency.

- Services cannot be provided beyond the scope, dates, or hours approved by the authorization.
- Families are responsible for ensuring attendance and schedules align with approved authorization.
- Attendance outside authorized hours may result in required schedule adjustments or financial responsibility for uncovered time.

Changes in Funding Status

Families must notify the Center immediately if:

- Funding is reduced, suspended, or terminated
- Approved hours or schedules change
- A renewal or re-certification is pending or denied

If funding is interrupted or ends, Families remain financially responsible for tuition charges incurred during the period of ineligibility unless otherwise stated in writing.

Dual Enrollment with ISD / Early Intervention Services

Some children enrolled at the MCC Child Development Center may also receive services through their local Independent School District (ISD), Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE), Early Intervention, or related support Programs.

To ensure appropriate staffing, supervision, and accommodations, the following policies apply:

Enrollment and Tuition

- Families who choose dual enrollment with ISD or other outside service providers remain responsible for full tuition.
- No tuition discounts, credits, or reductions are provided due to participation in outside educational or therapeutic services.
- Tuition is based on enrollment status and reserved classroom placement.

Program Policies & Compliance

Participation in CCS or third-party funding does not exempt Families from following MCC Child Development Center policies, procedures, or enrollment expectations. All Families, regardless of funding source, are expected to adhere to Program policies related to attendance, communication, guidance, health, and safety.

Right to Amend Tuition & Fee Policies

The MCC Child Development Center reserves the right to amend tuition and fee policies as necessary to remain compliant with McLennan Community College requirements, licensing regulations, and operational needs. Families will be notified of significant changes in advance when possible.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) defines 10 standards that measure the quality of early childhood Programs. These

7. Transitions, Withdrawal & Changes

The MCC Child Development Center & Lab School recognizes that transitions and changes are a natural part of early childhood and family life. We work in partnership with Families to support children through transitions in a thoughtful, developmentally appropriate manner while maintaining clear procedures and communication.

Transition Into the Program

Newly enrolled children may participate in orientation or transition visits, as appropriate, to support adjustment. These visits may include:

- Parent orientation or classroom introduction
- Partial-day or full-day transition experiences

Transition schedules are planned in collaboration with Families and based on classroom readiness and staffing.

Transitions Within the Program

Children may transition between classrooms as they grow and develop or as Program needs change.

Transitions are guided by:

- Child readiness and developmental needs
- Classroom availability and ratios
- Staff collaboration and observation

- Family communication and planning

Transitions include:

- Advance notice to Families
- Opportunities for transition visits that may include partial-day or full-day transition experiences.
- Sharing of information between teachers to support continuity of care

The goal of all transitions is to support children's sense of safety, belonging, and success. Any related tuition or billing adjustments will be applied to the following month based on the rate of the child's new classroom placement.

Withdrawal from the Program

Families who choose to withdraw their child from the Program are asked to provide written notice in accordance with enrollment agreements and tuition policies.

Written notice helps the Program:

- Plan staffing and enrollment responsibly
- Support smooth transitions for children and classrooms

Tuition obligations during the notice period remain in effect as outlined in the Tuition & Fees section.

Program-Initiated Changes or Withdrawal

In rare circumstances, the Program may initiate changes to a child's enrollment or placement, including review of enrollment or withdrawal, in accordance with MCC CDC policies and applicable regulations. These situations are addressed respectfully and follow the procedures outlined in the Review of Enrollment & Program Capacity section of this handbook.

Changes to Enrollment Information

Families are responsible for notifying the Program promptly of any changes to:

- ✓ Contact information
- ✓ Emergency contacts
- ✓ Authorized pick-up persons
- ✓ Health, allergy, or medical information
- ✓ Custody or legal documentation affecting the child

Up-to-date information ensures children's safety and effective communication.

8. Review of Enrollment & Program Capacity

The MCC CDC & Lab School is committed to supporting children through developmentally appropriate guidance, individualized supports, and strong family partnership. In most situations, children are able to participate successfully when these supports are in place. Suspension or expulsion is not a developmentally appropriate disciplinary strategy and is used only as a last resort after documented interventions, family collaboration, and reasonable accommodations, consistent with Texas Child Care Regulation guidance.

In rare circumstances the Program may determine that it is unable to safely or appropriately meet a child's needs within the scope of the Program.

When Enrollment May Be Reviewed

A review of enrollment may occur when one or more of the following conditions persist despite intervention and collaboration:

- A child's needs significantly exceed available staffing, supervision, training, or Program capacity
- The safety of the child, peers, or staff cannot be consistently maintained
- Agreed-upon individualized support plans are not implemented after multiple documented outreach attempts
- Reasonable accommodations have been attempted without sufficient progress
- Required collaboration with Families or external services does not occur despite support and follow-up

Review Process

When concerns arise, the Program follows a structured, collaborative process that may include:

1. Observation and documentation of concerns, strategies used, and progress over time
2. Family Communication and meetings to share observations and collaborate on solutions
3. Implementation of individualized supports, accommodations, or referrals, when appropriate and with family consent
4. Ongoing review of progress and effectiveness of strategies

If concerns continue, the Director will meet with the family to discuss options, timelines, and next steps.

Enrollment Decisions

Dismissal from the Program is always a last resort and follows careful consideration, documentation, and family engagement. Enrollment review is not used as a disciplinary action.

If, after reasonable efforts, the Program determines it cannot continue to meet a child's needs safely and appropriately, enrollment may be paused or discontinued in accordance with MCC policy and applicable regulations. Families will receive written notice, and when possible, the Program will support a respectful transition and connection to community resources.

The MCC Child Development Center & Lab School values Families as partners and is committed to transparency, respect, and open communication. Parents and guardians have specific rights under Texas Child Care Regulation. More information can be found in the “Parent Rights” section of this handbook.

9. Communication with Families

The MCC Child Development Center & Lab School values open, respectful, and consistent communication with Families. Clear communication supports children’s learning, strengthens partnerships, and ensures alignment between home and school. Families are encouraged to share questions, concerns, and insights, and staff are committed to timely, professional responses.

Primary Communication Platform

ProCare is the primary communication system used by the Program. Through ProCare, Families receive:

- Classroom updates and learning highlights
- Daily or weekly messages from teachers
- Program-wide announcements and reminders
- Calendars, forms, and important notices

Families may use ProCare to message teachers or the office. ProCare messages are monitored during business hours, and responses are provided within a reasonable timeframe.

Daily Communication

Teachers are available for brief check-ins during drop-off and pick-up times. These moments are intended for quick updates or immediate information (such as changes in pick-up plans).

In-person communication is valued and important to our staff; however, longer or more detailed conversations should be scheduled in advance to ensure privacy, minimize classroom disruption, and allow teachers to give Families their full attention.

Scheduled Conferences & Meetings

- Family conferences are held twice per year, and additional meetings may be scheduled as needed.
- Conferences provide an opportunity to discuss a child’s strengths, development, goals, and support strategies.
- Families may request meetings with teachers or administrators at any time.

Program Updates & Notices

The Program communicates important information through:

- ProCare announcements
- Email or written notices when appropriate
- Posted notices in common areas

Families are responsible for reviewing communications and responding when action is required.

Confidentiality & Professional Communication

All communication between Families and staff is handled with professionalism and respect. Confidential information is shared privately and in accordance with MCC policy and applicable regulations. Staff do not discuss children or Families in public spaces or with unauthorized individuals.

Concerns & Problem-Solving

When questions or concerns arise, Families are encouraged to:

1. First speak directly with the child's classroom teacher, when appropriate.
2. If additional support is needed, contact the Director.

The Program is committed to collaborative problem-solving and timely follow-up.

Incident & Accident Report Policy

The Child Development Center is committed to maintaining a safe and supportive environment for all children. Despite close supervision and safety precautions, accidents and incidents may occasionally occur. When they do, the Center will respond promptly, provide appropriate care, and communicate with Families in a timely and transparent manner.

Definitions

- Accident: An unplanned event that results in an injury (example: fall, bump, scrape, cut, bite that breaks skin).
- Incident: A significant event that may or may not result in injury but requires documentation (example: behavioral event, injury caused by another child, missing item of safety concern, or any event requiring additional follow-up).

Immediate Response

When an accident or incident occurs:

- Staff will provide immediate supervision and first aid as appropriate.
- The child will be comforted and monitored for changes in condition.
- The area will be assessed for safety concerns and adjusted as needed to prevent recurrence.
- If the injury appears serious or the child requires medical attention, Families will be contacted immediately.

Documentation Requirements

The Center will complete an Incident/Accident Report for events including (but not limited to):

- Injuries to the head or face
- Any injury that requires first aid (beyond basic comfort care)
- Bites, scratches, or injuries caused by another child
- Falls, collisions, or injuries involving equipment
- Allergic reactions or medication-related concerns
- Any situation requiring emergency services or medical evaluation
- Any unusual or serious event that impacts a child's health, safety, or well-being

Parent/Guardian Notification

- In the case of a head injury, parents/guardians will receive a phone call as soon as possible to inform them of the accident and the child's condition.
- For urgent concerns (suspected concussion, significant bleeding, allergic reaction, breathing concerns, or any serious injury), parents/guardians will be contacted immediately by phone.
- Families will receive a written report describing what occurred and the care provided.

Parent/Guardian Signature

- Parents/guardians will be notified as soon as possible, and within 24 hours at the latest, of any incident or accident involving their child.
- Parents/guardians are required to review and sign incident/accident reports.
- A copy may be provided to the family upon request.
- Incident and accident reports will be maintained in the child's file for at least three (3) months, in accordance with Texas Child Care Licensing record retention requirements. The Center may retain reports longer as part of the child's record for documentation and safety planning purposes.

Confidentiality

To protect children's privacy:

- Reports will include only the information related to the child receiving care.
- The names of other children involved will not be shared.

Emergency Situations

If a child needs urgent medical attention:

- Staff will call 911 immediately.
- Parents/guardians will be contacted as soon as possible.
- Staff will remain with the child until a parent/guardian or emergency medical personnel assumes care.

Follow-Up and Prevention

The Center may take additional steps when needed, including:

- Increased supervision or environmental adjustments
- Review of classroom safety practices
- Behavior support planning (when applicable)
- Staff coaching and documentation review
- Additional parent communication and collaboration.

In some situations, if incidents create ongoing safety concerns or if additional supports are needed, the Center may partner with the family to review enrollment and Program capacity to ensure we can continue meeting the child's needs while maintaining a safe and supportive environment for all children.

Language Access & Inclusion

The MCC CDC strives to communicate in ways that are accessible and respectful of family language preferences when possible. Families are encouraged to share communication needs or requests for accommodations with the office.

Babysitting Policy

To support a safe, respectful, and professional environment, and to help prevent conflicts of interest and liability concerns, the Child Development Center maintains clear boundaries between staff and enrolled Families. For these reasons, staff members are not permitted to babysit or provide private childcare services for currently enrolled children or their Families while employed at the Center.

Communication & Privacy

To protect family privacy and follow McLennan Community College (MCC) communication preferences, staff will communicate with Families through approved Center methods. Staff do not share personal contact information such as personal phone numbers, home addresses, or personal social media accounts.

Preferred communication method: MCC email and/or approved Center communication platforms and phone numbers.

Family Responsibility in Communication

Families are responsible for:

- ✓ Keeping contact information current
- ✓ Monitoring ProCare and other official communication channels
- ✓ Informing the Program promptly of changes that may affect the child's care or safety

10. Arrival, Dismissal & Security

The MCC Child Development Center & Lab School is committed to ensuring the safety, security, and well-being of all children during arrival and dismissal times. Clear procedures support smooth transitions, accurate supervision, and strong partnerships with Families.

Arrival Procedures

- Children must be signed in upon arrival by a parent or authorized adult using the Program's designated sign-in system.
- Children must be directly supervised and transferred to a staff member before the parent or authorized adult leaves.
- Arrival routines are designed to support calm transitions and allow teachers to greet children and Families.

Parents are encouraged to allow adequate time for arrival and to share any important information (e.g., changes in pick-up plans, child well-being) with the classroom teacher.

Dismissal Procedures

- Children may only be released to authorized individuals listed on the child's enrollment record.
- Authorized individuals must present photo identification when requested.
- Children must be signed out at dismissal using the designated system.
- The Program reserves the right to deny release if proper authorization or identification is not provided.

For a child's safety, staff may delay dismissal while verifying identity or authorization.

Authorized Pick-Up

Families are responsible for keeping authorized pick-up information current. Any changes must be submitted in writing and approved by the office. Verbal authorization is not accepted for permanent changes.

Children will not be released to individuals who appear impaired or unable to safely transport the child. In such situations, staff will follow Program procedures to ensure the child's safety.

Timely Pick-Up

Families are expected to pick up children by the Program's scheduled closing time. Late pick-ups disrupt staffing ratios and children's routines.

Late pick-up fees are assessed in accordance with MCC CDC policy and are outlined in the Tuition & Fees section of this handbook.

Late pick-up policies.

We understand that emergencies can occur. Families are encouraged to communicate with the Center as soon as possible if they anticipate being late. Open communication helps us ensure the safety and well-being of children.

Definition of Late Pick-Up

A child is considered late pick-up when they remain in care after the Center's official closing time or after their scheduled dismissal time, whichever applies.

Late Pick-Up Procedure

1. At closing time, children who have not been picked up will remain with designated staff.
2. Staff will begin contacting parents/guardians, if unable to reach them staff will then reach to emergency contacts listed on the child's enrollment forms.
3. Children will remain supervised at all times.
4. Repeated inability to reach a responsible adult may result in additional steps required by licensing regulations to ensure the child's safety.
5. If a responsible adult cannot be reached after a reasonable period of time and the child remains under the MCC CDC staff care, the Center is required to follow additional safety steps as directed by licensing regulations. This may include contacting appropriate authorities to assist in ensuring the child's safety.

Late Pick-Up Fees

To cover staffing and operational costs, late pick-up fees will be assessed as follows:

- A fee of \$1 per minute, per child will be charged after closing time.
- Fees begin accruing immediately after closing.
- Late pick-up fees. The fee will be assessed on your next bill and is payable to the MCC Business Office.
- Failure to pay late pick-up fees may result in suspension of services.

Repeated Late Pick-Ups

Consistent late pick-ups create safety and staffing concerns. If late pick-ups occur repeatedly:

- Families may be required to meet with the Director to develop a corrective plan.
- Continued late pick-ups may result in probationary enrollment status.
- Ongoing noncompliance may lead to discontinuation of enrollment.

Persistent Late Pick-Ups

For the purpose of this policy, persistent late pick-up is defined as:

- Three (3) or more late pick-ups within a 30-day period, or
- Five (5) or more late pick-ups within a semester, or
- Any pattern of repeated late pick-ups that causes ongoing staffing, safety, or operational concerns, as determined by the Director.

If late pick-up is persistent, the family will be required to meet with the Director to review the incidents, update contact information if needed, and develop a plan to prevent future occurrences.

Security Measures

To maintain a safe and secure environment, the Program uses multiple security practices, which may include:

- Controlled building access during operating hours
- Visitor sign-in procedures and visible visitor badges
- Staff supervision of entry and exit points
- Emergency preparedness and response protocols

Families and visitors are expected to follow all security procedures and support a safe environment for all children.

Parent & Family Access

Families are welcome to enter the Center and visit their child at any time during hours of operation, in accordance with Texas Child Care Regulation Minimum Standards. Prior authorization is not required.

Families are asked to follow sign-in procedures and to be mindful of classroom routines and supervision needs while visiting.

Transportation Changes & Emergency Situations

Any changes to a child's regular pick-up plan must be communicated to the office as soon as possible. In emergency situations, staff will follow established procedures to ensure children's safety and will communicate with Families promptly.

11. Curriculum & Daily Schedules

Curriculum

The MCC Child Development Center & Lab School implements a developmentally appropriate, play-based, and inquiry-driven curriculum that supports children's growth across all developmental domains. Learning is rooted in relationships, active exploration, and meaningful experiences that reflect children's interests, strengths, and cultural contexts.

How Children Learn

Young children learn best through:

- Active play and exploration
- Social interaction and relationships
- Hands-on experiences with materials and ideas
- Opportunities to ask questions, test ideas, and reflect

Teachers intentionally design learning experiences that balance child-initiated exploration with teacher-guided instruction, supporting curiosity, problem-solving, and creativity.

Curriculum Areas

Learning is integrated across domains and may include:

- **Social–Emotional Learning:** self-regulation, empathy, collaboration, problem-solving
- **Language & Literacy:** storytelling, rich conversation, books, early writing, and print awareness
- **Math & Cognitive Development:** counting, patterns, measurement, reasoning, and inquiry
- **Science & Inquiry:** observing, predicting, experimenting, and exploring cause-and-effect
- **Creative Arts:** visual art, music, movement, and dramatic play
- **Physical Development:** fine- and gross-motor skills, coordination, and body awareness
- **Outdoor & Nature-Based Learning:** exploration, physical play, and environmental awareness

Curriculum is **integrated and flexible**, allowing learning to unfold naturally throughout the day.

Inquiry-Based & Emergent Practice

Teachers observe children closely and use these observations to plan experiences that build on children’s interests and developmental needs. Learning often follows an inquiry cycle:

Observe → Plan → Invite → Explore → Document → Reflect → Extend

Documentation (photos, work samples, and narratives) makes learning visible and informs ongoing planning and assessment.

Role of the Teacher

Teachers serve as facilitators, guides, and co-learners by:

- Creating emotionally safe, intellectually engaging environments
- Asking open-ended questions and encouraging reflection
- Supporting small-group and individualized learning
- Adapting experiences to meet diverse needs

Equity, Inclusion & Belonging

The MCC Child Development Center & Lab School is committed to fostering an environment where **every child and family feels valued, respected, and a true sense of belonging**. Equity is embedded in curriculum, relationships, policies, and daily practice.

This commitment aligns with **NAEYC's Equity Statement** and culturally responsive teaching principles.

Our Equity Commitments

We believe:

- Every child is competent, capable, and deserving of high-quality care and education
- Children's identities—including culture, language, ability, family structure, and lived experiences—are strengths
- Equity requires intentional action, reflection, and partnership

Culturally Responsive Practice

Equity in practice includes:

- Using children's home languages, names, and family experiences respectfully
- Selecting books, materials, and images that reflect diverse cultures and identities
- Learning about Families through surveys, conversations, and partnerships
- Avoiding stereotypes and single-story narratives

Curriculum reflects the children and Families in our community and adapts as the community grows and changes.

Inclusive Learning Environments

Classrooms are designed to:

- Support multiple learning styles and abilities
- Provide visual supports and accessible materials
- Offer flexible routines and differentiated experiences

Reasonable accommodations and individualized supports are provided in partnership with Families, consistent with Program capacity and safety.

Anti-Bias & Reflective Practice

Teachers engage in ongoing reflection to:

- Examine personal assumptions and biases
- Respond to children's questions about differences with honesty and respect

- Intervene appropriately when bias or exclusion occurs

Anti-bias education is woven into everyday interactions, stories, and problem-solving—not taught as a separate lesson.

Family Partnership in Equity

Families are essential partners in equity work. We invite Families to:

- Share their cultures, languages, and traditions
- Offer feedback on curriculum and experiences
- Participate in conversations that support children’s identity development

Continuous Improvement

Equity is an ongoing process. The Program commits to:

- Ongoing professional development
- Program evaluation and reflection
- Listening to family and community voices

Daily Schedules

Daily schedules are designed to provide predictable structure with flexibility to respond to children’s needs. Each classroom follows a schedule appropriate to the age group, which typically includes:

- Arrival and greeting
- Choice-based learning Centers
- Small-group and large-group experiences
- Outdoor learning (weather permitting)
- Meals and snacks
- Rest time
- Closing routines and dismissal

Sample Daily Schedule

Daily schedules provide a predictable structure while remaining flexible to meet children’s individual needs, interests, and developmental stages. Each classroom follows an age-appropriate schedule that balances active and quiet experiences, indoor and outdoor learning, and individual and group interactions.

7:15–8:30 a.m. | Arrival & Morning Greeting

Children are welcomed individually as they arrive. Families may share brief updates with staff. Children engage in quiet activities such as books, table toys, drawing, or soft play.

8:30–9:30 a.m. | Choice-Based Learning Centers

Children explore classroom learning areas (blocks, dramatic play, art, sensory, literacy, and math). Teachers observe, scaffold learning, and work with children individually or in small groups.

9:30–9:50 a.m. | Morning Snack

Children enjoy a nutritious snack and practice independence, communication, and social routines.

9:50–10:15 a.m. | Large-Group Experience

Group time may include songs, movement, stories, discussions, and shared learning connected to classroom themes or projects.

10:15–11:15 a.m. | Outdoor Learning (*weather permitting*)

Children participate in gross-motor play, nature exploration, and outdoor inquiry experiences.

11:15–11:45 a.m. | Small-Group Experiences

Teachers facilitate small-group activities focused on social-emotional development, language, problem-solving, and creativity.

11:45 a.m.–12:30 p.m. | Lunch

Children participate in family-style meals that support independence, self-help skills, and positive social interaction.

12:30–2:00 p.m. | Rest Time

Children rest or sleep according to individual needs. Quiet activities are available for children who do not sleep.

2:00–2:30 p.m. | Wake-Up & Afternoon Snack

Children transition from rest, enjoy a snack, and prepare for the afternoon.

2:30–3:30 p.m. | Choice-Based Centers / Outdoor Play

Children return to learning Centers or outdoor experiences based on interest and energy level.

3:30–4:30 p.m. | Late Afternoon Learning & Exploration

Activities may include creative arts, music and movement, sensory play, storytelling, or collaborative games.

4:30–5:15 p.m. | Closing Routines & Dismissal

Children engage in calm activities, reflect on their day, and prepare for pick-up. Teachers share brief updates with Families as children are dismissed.

Flexibility & Individual Needs

Schedules may be adjusted to:

- Respond to children’s developmental needs

- Support individualized plans or accommodations
- Allow for extended projects or outdoor exploration
- Maintain health, safety, and supervision requirements

Families are welcome to review classroom schedules and discuss questions or individual needs with teachers or administrators.

Consistency & Transitions

Consistent routines help children feel secure and confident. Teachers support transitions with clear cues, visual supports, and calm guidance. While routines are predictable, flexibility is maintained to honor children's rhythms and learning needs.

- Partner with Families in goal-setting and support strategies
- Monitor Program effectiveness and continuous improvement

All assessment practices respect children's individual development, language, culture, and abilities.

12. Assessment, Portfolios & Conferences

Assessment Methods

The Program uses multiple, developmentally appropriate methods, including:

- **Developmental Screening**
Screening tools such as **ASQ-3™** and **ASQ:SE-2™** are used to support early identification of strengths and potential concerns and to guide conversations with Families.
- **Ongoing Observation & Documentation**
Teachers observe children during everyday routines, play, and interactions. Learning is documented through anecdotal notes, photographs, child language, and work samples.
- **Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP)**
The **DRDP** is used as an **authentic, observation-based assessment system** to document children's progress across developmental domains within natural classroom experiences. DRDP information is gathered over time and reflects what children know and can do in familiar routines and play—not through testing.
- **Portfolio-Based Assessment**
Assessment evidence is compiled in individual child portfolios to show growth over time and to support reflection, planning, and family communication.
- **Family Input**
Families contribute valuable insights through conferences, ongoing communication, and surveys, recognizing Families as essential partners in understanding the whole child.

Assessment information is reviewed regularly and used to plan responsive learning experiences and individualized supports.

Child Portfolios

Each child has an individual portfolio that documents learning and development over time. Portfolios may include:

- DRDP observations and summaries
- Developmental screening summaries (ASQ-3™, ASQ:SE-2™)
- Developmental checklists aligned with milestones and standards
- Anecdotal observation records
- Photographs and work samples
- Individual learning goals and progress updates

Portfolios highlight children's strengths, interests, and growth and are used to guide instruction and share learning with Families.

Portfolios are maintained by classroom teachers and are accessible to Families upon request. With appropriate supervision and confidentiality protections, MCC students may review portfolios for learning purposes.

Family Conferences

Family conferences are held at least twice per year, with additional meetings scheduled as needed.

During conferences, teachers and Families:

- Review portfolio highlights and DRDP-informed observations
- Discuss the child's strengths, interests, and developmental progress
- Collaboratively set goals and identify support strategies
- Discuss next steps or referrals when appropriate (with family consent)

Conferences are collaborative, strengths-based, and focused on supporting the child's success across home and school.

Screening Follow-Up & Referrals

When screening results, DRDP observations, or classroom documentation suggest that additional support or evaluation may be helpful, teachers partner with Families and the Director to discuss options. With family consent, referrals may include pediatricians, Early Childhood Intervention (ECI), Child Find, or other appropriate specialists.

The Program supports Families in navigating referrals and coordinating services when appropriate. No referrals are made without family knowledge and consent.

Confidentiality & Use of Assessment Information

All assessment records, portfolios, and conference discussions are handled confidentially and in accordance with MCC policy, FERPA where applicable, and state regulations. Information is

shared only with authorized individuals and used solely to support the child’s development and learning.

Successful inclusion depends on strong partnership. Families are expected to:

- ✓ Share relevant information and documentation
- ✓ Participate in meetings and planning conversations
- ✓ Follow through with agreed-upon support plans and referrals

The Program commits to clear communication, documentation, and ongoing collaboration.

Program Capacity & Enrollment Review

While MCC CDC strives to support all children, inclusion decisions must consider staffing, supervision, training, classroom composition, and safety requirements. If, after collaborative planning and reasonable supports, the Program determines that it cannot safely or appropriately meet a child’s needs, enrollment may be reviewed in accordance with MCC policy and applicable regulations. Families will be informed promptly, and efforts will be documented. More information about this process can be found in the section “Review of enrollment and Program capacity” of this handbook.

Non-Retaliation & Respect

Families who request accommodations or supports will be treated with respect and without retaliation. The Program values open communication and works to resolve concerns collaboratively and professionally.

13. Cultural Traditions & Celebrations

The MCC Child Development Center & Lab School values opportunities to build community, celebrate children, and honor Families’ cultures and traditions in inclusive, culturally responsive, and developmentally appropriate ways. Celebrations are planned thoughtfully to support learning, safety, and a strong sense of belonging for all children.

Inclusive & Culturally Responsive Approach

Our approach to cultural traditions and celebrations is guided by NAEYC-aligned, culturally responsive principles, including the belief that children’s identities, Families, and lived experiences enrich the learning community.

- Celebrations are inclusive and respectful of diverse cultures, beliefs, and family traditions and are informed by our community.
- Staff learn about family traditions, values, and cultural practices through family surveys, ongoing communication, and family–teacher interactions, and use this information to plan meaningful, respectful experiences.
- Participation in celebrations is optional and never required.
- Activities focus on connection, learning, joy, and belonging.

We strive to ensure that all children feel seen, valued, and included, without pressure to participate in activities that may conflict with family beliefs or preferences.

Cultural Traditions Experiences

Cultural traditions may be incorporated into the curriculum in developmentally appropriate and educational ways, such as:

- Exploring kindness, gratitude, or community diversity.
- Learning about a variety of cultural traditions through stories, music, art, and discussion
- Inviting Families to share traditions or experiences in coordination with teachers

The Program does not Center celebrations around a single holiday and avoids activities that may exclude or stereotype.

Food, Allergies & Safety

In alignment with health and allergy policies:

- Food-based celebrations are not permitted
- Activities avoid choking hazards and allergens
- All children participate equitably, without food or gift expectations

Family Participation

Families are welcome to participate in celebrations by:

- Sharing cultural traditions, stories, music, or experiences (coordinated in advance with teachers)
- Supporting classroom activities that align with Program guidelines

All participation is planned to support safety, supervision, and classroom routines.

Opt-Out Option

Families who prefer that their child not participate in holiday or birthday activities may communicate this preference to the teacher or Director. Alternative activities will be provided as appropriate.

Birthday Celebrations

Children's birthdays are recognized in simple, meaningful ways that honor the child while maintaining safety, equity, and classroom routines.

Birthday recognition may include:

- A special acknowledgment during the day (such as a song, card, or classroom tradition) coordinated in advance with the classroom teacher.

To protect children's health, safety, and inclusion:

- Outside food, treats, cakes, candy, or sweets are not permitted
- Balloons, decorations, party favors, or goodie bags are not permitted
- Birthday recognition is integrated into the regular classroom routine
- Birthday activities are planned and approved by classroom teachers and depend on classroom and Program needs

These guidelines ensure that birthday celebrations remain equitable, calm, and inclusive for all children.

Program Discretion

The Program reserves the right to:

- Approve or modify celebration activities
- Ensure celebrations remain inclusive, developmentally appropriate, and safe
- Maintain consistency with Program policies, routines, and licensing requirements

14. Inclusion, ADA & Reasonable Accommodations

McLennan Community College Child Development Center & Lab School is committed to providing a welcoming, inclusive, and respectful environment for all children and Families. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, sex, disability, age, veteran status, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, or any other legally protected status. MCC CDC complies with applicable federal and state laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and works to provide equal access to our Program and services.

Reasonable accommodations may be considered on an individualized, case-by-case basis to support a child's participation, as long as the accommodation does not fundamentally alter the nature of the Program or create a health or safety concern. Families who wish to request an accommodation are encouraged to contact the Center Director. Supporting documentation from a qualified professional may be requested to help guide planning. Any documentation provided will be kept confidential and shared only with staff who need the information to support the child appropriately.

Individualized Support Planning

When a child benefits from additional support, the Program works collaboratively with Families to develop an individualized support plan. Plans are designed to:

- Promote participation and belonging
- Support comfort, regulation, and engagement

- Balance challenge, independence, and safety
- Align with classroom routines and Program capacity

Support plans may include environmental adjustments, instructional strategies, visual supports, or schedule considerations and are reviewed regularly.

Collaboration with Specialists & Services

With family consent, the MCC Child Development Center & Lab School may collaborate with external providers and McLennan Community College academic and career Programs to support children's development. These collaborations are designed to enhance learning, observation, and coordinated support while prioritizing children's safety, routines, and privacy.

Collaborative partners may include:

- Early Childhood Intervention (ECI)
- Local school district and related services
- Speech, occupational, or physical therapists
- Other qualified specialists
- MCC academic and career Programs, such as Nursing, Occupational Therapy–related pathways, or other health and human services disciplines, when appropriate

Collaboration may include sharing observations, participating in planning conversations, coordinating schedules when feasible, and supporting services or learning experiences within the classroom environment when permitted. All collaboration follows MCC policies, applicable regulations, and confidentiality requirements, and occurs only with family knowledge and consent.

15. Discipline, Guidance & Social-Emotional Learning

The MCC Child Development Center & Lab School approaches guidance as a teaching process that supports children's social-emotional development, self-regulation, and relationship skills. Our practices are grounded in the Pyramid Model for Promoting Social-Emotional Competence and informed by Conscious Discipline, emphasizing connection, safety, and skill-building.

Guidance at MCC CDC is based on the understanding that:

- Children are learning how to manage emotions, relationships, and behavior
- Behavior is a form of communication
- Social-emotional skills can be taught and practiced over time
- Safe, connected relationships support learning and regulation

Teachers guide behavior with empathy, consistency, and developmentally appropriate expectations.

Pyramid Model Framework

Our guidance practices align with the Pyramid Model, which includes:

- **Nurturing and Responsive Relationships**

Teachers build warm, trusting relationships through responsive interactions, predictable routines, and positive communication. Teachers intentionally build trust and connection by:

- Greeting each child by name at arrival and supporting calm transitions
- Responding promptly and sensitively to children's cues, emotions, and communication
- Maintaining predictable daily routines so children know what to expect
- Using positive, respectful language and modeling kind interactions
- Spending one-on-one time with children during play, care routines, and small groups
- These practices help children feel safe, valued, and ready to learn.

High-Quality Supportive Environments

Classrooms are designed with clear expectations, visual supports, consistent schedules, and engaging materials to reduce stress and support success. Classroom environments are designed to prevent challenges and promote success by:

- Clearly defining learning areas and expectations.
- Using visual schedules, picture cues, and classroom rules to support understanding
- Providing consistent daily schedules with flexibility for individual needs
- Offering engaging, developmentally appropriate materials that encourage choice and independence
- Adjusting lighting, noise levels, and space arrangement to reduce stress and overstimulation
- A well-organized environment supports self-regulation and reduces the need for adult intervention.

Targeted Social-Emotional Teaching

Teachers explicitly teach skills such as identifying emotions, calming strategies, problem-solving, turn-taking, and empathy through modeling, coaching, stories, and play. Social-emotional skills are taught intentionally, just like academic skills. Teachers support children by:

- Teaching emotion identification using books, songs, mirrors, and visuals
- Modeling and practicing calming strategies such as deep breathing, movement, or quiet spaces
- Coaching problem-solving during peer conflicts rather than solving problems for children

- Supporting turn-taking, sharing, and cooperation through guided play
- Using stories, role-play, and group discussions to build empathy and perspective-taking
- These skills are practiced daily and reinforced throughout routines and play.

Individualized Intensive Interventions

When children need additional support, individualized strategies are developed in partnership with Families and specialists, focusing on prevention, teaching, and consistency. When a child needs additional support beyond universal and targeted strategies, teachers work collaboratively to provide individualized support by:

- Observing and documenting patterns, triggers, and successful strategies
- Partnering with Families to align home and school approaches
- Developing individualized support plans focused on teaching skills, not punishing behavior
- Collaborating with specialists (e.g., ECI, therapists, MCC academic partners) with family consent
- Maintaining consistency across caregivers, environments, and routines

Interventions focus on prevention, skill-building, and relationship support, and are reviewed regularly to adjust strategies as needed.

Conscious Discipline-Informed Practices

Conscious Discipline principles guide daily interactions and include:

- Building a sense of safety and connection before addressing behavior
- Coaching children to identify emotions and use calming strategies
- Modeling respectful communication and problem-solving
- Supporting children in repairing relationships and learning from mistakes

Teachers focus on helping children develop internal regulation skills rather than relying on external control.

Positive Guidance Strategies

Teachers may use strategies such as:

- Clear expectations and consistent routines
- Redirection and choice-making
- Visual supports and social stories
- Emotion coaching and calming techniques
- Collaborative problem-solving and restorative conversations
- Natural and logical consequences that are respectful and developmentally appropriate

Guidance strategies are individualized based on age, development, and context.

Trauma-Informed and Relationship-Based Care (TBRI® Approach)

We use principles from Trust-Based Relational Intervention® (TBRI®) to guide how we support children's behavior, development, and well-being. TBRI® is a trauma-informed, relationship-based approach that helps children feel safe, connected, and capable. It is especially helpful for supporting children who may have experienced stress, change, loss, or challenging life situations.

Our TBRI®-Informed Practices Include:

1. Connecting

We prioritize strong, positive relationships with every child. Staff work to:

- Build trust through consistent, caring interactions
- Use respectful communication
- Help children feel valued and understood
- Foster a sense of belonging in the classroom

2. Empowering

We support children's physical and emotional needs by:

- Providing regular meals, snacks, and water
- Encouraging rest and healthy routines
- Offering calm spaces when children feel overwhelmed
- Teaching children how to recognize and manage their emotions

3. Positive Guidance

When children need support with behavior, we focus on teaching. Staff will:

- Use gentle redirection and clear expectations
- Teach appropriate social skills
- Practice problem-solving with children
- Help children repair relationships after conflicts
- Use logical and developmentally appropriate consequences

Discipline is always handled in a respectful, age-appropriate manner. Physical punishment, harsh language, humiliation, or intimidation are never used.

Supporting Emotional Safety

We recognize that children may express stress or unmet needs through behavior. Our staff are trained to:

- Look beyond behavior to understand underlying needs
- Respond with patience and empathy
- Provide consistent routines and predictable environments
- Offer extra support during transitions or difficult times

Family Partnership

We believe Families are essential partners in supporting children's emotional and behavioral development. We encourage Families to:

- Communicate openly with staff
- Share important information about their child's needs
- Work collaboratively with teachers and administrators
- Participate in conferences and support plans when needed

If ongoing behavioral or emotional concerns arise, the Center may request a meeting with Families to develop a support plan that best meets the child's needs.

Individualized Behavior Support

When a child demonstrates ongoing challenges, the Program:

- Observes and documents patterns and triggers
- Partners with Families to share strategies and insights
- Develops an individualized support plan focused on skill-building
- Collaborates with specialists when appropriate and with family consent

The goal is always to support the child's success within the classroom community.

Prohibited Practices

In accordance with Texas Child Care Regulation Minimum Standards, the following practices are never used:

- Corporal punishment or physical discipline
- Humiliation, ridicule, or shaming
- Threats or intimidation
- Discipline related to food, toileting, rest, or sleep
- Withholding basic needs, affection, or communication

All guidance practices are respectful, non-punitive, and focused on learning.

Family Partnership

Families are essential partners in supporting children's social-emotional development. Teachers communicate regularly with Families about strategies, progress, and goals. When additional support is needed, Families are included in planning and decision-making.

Staff Training & Consistency

All teaching staff receive ongoing professional development in:

- Positive Guidance
- Social-emotional learning
- Pyramid Model practices
- Conscious Discipline strategies
- Trauma-informed and developmentally appropriate guidance
- Brain Development

Responses to Challenging Behavior

Our Program is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment for all children. We recognize that young children are still developing self-regulation, communication, and social skills, and that challenging behavior is a normal and expected part of early childhood development.

What Is Considered Challenging Behavior?

In early childhood, behavior is a primary way children communicate needs, emotions, and experiences. Challenging behavior refers to actions that may interfere with a child's learning, the learning of others, or the safety of the child or peers. These behaviors are developmentally common and often temporary.

Examples of challenging behavior may include:

- Hitting, biting, kicking, or pushing
- Throwing objects or knocking over materials
- Difficulty with transitions or following routines
- Frequent frustration, tantrums, or emotional outbursts
- Withdrawal, avoidance, or difficulty engaging with peers
- Impulsive behavior or difficulty with self-regulation

Challenging behavior often reflects:

- Developing language and communication skills
- Emerging emotional regulation
- Sensory needs, fatigue, or hunger
- Stress, change, or unfamiliar routines
- Individual temperament or developmental differences

All behavior is viewed within the context of a child's age, developmental stage, and environment. At MCC CDC, temporary separation and discontinuation of enrollment are not considered disciplinary practices and are not used as routine responses to behavior.

Our approach emphasizes:

- Prevention and proactive support
- Teaching social-emotional and self-regulation skills

- Strong, respectful partnerships with Families
- Equitable and culturally responsive practices

Children are not excluded based on disability, developmental differences, language, culture, or family circumstance.

How We Support Children

When a child experiences difficulty with behavior, the Program focuses on support rather than punishment. Strategies may include:

- Positive guidance, redirection, and coaching
- Individualized support strategies focused on skill-building
- Adjustments to classroom environments, routines, or supervision
- Observation and documentation to understand behavior patterns and triggers
- Ongoing collaboration with Families to promote consistency between home and school
- Consultation with early childhood specialists, mental health consultants, or community resources when appropriate

The goal is always to support the child's continued participation and success within the classroom community.

Temporary Separation for Safety

In rare situations where a child's behavior presents an immediate and serious safety concern for the child or others, a temporary separation from the Program day may be considered after reasonable supports have been attempted.

If a temporary separation is necessary:

- Families will be notified promptly
- The situation will be documented
- A plan will be developed to support the child's successful return
- Next steps and available supports will be clearly communicated

Any temporary separation is time-limited case by case and used solely to ensure safety while supports are reviewed and strengthened.

Discontinuation of Enrollment

Discontinuation of enrollment is considered only after extensive, documented interventions and family collaboration, and only when the Program determines it cannot safely or appropriately meet the child's needs within its scope, even with additional supports. More information about discontinuation of enrollment can be found in the section "Review of Enrollment & Program Capacity" and "Discipline, Guidance & Social-Emotional Learning"

Biting Policy

Biting is a developmentally common behavior, particularly among infants and toddlers who are still developing language, self-regulation, and impulse control. At MCC CDC, biting is addressed through prevention, close supervision, teaching, and family partnership.

Understanding Biting Behavior

Children may bite for many reasons, including:

- Limited language or communication skills
- Teething or oral sensory needs
- Frustration, excitement, or fatigue
- Difficulty with impulse control
- Changes in routine or environment

Biting is viewed as a form of communication and a signal that a child needs additional support.

Immediate Response to a Biting Incident

When a biting incident occurs, staff will:

- Ensure the safety and comfort of all children involved
- Provide first aid as appropriate
- Respond calmly and firmly using simple, age-appropriate language (e.g., “Biting hurts.”)
- Avoid shaming, labeling, or punitive responses
- Increase supervision following the incident

Communication with Families

- Parents/guardians of both the child who was bitten and the child who bit will be notified on the same day.
- Families will receive an Incident Report describing what occurred and the care provided.
- Reports will be reviewed and signed by parents/guardians.
- Children’s identities are kept confidential
- Families may be contacted by phone when medical attention is required or patterns are emerging

Prevention and Support Strategies

To reduce biting incidents, the Program may:

- Increase supervision and strategic positioning of staff
- Teach and model alternative communication (words, signs, gestures)
- Support emotional regulation through routines and calming strategies
- Adjust classroom environments, materials, or transitions
- Provide teething or sensory supports when appropriate

Repeated Biting Behavior

If a child demonstrates repeated biting behavior, the Program will:

- Observe and document patterns, triggers, and effective strategies
- Develop an individualized support plan focused on prevention and skill-building
- Partner closely with Families to ensure consistency between home and school
- Adjust supervision, environment, or routines as needed
- Seek consultation or referrals when appropriate and with family consent

The goal is to support the child's development while maintaining safety for all children.

What We Do Not Do

- Children are not removed as punishment for biting
- Biting is not labeled as bad behavior
- Punitive discipline, humiliation, or isolation is never used

In rare cases where biting behavior continues despite extensive supports and presents an ongoing safety concern, enrollment may be reviewed following the process outlined in "Responses to Challenging Behavior" and "Discipline, Guidance & Social-Emotional Learning".

16. Parent Rights & Addressing Concerns and Complaints

The MCC Child Development Center & Lab School values Families as partners and is committed to transparency, respect, and open communication. Parents and guardians have specific rights under Texas Child Care Regulation.

Parents and guardians have the right to:

- Visit their child at any time during hours of operation, without prior notice
- Be informed about their child's care, development, and daily experiences
- Receive written policies and procedures governing the Program
- Review their child's records, including assessment and portfolio materials
- Participate in conferences and planning related to their child
- Be treated with respect and without discrimination
- Voice concerns or complaints without fear of retaliation

Addressing Concerns

We encourage Families to share questions or concerns as soon as they arise. The recommended steps are:

1. Speak with your child's teacher to discuss the concern
2. If the concern is not resolved, contact the Director to request follow-up or a meeting
3. The Program will respond promptly and work collaboratively toward resolution

Formal Complaints

If a concern cannot be resolved through informal communication, Families may submit a written complaint to the Director.

- Complaints will be reviewed promptly and handled confidentially
- Families will be informed of next steps or outcomes as appropriate
- There will be no retaliation for raising a concern or complaint

Right to Contact Child Care Regulation

Parents have the right to contact Texas Child Care Regulation (TCCR) at any time regarding concerns about the Program.

Texas Child Care Regulation – Waco Office

 801 Austin Avenue, Suite 110 Waco, TX 76701  1-800-862-5252

 www.txchildcaresearch.org

Provider's Guide to Parent's Rights

Senate Bill 1098 from the 88th Legislative Regular Session added Section 42.04271 to the Human Resources Code and states that a parent or guardian of a child at a child care facility has the right to:

- Enter and examine the child-care facility during its hours of operation and without advance notice;
- File a complaint against the child care facility;
- Review the child care facility's publicly accessible records;
- Review the child-care facility's written records concerning the parent's or guardian's child;
- Receive inspection reports and information about how to access the child care facility's online compliance history;
- Have the facility comply with a court order that prevents another parent or guardian from visiting or removing the child;
- Be given the contact information for the child care facility's local Child Care Regulation office;
- Inspect any video recordings of an alleged incident of abuse or neglect involving their child provided that:
 - Video recordings of the alleged incident are available;
 - The parent or guardian does not retain any part of the video depicting a child that is not their own; and
 - The parent or guardian of any other child in the video receives prior notice from the facility;
- Obtain a copy of the facility's policies and procedures handbook;
- Review the facility's staff training records and any in-house training curriculum; and
- Exercise these rights without receiving retaliatory action by the facility.

Required Notifications

- The child care facility must provide written notice to the parent or guardian of any other child captured in a video before allowing a parent to inspect a recording.
- The child care facility must provide a parent or guardian with a written copy of the rights no later than the child's first day at the facility.

Helpful Tips

Since a parent may perceive an action taken by a child care facility as retaliatory, keep in mind:

- Documentation is essential in supporting your actions; and
- Follow the suspension and expulsion policy outlined in your operational policies and update your policy, if needed.



17. Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention and Reporting

The MCC Child Development Center & Lab School is committed to protecting the safety, dignity, and well-being of every child. We take our responsibility to prevent, recognize, and report child abuse or neglect seriously and follow all requirements of Texas law, Texas Child Care Regulation (CCR), and McLennan Community College policies.

Our Commitment to Prevention

Prevention is a shared responsibility and is supported through:

- Careful hiring, background checks, and staff training
- Active supervision and clear accountability
- Developmentally appropriate guidance and discipline practices
- Ongoing professional development on child safety and well-being
- Strong partnerships with Families

Our Program culture prioritizes respect, transparency, and child protection at all times.

Staff Training & Responsibilities

All MCC CDC staff members are:

- Trained annually on recognizing signs of child abuse and neglect
- Informed of their role as mandatory reporters under Texas law
- Expected to act immediately and professionally when concerns arise

Failure to report suspected abuse or neglect is a violation of state law.

Mandatory Reporting

Under Texas law, any person who suspects child abuse or neglect is required to report it.

If a staff member suspects abuse or neglect:

- A report must be made immediately to the appropriate authorities
- Reporting is made to the Texas Abuse Hotline or local law enforcement
- Reports are made individually; notifying a supervisor does not replace the legal duty to report

How to Report Suspected Abuse or Neglect

Reports may be made 24 hours a day to:

Texas Abuse Hotline



1-800-252-5400



www.txabusehotline.org

In emergencies, call **911**.

Signs of Abuse or Neglect

Signs may include, but are not limited to:

- Unexplained injuries or frequent bruising
- Extreme behavior changes (withdrawal, aggression, fearfulness)
- Poor hygiene, hunger, or lack of appropriate supervision
- Sexualized behaviors that are not developmentally appropriate

Families seeking more information may visit:

 www.txabusehotline.org (includes signs, resources, and reporting guidance)

Confidentiality & Non-Retaliation

- Reports of suspected abuse or neglect are confidential under Texas law.
- The identity of the reporter is protected.
- The Program strictly prohibits retaliation against any staff member or family who makes a report in good faith.

18. Health Policies

Illness & Exclusion from Care

To reduce the spread of illness and support children's well-being, Families are asked to keep children home when they are ill or unable to participate comfortably in daily activities.

Fever Guidance

A child must be excluded from care if they have a fever, defined as:

- 100.4°F (38°C) or higher when taken orally, or
- 99.5°F (37.5°C) or higher when taken under the arm (axillary), or
- Any temperature reading consistent with fever using an appropriate thermometer, in alignment with current pediatric and public health guidance.
- Vomiting or diarrhea with 2 or more occurrences in a 24 hrs.

A child may return to care when:

- They have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication (such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen), and
- Other symptoms have improved enough to allow full participation in daily activities.
- Medical clearance may be requested when appropriate.

Other Symptoms That May Require Exclusion

Parents will be given a courtesy call if they exhibit symptoms that may indicate contagious illness or prevent comfortable participation, including but not limited to:

- First incident of vomiting or diarrhea

- Persistent cough or difficulty breathing
- Red or draining eyes
- Undiagnosed rash or skin condition
- Lethargy, severe discomfort, or behavior changes related to illness

If a child's symptoms prevent them from comfortably participating in the Center's daily activities, MCC CDC staff may ask the family to arrange for early pick-up.

Illness During the Program Day

If a child becomes ill while attending the Program:

- Families will be notified promptly and asked to arrange pick-up as soon as possible.
- Timely pick-up supports the child's comfort and helps reduce exposure to others.

Medication & Health Plans

Medication is administered only with required written authorization and in accordance with Program procedures. Individual health plans (such as for allergies, asthma, or chronic conditions) must be completed in partnership with Families and healthcare providers when applicable.

Hearing & Vision Screening

In accordance with Texas Child Care Regulation requirements:

- Hearing and vision screenings are required for children of applicable ages.
- Families are responsible for submitting screening results or documentation of exemption.
- Screenings must be completed by a qualified professional or through approved providers.

If results indicate a concern, Families are encouraged to follow up with a healthcare provider. With family consent, the Program may assist in identifying community resources.

Confidentiality of Health Information

All health records, screenings, and medical information are maintained confidentially and shared only with authorized staff as required to support the child's care and safety.

Family Responsibility

Families are responsible for:

- ✓ Keeping immunizations, health statements, and screenings current
- ✓ Notifying the Program of illness or diagnosis of contagious conditions
- ✓ Updating emergency contacts and health information promptly

Insect Repellent & Sunscreen Authorization

The Center supports children's health and comfort during outdoor play and activities. In accordance with Texas Child Care Regulation (CCR) Minimum Standards, insect repellent and sunscreen are applied only with written parent or guardian authorization.

Parent Authorization Requirement

- Written permission from a parent or guardian is required before staff may apply sunscreen or insect repellent to a child.
- Authorization forms must specify the product name and any relevant instructions.
- Authorization must be renewed according to Program procedures or when products change.

Children will not be provided sunscreen or insect repellent without completed authorization on file.

Products & Application

- Families may provide sunscreen and/or insect repellent for their child, labeled with the child's name.
- Products must be appropriate for the child's age and used according to manufacturer instructions.
- Staff apply products in a manner that supports hygiene and supervision (e.g., assisting children as needed and encouraging independence when developmentally appropriate).
- Please apply sunscreen and insect repellent before drop-off, especially if your child will be arriving within 30 minutes of outdoor time.

Spray products may be applied away from children's faces and in well-ventilated areas, following safety guidance.

Allergies & Sensitivities

Families are responsible for informing the Program of any known allergies or skin sensitivities. If a child has a documented sensitivity or medical condition related to sunscreen or insect repellent, this information should be included in the child's health records and, when applicable, addressed through an individualized health plan.

Outdoor Play Without Authorization

If authorization is not provided:

- Sunscreen or insect repellent will **not** be applied by staff.
- The Program may adjust outdoor exposure (e.g., use of shaded areas, limited duration) when feasible, while continuing to meet supervision and curriculum expectations.

Family Responsibility

Families are responsible for:

- ✓ Completing required authorization forms
- ✓ Providing approved products when applicable
- ✓ Updating authorizations as needed

Employee Health & Vaccination Practices

. Health practices at MCC Child Development Center & Lab School to maintaining a healthy environment for children, Families, and staff follow Texas Child Care Regulation (CCR) requirements and McLennan Community College employment policies.

Employee Vaccinations

Texas Child Care Regulation does **not require** child care employees to receive vaccinations as a condition of employment.

The MCC Child Development Center & Lab School follows **McLennan Community College policies** regarding employee health and immunizations. As a result, employees may or may not be vaccinated, depending on individual circumstances and applicable employment guidelines.

Health & Illness Prevention Practices

Regardless of vaccination status, all employees are required to follow strict health and safety practices, including:

- Exclusion from work when ill, in accordance with health guidelines
- Proper handwashing and sanitation procedures
- Infection prevention and control measures
- Compliance with all applicable health, safety, and licensing requirements

These practices are designed to reduce the spread of illness and protect the health of children and staff.

19. Sanitation, Handwashing & Safe Sleep

The Program is committed to maintaining a clean, healthy, and safe environment for all children and staff. Sanitation, hygiene, and safe sleep practices follow Texas Child Care Regulation (CCR) Minimum Standards, current public health guidance, and McLennan Community College policies.

Sanitation & Cleaning Practices

Classrooms, restrooms, and shared spaces are cleaned and sanitized regularly to reduce the spread of germs and support children's health.

Sanitation practices include:

- Routine cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces, toys, tables, and equipment
- Immediate cleaning and sanitizing of areas after meals, toileting, diapering, and messy activities
- Safe storage and use of cleaning products in accordance with safety requirements
- Use of approved sanitizing solutions and procedures

Toys and materials are cleaned on a regular schedule and more frequently when mouthed or visibly soiled.

Handwashing Practices

Handwashing is a critical part of illness prevention and is taught, modeled, and reinforced throughout the day.

Children and staff wash hands:

- Upon arrival and before departure
- Before and after meals or food preparation
- After toileting or diapering
- After outdoor play
- After contact with bodily fluids (e.g., wiping noses, coughing)
- After handling animals or sensory materials
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty

Handwashing includes:

- Using running water and liquid soap
- Scrubbing hands for at least 20 seconds
- Drying hands with disposable towels or approved air-dry methods

When handwashing facilities are not immediately available, hand sanitizer may be used by adults or older children under supervision, in accordance with CCR guidelines.

Diapering & Toileting Hygiene

Diapering and toileting procedures follow CCR standards and include:

- Designated diapering areas
- Use of gloves and proper disposal of waste
- Cleaning and sanitizing surfaces between each use
- Handwashing for both staff and children after diapering or toileting

These procedures protect children's health and dignity.

Infant Safe Sleep Practices

The MCC Child Development Center strictly follows **Infant Safe Sleep** requirements to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and other sleep-related incidents.

Safe sleep practices include:

- Infants are placed on their backs for all sleep times unless a healthcare provider's written authorization states otherwise.
- Infants sleep alone, on a firm mattress, in a safety-approved crib that meets current standards.
- Cribs are free of soft items, including blankets, pillows, toys, bumper pads, positioning devices, or loose bedding.
- Infants are dressed in appropriate sleep clothing (such as sleep sacks or wearable blankets) to maintain comfort without loose coverings.
- Cribs are placed in a manner that allows for constant sight and sound supervision by staff.

Staff receive regular training on infant safe sleep practices and supervision requirements.

Family Communication & Individual Sleep Plans

Families are encouraged to share information about their infant's sleep routines. Individual sleep plans are developed in collaboration with Families and followed within the limits of CCR safe sleep standards.

Any medical exception to safe sleep positioning must be provided in writing by a licensed healthcare provider and kept on file.

Monitoring & Supervision During Sleep

During rest and sleep times:

- Staff maintain continuous sight and sound supervision
- Infants are checked visually at regular intervals
- Children are monitored for comfort, breathing, and well-being

These practices ensure children remain safe while resting.

20. Nutrition, Allergies & Meal Service

The MCC Child Development Center & Lab School supports children's health, growth, and learning through safe, nutritious meal practices that follow Texas Child Care Regulation (CCR) Minimum Standards, applicable public health guidance, and McLennan Community College policies.

Meals and snacks are viewed as an important part of the daily routine and provide opportunities for nourishment, social interaction, and skill development.

Infant Feeding Policy (Birth–12/18 months)

What We Accept

- Breast milk (fresh or frozen) and commercial infant formula are welcomed in infant rooms.
- No other foods or beverages are served to infants unless specified in the child's written Infant Feeding Plan (and, when applicable, a medical plan).

Family Responsibilities

- Label everything, every day: child's full name, date, and (for breast milk) time expressed; (for formula) date/time prepared/opened.
- Containers & bottles: bring clean, assembled bottles with caps. Shatter-resistant containers only; glass must be fully encased in a protective sleeve.
- Direct handoff: give milk/formula directly to staff at arrival (do not leave in bags or cubbies).
- Supply: provide enough milk/formula and nipples for the day plus one backup bottle. The Center does not routinely supply formula.

Storage & Warming

- Milk/formula is stored in a dedicated, food-safe refrigerator and logged by staff.

Warming: bottles are warmed in a water bath no microwaves. Staff test temperature before feeding.

Time Limits

- **Breast milk:**
 - Fresh, room temperature: staff use promptly.
 - Refrigerated: used per daily plan; previously frozen milk is used within 24 hours of thawing and never refrozen.
 - Once warmed, use within 2 hours; once feeding begins, discard any remaining milk after 1 hour.
- **Formula:**
 - Ready-to-feed or prepared powder is kept refrigerated per label directions.
 - Once opened/prepared, follow manufacturer guidance (typically 24–48 hours refrigerated).
 - Once feeding begins, discard any remaining formula after 1 hour.

Feeding Practices

- On-demand, cue-based feeding. We feed when infants show hunger cues and stop when they show fullness cues.
- Held, never propped. Infants are always held upright during bottle feeding; no bottle propping and no bottles in cribs.

- Documentation. Intake, times, and mood are recorded on the daily infant report.

Additives & Special Instructions

- Introduction of solids, textures, or potential allergens follows the Infant Feeding Plan developed with the family (and pediatric guidance when applicable).

Sanitation & Equipment

- Families provide clean, assembled bottles and nipples daily; staff ensure safe handling and surface sanitation in the classroom.
- Bottle parts that contact milk are not shared between children.

Supply Gaps & Emergencies

- If an infant arrives without sufficient milk/formula, we will contact the family immediately to supply more or arrange pick-up. In the interest of safety and consistency, the Center does not substitute a different formula without prior written authorization.

Families are expected:

- Complete an Infant Feeding Plan at enrollment and update it whenever needs change (and at least every 3 months).
- Containers must be labeled, transported and stored per health guidelines, and given directly to staff upon arrival.

Breastfeeding & Nursing Mothers Policy

Breastfeeding parents are welcome to breastfeed or provide expressed breast milk at any location within the Child Development Center. For Families who prefer a private space, a designated lactation area is available upon request at the CDC area label “Family Room”.

Our staff are trained in the safe handling, storage, and preparation of expressed breast milk and follow each family’s individual feeding plan to ensure infants’ nutritional and emotional needs are met with care and consistency.

As part of our family support approach, MCC CDC shares evidence-based breastfeeding resources and local community support information to assist Families in meeting their feeding goals.

Local Breastfeeding Support & Resources (Waco Area)

Community & Public Health Support

- **WIC Lactation Services** – The Waco-McLennan County WIC Program connects Families to free breastfeeding support, peer counselors, lactation consultants, scales, pumps, and education classes. Available at multiple WIC locations in Waco

- **Texas Lactation Support Hotline (24/7)** – Free statewide breastfeeding support available by phone: **855-550-6667** (assistance on feeding, troubleshooting issues, and referrals).
- Nutrition and Breastfeeding Support Services from Waco-McLennan County Public Health Dept at 225 W Waco Dr, Room 202, in Waco
- **La Leche League of Waco** – Mother-to-mother breastfeeding support and information; meeting locations and virtual support can be found via the LLLI locator. Phone: (254) 913-6939

Solid Food Introduction Policy

The Child Development Center supports safe, developmentally appropriate feeding practices for infants and toddlers. To ensure consistency and safety, solid foods will only be offered at the Center when Families have provided written permission and the child demonstrates developmental readiness.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

- Parents/guardians must provide written instructions before any solid foods are served at the Center.
- Families must introduce new foods at home first.
- Parents/guardians must inform the Center immediately of any food allergies, sensitivities, or dietary restrictions.

Developmental Readiness

Solid foods may be introduced when a child shows signs of readiness, such as:

- Sitting with support and maintaining good head control
- Showing interest in food (reaching for food, opening mouth)
- Ability to swallow safely without pushing food out with the tongue

Note: Age alone does not determine readiness. The Center will follow the child's individual developmental cues and family guidance.

Center Feeding Practices

- Solid foods will only be served according to the child's current feeding plan and family instructions.
- Children will always be fed in a safe seated position and supervised closely at all times.
- Staff will never force a child to eat. Children will be encouraged to explore foods in a positive and responsive manner.
- Foods will be prepared in safe sizes and textures to reduce choking risk.

High-Risk Foods -Choking Hazards:

For safety reasons, the Center will not serve foods that pose a high choking risk for children under 30 months, and not limited including but not limited to:

- Whole grapes or cherry tomatoes (must be cut appropriately)
- Popcorn
- Nuts
- Hot dog rounds
- Hard candy, gum, marshmallows
- Hard raw vegetables or large chunks of fruit

Foods may be served only when prepared in a developmentally appropriate and safe size/texture, based on the child's readiness and staff supervision

Allergies and Special Diets

If a child has a known allergy or medical dietary need, parents/guardians must provide:

- Written documentation of the allergy/diet restriction
- Any required medical forms and/or medication authorization (if applicable)

The Center will follow allergy safety procedures to reduce the risk of cross-contamination.

Communication With Families

Teachers will communicate daily with Families regarding the child's feeding, including what was offered and how much was eaten. Families will also be notified immediately if a child shows signs of discomfort or an allergic reaction.

Meal Service & Nutrition Practices

The MCC Child Development Center & Lab School supports children's health, growth, and learning by providing safe, nutritious meals and positive mealtime experiences. Meal service follows Texas Child Care Regulation requirements and developmentally appropriate best practices.

Typical meal and snack times are:

- **AM Snack:** approximately 8:30 a.m.
- **Lunch:** approximately 11:30 a.m.
- **PM Snack:** approximately 2:45 p.m.

Breakfast should be completed at home before arrival. Meal times varies by classroom.

Menus

- Menus are posted in the classroom and copies are available to Families per requests at the office.
- Meals and snacks meet age-appropriate nutritional requirements.
- Family-style meal service is encouraged when feasible to support social interaction, independence, and healthy habits.

Positive Mealtime Practices

In accordance with TCCR and best practices:

- Children are supervised at all times during meals and snacks.
- Teachers model healthy eating habits and positive mealtime behaviors.
- Children are encouraged—but never forced—to try foods.
- Food is never used as a reward or punishment.
- Mealtimes are calm, respectful, and socially engaging.
- Water is available throughout the day, including during outdoor play.

Allergies & Special Dietary Needs

- Families must notify the Program of any food allergies, intolerances, or medical dietary needs at enrollment and whenever changes occur.
- Medical documentation (from a physician or dietitian) may be required for dietary accommodations.
- Individualized Allergy or Health Plans are developed as needed and shared with relevant staff.
- The Center is nut-restricted.
- While reasonable precautions are taken, the Program cannot guarantee an allergen-free environment.

A private **lactation and family space** is available in the CDC.

Severe Allergies & Emergency Response

For children with severe allergies:

- Emergency medication (such as epinephrine) must be provided by the family with required authorizations.
- Staff are trained to recognize allergic reactions and follow emergency procedures.
- Emergency plans are reviewed regularly and updated as needed.

Family-Provided Food

Family-provided meals or snacks are permitted **only when approved** by the Program and in accordance with CCR requirements and MCC CDC procedures. Approval is typically limited to specific circumstances, such as documented medical or dietary needs. We are peanut free school and we provide only water and milk to our students.

When family-provided food is approved:

- ✓ Food must be **clearly labeled** with the child's full name and date.
- ✓ Food must be prepared, stored, and packed safely in appropriate containers.

- ✓ Items that pose choking risks, do not meet safety guidelines, or cannot be safely served will not be offered to the child.
- ✓ The Program reserves the right to restrict or decline foods that present safety, sanitation, or allergy concerns.

Food Safety & Sanitation

Food handling and meal service follow CCR sanitation standards, including:

- Proper handwashing before and after meals
- Clean and sanitized eating surfaces
- Safe food storage and temperature control
- Use of gloves or utensils when required

These practices help prevent contamination and protect children's health.

Choking Prevention

To reduce choking risk:

- Foods are served in developmentally appropriate sizes and textures.
- High-risk foods are modified or avoided for younger children.
- Children are closely supervised during meals and snacks.
- Staff follow CCR guidelines for choking prevention.

Family Responsibilities

Families are responsible for:

- ✓ Providing accurate and updated allergy and dietary information
- ✓ Supplying required documentation and emergency medications
- ✓ Communicating dietary or medical changes promptly

21. Outdoor Learning, Weather & Clothing

The MCC Child Development Center & Lab School values outdoor learning as an essential part of children's health, development, and well-being. Outdoor experiences support physical activity, attention, social-emotional growth, and curiosity about the natural world. Children are offered outdoor play daily, weather permitting.

Outdoor Learning

Outdoor time is intentionally planned and supervised and may include:

- Gross-motor play (running, climbing, balancing)
- Nature exploration and observation
- Gardening and sensory experiences

- Building, problem-solving, and cooperative play

Outdoor learning is considered part of the daily curriculum, not recess, and supports learning across developmental domains.

Weather Guidelines & Extreme Conditions

The Program follows current public health guidance and Child Care Weather Watch–style criteria to determine when outdoor play is appropriate. Decisions are based on temperature, heat index or wind chill, air quality, and overall safety.

General guidelines include:

- **Hot Weather:**

Heat Index	Outdoor Play
Below 90°F	Outdoor play allowed
90°F–99°F	Limited outdoor play; increased water breaks
100°F or higher	No outdoor play

Shade, hydration, rest breaks, and reduced activity levels are provided as needed.

- **Cold Weather:**

Temperature / Wind Chill	Outdoor Play
Above 40°F	Outdoor play allowed with appropriate clothing
32°F–39°F	Limited outdoor play (shortened time, coats required)
Below 32°F	No outdoor play

- **Thunder & Lightning Safety**

When thunder roars, children and staff will go indoors immediately. Lightning can strike up to 10 miles away from a storm, even when skies appear clear. For this reason, outdoor play is considered unsafe whenever thunder is heard, not only when rain is visible.

Children will remain indoors in a safe, sturdy building under staff supervision. Outdoor activities will resume only after 30 minutes have passed since the last sound of thunder or sight of lightning. This practice follows safety guidance from the National Weather Service and Texas emergency management authorities and is intended to protect children, staff, and Families.

- **Air Quality & Weather Alerts:**
 - Outdoor play may be limited or canceled during poor air quality alerts, storms, lightning, or other unsafe weather conditions.

Final decisions are made by Program leadership to ensure children's safety.

Hydration & Sun Safety

- Drinking water is available to children during outdoor play.
- Shade is used whenever possible.
- Sunscreen and insect repellent are applied only with written parent authorization, as outlined in the Insect Repellent & Sunscreen Authorization section.

Clothing & Personal Items for Outdoor Play and Water Activities

Families are responsible for providing clothing that allows children to participate safely and comfortably in outdoor learning and active play. Children should arrive dressed for movement, exploration, and changing weather conditions.

Families are expected to provide:

- ✓ Weather-appropriate clothing, such as:
 - Jackets, coats, hats, and gloves during colder months
 - Lightweight, breathable clothing during warm weather
- ✓ Closed-toe shoes suitable for running, climbing, and playground activities (sandals, flip-flops, and shoes with high heels are not recommended for outdoor play)
- ✓ A complete change of clothes, including underwear, kept at the Center or child's backpack and updated seasonally
- ✓ A labeled water bottle, filled daily, to support hydration during outdoor play

Water Play & Warm-Weather Activities

During warm weather, outdoor learning may include water exploration or splash activities. When water play is planned, Families may be asked to provide:

- ✓ A swimsuit or water-friendly clothing, clearly labeled
- ✓ Water shoes or secure footwear appropriate for wet surfaces
- ✓ A towel, when applicable

All water play is supervised, developmentally appropriate, and designed for exploration rather than swimming. Children who do not have appropriate water-play clothing may be offered an alternative outdoor activity.

Labeling & Storage

To prevent loss and support organization:

- ✓ All clothing, shoes, water bottles, and personal items should be clearly labeled with the child's name.
- ✓ Seasonal items should be replaced as weather changes.

Safety & Participation

Children who are not dressed appropriately for outdoor conditions may have their outdoor time modified for safety, such as spending time in shaded areas, reduced activity, or alternative indoor learning when necessary.

Families are expected to:

- ✓ Monitor daily weather conditions and plan clothing accordingly
- ✓ Dress children appropriately for outdoor learning and active play
- ✓ Provide, label, and maintain seasonal clothing and personal items, including extra clothing kept at the Center
- ✓ Check daily for soiled or wet items (such as clothing, towels, or shoes) and replace them promptly to ensure children remain comfortable and hygienic
- ✓ Ensure a labeled water bottle is sent daily and cleaned regularly

Appropriate clothing and hydration allow children to fully engage in outdoor learning while remaining safe and comfortable.

22. Rest Time & Infant/Toddler Practices

The MCC CDC & Lab School recognizes rest as an essential component of children's health, development, and emotional well-being. Rest practices are developmentally appropriate, respectful of individual needs, and implemented in accordance with Texas Child Care Regulation (CCR) Minimum Standards.

Rest Time for Toddlers & Preschoolers

In accordance with Texas Child Care Regulation (TCCR) Minimum Standards, children are provided a daily opportunity for rest.

- Children must be given the opportunity to rest or sleep for a minimum of one (1) hour.
- Children are not required to sleep during rest time.

After the first hour of rest:

Children who are awake may engage in quiet, independent activities, provided that:

- They remain on their mat or cot, or in a designated quiet area,

- Activities do not disturb children who are sleeping, and
- Active supervision is maintained at all times.

Infant Sleep Practices

Infants follow individual sleep schedules based on developmental needs and family input, within TCCR safe sleep requirements.

Infant sleep practices include:

- Placing infants on their backs for all sleep unless written medical authorization states otherwise
- Using a firm mattress in a safety-approved crib
- Keeping cribs free of soft items, including blankets, pillows, toys, or positioning devices
- Dressing infants in appropriate sleep clothing (such as sleep sacks or wearable blankets)
- Maintaining constant sight and sound supervision during sleep

Infants are never placed to sleep in swings, bouncers, car seats, or other non-approved equipment.

Toddler Sleep & Rest Practices

Toddlers are supported in transitioning to group rest routines while respecting individual developmental needs.

Toddler rest practices include:

- Consistent daily rest schedules
- Use of mats or cots appropriate to the child's size
- Comfort routines that promote security and predictability
- Support for children who are transitioning out of naps through quiet rest or calm activities

Comfort Items

Children may bring a small comfort item (such as a blanket or soft toy) for rest time, when developmentally appropriate and approved by the Program.

Comfort items must be:

- Clearly labeled with the child's name
- Used only during rest time
- Stored hygienically and sent home for regular cleaning

Sanitation & Bedding

- Rest mats, cots, and sleep areas are cleaned and sanitized regularly in accordance with TCCR requirements.
- Bedding and rest items are stored separately for each child to prevent cross-contamination.
- Soiled or wet items are removed, bagged and promptly sent home for laundering.

Family Responsibilities for Rest Items

To support children's comfort, hygiene, and consistency during rest time, Families are expected to:

- ✓ Provide a blanket and/or rolling mat, as required by the classroom and appropriate for the child's age and size
- ✓ Clearly label all rest items with the child's full name
- ✓ Bring clean rest items on Mondays at the start of each week
- ✓ Take rest items home on Fridays for washing and cleaning
- ✓ Check daily for soiled or wet items and replace them promptly if additional laundering is needed

These shared routines help maintain a clean, healthy, and comfortable rest environment for all children.

Supervision & Safety During Rest

During rest and sleep times:

- Staff maintain active supervision at all times
- Children are monitored for comfort, breathing, and well-being
- Rest environments remain calm, safe, and developmentally appropriate

Family Partnership

Families are encouraged to share information about their child's sleep routines, comfort needs, and changes at home. Teachers communicate with Families about rest patterns and any concerns to support consistency between home and school.

23. Field Experiences

The MCC Child Development Center & Lab School values safe, developmentally appropriate field experiences as part of children's learning. On-campus walks and visits beyond the immediate child care space are considered field experiences under Texas Child Care Regulation (CCR) and follow all applicable standards.

Families are notified in advance of field experiences, and required permissions are maintained on file.

Supervision & Group Size

During all field experiences, including on-campus walks:

- Children are actively supervised at all times
- Attendance is taken before departure, during the experience, and upon return
- Teachers carry emergency contact information and a means of communication
- Routes and destinations are planned in advance with safety as the priority

Field Experience Ratios (By Age Group)

To ensure safety, the MCC CDC follows field experience supervision ratios that meet or exceed CCR requirements. The Program uses more restrictive ratios than classroom minimums whenever children leave the immediate child care space.

Age Group	Maximum Ratio for Field Experiences
Infants -23 months	1 adult : 1 children
24 months	1 adult : 2 children
3 years old	1 adult : 6 children
4 years old	1 adult : 8 children
5 years old	1 adult : 10 children
6 years old and up	1 adult : 12 children

Additional staff may be assigned based on group needs, destination, distance, or individual considerations.

Transportation

- On-campus walks are conducted on designated routes approved by the Program.
- Children may use strollers or walking ropes as developmentally appropriate.
- The Program does not transport children in vehicles for routine field experiences unless specifically authorized and communicated to Families.

Family Notification & Permission

- Families are informed of planned field experiences in advance.
- Written permission is required for participation, in accordance with TCCR.
- Families may review field experience details upon request.

Safety & Decision-Making

Field experiences may be modified or canceled due to:

- Weather or environmental conditions
- Staffing changes affecting supervision ratios
- Safety concerns identified by Program leadership

24. Technology & Screen Time

The MCC CDC & Lab School prioritizes hands-on, play-based, and relationship-rich learning. Technology is used intentionally and sparingly to support learning goals and professional practice, in alignment with NAEYC guidance and Texas Child Care Regulation (CCR).

Screen Use with Children

- Infants, toddlers, and young preschoolers do not use screen media (including televisions, tablets, computers, or videos) during the school day.
- In classrooms serving 4- and 5-year-old children, limited technology (such as a classroom computer) may be used occasionally and intentionally, under direct teacher supervision, to support specific instructional or documentation purposes.

Technology use with preschool-aged children:

- Is brief, purposeful, and teacher-guided
- Supports learning goals such as inquiry, early literacy, creativity, or documentation
- Encourages interaction and conversation rather than passive viewing
- Does not replace hands-on learning, outdoor play, or peer interaction
- Is never used for entertainment, reward, punishment, or behavior management

Technology is not used as a substitute for active exploration or social engagement.

Technology Use by Staff

Teachers and staff may use technology away from children or briefly during classroom activities for professional purposes, including:

- Lesson planning and curriculum development
- Observation, assessment, and portfolio documentation
- Communication with Families through approved platforms (e.g., ProCare, email)
- Training, professional development, and administrative tasks

Technology use by staff must never interfere with active supervision, responsiveness, or engagement with children.

Technology in the Lab School Setting

As a laboratory school, MCC Child Development Center & Lab School may use technology intentionally to support learning, observation, and professional practice. Technology may occasionally be used for:

- Observation and documentation
- Approved instructional, assessment, or research purposes

All technology use in the lab school context follows MCC policies, confidentiality requirements, and—when applicable—family notification and consent.

Cell Phone–Free Learning Environment

To support children’s safety, engagement, and meaningful relationships, the MCC CDC operates as a cell phone–free learning environment.

Families, students, and visitors are expected to:

- Put away cell phones, headphones, and personal devices upon entering classrooms and childcare areas.
- Remain fully present and attentive while interacting with children and communicating with teachers.
- Use the lobby as a designated space to finish phone calls.

This practice supports:

- Active supervision and child safety
- Respectful modeling of attention and communication
- A calm, focused learning environment

Staff use Program-approved devices only when necessary for supervision, documentation, communication, or emergencies.

Exceptions

Exceptions may be made for:

- Program-related responsibilities
- Accessibility needs
- Emergency situations

All exceptions are handled discreetly and in alignment with MCC CDC expectations.

25. Photo, Media & Privacy

The MCC Child Development Center & Lab School respects the privacy and dignity of children and Families. Photos, videos, and other media are used thoughtfully to support learning, documentation, communication, and Program improvement, in accordance with Texas Child Care Regulation (TCCR), NAEYC standards, and McLennan Community College (MCC) policies.

Use of Photos & Media by the Program

With appropriate permissions, the Program may take photographs or videos of children for purposes such as:

- Classroom documentation and child portfolios
- Sharing learning experiences with Families through approved platforms (e.g., ProCare)
- Training, professional development, or Program reflection
- MCC-related publications, presentations, or promotional materials

Parent Authorization & Consent

- Families indicate media permissions during enrollment and may update or revoke consent at any time in writing.
- Children without authorization will not be included in photos or videos used for external or promotional purposes.

Consent preferences are respected at all times.

Family & Visitor Media Use

To protect children's privacy and support a focused learning environment:

- Families and visitors may not use personal phones or devices to take photos or videos within classrooms or CDC spaces.
- Photography or recording by Families or visitors is not permitted during the school day.
- Teachers may take photographs or videos of children using Program-approved devices for documentation and communication purposes and may share these with Families through ProCare or approved email communication, in accordance with media consent on file.

26. Emergencies, Drills & Severe Weather

The Center is committed to protecting the safety and well-being of children, staff, and visitors at all times. Emergency preparedness practices follow Texas Child Care Regulation (TCCR) Minimum Standards, McLennan Community College emergency procedures, and local emergency management guidance.

Staff are trained regularly on emergency procedures and respond calmly and promptly to ensure children's safety.

Emergency Preparedness

The Program maintains written emergency plans that address situations including, but not limited to:

- Fire
- Severe weather
- Lockdown or shelter-in-place
- Evacuation

- Medical emergencies
- Missing child or intruder situations

Emergency plans include procedures for supervision, communication, attendance verification, and reunification with Families.

Emergency contact information for each child is maintained and accessible at all times.

Emergency Drills

Emergency drills are conducted regularly to ensure preparedness and compliance with CCR requirements.

Drills include:

- **Fire drills**
- **Severe weather drills**
- **Lockdown drills**
- **Evacuation drills**

Drills are:

- Conducted on a regular schedule as required by TCCR
- Documented according to licensing standards
- Conducted in a developmentally appropriate, non-frightening manner

Children are supported with calm explanations and reassurance during drills.

Severe Weather Procedures

The Program closely monitors weather conditions and follows Child Care Weather Watch guidance, local alerts, and emergency management recommendations.

Severe weather procedures may include:

- Shelter-in-place during tornado warnings, high winds, or severe storms
- Relocation to designated interior safe areas
- Limiting or suspending outdoor activities based on weather conditions

Families will be notified as appropriate through Program communication systems.

Evacuation Procedures

In the event evacuation is necessary:

- Staff will take attendance records, emergency contact information, and first-aid supplies
- Children will be escorted safely to a designated evacuation location

- Attendance will be taken before departure, during evacuation, and upon arrival

Families will be notified of evacuation status and reunification plans as soon as safely possible.

Lockdown & Shelter-in-Place

In situations requiring lockdown or shelter-in-place:

- Doors are secured according to procedure
- Children remain supervised in classrooms or designated safe areas
- Calm routines and reassurance are provided
- Staff follow MCC and emergency responder guidance

Medical Emergencies

In the event of a medical emergency:

- Staff provide first aid within their training scope
- Emergency medical services (911) are contacted when needed
- Families are notified immediately

Incident reports are completed according to Program procedures.

Family Communication & Reunification

During emergencies:

- Families will receive updates through approved communication channels as information becomes available
- Children will be released only to authorized individuals listed on the child's enrollment forms and with proper identification

Families are asked not to come to the Center unless directed to do so, to allow staff and emergency responders to manage the situation safely.

Families are expected to:

- ✓ Keep emergency contact information current
- ✓ Follow reunification instructions during emergencies
- ✓ Review emergency procedures shared by the Program

27. Gang-Free Zone & Prohibited Conduct Notice

Under Texas law, the MCC Child Development Center & Lab School is designated as a gang-free zone.

Certain criminal offenses, including those related to gang activity, are prohibited on or within a designated distance of child care facilities. Violations may result in enhanced penalties under state law.

This notice is provided in accordance with Texas Health and Safety Code §481.134 and applicable Texas Child Care Regulation requirements.

28. Transportation

The Program does not transport children in vehicles, including buses, vans, or personal cars. Families are responsible for all transportation to and from the Center, including arrival and dismissal.

Field Experiences & On-Campus Walks

While the Program does not provide transportation, children may participate in on-campus walks or field experiences within the MCC campus. These experiences:

- Do not involve vehicle transportation
- Are supervised according to Texas Child Care Regulation (TCCR) field experience requirements
- Follow all applicable supervision ratios, safety procedures, and family permission requirements

Details about on-campus field experiences are outlined in the Field Experiences (On-Campus Walks) section of this handbook.

Emergency Transportation

In the event of a medical emergency:

- Emergency medical services (EMS/911) will be contacted as needed.
- Families will be notified immediately.

The Program does not transport children to medical facilities in personal or Program vehicles.

30. Family Partnership & Parent Participation

Families are a child's first and most important teachers. The MCC Child Development Center & Lab School values Families as essential partners in children's learning, development, and well-being. We are committed to building respectful, collaborative relationships that support continuity between home and school.

Family Partnership Philosophy

Family partnership at MCC CDC means:

- Open, two-way communication
- Shared responsibility for children's growth and well-being
- Respect for each family's culture, language, and values
- Collaboration in decision-making related to children's learning and care

Strong family partnerships support children's sense of security, belonging, and success.

Communication with Families

The Program maintains regular, ongoing communication with Families through:

- Daily or weekly updates via ProCare
- Informal conversations at arrival and dismissal
- Scheduled family conferences (at least twice per year)
- Program newsletters, announcements, and notices

Families are encouraged to contact teachers or administrators with questions or concerns. Longer conversations are best scheduled in advance to ensure privacy and focus.

Parent Participation

Parent participation is welcomed and encouraged, but never required. Opportunities are designed to be flexible and respectful of family schedules and interests.

Examples of participation may include:

- Classroom support activities coordinated with teachers (e.g., reading aloud, preparing materials)
- Sharing cultural traditions, languages, or family experiences
- Assisting with special events or celebrations
- Participating in family education workshops or meetings

All participation is coordinated in advance to ensure children's safety, routines, and supervision.

Volunteer Guidelines

To support safety and supervision:

- All volunteers must sign in and follow visitor procedures
- All volunteer roles may require orientation and background checks, in accordance with TCCR and MCC policy
- Volunteers follow classroom expectations and staff direction at all times

The Program reserves the right to limit or decline volunteer participation if it disrupts routines, supervision, or children's well-being.

Parent Visits

Parents and guardians are welcome to visit their child at any time during hours of operation, in accordance with Texas Child Care Regulation. Visits should respect classroom routines, supervision needs, and children's privacy.

Family Events & Engagement Opportunities

The Program hosts family-friendly events throughout the year, such as:

- Family connection activities
- Literacy or cultural events
- Program celebrations and showcases

These events strengthen community and support family engagement in developmentally appropriate ways.

Family Feedback & Program Improvement

Family input is valued and contributes to continuous Program improvement. Feedback may be gathered through:

- Family surveys
- Conferences and meetings
- Informal communication

Families are encouraged to share ideas, suggestions, and concerns to help strengthen the Program.

Shared Responsibility

Successful partnerships depend on mutual respect and communication. Families are expected to:

- Maintain up-to-date contact and enrollment information
- Communicate changes or concerns promptly
- Follow Program policies and procedures

31. Vehicle Idling Policy

To support a healthy and safe environment for children, families, and staff, the MCC Child Development Center encourages families and visitors to avoid leaving vehicles running while parked in the center's parking areas.

Reducing vehicle idling helps limit exposure to exhaust fumes, improves air quality, and promotes environmental responsibility. That said families are asked to use discretion and prioritize children's safety and well-being at all times. Vehicles may idle briefly during periods of extreme heat or cold when necessary to maintain safe interior temperatures or proper engine function.

32. Visitor & Volunteer Policy

To ensure the safety and supervision of all children, the MCC Child Development Center & Lab School maintains clear procedures for visitors, volunteers, and students.

All visitors, including family members, volunteers, and guests, must:

- Sign in at the front office upon arrival
- Present identification when requested
- Wear a visible visitor badge while on site
- Follow all program supervision and security procedures

Visitors and volunteers must remain under staff supervision at all times and may not be left alone with children unless authorized and approved in accordance with MCC and Texas Child Care Regulation requirements.

Volunteers and student participants may be required to complete orientation, training, and background checks prior to participation.

The Center reserves the right to limit or deny visitor or volunteer access if it disrupts classroom routines, supervision, or children's well-being.

33. Prohibited Items & Personal Belongings

To maintain a safe, organized, and focused learning environment, families are asked to be mindful of items brought to the Center.

Personal Belongings

Children's personal items should be clearly labeled with the child's name. Families are encouraged to limit personal toys and valuables brought from home unless requested by the classroom teacher for instructional purposes.

The Center is not responsible for lost, damaged, or misplaced personal items.

Prohibited Items

The following items are not permitted on campus:

- Weapons or objects resembling weapons
- Tobacco products, vaping devices, or illegal substances
- Alcohol
- Unapproved medications
- Electronic devices for children (unless authorized for documented support needs)
- Any item that poses a safety risk

If prohibited items are brought to the Center, staff will secure them and notify the family.

34. Lost & Found / Personal Property

Families are encouraged to label all clothing, backpacks, water bottles, and personal belongings with their child's name. Unlabeled items found on campus will be placed in the designated Lost & Found area in the office.

Lost & Found items will be kept for a reasonable period of time. Unclaimed items may be donated or discarded at the Center's discretion. The Center is not responsible for personal items that are lost, damaged, or misplaced.

35. Emergency Closures & Inclement Weather

The MCC Child Development Center & Lab School may close or adjust operations due to emergency situations, including but not limited to:

- Severe weather
- Power outages
- Water or facility emergencies
- Public health concerns
- College-wide closures
- Other situations affecting safety

In the event of an emergency closure or delayed opening, families will be notified as soon as possible through MyAlert, ProCare, email, and/or posted notices.

Families are encouraged to monitor official MCC communications and local media when severe weather is anticipated. The MCC and the MCC CDC prioritizes the safety of children, families, and staff in all closure decisions.

36. Family Acknowledgment

I/We have read the MCC Child Development Center Parent & Family Handbook and agree to partner with the Program to support a safe, healthy, and engaging learning environment.

Child's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Name(s) 1: _____ Date: _____

Signature(s): _____

Parent/Guardian Name(s) 2: _____ Date: _____

Signature(s): _____