

Northwestern State University

Marie Shaw Dunn Child Development Center

Guidelines for University Student Observation and Participation

Working with Young Children

This document will give you a brief overview of what to expect during your laboratory experience at the center. You will be working with preschool age children between the ages of 3 and 5. The children are divided into a 3 year old group and a 4 year old group.

Center Information

The CDC is located in room 116 inside Warren Easton Hall (E-Lab).

Please use your time at the center wisely. You are assigned to this lab to observe, learn, try new ideas, and interact with children and instructors in an early childhood setting. This gives you a chance to put what you have learned in theory into practice. It is normal to feel a little uncomfortable in a new setting with new people. As time passes, you will learn the routine and get to know the children and instructors. If at any time you have questions or concerns about the center, please contact the director, Faith Stanfield, by calling 318-357-6860, or emailing, stanfieldf@nsula.edu.

Confidentiality

Information about students and their families will remain confidential. It will not be repeated outside the learning institution. If you have any questions about something a child has confided in you, have a private discussion with your university instructor or the director. Maintain a friendly yet professional relationship with the parents and the children. Refer parents to the teacher for any questions about their children or center policies. It is not appropriate for you to respond to questions about children's abilities or behaviors.

Dress Code

This is the beginning of a career in which first impressions are very important. Your appearance should be neat, clean, and modest. Your clothes should cover you in a manner that allows you to sit on the floor, bend, and move without showing cleavage, midriff, or bottom.

Jeans (without any tears) tennis shoes, and sandals may be worn. For teachers, jeans may be worn every Friday.

No shorts are allowed. Any facial piercings should be removed before arriving at the center.

Tattoos should be covered.

Your time at the center will be active and most likely involve going outdoors. Please be prepared for the weather.

Your Professional Responsibilities

Although you are a university student, at the CDC you are beginning to demonstrate your ability to be professional and trustworthy as a teacher. There will be times when you are stressed, tired, or have family responsibilities, but you still have the responsibility to be at your best at your job. Maintain a positive attitude in and out of class as it relates to the CDC setting. Maintain a sense of calmness and caring about the children even if you do not feel this way. Your attitude affects others, including the children, and reflects on you as a professional.

Keep the children safe at all times. Always inform the teacher of any adults in the room who are unfamiliar to you. Every adult in the classroom should have a reason to be in the CDC.

Keep on task observing and participating with the children. Any socializing should be done on your personal time. When you are inside or outside with the children, be alert to the circumstances around you. Every moment is a teaching opportunity. If you must speak to a teacher or another student, keep it brief and still watch the children.

Ask questions and be curious. In class you will learn about the theory of working with young children. This lab is your opportunity to learn from observing others and to practice what you have learned. If you wonder why the children are participating in a certain activity, ask the instructor. If something is happening in the center that bothers you, ask about it. You may be able to solve a problem, initiate a new idea, or you may learn a new way to manage a situation.

Get to know the children as individuals. Bond with them and learn what “makes them tick”. Children have their own unique personalities. If we as teachers are going to make a difference in their lives, we first need to see them and treat them as individuals.

Help the children learn to think for themselves. Consider how much a child can actually do for themselves that we may do for them. Give them practice making decisions, getting organized, resolving conflicts, making plans, and solving problems. These skills become lifelong habits if learned and practiced at an early age. Assist the children in establishing good habits, such as picking up paper scraps off the table, or picking up a jacket from the floor.

Discipline and Guidance

At the CDC, you will find that we practice guidance techniques more often than we discipline. You will discuss the difference between the two during your lecture class. However, at any time a situation with a child is not easily resolved with positive redirection, immediately get the help of the classroom teacher. You are **never** to use harsh language, corporal punishment, threats, or timeout with children. We remember to tell children very specifically what we want them to do, (ex: sit down when you slide)

instead of what not to do (ex: don't stand up when you slide). If a behavior is consistent and warrants discipline, it will be handled by the child's primary teacher. Any questions about what is appropriate should be directed to the primary teachers at the CDC or your university instructor.

Say:

Slide on your bottom.

Dig in the sand. Keep the sand on the ground

Turn in the pages carefully.

Talk in a soft voice.

Wipe your brush on the side of the cup.

Time to go outside.

Wash your hands.

Eat the food off of your plate.

Do Not Say:

Don't stand up when you slide.

Don't throw sand

Don't tear the book.

Don't yell.

Don't drip paint on the floor.

Do you want to go outside?

Don't you want to wash your hands?

Don't take the other children's food.

Your Daily Routine

Arrive promptly, put your things away in designated area, sign in, and check with the teacher to see where you are needed. The teacher will assign you to an area or a task. There is always a shoe to tie, a paintbrush to be cleaned, a floor to be swept, a tear to be wiped away, or a spill to be cleaned up. Look around the center for things to do that make the center a safe and pleasant place for children. IN OTHER WORDS, BE A TEACHER! At the end of your lab time be sure you sign out and get your assigned teacher to initial your lab sheet.

If you are unable to attend lab because of illness, notify the center at 318-357-6860.

Eating at the Center

At the center, teachers try to eat and drink when the children do. You are welcome to do the same. Cold drinks will need to be poured in a cup, and all food and drinks need to be contained in the kitchen area. When at the center, please sit in a chair or on the floor. Remember that counters and tables are for food preparation. It is unsanitary for you to sit on these surfaces. Safe food practices dictate that you never give food of any kind to the children.

You have been given a lot of information, and you may feel a little overwhelmed. Please remember the CDC is a learning facility and we are here to help you on your journey to becoming a professional. When you have questions, please talk with one of the teachers or your instructor.

Have a great semester!