

EFFIE BENNETT-POWE CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

PROGRAM HANDBOOK 2023-2024

MISSION

To provide a model of excellence in pre-kindergarten education and applied learning environment for SUNY Cobleskill students to deepen their understanding of developmentally appropriate practices for young children, with the support and guidance of a lead Preschool Teacher and Early Childhood faculty.

Table of Contents

Dedication and Philosophy	1
Program Structure and Staff	1
Curriculum for Preschoolers	1
Field Trips	2
Kindergarten Readiness	2
Observation Booth	2
Child Guidance Philosophy	3
Snack	3
Food Allergies/Dietary Restrictions	3
Family-Teacher Communications	3
Family-Teacher Conferences	3
Assessment	3
Admission Criteria	4
Enrollment and Wait List	4
Visiting the Program	5
Tuition/Payment	5
Tuition Refunds	5
Arrival	5
Departure/Pick-up	5
Late Pick-up	5
Authorized Alternative Pick-up Persons	6
Reporting an Absence	6
Closing Policy/Weather	6
Health Policy	6
Medication	6
Medical Emergencies	7
Child Abuse and Neglect	7

Child Protection Policy	7
Fire Drills	7
Smoking	8
Volunteer Guidelines	8
Birthdays	8
Toys/Objects from Home	8
Clothing	8
Contributions	9
Addressing a Concern	9
Parking/Crosswalks	9
Directory	9

Dedication & Philosophy

The Effie Bennett-Powe Child Development Center is dedicated to and named for Effie Bennett-Powe, Distinguished Service Professor in Early Childhood from 1964-1998. Effie Bennett-Powe, throughout a 34-year commitment to the welfare and education of young children and families, has provided a legacy of excellence. She reminds us to celebrate diversity, cherish the joy of each child, and rise to challenges that children and families face. We are reminded to respect children, parents, students, and each other, but mostly to make a difference in the life of a young child.

A play-based approach to learning is the guiding principle for the CDC. We do this in many ways including developmentally appropriate small and whole group learning experiences, indoors and outdoors. Direct, hands-on experiences build knowledge of self and society, body awareness and physical skills, mathematics, science, language, literacy, and the arts. We approach curriculum planning from a holistic anti-bias perspective in which social, emotional, cognitive, physical, and creative aspects of the child’s development are integrated.

Program Structure and Staff

The CDC is unique in that it is a laboratory preschool run by the college through the Early Childhood (EC) Department. The Chair of the Early Childhood Department is the Program Director. The EC faculty oversee the program and supervise the practicum students. The faculty model best practices for the practicum students and monitor the children’s developmental progress. The practicum students are EC majors typically in their third or fourth semester. They may also be in their second year of their Associate’s Degree Program. They have completed courses in early childhood growth and development, curriculum and methods, and other EC and liberal arts and science courses. Practicum students are learning to: observe objectively; gain a deeper understanding of early childhood; plan, implement and

evaluate developmentally appropriate preschool curriculum; communicate with and develop positive relationships with families; and develop knowledge of self as a preschool teacher.

Curriculum for Preschoolers

The CDC operates four days per week with two half-day preschool sessions. The morning preschool session runs from 8:15-11:00 am. The afternoon preschool session runs from 12:15-3:00 pm. Developmentally appropriate play-based practice is the program's core value.

The Preschool Teacher and a team of Early Childhood practicum students plan and implement art, math, science, social studies, and literacy lessons, supporting all domains of development.

The college is a wonderful learning environment for children! The preschool curriculum is designed to integrate a wide variety of content areas that reflect and utilize the SUNY Cobleskill campus and its' academic programs. Campus resources such as the animal barns or greenhouses offer hands-on learning experiences. The campus provides a rich natural setting for discovery walks and physical exercise. There are even opportunities for children to participate as volunteers in the Therapeutic Horsemanship program.

The preschool classroom environment in Holmes Hall offers ten learning centers: library corner, writing center, science area, math manipulatives/table toys, dramatic play corner, art area, easel, sensory table the block area and a gross motor area (gym/playground). Music, open-ended art, literature, puppets, creative movement, dress up, cooking, blocks and learning aides are all used in an integrated approach for learning.

Purposefully, in the best interest of young children's brain development, 'screen time' with electronic devices is not included.

Field Trips

Field trips include walks around the college campus for children to benefit from the variety of opportunities the campus offers such as the library, art gallery, fish hatchery, conservatory, animal barns, music lab, culinary arts kitchen, gymnasium, track, cafes and more. These resources are incorporated into the curriculum to provide authentic and engaging learning experiences. Family members are welcome to join as volunteers.

Kindergarten Readiness

The preschool program is designed to prepare young children for the more formal learning that lies in their future. Some critical aspects of development that are incorporated into the program are the ability to do the following by age 5:

- practice responsibility and self-help skills
- develop and follow routines
- acknowledge and express feelings
- form positive relationships
- explore with curiosity and ask questions

- use creative arts and writing materials appropriately and productively
- understand use of print/literacy concepts
- understand basic number concepts

Observation Booth

The observation booth is a teaching and learning space designed for the EC programs. Under direct supervision of faculty, students observe and collect data to write reports such as: individual child studies; classroom environment critiques; reflections on teacher-child interactions; etc. Students must follow strict confidentiality guidelines to maintain the rights and privacy of the children, families, and staff. Policies required by the College's Institutional Review Board regulates the use of the booth and all research being conducted at the site. The booth is not intended as a space for anyone other than those authorized to use it. Parents/guardians of enrolled children may observe in the booth during specified times.

Child Guidance Policy

Children need models and guidance from caring adults. When adults have appropriate expectations for children, they are less likely to feel frustrated and behave in less desirable ways. We treat conflicts as mistaken behavior rather than misbehavior. We teach children how to handle those conflicts rather than punish them.

A "Calm Down Corner" is available as a quiet space for children if they are feeling sad, tired, or frustrated. Pillows, books, calming bottles, and fidget toys are provided in the cozy space.

Snack

A healthy snack will be provided by the program for the first week of school. Thereafter, families will be assigned one full week to provide snack for the class. A grocery-guide list will be provided to assist with shopping for nutritious foods.

All children and teaching staff will eat together to encourage safe and healthy eating habits and to promote social, emotional, and language skills. Children will have individual place mats. Snack will be served family-style in which children will scoop, pour and pass the food and beverages.

Food Allergies/Dietary Restrictions

Allergies or dietary restrictions may require the exclusion of specific food products. Please report any allergies or restrictions to ensure those foods are not provided or accessible. These food items will be posted in the kitchen area to be seen by teaching staff who prepare the snack.

Family-Teacher Communication

As the child's first teachers, the parents/guardians are partners in the educational process. The CDC teaching staff is interested in what your child is doing outside of preschool and want to know about any changes in your child's life, new accomplishments, illness or death of a loved one, changes in schedules, sleep patterns, etc. When events like these occur in children's lives, teachers often observe changes in behavior and want to support their emotional and physical needs.

Our lead Preschool Teacher, Renee Knapp, strongly believes in family-teacher communication. Establishing a positive, collaborative relationship will have a remarkable impact on your child's learning and development. She welcomes in-person communication, e-mails, phone calls or the use of the Class Dojo app to communicate on a daily basis.

Family-Teacher Conferences

At the end of each semester, a conference sign-up will be available. The purpose of the conference is to share the developmental progress of the child and to discuss any needs that the child may have. The program takes a "strengths-based" approach to assessment and planning, meaning that we recognize and value the unique development of individual children and focus on the child's strengths.

Assessment

We believe that the purpose of assessment is to monitor children's development and learning to best meet their needs and to design appropriate curriculum for each child. Child assessment is an ongoing process. We use non-biased developmentally appropriate methods of observation in natural settings, varied methods of documentation (e.g., artwork, photos, and language samples); collaboration with families; and consultation with other professionals when necessary. We strongly believe that although there are some similarities among young children as they develop, each child develops at their own unique rate and in their own unique way. Therefore, we are very open and accepting of each child and where they are at developmentally.

We confidentially observe each child to record observations, evaluate developmental steps each child has accomplished, and plan curriculum to benefit their development. Using the Creative Curriculum's Developmental Continuum, we record and assess this data throughout the year in 5 major domains.

- Social-Emotional Development
- Physical Development (Fine Motor and Gross Motor Skills)
- Cognitive Development
- Language and Literacy Development
- Approaches to Learning

Admission Criteria

1. The program generally serves children ages 3-5 years old.
2. Priority is given to children who have turned three by the first day of school and have mastered toileting.
3. Children who will be turning three by December 1st may be considered for enrollment.

4. Priority is given to families with children who currently or previously attended; however, their younger siblings must be on the enrollment/wait list.
5. Children may turn five prior to the end of the Spring semester.
6. The program serves the community and surrounding communities, as well as, students and college personnel.
7. In compliance with the Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and New York State Human Rights Law and other Federal, state, and local laws, admission is considered without regard to an individual's race, ethnic or national origin, religion, creed, or gender identity.

Enrollment and Wait List

The program maintains an enrollment wait list. Enrollment is based on the date of the child's third birthday, the Admissions Criteria above, and the date when a family member contacted the Early Childhood Department office or the Preschool Teacher to have their child placed on the wait list (first-come, first-serve basis). Families will be asked to provide the child's name, birthdate, parent/guardian name(s), phone number, an e-mail address, and mailing address. The family will be notified when an opening becomes available.

A tuition discount is offered to families who have more than one child enrolled in the program at the same time. The tuition for the second child will be discounted at 25%.

Visiting the Program

We recommend that families visit the CDC before making the decision to enroll their child(ren) into the program. Visits can be arranged by contacting the Preschool Teacher or Program Director.

Tuition/Payment

Families will be billed a non-refundable tuition each semester. Invoices are e-mailed from "Square" and payments must be made with a debit or credit card by using the link that is sent via e-mail. Payment due dates are specified in a welcome letter that is mailed out before the start of a semester. "Square" will also send regular e-mail reminders until the total is paid. If tuition is not paid in full by a given date, the child will be un-enrolled and unable to attend the program.

Tuition Refunds

The program tuition is non-refundable.

If the program is closed due to weather or specific situations, refunds are not offered. If a family chooses to be away from the program due to travel or house guests, a tuition reduction or refund for those days are not offered. If a child is out due to illness, no refunds will be given for absences.

Contact the Director to discuss situations that are beyond control such as long-term illness.

Arrival

The doors will open at 8:15 am for the AM session and at 12:15 pm for the PM session. One practicum student will greet you at the door, taking attendance upon arrival. Another practicum student will bring

the children from the lobby area into the classroom to start their day. The Preschool Teacher will attend to both areas as needed. Families are also welcome to walk their children to their cubbies if desired.

Families arriving late to the program are asked to ring the door bell in the lobby area upon their arrival. A practicum student will be sent out of the classroom greet them and to assist the child into the classroom to join the group.

Departure/Pick-up

The AM preschool session ends at 11:00 am and departure proceeds from 11:00-11:15 am. The PM preschool session ends at 3:00pm and departure proceeds from 3:00-3:15 pm. Prompt pick-up is appreciated as it keeps the flow of traffic moving through the circle, and the practicum students are expected to assist with clean up and writing anecdotal observations of children before their class time is over.

Late Pick-Up

If you are going to be unavoidably delayed in picking up your child(ren), please call 518-255-5696 or reach out to the Preschool Teacher through the ClassDojo app as soon as possible. It helps to comfort your child if the reason and probable extent of the lateness is known. Your child will be in the care of the Preschool Teacher until your arrival.

Authorized Alternative Pick-up Persons

Children will only be released to authorized adults. Please notify the Preschool Teacher or the practicum student at the door, if someone other than a parent or regular pick-up person will be picking up your child on a specific day. If the individual is not recognized by the teaching staff, they will be asked to provide photo identification.

Reporting an Absence

If your child will not be attending preschool, you can either call 518-255-5696 to leave a voicemail or speak to the Preschool Teacher. You can also communicate with the Preschool Teacher via the ClassDojo app.

Closing Policy/Weather

When school closings are reported for SUNY Cobleskill or the Cobleskill-Richmondville Central School District, the CDC will follow the same closings. If there is a one-hour delay in the morning, the CDC will open at 9:15 am and run until it's regular closing time of 11:00 am. In the case of a two-hour delay, the CDC will be closed.

Health Policy

All enrolled children are required to have a completed Medical Report Form and Emergency Card on file in the CDC office. The Medical Report Form is to be completed and signed by the child's physician. A parent/guardian should complete the Emergency Card to ensure that CDC staff will be able to contact you in the event of an emergency. These forms are sent to families along with other important paperwork before the start of school.

The program strives to ensure the optimal well-being for every child through nutrition, exercise, sanitation practices, safety awareness, and through appreciation and support of children's emotional needs. When illness occurs, it is important for the sick child to remain home. We ask families to be sensitive to their child's condition and the health of the other children in the program. If a child becomes ill during the school day, the parents or other designated emergency contact person will be contacted.

Please keep your child home if they have the following symptoms: a fever of 100.0 degrees or higher, vomiting, diarrhea, heavy nasal discharge that may indicate sinus infections, cold/flu symptoms, coughing that is deep or causing discomfort, unexplained rash, communicable disease or head lice.

**Children should be clear of these symptoms for at least 24 hours before returning.*

The Preschool Teacher should be notified of any communicable diseases. A medical release from the child's physician may be required before re-entrance, depending on type and/or severity of the communicable disease.

Medication

CDC staff is not generally certified to administer medication to children. However, the Preschool Teacher and Director are both certified in American Red Cross CPR/First Aid for infants, children and adults. This certification includes training of how to administer an Epi-Pen to an individual having a severe allergic reaction. An Epi-Pen must be provided by the family for a child with such allergies. Specific medication will be placed in the classroom first-aid kit, and carried in a backpack on field trips.

Medical Emergencies

In the case of a serious accidental injury or medical situation, we will immediately call 9-1-1. Then we will attempt to contact a parent or family member that is listed on the emergency contact card on file. University Police will also assist us with all emergencies.

The Preschool Teacher, the Director and other EC staff have completed a "Stop the Bleed" course in which they were trained how to pressure, pack, or apply a tourniquet to an open wound.

Child Abuse and Neglect

In accordance with state law and regulation, as well as early childhood professional practices, the CDC policy is to report all instances of child abuse and/or neglect of a child as soon as there is reasonable cause to believe that abuse or neglect may have occurred. If the Preschool Teacher or a college student believes that abuse/neglect may have occurred, they are to convey this belief immediately to the Director, Elise Weiss.

Once the Director has been notified, or if she believes there is reasonable cause to believe that abuse or neglect of a child may have occurred, she is mandated by law (NYS OCFS) to contact the Department of Social Services (DSS) and make a report of the suspected abuse or neglect. Under guidance from DSS, immediate action will be taken to safeguard children.

All staff have training in the observation and reporting of child abuse and neglect. In addition, all staff and practicum students must submit their names to the New York State Central Registry for clearance or any charges of child abuse or neglect to be permitted to work with children on campus. If child abuse is suspected, one should contact the following:

Child Abuse and Maltreatment Reporting Center

-800-342-3720

Schoharie County Department of Social Services

-518-295-8334

SUNY Child Protection Policy

As per SUNY legal requirements, all staff, practicum students and interns must complete the SUNY Child Protection Policy training and have a clear criminal background check to work in the CDC preschool.

Fire Drills

Fire drills are conducted at the CDC at least two times per semester. The drills are done according to the college guidelines for safety codes and procedures. Children will be directed to exit the building through the playground doors, and to walk to the top of the hill where the Preschool teacher will complete a head count to ensure that all children have exited the building.

Every Fall, the Cobleskill Fire Department will visit the classroom to educate children of fire safety.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted on campus except for designated outdoor gazebo areas. The entire CDC in Holmes Hall, the outdoor play space, and the drop-off/pick-up circle are smoke free zones.

Volunteer Guidelines

We value the time and talents of parents and other community members. In the best interest of the children and families we serve, we kindly ask all volunteers to follow these guidelines.

- Plan your volunteer time in advance by contacting the Preschool Teacher.
- Please consult your plans/ideas with the Preschool Teacher to ensure they are developmentally appropriate.
- Interactions are expected to be appropriate and respectful.
- Expect to be in the presence of the Preschool Teacher and other staff. Volunteers are not permitted to be alone with children at any given time.

Volunteers are always appreciated when we adventure on campus field trips to assist in holding hands or pulling wagons.

Birthdays

Children's birthdays may be celebrated at preschool upon family request. The children may enjoy special snacks donated by their families. It is kindly asked that families take any dietary needs into account, so all children may be included. The birthday child will be sung to at group time. A birthday headband and children's book will be gifted from their preschool teacher. Family members are always welcome to visit

or contribute other ideas for their special day. Please discuss any ideas with the Preschool Teacher in advance.

If you are planning a birthday party for your child outside of school, please include all children or deliver to specific families outside of the CDC.

Toys and Objects from Home

Children are discouraged from bringing toys from home to preschool. Prized possessions are sometimes difficult to share or may become disappointingly lost or broken. Special objects may be shared at group times when planned in advance.

We recognize that some children often need an object, a toy, or blanket to help make the transition from home to school easier. Small or special items which help a child in that way may be discussed with the Preschool Teacher, and a transition plan can be created.

Clothing

Children will be using water, sand, paint, play-dough, and other messy materials daily. Although smocks are available, we urge parents/guardians to send children to preschool in clothes that are meant for work and play. Clothing may become dirty or stained. Children will need spare clothing, so they can be changed when necessary.

If weather permits, children will play outside daily throughout the change of seasons. Please plan accordingly. For example, children will need a jacket, snowpants, boots, hats, and mittens for playing in the snow. Labeling their outerwear is helpful.

Children will be encouraged to use their self-help skills as they toilet on their own. Please avoid dressing your child in outfits with complicated fastenings such as overalls.

Contributions

Donations are welcomed and appreciated! Please feel free to donate or contribute plants, wood scraps, children's books, wooden puzzles, lightly used clothing, etc. Recycled materials such as cardboard tubes, newspapers, tissue boxes or egg cartons are most preferred. When special projects or events are planned, families may be asked to contribute specific items.

Addressing a Concern

If you have a concern regarding the program, please bring it to the attention of the Preschool Teacher. She will assist you with concerns associated with the program, your child, practicum student, or other staff member. The Director may also be contacted if necessary.

Parking/Crosswalks

Please place your "Parent Pick-Up/Drop-Off" or "Volunteer/Attending Field Trip" parking permit on your dashboard when parking. When dropping off or picking up your child, you may park temporarily in spaces along Albany Avenue, and you may pull in around the circle. When volunteering or attending a field trip you will be permitted to park in available spaces along Albany Avenue, in the C-lot, or near the athletic fields. Parking will not be permitted at the circle due to the longer duration of time.

*Please note that the maximum speed limit on campus is 20 mph. There is no parking at any time on campus roadways or grass.

You must always stop for pedestrians in the crosswalks. When using crosswalks, always push the button to initiate the flashing lights and look both ways to be sure that traffic has stopped prior to crossing.

Directory

Child Development Center Renee Knapp, Preschool Teacher	Holmes Hall 128	518-255-5696 knapprc@cobleskill.edu
Elise Weiss, Director and Department Chair of Early Childhood	Holmes Hall 232 A	518-255-5459 weissen@cobleskill.edu