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Definition of Role

The University of Alabama at Birmingham defines its role in three areas: instruction, research, and service. UAB defines its role in the area of instruction as providing broad-based instructional programs that serve the needs of a diverse student body. This diversity also includes many non-traditional students beyond the 18-24 year range. The child development center supports this role by reflecting cultural diversity in both staff and child populations.

Goals and Mission

Staff members at the UAB Child Development Center are expected to plan activities that allow children of many cultures to find their culture included in the center. Teachers’ responsibilities consist of planning flexible activities that allow for full participation by all children.

UAB notes that the national reputation of its programs for health professions and biomedical sciences requires complementary academic programs in many other areas. The UAB Child Development Center supports this role of the university by providing a professional quality child care service. Our center provides services designed to meet the needs of practicing health care professionals in the medical center, as well as university staff.

Staff at the UAB Child Development Center is expected to uphold the highest ethical standards of early childhood practice. All staff of UAB Child Development Center is expected to follow the Code of Ethics of the National Association for the Education of Young Children when working with children, their parents, and other staff members. Each staff member is expected to participate in quality improvement plans related to curriculum, parent relationships, infection control, and professional development/education.

UAB is one of the nation's leading research institutions emphasizing both basic and applied research. The university notes that although the majority of research activities are in the areas of biomedical science, all instructional programs are expected to participate in research activities. The university defines one of its research goals as contributing to the understanding of the city's economic, social, and cultural needs. The parallel role of the UAB Child Development Center is to provide an environment that is open to the provision of appropriate research opportunities that do not intrude upon the privacy of children or their families. Professional staff of the UAB Child Development Center is expected to participate in approved research activities with a variety of interdisciplinary faculty teams. These activities may occur in the center or in the community at large. The staff of UAB Child Development Center is expected to cooperate with approved projects that are carried out within the center.

UAB notes that as the senior public doctoral-level institution in the state's major urban area, the university has a commitment to comprehensive programs of continuing education that are consistent with the quality and diversity of its other offerings. UAB expects its faculty, staff, and students to serve as resources to the urban area in activities related to professional, economic,
and cultural growth and development. The role of UAB Child Development Center is to provide the community with a model of high quality, professional child care. This model includes provision of a curriculum that reflects the current understanding of the best child care practice. Services at UAB Child Development Center support the wide variety of educational opportunities and the varying work/class schedules reflected in the university community. Professional staff of the UAB Child Development Center is expected to be active in the child care community by participating in professional associations and sharing their expertise with other child care groups in the community. Staff of the UAB Child Development Center is expected to demonstrate commitment to the implementation and continuous improvement of a developmentally appropriate curriculum.

The UAB Child Development Center is a department of UAB Human Resources and operates under the authority of the Executive Director, HR Specialist. The Center was established to provide a quality child care facility aimed at helping parent-employees fulfill work, study and family responsibilities without sacrificing their occupational or educational goals or the quality of their family life. The Center program and policies are designed to be consistent with the University mission as an institution of higher education, while placing as foremost the quality of care received by the children enrolled.

**Learning Experiences**

The goals of the UAB Child Development Center include providing a high quality early childhood program that equally promotes physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development in a safe and caring environment. The philosophy of the center holds that young children learn from interactions with other children and from interactions with the environment, as well as from interaction with adults. UAB Child Development Center bases its learning program on the recommendations of developmentally appropriate practice as defined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC is the national professional association of early childhood teachers. The following statements are taken from Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs by Sue Bredekamp (NAEYC, 1988). These statements serve as the framework for the activities and policies of the UAB Child Development Center.

Developmental appropriateness has two parts that are equally important:
1. age appropriateness
2. individual appropriateness

Age appropriateness refers to the universally accepted norms of human development-the "ages and stages" of childhood. These changes are the typical and predictable phases that occur as children grow. Individual appropriateness refers to the individual's unique needs, personality, family background and experiences.

The following principles are used in planning for learning experiences in this center:

I. Curriculum

An overview of the center's philosophy regarding appropriate learning experiences for young children and infants
II. Adult-Child Interactions
Good teaching practices which promote healthy attachments between children and teaching staff

III. Relations Between the Home and Program
Provides foundational information regarding open communication between teachers, administrators, and parents

IV. Development Evaluation of Children
By implementing various types of assessments/evaluations, early childhood teachers can plan an appropriate curriculum and evaluate the developmental progress of young children.

I. Curriculum

A. Developmentally appropriate curriculum provides for all areas of a child's development: physical, emotional, social, and cognitive through an integrated approach.

B. Appropriate curriculum planning is based on teachers' observations and recording of each child's special interests and developmental progress.

C. Curriculum planning emphasizes learning as in interactive process. Teachers prepare the environment for children to learn through active exploration and interaction with adults, other children, and materials.

D. Learning activities and materials are concrete, real and relevant to the lives of young children.

E. Programs provide for a wider range of developmental interests and abilities than the chronological age range of the group would suggest. Adults are prepared to meet the needs of children who exhibit unusual interests and skills outside the normal developmental range.

F. Teachers provide a variety of activities and materials; teachers increase the difficulty, the complexity and the challenge of an activity as children are involved with it and as children develop understanding and skills.

G. Adults provide opportunities for children to choose from among a variety of activities, materials, and equipment; and time to explore through active involvement. Adults facilitate children's engagement with materials and activities and extend the child's learning by asking questions or making suggestions that stimulate children's thinking.

H. Multicultural and nonsexist experiences, materials, and equipment are provided for children of all ages.

I. Adults provide a balance of rest and active movement for children throughout the program day.

J. Outdoor experiences are provided for children of all ages.
II. Adult-Child Interactions

A. Adults respond quickly and directly to children's needs, desires, and messages and adapt their responses to children's differing styles and abilities.

B. Adults provide many varied opportunities for children to communicate.

C. Adults facilitate a child's successful completion of tasks by providing support, focused attention, physical proximity, and verbal encouragement. Adults recognize that children's misconceptions reflect their developing thoughts.

D. Teachers are alert to signs of undue stress in children's behavior, and are aware of appropriate stress-reducing activities and techniques.

E. Adults facilitate the development of self-esteem by respecting, accepting, and comforting children, regardless of the child's behavior.

F. Adults facilitate the development of self-control in children.

G. Adults are responsible for all children under their supervision at all times and plan for increasing independence as children acquire skills.

III. Relations between the Home and Program

A. Parents have both the right and the responsibility to share in decisions about their children's care and education. Parents are encouraged to observe and participate. Teachers are responsible for establishing and maintaining frequent contacts with families.

B. Teachers share child development knowledge, insights, and resources as part of regular communications and conferences with family members.

IV. Development Evaluation of Children

A. Decisions that have a major impact on children such as enrollment and group placement are based on developmental assessment or screening along with other relevant information, including observations by teachers and parents' reports.

B. Developmental assessment of children's progress and achievements is used to adapt curriculum to match the developmental needs of children, to communicate with the child's family, and to evaluate the program's effectiveness.

C. Developmental assessments and observations are used to identify children who have special needs and/or who are at risk and to plan appropriate curriculum for them.

D. Developmental expectations are based on standardized measurements and norms. The norms used, Denver II, are age-matched, gender, culture, and socio-economically appropriate.
Discipline

Teachers are expected to try to prevent problems before they arise by arranging rooms and the program to meet the developmental needs of the children. Such arrangements include the number of children assigned to each teacher; having a wide selection of toys and duplicates of popular items whenever possible; arranging the classrooms so that children can be as independent as possible and will not have to wait for long periods; arranging the daily schedule to balance the needs of children to be physically active and to rest; allowing children to be physically active and to rest; allowing children a choice of challenging activities suited to their developmental level.

When correction is necessary, teachers will use a kind, firm voice to redirect or restate the rule. No physical or harsh verbal discipline of children is allowed. Discipline that is associated with food, naps, or bathroom procedures is not permitted. Yelling, screaming at children, humiliating, shaming, threatening, frightening children or making derogatory comments about children or their families is not permitted. A discipline manual compiled of various articles dealing with common discipline issues has been distributed to each classroom. This notebook contains articles that deal with issues such as: Transitioning through the day, consistency in daily activities, appropriate schedules and expectations for young children, infants, and toddlers. Articles that are directed towards parents should always be read by each teacher prior to distributing the article to parents. If a parent has a question or concern regarding the topic discussed in the article the classroom teacher should be familiar with the article in order to discuss it with the parent.

When a child is extremely stressed or upset, separation from the group for a brief period may be advisable to allow the child an opportunity to calm him/herself. However, "Time-Out" as a typical means of discipline is strongly discouraged. Teachers are expected to redirect the child, restate the rule, and provide the support the child needs to find a more constructive behavior. When teachers become stressed dealing with a child’s behavior they are encouraged to:

1. arrange to take a short break from the classroom;
2. arrange with the Manager or Director to take responsibility for the difficult child/children for a short while.

When a teacher experiences repeated difficulties with a child or a group of children, the Asst. Director or Director will encourage a careful analysis of possible factors that contribute to the situation. This analysis may include observations of the classroom, as well as discussions with teachers and parents. The analysis should result in a strategy to meet the child’s individual needs. When a child will not or cannot respond, parents will be notified. In some cases, parents may be required to come immediately and take their child home.