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(626) 395-3386

Beaver Classroom:
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www.childrenscenteratcaltech.org
WELCOME TO
THE CHILDREN’S CENTER AT CALTECH

Mission Statement

The Children’s Center at Caltech is a non-profit organization providing high quality early education and care for children ages six months through six years for the Caltech, JPL and Pasadena communities. Caring, nurturing and qualified educators, trained and experienced in child development and early childhood education, staff this outstanding program. The Center has resources to support child, staff, and parenting development. In addition, the Center provides training in the form of practical development for students from surrounding colleges and universities who are pursuing a career in the field of early childhood development.

To accomplish all this, every effort is made to build and nurture relationships of mutual respect among the children, parents, community and early childhood education professionals.

Introduction

We aspire to make your time at the Center enriching for you and your family. This Parent Handbook contains important information that will assist in guiding you through this important journey at the Center. Please read it carefully. As a parent you are welcome and encouraged to participate in your child’s daily care and education here. Parent involvement will greatly enhance your child’s experience and foster continuity between home and Center. If you have any questions, please feel free to discuss them with your child’s Teacher or the Director. You are welcome to visit the Center at any time.

Philosophy and Goals

The philosophy of the Children’s Center at Caltech (CCC) has its basis in a humanistic view of the child as an independent and individual learner. The aim of the program is to respond to the needs of every child as s/he develops awareness of the world and readiness for learning. Each group provides developmentally appropriate materials and activities for every child in the areas of social/emotional, intellectual and aesthetic growth and psychomotor development, while fostering a positive self-concept.

Through planned activities, children are challenged to explore their world, solve problems, develop physically, and expand language skills and concepts. Teachers nurture a sense of competence and self-worth in every child. The emphasis is on active, hands-on learning that addresses the needs of the whole child in the areas of social, emotional, cognitive, creative and physical growth.

Following long-term and current research on how children learn, the Center offers both planned and spontaneous activities, encouraging independence while presenting limits that arise from being part of a group. Teachers provide a variety of choices for play designed to encourage physical skills, cognitive learning, problem solving and independent thought. Resources and encouragement are available for those children who are ready for more directed, academic learning. Our approach is consistent with research based on long term observation of young
children, which indicates that they learn best through their senses, needing many opportunities to initiate learning on their own, and needing periods of choice that alternate with periods of guidance. By means of these age-appropriate activities, a strong foundation is built for the kindergarten experience.

**History of the Children’s Center at Caltech**

The Children's Center at Caltech opened in 1972 in a former home that had also been used as a dormitory, at 293 S. Chester. It was founded with the approval of Caltech by a group of Caltech wives and students, plus several non-Caltech Pasadena women. Like most child care centers, it has experienced growing pains and changes. In the early years, the Center had low enrollment and high staff turnover. More than once it appeared that it might have to close.

In 1988, a second classroom at 303 S. Chester was opened. A third house at 296 S. Chester, opened in 1990. In July of 1998, a Toddler Option with portable classroom adjacent to 296 S. Chester was added. This environment cultivates a home-like atmosphere. The latest addition is the office/training room in the house on the southeast corner of Del Mar and Chester.

In the early years the Center was financially independent, paying all its own operational expenses. Gradually, Caltech increased its support of the Center, and now aids substantially in terms of free rent, utilities, maintenance, repairs, and gardening. However, the Center remains separate as a private non-profit corporation with its own governing Board. Parents make up the majority of the Board of Directors. All parents are members of the corporation. The Center draws families from all over the world, making for a richly multicultural group.

Today the Community Care Division of the State of California licenses the Center to serve 99 children. Families of differing social and ethnic backgrounds, from Caltech and the community at large, are accepted on a non-discriminatory basis. There are six classroom groups. The Center serves as a lab school for nearby colleges and universities and helps train many child development students each year.

We foster a close relationship between home and school. Parents are welcome to visit the classroom, accompany the children on field trips, and participate in planned classroom activities. The high adult-child ratio allows for the individual needs of every child to be met in a comfortable, supportive setting. The Children's Center first achieved accreditation from the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs in 1993 and has been re-certified every year since then.

Children from six months to six years are accepted in the two, three, or five-day program. They are grouped by age as follows:

- **Bunnies (6-24 months)**: 10 children  
- **Dolphins (18-30 months)**: 12 children  
- **Penguins (2-3 years)**: 15 children  
- **Koalas (3-4 years)**: 22 children  
- **Raccoons (3.5-4.5 years)**: 17 children  
- **Beavers (4-5 years)**: 24 children

Caltech provides many in-kind services and the Center occupies buildings owned by Caltech rent-free; however our operating budget is based on tuition income alone. Monies from fundraising activities are spent on major acquisitions or special items. In addition, a Teacher's Holiday Gift Fund and a Tuition Assistance Fund have been established. Contributions to these
funds, or the program in general, are welcome. Contributions made to the Center are tax
deductible.

Board of Directors

A Board of Directors governs the Children’s Center. The Board consists of parents, staff, and
members of the community who are elected by the general membership of the Children’s
Center. The Center Director is hired by The Board and is the sole employee of The Board.
The Board has full legal responsibility for the Center. The officers are voted in once a year and
parent participation hours are waived for those serving as officers.

The Board meets at 7:00 p.m. on the third Monday of each month at an announced location on
campus. Meetings are posted each month on the Center website and are open to any members
of the Center community wishing to attend. There are seven standing committees of the Board:
Finance, Fundraising, Strategic Planning, the Committee on Trustees, the Committee for Parent
Communication, Personnel, and Facilities.

Parent Teacher Partnership

The Parent Teacher Partnership (PTP) meets bi-monthly, typically at noon at the Center.
Parents in attendance receive one-hour credit toward their parent participation hours. Topics of
general interest are planned by the teaching staff and often include community experts and
cover issues such as best practices. When parents and teachers work together, it maximizes
the children’s experience at the Center.

Staff

The Children’s Center staff consists of highly qualified educators trained in Early Childhood
Education. Many of our teachers hold Associate, Bachelors and/or Masters degrees. Our low
teacher/child ratios allow for the staff to plan and provide a high quality program in each of our
classrooms.

The CCC is committed to maintaining a staff that is consistently on the cutting edge of the Early
Childhood Education field. Our teachers are provided myriad opportunities for professional
growth. All staff are encouraged to continue education in Early Childhood Education, to
participate in staff development opportunities and to take First Aid/CPR and Health and Safety
training annually.

Curriculum

The teachers thoughtfully plan classroom curriculum. Broad objectives for each month, as well
as retrospective summaries of daily activities, are posted on the bulletin boards located in each
room. We believe that while curriculum should be meticulously planned, good teaching also
involves being ready and able to catch the teachable moment by following the interests of an
individual child or group into activities that may not have been pre-planned.
The Center provides activities that offer a variety of choices designed to encourage physical skills, cognitive learning, problem solving and independence. Active physical play, conceptual learning, art, music, science, language development, early literacy and dramatic play are a part of the daily program. Materials and encouragement are available for children that are appropriate to their developmental level.

An important component of our curriculum is the embracing of the entire human family. The books we read, the songs we sing, and many of our cooking projects follow this theme. Parents are encouraged to share meaningful family traditions in the classroom. This is one of the many ways we celebrate our diversity. We touch on our heritage at Thanksgiving; we celebrate winter and our appreciation of loved ones in December; and we construct and mail letters in February, including a walking trip to the post office located on campus. While we do follow the events of the year in our planning, especially in our science projects, we do not have a holiday-dictated approach.

Art activities of all kinds are done daily with the children, from the simplest crayon and paper drawings to carpentry and multi-media projects such as finger painting and collage creation. Our philosophy is that the process is important, not the product; the children are given a variety of open-ended materials and are encouraged to make what they will from them.

Curriculum varies according to age. As children mature, they engage in increasingly intricate and challenging activities. Year to year, curriculum reflects the dynamic that no one group of children is like another. This flexibility allows our teachers the opportunity to assess the nature of their group and design plans accordingly.

**Center Operating Policies**

**Sign-in, sign-out:** Each day your child(ren) must be brought into the classroom by an adult. As mandated by State Law, the adult must sign his/her full name on the sign-in sheet. The same is also required at pick-up time. Only adults who are authorized on the emergency cards will be allowed to pick up any child. Please make sure that a teacher knows when your child has arrived or is leaving.

**Hours, late fees:** The Center hours are 7:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. Most children arrive between 7:30 and 9:30 a.m., and depart between 3:30 and 5:30 p.m. We ask that you bring your child most days by 9:30 a.m. Parents of Bunnies and Dolphins should call in advance if they wish to bring their child after 11:00 am.

It is important to consistently pick-up your child(ren) before closing time as the staff need time to clean up and prepare for the next day. There is a grace period until 5:45 p.m. for pick-up. If you are on the property after 5:45 p.m., you will be charged $2 per minute or $10.00 for each five minutes past closing time. This late fee will be used for staff development. Families with two children will need to pay late fees for both children, if arriving at the Center after 5:45 p.m.

If you will be late, the courtesy of a phone call is appreciated, both by your child and the staff; however, the late charge will still be assessed. Persistent and excessive tardiness will result in doubled late charges.

**Parking:** There is a green one-hour parking zone in front of the Center. Parking is also available in the lots adjacent to the Koala and Dolphin yards, and on public streets; however,
these spots require Caltech parking permits. Daily permits can be purchased at pay stations throughout the campus.

**Gates:** It is imperative that all doors and gates be closed and latched behind you when you enter or leave the center.

**Annual Calendar:** The Center is open year round. National Holidays are scheduled in conjunction with the Caltech calendar. A typical Holiday calendar will be:

- Martin Luther King Day
- President’s Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day after Thanksgiving (Friday)
- One week for Winter Holiday Break

Additionally there will be two scheduled closures each year to facilitate staff development training. These closures will be announced on the Center website and on bulletin boards, well in advance.

**Communication:** There are many lines of communication available between staff and parents. All lead teachers and administration have email addresses for direct communication; information is frequently posted and updated on the Center website; and each family has a mailbox in their child’s classroom. Because each “child” is assigned a classroom mailbox you may have multiple mailboxes in more than one classroom attended by your children. (Therefore you may receive multiple copies of announcements.) Please check your classroom mailbox and your email daily for information from the Center.

**Individual Teacher mailboxes** are also provided in each classroom, should you need to get a message to any classroom teacher. The office boxes in each classroom are supplied with paper and pencils and may be used to get a message to anyone in the office. In turn, you may receive messages from administrators in your family classroom mailbox and/or via email.

The **bulletin boards** in each classroom have news and information regarding events at the Center. Please check them frequently. The following forms are also found on the bulletin boards:

- Medical Dosage Forms
- Sign-in/sign-out sheets. Parents are required by law to sign their child (ren) in and out each day. You must sign in with your full legal signature and the time.
- Snack menus
- Notice of any contagious illness within the Center
- Upcoming events
- Daily schedules
- Staffing schedules
- Curriculum plans

A **Newsletter** is published every month and emailed to all parents by the classroom room parent. Important events, highlights from each group, articles, and fundraising information may
be included. If you would like to contribute an article or item in the Newsletter, please drop it in the Office mailbox.

Another source of information regarding the Children’s Center is the CCC website: www.childrenscenteratcaltech.org. The website provides contact information, driving directions, a center-wide calendar, a copy of this parent handbook, the latest snack menu, the newsletter, as well as other pertinent information about the Center.

Parent-Teacher Conferences are held formally at least once a year with each family, and twice a year for new families. Informal conferences can be scheduled at any time by either parents or teacher. Daily, informal chats with teachers are highly encouraged, though the children’s presence demands that these be brief.

E-mail: The CCC Directory is updated each year and contains mailing addresses, emails, and phone numbers of the Center families. For privacy reasons (and to avoid junk e-mail) we do not publish these addresses on-line. However, the Directory is provided to all families at the beginning of the school year.

Finally, in each classroom, there is a Daybook in which you may leave and receive messages.

Nutrition

**Snacks:** Snack menus are posted on the website and in each classroom. The Center provides nutritious morning and afternoon snacks. Milk is provided with snacks and lunch.

**Lunches:** If your child’s lunch contains perishable items, please place the labeled container in the refrigerator. Remember to label lunch boxes and bags, containers and lids. Uneaten lunch foods will be left in the child’s lunch box unless the food is very messy. This allows you to determine the amount/types of food that fit your child’s appetite.

**Recommendations:** Healthy eating habits are part of the Center’s policy. Please do not send items such as chips, fast food, candy, gum, chocolate, soda pop, high sugared fruit punch or drinks, high sugar cupcakes and other pastries, or marshmallows to the Children’s Center. As a guideline, if the first ingredient listed on the container is a form of sugar, please leave it for home snacking. Experience tells us that if a child’s lunch contains these items, s/he tends not to eat much of the other foods you send.

For safety reasons, no food should be served which is a size and/or consistency that could cause choking. **Specific foods that fall into the “risk category”** include, but are not limited to: popcorn, cherries with pits, whole grapes (for children two and younger), whole hard-boiled eggs, and hot dogs. If there is a concern about the appropriateness of an item, the Lead Teacher will communicate her/his concern directly to the parents.

The Center has a **“no nuts” policy.** This policy will include but is not limited to: walnuts, almonds, hazelnuts, pecans, macadamias, pistachios, and any kind of food that may include any type of nut. While we know the policy may come as a surprise, let us assure you the decision was not arbitrary. The reason behind the decision is literally a matter of life and death. A few children in the Center have a life-threatening allergy to nuts.

**Birthdays:** You are welcome to come celebrate your child’s birthday with the group. We want children to connect feeling special with healthy foods, and the Center will provide your child’s
favorite snack on their birthday. We will put candles in their snack, sing Happy Birthday, read stories, and, in general, make your child feel special.

**Personal Possessions**

All items, clothing and other belongings, **MUST BE LABELED** with your child’s name. Your child should have a complete change of clothing in his/her cubby at all times, including a waterproof bag for wet or soiled clothing. The Center has a limited amount of clothing to be **loaned** for emergencies (for example, to clean up after clothes are soiled by sudden illness or a toileting accident). Center clothes that are **loaned** to your child must be washed and returned to the Center by the following week. When the weather is warm, you may send a bathing suit and towel for water play.

For naptime, your child will need a crib-size blanket. In the preschool classrooms, your child will also need a crib-size sheet for their mat (sheets are provided in the Bunny and Dolphin rooms). The sheet and blanket **MUST BE LABELED WITH YOUR CHILD’S NAME** and taken home each Friday for laundering. (Crib/mat sheets are laundered daily in the Bunny class by housekeeping staff.) If you wish, a comforting stuffed animal or doll may be brought to the Center for naptime.

Children are often eager to bring toys from home to the Center; however, the risk of damage, lost parts or misplacing the toy is great. The Center strongly discourages bringing toys from home, and staff cannot be responsible for these items. For “sharing”, we encourage bringing age-appropriate books, tapes and “discoveries” such as corncobs, seedpods, feathers, interesting leaves, sprouting onions, shells, pebbles, etc. These treasures are often displayed in the science area where they stimulate discussion and exploration. Be sure to label any of these types of items your child wants back; otherwise the Center and its staff cannot be responsible for them.

**Clothing**

Children should be dressed **comfortably** for the day’s probable weather and temperature. Layers are best! As much as possible, **children should wear clothes that can be soiled** without it being a source of anxiety for them or frustration for you. Our paints are supposed to be washable, but occasionally they don’t completely wash out.

**Shoes:** Sneakers are best! In hot summer weather, sturdy sandals are acceptable. Active children need to wear supportive, soft-soled, flexible non-skid shoes. No flip-flops please, and no boots or shiny-soled “party” shoes.

**Health and Safety**

We will inform you of any contagious disease or condition occurring in your child’s group, with a printed notice next to the sign-in sheet. As part of the enrollment process, parents are required to sign a **Medical Emergencies Consent Slip**, which provides the Center with information concerning the child’s physician, drug and medication allergies as well as a medical release. Parents must notify the Center **immediately** of changes in emergency and identification information, including a change of physician.
Sick Child Policy: When in doubt about your child’s health, keep him/her home. Please remember that the teachers and other children may catch the illness that an ill child may bring to school. Keep your child home if s/he:

- is in the first three days of a cold
- has a sore throat
- has had a temperature greater than 100°, with or without other symptoms, in the past 24 hours
- has lice
- has been vomiting in the past 24 hours
- has had diarrhea in the past 24 hours
- has impetigo (strep or staph infection on the skin)
- has an untreated conjunctivitis (“pink eye”)
- has any unidentified rash
- or any other contagious disease or condition

Please notify your child’s teacher if your child has not been feeling well, or is acting “out of sorts.” Additionally, a green nasal discharge may indicate an infection requiring treatment by a physician. Please notify your child’s teacher or the office if your child has contracted any of the above-mentioned conditions.

If your child becomes ill while at school, you will be contacted to discuss the symptoms and you may be asked to take the child home within one hour. Your child may return to class after s/he is free of the above symptoms for 24 hours and can fully participate in the classroom’s daily activities. If your child has a fever, s/he may not return to the Center until s/he has been fever-free without the aid of fever reducing medicine for 24 hours.

Medication: We understand that children will occasionally need to take medicine at school. Your child’s Teacher will administer the medicine; however, you are required to complete a Medical Dosage Form and only medication in its original bottle will be dispensed. Blank forms can be found on the website as well as in each classroom. Center staff will administer medication only once per day. If a child needs to receive medication more than once in 6-8 hours, the child must be kept home.

No over the counter medication will be given to any child unless directed and approved by the physician. The physician should prescribe specific amounts and intervals for a specific condition before any medication is administered. If your child has a chronic medical condition, you will need to have a Physician Instruction Form, Chronic Condition on file with your child’s teacher.

MEDICATION REMINDER: Please do not send medication of any kind in your child’s lunch. Medication in its original bottle, labeled with your child’s name and dosage, should be given to your child’s Teacher, who will place it in a locked box, either on or inside the refrigerator.

Car Seat Law: We also remind you to use child safety seats (car safety seats or booster seats) for all children up to 8 years of age, under 4’ 10”, and under 60 pounds, and to use safety belts at all times.
Discipline

The goal of positive guidance or discipline is to help children learn to consider and respect others and the environment around them, as well as to feel secure and in control of himself or herself. Young children need to learn what is acceptable and how to live cooperatively with others. Self-discipline is the ultimate goal we set for the children. We strive to make each child intrinsically motivated to value accepted behaviors.

At the Center, clear and consistent age appropriate limits on behavior are set. The environment is arranged in such a manner as to minimize the necessity of limits, and children are allowed to participate in the decision making process. As the Children’s Center at Caltech has a strong commitment to developing a positive sense of self-esteem and independent, responsible and caring behavior on the part of the children, we approach discipline in a positive rather than punitive manner. Teachers model appropriate behavior and provide positive reinforcement, praising children for exhibiting those behaviors. Additionally, the teachers provide reminders and cues as to acceptable behavior, as well as facilitate problem solving amongst the children.

When unacceptable behavior occurs, the first course of action is positive redirection, with the understanding that the child may return to an area or activity when they are able to use proper behavior. **At no time will a child be struck, roughly handled, verbally abused, or demeaned. Bullying will not be tolerated. This behavior is categorically prohibited. This rule applies to all adults and children on the CCC premises.**

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

All staff working with children are mandated by the State of California to report any suspected child abuse or neglect. Reports, by law, are made without prior notification to parents, to the Protective Services Division of the local Department of Social Services. Signs of abuse and neglect include, but are not limited to: bruises, burns, prolonged inability of the child to interact with or relate to staff and/or children, or inflammation or other abnormal appearance of genitals.

We ask that you tell us the cause of visible bruises, etc. that have been incurred at home, and we in turn will notify you of the circumstances surrounding any injuries sustained at school.

One other item considered to be child neglect is leaving an unattended child in a car. If a staff member observes an unattended child in a car, she or he will mention it to the child’s parent.

We earnestly wish to work in partnership with parents. For further information regarding the Child Abuse Reporting law, you may consult the Attorney General’s *Child Abuse Prevention Handbook* in the Children’s Center Office.

Disaster Preparedness

**Fire, Emergency, and Shelter in Place Drills:** Fire and Emergency drills are conducted monthly to familiarize staff and children with disaster procedures. The usual evacuation destinations for each group are posted in each classroom.
**Emergency Supplies:** The Children’s Center keeps emergency supplies on hand in the event of a major disaster when children might need to remain at the Center.

**Emergency Evacuations:** After a major disaster, if the Center facilities are considered safe by the staff of the Caltech Housing Department and Physical Plant, the children will be kept at the Center. If necessary, an alternate facility will be determined by the Institute. If the children have been moved elsewhere, information will be posted at all the regular entrances to the Center.

The Children’s Center is included in Caltech’s Disaster Preparedness plan, which provides shelter, food, water and basic medical attention for a 72-hour period. Children will be released only to a parent or designate listed on your Emergency Information Form kept on file at the Center.

**Air Quality**

The Children’s Center is aware of and concerned about air quality. We consult with the AQMD and refer to the Lead Teacher’s discretion to ensure the air quality is within a healthy range before going outside to play. The AQMD phone number, for your reference, is 1-800-242-4022.

**Dismissal Policy**

We want to partner with parents to solve any discipline problem. However, physical or emotional abuse of another child or teacher, which is determined to be excessive or repetitious by the Staff and Director, will be grounds for dismissal.

Following is an outline of steps that will be taken before dismissal will be considered:

- Initially, a parent conference will be scheduled to discuss the behavior(s) needing to be addressed, and to develop a plan to correct them.
- An outside assessment may be appropriate to help evaluate the problem and assist in developing a plan to correct it. This may result in additional cost to the parent.
- Next, a reasonable amount of time will be given for improvement in the child’s behavior. Another parent conference will be scheduled to evaluate the child’s progress.
- Finally, if the behavior persists, and cannot be resolved to the Center’s and the parents’ satisfaction, it may be determined by the Director and Staff that the program does not meet the child’s needs. At that time it may be necessary to withdraw the child from the program.

Parents’ non-support of or non-adherence to Children’s Center policies will be cause for dismissal.

**Grievances**

It is the Children’s Center policy to establish and maintain the necessary atmosphere for healthy Staff and Parent relationships. As a vital part of this process, participants in the program must have the opportunity to submit complaints or grievances arising from work situations. The Center has provided a grievance procedure designed to give such matters careful consideration and bring
them to a fair and speedy resolution. All grievance issues will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Traditionally most adults contribute to the CCC environment in a happy, healthy and harmonious manner. However, we understand that from time to time situations may arise that need to be addressed. We believe that grievances and personal complaints are best handled informally and expeditiously. Parents are encouraged to speak to their Lead Teacher or to the Director with concerns, questions and suggestions. In the event that further steps need to be taken for resolution of the parents’ concern, following are the steps for filing and resolution of grievances is in place:

**Step I** - A written notice should be submitted to the Center Director clearly outlining the issues to be addressed. The Director will make a reasonable effort to obtain the necessary facts and to resolve the issue immediately. When appropriate, parents may request that the Director set up a special meeting with one or more affected staff in order to provide a forum in which to discuss the grievance issues. The Center Director will do fact gathering and respond to the parent no later than 10 working days from the date the grievance was first received.

**Step II** - In the event a mutually satisfactory solution has not been reached as a result of having explored avenues available within the Center administration, the parent may proceed in the following manner: A) the parent should write a clear, concise statement of the grievance, B) outline his or her understanding of the decision given by the Center Director and C) include his or her desired remedy or correction. This information must be completed and provided to the Chairperson of the Personnel Committee of the Board of Trustees within 10 working days from the Center Director's final decision, or from the date it was due under Step I above. The Personnel Committee will then obtain a written statement from the Center Director outlining her/his views on the matter, the basis for the decision rendered, and all actions taken to resolve the matter within the Center. The Personnel Committee will take all the above information under advisement.

**Step III** - The Personnel Committee will review and discuss the parent's appeal and will provide a response within ten (10) working days. A meeting to discuss the response may be requested.

**Extra Curricular Activities**

Extra curricular activities are for the purpose of providing fresh experiences and learning opportunities for the children. Center teachers present related curriculum both before and following onsite presentations or field trips.

All children take walking trips on Campus, a nearby park, the fire station, the library and the surrounding neighborhood. We feel this gives the children a sense of belonging in the community. Whenever possible, the center hires guest performers such as artists, musicians, and puppeteers. Additionally, various hands-on experiences are made available to the children through visitors to the CCC.

Children not regularly attending the Center on the day of a field trip are invited on these trips for the duration of the trip only. For instance, a Tuesday/Thursday child is welcomed on a Friday trip. If your child is in this category, be sure to sign up on the field trip sheet, and be sure to pick up your child at the end of the announced time of the trip. The cost of any extra curricular activity is included in the tuition for enrolled children. Parents may be asked to pay actual costs incurred for themselves and/or siblings.
We encourage parents to accompany us on field trips. The children benefit greatly from having an adult accessible to chat with, who can expand the experiences and sights of the trip. To receive work hour credit for attending a field trip, a parent must take the responsibility to be a “walking partner” for one or more children throughout the entire trip. If two parents come, work hour credit will be given to each parent if they each take the responsibility to be a “walking partner” for one or more child(ren) throughout the entire field trip.

Transition to a New Classroom

Our Philosophy: We wish to offer the best possible experience for your family. The philosophy of the Children’s Center at Caltech has its basis in a humanistic view of the child as an independent and individual learner. The aim of the program is to respond to the needs of each child as s/he develops awareness of the world and readiness for learning.

Each group provides developmentally appropriate materials and activities for children in the areas of social/emotional, intellectual and aesthetic growth and psychomotor development, while fostering a positive self-concept. Decisions on when and how to transition a child from one classroom to another are made in alignment with this philosophy.

How Decisions are Made: There are many factors that we take into consideration when transitioning children. The list below represents just some of the factors we consider:

- Parent feedback
- Space availability in the next classroom
- Your child's physical and emotional readiness
- Developmental milestones
- Your child's social relationships in the classroom
- Travel schedules (family, teacher)
- Significant changes in your child’s life (e.g. new sibling, new home, visiting relatives)
- Your child’s individual temperament
- Transitioning a cohort together versus an individual child
- Group dynamics

The Transition Process: We understand that transitioning your child from one classroom to another can be a challenge as well as an opportunity. As a Center, we work with you, the parent, to make the smoothest possible transition for your child. Once the lead teacher in the classroom has identified that your child is ready to transition, the teacher will work with the administrative office to coordinate a transition plan with you.

Hop-Skip: Sometimes, your child might be ready to move but there is simply no spot available. The waiting period is generally a short one so please be patient. Because we have six classrooms and we only serve children ranging from 6 months to 6 years old, it is impossible for each child to spend a year in every room. Some children do what we refer to as a “hop skip”, spending only the summer months in the room before moving to the next classroom.
Admission and Waiting List

Parents who wish to apply for admission are encouraged to make an appointment to tour the Center. Applications for the wait list are available in the office or online at www.childrenscenteratcaltech.org. Upon receipt of the application, the child’s name is added to the wait list. Caltech, JPL and our own Center staff families are added to the Caltech affiliates wait list. Within the wait list, siblings of children already at the center receive priority. As openings occur, age-appropriate children are selected from the wait list based on application date to fill any vacancy in a class. Tenured and tenured track Caltech professorial faculty will ordinarily have priority over all other groups on the waiting list. Center staff and families with currently enrolled siblings may also be given priority. There is also a separate Community wait list for applicants who are not affiliated.

The Children’s Center at Caltech supports the value of inclusion—the right of all children, regardless of their diverse abilities, to participate actively in natural settings with their peers. At the Children’s Center, this means that we will, on a provisional basis, accept children with special needs who meet the waiting list criteria stated above. Depending on the nature and extent of the disability, continued enrollment will depend on frequent and on-going staff-parent communication, and on careful and continuous assessment of the viability of the arrangement for all concerned.

Parent Work Hours

We believe it is developmentally beneficial for children to know and feel the importance of their own daily care and education. We believe children are most influenced by their own parents and more readily adopt for themselves the values they observe in their parent(s). Modeling esteem for your child's school and respect for teachers can make our job easier, too!

Two-parent families agree to contribute twenty (20) hours per year, and Single-parent families agree to contribute ten (10) hours per year. Work hours may be waived by paying $25.00 per hour ($500 per year for two-parent families, $250 per year for single-parent families).

The work hours obligation must be fulfilled during the period from October 1 through September 30 of any school year. Unless other arrangements have been made, a minimum of ten (10) hours, or five (5) hours for single parents, should be completed by March 31. Remaining work hours must be completed by September 30. Families will be billed for hours not completed and the charge will be reflected on their October statement, or the remaining amount will be deducted from their deposit. Families enrolling after October 1 will have their work obligation prorated at the rate of ninety (90) minutes per full month for two parent families.

Parents may earn work hours in a variety of ways. Some examples are: preparing teaching materials, serving as a committee member for a fundraising event, participation in classroom activities (i.e., assisting a teacher with a special project), sewing, membership on the Board of Directors (a one year commitment fulfills obligation), Room Parent, classroom webmaster, classroom librarian, participation on a field trip as a “walking partner” for at least one child, attendance at a parent function such as Parent Teacher Partnership Workshops, or attending Board meetings.

Each family is required to fulfill no less than 4 hours (2 hours for a single parent) by participating in a Saturday work morning. Families are exempt from this requirement if their work job
already fulfills their annual commitment, or if families choose the payment option. A detailed Job Listing is distributed each fall.

Parents will be responsible for reporting any work hours completed by indicating the time and dates worked in the Parent Hours notebook in your child’s classroom.

**Fundraising**

The Children’s Center Board sponsors two fundraising events each year: the annual Pancake Breakfast in the fall, which is the kick-off to the Center’s annual Giving Campaign, and the annual Evening Under the Stars dinner and auction held in May.

There are two easy and steady fundraising projects that are almost effortless! Our group earns cash rewards when you do what you do anyway – shop! It’s free, it’s easy, and it’s rewarding! One way to do this is by shopping at Amazon.com through the Center’s unique link, [www.supportccc.org](http://www.supportccc.org). By shopping through this link, approximately 6% of your purchase total can return to the Center. Similarly, families can contribute easily to Center fundraising by participating in the grocery E-SCRIP program, another way for a percentage of your purchase to benefit the Center. We encourage every family to sign-up for grocery e-scrip designating the Center as beneficiary: CCC Group ID #140972586.

**Parents are expected to contribute to fundraising for the Center by participating in fundraising events and by contributing money to annual giving campaigns.**

**Tuition**

**Deposit and Payment Contract:** The initial non-refundable deposit of $500.00 is due upon enrollment. This deposit may be credited to the last month’s tuition with 30 days-advanced written notice. Monthly tuition is paid in advance and is due on the first of each month. Please make a written request to the office to receive a monthly receipt. Thereafter you will receive the receipts in your family classroom mailbox. **There is no tuition credit for vacation or sick days.**

**Tuition Payment:** “Tuition is Due” reminders will be posted in the classrooms every month. To assure proper credit for payments, please submit your monthly payment to the Center’s office or in the office mailbox in your child’s classroom.

**Tuition Late Fee:** If payment is received after the 10th of the month, a late fee of $10 will be charged to your account. The Director has the authority to negotiate whatever payment plan is appropriate to bring the account up to date. Late payments received after the tenth will have an additional late fee of 5% of the outstanding balance assessed. The only exception will be if the 10th falls on a weekend; the condition will apply on the following Monday. If a child’s tuition is two months in arrears, his/her enrollment will be terminated. If a child’s account has been delinquent after the tenth four times during the school year (October to September), enrollment may be terminated.

**Attendance and Extra Days:** Children may attend only those days that are reserved for them at the time of enrollment. Re-scheduling and exceptions may be arranged with the Lead Teacher and/or the Assistant Director. Parents are requested to inform us in advance if a child
will not attend regularly scheduled days. This way spaces are freed for other parents’ needs. As spaces become available, additional days may be used if a Lead Teacher or the Assistant Director gives permission. For these non-reserved **Extra Days**, the fees vary depending on the child’s age group. You will be required to pay the Teacher on that day at drop off time. For families attending the Center part-time, there are no “make-up days” for absences.

**Tuition Assistance:** Our overall goal is to offer tuition assistance to Caltech and JPL families in financial need. Tuition assistance is dependent on the basis of monies available and is designated for qualified Caltech and JPL families. Tuition assistance is reserved for the cost of childcare when custodial parent(s) are employed and/or enrolled in school. Contact the office for further information and an application for tuition assistance.

**Schedule Changes:** Withdrawal from the Children’s Center or reduction/increase of the number of days per week enrolled requires 30-day written notice to the Office (just informing your child’s Lead Teacher is not sufficient). The notice must be in writing. If less notice is given, tuition will be charged as follows: tuition for one month, minus the number of days (if any) for which the notice was given.

**Transitions and Matriculation Fee:** As your child makes transitions into different rooms or you request a schedule change, please complete a new tuition contract. Usually, as your child moves into an older classroom your tuition decreases.