



# PARENT HANDBOOK

UNM Kid's Campus for  
Early Learning  
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Just Playing ~ Anita Wadley

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## Welcome

Welcome to the UNM-Taos Kid's Campus Center for Early Learning. We are accredited through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and licensed by the Early Childhood Education Care Department (ECECD). We are pleased to be able to serve you and your child.

UNM-Taos Kid's Campus opened in spring of 2008 through a grant funded by Daniel's Foundation. Kid's Campus is located at UNM-Taos Klauer Campus 1157 State Rd 110 Ranchos de Taos NM 87557 in the Kid's Campus Building. Our state of the art facility was built with funds from two grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The UNM Kid's Campus for Early Learning (UNMKC) is under the umbrella of UNM Taos, Department of Instruction. This program is also supported by various State and Private grants.

The Kid's Campus provides the children of Taos community with a high quality early childhood experience. The Campus is a site for UNM student and faculty research, observation, and practicum.

To comply with the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, UNM provides this publication in alternative formats. If you have special needs and require an auxiliary aid please contact any UNM Kid's Campus director.

We look forward to serving you and your child and hope that this proves to be a rewarding experience for the entire family. This handbook is intended to help you get to know our Campus and to inform you about many of the policies that we consider most important. If you have any questions or concerns as a result of reading this handbook, please direct them to either your child's teacher or to an administrator. If you would like a printed version of this document, please see either Alison McPartlon or Bella Rodreguz.

## Our Mission

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Our mission is to provide the diverse families of the greater Taos Community with the highest quality early childhood experience. As part of the UNM/Taos Department of Instruction, we are committed to providing students in our teacher education program with a laboratory school to facilitate their training and education.

## **Our Philosophy**

UNM-Taos Kids Campus believes that every child is capable, intelligent, and full of potential. Our child-centered philosophy is grounded in personalized learning—guided by each child’s interests and developmental goals. Through a balance of exploration, creativity, and play, we create a safe and nurturing environment where children can thrive.

The Kids Campus strives to cultivate a welcoming space where all families feel respected, valued, and heard. UNMTKC celebrates the richness of diverse cultures, beliefs, and heritages, weaving them into the daily life of our classrooms.

## **We Believe Every Child:**

- Is a capable and competent
- Is a unique and complex learner
- Is deserving an environment that nurtures the whole child.
- Learns through child-initiated, child-directed, educator-supported play
- Is a social being who learns through the development of relationships and collaboration with peers and adults
- Is by nature a creative and curious researcher and learns best through hands-on exploration that is relevant to his or her experiences
- Deserves trust, respect, and meaningful relationships to facilitate confidence and healthy risk taking
- Has diverse strengths rooted in his or her family’s unique culture, heritage, language and beliefs.
- Is a subject of rights, a whole citizen from birth, worthy of citizenship in the world
- Possess hundreds of languages with which to describe their beliefs and experiences, and with which to express their learning.
- That each child's individual needs are met, and they are provided unique opportunities based on personality and individual development.

## **We Value:**

- **An environment that conveys respect for children and engagement in learning**

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We value a dynamic, engaging, and aesthetically pleasing learning environment that encourages safe interactions between members of the community and invites interactions with materials. The space is thoughtfully designed, and materials are chosen with meaning and purpose. The environment is intentional and reflects beauty, joy, order, comfort, and appreciation for the natural world. It is a relational space, where social and emotional expression is nurtured and communication is sustained

- **Relationships as the basis for learning and development**

Each member of the community is valued for his or her individuality and contribution to the group of life of the school. Genuine listening, compassion, and respectful communication characterize relationships. We believe relationships are fundamental to teaching and to development

- **Collaboration among the children, families and teachers in our community**

Within a culture of inquiry and research, teachers actively engage in in-depth and ongoing professional activities to understand children's thinking. Teachers value listening, observation, and documentation as the basis of curriculum development. Children are offered a wide variety of materials to express their theories and understandings and are supported in pursuing extensive investigations and explorations

- **Communication through documentation**

We value the exchange with parents and colleagues that is stimulated when the everyday details of the lives of the children are shared. Documentation fosters teachers' and parents' connections to the children and the school and encourages collaboration. Documentation invites focused conversation, a deep level of exchange and a sense of community

***UNM Taos Kids' Campus mission, philosophy and vision align with the NM FOCUS Essential Elements of Quality and the Guiding Principles for the Full Participation of Young Children in New Mexico's Early Learning System.***

## **Our Program**

The UNMKC provides a developmentally appropriate experience for your child. We have a curriculum that recognizes the equal importance and critical interrelationships of social, emotional, intellectual, and physical growth. Our program supports children's learning through a play-based environment and activities that encourage the development of concepts that are crucial for academic learning.

We believe that children learn best through active exploration, experience, interaction, experimentation, and modeling. We see the classroom environment as another teacher; each classroom design is carefully planned and may evolve throughout the year to meet the needs of the children. The teachers maintain a structure through routine,

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predictability, and consistency. Teachers are guides, observers, and collaborators with children in their learning and discovery. They are also partners with parents and collaborators with one another.

Throughout our program, we implement anti-bias practices. We recognize and celebrate differences in culture, gender, family form, and ability. We support every child's identity and address children's occasional biased behaviors and statements in the context in which they occur.

Our Program offers care for children aged six (6) weeks through five (5) years old. This program is open from 7:30 am to 4:00 pm Monday through Thursday and 7:30 on Fridays.

Our PreK Program is a grant funded program that is available for eligible three (3) and four (4) year olds. The hours are Monday-Thursday 7:30 to 4:00. Friday, 7:30-11:30. UNM Taos Kid's Campus is committed to ongoing program evaluation and improvement. Annual parent and staff surveys are conducted to identify the strengths of our program as well as those areas in need of improvement. An annual program improvement plan is developed in response to this important community feedback.

## Our Staff

### Classroom Staff

Each classroom team consists of a Lead Teacher, Teacher Assistant, and Student Staff.

#### Lead Teacher

All of our Lead Teachers have earned at **least** an associate's degree or equivalent (60 credit hours of coursework) in Early Childhood or related field. It is their role to develop and implement their classroom curriculum and to supervise/mentor their classroom staff. Lead Teachers are usually the best authorities on your child's daily experience at the UNMKC.

#### Assistant Teacher

The function of our Assistant Teachers is to implement the classroom curriculum with the Lead Teacher and to assist in the training and supervision of classroom staff. Our Assistant Teachers are required to complete the New Mexico Early Childhood 45 Hour Entry Level Course and are strongly encouraged to complete a competency-based credential issued by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs or a degree.

#### Student Employee

We employ UNM students to work in our classrooms in an effort to foster UNM's retention and recruitment goals and to support the students' academic endeavors. Student

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Staff generally have had some contact with children and are enthusiastic about working with children as they pursue their course of study at UNM. We hire energetic, intelligent students from diverse backgrounds. Our student staff is hired on a semester basis with flexible classroom assignments to support the permanent classroom staff. Responsibilities in the classroom include implementing activities, interacting with the children, and classroom maintenance.

## Administrative Staff

### Director/Operations Manager

The Director is responsible for the overall management of the Kids' Campus as well as strengthening and sustaining the program's presence in the community as a model of Early Childhood Best Practices. The Director is also responsible for the direct supervision and training for our teachers and classrooms.

### Administrative Assistant

The Administrative Assistant is primarily responsible for the business functions of the UNMKC, including billing and budget oversight.

All staff is required to go through a lengthy interview process which includes reference checks and a criminal records check through the ECECD. They are also required to attend regularly scheduled training classes.

In the event one of our permanent staff resigns or is terminated, we must follow the hiring procedures set forth by the Human Resources Department of the University of New Mexico. This can be a lengthy process, so we ask your patience while we fill the position. We try to give parents and children adequate notice about these departures. During these transitions we will work to support children and families as needed.



## **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is dedicated to improving the well-being of all young children, with particular focus on the quality of educational and developmental services for all children from birth through age 8. NAEYC has developed ten (10) program standards that are widely believed to measure the quality of an early childhood program. The UNM Kids' Campus strives to meet each of these standards every day.

1. Promote positive relationships for all children and adults to encourage each child's sense of individual worth.
2. Implement a curriculum that fosters all areas of child development: cognitive, emotional, language, physical, and social.
3. Use developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate effective teaching approaches.
4. Provide ongoing assessments of a child's learning and development and communicate the child's progress to the family.
5. Promote the nutrition and health of children and protect children and staff from illness.
6. Employ a teaching staff that has the educational qualifications, knowledge, and professional commitment necessary to promote children's learning and development, and to support families' diverse needs and interests.
7. Establish and maintain collaborative relationships with each child's family.
8. Establish relationships with and use the resources of the community to support the achievement of program goals.
9. Provide a safe and healthy physical environment.
10. Implement strong personnel, fiscal, and program management policies so that all children, families, and staff have high-quality experiences.

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## NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment

UNM Children's Campus staff subscribe to the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct. To obtain a copy of the code, you can make your request to office personnel or visit NAEYC's website at <http://www.naeyc.org/about/positions/PSETH05.asp>.

## Academic Connections

One of the goals of the Kids' Campus is to serve as a location for academic connections for UNM students and faculty as well as for others in the community. Due to our connection with the University and our role in supporting faculty and student's professional and educational goals, parents should expect a high level of participation in approved research, observations, projects and field experiences. Participation in these activities is a required condition of continued enrollment at the Kids' Campus unless it is an activity that requires separate parental permission. If you feel strongly that your child does not participate in these activities, the Director will recommend disenrollment and provide options for alternative childcare arrangements that may better meet your family's needs.

Activities may include, but are not limited to, practicum assignments, observations and projects, internships, student teaching placements, informal research, practice developmental and/or linguistic testing, mental/physical wellness experiences and the like. The level of involvement may include, but is not limited to, passive observations, active interactions, facilitating group activities/discussions, and conducting practice tests. This may include photographing, audio taping, videotaping, collecting samples of children's work, and taking dictation of children's words. If any of the research protocols should fall under the jurisdiction of the Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research, we will ensure the researchers have taken the necessary steps. The Kids' Campus is committed to providing these opportunities to faculty, students and the community while also ensuring your child is in a safe and nurturing environment. Therefore, we will not permit any involvement that we feel will cause emotional distress and/or psychological/physical harm. All individuals involved in these activities must meet the standards and expectations of our program, which include completing an application for participation and meeting with the appropriate administrator. The procedures are designed to ensure that your children are properly protected and supported during the conduct of any study at the Children's Campus. Also, unless we have received specific separate permission from you, these individuals will not be left alone with any

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child or group of children at the center. As with other aspects of our program, the UNMKC will always work to respect your child's choice to participate.

## Confidentiality

At UNM Taos Kids' Campus, we recognize that some of the information shared between families, teachers, and administrators is sensitive in nature. This may include medical records, financial information, as well as observations regarding the behavior of children other than your own. Such information will only be shared with UNM Taos Kids' Campus staff and professional consultants who have a legitimate "need to know" based on their direct involvement with the child or family.

We do not disclose personal information to other parents, employees without direct contact, or individuals who do not have a professional reason to access it.

Access to a child's file is granted to the Contracting Parent listed on the current contract, unless we receive written notification stating otherwise. Court-mandated information requests will be honored in accordance with legal requirements, which may involve review by UNM's University Counsel.

Requests for copies of a child's records must be submitted in writing. Please allow a minimum of 24 hours for processing such requests.

## Waiting List Policy

The UNM Kids Campus (UNMKC) maintains an ongoing waitlist for all families interested in program enrollment. University of New Mexico affiliation is not required to apply or enroll.

To support continuity of care, children on the waitlist with siblings currently enrolled receive priority placement. Please note that if an offered spot is declined, the child's name will be moved to the bottom of the waitlist.

**NM Pre-K Lottery Process** Selection for our NM Pre-K classrooms transitions from the standard waitlist to an annual lottery system held every April. All eligible families on the waitlist will be invited to apply. Eligibility criteria:

- **NM Early Pre-K (3-year-olds):** Must turn 3 by August 31.
- **NM Pre-K (4-year-olds):** Must turn 4 by August 31.

Children accepted through the April lottery will begin enrollment the following August and will be placed on an incoming roster based on their lottery results. Waiting list will

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established by the lottery drawing. Completion of lottery form does not guarantee a student's enrollment in UNM Taos Kid's Campus Pre-K Program.

## Enrollment, Child Care Assistance and Pre K

To enroll a child at the UNM-Taos Kids' Campus the contracting person must adhere to the following criteria: The contracting person must have primary legal custody of the child. This can include a parent, foster parent, or legal guardian.

Enrollment of a child is accomplished by the parent providing the following information:

1. Completed registration form
2. A copy of the child's immunization record-no child can be admitted without proof of current immunizations or legal waiver.
3. Identification and Emergency Information.
4. Field trip, photos, & sun protection Permission Forms.

5. Signed Acknowledgement form

### Responsibility to Secure an ECECD Contract

I understand that because my child is enrolled in an Infant, Young Toddler, or Toddler classroom, it is my sole responsibility to apply for, secure, and maintain an active Child Care Assistance (CCA) contract through the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD).

### Monitoring Contract Expiration and Renewal

I understand that ECECD contracts have strict expiration dates. It is my responsibility to track when my family's contract ends and to complete the renewal process with ECECD on time to prevent any gaps in child care coverage.

### Responsibility for Full Tuition in the Event of Gaps or Non-Renewal

I understand that if I fail to secure an active ECECD contract, fail to renew my contract before it expires, or if my contract is terminated by ECECD, **I am immediately and fully responsible for paying the standard monthly tuition out of pocket.** Tuition will be billed according to my child's classroom placement.

If my child is not picked up at the dismissal of class, I will pay the required late fee of \$25.

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The Director and ECECD CCA requires two weeks advanced written notice when withdrawing a child from UNM-Taos Kid's Campus.

## **Dismissal Policy**

The UNM Kids' Campus strives to meet the needs of all of the families that use our services. Unfortunately, in some instances, this is not possible. The UNMKC's contract for services is renewed each semester based on a number of factors, including whether or not the Kids' Campus is best able to meet the needs of an individual child. Situations that may be grounds for dismissal from the program include but are not limited to:

- A child that is not able to adjust to a group childcare setting. After meetings with the parents, the child's participation at the Center may need to be limited or curtailed by the Director.
- Noncompliance with Center policies is grounds for immediate termination of services.
- Any fraudulent, false or misleading information provided to the Center regarding your student status, enrollment units, child custody agreements, emergency contacts, or household income is grounds for immediate termination of services.
- Failure to provide the required registration paperwork
- The UNM Kid's Campus requires that all children enrolling for services receive a complete health evaluation and have current immunizations prior to entry into the program. Failure to comply with this requirement within six (6) weeks of enrollment could result in immediate termination of services
- At the point where despite our best efforts, we are no longer meeting the needs of a family, the Director has the authority to pursue disenrollment.
- If the situation between divorced/separated parents becomes administratively disruptive to the Center, the Director has the authority to discontinue services.

## **Parental Disputes**

When there is a parental dispute between separated or divorced parents/legal guardians about issues involving a child in relationship to the Center, this issue should be immediately brought to the attention of the Director. It is our responsibility to provide

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your child with a quality early learning experience and to support their social and emotional well-being. As such, the UNM Kid's Campus will act as a neutral party and will not side with one parent over the other. In addition, UNM University Council may be consulted at any time to provide guidance and support to the Children's Campus.

A child's pick-up and drop-off schedule often becomes a point of contention during parental disputes. Occasionally one parent/legal guardian will request that we not allow the other parent/legal guardian to pick-up or have access to their child. We cannot legally prevent a parent/legal guardian from picking up or having access to their child without appropriate court paperwork. Once court documents are submitted to the Kids' Campus, they immediately override any of our in-house paperwork. This includes standing orders.

In situations where court paperwork is on file but the court's intention is unclear, it is not the responsibility of the Kids Campus to infer what the intention was. Parents/Legal Guardians will be required to provide clarification of the terms and conditions outlined by the court. This can be done through

- 1) an agreed upon calendar that clearly states the days and times that each party is authorized to pick-up the child or
- 2) a court document clarifying the specific days and times that each party is authorized to pick-up and drop-off the child. At the discretion of the Director, the child may not be allowed to attend the Kid's Campus until an agreement has been reached and this documentation has been received.

If a parent/guardian violates the conditions outlined in the court paperwork as it pertains to the Kid's Campus or in any way compromises the safety of the child, other children and families in our program, or center staff; UNM Campus Security will be called immediately. Depending on the circumstances surrounding the incident, the Children Youth and Families Department may also be notified. This situation places everyone in a difficult position and often compromises the emotional well-being of the child. We respectfully request that parents/legal guardians do not place the child, other children and families in our program, or the UNM Kid's Campus in the middle of their dispute.

Access to a child's file, including but not limited to a child's developmental evaluations, financial records, medical records, and attendance records will be given to the Contracting Parent as listed on the current contract, unless we receive written notification otherwise. Any requests for court mandated information will be honored accordingly, which may include review through UNM's University Council. Any requests for copies of your child's record must be in writing. The Contracting Parent may provide written authorization for a release of information to the Kid's Campus. Access will also be granted upon receipt of documentation from the court authorizing access to these records.

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Depending on the scope of information required, we require a minimum of a 24 hour processing time for each request.

It is our intention to provide your child with the best possible care and experience while at the Kid's Campus. The Director will make every attempt to work with your family so that the transition between home and school can be a smooth one for everyone involved. If the situation becomes administratively disruptive to the Center the Director has the authority to discontinue services.

## **Withdrawal**

To withdraw from the Kid's Campus, a written notification must be submitted to the Director, thirty (30) days in advance. The family is responsible for canceling there CCA contract, any remaining tuition and fees from the date of the written letter to exactly thirty (30) days later.

## **Procedure for Feedback/Concerns**

The staff and administration appreciate hearing your positive and negative feedback. If you have concerns regarding your child's experience at the UNMKC you can talk with your child's classroom teacher or one of our administrators. We ask, however, that these discussions do not disrupt or take attention away from the children. You are welcome to submit your feedback/concerns to the Director in writing. In some instances, you may be requested by the Director to submit this information in writing to facilitate the growth of the program.

If you are dissatisfied with the way a problem has been handled by UNMKC staff, you may direct your concerns, in writing, to the Dean of Instruction. In addition to those UNM Resources, you may also contact the Early Childhood Education Care Department Licensing Department. The licensing authority will acknowledge complaints within fifteen (15) working days of receipt. The UNMKC and the complainant shall be notified of the results of any investigations.

We understand you may not always agree with our program's policies, but in signing your contract you acknowledge that you have read this Parent Handbook and understand and agree to our policies. No one, including family physicians, can usurp any of our program policies, unless it is of a medical nature.

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## **Cell Phone Use at the Kid's Campus**

The time spent with your child during drop-off and pick-up is important in helping them to feel secure and in sharing the many things they did during the day. This is also an important time for communication between parents and teachers. In order to facilitate these interactions, please limit your cell phone use. KC staff is not allowed to use their phones except for documentation purposes during work hours.

## **Smoking, Firearms, Alcohol, Illegal Drugs & Controlled Substances**

The UNM Kid's Campus is a smoke-free environment. Smoking is not permitted on the premises, including in the facility and outdoor play areas. Smoking within the view of the children is prohibited.

Firearms, alcoholic beverages, or non-prescription controlled substances (drugs) are prohibited on the premises or in vehicles. Possessing or knowingly permitting these items, including illegal drugs or non-prescription controlled substances, to be possessed or sold on the premises at any time regardless of whether children are present is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Due to the nature of their duties, Campus Police and Taos Police may carry firearms onto the premises.

## **Environmental Hazards & Use of Pesticides**

The University of New Mexico and the UNM Kid's Campus has measures in place to monitor and protect children and adults from environmental hazards such as air pollution, lead, and asbestos, according to public health requirements. All Kid's Campus buildings have been tested and found to be free of lead, asbestos, and radon. In addition, playgrounds are regularly inspected for safety hazards and other potential problems. This information is maintained by the University's Safety Health and Environmental Affairs (SHEA) department, Risk Management, and the University's Physical Plant department (PPD). For more information regarding specific test results, please contact the Director or the Operations Manager.

In addition, the Kid's Campus maintains its facilities so that they are free from harmful animals, insect pests, and poisonous plants. The least hazardous means are used to control pests and unwanted vegetation and all pesticides and herbicides used are applied according to the manufacturer's instructions when children and adults are not present and in a manner that prevents skin contact, inhalation, and other exposure.

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## **Clothing**

Parents are asked to provide their child with an extra set of clothing, including extra underwear and socks, as well as a hat to shade them from the sun year-round. During colder weather, please send your child warm clothing including a thick jacket, hat, and gloves or mittens. All clothing must be labeled with your child's name. During warmer weather, please send your child in clothing that will protect them from the sun.

It is important to always dress for the weather as the children will play outside daily. Your child should also dress in clothes that are comfortable to play in and are okay to get dirty. Your child may get paint, markers, or other materials on their clothing. Occasionally, despite using washable materials, it does not come out of your child's clothing. Unfortunately, due to budget constraints, we cannot replace any lost or damaged clothing, including items that become stained. We recommend that your child wear comfortable, closed-toed shoes. If your child chooses to wear a sandal or flip-flop, we ask that you have an extra pair of closed-toed shoes available in the classroom.

## **Toys from Home**

To make drop-offs easier, you can bring toys from home, and the Teacher will help your child put them away. Too often toys become tools for social manipulation and occasionally children or parents can feel bad because they are unable to provide similar toys. We have an ample supply of play equipment at the Campus that belongs to all of us.

Transitional objects are welcome at the Campus. These are personal items from home which remind the child of their loved ones. These objects are the phenomenon of a transitional object transforming into a toy around 3 years on average. You will know when this happens because your child will be willing to share this item or he/she will become very casual about leaving the item lying about. This can be an awkward time for your child. Please talk with your child's Teacher about how we will handle this time in the classroom.

## **Daily Schedules**

The UNMKC opens each day at 7:30 am. Daily schedules are posted in individual classrooms. The infants' schedules will be more individualized than those in the other classrooms. Check with your child's teacher about your classroom's daily routine. Our traditional program ends at 4:00 pm each day. All classroom routines are predictable but

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flexible and allow adequate time for transitions to occur. Our program encourages keeping infants together with the same teacher staff for nine months or longer as well as keeping toddlers and twos together with the same teacher staff for nine months or longer.

## **Absences**

It is important that your child's teacher is informed if your child is going to be absent from the Kid's Campus for any reason. This can include absence for illnesses, trips, and occasional "just for fun" days off.

## **Open Door Policy**

The Kid's Campus maintains an open-door policy. You are your child's first and most important teacher. We need your help to make this experience the best possible one for your child. We encourage you to participate in as many center activities as you can.

Volunteers are always welcome at Kids Campus. You might be willing to share a special lobby, art activity, or recipe with the children. You may wish to spend some time in the classroom as a helping parent. Or perhaps, you could help by collecting "useful junk" for our art projects. One way or another, we hope you will involve yourself in your child's education and feel this is your Campus as well as your child's.

## **Building Relationships**

Building strong relationships with children and families is the cornerstone of the Kid's Campus philosophy. It is our goal to foster positive relationships with families by demonstrating respect, engaging in frequent conversations, and expressing warmth through behaviors such as eye contact, tone of voice, and smiles. The needs, questions, and requests will be responded to promptly and in a developmentally appropriate manner that establishes a secure base for the child and provides comfort, support, and assistance. Teaching staff will encourage and recognize children's work and accomplishments in a positive manner. Efforts will be made daily to engage in meaningful and extended conversations with each child on a one-on-one basis.

## **UNM Taos Kid's Campus Parent Engagement Plan**

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At UNM-Taos Kid's Campus we believe family members are a child's first and most important teacher and strive to create an ongoing collaborative relationship between family and school. We have an open-door policy and encourage family members to visit any time as well as share areas of special interests with the students.

At Kid's Campus, the relationship building process begins with a home visit with each student's family. Home visits will occur the week prior to the start of school. The home visit is an opportunity to "better understand the child's individual needs, interests, abilities and the families goals, values, expectations and childrearing practices" (NAEYC Position Statement 2009). The teachers will also assist the family in completing the *Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)*, which will serve as a springboard for discussion with families, as well as identify any potential areas of development that need additional support or further evaluation.

Three parent/teacher conferences will be held throughout the year. This is an opportunity for teachers and families to share in the celebration of the child's developmental achievements through documentation, as well as collaboratively design the learning goals for the student. Kid's Campus will respond to the needs of parents by providing flexible scheduling for parent-teacher conferences.

Kid's Campus will also offer several parenting workshops including ongoing training in emotional intelligence (EQ), Love and Logic Parenting classes and Circle of Security. Additionally, our program provides multiple opportunities for families to come together such as parent open house, Fall Festival, Winter Celebration, and a celebration of learning at the close of each school year. Parents are also encouraged to participate in the classroom, by sharing special interests and activities.

Our teachers recognize the ongoing need to engage parents by taking the initiative to keep lines of communication open. Teachers will be available at the beginning of the day and end of the day to informally discuss the child's progress as well as daily interactions and activities. The weekly lesson plans are also posted on the parent board outside of the classroom. In addition to monthly newsletters, a monthly journal will be posted on the Kid's Campus website which will highlight the learning process occurring in each classroom.

We also have a classroom parent representative (CPR). The role of the CPR member is to help build a sense of community through fostering parent involvement and participation, along with keeping classroom parents informed about events. Because UNM Kid's Campus is geographically isolated from our community, the CPR will also work with the classroom teachers to involve community members in the classroom curriculum. The CPR member will meet with the UNM Kid's Campus advisory council quarterly.

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## **Observers and Visitors to the Classroom**

Due to UNM Kid's Campus's affiliation with the College of Education, we provide the opportunity for University students and staff to observe and train. Administrators may limit the number of observers or visitors in the classroom at any one time out of respect for the children.

Any person, other than a parent coming into the Kids Campus Campus is required to sign in at the front office and to wear a name-tag. The Director or Operations manager must first clear all observers and volunteers. All visitors must be escorted to the classroom by office staff.

The Kids Campus encourages parents and families to visit regularly. Families are encouraged to spend time in the classroom at their convenience. We also encourage prospective parents to visit at any time to learn more about our program

## **Community Collaborations**

The UNM Kid's Campus believes in the importance of building collaborative partnerships within the community. We work with a number of organizations in order to provide the highest quality of service to our children and families. These community partners are used as a resource and are often called in to offer support to staff, children, and families.

## **Classroom Communication**

It is our goal to build strong relationships with each family enrolled at the UNMKC. Our teachers work in collaboration with families, establishing and maintaining regular, ongoing two-way communication as a way to learn about a child's individual needs and ensure a smooth transition between home and school. It is our goal to become acquainted with you and learn more about your family structure; preferred child-rearing practices; and other information that you may wish to share with us regarding linguistic, racial, religious, and cultural backgrounds. To assist us in this process, classroom teachers will schedule a home visit within the first month of your child's registration into the program.

The UNMKC will schedule regular parent/teacher conferences three times a year to share information regarding your child(ren)'s experiences and development both at home and at the UNMKC. Occasionally, UNMKC staff will have questions or concerns that they wish to communicate with parents. Sometimes parents or guardians will have similar questions or concerns. Should these arise we will arrange additional parent/teacher conferences to discuss how to best address each child's needs.

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Each classroom maintains a documentation on a child's individual experiences and progress in the classroom. We invite and encourage parents to review their child's information whenever they have a few minutes. The information includes formal educational or developmental assessments or evaluations and anecdotal information contributed by many people who work with your child.

Classroom teachers communicate daily with families regarding their child's day, including activities, developmental milestones, shared care giving issues, and other information that affects the well-being and development of your child. In addition, each classroom has a parent board where teachers place important information for individual children and families. The parent board should be checked daily for messages. In addition, many classrooms hold gatherings occasionally during the year. These events are coordinated between classroom teachers and parents.

## General Curriculum

The curriculum is designed to enhance children's natural curiosities and foster a lifelong love of learning. It is an emergent, child-centered curriculum that starts by identifying the children's interests and building on those interests through child and teacher initiated, hands-on activities. Providing children with opportunities to learn through first-hand experiences allows them to expand their knowledge about the world around them in a meaningful way.

Our program is based on the belief that not all children share the same interests. We allow children to make many choices throughout the day, especially regarding the activities in which they wish to participate. Our goal is to shape the program around each child rather than attempting to fit the child into the program.

The Kid's Campus will provide children with:

- Opportunities to develop competence and positive attitudes towards learning
- Opportunities to develop competencies in verbal and nonverbal communication
- Opportunities to engage in discussion with others
- Opportunities to develop awareness and respect for diversity

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- Opportunities and materials to support future academic success

The UNMKC staff facilitates learning by discussing with the children what they see, hear, smell, taste, touch and feel, helping them to increase understanding through modeling and encouragement. Teachers work with children to show respect and understanding for each person and to use words to express needs and feelings. Children are able to learn from mistakes rather than having them labeled as failures in an environment that is safe, supportive, and predictable and where rules, limits, expectations and routines are clear and consistent.

Teachers use the curriculum in all content and developmental areas as a flexible framework for teaching and to support the development of daily plans and learning experiences. Lesson plans are based on the children's interests and developmental needs. The focus can be pre-determined, but teachers are able to easily change topics if the children are showing an interest in other things. Teachers will use their own judgment in determining the length of time to focus on an area depending on the interest level of the children. The value of a learning experience when it comes from the minds of the children is considerably strengthened and is a priority for classroom teachers.

The UNM Kid's Campus believes that children learn most effectively through play. Through play children re-enact experiences, try out different roles, express ideas, develop vocabulary, process information, widen their world view, relate to one another and work towards building their social and emotional competence. Our indoor and outdoor space is designed to encourage a variety of constructive play activities that stimulate exploration, experimentation, discovery, and conceptual learning.

UNMKC staff believes that young children learn best through a curriculum that begins with an understanding of their play and focuses on the needs of the whole child, taking into account all of the developmental domains including physical, motor, social, emotional, language and cognitive. Children learn through doing - active play rather than passive learning. Children also understand things that are real and concrete rather than abstract. We emphasize the process of learning rather than the product.

## **Developmentally Appropriate Practice**

The UNM Kid's Campus strongly believes in integrating developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) in all aspects of your child's learning experience. Intentionality is a cornerstone of DAP and will drive the decisions our teachers make about the activities available for your child, the design of the environment, and making use of unexpected

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## TAOS

opportunities or “teachable moments”. Teachers are purposeful and thoughtful about the actions they take, and base these on the outcomes they are trying to help your child reach. Developmentally appropriate practice means that:

- We will meet children where they are at, considering their individual physical, emotional, social, and cognitive developmental characteristics.
- We will identify goals for children that are both challenging and achievable – a stretch, but not an impossible leap.
- We recognize that what makes something challenging and achievable will vary, depending on a child’s individual development, experiences, knowledge, skills, and the context within which the learning is taking place.

## Children with Special Needs

The UNM Kid’s Campus is committed to meeting the needs of all children, regardless of special health care needs or disabilities. Children with special needs will be accepted into our program under the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All families will be treated with dignity and with respect for their individual needs and/or differences. The Kids’ Campus will ensure the confidentiality regarding special needs is maintained for all families and staff in the program.

Children with special needs will be given the opportunity to participate in the program to the fullest extent possible. To accomplish this, the Kid’s Campus may consult with agencies/organizations as needed, provided parental permission is granted. Inclusion of program staff on an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) and Individual Education Plan (IEP) case conferences is desired to ensure that we are able to provide the most supportive environment possible.

All staff will receive general training on the benefits of inclusion of children with special needs and training on specific accommodations that any child in their classrooms may need. The knowledge of parents and health care professionals involved in the care of the child with special needs will be consulted to determine accommodations and or therapy requirements. If you have a specific concern about your child or feel that they are in need of special accommodations, please speak directly with the Director in order to develop an individualized plan to work with you and your child.

## Learning Through Play

Play is an activity-oriented medium where teachers are able to build upon what children are already engaging in on their own. During play, children need adults to help them

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## TAOS

verbalize their experiences, to find ways to express their ideas and feelings and to support and encourage them.

Often a parent or visitor to UNMCK may feel that the children are “just playing.” They may question where the learning is occurring. Research has shown that the way children learn best is through play. As the children are examining and exploring different areas, they are building a number of important skills:

When children listen to stories or look at books they:

- Develop listening skills
- Have an opportunity to build their vocabulary by hearing new words
- Learn about different concepts, people and places
- Learn to enjoy books and reading
- Develop reading readiness skills
- Develop oral language skills
- Learn a respect for books
- Develop an appreciation of good literature
- Develop their imagination
- Increase their attention span

When children explore they:

- Develop observation and discrimination skills
- Develop respect for the environment
- Encourage a child's curiosity
- Facilitate the development of a natural curiosity about living things and the world around us

When children build with blocks they:

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## TAOS

- Learn to use their imagination to create something from their own thinking
- Have the satisfaction of being able to make something
- Learn about sizes and shapes, weights and balances, height and depth, smoothness and roughness
- Are exercising their body
- Learn to play with others
- Are practicing their social skills
- Develop gross and fine motor skills
- Develop their creativity and decision-making skills
- Develop their visual discrimination skills
- Have opportunities for role-playing
- Develop eye-hand coordination
- Develop their communication skills and oral vocabulary

When children play in the socio-dramatic play area they:

- Have an opportunity to role-play home, work and life experiences
- Increase their social development and communication skills
- Develop small and large muscle coordination
- Develop self-awareness
- Develop visual discrimination skills
- Learn to understand what it feels like to play at being somebody other than themselves
- Learn how to use their imagination and take on roles of others

When Children paint and uses a variety of art materials they:

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- Are more concerned with the process than the product
- Learn about colors and how they can use them
- Learn to use their imagination to transfer ideas to paper
- Get emotional satisfaction from being able to express themselves
- Learn to make choices and decisions
- Learn how to use a variety of materials
- Have opportunities for creativity, imagination and self-expression
- Develop small and large muscle skills
- Develop concepts of color, shape, size, and texture
- Have an opportunity to release positive and negative feelings
- Develop reading readiness skills
- Develop pre-writing skills
- Gain an appreciation for the arts

When children cook they:

- Learn to follow directions
- Stimulate and use all five senses
- Recognize colors and shapes from different kinds of food and utensils
- Have an opportunity to use different tools and equipment
- Develop small muscle coordination

When children play in the sand and water they:

- Find it soothing and are able to relax and center their attention on the task
- Have an opportunity to play alone and not have to compete with other children
- Are not concerned with a final product

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TAOS

- Develop sensory awareness
- Develop concepts involving space, measurement and volume
- Increase their fine and gross motor skills
- Have opportunities for problem solving and creative thinking
- Are encouraged to think, reason, question and experiment

When children use manipulatives and puzzles they:

- Explore new concepts, practice emerging skills, and reinforce skills they have already mastered
- Develop small muscle coordination
- Learn about classifying, sorting, predicting, problem solving, and analyzing results
- Learn mathematical concepts such as shapes, sizes, space relationships and counting
- Develop their knowledge of the world around them using real objects and concrete examples
- Learn how to learn
- Have an opportunity to work alone or together with other children
- Gain satisfaction in completing a project and build their self-confidence
- Develop eye-hand coordination
- Will use the skills they learn when they learn to read – putting letters to sounds, making words with letters, and making stories with words
- Increase social development and communication skills
- Develop their imagination

When children play outdoors or is involved in physical activity they:

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## TAOS

- Learn how to use their body effectively
- Experience joy in achieving a skill
- Have fun and are able to relax
- Learn limitations of their body
- Learn awareness, safety, and caution
- Learn to take turns and to share
- Develop large muscle coordination
- Increase their social development and communication skills
- Have opportunities for role play
- Develop balance and coordination

When children listen to music, sing, and dance they:

- Learn to appreciate music from different countries, cultures, and time periods
- Learn to express their ideas
- Increase their vocabulary
- Develop an awareness of different sounds and rhythms
- Develop an appreciation for songs, vocabulary and speech
- Develop body awareness
- Develop their large muscles

When children use technology they:

- Learn how machines work
- Practice eye-hand coordination
- Are able to learn the processes necessary to use technology
- Have an opportunity to work alone or together with other children

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## **The Outdoor Environment**

The outdoor environment is an extension of the classroom. It is our expectation that children will have daily opportunities for outdoor play. Children should wear clothing that is dry and layered for warmth in cold weather and sun protective clothing when in the sun.

The outdoors supports children's physical movement, sensory stimulation, and allows them an opportunity for fresh air. Children are growing, moving, multi-sensory individuals that need to experience the sense of freedom playing outdoors can bring.

When your child is outdoors they are able to run, shout, sing, jump, roll, stretch, and throw. They are able to connect to the community, learn about nature and develop a sense of respect and appreciation for the natural environment. These experiences are invaluable for children.

When weather or environmental conditions prohibit the children from going outdoors, opportunities for gross motor activities will be provided in the Kid's Campus conference room.

## **Anti-bias Approach**

Throughout our program, we implement anti-bias practices. We recognize and celebrate differences in culture, gender, family form, and ability. We support every child's identity and address children's occasional biased behaviors and statements in the context in which they occur.

Teachers are active in identifying and countering any teaching practices, curriculum approaches, or materials that are degraded with respect to gender, sexual orientation, age, language, ability, race, religion, family structure, background, or culture. All children are treated with equal respect and consideration. Children are encouraged to help develop the classroom community by participating in the decision-making process.

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Classroom staff model respect and intervene when children tease or reject others. They facilitate children's discussions about their own and others' emotions and provide opportunities for children to explore a wide range of feelings and the different ways those feelings can be expressed.

The curriculum includes activities and discussions that build positive self-identity and teach the valuing of differences. The children have a variety of opportunities and materials to build their understanding of diversity in culture, family structure, ability, language, age, and gender in non-stereotypical ways. The classroom environment is welcoming and provides models of adult roles, differing abilities, and ethnic or cultural backgrounds that counter stereotypical limitations

## **Holiday Activities**

Because of the remarkable diversity of the families we serve, the staff at the UNM Kid's Campus will not initiate the introduction or discussion of religious "holidays". As a publicly funded institution, UNM must be exceptionally careful to listen respectfully and provide time and space for the child's activity and will appropriately support the individual culture and values of each child and their family.

The words "holiday" and "celebration" mean different things to different people. For purposes of this policy and to define our holiday practices in the classroom, we define holiday activities" in the following way: Holiday activities at the UNM Kid's Campus can be as simple as reading a book about a holiday and as elaborate and involved as having a party in the classroom with food, decorations, guests, and music. Activities might involve a group discussion about a holiday, how a family celebrates it, or the reading of a book about a holiday.

Goals and Functions of Holidays:

1. To validate children's and families' holiday experiences and traditions at home.
2. To expose children to different ways of celebrating the same holiday.
3. To expose children to celebrations, traditions, and religions different from their own.
4. To foster respect for celebrations, traditions, and religions different from their own.

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5. To mark time for children.
6. To build a sense of community, family, and togetherness.
7. To provide accurate information about holidays in a developmentally appropriate manner.
8. To encourage critical thinking about bias and unfairness.

#### Role of Holidays in the Program:

Since we plan curriculum on an emergent basis in a way that is reflective of children's needs and interests, the exact amount of time we spend on holidays will vary. We use children and families in the program to help us decide how much we will incorporate holidays. To ensure that holidays do not take over the entire curriculum, we will limit holiday parties as necessary. When recognizing holidays, a brief discussion will take place with the children to highlight what the holiday is called and what it is all about, unless children ask to know more. Similarly, when holiday activities are available for children, they will be open-ended and one of many choices so that they are not the focus of the entire curriculum. Families will be encouraged to share their holidays with the classroom.

#### How Religious Aspects of Holidays will be Approached:

Teachers will approach holidays in a developmentally appropriate, factual, and unbiased manner. Families will be consulted for language they use when talking about holidays to their children. Children will also be referred back to their families for more explanation and in-depth information about religious aspects of holidays.

#### Plan for Working with Children and Families who don't Celebrate Holidays:

If we have children in the program who do not celebrate any holidays, teachers should work with families on an individual basis to come up with a plan for meeting their children's needs so they are not left out.

The UNM Kid's Campus participates in celebrating children's birthdays. The child may bring something in to eat for their birthday. Though the child may bring in cupcakes, a low-sugar snack is preferable.

If a child is having a party away from the center and wishes to distribute invitations at the Kid's Campus, there must be one for each child. If not all children are to be invited to the

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occasion, staff should remind families that they must make alternative arrangements to distribute the invitations.

Parents should check in with the teachers several days before the celebration, so they can ensure that they are aware of food allergies before purchasing or baking anything. Several of our children have food allergies.

## **Rest Time**

To reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) infants twelve (12) months and younger, unless otherwise ordered in writing by a child's physician, will be placed on their backs to sleep on a firm surface that meets or exceeds the standards of the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission. After being placed on their backs to sleep, infants will be allowed to assume any comfortable sleep position when they are able to easily turn themselves from the back position.

Pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, stuffed toys, and other soft items are not allowed in the cribs or rest equipment for infants younger than twelve (12) months. Children's blankets will be tucked around the crib mattress, and will only reach as far as the infant's chest. Infants will not be allowed to have their head covered in anyway while they are sleeping.

The Kid's Campus will never force a child to sleep. If, by parent request, a child does not have the option to choose whether or not to rest and has not fallen asleep, classroom staff will have them rest their bodies for approximately 15-30 minutes. During this time the child may look at books or do other quiet activities on their mat. After this time, the child is able to get up and participate in other quiet activities in the classroom or join another group of non-resters either inside or outside. If a child has the option to choose whether or not to rest, the classroom staff will respect their choice and provide appropriate indoor and outdoor activities during this time. Occasionally, parents will request that staff wake up a child at a certain time. Children's Campus staff will only wake up a child after that child has reached a minimum of a 45 minute sleep cycle.

## **Teaching Children About Physical and Sexual Development**

The children at our Campus will grow and experience many physical changes during their stay here. We recognize and respect family members as the primary source of education in a child's life. Children also need teachers to be accurate and frank about sexual development issues. The information children will receive will be factual and

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developmentally appropriate. If the discussion involves judgments of a moral nature, staff will be careful to provide an unbiased response and will support children in addressing these questions with their families. It is our goal for children to use correct names for all of their body parts and functions and that they receive accurate information. Teachers also explain differences between private and public behavior, appropriate touches such as back rubs at rest time and inappropriate touches. Teachers help children to establish personal physical boundaries and teach them that it's OK to say "no" to touch.

At certain ages it is developmentally appropriate for children to explore sexuality, sexual development, and differences through touch, observation and play. Staff members respond to these situations in a respectful and open manner. This may include answering children's questions, re-directing behavior, bringing in resources such as books and visitors and confirming personal choice and boundaries. Teachers and administrative staff are available to answer questions parents may have and give further information.

When appropriate, parents will be notified of these discussions and explorations. In addition, the Kid's Campus may choose to bring in outside professionals to enhance our existing curriculum.

## Language

Teaching staff support the development and maintenance of children's home language whenever possible. We will help children to understand spoken language (particularly when children are learning a new language) by using pictures, familiar objects, body language, and physical cues and by establishing daily routines that the child can participate in even if they do not speak English. Teachers will use a variety of vocabulary and engage in sustained conversations with your child about their experiences.

If your child is learning English as a second language, it is very important to continue to develop the child's first language at home. Not only will this strengthen the parent child relationship and prevent the loss of the home language but it will also make it easier for your child to learn English in the long run.

### Inappropriate Language:

As your child begins to increase their vocabulary, they may experiment with words that are considered to be profanity, inappropriate, or to be socially unacceptable. These words can include not just profanity but words such as "stupid" or "poop head." It is our belief that any word that has a negative connotation can be hurtful and is not appropriate to use while at the center. In addition to these types of words, staff will refrain from calling your child by anything other than their name or by the name the child or family has requested

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be used. All terms of endearment such as “sweetie,” “honey,” or “buddy” are reserved for the family and will not be used by teachers or staff.

Our approach to handling the use of inappropriate language is unique but effective. Words can be a powerful thing. It is our belief that words can gain power based on our reactions to them. For this reason, if a child uses profanity or other inappropriate language, the teacher may repeat the word back to the child and emphasize the emotion that the child may be feeling, and to help the child by suggesting other words they can use when they are frustrated.

For example: A child has spent all morning building a tower of blocks and just as they are placing the last block on top of the tower, it falls over. All of the blocks come crashing down and the child yells out “SHIT!” or “DAMN!” The teacher’s response might be, “I can hear that you are upset. People use the word “shit” or “damn” when they are feeling really frustrated. You worked really hard on that tower. Can I help you to fix it?”

Responding in this way allows the child to better understand their emotions and to talk about them in a constructive way without the emphasis being placed on their use of a certain word. Their emotions are validated and the word “shit” or “damn” is not given any special attention. Often if a child believes that a word is so bad that not even their teacher will say it, that word gains that much more power. By repeating the word back to the child we are treating it just like any other word, taking away the power from the word itself and instead placing it on the emotion.

## Food

Breakfast and Lunch will be provided Monday-Thursday and breakfast only on Friday. We ask that parents provide a morning and afternoon snack for their child.

Family style dining is a style of dining where the children participate in all parts of the meal, including meal planning, setting the table, serving and cleaning up. It also involves conversation about the food or other topics of interest to the children. This provides the children with an excellent opportunity for discussion and the development of healthy habits. During meals, staff members sit and eat with the children to model appropriate behavior and engage in and encourage conversation. Teachers also help the children with the inevitable spills and encourage them to serve themselves.

The Center also supports breastfeeding and is able to accept store, and serve expressed human milk for feedings. Human milk must be in ready-to-feed sanitary containers labeled with the infant’s first and last name and date milk was expressed. Staff are instructed on how to gently mix, not shake, the milk before feeding to preserve special infection-fighting and nutritional components in the milk. It may be stored in the

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refrigerator for no longer than 48 hours (or no more than 24 hours if the breast milk was previously frozen) or in the freezer for no longer than three months.

All formula is brought either premixed from home or in a factory-sealed container

Bottle feedings cannot contain solid food unless the child's health care provider supplies written instructions and a medical reason for this practice. Staff will discard any formula or human milk that is served but not completely consumed after two hours. The unused formula or breast milk cannot be saved for parents to re-use later. No cows milk will be served to children under 12 months. Only whole milk will be served to children over one year old and 2% to children over two.

All bottles and infant food are warmed for no more than five (5) minutes in a bottle warmer that will not heat the water more than 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Under no circumstances will Kid's Campus staff warm infant food or bottles in a microwave oven. It is prohibited to serve any form of solid foods in a bottle unless under written direction from the child's health care provider. Any unfinished and unrefrigerated formula or breast milk will be discarded after two hours.

Infants that are unable to sit are held for bottle-feeding. All others sit or are held to be fed. Children will not be allowed to carry bottles, sippy cups or regular cups with them while crawling or walking. Under no circumstances will infants have their bottles propped or be placed in a crib or bed with a bottle, or sippy cup.

Staff are not to offer solid foods or fruit juices to infants younger than 6 months unless instructed by a health care provider and approved by the family. Only 100% fruit juice is to be served and the amount is limited to no more than four ounces per child daily.

UNM Kid's Campus will do our best to work with our food purveyor to accommodate special dietary needs, but we cannot make a guarantee that special food accommodations can be provided. Please be prepared to bring your child's meals if this is the case.

If you bring your child's breakfast or another meal to eat at the UNM Kid's Campus, please be aware that they must meet the USDA's CACFP food guidelines. Granola bars, yogurt, cereal and juice are acceptable. Candy, doughnuts, soda and other sugary items are not nutritious and are not allowable foods at the UNMKC. All foods and beverages brought from home must be labeled with your child's first and last name and the date. Food that comes from home for sharing among the children must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers.

### Food Practices:

1. We will not allow children in the kitchen except under careful supervision.
2. The food preparer will thoroughly wash all raw fruits and vegetables before cooking or serving.
3. We will serve food promptly and refrigerate immediately after use.

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## TAOS

4. We will protect food and drink from insects, rodents, and other vermin by properly storing items in an airtight container or by tightly wrapping them. A center will label and date all leftover food.
5. If food is brought from the child's home, a center will label it with the child's name and refrigerate if necessary. We will label and refrigerate bottles of infant formula or breast milk. The center must ensure children are fed the food or bottle provided by their parent/guardian and as instructed by them.
6. Our refrigerator will have working internal thermometers and keep food requiring refrigeration, including formula, at 41 degrees Fahrenheit or below, and frozen food at 0 degrees Fahrenheit or below
7. A center will sanitize eating utensils, dishes and cups before re-use by washing them in a dishwasher or by completing the following steps:
  - a. **1)** wash with soapy water;
  - b. **2)** rinse with clean warm water; and
  - c. **3)** sanitize.
  - d. Disposable plates and cups and plastic utensils of food-grade, medium weight may be used for single service, but Styrofoam cups may not be used.
8. A center will use cleaning materials for the kitchen and food preparation areas only in the kitchen and will store the materials separately from food.
9. A center shall thoroughly sanitize food preparation surfaces before and after each use.
10. We will discard any foods with expired dates. Any unfinished and unrefrigerated formula or breast milk will be discarded after two hours.

### MEAL TIMES:

1. A center will equip dining areas with tables, chairs, eating utensils and dishes appropriate to the age of the children served and sanitize the areas before and after use.
2. Staff/child ratios and group size must be maintained at meal times.
3. Adults must sit with the children at meal and snack times to assist children with eating, drinking, and self-feeding and to encourage family-style dining and socialization.
4. Time allowed for meals shall enable the children to eat at reasonable rate.
5. A center will provide sanitary cups or glasses or a drinking fountain for drinking water. Infants and toddlers shall be offered water from a cup. Toddlers shall be encouraged to hold and drink from a cup, use a spoon, and to use their fingers for self-feeding. A center will not allow children to share drinking or eating utensils.

### Directions for Income Eligibility Application

The UNM Children's Campus participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) administered by the United States Department of Agriculture. In order to comply with the requirements of the CACFP, parents are required to complete this form

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each semester at the time of registration. This information is necessary to decide the level of CACFP reimbursement the Children's Campus is eligible to receive for the meals served to children in our program. This form will be placed in a file and treated as confidential information. All children in our program receive their meal free of charge, but the determination of eligibility category affects the amount of Federal funding received by us.

1. Fill out name and age of all children enrolled at the Campus.
2. List all household members. Do not include names of children listed above.
3. You are required to fill out this portion if your household income falls within the specified USDA standards.
4. Sign.

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Diet Restriction for Meals @ the UNM Kids' Campus

Child's Name: Classroom/Teacher \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Diet Restriction (A physician's signature is required if the restriction is not a parent preference):

☐ None

☐ Parent preference; please specify \_\_\_\_\_

(i.e.) lacto-ovo vegetarian, lacto-intolerant, etc. (likes and dislikes are not accommodated)

☐ Allergy/Medically necessary (physician signature required)

If your child requires a special diet, please include a detailed description of any allergic reaction or adverse consequence of not following the special diet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

List specific foods to be omitted and suggest substitutions:

Omissions

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Substitutions

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I give permission for the program to post information regarding my child's allergy(s)/special nutritional needs in food preparation areas, and in my child's classroom as a visual reminder to staff.

Summer Fall Spring

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Contracting Parent Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Contracting Parent Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Contracting Parent Signature Date

☐ If any additional information regarding diet or feeding is necessary, please check this box and provide the needed information on the back of this form.

I certify that the above named person needs special dietary substitutes prepared as described above because of an allergy, disability or chronic medical condition.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Physician's Signature Phone # Date

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## Assessments

Assessments are an integral part of the program. The Kid's Campus uses a variety of assessment methods that are sensitive to and informed by a family's culture, experiences, children's abilities and disabilities, and home language. The program uses an ongoing systematic, formal and informal approach to assessment that provides information on children's learning and development that takes into account the cultural context in which children develop. This includes observations, checklists, rating scales, and work samplings. Assessments provide a meaningful picture of your child's abilities and progress. They also allow teachers to align your child's needs with their curriculum goals. UNM Kid's Campus uses the New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines and New Mexico Early Learning Sanders as the criterion-referenced tool. At any point in the assessment process, we invite families to raise questions or concerns about how the assessment process will meet their child's needs.

### Purpose of Assessment:

Assessments help us to gather information about your child's development and learning, including cognitive skills, language, social-emotional development, approaches to learning, health, physical development, and self-help skills. This information helps the teachers with curriculum development and daily planning. In some instances it can provide us with important information about additional resources your child may need.

The information gained from using assessment tools, enables us to arrange for appropriate developmental screenings and referrals for diagnostic assessment when necessary. We are also able to use this information to identify children's interests and needs, to set goals for individual children, to describe the developmental progress and learning of each child, to improve curriculum, adapt teaching practices, make adjustments to the environment, and help with planning program improvements.

### Procedures for Assessment:

Staff are always assessing and evaluating your child's learning. They are constantly observing and documenting your child's play, behaviors, and interactions to assess their progress. Children are assessed in a familiar environment, and often times are not aware that the assessment is taking place. More formal assessments are conducted each semester, using the Ages and Stages Tool. This information is shared with parents at parent/teacher conferences and by providing copies of the completed assessments. Staff may also ask parents to complete an assessment at home that will complement the ones conducted in the classroom.

[Type here]



## TAOS

Teachers use a variety of tools including results of informal and formal assessments as well as children's initiations, questions, interests, and misunderstandings to identify what children have learned. This enables them to foster the children's curiosity, to extend their engagement, and to support self-initiated learning. Once children have demonstrated that they have gained competence and understanding, teachers will adjust the challenges to allow your child continue to stretch their abilities.

Teachers meet with families for parent/teacher conferences a minimum of three times per year and more often when necessary. For infants and children in the PreK program, teachers will also schedule at least one home visit upon enrollment into the program and others as necessary. These meetings are opportunities to discuss each child's needs, progress, accomplishments, and difficulties in the classroom and at home. They also help the teacher plan appropriate learning activities that can be used both at home and at school. Families will be provided written reports about their child's development and learning at least two times a year.

### Use of Assessment Results:

Assessment results are considered to be confidential. Only staff with a need to know in order to better support your child will be provided access to these records. In addition, as part of our annual evaluations, our licensing body, accrediting body, and grantors may require access to this information. With grants, parents will be asked to sign a consent form authorizing their use by the granting agency. When assessments are conducted for these purposes, the specific details surrounding their use will be outlined in the consent form. The contracting parent may request copies of assessments and authorize us to release copies to other individuals.

The results of assessments are used to benefit the children by informing decisions about children, teaching and program improvement. Children's strengths and needs are identified so that teachers may use that information to inform curriculum. Based on a teacher's knowledge of your individual child, they modify strategies and materials to enhance their learning and are better able to plan appropriately challenging activities and tailor the program to respond to your child's strengths and needs.

Assessment is also essential for identifying children who may benefit from additional support or intervention or who may need additional developmental evaluation. When the Kid's Campus staff suspect that a child may have a developmental delay or other special need, it will be communicated to the family in a confidential and supportive manner. Staff will provide the family with documentation and an explanation for their concerns. The center will provide families with suggestions for next steps and make available information about additional resources. The UNMKC works in partnership with each family and will provide support and assistance with Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

### Qualifications

[Type here]



## TAOS

Lead Teachers, Teacher Aides and student employees are required to complete a minimum of 24 hours of professional development training each year. Training must address at least 3 competency areas within one year and all 7 areas within 2 years. The competency areas are: child growth, development and learning, health, safety, nutrition and infection control, family and community collaboration, developmentally appropriate content; learning environment and curriculum implementation, assessment of children and programs, and professionalism.

A college credit hour in a field relevant to the competency areas will be considered equivalent to a minimum of fifteen (15) clock hours.

Infant and toddler care givers must have at least four (4) hours of training in infant and toddler care within six (6) months of starting work. The four (4) hours will count toward the 24-hour requirement. All teachers, teacher assistants and program Director are required to take the 6 hour NM Early Care, Education and Family Support training. These hours will also count toward the 24-hour training.

Training must address Pediatric First Aid, CPR, infection control and at least three (3) competency areas within one year and all seven areas within two (2) years. The competency areas are 1) child growth, development, and learning; 2) health, safety, nutrition, and infection control; 3) family and community collaboration; 4) developmentally appropriate content; 5) learning environment and curriculum implementation; 6) assessment of children and programs; and 7) professionalism.

## Health & Safety Policy

(Aligned with NMDOH, CDC, and AAP guidance; reviewed: 02/24/2026 — next review: annually or when NMDOH/AAP guidance changes)

### Purpose

UNM Taos Kids Campus (Kids Campus) promotes a healthy, safe, and supportive environment that protects physical, oral, mental, emotional, and social well-being for children, families, and staff.

### Authority and References

This policy follows guidance from:

New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH)

[Type here]



TAOS

Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) / American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Policy will be reviewed at least annually and updated as CDC/NMDOH recommendations change.

## **Health & Safety**

To fully benefit from their educational experience and maintain a high quality of life, children must be as healthy as possible. Young children rely on the adults around them to make healthy choices on their behalf and to model healthy behaviors. UNM Taos Kids Campus is committed to promoting a healthy, safe, and supportive environment for all children, families, and staff.

A healthy environment is not defined solely by the absence of illness or disease, but by the promotion of complete physical, oral, mental, emotional, and social well-being.

## **Confidential Health Records**

Health records are confidential, stored securely in a locked cabinet in the Director's office, and accessible only to administrative and classroom staff with a legitimate need to know.

Records may be reviewed by state licensing, accrediting bodies, or grantors for verification purposes. Other disclosures require a signed release or court order. Staff will follow HIPAA/FERPA/NM state regulations and NMDOH reporting rules for reportable illnesses.

## **Health Evaluations and Required Documentation**

All children must provide a complete health evaluation by an approved healthcare provider (e.g., pediatrician, family physician, or licensed nurse practitioner) prior to enrollment and maintain current health records annually.

- A parent who is a physician may not complete the health evaluation for their own child.
- Acceptable: a health evaluation completed within the previous 6 months at enrollment; thereafter, annual updates.
- Failure to submit required health documentation within six (6) weeks of enrollment may result in suspension or termination of services.
- Families may be asked to provide proof of scheduled appointments for overdue routine care.

[Type here]



TAOS

- Immunization records, exemption forms, or updated health records not received within 30 days of the fall start date may lead to disenrollment or exclusion until documentation is provided.

### **Immunization Requirements and Exemptions**

Children must maintain immunizations consistent with ACIP, AAP, and NMDOH schedules. Required vaccines include (per age): Hepatitis B, DTaP/Tdap, IPV, Hib, PCV, rotavirus, MMR, varicella, Hepatitis A, influenza (annual), COVID-19 (as recommended), HPV/Meningococcal per adolescent schedule.

- A parent who is a physician may not administer vaccines to their own child.
- Families seeking exemptions must submit an official NMDOH exemption certificate before attendance. Exemption renewal frequency will follow NMDOH rules (currently every nine months); exceptions only as allowed by NMDOH.
- Exempt children are subject to exclusion during outbreaks per NMDOH direction. NMDOH and Kids Campus may require immediate exclusion or quarantine of exempt or under immunized children during vaccine-preventable disease events.

Families claiming a conscientious objection (religious, personal belief, or documented medical exemption) must submit an official NMDOH exemption certificate prior to attendance.

- Exemption certificates must be renewed every nine (9) months.
- Requests should be submitted to:

New Mexico Department of Health

Public Health Division – Immunizations

P.O. Box 26110

Santa Fe, NM 87502-6110

Failure to comply with may result in immediate termination of enrollment.

As stated in the exemption form, families acknowledge that in the event of a communicable disease, the NMDOH and UNM Taos Kids Campus will require the exclusion of infected or nonimmunized children.

[Type here]



## TAOS

In classrooms where a child has been confirmed to have a contagious condition, information regarding that condition will be emailed to all families. In the case of a conscientious objector to immunization of your child, the Kids' Campus will send the child home immediately if a vaccine-preventable disease, to which they may be susceptible, occurs at the center. Any under immunized child will be excluded from the program if a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs in the program.

### Immunization and Outbreak Protocol

If a confirmed communicable vaccine-preventable disease occurs, Kids Campus will:

- Notify families and staff promptly (see Communications).
- Exclude susceptible/unimmunized children per NMDOH direction.
- Follow NMDOH/CDC return-to-care recommendations or require written medical clearance.
- Confirmed contagious conditions in a classroom will prompt an email to families describing the disease, incubation period, recommended monitoring/testing, and links to NMDOH/CDC resources. Individual identities will not be disclosed.

### Childhood Immunization Schedule

*(Summary for parent reference; official schedules are maintained by NMDOH and CDC)*

#### Birth

- Hepatitis B – 1st dose
- RSV (if

eligible/seasonal)

#### 1 Month

- Hepatitis B

– 2nd dose

#### 2 Months

[Type here]



## TAOS

- DTaP – 1st dose
- Polio (IPV) – 1st dose
- Hib – 1st dose
- Pneumococcal (PCV) – 1st dose
- Rotaviru

s – 1st dose

### 4 Months

- DTaP – 2nd dose
- Polio – 2nd dose
- Hib – 2nd dose
- Pneumococcal – 2nd dose
- Rotavirus

– 2nd dose

### 6 Months

- DTaP – 3rd dose
- Polio – 3rd dose
- Pneumococcal – 3rd dose

- Hepatitis B

– 3rd dose

### 12–15 Months

- Hib – final dose
- Pneumococcal – final dose
- MMR – 1st dose
- Varicella – 1st dose
- Hepatitis

A – 1st dose

[Type here]



TAOS

18–24 Months

- Hepatitis A

– 2nd dose

4–6 Years

- DTaP – 5th dose
- Polio – 4th dose
- MMR – 2nd dose
- Varicella

– 2nd dose

11–12 Years

- Tdap
- HPV series
- Meningococcal

1 – 1st dose

16 Years

- Meningococcal

al – booster

Annually

- Influenza
- COVID-19 (as recommended)

Health & Developmental Screenings

[Type here]



## TAOS

All children receive required health and developmental screenings in accordance with ECED guidelines, typically within three (3) months of enrollment.

Screenings include assessment of:

- Physical health
- Vision and hearing (on site)
- Language and cognitive development
- Gross- and fine-motor skills
- Social-emotional development

Results may lead to referrals for further evaluation. Kids Campus will collaborate with families and support follow-up as appropriate with outside agencies.

## Illness Policy

UNM Taos Kids Campus is a facility for well children. To protect the health and safety of all children and staff, the following exclusion policies are strictly enforced.

A child will not be admitted, or will be sent home, if:

- The illness prevents comfortable participation in activities; or
- The illness requires care beyond what staff can safely provide; or
- The condition is suspected or confirmed to be contagious.

## Conditions Requiring Exclusion

*(In accordance with CDC guidance for early care and education settings)*

A child shall be excluded from attendance when any of the following conditions are present:

- Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, especially when accompanied by behavior changes or other symptoms of illness.
- General signs of illness, including:
  - Unusual lethargy or decreased responsiveness

[Type here]



TAOS

- o Irritability or persistent, inconsolable crying
- o Uncontrolled or persistent coughing
- o Difficulty breathing, wheezing, or labored breathing

#### Gastrointestinal Symptoms

- Vomiting:
  - o One or more episodes of vomiting while in care.
  - o Return: At least 24 hours after vomiting has completely stopped.
- Diarrhea:
  - o Two or more loose stools within one hour, or diarrhea that is uncontrolled.
  - o Return: At least 24 hours after diarrhea has completely stopped.

#### Oral and Skin Conditions

- Mouth sores with drooling (including Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease):
  - o Return: When all sores and blisters have dried, and drooling has resolved.
- Rash with any of the following:
  - o Fever
  - o Blistering or weeping lesions
  - o Behavioral changes
  - o Return: As determined by a healthcare provider or public health guidance.
- Impetigo:
  - o Return: At least 24 hours after treatment has begun.

#### Eye, Ear, and Neurological Symptoms

- Purulent conjunctivitis (pink eye):
  - o Thick white or yellow discharge, crusting, or drainage that cannot be contained, eye pain or swelling, or eye symptoms accompanied by fever or other signs of illness.
  - o Return: When either:
    - Symptoms have clearly improved and discharge has stopped, or
    - The child has completed 24 hours of prescribed antibiotic treatment (if bacterial conjunctivitis is diagnosed).

[Type here]



## TAOS

- Ear pain, stiff neck, or severe headache, especially with fever or other systemic symptoms:
  - Return: With healthcare provider clearance and when able to participate normally.

## Infestations

- Scabies or other parasitic infestations:
  - Return: The day after the appropriate treatment has been initiated.
- Head lice:
  - Children may remain in care if only nits (eggs) are present.
  - Exclusion occurs only when live lice are identified.
  - Return: After treatment has begun, even if some nits remain.

## Communicable Diseases

### Streptococcal Infection (including strep throat)

- Return: After 24 hours of antibiotic treatment, and the child is fever-free.

### Chickenpox (Varicella)

- Exclusion applies to children showing signs of active infection, including rash, with or without fever.
- Return: When all of the following are met:
  - All blisters have dried and crusted
  - No new blisters have appeared for at least 24 hours
  - The child is well enough to participate in

normal activities.

Unvaccinated children may return when one of the following applies:

[Type here]



## TAOS

- The recommended exclusion period is completed without symptoms, or
- The child receives the chickenpox vaccine (if eligible) and meets public health return criteria, or
- Written documentation from a healthcare provider confirms the child is not contagious.

### Pertussis (Whooping Cough)

- Exclusion applies to children who are diagnosed with pertussis or show symptoms such as:
  - o Severe or persistent coughing fits
  - o “Whooping” sound after coughing
  - o Vomiting after coughing
  - o Difficulty breathing or apnea
- Return:
  - o After 5 full days of appropriate antibiotic treatment, or
  - o If untreated, after completion of the full contagious period (typically 21 days after cough onset), as determined by a healthcare provider.
  - o The child must be well enough to participate in daily activities.

### Unvaccinated or under-vaccinated children:

- Will be excluded during the incubation period as directed by public health authorities.
- May return when:
  - o The exclusion period is completed without symptoms, or
  - o Appropriate antibiotics are started and 5 full days are completed, or
  - o Written medical clearance confirms the child is not contagious.

### Mumps

- Exclusion applies to children who:
  - o Are diagnosed with mumps, or
  - o Show symptoms suggestive of mumps and are awaiting medical evaluation.
- Return:
  - o At least 5 days after onset of parotid (salivary gland) swelling, and
  - o With healthcare provider or public health clearance, as required.

[Type here]



## Measles

- Immediate exclusion is required for:
  - Confirmed cases of measles, or
  - Exposure in children who are not fully vaccinated.
- Return:
  - 4 days after rash onset for confirmed cases, or
  - 21 days after last exposure for unvaccinated children.
- Exclusion applies even if the child remains asymptomatic.

## Returning to School

- Children must be symptom-free for at least 24 hours before returning without the aid of medication.
- When a child is sent home due to illness, they may return to UNM Taos Kids Campus no sooner than 24 hours after being sent home, provided symptoms have resolved, and the child is well enough to participate in daily activities.
- Children on antibiotics must remain at home 24 hours after treatment begins.
- Children not well enough for outdoor play are not well enough to attend.
- Kids Campus may consult with the New Mexico Department of Health when needed.
- For COVID-19, influenza, RSV and other respiratory viruses, Kids Campus will follow current CDC/NMDOH isolation and return-to-care guidance (time- and symptom-based strategies as updated).

## Hand hygiene

- Staff and children will perform handwashing at key times (arrival, before/after meals, after toileting/diapering, after coughing/sneezing, before medication).
- Use soap and water or alcohol-based sanitizer (if hands are not visibly soiled).
- Respiratory etiquette: cover coughs/sneezes, dispose of tissues, and perform hand hygiene.
- Cleaning/disinfection: routine cleaning of high-touch surfaces and toys; cleaning schedule documented; toys cleaned/disinfected between uses as appropriate.

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## TAOS

- Diapering/food handling: follow safe diapering and food safety protocols per state licensing and CDC.
- Ventilation: maximize outdoor activities, open windows when safe, and utilize improved filtration (e.g., MERV-13 or HEPA) where feasible.
- Personal protective equipment (PPE): used per CDC/NMDOH guidance and for care of ill children when necessary.

### Child Nail Policy

To maintain a safe and scratch-free environment in our classrooms, children enrolled at UNM Taos Kids Campus are not permitted to wear artificial nails, nail extensions, or long acrylics.

- **Maintenance:** Parents and guardians are expected to keep their child's natural fingernails trimmed short and filed smooth.
- **Safety Risk:** Long or artificial nails on young children pose a safety risk to the child during active play (risk of the nail tearing or snagging) and increase the risk of accidental scratches to classmates and teachers.
- **Compliance:** If a child comes to school with artificial nails or unsafely long nails, the family will be asked to trim or remove them before the child returns to the classroom.

### Parent Pick-Up & Communication

- Parents must pick up an ill child within one (1) hour of notification.

### Sunscreen/Sunblock

Sunscreen or sun block will be applied to children's exposed skin each time they will be playing outdoors regardless of whether it is sunny or cloudy, except as indicated in writing by a child's physician. Parents of children under six (6) months old must obtain a note from their doctor in order for the Kids' Campus to apply sunscreen. Due to the individual nature of each child's skin sensitivities, families are required to provide sunscreen for their child. Sunscreen/sun block must contain a minimum UVB or UVA protection of SPF 30 or higher. Please be aware that some sun protection products are labeled as flammable and cannot be used at the UNMKC. Staff will not apply any form of insect repellent to children.

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## Toileting /Diapering

Parents provide disposable diapers and wipes for children who are not yet able to use the toilet. For families requiring the use of cloth diapers for medical reasons (written documentation must be provided by the health care professional) or due to family beliefs, the cloth diaper must have an absorbent inner lining completely contained within an outer covering made of waterproof material that prevents the escape of feces and urine. Both the diaper and the outer covering are changed as a unit. Cloth diapers and clothing that are soiled by urine or feces are immediately placed in a plastic bag (without rinsing) and sent home that day for laundering.

Classroom staff will change the children's diapers as many times as necessary. Children will be checked for signs that a diaper is wet or contains feces

- 1) at least every two hours or as often as necessary when children are awake;
- 2) before children go down for a rest;
- 3) when sleeping children wake up from resting. A new diaper will be used when there is any indication a diaper contains any amount of urine or feces.

## Toilet Learning

The UNM Kid's Campus does not require a child to be able to use the toilet in order to be in any of our classrooms. All children develop a readiness to learn to use the toilet at their own pace. Toilet learning is a process and it will ultimately lead to your child developing an important self-help skill as long as they are ready. At the Kid's Campus we base our toilet learning practices on the following philosophy:

- This should be a non-stressful experience that is appropriate to each child's individual development and involves the child as well as a partnership between the parents and classroom teachers.

- Toilet learning should be consistent between home and school.

Communication between parents and teachers is critical to ensure that your child is comfortable and confident about using the toilet.

- We will respect the child's readiness to begin learning to use the toilet.

[Type here]



## TAOS

- We will never force a child to sit on the toilet.
- We will not bribe a child to use the toilet. In addition, it is important that parents do not promise children treats or rewards if they use the toilet.
- Accidents are part of the learning process. We will never punish or shame children in any way for accidents or require them to clean up the mess.
- Children will not be allowed to remain in wet or soiled clothing following accidents. Please ensure that there is an adequate supply of clothes during this process.
- Under some circumstances, we may recommend that you wait to begin working with your child on learning to use the toilet even if they are showing signs of being ready. These circumstances may include recent changes in the household that seem difficult for the child such as a separation/divorce, a death in the family, or a new baby.

## Shoes

The Children's Campus requires that before walking on surfaces that infants use specifically for play, adults and children remove, replace, or cover with clean foot coverings any shoes they have worn outside the play area. Your cooperation in maintaining a clean play area for our infant classrooms is appreciated.

## Accidents

The staff at the UNM Kid's Campus strives to prevent accidents through their arrangement of play and learning environments and through their supervision of children. Nevertheless there are certain risks and hazards that may arise in the course of your child's activities. At the UNMKC all permanent staff, maintain current certification in pediatric and adult first-aid, CPR and AED in order to ensure the presence of at least one successfully trained staff member is available to each group of children at all times.

## Minor Accidents

[Type here]



## TAOS

If your child has a minor accident, the adult in charge will administer the proper First Aid treatment and complete an Accident Report signed by the Director, teacher and parent and filed in your child's accident report file. All head injuries will result in an automatic call to the parents. If the accident involves a head bump, staff will apply ice, and have the child checked by an administrator. A call will be made to notify the parent of the head bump.

If your child arrives at the Campus with an injury that happened at home or away from the Campus, please inform us upon arrival. If we are unaware of the cause of the injury, we will contact you to inquire about it. An incident report will be written, documenting what the staff person observed. In some instances, a photograph may be taken to document the injury.

### Vehicles

UNM Taos Kids' Campus discourages idling vehicles (buses, families automobiles) in our parking area, except in vehicles need to idle in extreme heat or cold to maintain interior or engine temperatures.

## Medical Emergencies

If your child has a serious accident or becomes seriously ill while at the Kid's Campus we will stabilize the child, assess the situation, and determine whether to call 911. If it is deemed necessary to call 911, we will also contact the parent/legal guardian to meet emergency medical personnel at the center or at the hospital. A designated staff person will stay with the child until emergency help arrives. Another staff person will be sent outside to direct emergency personnel.

Once 911 has been called, the emergency response is immediate and because we are a childcare center, a large number of emergency personnel respond. This can be especially scary for parents arriving at the Kid's Campus. A staff person will be positioned outside to talk with parents and inform them of the emergency situation. This staff person will remain outside until all emergency personnel have left the facility.

If the child must be transported by ambulance, they will be taken to the hospital designated in the child's paperwork. If a hospital was not designated the child will be taken to Holy Cross Hospital. If the child's parents have not arrived and emergency medical personnel deem it necessary for the child to be immediately transported to the hospital, a designated staff member will be assigned to accompany the child to the hospital and stay with the child until the parent arrives.

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## Insurance

The University of New Mexico does not provide medical insurance for accidents that may occur while your child is at the Children's Campus. UNM and the UNM Kid's Campus is governed by the New Mexico Tort Claims Act. This act imposes limitations on the recovery of damages from state institutions and their public employees.

## Fire/Emergency Evacuation Drills

The Kid's Campus conducts a minimum of one (1) fire/emergency evacuation drill per month. During a fire/emergency evacuation drill children practice how to safely exist the center in case of a real fire or other emergency. Fire/emergency evacuation drills are unannounced and can happen at any time during the day including meal and rest time. When the alarm sounds, children will be escorted to their classroom's designated waiting area. During these drills, children are expected to exit the classroom quickly, sometimes without their shoes. In order to minimize any potential discomfort the children may experience during a fire/emergency evacuation drill, we regularly check the surface temperature of the classroom evacuation paths and we monitor the path regularly for any signs of debris, sharp rocks, or thorny weeds. Our first priority during any fire/emergency evacuation drill is to ensure the safety of all children and staff and to ensure that they have been evacuated from the facility to a safe waiting area. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak with the Director.

Upon arriving at this location, each classroom will conduct a role call to ensure that all children are accounted for. Once everyone has been accounted for and the classroom staff is given the okay, the children will return to the classroom. Classroom staff will often build the fire/emergency evacuation drill into their curriculum with the children, talking about the loud noise and how it made them feel. If the drill in any way upset your child, you will receive an incident report informing you of the situation.

As part of our fire/emergency evacuation drills, our staff secures the center. If you arrive in the middle of a drill, you will not be allowed access to the facility until the drill is completed. A staff member is positioned at the front entrance to ensure that no one enters the building. If you are in a classroom, on the playground, in the courtyard, or in the administrative building, you must exist using our posted emergency evacuation routes. You will not be allowed to re-enter the main administrative building until the drill is completed. Center staff will help to direct you to the appropriate exists. We appreciate your cooperation as we conduct our monthly fire/emergency evacuation drills.

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## **Emergency Shelter and Evacuation & Disaster Preparedness**

Emergency shelter, evacuation and relocation could occur as the result of a security threat, utility failure, natural disaster, or other environmental hazard that directly affects the safety of the children and staff at the Children's Campus or that affects some other area of the University or surrounding community. The Director, or administrator authorized to assume authority as outlined in the posted chain of command, will work in conjunction with University Officials and Campus Security.

In situations where there is a threat to the safety of the children and staff at the center, such as an unauthorized individual on the premises, the center will be placed in lockdown. Access to the facility will be limited only to emergency personnel. All classroom doors and windows will be locked, shades will be drawn, and lights will be turned out.

Teachers will gather children together in a group and keep them away from any windows and doors. Attendance will be taken to ensure that everyone is accounted for. Once the area has been deemed safe, staff will be notified that the lockdown has been concluded.

## **Emergency Evacuation and Relocation**

In situations such as a bomb threat or other environmental hazard, everyone must evacuate the premises. Teachers will take attendance forms, be sure everyone is out and accounted for, and take the group to the designated waiting spot. The evacuation site will be Klauer Campus, Padre Martinez Hall or the Old Armory. Upon reaching the evacuation site, another head count will be taken and parents will be notified. We work in conjunction with UNM Campus Security and Safety Office during any emergency. During an evacuation, parents may use the following emergency numbers to contact Kid's Campus Administrators for updated information: (505)690-7559 or UNM Facilities Director (575)776-7016

## **Supervision, Ratios & Group Size**

Each group of children is assigned to teaching staff that will have primary responsibility or working with that group of children. Teaching staff supervise infants, toddlers, and twos by sight and sound at all times. Preschool and kindergarten children are supervised by sight and sound at all times.

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## TAOS

The UNM Kid's Campus maintains developmentally appropriate teaching staff to child ratios within group size. Smaller group size and lower ratios allow for more one-on-one adult to child interactions and for constructive activity among children. Staff to child ratios within group size are maintained during all hours of operation, including indoor time, outdoor time, and during field trips.

Research has consistently shown that fewer children per adult and smaller group size result in a higher quality program and more positive developmental outcomes for children.

Student to Teacher ratios and group size

Infant: 6 weeks to 12 months 1:4/ Group size 8

Young Toddler: 1 to 2 years 1:4/Group size 12

Toddler: 2 to 3 years 1:6/ Group size 12

Early Pre-K: 3 to 4 years 1:10 Group size 16

Pre K: 4 to 5 years 1:10/ Group size 20

## Missing Child

In the event that a child is missing and not located after a 10-minute search, an administrator or the staff person in charge will immediately notify both parent(s) and police. All staff members will be notified immediately utilizing a center wide "all-call" and the UNMKC will be placed in lockdown. No one will be permitted to enter or exit the facility without administrative approval, until the child has been located.

## Discipline Policy

The goal of discipline is to maintain a safe and fair environment that encourages growth and development of the child's self-esteem. This type of environment encourages the building of interpersonal competence and fosters self-discipline and respect for others.

1. Rules shall be clear, understandable to the child, explained before and at the time of disciplinary action and consistently applied.

[Type here]



TAOS

2. Discipline shall include positive guidance, redirection, modeling of constructive handling of feelings and the resolution of interpersonal conflict, setting of clear cut limits and use of logical non-punitive consequences.

3. Discipline will not include forcing a child to apologize to another.

4. Kid's Campus staff will never use physical punishment such as shaking or hitting, do not engage in psychological abuse or coercion, never use threats or derogatory remarks and will never withhold nor threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline.

Please note: We do not allow parents to physically discipline their child(ren) while on Kid's Campus property. It is our professional responsibility to notify the Children Youth and Families Department if we believe a child is being physically harmed.

## **Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect**

The staff at our Campus is steadfastly committed to protecting children and helping them to grow. It is our legal obligation to report unusual physical marks or inexplicable behavior to the Department of Children, Youth and Families. It is not our responsibility or intention to offer interpretation or explanation of our observations.

1. Staff members will be familiar with the signs of abuse/neglect as given in the description provided by the Department of Children, Youth and Families.

2. As required by New Mexico law (the Children's Code), staff members will report any known or suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

3. Any of the following information may be requested:

- a. Child's name, address and age
- b. Location
- c. Nature and extent of injuries and previous injuries
- d. The name and address of the parent or caretaker of the child
- e. The name of the person we suspect is abusing or neglecting
- f. Why we suspect the child is being abused or neglected

4. The above report may be made by telephone, in person, or in writing to the local Social Services Division office. The address and number is:

[Type here]



TAOS

CYFD Protective Services

1308 Gusdorf Road

Taos, NM 87571

(575) 758-8871

5. Failure of educators to report is a misdemeanor. New Mexico law establishes immunity for any person reporting in good faith. State law assures confidentiality of reports and reporting persons. The law provides that an anonymous report may be made and the case will be investigated.

Some Signs of Child Abuse/Neglect

The Child:

- Seems unduly afraid of certain adults and generally fearful
- Is kept confined for long periods of time
- shows evidence of repeated skin or other injuries
- Injuries are untreated or inappropriately treated
- Appears to be undernourished or inappropriately fed
- Shows evidence of overall poor care
- Is described as “different” or “bad” by parents
- Does indeed seem “different” in physical or emotional make-up
- Cries often
- Takes over the role of parent or takes care of the parent
- Is notably destructive and aggressive
- Is notably passive and withdrawn

## **Sexual Harassment Policy**

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UNMKC adheres to the University of New Mexico's Sexual Harassment Policy as detailed in the Business Policies and Procedures Manual (Policy #3780) and the Pathfinder. If you have experienced any unwelcome sexual advances or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, please contact an administrator. These policies protect our families as well as our staff.

## **Kid's Campus Closings & Snow Days**

A Child Care Assistance contract and parent agreement is required for every family enrolled at the UNM Kids' Campus. By signing, parents attest that they have read and agreed to the terms of the contract. Contract terms are binding and cannot be altered without written approval from the Director. Contracts may be terminated by providing a minimum of two weeks' written notice of withdrawal.

There are no adjustments or changes to Child Care Assistance or Pre-K Extended Plus contract hours for unexpected program closures or child absences. The annual operational calendar accounts for potential unanticipated closures to meet our Pre-K Extended Plus contract hours of 1380. On average Kids Campus has 1480 contact hours a year. Contract hours remain regardless of absences or closures resulting from:

- **Child Absences:** Illness, personal family vacations, or routine missed days.
- **Scheduled Closures:** Recognized holidays and pre-planned calendar breaks.
- **Unplanned Closures:** Severe weather, unforeseen circumstances, or administrative days granted by the University President

## **Late Pick-up After Closing**

The staff at the UNM Kid's Campus is very serious about the 4:00 p.m. pick-up time. If you are unavoidably detained we will expect you to call in advance to warn us of your late arrival. There will be a \$25.00 late fee billed for parents arriving at 4:10 or later and will be expected to be paid directly to teachers in cash. Having parents show up late frequently is frightening to children and disrespectful of the teachers who have children and families of their own and student employees who may need to get to class.

## **Picking Up and Dropping Off Children**

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## TAOS

We ask that all parents or guardians escort your child into class. You are required to sign your child in and document the time of arrival. You are also required to sign your child out when picking your child up from the program.

You must fill out our Standing Order for Pick-Up form each semester to authorize individuals other than the contracting parent to pick up your child. This will alleviate miscommunications and expedite the safe transportation of your child. Any authorized person picking up your child(ren) must be at least 18 years old.

Written permission must be given to the teacher in your child's room if anyone other than those listed on your child's standing orders is to pick up your child. In case of emergency, a phone call will be accepted before the other adult arrives.

All visitors must stop in the office before going to the child's room. The adult must present a picture ID. We WILL NOT release a child to someone who has not been authorized to pick him or her up. Remember, the emergency contact list on your contract permits us to call someone of your choosing only if we cannot find you in an urgent situation.

Under the laws of the State of New Mexico, both parents may have the right to pick up their child, unless a court document restricts that right. The enrolling parent, who chooses not to include the child's other parent/legal guardian on the contract, standing orders and other Center paperwork, must bring in official proof of or file an official court document (e.g., current restraining order, sole custody decree, or divorce decree stating sole custody). Without that document, the center may release the child to either parent, provided that parent documents his paternity/her maternity of the child.

In accordance with the Public Health Licensing Authority, and the Children's Code of the State of New Mexico, all staff of the UNM Kid's Campus are required to report any incidents that may fall within the definition of child abuse and neglect. We are therefore mandated to use every discretion and precaution in releasing a child into the custody of an adult who exhibits physical manifestations of impairment (i.e. operating under the influence of alcohol or other substances).

Our first obligation is to the safety of all children in our care. Releasing a child into a potentially hazardous situation would constitute endangerment. It is our policy, therefore, that we will not release a child into the care of any person whom we deem too impaired to safely transport and/or care for that child. We will make every effort to locate an alternate person to pick up the child from the emergency numbers provided by the parents. If an angry or hostile situation occurs we reserve the right to contact the UNM Campus Security to ensure the well-being of our staff and children.

## UNM Taos Kids' Campus

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## **FY21 Program Plans**

### **Recruitment, Prioritization, Enrollment and Attendance**

#### **I. Recruitment**

UNM-Taos Kids Campus is located in the targeted community of the Taos Municipal School (TMS) district. Our school is at the UNM Taos Klauer Campus south of the Town of Taos and Ranchos de Taos, however our students come from all over the TMS district. In the TMS District there are three traditional elementary schools (Ranchos de Taos, Enos Garcia and Arroyos del Norte) and four charter schools (Anansi Charter, Taos Charter, Taos Integrated School of the Arts-TISA and Taos International School-TIS. Arroyos del Norte Elementary, Enos Garcia Elementary, Ranchos de Taos Elementary, TISA and TIS are all Title 1 Schools.

Recruitment is directed to the target population who will attend a Title 1 Taos Municipal School Kindergarten and or who live in the attendance zone of a Title1 elementary school. Word of mouth, UNM Taos website, Taos News legal ads and outreach at community events are ongoing throughout the school year.

UNM Taos Kids Campus works closely in collaboration with the other ECECD, PED NM Pre K and Early PreK funded programs in our community to provide services to all eligible 3- and 4-year-old children. Early Childhood PreK programs in Taos County work together on recruitment. We share wait lists and share information with parents. We

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refer children amongst programs and collaborate on curriculum development, share questions and answers and generally support each other in our work together.

Kids' Campus has a history of collaboration with the other NM PreK programs in our community. In the spring all NM PreK programs collaborate to host a Kindergarten transition night for our families. All area public and private Kindergarten Programs are invited to attend and give a brief overview of their programs. Prior to the Kindergarten Night, all Taos funded NM PreK programs are invited to a preliminary meeting to discuss the needs of our community and how we can best work collaboratively to meet those needs. Our commitment to community collaboration is also evidenced by our founding membership in the Paso a Paso Network for the past 16 years. Paso a Paso Network is a public-private community network that merges medical providers, social service providers, early childhood educators and public service programs into a system of continuous care for families of young children prenatal through eight years old. Kids' Campus recognizes the need for community collaborations and systems alignment to fully provide all children with access to comprehensive services that are predictive of school success.

## **II. Prioritization and Enrollment**

At UNM Taos Kids Campus we prioritize the enrollment of children who:

- Are previously enrolled in our program, ensuring continuity of care.
- Would not otherwise have the opportunity to participate in a high-quality early childhood care and education program

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- Are not being funded for early care and education (PreK) services during the specified NM Pre K program hours with another funding source.
- Will attend kindergarten in an elementary school designated as Title I

At Kids' Campus we use several methods to prioritize enrollment of children without access to high quality programs while ensuring equal opportunity to services for children in the identified target communities:

66% meet the primary priority/ slots after that are open.

When there are more children than slots, we use a lottery process

For the NM PreK Program; Enroll only children who have reached their Fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) birthday on or before 12:01.am August 31, 2026, of that year and are not age-eligible for kindergarten.

For the NM Early PreK Program; Enroll only children who have reached their third (3<sup>rd</sup>) birthday on or before 12:01.am August 31, 2026, of that year and are not age-eligible for NM PreK.

During the enrollment and application process, information on the child's age and prior school experience is collected to determine the families' priority level.

Children will be enrolled in the order of prioritization mentioned above and ensures that at least 66% of children served live within the attendance zone of a Title 1 elementary school.

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When priority slots are filled and there are more children than space available then we will use a lottery process.

The process assures equal access to the program and meets priorities for enrollment.

### **III. Attendance Policy**

UNM Kids' Campus PreK program is a free, state funded full day program Monday through Friday. A minimum of 90% attendance is required by the state. We ask that family members call in to report a child's absence within 24 hours. A teacher will follow up with a phone call to the family after three consecutive days of absence. If an extended break is anticipated, communication with teachers is required and suggestions for home activities can be provided. If the required 90% attendance is in question, a conference will be scheduled between family members, teachers and program administrator to develop a mutually acceptable compliance plan. If absences continue despite the terms of the compliance plan, the family will be given two weeks' notice of disenrollment.

When and if there is a closure in our facility, we will provide remote learning for NM Prek and NM Early Prek Kids' Campus students. For those families participating in remote learning only, regular responses on the Seesaw ap. are encouraged.

Upon vacancy of a Pre-K slot, UNM Kids Campus will actively seek to fill the position using the enrollment strategies as previously stated.

### **Special Education Program Plan**

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## **PreK and Early PreK Screening and Referral Procedure**

All UNM Taos Kid's Campus PreK and Early PreK teachers are trained in administering the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ). During the PreK and Early PreK home visit, conducted the week prior to the start of school, the teachers will orient parents on how to fill out the ASQ. All ASQ will be returned to school by October 1 of each year. The UNM Taos Kid's Campus administrator will score all ASQs and discuss any concerns with the PreK and Early PreK teachers.

When the Kid's Campus staff suspects that a child may have a developmental delay or other special need, it will be communicated to the family in a confidential and supportive manner. Staff will provide the family with documentation and an explanation for their concerns. The center will provide families with suggestions for next steps and make available information about additional resources. The UNMKC works in partnership with each family and will provide support and assistance with Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

If a child is currently receiving services through other local agencies we ask that families let us know. A copy of any current IFSP (Individual Family Support Plan) or IEP (Individualized Educational Plan) will help us to best meet the needs of the child and provide consistent care. The lead PreK and Early PreK teacher will attend and participate in all IEP meetings. This information will be held in the strictest of confidence and will

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not be shared without written consent with anyone other than staff working directly with the child.

Supports: If our staff needs more resources or supports for meeting the needs of the child, then we will seek these out through community agencies. If the family needs additional supports or resources, we will help connect them to available resources in the community.

## **UNM Taos Kid's Campus Parent Engagement Plan**

At UNM-Taos Kid's Campus we believe family members are a child's first and most important teacher and strive to create an ongoing collaborative relationship between family and school.

At Kid's Campus, the relationship building process begins with a home visit with each student's family. The home visit is an opportunity to “better understand the child's individual needs, interests, abilities and the families goals, values, expectations and childrearing practices” (NAEYC Position Statement 2009). The teachers will also assist the family in completing the *Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)*, which will serve as a springboard for discussion with families, as well as identify any potential areas of development that need additional support or further evaluation.

Three parent/teacher conferences will be held throughout the year. This is an opportunity for teachers and families to share in the celebration of the child's developmental achievements through the NM PreK portfolio documentation, as well as

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collaboratively design the learning goals for the student. Kid's Campus will respond to the needs of parents by providing flexible scheduling for parent-teacher conferences. Families will be provided the option of meeting virtually or outdoors at Kids' Campus, with COVID safe practices adhered to. Parents will also be encouraged to use the PreK parent materials to support their child's learning outside of school.

| UNM Kid's Campus                     | Date            |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Home Visits                          | August          |
| Family Open House                    | August          |
| First Day of School                  | Mid August      |
| vision and hearing screening         | September – Nov |
| Parent/Teacher Conferences/No School | November        |
| Fall Festival                        | October         |
| Winter Celebration                   | December        |
| Parent/Teacher conferences/No School | February        |
| Community Event                      | March           |
|                                      |                 |
| Parent/Teacher Conferences/No School | May             |
| Celebration of Learning/Graduation   | May             |

Through our partnership with Taos Children's Trust Fund, Kid's Campus will also offer several parenting workshops including training in emotional intelligence (EQ), Love and Logic Parenting classes and Circle of Security. We also provide families with additional on-line resources to support their family needs during this challenging time. Due to COVID, all family engagement activities will be virtual.

Our teachers recognize the ongoing need to engage parents by taking the initiative to speak with them at the beginning of the day and end of the day to informally discuss the child's progress as well as daily interactions and activities. The weekly lesson plans

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are posted on the parent board outside of the entrance to the classroom and when we are teaching virtually they are emailed to families weekly.

We also have a classroom parent representative (CPR) that sits on the Kids' Campus advisory council. The CPR member will meet with the UNM Kid's Campus advisory council quarterly.

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**Just Playing ~ Anita Wadley**

When I'm building in the block room, please don't say I'm "Just Playing."

For, you see, I'm learning as I play about balance and shapes.

Who knows, I may be an architect someday.

When you see me up to my elbows in paint or standing at an easel,

Or molding and shaping clay, please don't let me hear you say, "He is Just Playing."

For you see, I'm learning as I play. I'm expressing myself and being creative.

I may be an artist or an inventor someday.

When you see me engrossed in a puzzle or some "plaything" at my school, please

don't feel the time is wasted in "Play."

For you see, I'm learning as I play. I'm learning to solve problems and concentrate.

I may be in business someday.

When you see me cooking or tasting foods, please don't think that because I enjoy it,

it is "Just Play."

I'm learning to follow directions and see difference. I may be a cook someday.

When you see me learning to skip, hop, run, and move my body, please don't say I'm

"Just Playing."

For, you see, I'm learning as I play. I'm learning how my body works.

I may be a doctor, nurse, or athlete someday.

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TAOS

When I'm getting all dressed up, setting the table, caring for the babies, don't get the idea I'm "Just Playing."

For, you see, I'm learning as I play. I may be a mother or father someday.

When you see me sitting in a chair "reading" to an imaginary audience, please don't laugh and think I'm "Just Playing."

For, you see, I'm learning as I Play. I may be a teacher someday.

When you see me combing the bushes for bugs, or packing my pockets with choice things I find, don't pass it off as "Just Play."

For, you see, I'm learning as I play. I may be a scientist someday.

When you ask me what I've done at school today, and I say, "I Just Played."

Please don't misunderstand me.

For, you see, I'm learning as I play. I'm learning to enjoy and be successful in work. I'm preparing for tomorrow.

Today, I am a child and work is play.

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