

Student Handbook



The Children's Center at Purchase College

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Welcome to The Children's Center at Purchase College. About 30 Purchase College students work as Practicum Students or student assistants in the Children's Center each semester. It always takes a while before students feel comfortable with their role. These pages are designed to help familiarize students with their role and responsibilities at the Children's Center. Please feel free to ask questions! We are here to help.

**Sincerely,
The Staff of
The Children's Center at Purchase College**

Director: Dr. Patricia Amanna

Assistant Director: Harriet Mendl

Administrative Assistant: Virginia Gennusa

Facilitator: Penny Rose

Head Teachers:

- **Christina Brown**
- **Cindy Quiroa**
- **Harriet Mendl**
- **Andrew Balsam**

Assistant Teachers:

- **JoAnn Edwards**
- **Giselle Diaz**
- **Abigail Lane**
- **Chelsea Delvecchio**

Music and Movement Instructor: Wen-Lin Murray

Philosophy of The Children's Center

The Children's Center at Purchase College, Inc. (NAEYC accredited) is a campus-based early childhood center and instructional facility. The families served are those of students, faculty, and staff of the college and of the community at large. The primary commitment of the professional staff of the Children's Center is to provide high quality child care in a safe, healthy, happy and stimulating learning environment. Designed to facilitate each child's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive growth, the program emphasizes gender equity and the development of a positive self-concept. These goals require that all members of the staff respect and maintain open, positive communication with the children, their parents, and each other.

Purchase College students utilize the center in conjunction with course work, independent study, field experience, and senior projects. The Children's Center also pays particular attention to the needs of the community by offering parents invaluable informational resources, referrals, seminars, and conferences. The Center tries to be responsive to issues that face communities as a whole, such as public health, child nutrition, teacher training, and mainstreaming.

A very important part of our curriculum focuses on the integration of campus resources and early childhood practices. The children visit the Neuberger Museum for a diversified cultural and ethnic experience. We utilize the dance and music buildings to experience sound, rhythm, and movement through the performing arts. The children learn about science through our nature walks and outdoor activities.

In an open environment setting, the Children's Center provides children with developmentally appropriate activities, ongoing assessment of the children's development, and an anti-bias curriculum emphasizing inclusion and anticommercialism. Play - the universal language of childhood - is used at the Center to foster the growth of elementary concepts of time, space, number, and color.

Games, painting, construction, modeling, dance, outdoor play, and music are used to sharpen cognitive and perceptual processes, as well as to allow children to interact constructively with others. The purpose of these exercises is to create an atmosphere of self-respect and self discipline, and to provide numerous opportunities for teachers to guide the children as they learn to make their own choices and decisions.

Welcome to the Yellow Room

Welcome to the Yellow room! There are up to 10 children in our room, who range between eighteen months to two years old. We have one head teacher, and one assistant teacher, and several student assistants. The children in our room are new to the Children's Center at Purchase College. For many of us, this is our first time away from our family. Some of us are learning to separate from our parents, which is not always an easy task. So, do not be worried if you see us crying. It takes time to adjust to our new routine. We also may be a little afraid of new people and new faces, so please give us time to get used to spending our day with you. Sometimes we need lots of love and attention and other times we may want to be alone. We do not have a large vocabulary and may have trouble expressing our needs. Occasionally we become frustrated because we cannot verbalize what is troubling us and you may see a child use their hands upon another child or grownup. However, we are learning to use our words and not our hands to get what we want. So, please be patient because we are learning new words everyday! Everyday we learn how to be more independent, so we may need your help from time to time. We look towards the grownups in the room for guidance and assistance, so please be there when we need you! We like to work in small groups and often by ourselves. We often play side by side with the children and not with them. We are just beginning to become aware of other children. We love songs, stories, and music. As the year progresses, we will acquire new words, new ways of expressing ourselves, and new skills! Thank you for joining us and we look forward to growing together!

Welcome to the Green Room

Welcome to the Green room! We have eleven children in our room, who range from two years to three years old. We have one head teacher, and one assistant teacher. The children in our room are more comfortable with being away from their family. However, we all have our days where it is hard to leave our family and we may be sad. For some this may be our first school experience, so we may have a hard time seeing our family leave. We have acquired many words and have become better at expressing our needs. Occasionally we can become frustrated because we cannot verbalize what is troubling us and you may see one of us use our hands upon another child or grownup. However, we are still learning to use our words and not our hands to get what we want. So, please be patient because we are learning new words everyday! As this age, we have begun to assert ourselves, so you may hear the word no quite often. We are trying to be independent and like to do things "all by ourselves". We are very proud when we are able to do something without help from the grownups, so please give us the chance to try to do things on our own. We need help doing certain tasks and we will let you know when we need you. We are all learning how to use the potty, but it takes time to learn. So many of us wear diapers, but some of us wear underwear. We like to pretend and play games. We love to sing, listen to music, and dance. We like to work in small groups and are beginning to develop friendships with others. We still like to play by ourselves, but are much more aware of the other children and their needs. As the year progresses, we will learn new words, new ways of expressing our needs, and gain new skills. Everyday we are becoming more independent. Thank you for joining us and we look forward to growing together!

Welcome to the Purple Room

Welcome to the Purple Room! We have eighteen children in our classroom that range between the ages of three and four. We have a head teacher, and an assistant teacher. The children in our room have developed a good sense of independence and are comfortable with being away from our family. However, like all we can have trouble seeing our family leave and can be sad. For some this may be our first experience away from our family, so we may have a hard time saying goodbye. At times, we may miss our family very much and wish they were here. We are a verbal group and like to talk with other children and grownups. We like to work in small groups of children and occasionally by ourselves. We are learning to work together as a team to get things accomplished, like cleaning our classroom or completing a project or an activity. We have developed attachment to the other children and strong friendships. We like to play with one another and are concerned with other people's feelings. We are learning to share and take turns, which is not always such an easy thing to do. We can become very frustrated by having to share a toy or wait for a turn. So, please be patient if we become frustrated or upset. We are an independent group and we like to do things on our own. We serve ourselves during meals, pour our own juice or milk, and clean up after we are done. We are learning to take care of our own needs everyday. Sometimes we do need help from the grownups and we will let you know when we need you. We do get very proud when we are able to accomplish a task on our own, so please encourage us to do things on our own. Many of us use the bathroom all by ourselves. Sometimes, we need to be reminded to flush and wash our hands. Some of us are still in diapers and we are learning to use the potty, but it takes time. We love to pretend, sing, listen to music, and build with blocks. We love to talk, so feel free to strike up a conversation with us! As the year progresses, we will learn new words, new ways of expressing our needs, and gain new skills. Everyday we are becoming more independent. Thank you for joining us and we look forward to growing together!

Welcome to the Blue Room

Welcome to the Blue Room! We have twenty children in our classroom that range between the ages of four and five. We have one head teacher, , and an assistant teacher. The children in our room have developed a good sense of independence and are comfortable with being away from our family. However, like all we can have trouble seeing our family leave and can be sad. We are verbal and like to talk with the children and grownups. We really enjoy talking about friends, families, and ourselves. We like to work in groups and occasionally by ourselves. We work together as a team to get things accomplished, like cleaning our classroom or completing a project or an activity. We each have an important job that we complete each day, such as setting the table or sweeping the floor. We like to play with one another and are concerned with other people's feelings. We have developed good friendships with the other children. We share and take turns, which is not always an easy thing to do. We can become frustrated by having to share or wait for a turn. So, please be patient if we become frustrated. We will work through it. We are an independent group and we like to do things on our own. We serve our own meals, pour our own juice, and clean up after we are done. We can dress and undress ourselves when we need to. We can put on our own shoes and socks. We do need help tying the laces. Sometimes we may need help from a grownup and we will let you know when we need you. We use the bathroom by ourselves and remember to wash our hands when we are done. We love to learn new things. We are a busy group soaking in lots of information before going off to kindergarten. We still love to pretend, sing, listen to music, and build with blocks. As the year progresses, we will learn new words, new ways of expressing our needs, and gain new skills. Thanks for joining us and we look forward to growing together!

STUDENT ASSISTANT

Roles, Responsibilities, & Expected Behaviors

After spending time in the classroom with the teachers and the children, roles and responsibilities will become clearer, teachers, students, and children will become familiar with one another, and a comfort level will be reached. The following guidelines will help ease the breaking in process. Remember you are an important part of The Children's Center team, if you have any questions please feel free to ask.

A practicum student's overall responsibility is spend a minimum of eight hours per week for fifteen weeks at The Children's Center, in order to gain experience working with children between the ages of eighteen months to five years old. Practicum students are to ensure the safety of the children at all times, maintain daily routine, maintain operation and function of the classroom, and follow Children Center policies and procedures.

- **Dress Appropriately:** Keep in mind that working with young children involves activities that are messy, so you may want to avoid wearing clothing that you are not comfortable with getting dirty. Wear clothing that is comfortable and appropriate to the season. All teachers will spend time outside with children on the playground and on walks. Please make sure clothes and shoes reflect the weather. We will play outside in the snow!
- **Be Prompt:** There is a log in book located across from the locker. You are expected to sign in when you arrive (If you are late, you must sign in for the time you arrived, not the time you were scheduled to work). Arrive in sufficient time to be prepared to begin work at your scheduled time (5 - 10 minutes prior is recommended).
- **Notify Center if Going to be Late or Sick:** Always call 914-251-6895 when late or sick. Again, you are an important part of our team, so please give us as much notice as possible. Please be aware that Practicum Students are required to spend 120 hours at The Children's Center and are expected to make up missed hours. Students who are chronically late or absent will be subject to dismissal.
- **Ask Questions:** Be sure to ask for help when needed. You will be able to do a better job if you question teachers as to why and how they handle various situations. The teachers are here to help you in any way necessary.
- **Health:** Regular hand washing is the key to maintaining your health and that of the children. You are required to wash your hands immediately upon entering the classroom. During your time in the classroom, you should be sure to wash your hands prior to handling food, after helping a child wipe his/her nose or after blowing your own nose, and again before you leave.
- **Safety:** Remain alert to the children's safety as a top priority. If you notice hazards, such as broken toys, uncovered electrical outlets, etc. report them to the teachers in the classroom.
- **Never leave children unsupervised:** Notify teachers if you must leave the room or

- playground so that arrangements will be made to provide full coverage and maintain proper teacher to child ratios.
- **Be alert to the whole group:** Know where children and other teachers are and what they are doing even when they are not in your immediate area.
- **Your Responsibility is to the Children:** Your conversation in the classroom should be concerned with their needs, the program, and helping the teachers. Try to avoid conversations with teachers and other students that do not relate to the children. Your personal life and interests need to wait until your day at the center is finished.
- **You are a role model to the children:** Please model appropriate behavior and language for the children at all times. Avoid sitting on tables and shelves in the classroom, chairs have been provided for teachers.
- **Use your voice and tone effectively:** Go over to the child, stoop down, and speak quietly, but distinctively, rather than shout from across the room or yard. Never use force. Avoid picking up children to get them where they are supposed to go. Learn to use verbalization, not force or strength to get children to cooperate.
- **Join the group:** Unless you are needed elsewhere, join the teacher and the children by sitting with them.
- **Maintain your role as teacher:** Avoid playing adult centered games with children or entertaining them so that you become the focus of their play.
- **Maintain the environment:** Keep the room and playground in order as the day moves along. It is everyone's responsibility and a team effort to maintain health and safety of the room. Please take the initiative in maintaining proper order and cleanliness. Involve children in the clean up process. Clean up should be a pleasant activity when adults and children work together to get the room ready for the next activity.
- **Process over Product:** You should not make models for the children in their artwork, block play, games, etc. The children's work will never measure up to yours, so encourage them to do their own thing. Remember that the process is more important than the child's finished product.
- **Give children time:** Be patient. Allow plenty of time for children to do as much as they can without help.
- **Encourage Independence:** Before helping a child, encourage them to do it on their own. When help is needed, please give as much as is required for success.
- **Encourage conversations at meal times:** You should sit with the children during meal times, unless you are needed elsewhere. Remember the food being served is for the children and not the students.
- **Use professional ethics:** Avoid discussing children and families by name outside the school. Confidentiality must be maintained at all times.
- **Maintain Communication:** Keep other staff members informed of significant events and problems that occur. Parent question's and concerns should be redirected to the head or assistant teacher.

The Children's Center at Purchase College

Student Acknowledgement Form

The Student handbook describes important information about The Children's Center and I understand that I should consult the Director regarding any questions not answered in the handbook. I have received and fully read the handbook and understand that it is my responsibility to comply with the policies contained in this handbook.

Student's Name (Please Print)

Date

Student's Signature