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Dear Families,

At UCCC, we believe the power to change society lies in changing the way young children are taught and for nearly 50 years, University City Children’s Center has honored this belief by providing high-quality child care and education to children across the St. Louis region. We are constantly innovating, improving the way we teach and support children and families, as well as how we support the professional development of our teachers and staff. Our approach, the LUME Approach, was developed right here at UCCC and is rooted in the deep understanding that children’s emotional development is the foundation for lifelong health, growth, and learning. In fact, studies have shown that the LUME Approach is proven to make a difference in a child’s mental health and educational journey.

Our teachers understand that early childhood is a critical time for the social, emotional, and physical development of all children, but each UCCC teacher is expected, prepared, and willing to teach and love each child as an individual. We know that children come to UCCC with different strengths, needs, and challenges and we partner with our families to provide the best care and education possible. Our classrooms support active learning through play, experimentation, and wonder. We encourage our children to be curious learners and enable them to embrace their confidence—whether they can count to 10 or 100. Most importantly, we live by, teach, and promote our core values; love, trust, empathy, joy and compassion.

We know and understand that children will take greater academic risks and learn more when they feel emotionally supported in the classroom and at home. Developing a partnership between school and family is essential for a successful, holistic, educational experience for children. Teachers and parents must make a conscious decision to become deeply involved in the educational and developmental process of their children. In the words of Bev Bos, an internationally renowned educator, “together we’re better.” I hope this Family Handbook will assist you in becoming involved at University City Children’s Center with your child.

Stephen P. Zwolak
Executive Director
Our Mission, Vision, Belief, and Values

Mission
We partner with families of diverse backgrounds to nurture the growth and development of their children through inclusive, innovative, high quality care, and education.

Vision
All children are prepared for life.

Belief
We believe what happens early in life lasts a lifetime and the power to change society lies in changing the way young children are taught.

Values
Trust. We instill in children the confidence that we will always be there for them and we strive to have this same confidence in others. This trust allows us to enter into interdependent relationships with our school community, our partners, and our friends.

Love. We willingly extend ourselves for the sake of others. We put children first and strive to understand, respect, and support all the members of our school community.

Empathy. We are intentionally sensitive to the feelings, experiences, and perspectives of children, families, and each other. Empathy allows us to build a diverse community that is understanding of the needs of others.

Compassion. We take action to help meet the needs of our children, our families, and each other.

Joy. We want our children to experience the wonderful and calming feeling that comes from believing that everything is going to be alright. Joy is an essential element of an emotionally healthy life, and is established through the alternating experiences of struggle and success that begins at birth.

Moving Our Vision Forward
Founded in 1970 by nine community synagogues and churches, today University City Children’s Center (UCCC) reflects the founders’ visionary desire to create a safe, nurturing environment where children from different socioeconomic, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds can learn and play together in an atmosphere that is respectful of diversity and individuality. UCCC is a 501(c)
(3) and opened with 28 children at Temple Shaare Emeth and was one of the very first programs to achieve accreditation with Missouri Voluntary Accreditation.

Today, UCCC has the capacity to serve 180 children. We have a growing reputation as a thought-leader in early childhood education and human development. Our notions of innovation and creative thinking in the classroom drive the continuous improvement of our program, evolving into the LUME Approach and establishing the LUME Institute. As a result, UCCC is now the model school of LUME Institute.

LUME Institute and University City Children’s Center

Throughout the years, UCCC has had an incredible impact on children and families. Our children graduate kindergarten ready and prepared for life. We offer tuition assistance to more than half of our families and our mixed income model is closing the achievement gap. While we continue to grow and learn at UCCC, we recognize that there is a community of early childhood educators and families beyond our walls, working hard to provide higher quality early childhood experiences for their children. As a result, UCCC established LUME Institute, as a pathway to help others better understand early childhood development and practice, by learning the LUME Approach.

Together, LUME Institute and University City Children’s Center are improving the field of early childhood education. By working directly with children and their primary caregivers (parents, teachers, and more), we are increasing children’s opportunities to thrive and reach their full potential at UCCC and beyond.
About LUME Institute:

UCCC Model School is where the LUME Approach evolved. The philosophy and methods integrated at UCCC are rooted in a deep understanding that a child’s emotional development is the foundation for lifelong health, growth, and learning.

Professional Development courses that build educators’ capacity to understand, connect with, and serve children and families.

Workforce Development opportunities through LUME’s Apprenticeship Program, which is registered with the Department of Labor and meets professional education requirements for Child Development Associates Credential.

Family Education and resources that help families and caregivers grow healthy relationships with children that will last a lifetime.

Community Engagement by leading and participating in regional, state, and national partnerships that encourage critical conversations and action to improve systems that affect children and families.
How We See Early Childhood (the LUME Approach)

Our inside-out approach to caring for young children is part of what makes us unique and one of the most critical ingredients missing in other early childhood programs. We have developed a model, The LUME Approach, which integrates three interdependent developmental lines, each of which is critical to developing the whole child.

Values and character development naturally emerge in an environment that models trust, empathy, and compassion. As children live in the UCCC environment, they begin to internalize, demonstrate behavior, and ultimately embody these core values.

Our teachers are focused on understanding and promoting psychodynamic development to ensure that we meet the individual needs of each child. Children naturally have different temperaments/personalities, strengths, needs, interests, and more. The understanding of human development and relationships is embedded in our curriculum and helps children develop self-regulation, resiliency, identity, and more.

We identify early literacy as the foundation of current and future academic success for all children. Early literacy begins in relationships and emerges through oral language, listening skills, and emergent reading. UCCC creates a literacy-rich environment to promote children's early literacy development.
The LUME Approach supports intentional teaching practices. We integrate each sphere into daily practice. Within each sphere, there are key elements of children’s growth that are based on developmental theory, observational research, and current brain research. Our responsibility is to provide educational experiences that are driven by best practices.

Our approach is an ambitious conceptual understanding for teachers of early childhood, when the norm emphasizes product, not process or understanding of the inner world of children. We have created a school that can heal and is emotionally responsive to the needs of children and families. Yet as ambitious as this may be, we believe it is the key to systemic family change.

This integration of disciplines creates a model for early childhood education in the St. Louis metropolitan area.
Program Goals and Objectives

To provide innovative quality early care and education for an economically, racially, and culturally diverse population of children from 6 weeks to 6 years of age in a year-round program.

To enhance early literacy development of children in an emotionally responsive environment that advances the intellectual, emotional, social, and physical development of children.

To provide an emotionally safe environment where children have the opportunity to develop their intellectual capacity while building skills for academic success.

To develop partnerships with families that increase their understanding of the importance of early care and education through comprehensive family services.

To enhance character and value development of children, families, and UCCC’s faculty and staff through building a caring community.

Theory of Change

We Know:

• All behavior has meaning
• What happens early in life lasts a lifetime
• Critical and rapid brain development occurs by age 5

Therefore, We Believe:

• We can impact a generation of children in 5 years
• If we want to change society, we must change the way young children are taught
How We Engage Children in Learning (Curriculum)

We believe that the foundations of all developmental domains must be nurtured from infancy and through relationships. For example, when an infant begins to build their fine motor skills to grasp and eventually make marks on paper, this is critical to their writing development. When a toddler practices sorting, they are building their classification skills which are foundational for both mathematic and scientific knowledge. At UCCC, you will never see us drilling children on letters or numbers or offering worksheets. We believe that learning must be relationship-based, contextualized, authentic, and connected to the child’s phase of development. When learning is playful, yet intentional, it has the strongest impact on retention of knowledge, motivation to learn, and later academic success.

UCCC uses The Creative Curriculum and follows the Developmentally Appropriate Practices established by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). These guide teachers in creating quality learning environments and facilitating learning experiences through play that supports the development of the whole child. A monthly curricular plan will
be posted outside your child’s classroom detailing planned learning experiences in the physical, social-emotional, cognitive, language, literacy, mathematics, social studies, and science domains and that meet standards for kindergarten readiness. Our teachers’ curricular plans are driven by the children’s data and goals (based on ongoing observation and assessments), and tailored to their interests. Teachers are never limited to their curricular plans, and are always encouraged to capitalize on “teachable moments” and other opportunities that might arise. Furthermore, our teachers infuse their passions and interests into the classroom in a variety of ways.

Diversity is cultivated throughout the learning experience so that children learn to appreciate the differences of others. We are proud that our UCCC community reflects children and families from 30+ zip codes and 40+ nationalities, cultures, and ethnicities. With your permission, children may occasionally participate in field trips that enhance programmatic themes and broaden their experiences.

Every summer, a committee of our teachers plans our UCCC Summer Camp. This occurs over six weeks from June to July. Each week is designated a theme and teachers plan engaging outdoor activities to support the theme. Often special events culminate certain weeks. Water Play Wednesdays are also a traditional part of our summer camp experience.
Outdoor play is an important part of our curriculum as it supports all areas of development for children. Children will have the opportunity to go outside in almost all types of weather (except extreme or unsafe weather). It is not unusual for children to go out and run in the rain or use our school rain boots to splash in, often muddy, puddles.

**Guiding Principles of Curriculum**

- Early learning and development is an integrated experience as one domain influences the development in others.
- The expectation of children must be to succeed, regardless of their background.
- Children are individuals who develop at different rates.
- Children learn through exploration of their environment in child-initiated and teacher-facilitated activities.
- Teachers, staff, and families must work collaboratively to ensure children are provided optimal learning experiences.

**Emotionally Responsive Programming**

- Children will show the capacity to think about important people when they are out of sight.
- Children will be able to identify and name emotions.
- Children will find pleasure in relating to other children.
- Children will anticipate and participate in routines, activities, and transitions.
- Children will use pretend play, symbolic play, storytelling, drawing, painting, and clay modeling to process experiences and express thoughts and feelings.

Adapted from *Creating Schools That Heal* by Lesley Koplow (2002).
Our Building

UCCC has the capacity for 180 children daily in a state-of-the-art facility. The 10,000 square foot building has 12 classrooms (infant to pre-k), an infant/toddler playground, infant/toddler herb garden, adventure playground, vegetable garden, greenhouse, trike track, tea house, library for children and families, reading garden, family resource library, and lactation room. Our kitchen and nutrition program is led by an in-house chef.
How We Understand Each Child as an Individual

We use ongoing observations, assessments, and individualized planning to track the progress your child makes. Teachers use this information to create lesson plans connected to the developmental needs and interests the children in the classroom. Teachers also work closely with parents and caregivers to better understand each child’s individual needs. Each child has a classroom portfolio that reflects his or her work and learning progression through the developmental milestones.

Our assessments also help us learn about how our program is working overall for the children we serve. One thing that we see consistently each year from our assessments is that children who have had the opportunity to grow at UCCC from infant through pre-k benefit most from the full UCCC experience and are prepared to go to kindergarten.
Below is a list of the assessments UCCC uses and how often they are completed. These assessments help us understand your child’s social and emotional, physical, and cognitive development. Your consent for your child to participate in these is obtained at enrollment (with a yearly update) on the General Consent Form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Who participates</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)</td>
<td>All children</td>
<td>Completed 3 times a year (October, January, April) by both parents and teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning, 4th Edition (DIAL-4)</td>
<td>Children aged 2.6 to 5.11 years</td>
<td>Completed 2 times a year (October and April) by UCCC teachers and administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages and Stages Questionnaire, 3rd Edition (ASQ-3)</td>
<td>Children aged 1 month to 29 months</td>
<td>Completed 2 times a year (October and April)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOLD Objectives for Development and Learning</td>
<td>All children</td>
<td>Ongoing observation and documentation throughout the year 4 Checkpoints (October, February, May, and August)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Building Children from the Inside Out

We help children learn to be self-assured, helpful, and cooperative. We believe positive discipline is an ongoing process through which young children can learn self-regulation. The emphasis at the Center is placed on acquiring positive social skills, problem-solving strategies, and the ability to see things from other people’s perspective. This process occurs at different times for different children, but from the earliest age, children are encouraged to express their feelings appropriately through facial expression, body movements, or language.

Teachers are encouraged to:

- Make expectations clear and age-appropriate
- Model desirable behaviors
- Anticipate potential conflicts
- Use discussion and/or redirection as needed

Teachers are prohibited from:

- Using physical punishment, including, but not limited to, spanking, slapping, shaking, biting, or pulling hair.
- Using discipline techniques that are humiliating, threatening or frightening to children; children shall not be shamed, ridiculed, or spoken to harshly, abusively, or with profanity.
- Using punishment or threat of punishment that is associated with food, rest, or toilet training.
- Placing children in a closet, a locked or unlit room, or any other place which is frightening.
- Permitting children to intimidate or harm others, harm themselves, or destroy property.

We are committed to supporting all children. When children need additional support for their behavior and/or development, teachers and administrators work closely with the family on how to best support the child. This can include observation, documentation, individual support plans, and outside referrals.

Healthy Minds for the Future

Early childhood mental health is an important component of UCCC. Our goal is to assist each child and family in finding effective ways to meet their emotional, physical, and social needs, through our early childhood mental health consultation model. This model focuses on assisting children, families, and teachers in the promotion of emotional and social development, while working to prevent and intervene for mental health concerns.
Throughout the year, information will be shared on positive parenting, emotional wellness, behavior management, and developmental delays. If you would like more information about these services, please contact the Center Director or Assistant Center Director.

If your child has a diagnosed disability, or if you suspect your child may need additional support, contact the Center Director or Assistant Center Director. We will partner with you as we develop a plan for your child.
How We Engage with Families

Parents are always welcome at the Center. UCCC hosts a variety of family involvement activities to enable every family to have a relationship with the Center. Some of the events include a family potluck to celebrate our diversity, Curriculum Night, Literacy Night, year-end giving, and family work days. Our goal is to have 100% of our families engaged.

New Family Orientation

When new children and families join our center, we provide an orientation process to welcome you to our family. This process will include a meeting with a member of the program team to review the handbook and answer any questions you may have as well as a meeting with the CFO to go over your tuition agreement. New infant-toddler families will also have a home visit, where your primary teacher and a member of the program team will visit you to learn about your family and your child's routines. New preschool families will have a play-date where the child will visit the classroom and the family will meet with a member of the program team and/or the primary teacher to get to know the child and family better.

Parent-Teacher Conferences and Home Visits

Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled at least twice a year; every six months or in the spring and fall. Families will also participate in a transition conference any time your child transitions to a different room and when your child leaves UCCC. Parents are always welcome to request a conference at other times with teachers and/or any member of the Program Team. All students enrolled at UCCC receive home visits at least once per school year.
Child Transitions

The process of moving a child from one classroom to the next is individualized to best support the child and family. We encourage families to have conversations with their child’s teachers as children get close to transition times. This will allow everyone to create a plan and find a best fit for the child.

Requesting Child Records

There is a secure record of each child’s history and progress during his or her enrollment at UCCC. These files are kept safe to protect confidential information about your child; however, you can request the following information from the Center Support Manager:

- Health records
- Developmental assessments and screenings
- Attendance
- Developmental notes
- IEP or IFSP
- Accident reports
- Tuition

Parent and Child Forms

In order to maintain the most updated information and to remain in compliance, we will ask you each year to update your child’s enrollment form and our general consent form. If your contact information (address, phone number) changes at any time during your enrollment, please submit this information to the front desk as soon as possible.
Breastfeeding-Friendly Child Care Center

Breastfeeding is a natural way to feed a baby, and provides many health benefits to both infant and mother. Because breastfeeding employees need ongoing support from child care providers to provide their milk for their babies, University City Children’s Center (UCCC) supports families who choose to breastfeed by doing the following.

1. UCCC provides a private, comfortable lactation room for breastfeeding mothers, including employees, to express milk or breastfeed their babies although breastfeeding is welcome throughout the facility.

2. Breastfeeding mothers and employees may store their expressed breast milk in the child care facility’s refrigerator. Mothers should provide their own containers, clearly labeled with name and date. Staff will follow guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics and Centers for Disease control and Prevention in ensuring that the breast milk is properly treated to avoid waste. Universal precautions (i.e. gloves) are not required in handling human milk.

3. Staff is committed to providing ongoing support to breastfeeding mothers. This includes providing an opportunity to breastfeed their baby at any time, and will delay giving a bottle, if possible, when mom is due to arrive. Artificial baby milks (formula) and solid foods will not be provided unless the mothers has requested. Babies will be held closely when feeding and bottles will never be propped.

4. All child care staff will be trained every year in the proper storage and handling of human milk, as well as ways to support breastfeeding mothers.

5. Staff will provide information on breastfeeding, including the names of area resources, should questions or problems arise. In addition, positive promotion of breastfeeding will be on display in the facility. There will be no advertisements of formula in the facility.
Center Communication

UCCC is committed to promoting communication between the Center and our families. We communicate with our families in the following ways and welcome you to communicate with us as often as needed.

- **Newsletters**  
  - A weekly newsletter is emailed to all families with information on upcoming events, the weekly menu, classroom activities and curriculum, information to support parenting, and more.

- **Classroom Communication**  
  - You child’s teachers will provide you with regular information about your child’s development and learning at UCCC. Each classroom uses various methods to communicate with families including journals, daily sheets, white boards, portfolios, newsletters, and/or emails. Be sure to talk with your child’s teachers about how they will keep you informed of your child’s development and learning!

- **Phone**  
  - Teachers are discouraged from using cell phones in the classroom and are not required to share their cell phone number with parents. If you need to talk with a teacher, please contact the center to be connected to them in their classroom. You may also dial a classroom directly by calling 314-726-6661 and entering the classroom extension.  
  - Phone calls will be placed to families in the event of early closings, updates on their child(ren), and emergencies.

- **Website**  
  - UCCC’s website, www.uccc.org, includes useful information such as the school calendar, lunch menus, upcoming events, announcements, and news stories.

- **Social Media: Facebook, Twitter, and Linkedin**  
  - UCCC uses social media to enhance communication with families and the community. Notices, school announcements, school closings, calendar reminders, photos, videos, links to news stories and other relevant information is shared regularly through these platforms. We encourage parents to follow us on each platform.  
    - Facebook: @UCityChildrensCenter  
    - Twitter: @UCCCkids  
    - Linkedin: University City Children’s Center
• Print
  o Fliers for upcoming events and activities, letters, and memos will often be placed in your child's folder or cubby as well as posted on classroom doors, information boards, and/or at the front desk. UCCC mails out two printed newsletter publications each year, one in the spring and one in the fall.

Media Disclosure

Any parent who does not want his or her child to be interviewed, photographed, or videotaped by newspaper, television, or radio, for the purposes of news coverage or other projects, may opt-out via the general consent form in the enrollment packet. Students with a signed opt-out form will not be included in any publicity-related materials occurring at or produced by UCCC.

Questions or Concerns

When concerns arise about your child or your child's classroom, we encourage you to first communicate with your child's teachers. If further assistance is needed, please contact a member of the administrative team. If this fails to resolve the concern, you may contact the Center Director and/or Executive Director.
Extraordinary Faculty and Staff

Each teacher, staff member, and administrator at the Center has an important role and responsibility in supporting the emotional, social, and intellectual growth of all children. We take a team approach to the development of children, knowing that each Center member has the capability to positively influence the life of every child. To comply with State of Missouri child care licensing regulations and other best practices, all employees of UCCC undergo required background screenings and medical exams and meet the professional requirements to work at an early childhood education center.
Equal Employment Opportunity

UCCC provides equal employment opportunities to all individuals without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, veteran status, information derived from genetic tests, or any other protected characteristic.

UCCC is committed to making reasonable job accommodations when possible. This policy governs all aspects of employment, including, but not limited to, selection, promotion, job assignment, compensation, discipline, termination, and access to benefits and training.

Professional Development

UCCC is unique in its commitment to professional development. UCCC teachers typically participate in over 50 hours of professional development each year. In addition, all of our educators participate in LUME professional development courses, which cover various aspects of early childhood development as well as ongoing coaching.

OUR VETERAN TEACHERS RECEIVE OVER 4 TIMES THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT HOURS REQUIRED BY THE STATE.
Building Extraordinary Faculty and Staff

Hiring teachers to care for the children at UCCC is an intensive process rooted in our values. We look for people who understand and are committed to changing the way young children are taught. The hiring process at UCCC is thorough and designed to give us insight into our candidate’s experience, dedication to the field, and interactions with children, families, and staff. In addition to multiple interviews, candidates participate in a “Teach In” during which they support several different classrooms. This experience allows us to see our candidates in action, and also an opportunity for the candidates to “try us on.” A mutual fit is essential for retention of our teachers.

Once hired, new teachers attend a multi-day orientation that includes information on all UCCC policies and procedures, as well as a two-hour initial training on the LUME approach. During the first few months, we may place a teacher in a few different classrooms to find a mutual fit and give them opportunities to work with our veteran UCCC teachers who can impart knowledge on our curriculum and approach.

Occasionally we will need to move staff between different classrooms at the center. We recognize the impact of these staffing decisions on our children, families, and staff, and do not make these decisions lightly. Ultimately, we strive to arrange our staff in a manner that is most beneficial to the long-term success of the school. Similarly, when teachers resign or are asked to leave, we do our best to provide appropriate notice in order to support the goodbye process for children and families. If you have questions about this process, please speak to an administrator.
Classroom Staffing

Our Center is set up with classroom pods and within each pod are 2 classrooms and 2-3 teachers in each classroom. Teachers are scheduled to stagger in each morning and out in the afternoon in order to provide as much continuity of care as possible for children. Often in the early mornings and the late afternoons the classrooms will be combined to best support ratios. Here is an example of how a teacher schedule might look for a pod.

Big Dipper/Shooting Star Pod:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BD Teacher 1:</td>
<td>7:00-3:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ShSt Teacher 1:</td>
<td>7:30-4:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BD Teacher 2:</td>
<td>8:00-5:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ShSt Teacher 2:</td>
<td>8:30-5:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BD Teacher 3:</td>
<td>9:00-6:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ShSt Teacher 3:</td>
<td>9:30-6:00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Licensing and Accreditation

UCCC is licensed for 180 children by the Missouri Department of Social Services-Child Care Division. Hard copies of all state licensing compliance/inspection reports are located on site at the Center and are available for viewing upon request. A hard copy of the licensing regulation handbook is also located on site and are available for viewing upon request.

We are accredited by the Missouri Accreditation of Programs for Children and Youth. This accreditation focuses on qualitative aspects of the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth opportunities available to children.

Accreditation involves a thorough validation of the criteria listed below:

- Administration
- Children’s relationships and interactions
- Family connections
- Health, safety, and nutrition
- Physical environment
- Programming
- Curriculum
General Policies and Guidelines

Admission Procedures

We strive to mirror the diversity of our community within our Center. Children are enrolled regardless of race, gender, religion, or national origin on a first-come, first-served basis.

Tuition

Please refer to your individual enrollment packet for tuition policy.

Hours of Operation

The Center is open Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. School closings due to inclement weather will be posted on KTVI Channel 2, KSDK Channel 5, and KMOV Channel 4. You will also receive an automated telephone call. Please be sure we have an up-to-date contact number at all times. If your child will be absent due to illness, vacation, or any other reason, please inform your child’s teachers ahead of time or call the Center before 9:00 a.m. at 314-726-0148.

Dismissal Information

We know that all families understand the difficulties caused by not picking children up on time—6:00 p.m. at the latest. However, the procedure in case of an unavoidable delays or an occurrence, which makes it impossible to come to the Center or notify us is:

In the event that no staff member can stay and/or the time is unreasonably late and we cannot reach any of the people on your list, a UCCC administrator will contact the University City Police Department. As alarming as this sounds, it is standard procedure for early childhood programs. This allows you or family members to know exactly where your child will be in the event of a true emergency, and provides our families with a consistent procedure.

Drop off and Pick up

Upon arriving each day, sign your child in on the Attendance Sheet and help your children wash their hands. In the infant, toddler, and twos classrooms, there is also a more detailed sign in
sheet in your child’s binder to share information about wake up times, morning food, medications, etc. Please always share any important information with the teacher that might impact the child’s day (sleep, someone new in town, parent out of town, etc.). For preschool children, please arrive by 9:00 as that is when we begin our daily curriculum. Always say good bye to your child – the teachers will help you and your child to develop a routine that works for everyone.

When picking up each day, sign your child out on the Attendance Sheet. Anyone that you would like to authorize to pick up your child must be listed on their contact information form. If you need to add someone to that list either for a particular day or permanently, please stop by the front desk to do so.

If your child will be absent, it is always helpful to let the front desk or the classroom teachers know.

**Transitional Objects**

Napping in an early childhood center can be challenging for young children (lots of other children, noise, a cot instead of their own bed), but one way that many children can gain mastery over this is to have their own lovey or blanket (or other transitional object from home). These objects provide children with a sense of trust and comfort because they are associated with home (smell like home, feel like home). We encourage families to bring a blanket (and any other comfort objects) to school with their child. These are especially supportive for children at naptime, but can also be used throughout the day when needed. At the end of each week, please take your child’s blanket home to be washed.

We also recognize that bringing in a toy in the morning can help ease the transition from home to school, but this can also be challenging as these toys may get lost or broken. Please talk with your child’s teacher how best to support your child with toys from home.

**School Closings**

Watch and listen for school closing on the following stations:

- KTVI Channel 2
- KMOV Channel 4
- KSDK Channel 5
In case of school closing, you will receive a telephone call from our automated phone system as soon as the decision to close has been made. Please be sure we have an up-to-date contact number at all times. We will also do our best to post the information on the homepage of www.uccc.org and our Facebook page.

To check past automated messages or if you feel a message has been missed, call 855-955-8500 to hear up to 30 days' past messages. Note: Your call must originate from a telephone number to which a message was originally sent.

Delayed Opening/Early Closing Plan

In the event that weather or other emergency conditions exist that require UCCC to delay opening, the Center will open at 9:30 a.m. The decision to open late will be made by 6:00 a.m. if possible. Parents will be notified via an automated phone call once the decision is made.

If UCCC must close early due to weather or other emergency conditions, the decision will be made by 1:00 p.m. and the Center will close at 3:00 p.m. Parents will be notified via an automated phone call once the decision is made.

Parking Lot Safety

Pick up and drop off can be a hectic time each day, especially if you have additional children. Please be advised that the handicap accessible spot is for those who need it. Also, please do not leave other children in the car or your car running while dropping off or picking up. Please don’t hesitate to call the front desk and a staff member will meet you in the parking lot to assist you and your family in an emergency.
Calendar

UCCC is closed on the following holidays. Please refer to our school calendar for exact dates.

• New Year's Day
• Martin Luther King Jr., Day
• Presidents' Day
• Memorial Day
• Independence Day
• Labor Day
• Thanksgiving Day and the Friday following
• Early closing (3:00pm) or full day closing on Christmas Eve
• Christmas Day
• Early closing (3:00pm) or full day closing on New Year's Eve
• Three early closing dates for professional development
• Two full day closures for professional development

Celebrations and Holidays

Our classrooms celebrate often-sometimes in response to traditional holidays, and sometimes spontaneously! We respect and acknowledge many traditions. Classrooms will honor each child's birthday individually in their classroom with a special celebration and a special gift from UCCC.
Center Nutrition and Seed to Table Program

Garden
UCCC has a large garden on the Adventure Playground as well as a small garden on the Infant/Toddler Playground. The Seed to Table Program at UCCC fosters the importance of healthy eating, supports our nutrition program, promotes empathy and compassion, and engages children and families in gardening and outdoor learning. Our garden program supports all areas of children’s development and is overseen by our master gardener. Throughout the year children learn about and participate in preparing the garden, planting, caring for the plants (watering, weeding, and respecting their growth), harvesting, cooking, and eating.

Meals
Breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack are prepared each day by our in-house chefs following Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines and incorporating fresh garden produce when possible. We work with families to be able to accommodate most allergies and dietary restrictions. If your child has a food allergy or dietary restriction, please make sure to complete the appropriate forms. We are a nut-restricted facility and do not prepare any foods with nuts or nut products.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast</td>
<td>7:45 to 8:45 a.m. Parents of children who arrive at 8:45 a.m. and want their child to have breakfast must stay with their child until he or she finishes breakfast. The classroom begins their program day at 9:00 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snack</td>
<td>2:00 p.m. and served at the teachers’ discretion.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

For infants and toddlers, we work with families to support how they would like their child to be fed during each stage of their development. Our chefs provide a freshly pureed baby food option each day.

The lunch menu is distributed in the weekly family emails and printed copies are available in the resource area at the front of the building.
Health and Safety

Medical Admissions Requirement

The Center must have up-to-date and accurate reports of each child’s physical history and immunizations. State licensing requires this information be on file and current for all children to remain in attendance. All medical information must be submitted at the time of the orientation visit or, at the latest, on the first day of attendance.

Medication

Prescription medication must be prescribed by a physician and in its original container, labeled with instructions for staff and the physician’s name. Non-prescription pediatric medication must be in its original container and labeled with the child’s name and instructions for administration, including the times and amounts for dosages (medication must be pediatric). Non-prescription cold medication will not be given without a doctor’s note. Medication authorization forms must be completed for all medications and must not deviate from the instructions. Families are asked to partner with teachers to ensure that all expired medications are promptly removed from the Center.

Medical Action Plans

Children with specialized medical care needs, including asthma and allergies, may be required to provide a current emergency action plan from their licensed medical provider.

Illness/Acute Infectious Disease

If a child becomes ill while at the Center, his or her parents will be contacted. For the comfort of your child and the protection of other children, we ask that you pick up your child as soon as possible, preferably within one hour of notification.

A child with a fever of 100, diarrhea, or vomiting will not be admitted to the Center until the child has been symptom-free for 24 hours. The following conditions and illnesses will require temporary exclusion from the Center:

- Rashes: A physician must investigate an undiagnosed rash or spots; before returning, a written physician’s diagnosis must be presented to the Center.
- Pinkeye: Antibiotic treatment for 24 hours before returning to the Center.
- Chicken Pox: May return when all lesions have crusted, approximately 5 to 7 days.
- Strep Throat: May return after 48 hours of antibiotic treatment.
• Lice: May return after treatment with medicated shampoo and hair is nit-free.
• Ringworm: May return with a doctor’s note after receiving treatment. Ringworm on the skin may be treated with a topical cream. Ringworm in the hair requires shampoo and medication before re-admittance to school.

Safe Sleep Policy

UCCC follows the safe sleep guidelines established by Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services:

• Children under one year are placed on their backs
• A doctor’s note is required for alternate sleep positions
• Physical checks are given during sleep to check for distress or overheating
• For infants, UCCC uses firm mattresses, tight sheets, and does not allow blankets, toys, or loose bedding in the crib
• A child’s head must remain uncovered during sleep
• Covering cribs with blankets is prohibited
• Smoking is prohibited

Injury/Accident Guidelines

A written Accident/Injury Report will be filled out to document any accident, including major scrapes, bruises, bumps, or any other injury. Parents will be notified in a timely fashion. Staff will note the time and date of the incident, the child involved, why and where the accident happened, what injury resulted, when a parent was notified, and what actions were taken. Staff will call 911 before notifying a parent if the incident warrants such action. A parent will be asked to sign the Injury/Accident Report and will receive a copy.

Over 90% of our staff and administrators are CPR/First Aid certified.

Child Abuse/Neglect Policies and Procedures

Missouri Department of Social Services is an agency that can provide services and assistance for families to help prevent abuse and neglect. UCCC works closely with this agency to provide resources and services for families. Trauma in children can take years to manifest; therefore, it is important that victims of child abuse receive counseling as soon as possible after the abuse is disclosed. If you or someone you know is in need of services or resources, stop in and talk with our Center Director who will be happy to support you through the process.

Child abuse includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect (which is the failure to provide a minimum standard of care for a child’s physical and emotional needs). UCCC
staff is trained to recognize indicators for abuse and neglect. We are mandated reporters. If a staff person has reasonable cause to suspect a child has been or may be subjected to abuse or neglect, or observes a child being subjected to conditions or circumstances which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect, he or she must immediately report or cause a report to be made to the Missouri Department of Social Services (1-800-392-3738).

Disaster and Emergency Plan

In the event of an emergency that would cause UCCC to evacuate the building (fire, gas leak, storm, etc.), parents would be notified as soon as possible of a location to pick up their child. The following are possible locations we would go in the event of such an emergency:

- Julia Goldstein Early Childhood Education Center
  737 Kingsland Ave.
  St. Louis, MO 63130 314-721-2965

- Washington University – North Campus Building
  700 Rosedale Ave.
  St. Louis, MO 63112 314-935-5727

- Laciny Brothers, Inc.
  6622 Vernon Ave.
  St. Louis, MO 63130 314-862-8330

Safety Drills

The Center performs two safety drills per month. A fire drill is completed each month and the other is on a rotating basis between tornado, earthquake, and intruder.
Affiliations and Partnerships

YWCA/Head Start

Effective January 2007, UCCC became a partner in the YWCA Head Start Program. This enables us to serve several qualified families at a reduced rate of tuition.

Youth In Need/Early Head Start

Effective in 2016, UCCC became a partner in the Youth In Need Early Head Start Program. This enables us to serve several qualified families at a reduced rate of tuition.

St. Louis Psychoanalytic Institute

UCCC and LUME Institute have longstanding partnerships with St. Louis Psycholanalytic Institute. Several UCCC staff and teachers have completed the St. Louis Psychoanalytic Child Development Program. The St. Louis Psychoanalytic Institute supports UCCC’s ongoing Healthy Minds for the Future program. Analysts visit classrooms on a regular basis and consult with the teachers about the children in their care. This partnership began in 2000.

Agency Membership and Partnership

UCCC is a member agency of United Way of Greater St. Louis and of Variety the Children’s Charity, and a partner agency of St. Louis County Children’s Service Fund.

Soldan International Studies High School

UCCC has partnered with Soldan International Studies High School and some of their students interested in gaining hands-on experience in early childhood education, leadership, business management, marketing, and human services. Each year, UCCC has one or two interns from January to April.

Special School District: Vocational Skills Program

UCCC has partnered with Special School District’s Vocational Skills Program since 2006. Each new school year, up to six students attend the program at UCCC. These students handle all UCCC’s laundry, assist in the kitchen, organize and maintain UCCC’s library, help with meeting set-up, and sanitize and clean as needed throughout UCCC.
The mission of the Vocational Skills Program is to provide a continuum of supports and services to students and families to assist the students in gaining skills needed to achieve realistic and meaningful post-secondary goals.

Foster Grandparent Program

UCCC is fortunate to partner with this program through Cardinal Ritter Senior Services. Grandparents in the program work in our classrooms on a daily basis and provide support to our teachers and children.

Volunteers

In addition, UCCC is fortunate to have numerous volunteers, health consultants, and other individuals who assist children, families, and staff.

Board of Directors

The Center’s Board of Directors is composed of a maximum of 24 members who are community leaders, business people, professional volunteers, educators, parents of Center children, and one Center teacher. For a list of current Board members please visit www.UCCC.org.

Practicum Students

We partner with a number of local universities, including Webster University, Fontbonne University, St. Louis University and Washington University, to support practicum students. These students may observe or work with small groups of children in the classroom. These students are background checked and TB tested prior to working with our students. UCCC children are never left alone with these students

Staff and Educator Contact Information

For a complete list of staff and educators please visit UCCC.org.
Appendices

Curriculum Examples

Effective Infant Literacy:

Literacy development with our infants and toddlers looks different in many ways. With our infants, they are exposed to print in books and different textures as they hold and study soft and hard books. Baby N and Baby A observe the toddlers during group time activities such as scarf dancing to music and peek-a-boo. Baby N and Baby A have been working on reaching and grasping rattles that enhance eye movement. This helps with tracking that will eventually help them follow words and pictures in a book as they get older.

With our toddlers, T has been using words to express his wants. As an example, T will ask for more food at lunch. He also expresses when he wants to go over to see another child (A) by saying ‘over A.’ I has been very interested in the book ‘Ralph.’ She will hold the book up to me and sit in my lap as I read the book to her. When the story is over, she says more and we do the song and dance again.

With the social emotional piece, I believe our infants feel safe with a teacher just being there next to them all the time. With our toddlers, I think they want to be a part of the group and are very curious.

Infant Science:

One stormy afternoon, a child in my class woke up from her nap. She sat up on her cot and stared out the classroom window. Soon after, she got up and walked over to the window. As the rain came down outside and the drops hit the window, the girl touched the glass with her hand. I said to her, "do you see it is raining?" And she replied, "yeah it’s wet." As part of our classroom our students learn about the different characteristics of nature and the world around them. Our students taste herbs in our herb garden during the summer months. They smell the lavender in the bubble bath as they wash their baby dolls. We feel the cold, wet paint as we finger paint a mural for our classroom wall. Our students see the bubbles float down to the ground as they are being blown. They hear the birds tweeting as they perch on the fence on the playground. The children learn about these characteristics through exploring the world with all five senses.
Toddler Math:

When you hear the word math, some assume you are supporting older children. However, math is in everything we do.

With our toddlers, we allow them to explore different concepts of math; not just the traditional adding and subtracting. It’s deeper than that. Before I promote math development, I lay down a foundation of trust, love, and compassion. I want children to be emotionally ready to learn or explore new concepts. Once children are comfortable they are able to explore. In my classroom, we are really good with talking with children and not just to them. Children have a voice in our classroom, so the learning is natural.

To encourage math daily, we sing songs with descriptive language; one example is 5 Little Monkeys. We use hand gestures to demonstrate the amount of monkeys in this simple song. Children are learning subtraction, repetition, and the concept of more and less. During story time, we have books that talk about the amount of certain objects.

My favorite are the blocks. Children are encouraged to use their imagination to build anything they like. With a simple activity, children are learning to count in order, to subtract, special understanding, and last but not least they are learning language skills.

One child, in particular, began playing with a few blocks at a time. As I observed him, I would describe his actions. We then would count the blocks and I would ask him open-ended questions. Once he began to feel more comfortable, he would move on to a new activity without forgetting what was learned during block play. This activity was counting smaller objects in order, all the way up to 16. Now for a toddler, this is amazing. Not necessarily the part where he counted to 16, but how emotionally and socially safe he felt to count in front of other teachers and children.

To help scaffold his learning, we are continuing to use objects to help him count, but now we are introducing him to another math concept of sorting. We sort by colors, shapes, or textures. The next time someone says, you can’t teach toddlers math, you can use research and daily observations to prove that math can be learned at any age.

Preschool Math:

When I reflect on my own educational experiences, I find myself particularly fond of my preschool experiences. I loved preschool. When I reflect, I remember loving learning through regular mundane activities. I continue to find that regular mundane activities give way to phenomenal learning opportunities. Take family style dining for example.
While pouring milk during lunch, F began counting the lines on the pitcher. He stated, “Hey look guys. There are four lines on this pitcher and they have numbers next them. Ms. Ashley, what are those numbers for?” I explained to the group that the numbers were for measuring how many oz or ml of fluid were in the pitcher. F examined the pitcher more closely and stated, “Right now the milk is on this line.” I told him that line was for 24 ounces of milk. After he poured his milk, he stated, “Hey look. The milk went down. It’s not on the 24 anymore.” N commented, “It went down.” The milk was now on the line labeled 20. The rest of the group took turns pouring their milk, stopping to comment on where the milk was located. Once T finished pouring his milk, he pointed to the line at the bottom of the pitcher and said, “Hey. It’s all the way down here. It’s almost empty. It’s on the eight.” I asked, “Why is the milk now on the eight?” R replied, “Because we poured the milk out. It went down.” I then asked what would happen if we decided to pour the milk back into container. F replied, “It will increase and go back to the top. Much more than eight.” I then asked what would happen if we only poured some of the milk. F replied, “Like half of the milk?” I said yes and H replied, “Well then it would only be half filled because we would only pour half of the milk”. T went on to say, “So if we want the milk to increase we should add more milk but if we need it decrease we should pour some out”.

Looking through our window during our meal time, an onlooker might assume that it’s just lunch time and the students are simply eating. However, family style dining is more than that. In our meal time in this observation, children were counting, recognizing numbers, and making comparisons and measurements while sharing their ideas and opinions with one another in a respectful manner. Children are always learning and developing new skills, even while eating.

Preschool Science:

Science is by definition the discovery of the truth about the structure and behavior of the physical and natural world through observation and experimentation. Children are working constantly to understand their world. How does it feel? How does it small? How does it taste? How does it work? They make up hypotheses and describe what they see.

What we do is encourage their questions, not by answering them, but by showing them ways to find an answer. Possibly by observation or by experimentation. We give them new words to describe what they experience and sometimes information that explains what is going on.

When we were learning about worms the children played with live worms, touching and watching how they behaved. When they commented on how they felt “slimy,” we explained that their skin must always be damp because they breathe through their skin. They watched them trying to crawl back into the dirt. “They want to go underground away from the light.”
When we hatched ladybugs from larvae to pupa to beetles, the children learned about the life cycle and that ladybugs eat aphids. Armed with that information, the children found ladybugs all over a tree on the playground that had some kind of bug eating its leaves. They made the connection, saying it must be aphids eating the tree.

They experiment first hand with structures, ramps, and levers in the block area. They manipulate and test the behavior of magnets, what attracts or repels, how strong is the hold. They watch and manipulate water, clay, playdough, slime - any number of different substances. Every day is full of experiences and opportunities for observation and experimentation.
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