



2024-2025

PARENT HANDBOOK

CONTACT US: 718-518-4176

EMAIL US: PMARTINEZ@HOSTOS.CUNY.EDU

HOURS: 7:45am TO 5:00pm Monday-Friday

ADDRESS: 475 GRAND CONCOURSE, BRONX, NY 10451

A Building-Room 109

Revised 8/22/2024



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Hostos Community College Children's Center, Inc.! We first opened our doors almost 40 years ago and continue, today, to provide quality child care and education in a developmentally appropriate learning environment. Our goal is to work with student-parents to help them become self-sufficient, to achieve their educational objectives, and to graduate, while their children participate in a safe, nurturing, educational program.

The Children's Center (the Center) is a campus-based, 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. We are licensed by the New York City Department of Health & Mental Hygiene (DOHMH). We provide care to children ages 6 weeks to 5 years old.

OUR EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Every child is unique and different. They each have different strengths and challenges. Our goal is to address and support the needs of every child, through differentiated instruction and hands-on implementation of the curriculum. The staff at the Children's Center acknowledge and embrace student diversity while implementing a student-centered approach to education. We strive to meet each child where they are; cognitively, developmentally, as well as socially and emotionally. The Center's focus is on active learning and we have high expectations for our students, staff, and families. Our ideal environment is safe, nurturing, stimulating, and engaging, which motivates children to learn.

CURRICULUM

At the Children's Center, we utilize the Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, Two's, and Preschoolers. The goal of the Creative Curriculum is to help children become independent, self-confident, inquisitive and enthusiastic learners by actively exploring their environment. Through a series of investigative studies on various themes; children deeply explore topics that build on a foundation in math, science, literacy, social studies and art. As students explore each thematic unit, they will be

exposed to diverse cultures, languages, family compositions, disabilities, and religions within the classroom. This will encourage empathy, understanding, and acceptance of all differences, and will be exhibited through the transformation of centers/learning areas and student work.

The Creative Curriculum helps teachers interact with every child in ways that promote their overall development and learning, foster children's social competence, support children's learning through play, create rich environments for learning, and forge strong home-school connections.

We encourage parents to utilize the Curriculum's Family App so that they can continue their child's learning at home based on the studies the children are engaging with in the classroom. Teachers can distribute activities to parents in a digital format, which makes accessibility more convenient. Which means parents can view curriculum activities from their phones!

A WORD ABOUT CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

Our teachers have attended training on how to integrate culturally sensitive and inquiry-based language strategies with inquiry tools in the early childhood classroom. Teachers aim to develop their interactions with children through intentional language strategies that consider children's lived experiences. Applying culturally responsive strategies and techniques in early childhood also fosters increased student engagement and participation in the classroom and enhances children's interest and sense of belonging in the classroom.

Quality teacher-student interactions that consider teachers' language and children's funds of knowledge promotes cognitive and language development through the early years.

SCREEN POLICY (ELECTRONICS, TABLETS, COMPUTERS, TVS)

The Center's policy limits the use of screen time for children in that there can be no viewing of more than 30 minutes, once a week, of high-quality educational or movement-based commercial-free programming. Screen time is never used for children birth to age 2.

HOURS OF OPERATION and SCHEDULE

The Center is open for childcare services from 7:45 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Your child can attend the Center based on the parents' class schedule and need for work-study, internships, study time, and clinicals/labs.

The Center follows the Hostos Community College Academic Calendar. The Children's Center is closed on all national holidays followed by Hostos Community College. Each month you will receive a Children's Center calendar which highlights important dates and events happening at the Center. The Center closes at 5:00PM. Please arrive by, or before 5:00PM. If you run into an emergency and are late, please call the front desk at 718-518-4176.

ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAM

Admission is based on the parent/legal guardian's enrollment in Hostos Community College. The Children's Center serves the children of enrolled, matriculated students and non-matriculated students in the college's Continuing Education Program. We also reserve 10% of our slots for children of faculty and staff, if available.

Hostos students interested in enrolling their children at the Center must complete an initial application. A representative from the Center will contact you to review the documents that must be submitted, and to complete the intake process. During the intake process, your fee will be calculated, and you will sign a tuition agreement.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

- Child & Adolescent Health Examination Form; NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene, (completed by Child's doctor; form must be less than one year old).
- Child's immunization record
- Copy of Child's Birth Certificate
- Current government issued Photo I.D. (i.e., driver's license, state ID, Green Card, permanent residency card).
- Proof of income (i.e., tax return, 4 weeks of pay stubs, letter from employer on letterhead)
- Copy of parent's class schedule
- ASQ/ASQ3

FEES*

Childcare fees are based on the number of weeks that your child attends. Schedule changes are permitted if there is an open spot available to accommodate the change. We do have a limited number of subsidized awards through the NYS Block Grant to assist with tuition, if you qualify. Eligibility is based on income and family size. If you do not qualify, then student fees for childcare are based on a sliding-fee scale. We also accept HRA Childcare Vouchers

During the enrollment process, our Program & Family Coordinator will work with you to determine your eligibility, and fees.

*Please note fees for faculty/staff are based on a sliding-fee scale.

PAYMENT

The Children's Center enrolls children throughout the year. A Children's Center staff person will provide you with an invoice for tuition payment. The transmittal is brought to the Bursar's Office, Basement, Savoy Building at 120 E 149th St., where payment is received by check or cash. The Children's Center does not accept payments.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Parents/guardians are required to complete an Emergency/Escort Authorization Form. The authorized contacts are only the people listed on the Form. All authorized escorts must be 18 years or older. It is important that you notify emergency escorts that they have been designated as an emergency resource. The Center will provide the public safety officer with a comprehensive list of allowed escorts.

If you would like to amend your emergency contacts/authorized escorts information, please see our Program & Family Coordinator or our Administrative Assistant at the front desk, who will assist you and ensure we record the change.

A NOTE ABOUT SEPARATION

Children sometimes have difficulty letting go of their parents at arrival. This is typical behavior which, over time, should decrease as they become more secure in their new environment. Here are a few suggestions to help ease separation:

- Allow adequate time at drop off for arrival adjustment before needing to leave for class.
- While traveling, talk to your child about the classroom, who will be there, etc. This prepares your child for what will occur. When you are rushed, children feel hurried and anxious.
- When you arrive, help your child get "settled in" by becoming involved in play.
- Once your child is playing comfortably tell your child it is time for you to go. Please do not "sneak out." Children are establishing their sense of trust and need to see you go and see you return at the end of the day.
- Give hugs and kisses and reassure your child you will be back (e.g., after a snack).

If there is still protest or difficulty, the staff members and teachers are close by to help your child when you leave. Usually, children calm down and begin to play soon after you leave. Remember, even those children who are comfortable in play and in their environment need your attention, affection, and reassurance.

TRANSITIONS FOR CHILDREN

We prefer to have new children ease into the classroom routine. We recommend phasing in for the first three days, gradually lengthening the hours until attending for a full day. This helps your child become familiar with the environment and helps us get acquainted. Please speak to your classroom teacher about a phase-in schedule.

There are other times during the school year when children experience transitional periods. If your child attends the Center for a second year, then they will be transitioning to a new classroom with a new teacher. Before beginning their second year, we work with children to visit their new classroom, to meet their new teacher, and to process saying goodbye to their familiar surroundings, and friends, by reading relative stories and creating art projects.

We have also added to our team. Our staff includes a Mental Health Consultant who will work with children, teachers, families, and staff to ensure that transitions are successful, and that families are given the skills to adjust to new routines. The Children's Center is excited to partner with a community-based organization, Chances for Children, which offers parent-child therapy and parent-child groups and supports both child and parent through separation. These sessions are supportive of children and families who need a program model which provides families access to clinical services. Chances for Children utilizes one of our classrooms on Tuesdays from 9:00AM-5:00PM. At that time, their social worker is on site.

TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN FOR FOUR YEAR OLDS

If your child will be transitioning to kindergarten, we also work to help children understand they will be starting a new school, with new friends! We assist families by presenting workshops dedicated to learning about the various kindergarten options in New York City, and how to navigate the application process.

ARRIVAL

Student-parents/guardians and authorized escorts should bring their child to the classroom for drop-off. The Children's Center utilizes the **Brightwheel app in order** to scan your child in and out of the Center. Once you are enrolled, you will receive an invitation to download the app onto your phone, or you may scan in on the Center's iPad at the reception desk. Additionally, staff will conduct a health and wellness check

of your child as part of the arrival process. If your child arrives to school with any signs of minor injury (scratch, bump, bruise), the teacher will record that on the sign-in sheet, and you may be asked to sign a form indicating that you are aware of the injury that occurred outside of the classroom.

Student-parents/guardians should ensure their child arrives in unsoiled diapers or pull-ups. When your child arrives, please check their diaper/change/clean and wash hands for the child before signing in the child in your child's classroom. Lastly, please stop at the sink to wash your hands when entering the classroom, and after a diaper change.

Student-parents/guardians are required to inform the Center staff if a child was given medication prior to arrival. Disclosing the medication, the child was given will help ensure the child is treated appropriately in an emergency situation.

PICK-UP

Children are picked up from the child's respective classroom. Please be on time. It is very important for children to have predictability, and to take comfort in knowing they will be picked up along with everyone else. All student-parents/guardians must scan out through Brightwheel at the time of pick up

FOOD POLICY

At this time, we are not providing meals for children. Breakfast, lunch, and snack are provided by the student-parent/guardian. Our Food Service Coordinator will prepare and serve each child's food. To promote healthy eating, please send in fresh fruit, vegetables, protein, grains, or grain substitute, and 100% fruit juice. **NO COOKIES OR POTATOE CHIPS.**

Please be sure to label all food containers with your child's name. Please note we are a **nut-free and fish/shellfish free program. Do not send in any food items containing nuts or fish/shellfish.**

BIRTHDAY POLICY

We celebrate birthdays once per month. Due to food allergies, we do not encourage sending any food items or special snacks. Candy and chewing gum are not allowed as they are potential choking hazards for young children. If you are sending in party bags, please do not send in small toys that are choking hazards.

CLOTHING AND SUPPLIES

Please make sure your child has two complete changes of clothing at the Center at all times. If soiled clothes are sent home, please be sure to replace them the next day. If

your child wears diapers or pulls ups, please make sure to send in those supplies as well on a regular basis. Open-toed shoes are not permitted for children's safety.

SHEETS

All children must have two cot sized sheets for their daily rest period. Sheets are a NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene regulation. We will send sheets home every Friday to be washed and returned on Monday. The Center has a supply of sheets, should you forget your child's sheet.

ABSENCE/LATENESS

Please call (718-518-4176) or message us on Brightwheel if your child is going to be absent or late. Please note that if you are receiving Block Grant funding for your tuition, there are specific absence guidelines about the number of days your child can be absent. These guidelines were explained during your enrollment process. If you would like to learn the absence guidelines again, please contact our Program & Family Coordinator.

SICK POLICY

If your child is not well and you have any doubt as to your child's health on any given day, please keep your child at home. They should be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to the Center. Please notify the Center when your child's absence is due to illness.

In the event that your child becomes ill while at the Center, you will be notified immediately (for example, fever, diarrhea, rash, vomiting). If illness prevents your child from being able to participate in class, the Center expects the student-parent/guardian to pick up the child and to take him/her home. Your child should be symptom free for 24 hours. You must provide us with a medical clearance letter from a Healthcare Provider.

MEDICATION

If necessary, The Children's Center will administer basic first aid. The Center is also trained to administer Emergency Medication, i.e., inhalers and epi-pens. Two of our staff are MAT certified (Medical Administration Training) and can administer over-the-counter medications, and prescription medications. We must have an individual health plan, signed by your doctor, on file for your child if you authorize us to administer any medication.

INCIDENTS AND ACCIDENTS

The Center strives to maintain a safe environment for all of our children and staff. If a child sustains an injury during the school day the following procedure is in place:

1. The parent or legal guardian will be contacted.
2. Children's Center staff will administer first aid immediately.
3. More serious injuries require that the College's Public Safety Office be notified, and more qualified assistance summoned.
4. If an injured or sick child must go to the hospital with paramedics, a Children's Center staff member will travel with the child if the parent cannot be reached.

Please note that the Children's Center cannot assume responsibility for accidents or situations that stem directly from false information provided at the time of enrollment. The Center will also not be responsible for any changes or updates in a child's medical status that has not been officially communicated to the Center by the parent or guardian in writing.

PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

Conferences are held 2 times per year, once in the Fall, and once in the Spring. Parent/Teacher conferences provide opportunities for parents and teachers to discuss the child's growth, development, and progress. Parents are encouraged to be active partners in their child's educational lives. Assessments and Portfolios are also shared at this time.

ASSESSMENT

Best practices and policies in early childhood care and education requires that our program has in place a child observation and assessment system that includes the collection, and protection of assessment results, and the sharing of that information with families. Student assessment enables instructors to measure the effectiveness of their teaching by linking student performance to specific learning objectives. As a result, teachers can implement effective teaching choices and revise ineffective ones in their practices.

The program documents the Developmental / Social Emotional status of each child within 45 days of entering / starting the program using a child developmental screening tool. This tool is called the ASQ and the ASQ-SE. This screening assesses each child for basic developmental and social emotional levels to help define individual learning goals and identify any potential special needs. Copies of the screening and assessments for each child are kept completely confidential and will be a part of each child's private record. Parents complete this tool, with the support of their child's teacher, or our mental health consultant, and then they are scored by our Mental Health Consultant. Results of the screenings or concerns are shared individually with parents.

Teachers also collect data on children’s cognitive, developmental, social / emotional, and academic skills by using an assessment tool called Teaching Strategies Gold – Checkpoints. The results of these assessments will be shared with parents during Parent / Teacher Conferences. This information is also kept completely confidential and is a part of each child’s private record.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS/EVALUATION PROCESS

If your child has support services in place, or you are interested in having your child evaluated, it is very important to please discuss this information with our enrollment coordinator, and our Mental Health Consultant, at the time you are completing your enrollment process. Our enrollment coordinator will then inform our Mental Health Consultant, who will be the main person to assist you through the evaluation process.

The Children’s Center accepts children working with NYC’s Early Intervention program for children under the age of 3, and the Department of Education’s Committee on Preschool Education for children 3 and 4 years old, **as long as** we are able to meet the needs of the child as outlined in their individual education plans. Related services can be held by outside providers at the Children’s Center. Copies of the evaluation, IEP/ IFSP must be reviewed by us PRIOR to the child’s start date.

Our teachers will implement appropriate modifications and provide support so that children identified with special needs are able to be fully included in the program’s activities. For children, whose needs might be greater than a regular childcare center can provide, we will work with the family to find the most suitable educational arrangement, by providing referrals and outreach on your behalf.

WORKSHOPS AND REFERRALS FOR PARENTS

As part of our partnership with parents and community organizations, the Children’s Center regularly offers and hosts family workshops and events. Examples of past workshops include; Managing Asthma and EpiPen Injector, Nutrition and Health, How to Manage your Finances, Understanding the Early-Intervention Process, etc. Information and details will be provided on the monthly calendar. We are also available to provide you with Campus resources and referrals offered by the department of Student Development and Enrollment Management.

CHAT WITH THE CHILDREN’S CENTER

CHAT WITH THE CHILDREN’S CENTER are monthly zoom meetings held by the Director. Sessions are an opportunity for parents to receive the latest Center updates,

and for parents to get to meet each other. CHAT WITH THE CHILDREN'S CENTER provides an open forum for parents to ask questions and communicate ideas with the Director. Sessions are held either virtually or in person, once a month on a Tuesday. See your monthly parent calendar for dates.

UPDATE TO CHILD/PARENT INFORMATION

All changes of information must be reported to a Children's Center administrator. Student-parents/legal guardians are responsible for updating all information, i.e., address, telephone numbers, escort lists, email address, orders of protection, emergency contacts, class schedules, internships, etc. If you have a change in schedule that will have an impact on your weekly or monthly fee, you must bring this to the attention of our Program & Family Coordinator.

MANDATED REPORTING

All staff members of the Children's Center are considered Mandated Reporters. Therefore, the Center staff is required by law to report any suspicions of child abuse or neglect to the New York State Child Abuse Central Registry.

Thank you for participating in our programs and we are excited about working with you to guide you and your child along a pathway to learning! Always reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns.

Catherine Garcia-Bou
Director

INFANT/TODDLER ADDENDUM TO PARENT HANDBOOK

INTRODUCTION

Hello parents and guardians and welcome to our newest program for infants and toddlers at the Hostos Community College Children's Center! We are now licensed by the NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene to allow programming for children ages 6 weeks through 24 months old. Our infant room can accommodate 8 babies, and our 12-month-old to 24-month-old rooms can accommodate 10 toddlers each. Each room is staffed with a Lead Teacher and an Assistant Teacher. A floater works between both classrooms every day.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

This addendum is attached to the Children's Center Parent Handbook which provides a comprehensive overview of all information regarding day-to-day policies and procedures for all ages. Additional program information, specific to infants and toddlers, is below.

FOOD POLICY

At this time, we are not providing formula or food for infants and toddlers. All bottles and food items should be prepared at home and sent in a clearly marked bottle and/or container/sippy cup. These items will go home at the end of the day for return the following day. Each classroom has a refrigerator to store milk, formula, and food. If your child is allergic to any foods, that information **should be clearly identified on your child's physical**. You should also notify Paulina Martinez, our Program & Family Coordinator. If you have a food preference for your child, you should notify us as well, and we will do our best to not have that item available.

DAILY SUPPLIES

Please send your child with the following items:

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Diapers | Pacifier |
| Formula | 2 changes of clothing |
| Cereal (if child is eating) | 2 Crib Sheets or cot sheet |
| Baby Food or Toddler Food | 1 Blanket (no blankets for infants) |
| Wipes | |
| Bottles, sippy cups, preferred bowl, or spoon | |

Teachers will remind you if your supplies are running low, but please check to make sure the above items are always in your child's cubby.

THE CHILD PROJECT (Climate of Healthy Interaction for Learning and Development)

The Children's Center has partnered with the Robin Hood Foundation to implement the Child Project in our Infant/Toddler Classrooms. CUNY has secured funding through the Robin Hood Foundation to allow teachers at the Children's Center to be coached and participate in the CHILD project voluntarily. Their participation will involve monthly coaching along the framework of the Climate of Healthy Interaction for Learning and Development (CHILD) to build their practice to support the social and emotional environments and climate of early childhood classrooms. The mental health climate is rooted in relationships and experiences. We use the CHILD Toolkit to build a climate that supports both children and adults by encouraging healthy positive interactions.

PHYSICAL WELL BEING AND HEALTH

Infants need freedom of movement to build strength and motor skills. Our program provides infants and toddlers daily opportunities to move freely under adult supervision to explore both indoor and outdoor environments, including tummy time when awake. It is important to keep families informed of their child's daily routines. The program will communicate with parents of infants through daily written reports, or through our parent-friendly communication, app – Brightwheel. You will receive, and /or will be able to, access daily reports about care-giving routines, such as feeding, sleeping, diapering/toileting.

BREASTFEEDING

The Children's Center supports breastfeeding for children. There are proven health benefits and development advantages associated with breastfeeding. We have a quiet, private space available in the Center to all parents. Please see a staff member if you are interested in using this space. The program is certified in the Child and Adult Food Program's Breastfeeding Friendly Certificate.

The Center recognizes that breastfeeding is the ideal method of feeding and nurturing infants, providing many health benefits to both infant and mother. We encourage and support families who choose to breastfeed their infants and strive to protect their ability to continue providing breast milk while their infant is in our care. We promote a philosophy that advocates breastfeeding as the normal feeding process and are committed to helping families have a successful experience.

CHILDREN'S CENTER ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF:

Director: Catherine Garcia-Bou cgarciabou@hostos.cuny.edu
Senior Education Director: Monique van Putten mvanputten@hostos.cuny.edu
Administrative Assistant: Elias Advincola eadvincola@hostos.cuny.edu
Family & Program Coordinator: Paulina Martinez pmartinez@hostos.cuny.edu
Mental Health Consultant: Cassie Elliot celliot@hostos.cuny.edu
