



# Family Handbook 2024-2025

Center for Young Children  
University of Maryland

College of Education  
Department of Human Development &  
Quantitative Methodology

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# Overview

Welcome to the Center for Young Children (CYC), a laboratory, demonstration, and research center housed within the Department of Human Development & Quantitative Methodology within the College of Education at the University of Maryland in College Park. We are glad to have you as a part of the CYC. We want to partner with you to ensure the optimal development of your child. We are here to provide high-quality education and care for your child, and we want your child's experiences at the CYC to be rich and rewarding. Our most important goal is to help children to become enthusiastic learners.

We designed this handbook to provide you with a comprehensive guide concerning our policies and operating procedures, and to give you basic information about our educational philosophy and goals. Additional information may be found [on our website](#).

As a part of your child's enrollment, **please sign the last page of this handbook** ([available here as a separate download](#)) to show that you acknowledge and agree to abide by the policies and procedures outlined herein.

## CYC Mission

The CYC is a research and educational facility that employs exceptional faculty to educate and care for young children. Our mission is to:

- (1) Educate and care for young children,
- (2) Serve as an internship and observation school to train university students for careers in education and related fields, and
- (3) Provide a research facility for faculty and students at the university who are studying child development and related topics.

## Financial Support

The CYC is designated as a self-support unit on campus. Apart from three state-funded administrative positions, all salaries, benefits, supplies, and utilities are paid for from the tuition and fees that you pay as a part of your child's enrollment.

## Hours of Operation

The CYC is open from 8:30 am to 5:30 pm, Monday through Friday.

Our core day is from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. Afternoon Gathering (AG) runs from 4:30 pm to 5:30 pm and is paid for by a separate fee. Your child must be registered for AG for the entire year at time of enrollment if space is available. Drop-in is not available.

## Commitment to Justice, Equity, and Inclusion

The CYC shares the University of Maryland's commitment to justice, equity, and inclusion. To that end, we embrace and act on the four core goals of anti-bias education<sup>1</sup>:

### (1) Identity

- Teachers will nurture each child's construction of knowledge and confident personal and social identities.
- Children will demonstrate self-awareness, confidence, family pride, and positive social identities.

### (2) Diversity

- Teachers will promote each child's comfortable, empathic interaction with people from diverse backgrounds.
- Children will express comfort and joy within human diversity, use accurate language for human differences, and form deep, caring human connections across all dimensions of human diversity.

### (3) Justice

- Teachers will foster each child's capacity to critically identify bias and will nurture each child's empathy for the hurt bias causes.
- Children will increasingly recognize unfairness (injustice), have language to describe unfairness, and understand that unfairness hurts.

### (4) Activism

- Teachers will cultivate each child's ability and confidence to stand up for oneself and for others in the face of bias.
- Children will demonstrate a sense of empowerment and the skills to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and/or discriminatory action.

<sup>1</sup>From Derman-Sparks, L. & Edwards, J. O. (2020). *Anti-bias education for young children and ourselves*. (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). NAEYC.

## Statement of Inclusion of Children with and without Disabilities

At the CYC, we are committed to the inclusion of all children and their families in our high-quality early childhood environment. We believe that inclusion is a right, and therefore we foster social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development in a safe and supportive community. Our general and special education teachers provide curriculum and experiences that actively engage children to emphasize individual growth. We value partnerships with families and outside service providers so that, through a team approach, we ensure that each child meets their full potential. We welcome a diverse community for the benefit of all children at the CYC.

## Accreditation and Quality Rating

The CYC is accredited by the **National Association for the Education of Young Children** (NAEYC), the nation's oldest and largest organization of early childhood professionals. NAEYC administers this national, voluntary accreditation system to recognize outstanding early childhood programs that meet more than 100 standards in 10 program areas. For more information about accreditation, please visit [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org).

**Maryland Excels** is our state's voluntary quality rating and improvement system for early childhood programs. The Maryland Excels framework is based on five core disciplines, including compliance, professional development, accreditation, developmentally appropriate activities, and administrative practices, and is rated on a scale from 1 (lowest initial requirements met) to 5 (highest level of quality). The CYC has achieved a level 5 rating.

# EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

## Educational Philosophy

Our approach to early childhood education is based on decades of continuing research on human development and learning. Our approach is also aligned with the standards set forth by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in several position statements including (1) [Developmentally Appropriate Practice](#), (2) [Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education](#), and (3) the [Code of Ethical Conduct](#). Further, our work training preservice teachers is aligned with the NAEYC's position statement outlining the [Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators](#).

Our decades of work with children and with researchers informs our practice:

- Our classrooms are warm, inviting, child-friendly spaces where every child feels a sense of belonging. Belonging is required for learning.
- Teachers spend significant time building trusting, warm relationships with each child. Knowledge of each child as an individual, including their interests, abilities, and cultural and linguistic identities, is key to teaching and optimal development.
- Teachers build a strong sense of community among the children and faculty. A sense of community aids in belonging and helps children build social-emotional skills required for relationship building.
- Learning happens when children are given the opportunity to explore their environments, ask questions, post hypotheses, test predictions, solve problems, make mistakes, and make observations about the world around them.
- Teachers support children in their quest to learn by facilitating exploration and learning experiences, by creating experiences that stretch children just beyond their current understanding, by asking questions that prompt children to think critically, and by designing age-appropriate activities that help children meet learning standards.
- Young children require significant amounts of time to be involved in self-directed play and exploration.
- Children's learning is integrated across domains.

## Curriculum Approach

The project approach is a method of teaching in which children and teachers act as co-investigators into a topic that is worth learning more about. Topics are investigated in-depth, and in hands-on ways. This is a research effort that is deliberately focused on finding the answers to questions posed by the children, the teacher, or collaboratively.

Project work helps children utilize academic skills and abilities in the pursuit of answers, giving those academic skills meaning.

Project work includes the following intellectual goals, among others:

- To apply an inquisitive mindset to the world around us
- To think critically
- To question, hypothesize, test predictions, and theorize about observed phenomena
- To be empirical
- To understand the consequences of actions



- To persist in seeking solutions to problems
- To speculate about cause-and-effect relationships

[Visit our website for project examples](#)

## Academic and Social-Emotional Goals

In addition to the project approach, teachers plan a variety of play-based activities and experiences that support social-emotional learning and academic learning aligned to the [Maryland Early Learning](#) (3-year-olds) and College & Career Ready Standards (4 and 5-year-olds) across all content areas, including language arts and literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, physical development (gross and fine motor), and the arts. Please see the following links for academic goals for preschool and kindergarten:

[English Language Arts](#)

Mathematics [Preschool](#) (4s) and [Kindergarten](#)

[Fine Arts](#)

Social Studies [Preschool](#) (4s) and [Kindergarten](#)

[Science](#)

[Physical Education](#)

[Health](#)

Children’s social-emotional development is foundational to their success in school and in life. Children must regulate their emotions, focus, cooperate with others, persist with tasks, and more. At the CYC, we focus on supporting children’s skills in self-management, responsible decision-making, relationship skills, social awareness, and self-awareness. For more information about social-emotional development, please visit the [Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning](#) (CASEL) website.

## Guidance and Discipline

Professionals working with young children expect to be met with challenging behavior from time to time. During their first five years, children are just learning how to handle their own emotions and conform to the behavioral expectations of society. This is a lengthy process.

We define challenging behavior as any behavior that:

- Interferes with children’s learning, development, and success at play;
- Is physically or psychologically harmful to the child, other children, or adults; and
- Puts a child at higher risk for later social problems or school failure.

Challenging behaviors can be direct (like hitting, pushing, biting, or kicking) or indirect (like teasing, ignoring rules or instructions, excluding others, name calling, or destroying objects).

Supporting and teaching children socially appropriate ways to manage their feelings is one of the most important things we do. The word discipline, at its root, means instruction. Thus, instruction rather than punishment is the foundation for our approach to behavior guidance. We know that children will sometimes display their emotions or try to achieve their goals in

unproductive or immature ways, which is simply a part of being young. Fortunately, much of children's most valuable learning in group settings occurs during behavioral problem solving. Our approach includes the following:

- **Adults model positive behavior.** We show that we can accept, control, and express our own feelings in direct and non-aggressive ways; we let children know that we are not afraid of their intense emotions and will not punish, threaten, or withdraw from them.
- **We design the physical environment to minimize conflict.** We provide multiples of toys and materials for groups of children, define classroom and outdoor areas clearly to allow for both active and quiet play, and strive to maintain an appropriately calm level of stimulation.
- **We maintain age-appropriate expectations for behavior.** We try to minimize unreasonable waiting and transition times, and to limit the length of large group and teacher-directed activity times according to children's developmental and individual needs. We give children large blocks of uninterrupted time when they can make their own activity choices.
- **We establish simple rules for the classroom community.** Children participate in the process of rulemaking early in the year. When issues come up, we work with children to reference these rules—"I take care of myself, I take care of others, I take care of my school"—and use them as reminders about the kinds of behaviors that facilitate life in a group setting.
- **We closely observe and carefully supervise children's activities and interactions.** With our low ratios of adults to children and our emphasis on attentive observation, we can often intervene to guide children before situations escalate.
- **We help children to express their needs.** We help children to identify and describe problems they encounter, to generate possible solutions, and to think through logical consequences for their actions. We help them express how they feel and what they need. Our role is to be a positive helper for problem-solving. We want children to value cooperation and teamwork, and we help them learn peaceful, productive approaches to interacting.
- **When children's behavior endangers others, we will temporarily supervise them away from other children.** Unlike traditional "time-out," we stay with and support children to calm themselves and to process their emotions. This is an active, caring process.

**Guidance of children's behaviors will always be positive, productive, and immediate when behavior is inappropriate.** No child will ever be humiliated, shamed, frightened, or subjected to physical punishment; verbal, psychological or physical abuse; or coercion by any staff member, student, or volunteer working at the CYC.

Examples of banned physical punishment: *shaking, hitting, spanking, slapping, jerking, squeezing, kicking, biting, pinching, excessive tickling, and pulling of arms, hair, or ears; requiring a child to remain inactive for a long period of time.*

Examples of banned psychological abuse: *shaming, name calling, ridiculing, humiliation, sarcasm, cursing at, making threats, or frightening a child; ostracism, withholding affection.*

Examples of banned coercion: *Rough handling (shoving, pulling, pushing, grasping any body part); forcing a child to sit down, lie down, or stay down, except when restraint is necessary to*

*protect the child or others from harm (use of restraint for safety reasons or to support a child with postural needs may be used on an as needed basis); physically forcing a child to perform an action (such as eating or cleaning up).*

Each member of the CYC professional staff understands and follows our disciplinary approach as well as the standards on guidance and management in our state licensing regulations. We work intensively with our student aides and interns, so they also understand and employ this approach.

**Please Note: When a pattern of behavior persists that endangers self, others, pets, or property, or significantly disrupts the program (including behaviors such as leaving the classroom or school property, or requiring the exclusive attention of an adult all or most of the time to be safe), we will work with a child’s family to find solutions, including referral for outside services or, as a last resort, exclusion from the CYC.**

Occasionally, children may demonstrate a pattern of persistent challenging behavior. When such behavior occurs, teachers work with the special educator to understand and address the behavior. The special educator will follow these steps:

1. Meet with the teachers and family, if appropriate, to clearly define the challenging behavior pattern.
2. Conduct a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) to determine why the behavior is occurring.
3. Share the FBA with the family and teachers and make referrals to outside professionals if appropriate.
4. Write a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), with a focus on positive behavior supports to be implemented in the classroom.

Exclusion is always a last resort, after all other possible interventions have been exhausted and there is agreement that another setting is in the best interest of the child and/or for the others in the classroom. In that circumstance, the program will offer assistance to the family in accessing services and an alternative placement. Our actions will always comply with federal and state civil rights law.

## Assessment

We use the Work Sampling System, which is a reliable, criterion-referenced, authentic, performance assessment tool that aligns with the Maryland State Learning Standards. Teachers spend time each day collecting evidence of growth and development of individual children in all the domains of learning—social/emotional, language and literacy, math, science, social studies, the arts, and physical development. This evidence is documented and used for several purposes:

- (1) To inform lesson planning for the whole group,
- (2) To differentiate instruction for individual children, and
- (3) To share information about your child’s learning and development with you.

## Screenings

We conduct developmental screenings as necessary during the school year to ensure that children are on the path to optimal development. Some screening tools will require input from

you, and others are completed solely in the classroom. Additionally, we offer screenings for vision, speech, and hearing. These screenings are more in-depth than what occurs in your pediatrician's office, and we strongly encourage you to allow your child to participate. Early awareness of delays allows for early intervention which is critical to your child's success.

Occasionally, screening and assessment data cause us to suspect a potential delay or disability in a child. When this happens, we will meet with you to discuss our observations and to make a recommendation for further evaluation by an appropriate professional. We are committed to supporting all children in ways that meet their needs. Some children may require extra support from the special educator, schedule adjustments, or therapies outside of the scope of the CYC. Instructional decisions are made with the best interests of the child as a primary focus. We adapt the environment when necessary and possible to support each child. If a delay or disability is identified during the school year, the special educator can be present for Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings, with family approval. Although the CYC is not legally responsible for implementing IEPs, every effort will be made to address the documented goals and objectives on the IEP. Children are best supported in our school when we can work together with your child's private therapists/service providers. If your family would like further information on a child's development, a meeting with the special educator can be requested at any time.

## Children's Library

High quality children's literature is a staple of our program. On select afternoons, your child will have the opportunity to check out a book hand-selected by our assistant director. The library will be set up in the lobby or just out front. Typically, children are allowed to check out one book at a time. Children write their name on an old-fashioned library card with the assistance of our assistant director. For every book children check out during the season, a pompom or other token goes into a jar which is then counted. We love to celebrate our reading success! Please return books to the shelves in the hallway just before the Great Room.

## Green School

We have earned the distinction of being named [a Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education \(MAEOE\) Green School](#), as well as a [University of Maryland Green Workspace](#). Some of our green measures include automatic and low water flow faucets and toilets. We compost food leftover and paper products in each classroom, and we employ reusable, washable dishes, cups, and utensils whenever possible.

Our goal is to teach conservation of the environment to young children along with the support of their families through our programs including Trash Free Tuesdays, Maryland Green School and Eco-School USA participation, the UMD Green Workspace program, and other school-wide endeavors. Young children can begin to understand and learn the importance of being thoughtful about their use of resources and their impact on our environment.

# RESEARCH

As a research center within the College of Education, research is a core mission of the CYC. Children enrolled in our program participate in studies that increase our understanding of child

development and learning, which in turn improves educational and other practices across the world for the betterment of children everywhere.

Research studies approved for the CYC undergo a rigorous review process by both the university's institutional review board (IRB) as well as by our director. Only studies that adhere to all protocols of ethical human subjects research and abide by the CYC's own research protocols are permitted. When your child participates in research, they are always directly supervised by a CYC faculty or staff member.

Currently, all children enrolled at the CYC give permission for observational studies that occur while children are in their classrooms. When a study requires a child to leave the classroom to participate, separate permission is required. These permission requests will come to you in your child's cubby or via email. We have recently received permission to include our blanket consent process for children to participate in research that occurs within the CYC and under the supervision of CYC staff that have been IRB and CYC approved. These research sessions will be play-based, such as a child listening to a story and then answering questions, a child interacting with puppets and then having a conversation with an adult about the interaction, or a child playing a simple game on a tablet. This new process will be piloted during the 2024-2025 school year. Please visit our website for additional information and research FAQs.

The CYC strongly encourages families to provide consent for children to participate in research conducted at the CYC. Children are always asked if they would like to participate, and always have the ability to opt out of any session at any time, even if the session has already begun. Research sessions last no longer than 20 minutes, and children participate no more than once per day.

## ENROLLMENT

### Initial Enrollment

We welcome enrollment from those within the UMD community and those without; however, priority is given to current University of Maryland System school affiliates (faculty, staff, and students). We strive to enroll a population of children who represent a diversity of race, gender, language, country of origin, family make-up, and ability. Children must be three years old by September 1 to qualify for our preschool program or five by September 1 for kindergarten. Children must be toilet-trained unless the child has a documented disability that prevents or delays toilet training.

Offers of enrollment are made from our waiting list, first by priority level and then by date of application. Join our waitlist by filling out the application and paying the application fee, [available on our website](#). Joining the waitlist does not guarantee enrollment.

Affiliated families who have an established relationship with the CYC via enrollment of a child and fulfillment of their contract obligations receive highest priority on the enrollment of subsequent siblings as long as one parent/guardian retains affiliate status with USM.

Enrollment in our kindergarten program is not guaranteed for children completing preschool at the CYC. If there is more interest in kindergarten than we have room for, we will hold a lottery for admission from within our current population of preschoolers.

We are happy to note requests for specific rooms or teachers, but they cannot be guaranteed.

## Re-enrollment

In January, families will be canvassed in writing about their intent to re-enroll their child for the next school year. If you fail to inform us of your intent to re-enroll, your child's placement may be offered to a child on our waiting list. Likewise, re-enrollment forms must be completed by the stated deadlines, or you may lose your child's spot.

## Custody Considerations

Please provide us with a copy of any legal custody documents and share with an administrator and your child's teachers any specific details that may be important for us to know, such as if a parent or someone who might otherwise have legal right to your child is prohibited from removing your child from the CYC. We must have a copy of any applicable court order to guide us in releasing a child.

## Requirement for Toilet Training

Toilet-trained children are expected to be able to do the following on their own:

- Decide when they need to use the toilet
- Pull down and up their own pants/skirt/underwear
- Have sufficient aim to keep clothing and floor dry
- Get their body onto a child-sized toilet
- Wipe/clean themselves with toilet paper

**Please note:** In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), we will admit and accommodate children with disabilities for whom toilet training is delayed or inhibited.

Children should come to school in regular underwear, not diapers or Pull-up type training pants. To enhance children's independence, please dress your child in clothes they can manage on their own, such as elasticized waistbands. Refrain from sending children in belts and overalls unless your child is proficient at removing them and putting them back on.

We expect that preschool children will have occasional accidents. We will keep a record of the accidents, inform the family of them, and discuss what might be causing them. If accidents continue to occur, a meeting may be scheduled with the family to discuss goals and suggest prevention methods that can be put into place, such as scheduling frequent bathroom trips. If accidents continue and are excessive, the policy below will be followed:

Children who enter the CYC but are not toilet-trained cannot remain enrolled. Families will have the option of paying to hold the space for one month to complete the toilet training process. If at the end of one month training is still not complete, the child will not be able to return that school year. If this happens, the child will remain on the waitlist with their original date of application for potential enrollment the following year.

## Special Needs Inclusion

### Children Identified with Special Needs/Disabilities

We welcome all children to the CYC. If a child has identified special needs, families are requested to share evaluations and reports with the administration and special educator prior to the start of the school year to ensure a smooth transition. In your enrollment paperwork there is space for you to request a meeting with our special educator, who will partner with you to ensure that we are best equipped to meet your child's needs. You may also schedule a meeting with our special educator at any time to obtain referral information, to ask questions about development, or to problem solve.

### Consent to Release Information

Our program is most effective when we collaborate. Children are best supported with families, teachers, therapists, and/or other service providers work together to share information, to set goals, and create action plans. To facilitate collaboration, please complete the [consent to Release Information form](#) contained in your enrollment packet or available on [our website](#).

### Fraudulent or Misleading Information

Any fraudulent, false, or misleading information provided to the CYC regarding affiliate status, child custody agreements, emergency contacts, or insurance information is grounds for termination of enrollment.

## TUITION AND BILLING

### Payment Due Dates

Your contracted tuition amount is payable across ten equal payments, due on the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month between August and May. If a child enters midyear, tuition is generally prorated to one full tuition payment for each calendar month remaining in the school year.

The Office of Student Financial Services and Cashiering (OSFSC) generates the tuition bills, which are sent out approximately two weeks prior to their due date. Failure to receive a bill does not negate your payment responsibility. Please call (301) 314-9000 if you fail to receive an invoice or have questions.

There is no refund for any absence, regardless of the reason, including vacation and illness.

### Payment Types

You may pay by check made payable to the University of Maryland by mailing your payment to OSFSC at the address listed on the invoice. Please include your account ID number. Tuition may also be paid by credit card [at the link listed on our website](#).

Tuition may not be paid in the CYC office. We apologize for the inconvenience.

## Flexible Spending Accounts

UMD participates in a childcare flexible spending account program in which most employees are eligible to participate. The FSA program allows you to set aside money for your CYC tuition account expenses before taxes and have this money reimbursed to you once you have paid your tuition bills, up to a certain maximum amount. Please consult with UMD Personnel Benefits for more details on this program, including maximum reimbursements.

To receive reimbursement, please email your completed claim forms (available online for most FSA companies) to the Program Coordinator. We will certify that you have already paid for the amounts and dates reflected in the reimbursement request, sign off on the claim form and return it to you via email. Please allow 48 hours for this to be completed. We are unable to sign off on forms that are requesting tuition reimbursements for service dates that have not yet occurred.

## Tax ID

For tax purposes, our tax ID number is 52-6002033. Please see your tax attorney or accountant for information on claiming childcare expenses on your taxes.

## Failure to Pay Tuition

Failure to make timely tuition payments could result in a late fee and/or a finance charge as per the policy of OSFSC. OSFSC sends unpaid tuition bills to a state collection agency. If payment is more than one month in arrears, a child's enrollment may be terminated.

## Withdrawal

Withdrawal of your child prior to the end of the school year does not relieve you of your requirement to pay tuition, as delineated in the CYC contract.

## Release from Contract

We understand that sometimes circumstances change and you may wish to be released from your enrollment contract. As a financially self-supporting unit on campus, the CYC is unable to release enrollees from their contract unless and until a child of the proper age is found to fill the vacated position. We will make every effort to find another child, but that is not always possible. We do not enroll new children into classrooms after February 1. Therefore, if you request to withdraw on or after January 31, or prior to January 31 and a replacement child cannot be found, **the account holder is responsible for tuition for the remainder of the contractual period.**

# HEALTH

## A Community of Care

At the CYC, we spend significant time helping children understand that we have a collective responsibility to “take care of ourselves, take care of our friends, and take care of our classrooms.” Typically, we teach this to children to help them understand that we, as a community, have the responsibility to take care of one another and our things—we pick up our toys so others don't trip and fall; we use our words instead of our hands to express our needs



and wants in ways that others aren't hurt; we wash our hands before lunch to take care of our own bodies. Our approach to preventing the spread of illness is similar. We do what we can (even when it's not our preference) to keep ourselves and each other safe and healthy.

Our greatest priority is to ensure the health and safety of the children in our care, making it imperative that we limit the spread of disease. We use the following symptoms to determine when a child is too ill to attend school.

## Exclusion Symptoms

- **Fever:** any reading over 99.5° F when taken under the arm (100.0° F taken orally).

**Child may return when** they are fever-free without the use of medication for 24 hours. If the child has a fever on a Sunday, they may not come to school on Monday.

- **Diarrhea:** defined as an increased number of stools compared to the child's normal pattern, with increased stool water and/or decreased form.

**Child may return** after a minimum of 24 hours. If the diarrhea continues, the child will be excluded until the child's physician is consulted.

- **Vomiting:** two or more times in the previous 24 hours unless the vomiting is determined to be due to a non-communicable condition.

**Child may return** after 24 hours since last episode.

- **Rash,** with fever or behavior change.

**Child may return** after a doctor has determined it is non-communicable.

- **Conjunctivitis ("pink eye"):** if white of the eye is red, even without seeping. (If red eyes are from allergies, please send in a doctor's note stating they are not infectious).

**Child may return** after 24 hours from start of medication. A note from the doctor clearing the child to return to school must be provided.

- **Severa Cold Symptoms:** severe sneezing, coughing, nose drainage, etc. If due to an allergy, please send in a doctor's note stating they are not infectious.

**Child may return:** please see following respiratory illness policy for additional information.

- **Other Signs of Possible Severe Illness:** may include unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, or persistent barking-type cough.

If your child has any of the above symptoms, please do not bring your child to school until they have been seen by a medical professional and have begun treatment or until the symptoms either go away or improve considerably. If your child has been put on antibiotics, they must have been on the prescription for 24 hours before returning to school.

If a child seems sick without obvious symptoms, please keep them at home. This includes pallor, irritability, exhaustion, or disinterest. We reserve the right to isolate or send children home for exhibiting these symptoms whether a fever is present or not.

## Handwashing

It is your and our responsibility to teach children about frequent and thorough hand washing before eating, after bathroom visits, after coughing, sneezing, or blowing noses, and at other times of the day.

## Respiratory Illness Policy and Guidance

Prevention is key to suppressing illness. Getting available vaccinations when possible, keeping building ventilation good, proper handwashing, staying home when sick, and using masks when symptomatic can go a long way towards preventing illnesses of all kinds.

## Policy Requirements

### When children are sick with a respiratory illness:

- Keep children home until **fever-free for 24 hours** *without the use of medication*, and **symptoms are improving**.

“Symptoms improving” means:

- Your child no longer feels ill
- Your child can participate fully in their daily home/school routines (note: daily school routines are typically more strenuous than home routines)
- Symptoms such as a cough or runny nose are very mild or infrequent

When your child returns to school, they must mask for the next five days at school or around others, and we recommend masking for up to 10 days if any symptoms persist.

### Exposure to COVID and other respiratory illness:

- Masking is recommended during periods of high transmission but is not required (We will try to share transmission data when applicable).
- Masking is recommended if your child has a known exposure to someone with a known COVID illness.
- Families may ask that their child mask whenever they feel it is important to do so.

## What Does This Policy Mean for Me?

- **My child woke up with a cough, what do I do?** If your child is coughing, please keep them home until they are feeling better, and the cough is significantly improved. If there is a fever, they *must* wait until they are fever-free without medication for 24 hours to return, regardless of other symptoms. Upon being 24 hours fever-free and improving symptoms, they should mask for the next five days while at school.
- **Do I need to test my child?** We recommend that you test and report to us (it's recommended to test 5 days after known exposure, or at onset of symptoms and every 48 hours if negative—[see FDA recommendations for testing here](#)), so we can report (anonymously) to other families who may want their child to mask in the classroom or at home. Remember, some children may live with older adults and/or immunocompromised

individuals. It's our responsibility to give them the best possible chance to keep themselves safe and healthy.

- **My child started feeling better on Friday and hasn't had a fever; how long do they have to mask?** If they saw improvement on Friday, then the five-day count starts on Saturday. They would mask Monday through Wednesday at school.
- **My child has asthma, and sometimes develops a cough when out in the cold air. Do they have to stay home?** No, as long as we have your child's asthma action plan on file and we are able to maintain your child's breathing within that plan, they may remain at school.
- **My child was diagnosed with the flu or RSV but was negative for COVID at the doctor's office. Do they have to mask?** Yes. Children with any respiratory illness must mask for the first five days when returning to school. In addition, they must have significantly improved symptoms and have been fever free for 24 hours before returning.
- **What are the current vaccination recommendations for COVID and other respiratory illness?** Vaccinations are available from 6 months old for influenza and COVID, and from birth through infancy, during pregnancy, and for adults over 60 for RSV. See [this document](#) for additional information on efficacy and timing of vaccinations.

Our goal is to take care of each other—to keep ourselves safe, to keep our friends safe, and to keep our classrooms safe. We rely on you to help us do this. By following our respiratory illness policy carefully, we can do our best to prevent the transmission of illnesses that may harm others—even if our personal risk is small.

**We continue to do our part at the CYC.** We do our part by working closely with UMD facilities to ensure healthy air quality levels in our building. We continue to run our HEPA filters in classrooms and other common spaces. We continue to regularly sanitize toys and classroom surfaces, and to utilize regular handwashing.

## Post Diagnosis Exclusion & Notification for Communicable Diseases

If your child is diagnosed with a communicable disease, please alert us so that we can inform other families in your child's classroom to be alert for symptoms in their child. We will inform others in your child's class of the diagnosis and potential symptoms, without revealing your child's identity. Children with contagious disease will be excluded for as long as current best medical practice states. Your family's confidentiality will be protected to the best of our ability.

## Unimmunized or Under Immunized Children

If your child has not been immunized for medical or religious reasons, or your child is considered under immunized, your child will be excluded from our program in the case that a vaccine-preventable disease occurs at the CYC. Your child will remain excluded until the illness has passed.

## Care for Sick Children

We are not equipped or licensed to care for sick children. You must pick up your sick child within one hour of being called or make alternative emergency pickup arrangements. Sick children are made comfortable in the sick bay, located behind the front desk, to rest or play quietly until they are picked up. The sick bay is maintained away from the classroom to prevent the spread of illness.

If your child has recently been seen in a hospital or emergency room, please let your child's teachers know. Frequently, there are persisting symptoms or behaviors when a child returns to school and having this information helps us make informed decisions about your child's health and safety.

We will call you when we think there is a possibility that a child is developing an illness, even when exclusion is not yet necessary. This affords you the opportunity to make health decisions for your child (like making a doctor's appointment if desired) at the earliest time. Please promptly return phone calls you receive from us.

## Medical Emergencies

We must always have a way to contact you or your designated emergency pickup every day. Please keep cell, home, and work phone numbers updated as changes occur. A change of information form is available on our website.

In the case of a serious accident or illness, we will call 911. The child will be transported to the hospital via ambulance accompanied by a staff member most familiar to your child and/or the staff member who witnessed the accident. The Emergency Medical Consent form in the enrollment packet will accompany the child to the hospital. It is essential that this form be up to date.

## Administration of Medications

We can administer most prescription and nonprescription medications. In compliance with Maryland regulation, please use the following procedures:

- (1) [A medication order form](#) must be completed and signed by you and a doctor for all prescription and nonprescription medications.
- (2) Leave both the medication and the medication order form at the front desk with an administrator. They will double check the form for completeness and take the medication to the classroom.
- (3) Medications must:
  - a. Be in the original container with full label
  - b. Be labeled with the child's first and last name
  - c. Show date filled and prescriber's name (for prescription meds only)
  - d. Show medication name and strength
  - e. Have clear administration instructions, including dosage, time, and route
  - f. Have storage instructions
  - g. Show an expiration date
  - h. Include a properly calibrated medication measuring device (not a kitchen utensil)
- (4) We will store refrigerated medications in the kitchen in a locked box, and non-refrigerated medications in a locked box in your child's classroom.
- (5) You must give your child the first dose of any medication due to the possibility of an allergic reaction.
- (6) **Preventative** topical medications including sunblock, insect repellent, lip balm, lotion, and other preventative salves do not require a doctor's signature and can be administered with your signature on a [topical preventative care form](#). We recommend non-aerosol sunblock. Please label all items with your child's full name.

(7) **Do not** place any medication or preventative topical salve in your child’s cubby, lunch box, pocket, backpack, etc. All medications and preventative care items must be given to an adult for administration.

(8) You may choose to come to school and administer your child’s medications.

All teachers have received 6 hours of training in medication administration as required by the state.

### Allergy Action Planning

Please alert us to any allergies or sensitivities. This information is requested on the Personal History Form (at enrollment), on the Emergency Medical Consent Form, on the Emergency Information Form, and on the Maryland Health Inventory Form. If an allergy is indicated, we will follow up with an [Allergy Action Plan form](#), which details each allergen and what actions we should take in case of exposure or reaction. The allergy action plan will be kept in the child’s file and in the classroom. All reported allergies, including seasonal allergies, must have confirmation from a medical professional.

Please keep us updated with any changes to your child’s allergy status.

### Asthma Action Planning

Any child with an asthma diagnosis must have an [asthma action plan](#) on file, signed by both the parent and the doctor.

### Extreme Weather

Children benefit from playing outdoors in all kinds of weather. Children should dress daily for the weather, including the cold. Please send coats, boots, mittens, hats, and if possible, snowsuits for very cold days. Layer clothing for warmth and comfort indoors and out.

Medical professionals have advised us that children who are recovering from mild respiratory infections and earaches can play outdoors without affecting the course of their recovery so long as they are properly dressed. We do not have the staff to keep your child indoors when the rest of the class is outside.

### Extreme Cold

In extremely cold weather, children go out for abbreviated times depending on temperature and wind chill.

<b>If the temperature + windchill is:</b>	<b>We will go outside for:</b>
30 degrees F	30 minutes
Between 15-30 degrees F	20 minutes
Between 0-15 degrees F	10 minutes
< 0 degrees F	0 minutes

### Extreme Heat

Every effort will be made to get children outside for much needed playtime in the hot summer months. However, in extremely hot weather children will be outdoors for abbreviated times.

<b>If the temperature + humidity equals:</b>	<b>We will go outside for:</b>
A heat index of 95-100 degrees F	Up to 30 minutes
A heat index > 100 degrees F	0 minutes

## Air Quality

When air quality is a concern, the CYC will follow the guidelines for schools provided by the Centers for Disease Control. Air quality determinations will be made using the [airnow.gov](http://airnow.gov) website.

<b>Air Quality Index</b>	<b>Outdoor Activity Guidance</b>
Green	Outdoor activities as normal.
Yellow	Outdoor activities as normal. All students with asthma or other respiratory concerns will be closely monitored.
Orange	Short activities, such as recess and pool time, are allowed. All students with asthma or other respiratory concerns will be closely monitored.
Red	No outdoor activities permitted.
Purple	No outdoor activities permitted.

## Pets in the Classroom

Most of our classrooms have pets to provide children opportunities to learn the responsibility to care for a living creature. Please inform us if your child is allergic to, or has a fear of, certain animals. Pets are monitored continually by the campus veterinary staff. Children observe proper handwashing when interacting with animals.

## Smoking

UMD and the CYC are a smoke-free campus. Please do not smoke in any part of the CYC including out front, on the playground, or while on field trips.

# CLOSURES

## Scheduled Closures

Please keep the school calendar handy. During the year, we are closed for several professional development full days and half days. Two of these days are reserved for family/teacher conferences. All professional development and family/teacher conference days may be rescheduled in the event of cancellation due to emergencies such as inclement weather. Like the university, we are closed on all major holidays and for both winter and spring break. Please visit our website for the [school year and summer calendars](#).

In preparation for our summer program and for each new school year, we are closed for two weeks in early June, and for three weeks in August. We use this time for school repairs, maintenance, and heavy cleaning.

## Emergency Closures

We follow Prince George's County Public Schools determinations on inclement weather closings such as snow and ice.

The CYC maintains the following procedures in the case of inclement weather:

When Prince George's County Schools...	We will:
- Close	- Close
- Open 2 hours late	- Open at 9:30 am
- Close 2 hours early	- Close at 1:30 pm
- Cancel all afternoon/evening activities	- Close at 4:30 pm (No AG)
- Cancel AM/PM kindergarten	- Does not affect us
- Close for non-weather purposes (e.g., utility failures, voting, etc.)	- Does not affect us

**NOTE:** If UMD announces an opening time LATER than 9:30 am, we will open 30 minutes after the university to allow time for snack preparation and classroom set-up. If UMD closes PRIOR to the closing times noted above, we will close with the university.

### Other weather closure decisions

- (1) When inclement weather is predicted and Prince George's County Schools are already closed due to a scheduled closure, our actions will be at the discretion of the director.
- (2) When we make a closing decision, an email will be sent to all families. We will also send a text on our emergency texting service to all families who sign-up for emergency texts.
- (3) Families are encouraged to listen to radio and television announcements about the status of both the University of Maryland and Prince George's County Public Schools throughout the day when inclement weather is predicted, and to call us with questions at (301) 405-3168.
- (4) You can sign up for School Messenger on the [Prince George's County Schools website](#) to receive alerts for news and closings.

### Non-Weather Emergency Closings

The state of Maryland licenses the CYC and determines regulations that govern our operation. These regulations concern, among other things, required adult-child ratio, safety, and health mandates. If an emergency condition ever arises that prevents us from operating within these legal mandates, we must, by law, close.

Examples of non-weather emergency closings include but are not limited to: loss of safe, running water; loss of ability to maintain a safe indoor temperature; loss of electricity; inability to maintain safe and legal ratios of adults to children.

We recognize the hardship this may cause and will try to avoid such closures.

No tuition will be refunded in the event of an emergency closing. If an emergency closing lasts more than 10 school days for reasons beyond the university's reasonable control (e.g., pandemic, major building structural damage, etc.), the CYC will use its best efforts to implement a distance learning program and services. At the time such program and services will begin, and for all remaining days of the emergency closing, in consideration of the distance learning and support provided by the CYC:

- Preschool families will be responsible for fifty percent (50%) of the Core Day tuition
- Kindergarten families will be responsible for one hundred percent (100%) of the Core Day tuition.

Should such an emergency closure extend longer than 60 school days, we will work in good faith with university officials to determine if an updated plan is necessary.

## Emergency Closing Text Sign-Up

We maintain a subscription to an emergency texting service that we use to notify you of weather related and other emergency closings and schedule changes. You can sign-up for this text service using the QR code available in the CYC newsletter or posted around the school.

# SAFETY

## Attempt to Pick-up While Under the Influence

If, in the opinion of CYC faculty or staff, a parent or authorized person picking up appears to be intoxicated or otherwise under the influence, we will attempt to keep that person from leaving the CYC with the child. An administrator will call for another adult to drive the parent and child home. If the intoxicated person refuses an administrator's request to find alternate transportation, the police and/or child protective services will be called.

## Authorization for Pick-up

We will only release your child to someone for whom we have your written authorization to pick up your child from the CYC. You will indicate on the attendance sheet who is picking up your child each day. If that pick-up should change during the course of the day, please call the CYC at (301) 405-3168 to let us know. A phone call will suffice if the alternate pick-up person is already authorized to pick your child up. If they are not, you must send an email to CYC administration at [cyc-admin@umd.edu](mailto:cyc-admin@umd.edu), and call to let us know to look for that email. If you would like to permanently add someone to your authorized pick-up list, please stop at the front desk to do so.

Anyone who arrives to pick up your child may be asked to show photo ID. Please make sure they know to bring ID with them.

**NOTE:** We are not permitted to release your child to another parent who volunteers at the last minute to pick up your child if you're running late, unless the procedures outlined above have been followed.



## Food safety

We take food safety seriously at the time of purchase, storage, preparation, and service to children. These practices reduce the risk of foodborne illness and provide for the safe consumption of food by children.

Your role in food safety:

- Please label all food items to be refrigerated with your child's full name
- Place items to be refrigerated in the classroom container designated for those foods
- Please do not include the following potential choking hazards in your child's lunch: popcorn, raw large carrot chunks, whole grapes, large chunks of meat (including hot dogs), large hard pretzels, hard candy, or nuts. We cannot serve these items and will send them back home.
- Please remember to advise us of any food allergies and complete an allergy plan to address them.
- **Special feeding needs:** Please advise us in writing of any special medical dietary modifications needed for your child. A dated record will be kept on file of food served to any child on a modified diet or medical feeding plan.

Reminder: we are unable to heat up foods for children.

## Fire Drills

Monthly fire drills are coordinated with the campus Fire Marshal. All adults, including parents, are required to follow fire drill procedures when present in the building.

## Evacuations and Drills

If we must evacuate our building, we will go to either Oakland Hall, the Benjamin Building, or Stamp Student Union. Visit the [UMD interactive map](#) to see these locations. Families will be notified of the location to pick up their child by email, our emergency text notification system, and/or by phone.

We practice evacuating to Oakland Hall annually.

## Other Emergency Drills

Teachers and children practice shelter in place and other emergency drills during the school year.

## Accidents

If your child is injured at school you will receive a written injury report at the end of the day.

## Mandated Reporters

All faculty and staff at the CYC are mandated by law to report any instances of suspected child abuse and neglect to child protective services.

## Security

Our school uses a keypad/keycard entry security system. The building's front door is always locked, and each family is assigned a unique code to use to enter the building during business hours. This system is designed to allow only authorized people access to the building. Please do not allow those unknown to you to enter the building when you input your code. Parties without approved access must ring the bell, identify themselves, and be buzzed into the building. You are responsible to notify others picking up your child about this process. Please do not share your family's code with anyone other than those authorized to pick up your child.

## Photographs

To protect the confidentiality of children, please do not publish photos of other enrolled children without the express permission of those children's parents. Photos of school birthday parties and school social events are permitted for family albums, but not for university publications or other published materials, including social networks or other websites. Please do not take photographs or videos from the observation booth.

## Confidentiality

We take the confidentiality of children's records, information, and photos seriously.

- Children's files are maintained in a secure location in the administrative offices
- Children's files are only made available to parents/guardians, teachers who need information for the child's education, representatives of the state of Maryland Division of Early Childhood as required by law
- Materials contained in children's files are never disclosed without express written consent of parents. Such requests to share information must appear on the official letterhead of the school or agency requesting information.
- We require a FERPA waiver to write letters of recommendation for children. You can obtain a waiver from the receiving agency/school or from us.
- Assessment notes collected in the classrooms are kept in a secure location.
- Any discussion of confidential information takes place in locations designed to maintain the security of the information.
- Researchers and students conducting observations or internships at our school are required to read and sign confidentiality guidelines and are not allowed to identify children by full name.

## Parking Lot Safety

Please park in the YC spots that are located adjacent to the sidewalk or adjacent to the grassy strip behind the Free Little Library. These spots offer the safest ways for you and your child to walk into school. CYC faculty and staff will park in the center of the YC lot.

Please do not allow your child to go into the parking lot alone as small children are easy to miss when people are backing out of spots.

## Supervision of Children: Your Responsibility

Children must always be under your supervision on their way to the classroom in the mornings and on their way out of the building in the afternoons/evenings. Children may never be left alone

in any part of our building, on the playground, or in the parking lot. When entering the building, please accompany your child to the classroom, sign the child in on the clipboard, and alert the teacher to your presence. At sign out, please sign your child out, alert the teacher that you are leaving, and keep your child with you as you exit the building. They may not be out of your sight at any time during this process.

## DAILY ROUTINES

### Drop Off

The academic day for preschool is 9:30 am to 12 noon, and for kindergarten is 9 am to 3:30 pm. Children should arrive for preschool by 9:15 am and for kindergarten by 8:45 am. If necessary due to doctor's appointments or therapies, children may be dropped off by 12 noon.

Children may never be dropped off or picked up at the CYC between 12 noon and 3 pm as this is disruptive to the classroom. Only on the rare occasion of a doctor's appointment or other significant circumstance may children be dropped off or returned to school after 3 pm, and only if pre-arranged with the teacher.

If your child is going to be absent, please notify us by 9 am using the [Absentee Form](#) located on our website.

### Sign In

Please sign your child in on the attendance sheet every day. Indicate the full name of who will be picking up that day. Please alert the teacher to your arrival, and let them know any important information they might need to know (child didn't sleep well, a parent is on a work trip, they are getting picked up at a different time than usual, etc.)

### Settling In

After signing in and greeting the teacher, please guide your child to put their things in their cubby and to wash their hands with soap and water before engaging in the classroom. Create a short but consistent drop off routine for the smoothest transition. Please let your child's teacher know if you need help separating from your child in the mornings. Administrators are also happy to talk about transition routines.

### Classroom Meeting Time

Classroom meeting time is an important part of the academic day. Missing meeting affects children's learning. Your child's teacher will give you the morning meeting time for their classroom. Please arrive at least 15 minutes prior to meeting to help your child get settled in. If you arrive after meeting has started, you will have to wait with your child in the observation booth until the meeting is over. Your child may not be signed in to the classroom during this time. Children may not be left at the front office or left unattended.

### Extra Clothing

Please keep a supply of extra clothing for your child in their cubby. Clothing should be size and season appropriate. We recommend at least two full changes of clothing including socks,

underwear, pants and tops. If you bring home soiled clothing, please bring fresh clothes to replace them the following day.

## Shoes

Ensure your child wears rubber soled, enclosed-toe shoes to school every day. We go out in all kinds of weather, including rain and snow. Please bring warm boots when winter is predicted to be snowy and keep rain boots at the CYC. Extra sneakers are a great idea if possible.

## Dressing Your Child

We play hard at the CYC. Please dress your child in comfortable clothes that can get dirty. We regularly paint, dig in sand and dirt, jump in mud puddles, and engage in other messy activity. Please choose clothes with fasteners that your child can manage. Elastic waisted pants without belts are a superb choice. If your child's pants have snaps, please help them learn to unsnap and re-snap them.

## Daily Schedule

Your child's teachers will share their daily schedule with you.

## Rest Time

We are required by regulation to offer all children a rest period. Accepted practice in preschool is a two-hour rest/nap period. Kindergarten children typically rest for 50-60 minutes. Children who do not sleep are asked to rest quietly on their cots. Each class has special routines to prepare for rest time and maintain a quiet, relaxing environment.

When a child has difficulty setting down, thus disturbing other children, teachers work hard on expectations with that child. If the difficulty continues, teachers may request a meeting with you to discuss strategies for success.

We are unable to accommodate requests to deliberately keep children awake during rest time.

Please bring a standard sized crib sheet, a small blanket, and a small pillow for your child's use. This will be brought to school every Monday and taken home to wash every Friday.

## Toys from Home

Your child may bring one soft, cuddly style toy from home to use during rest time (or for comfort at other times of the day.) Please discuss any other items brought from home with your child's teacher prior to bringing them in.

Because families have divergent beliefs about toy gunplay and play violence, we discourage the use of toy gunplay, war toys, and activities involving pretend violence. We ask you to keep toy guns, war toys, and superhero figures at home.

## Pick Up

Afternoon Gathering starts at 4:30 pm. Children who are not enrolled in AG must be picked up by 4:30 pm. Children enrolled in AG must be picked up by 5:30 pm. When you arrive to pick up your child, please sign them out on the attendance sheet, and alert the child's teacher before you exit. Please always keep your child in your sight while exiting the building.

## Late Pick Up Fees

Your child anticipates your arrival at the end of the day, and teachers are ready to go home to their own families. If you arrive late, a late fee will be assessed. Late fees are paid directly to the teacher who stayed late with your child and are due within 48 hours.

Late fees per child: \$10.00 – First 1 to 5 minutes

\$5.00 – each additional 5-minute increment or part thereof

Late fees begin to accrue at 4:31 pm if not enrolled in AG, or at 5:31 pm if enrolled in AG. You will be asked to sign a form acknowledging the late pick-up and the fee.

Late fees will be imposed when school closes early (no AG days and half days) and for emergency closings unless suspended by the director. Fees are payable directly to the teacher who stayed with your child by cash, check, or other method such as Venmo, Paypal, or CashApp at the teacher's discretion.

Late fees are doubled after three incidents. After six incidents, the child may not attend the CYC the following day, and enrollment for the future will be in jeopardy. Failure to pay late pick-up fees will jeopardize your child's enrollment.

## End of Day Emergencies

If you have an emergency at the end of the day, such as a car breakdown, please call us at (301) 405-3168, and then make alternate arrangements for pickup. The late fee is imposed even under emergency conditions.

# FACULTY AND STAFF

### **Advisory Board**

The Chair of HDQM appoints an advisory board comprised of members from the CYC and University communities. The board acts in an advisory capacity on issues that arise at the CYC. The board meets as needed.

### **Director**

The director holds a Ph.D. and is a member of the Department of Human Development and Quantitative Methodology. They are responsible for the strategic direction, implementation of the CYC's mission, financial oversight, and reviewing proposed research.

### **Assistant Director**

The assistant director holds an advanced degree in early childhood education. The assistant director is responsible for the daily operations of the center, including managing compliance with state licensing and national accreditation.

### **Curriculum Specialist**

The curriculum specialist holds an advanced degree in early childhood education. They are primarily responsible for ensuring the overall effectiveness of instruction at the CYC. They also share responsibility for the day-to-day program operations.

**Program Coordinator**

The program coordinator manages enrollment processes and paperwork, billing, and works closely with the rest of the administrative team to ensure the smooth operation of the program.

**Teachers/Faculty**

CYC teachers are university faculty of practice with either bachelor's or master's degrees and extensive backgrounds in early childhood education. Teachers are responsible for planning inclusive, comprehensive curriculum and conducting ongoing assessment.

**Rainbow/Floating Teachers**

The CYC employs fully qualified teachers who are assigned to classrooms as needed to ensure that even if a teacher is out, classrooms are staffed with faculty who know each child.

**Special Educator**

The CYC employs a full-time special educator, with an advanced degree and licensure in special education. The special educator is responsible for working with teachers to support all learners and to work with families to find necessary resources to support child development and learning.

**Instructional Coach**

The CYC has a full-time instructional coach who works with teaching faculty to improve their day-to-day practice in the field of early childhood.

**Research Specialist**

The research specialist coordinates research being conducted at the CYC and accompanies children participating in research.

**Undergraduate Students at the CYC**

Undergraduate students have roles as interns, observers, and paid aides. Teachers display photos of these students in the classroom. All contribute in significant ways towards the operation of the program.

## OTHER POLICIES AND INFORMATION

### Orientation to School

The first day of every school year is set aside for "getting to know you" meetings for children new to the CYC as well as children entering kindergarten. You will receive information on how to sign up for a meeting. These meetings are brief and you will attend with your child so that both children and their families can get to know the teachers and the classroom. Families who are returning to the CYC will be offered a meeting if they choose.

The remainder of the week is Gradual Entry. All students (new and returning preschoolers and kindergarteners) begin each school year on a gradual basis. If, for some reason, your child cannot participate in gradual entry during that week, we will provide you with a similar schedule for your child's first week.

Gradual entry allows children to come for shorter days, in smaller groups, and facilitates children's transition to the school year, new classmates, new teachers, and new routines. It also allows children to form trusting bonds with teachers and classmates, which are foundational for a successful school year.

In late July, you will receive a packet that includes a welcome letter, class assignment, and gradual entry schedule. Occasionally, we may observe that an individual child needs more time to adjust. In these cases, the family may be asked to participate in an extended gradual entry period. We will work together to discover the best way to support the child.

## Open School Night

You will be invited to attend our annual Open School Night scheduled in September. During this event, you will hear from the director, other administrators, and your child's classroom teachers about school and classroom policies and practices, important procedures, and the curriculum. Much valuable information is shared at this event, so we encourage you to attend. This is an adults-only event.

## Birthdays

Birthday invitations for out-of-school celebrations should only be brought to school if all children in the classroom are being invited. Otherwise, please use the CYC Family Directory to reach out to families. Our classrooms celebrate children's birthdays in a variety of ways, including making birthday books and singing songs. Some classrooms do not allow food to be brought to celebrate birthdays. Please check with your child's teachers if you are interested in celebrating a birthday during the school day. In addition, if you do not celebrate birthdays, please work with your child's teachers to find an appropriate accommodation for your child during birthday celebrations.

## Cell Phones

Please finish phone calls before entering the building. Children fare best when they have your full attention during drop off and pick-up times. Teachers also have very limited time to communicate with you during the day, so please be available to briefly chat with them as well.

## Communication

We want to build a trusting partnership with you in support of your child's growth and development. If you have any concerns, please bring them to your child's teachers, and if necessary, to administration. We take your concerns seriously and will work to find solutions. Attempts to encourage unrest, without problem solving through appropriate administrative channels, may undermine the sound operation of the CYC. Any abusive behavior toward CYC faculty, staff, other parents, or children may jeopardize your child's enrollment. Abusive behavior includes, but is not limited to, verbal harassment and threats.

## Conferences

In addition to *getting to know you* meetings, we host two formal family-teacher conference times per year, one in the fall semester and one in spring semester. These formal meetings allow teachers to share their observations about your child's learning in all areas of development and

allow you to share your observations and ask questions. Conference days are listed on the school calendar.

While our school is closed for children on conference days, we do offer babysitting in the building for free during your conference time.

Teachers and administrators are available and happy to meet with families at other times of the school year to talk about observations, child growth, or concerns about child development. Don't hesitate to reach out to your child's teachers or to front office staff if you'd like to talk.

## Holiday Celebrations

We are very proud to serve a diverse population of students and families—we are truly a global community. We strive to find ways that help all of our children and families feel included and respected, especially when it comes to cultural celebrations and holidays.

We do not celebrate or decorate center-wide based on any religious holiday. Instead, holidays are recognized and appropriately supported as they naturally emerge through children's play, drawings, and stories. By responding to children's expressions and representations, holidays and cultural celebrations are better recognized in the context that is most meaningful for that child, and support children's social and cultural understanding. We recognize and respect that holidays and other celebrations are an integral part of each child's socio-cultural life, and part of their uniqueness as individuals, as parts of families, and parts of communities. As such, teachers are prepared to support and extend children's interests and desire to know with questions, ideas, materials, and documentation of the experience.

We invite families to share significant traditions and holidays from their cultures and countries of origin. Celebrations such as Diwali, Chanukah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, Lunar New Year, Têt, Mardi Gras, Eid-al-Fitr, and others are among special holidays that can be shared. Teachers will work with families to prepare age-appropriate experiences that focus on cultural rather than religious themes.

## Field Trips

Field trips on and off campus support our curriculum by allowing children to have first-hand experiences. Trips may be on foot or via bus. Local trips often use UMD shuttle buses, while trips further away will use the UMD charter service or other similar charter service. You are encouraged to participate. Please follow all instructions given by your child's teacher if you are a chaperone. Trips that use a bus to go off campus require separate permission from you. If you arrive at school after your child's class has left for a field trip, your child must remain with you until the class arrives back to school.

## Parent-Teacher Partnership

The Parent-Teacher Partnership (PTP) is a nonprofit organization made up of CYC families, faculty, and staff that exists to support the CYC. As an enrolled family, you are a member. The PTP meetings approximately four times annually and hosts special events for families and appreciation events for teachers. If you are interested in participating in the PTP, keep an eye out for invitations to events, or check out our webpage for more info.



## Parking Permits

You will be assigned two YC one-hour parking permits during Gradual Entry week. These permits should be displayed on your rearview mirror at all times when dropping off or picking up your child from the CYC. They may also be used for other CYC events. The CYC has no ability to remove parking tickets received while parked in the YC lot or anywhere else without a proper permit. If you have others picking up or dropping off your child, please ensure they have your permit as well.

## Volunteering

Families are an important part of our program. We invite you to sign up for volunteer opportunities at the CYC, such as PTP leadership or assistance, chaperoning field trips, working on special events or fundraising, helping in the library, sharing a cultural tradition with your child's class, volunteering as an expert for a curriculum study, or completing projects at home as requested by a teacher or administrator. As a community, children benefit when we all work together.

# SIGNATURE PAGE

My signature indicates that I have read and understand all policies contained in the Center for Young Children Family Handbook, 2024-2025 edition, including the CYC Calendar.

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Signature of Parent/Guardian/Date

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Signature of Parent/Guardian/Date

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(Print child's name/room)