



*In partnership with the School of  
Teacher Preparation, Administration, and Leadership*

# Family Handbook

Updated: 1/13/2023



*Dear Families,*

Welcome to the NMSU School for Young Children! We are delighted to have your interest in our program. Attached is the Family Handbook, a guide to help you better understand our program, what we're about, how to contact us, and much more. We ask that you please **read the handbook in its entirety, sign the last page** (also included in your child's registration packet) **and return it to us before your child starts the program.** If you have any questions or concerns regarding any aspect of the handbook or our program, please reach out to us at the contact information below.

We look forward to getting to know you and your child.

Sincerely,

*The NMSU School for Young Children Staff*

### **Center Information**

*New Mexico State University School for Young Children*

*License #:*

*Located in Myrna's Children's Village*

*4101 Sam Steel*

*Las Cruces, NM 88003*

*Buildings A300, 600, 700 & C200, 300*

<b>Class/Person</b>	<b>Building #</b>	<b>Phone #</b>
SFYC Director	C300	646-3513
SFYC Admin. Assistant	C300	646-1651
Bobcats (Early PreK)	A700	646-3206
Wolves (PreK)	A600	646-4183
Roadrunners (PreK)	A300	646-4176
Turtles (Toddler Child Care)	C200	646-2430

*\*The NMSU School for Young Children staff, who are employees of NMSU, follow the NMSU calendar. We will let you know in advance of any exceptions\**



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**New Mexico State University**

## *Vision Statement*

An inclusive, multicultural environment fostering growth and exploration by building connections through inquiry and creativity.

## *Mission Statement*

Our mission at NMSU School for Young Children is to provide a welcoming, supportive, enriching, and stimulating environment where children, families, staff, and NMSU/DACC practicum students will be able to engage in a wide range of experiences to create and maintain a thoughtful, caring, and diverse community and promote continuous learning within and outside our program.

## *Goals*

The goals of the NMSU SFYC are to provide a quality early childhood program in order to:

- Meet the developmental needs of young children and their families.
- Form stable, nurturing relationships with all children and families in the program.
- Support families in their role as their child's first teacher.
- Have our teachers serve as mentors for the next generation of educators.
- Serve as a model program for the community.
- Be a model program and an impactful steppingstone to promote continued self-sustained inquiry for staff, families, and children alike.
- Promote inclusivity to foster our multicultural and multilingual environment for all.
- Create a safe space to protect people of all colors, races, ages, genders, sexual orientations, and other diverse cultures.



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# Lab School Description

## *We Are a Laboratory School!*

One reason we are able to provide such fantastic adult to child ratios is because of the many university students who are part of our staff or are doing practicum hours in our classroom through our collaboration with NMSU and DACC. We are proud to serve as a model program for future educators and the community, and mentoring future teachers is part of the important work of our laboratory school. Please know that student interns are carefully supervised by permanent staff and are never alone with children.

The NMSU School for Young Children serves as educational training and research laboratory for New Mexico State University in several different ways.

- 1) The primary way is in our service as a site for field experience courses for the School of Teacher Preparation and Leadership and Doña Ana Community College. In addition, we sometimes host individuals from other disciplines and colleges as well as student teacher candidates.
- 2) Families, students and faculty may observe the classroom environments for their own learning purposes
- 3) Students may enter the classroom to observe, conduct appropriate activities with groups of children, or to serve as teacher's aides.
- 4) Students and faculty may conduct research by observing or video or audio taping the experiences of the children.

In all cases laboratory procedures have been established for the safety of the children. All data collected is kept **confidential** and will be used for educational purposes only. Staff and volunteers must understand and sign a confidentiality statement and process a background check through our NM ECECD Department. Families will always be notified in writing of any research projects to be conducted in the classroom and sign a separate permission form for this research. The privacy and confidentiality of the children and their families is of primary concern.

Families who enroll understand and accept the tenets of a laboratory school to enroll their children in the NMSU SFYC.



# Program Philosophy

NMSU SFYC is based on a **child-centered** learning approach, inspired by the practices of the municipal infant/toddler centers of Reggio Emilia, Italy. This approach inspires us to view each child, family and teacher as strong and ready to learn. Our practice is rooted in the belief that an effective program is possible only through the partnership and collaboration between teachers, families and children. We strive to create a beautiful and comfortable environment where children, teachers and families are given the guidance and freedom to fulfill their potential.

We believe in respecting and supporting the **natural stages** of the child's physical, cognitive, social and emotional **development**. Addressing the needs and rights of the whole child, while also focusing on targeted areas of learning. Children develop new concepts of self and the world around them through play and participation in short- and long-term projects. Teachers are learning facilitators, rather than directors. They are responsible for creating environments that expose children to many learning possibilities in the course of their time in our program. Children's interests are at the heart of all learning.

The NMSU SFYC prides itself upon the implementation of **anti-bias curriculum**. We serve a wide diversity of people and know that our teachings need to reflect this as well. We seek to select materials that represent a variety of different peoples, including but not limited to people of different races, colors, spoken languages, genders, LGBTQIA+ affiliations, cultures, and more to showcase and learn respect for all people. We seek resources from students, families, and the community that showcase these identities to include in our curriculum. Finally, because we are University affiliated and serve children and families of many religious backgrounds, we pledge to maintain religious neutrality. *Religious and secular holidays are honored as family traditions and are not celebrated at the NMSU SFYC but may be included in our curriculum by families.*

Family involvement stays at the core of our program and is based upon mutual respect and clear communication between families and teachers. We make every effort to communicate with families regarding their child's activities in the NMSU SFYC. We believe it is in the best interest of every child for us to work as closely as possible with their family.



# 1. Day to Day Operations

## *1.1 Daily Schedule*

The NMSU School for Young Children (SFYC) operates typically between the hours of 8:00 AM and 5:30 PM for the Toddler classroom and 8:00 AM and 3:30 for the PreK classrooms. During this time, children will be participating in outdoor time, nap time, snack/mealtime, and play/learning time.

### *1.1a Outdoor time*

We believe at NMSU SFYC that outdoor time is crucial for young children to stretch, play, practice social skills, and connect with their peers in a more meaningful way. SFYC offers many different types of playground equipment, from swings to a playground set, to tricycles for children to ride around on. This is a time when children are free to take the lead in their pursuits of investigation without the interruption of adults. Children will not be brought outside if the temperature with wind chill is brought below 32°F.

### *1.1b Rest time*

Rest time occurs just after lunch is over. After a very active morning, many children need a nap or rest time to calm down and recharge their bodies. However, we acknowledge that not all children sleep. Non-napping children will be given 15-30 minutes of rest with quiet activities, while teachers help those who want to sleep and then head to the studio or outdoors to engage in activities. Napping students will be given 60 to 90 minutes (about 1 and a half hours) of nap time. Cots are provided for children to sleep on; however, we ask that you provide sheets/cot covers/blankets/stuffed animals/etc. for comfort while your child is sleeping. **Please do not bring anything oversize, as we have limited storage space!** We will return the cot supplies at the end of every week to be washed over the weekend and be brought back every Monday. Each child will be assigned a cot for everyday use, and every cot will be sanitized every day after use.

## ***1.2 What to Bring***

Prior to your child's first day, the items you should bring with you are:

- 1) Enrollment forms, Immunizations forms, and Birth Certificate if they aren't already turned in to the administration. **We cannot care for your child without these.**
- 2) Child Care Center Physician Report if not already turned in.
- 3) First tuition payment (if applicable)

On your child's first day, the items you should bring are:

- 1) Reusable Water bottle with child's name written in sharpie **on the bottle.**
- 2) Crib sheet, small pillow, small blankets (see *Nap time* above)
- 3) At least one complete change of clothes (see *Dress*)
- 4) Diapers and Wipes (if needed)

### ***1.2a Toys from Home***

We recognize that for many children, their time at our program will be their first time spending extended amounts of time away from their home, and in a group learning setting. This can be a very overwhelming experience for many children. Because of this, we are happy to let your child bring a comfort/transition object from home (stuffed animal, blanket, etc.) to make the transition easier on your child. We request limiting this object to **ONE** item and mark it, when possible, with your child's initials, as it can be hard for staff to keep track of all the children's comfort objects. We would also like to make you aware that toys can/do break, so to be prepared for this in any way possible. We also ask that you **please refrain from this comfort object being any toy gun, or any type of war/violence toy** as these can make some children very uncomfortable.

## ***1.3 Dress***

We recommend comfortable, easily washable clothing for sending your child to school so they can stay active and participate in potentially messy activities (painting, water-play, etc.) without worrying about clothing.

Footwear is also very important for children's safety while on the playground and inside. We recommend you send your children in athletic shoes with laces or hook and loop (Velcro™) shoes for access to all play opportunities. If your child wants to wear other

shoes, please be sure they are appropriate to be worn for play activities or provide alternate footwear.

We also recommend labeling your child's sweaters, coats, hats, gloves, etc. with their initials to prevent any confusion. A second set of clothing (brought on the child's first day) should always be available in case of any accident, potty or otherwise. Even children who don't have potty accidents may need access to dry clothes for other reasons.

### ***1.4 Arrival and Departure***

When picking up and dropping off your child, we request that you use the loading zone located on Williams, or the 10-minute drop off/pick up zone parking spaces within Myrna's Children's Village. When you arrive with your child, please escort them all the way to their respective classroom, complete the parent sign in process, and greet one of the teachers before leaving the premises. For safety reasons, children are not allowed to enter or exit their classrooms unattended. We are also not allowed to let your child be picked up by anyone who isn't an immediate family member or on the authorized pick-up list for your child. If there is anyone who is NEVER allowed to pick up your child, please be sure to let us know.

### ***1.5 Meals and Snacks***

The NMSU School for Young Children serves breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack each day, provided through the Las Cruces Public Schools (LCPS) Kitchen. During mealtimes, staff members and teachers will sit down with students to assist them with eating, as well as facilitate community building within the classroom. Children will be guided and encouraged to become more independent eaters through learning to be responsible for their own clean up and hand washing.

One of the ways that make it possible for us to provide meals to children is through receiving funds from the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), a federally funded program dedicated to providing food services to child and adult care programs. As part of our agreement with CACFP, an Income Eligibility Application form must be filled out, even if you do not qualify for free/reduced meals as stated by the form. This form asks some basic questions about house size and income to place you into one of three categories (Free, Reduced, or Paid) to determine the amount of funding NMSU SFYC receives. This

form is treated as a **confidential form**, meaning no information will be released that you put on the form.

All children will be offered the same meal (unless an allergy or food preference is stated) at no separate charge without physical segregation, or any other discriminatory action against any child because of race, skin tone, age, nationality, orientation, gender, disability, or ability to pay. If your child requires a substitution, documentation will be needed to accommodate their needs.

## ***1.6 Environment Safety***

NMSU SFYC prides itself on creating a safe environment for your child to learn, play and grow. Safety is achieved through trusting, safe relationships with our teachers, staff, and other families all committed to children's safety.

Our program always meets, and consistently exceeds state licensing minimum requirements for staff to child ratios, which are noted below:

**Toddlers (Turtles)- 1:6**

**Early Pre-K (Bobcats)- 1:8**

**Pre-K (Roadrunner, Wolves, and Amistad)- 1:10**

All staff have been trained/certified in CPR, First Aid, Food Safety, and abuse/neglect reporting, as well as state mandated background checked to ensure the safest environment possible for you and your children.

## ***1.7 Curriculum***

NMSU SFYC follows an integrated curriculum that is based on the practices of the Reggio Emilia approach, building a foundation to inform practices of authentically observing children and connecting those observations to the New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines. The root of the word curriculum is the Latin *currere*, or racecourse—a fixed course for runners (or students) to follow. Unlike many curricula to which you may have been exposed, the curriculum at the NMSU SFYC is not based on a prescribed schedule, theme, or fixed course.

We practice a reflective, Authentic Observation, Documentation, Collection, and Planning process (AODCP) helps us enhance our pedagogical practices to engage scaffolding for children and communication with ourselves and families. This process works to inform



and strengthen our ability to know where children's strengths are and how to help them learn new skills.

We strive to provide an inspiring learning experience that focuses on:

- Creating beautiful and provocative environments for children to explore and question.
- Respecting children's capability, many communicative "languages," and powers of communication, collaboration and design of their own learning experience.
- Re-imagining the teacher's role as nurturer, guide, facilitator and researcher.
- Inspiring community through art, family and community collaboration, and providing materials that will make children's interests and experimentations become a reality.

## ***1.8 Field Trips***

We occasionally will take walking trips or trips on the Roadrunner Transit shuttle bus through campus to visit areas of interest on campus, or just go for a nature walk to get the children outdoors. We will always let you know ahead of time about these field trips and where they will be. If you prefer that your child does not take part in these trips, please be sure to let the teachers know so appropriate accommodations can be made ahead of time. We will also always let you know if we are planning a trip off campus and will give you a separate permission form to sign. We highly encourage you to volunteer and take part in these field trips, as it helps to have more hands, and can make the experience even more special for your child.



## 2. General Information

### *2.1 Eligibility*

Eligibility varies depending on which classroom you are planning on enrolling your child in. Please see the following guidelines for each of our classrooms.

#### *2.1a Turtles*

If your child is enrolling in the Turtles program, they must be between 2 years old by September 1 of that academic year. This is a tuition-based program which requires an enrollment fee and monthly tuition to be collected over the course of the school year.

#### *2.1b Bobcats*

If your child is enrolling in the Bobcats program, they must turn 3 by September 1<sup>st</sup> of that school year.

#### *2.1c Roadrunner/Wolves*

If your child is to enroll in the Roadrunner or Wolves program, they must meet the age requirement of turning 3 or 4 by September 1<sup>st</sup> of that school year. All entering 4-year-olds must be planning on attending a kindergarten program the following year.

#### *2.1d PreK for Advanced Learners*

This program targets children who do not meet the cut off age for kindergarten of September 1<sup>st</sup> of the enrollment year. Children entering the PreK for Advanced Learners through SFYC must meet the requirement of turning age 5 by March 1 of the school year enrolled and participate in a screening process through the Las Cruces Public Schools. This is also a tuition-based program which collects tuition on a monthly basis.

#### *2.1e Potty training*

NMSU SFYC does NOT require children to be potty trained before attending school with us. However, if your child is currently wearing diapers, we ask you to provide

at least one package of wipes and diapers on the first day of school and replace them as they run out.

Also, if your child is currently potty training, please inform us so we can help them handle toileting in the best way possible to minimize any accidents from occurring, and so we stay consistent with what is happening at home. Consistency is key in making the transition from diapers to toileting as smooth as possible. We will do everything we can to support your child and family through the process and refer you to our *Professional Learning Library* for more resources if you are interested.

## ***2.2 How to Enroll & Prioritization***

NMSU SFYC is always accepting waitlist applications both for the current year, and for the following year (depending upon the time of enrollment). To get on the waitlist, parents are required to fill out the waitlist form, or scan the QR Code/ go to link provided by the Director, Admin. Assistant, or other SFYC staff member, to fill out a Microsoft form to get on the waitlist. All information is kept confidential through this process. If/when your child is accepted into the program, you will be contacted and asked to follow the steps below:

- 1) Provide an original of your child's current immunization records.
- 2) Provide the child's original birth certificate.
- 3) Fill out and sign enrollment packet (given by SFYC Staff member).
- 4) (Toddler & Advance PreK only) Pay a non-refundable enrollment fee.
- 5) (After-care only) Pay for the first month's tuition.

NMSU SFYC does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, ethnicity, national origin, color, disability, religion, or sexual orientation for decisions regarding the enrollment process.

NMSU SFYC prioritizes enrollment first and foremost by collaborating with our community partners. Children who have a referral for need of services from a service provider such as La Cinica de Familia, Apprendamos, MECA, etc. will be automatically added to our wait list for the following year's enrollment. During our enrollment process each child on our waitlist is awarded points regarding the following criteria:

- Children experiencing homelessness.

- Children in foster care
- Continuation of services priority
- Children living within a Title I school zone.
- Lack of prior experience with childcare or access to high-quality childcare.
- Affiliation to NMSU.

Enrollment begins once this process is completed to ensure all children and families have been accounted for.

### ***2.3 Attendance***

It is very helpful for us if you call, text, or email us as early as possible to tell us if your child will be absent or late for that day. This helps teachers know what to expect for the day and how to plan accordingly. We appreciate as much notice as possible but understand if an emergency arises. Due to our funding agreements with the state of New Mexico, if we have not heard from you, are unable to contact you, and your child misses more than 10 consecutive days of school, we are required to disenroll them from the program and offer the space to another child on our wait list.

### ***2.4 Guidance Policy***

The SFYC staff strives to create an environment where children feel respected, learn proper social skills, develop self-control, and be encouraged to make constructive, positive choices. We view guidance as a set of positive, constructive methods for encouraging your child's growth towards self-management. Our teachers work with children to encourage them to make good choices in a variety of social scenarios. They do this to maintain a positive environment while still managing the classroom setting.

As we support children who are in the learning process of self-regulation and appropriate skills, our teacher responses are positive, supportive, and focused on future learning. We encourage children to learn about their world while staying safe and making the world safe for others. Children are able to explore objects and their many creative uses, within safe limits.

Biting and other aggressive behaviors (hitting, pulling hair, etc.) can occur in groups of toddlers and preschoolers as they adjust to being in a classroom setting. At this stage, children are still learning about social skills and don't always have the words to express



how they feel, which can lead to frustration. These factors and others, at home or at school can cause a child to act out and exhibit aggressive behaviors. We would like to assure you that our staff will do everything to stop this before it happens, find the cause of these behaviors, and help your child learn more constructive ways of dealing with their frustration or confusion. In this spirit, **the NMSU SFYC does not remove children from the program for exhibiting these aggressive behaviors that fall within the limits of typical for their developmental stage.** However, if the behavior intensifies, we do reserve the right to call you and/or refer you to other services to provide additional assistance in learning to regulate their behavior.

If you have any questions about how we handle aggressive behavior in our program, please do not hesitate to contact us so we can answer your questions.

## ***2.5 Payment & Fees***

For the Turtles and Advance PreK Programs we charge a \$50.00 enrollment fee and a monthly tuition rate that is subject to change annually. Tuition is calculated in a yearly total and then charged over a period of ten months. This is to allow families to have an extended time to pay tuition instead of requiring it all at once. **Tuition as well as Aftercare Fees are due by the 3rd of each month.** You will receive an invoice at the end of the month that will serve as your receipt from the previous month paid. **A \$10 late fee will be charged after the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month if written alternate payment arrangements have not been made.** If you need an alternate payment schedule, please, make arrangements with the Assistant Director/Director. If tuition has not been received by the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month, your child will not be able to attend classes until we receive payment from you. If a family is over one month behind in their tuition payments and no alternate payment schedule has been made, the NMSU SFYC will have to dis-enroll your child. If dis-enrolled, you are still responsible for the tuition balance owed. In the event your regular tuition fees are paid in part or in full through a third party (i.e. ECECD or an employee sponsored plan), the above dis-enrollment policies still apply.

**Please be aware that your tuition payment secures your child's space in the program. The entire tuition amount is due each month, regardless of your child's attendance.** The only exception to this is if the program needs to close unexpectedly for 2 or more days

while the rest of NMSU is still open. In that case, your invoice will reflect that your tuition has been pro-rated for that month and a credit applied to your next month's tuition.

### ***2.5a Payment Methods***

The NMSU SFYC accepts checks and money orders only. No cash will be accepted. Please make checks and money orders payable to NMSU SFYC. You will receive an invoice record of payments made each month. Please save these in case there is ever a question about your payment.

### ***2.5b Child Care Services Bureau Contracts***

The NMSU SFYC accepts contracts with the NM Child Care Services Bureau to cover all or part of a family's tuition for the program. However, the SFYC does not accept part-time enrollment for full day classrooms. If you receive childcare assistance from the NM Child Care Services Bureau, you are only responsible for any co-payment as determined by CCSB.

In the event a family has a contract with the NM Child Care Services Bureau that is not renewed, it is the family's responsibility to notify the director to sign a new SFYC tuition contract. If the CCSB contract is not renewed and the family does not make appropriate arrangements with the director, the family is responsible for paying tuition owed.

### ***2.5c Late Pick-up Fee***

The hours of operations for the Turtles classroom are from 8:00 AM to 5:30 PM, Monday through Thursday and 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM on Fridays. PreK classes, operation time is from 8:00 AM to 3:30 PM Monday through Thursday and 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Aftercare hours are Monday through Thursday 3:30 to 5:30 and no aftercare will be provided on Fridays. Your child must be picked up **before** the applicable closing time of your child's program. If your child is picked up after that time, the following **late fees will be charged on your next invoice, or an invoice will be created for the late fee in programs that are free of tuition.** Chronic tardy pick-ups may result in NMSU SFYC disenrolling your child from the program (see 2.6 Withdrawal/Disenrollment). If you are running late to pick up your child, please give our teachers a courtesy call so they are aware, but this does not exempt you from the fees. The late pick-up fees are as follows:

Late fees:



- First 15 minutes after closing..... \$10
- Every minute thereafter..... \$1/minute

## ***2.6 Withdrawal/Disenrollment***

If it is necessary to withdraw your child from the NMSU SFYC for any reason, you must let the Director know with **at least two weeks' notice in writing**. This allows us time to be able to contact other families in order to fill the spot in the classroom. If notice is not given, two-week tuition will be charged to you.

The NMSU SFYC is fully committed to supporting and working with/for a wide variety of children and families. Although we are not allowed to disenroll children for behavior deemed typical for their stages of development, there may be some cases in which families and our program are not a good fit. If it becomes apparent that the fit between your family and our program is not a good one, and steps to remedy the situation are proven to be unfruitful, then NMSU SFYC reserves the right to disenroll your child. If we disenroll your child for any reason you will be given at least two weeks' notice to make alternate care arrangements. If you have already paid your tuition beyond two weeks' notice, you will be refunded that money in full.

## ***2.7 Recruitment:***

We have many avenues for recruiting new students to our program. While a lot of our previous recruitment has happened by word of mouth, we now have a new way to advertise our program through a state-funded website builder called WonderSchool™. This new platform has allowed us to broaden our reach to offer our program to even more people.

While our program is on a first come first serve basis, we do have systems in place to prioritize children who: are experiencing homelessness, are in foster care, in need of continuing services, are living in a Title 1 zone, lack prior childcare experience, don't have access to childcare, and are affiliated with NMSU. Enrollment does not begin until all of these procedures have been completed to ensure equitable outcomes. Please see the section above on how to enroll.

## ***2.8 Birthdays/Holidays/Other Celebrations***

### ***2.8a Birthdays***

NMSU SFYC recognizes that birthdays are a very special day in a child's life. Because of this, we are more than happy to help you celebrate your child's birthday with the class. Please talk to our teachers in advance to see what traditions that class typically follows.

If you would like to provide a treat to celebrate with, you are more than welcome to do so. However, due to our contract with CACFP, the requirements state that it can only be a pre-purchased treat (pre-packaged cupcakes, etc.), or ingredients purchased to make in our commercial kitchens by the teachers.

### ***2.8b Holidays/Other Celebrations***

At SFYC, we serve children from many different cultural backgrounds. Because of this, we de-emphasize holidays typically associated with secular religion. Depending on the classroom, children/teachers will celebrate Fall Festival, and Friendship Day in the spring. But these are the only holidays endorsed by SFYC.

Sometimes, we are asked to celebrate holidays with other organizations that are of importance to them. As an example, every year we celebrate Halloween with the College of HEST at NMSU. In this case, we will email you ahead of time and if you wish for your child not to attend, you may let our teachers know or keep your child at home for the day. This does not mean the NMSU SFYC is emphasizing these holidays.

# 3. Health and Safety

## 3.1 Illness

NMSU SFYC is dedicated to promoting good health policies for our children, teachers, and staff. Due to this, communication about illness at home and school is important. We will always let you know if your child has been exposed to a communicable disease while at our program. It is also imperative that you let us know as soon as possible if your child has contracted a communicable disease such as COVID (see below), chicken pox, lice, ringworm, pink eye, flu, etc. so we can notify the rest of our staff and parents.

### 3.1a When to keep your child home

Please keep your child home if they experience:

- A fever within the last 24 hours (100°F). **Fever dropping because of medication does not count.**
- Vomited or had diarrhea in the last 24 hours
- A cold that is less than two days present
- Heavy nasal discharge
- A congested cough
- Symptoms of other communicable illnesses

Your child may return to the program if they have been **symptom free for 24 hours without medication or a doctor's note when applicable.** If you are unsure if your child is ready/able to return, please contact us or your child's physician for advice.

### 3.1b If your child becomes ill at school

If your child becomes ill at school, we will call you to come pick up your child and take them home. We will first try to contact parents/guardians, however if we are unable to reach them, we will contact the emergency contacts to come pick up your child.

### 3.1c COVID-19

NMSU SFYC understands that COVID-19 has had a large impact on our nation and community. Because of that, SFYC has a COVID-19 guideline outlining procedures

and protocols in case COVID-19 reoccurs. All families will be given a copy of these guidelines and required to sign an acknowledgment.

### ***3.2 Sunscreen, Lotion, Topical Medication***

If you would like your child to wear sunscreen during their time at the program, we recommend that you apply it first at home or before your child enters the SFYC for the day. If you would like us to reapply the sunscreen for added protection, please bring us a bottle of the sunscreen of your choice, labeled with your student's name, and sign the Sunscreen, Lotions, and Topical Medication form included in the registration packet.

If your child has any other forms of lotion or topical medications (rash creams, etc.) please note it in the Sunscreen, Lotion, and Topical Medication form, sign it, and bring the bottle labeled with your child's name just as you would sunscreen.

### ***3.3 Emergencies***

Emergencies can range from severe weather to having to evacuate the premises.

#### ***3.3a Snow Days***

Although we live in Las Cruces, we do sometimes experience extreme weather that can make it dangerous to come to school. In this case, NMSU SFYC staff will contact you through email, text or phone call. If NMSU Main Campus, or LCPS has a snow delay or snow day, we will also have a snow day. If the weather turns bad after your child is dropped off at school, we will call you and/or your child's emergency contacts to come pick them up.

#### ***3.3b Fire Drills/ Evacuations***

We have other types of emergencies that may require us to evacuate the SFYC Campus. In this case, we will follow the steps below:

- 1) If we are required to evacuate Myrna's Children's Village, we will walk to the Aggie Express store on Williams and Stanley Drive (646-7788).
- 2) If we are required to evacuate the Aggie Express, we will walk to NMSU O'Donnell Hall Center.
- 3) If we are required to evacuate the NMSU campus, NMSU emergency services will provide transportation to the Las Cruces Convention Center at 689 E. University Ave.



- 4) If we are required to evacuate the Las Cruces Convention Center, NMSU emergency services will provide transportation to an alternate location that they deem necessary.
- 5) Once children and staff have been safely evacuated families will be called when emergency services have deemed it safe.

We also have monthly fire drills that are implemented so children and staff are ready for any kind of unpredictable scenario. We know it can be scary to send your child off to school but know that we are taking every precaution necessary to keep you, and your child, safe.

### ***3.3c Lockdown or Hostage***

Staff are trained yearly in the procedures of many different types of emergencies. In the case of a lockdown or hostage procedure, NMSU SFYC staff is prepared to keep your children safe to the best of their ability. Procedures include the following:

- 1) Lock down the entire classroom to restrict entry.
- 2) Move children to a safe place.
- 3) Call emergency services.
- 4) When given the “all clear”, notify families.
- 5) Send formal notification to all families and staff from administrative staff.

### ***3.4 Missing Child Policy***

At SFYC, we do everything in our power to maintain knowledge of your child’s whereabouts at all times during our program day. However, in case of any emergency following the realization of a missing child, SFYC will follow the steps below.

- 1) The NMSU SFYC staff will know the whereabouts of all enrolled children during the official service hours. Ratios will be maintained during all search procedures.
- 2) In case of any absence of 5 minutes without contact with a child, the staff will ask the other children the whereabouts of the missing child.
- 3) Staff will signal a search for the child with all available staff present and notify the director.

- 4) The immediate area will be searched and a search of all outdoor areas in the immediate vicinity.
- 5) If the child is not located within 10 minutes, campus police will be notified, and the continuation of the search will be expanded to include surrounding offices, buildings and outdoor areas.

### ***3.5 Confidentiality***

All information about your child, from their name to any other information you may provide us, shall be kept confidential to anyone outside of your child's teaching team and the program administration. Confidentiality is of the utmost importance to us here at NMSU SFYC.

### ***3.6 Abuse & Neglect***

NMSU SFYC staff are mandatory reporters of child abuse. This means that staff is required to report children/parents to the state of New Mexico if there are any signs or suspicions of child abuse occurring in or outside of the program premises. All staff are trained to recognize signs of abuse and neglect, and in how to handle reporting yearly.





# 4. Family and Community Building

## *4.1 How to be Involved*

Families are the heart of our program and successful collaboration with families is key to harmony in our classroom communities. We value the culture, languages and talents of families and encourage them to share these with the program. Family members, including extended family members and siblings with family supervision, are always welcome with the open-door policy (see below) of the NMSU SFYC. We offer many opportunities to connect with the community we have created, and hope you take advantage of this opportunity when you are able. Family surveys are available each year to express satisfaction and dissatisfaction with our program so we can continue to learn how to meet your needs and the needs of your children.

## *4.2 Open Door Policy/Volunteering*

NMSU SFYC implements an open-door policy. We encourage parents/guardians and extended family to come visit us and see how our classrooms operate. Families are more than welcome, and even encouraged, to volunteer and help us with field trips/walks both on and off NMSU campus, spending time in the classroom, facilitating activities or any other type of volunteering that you deem a good fit for you. These are fun ways to stay engaged in your child's learning and build relationships with the classroom. Volunteers of our program are allowed to participate/observe classrooms for a limited amount of time each week (5 hours) before needing to obtain a background check through the NMECED department. If you plan to spend more than 5 hours in a classroom per week, please see our program director on how to obtain a background check.

## *4.3 Home Visits*

Each school year, the teachers of your child's class will conduct a home visit to build trust with your child through getting to know you, your family background, linguistic preferences, and the hopes and dreams of and for your child. The teachers will also conduct/help you conduct the appropriate ASQ form for your child (see *Evaluations & Referrals*).

## ***4.4 Conferences***

Family conferences are a requirement for our program offered to each family three times a year. During this time teachers share their observations and experiences of your child's growth and development and hear from families how they can better fit the needs of you and your child in collaboration. Our teachers will also be available to meet with you upon request to discuss any other pertinent matters involving your child's life, or the NMSU SFYC program. If at any time, there are additional concerns you may also schedule a meeting with the program director or assistant director.

## ***4.5 Engagement***

Each month, NMSU SFYC classroom's hold a family night where all families are invited to participate. Parents, families, teachers, siblings, and anyone who would like to join can come together and get to know each other. This is another great way for us to build our community in collaboration with one another. We also offer monthly outdoor events in our local community in an effort to provide families with additional resources and time together. If you or your family would like to sponsor an event, please speak with your classroom teacher so that they can coordinate with you and our program!

## ***4.6 Evaluations & Referrals***

Each year, the NMSU SFYC teachers will assist families in filling out two of the Ages & Stages Questionnaire to determine if your child is on a typical development path, and how to intervene if they deviate too far. Interventions may include referrals to various sources to provide help to your child. It is important that parents or guardians fill out these forms, as you are their primary caregiver and may see things we don't. All information from these evaluations will be kept private and used to provide additional support to your child if needed. Results will be shared in the state database if your child is in a PreK classroom, which is a confidential site. If your child is in need of additional support or a referral, teachers will work with you to help guide the process. In addition, if your child is already receiving services from an outside program, it is part of our policy to ensure that our teachers are aware of the support your child is being given. We ask that you bring them into the IEP/IFSP process so that your child receives consistent feedback and support while spending time in our classrooms. Please see our IEP/IFSP form for you to sign and agree

to provide any information that is needed to support your child's growth and development while in our care.

### ***4.7 Wellness Checks & Screenings***

As part of our program requirements and enrollment process, NMSU SFYC has all families fill out a permission form stating when a child's last physical, eye exam, dental exam etc. were completed. If your child has not been able to obtain these screenings/exams, we will provide resources where you can obtain them or work with you and your child to schedule needed screenings.

### ***4.8 Liability***

Due to the extent of our state provided license, we are required to inform you that our license does not hold any powers of liability or accident insurance to cover any such costs.

### ***4.9 Inclusion Policy***

#### **NMSU POLICY STATEMENT ON DISCRIMINATION AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION**

New Mexico State University (NMSU) is dedicated to providing equal opportunities in areas of employment and academics without regard to age, ancestry, color, disability, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, serious medical condition, sex, sexual orientation, spousal affiliation or protected veteran status as outlined in federal and state anti-discrimination statutes. As a federal contractor, NMSU's affirmative action program also supports this effort. Further, NMSU is committed to providing a place of work and learning free of discrimination and harassment on the basis of a person's age, ancestry, color, disability, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, serious medical condition, sex, protected veteran status, sexual orientation, or spousal affiliation. Where a violation of policy is found to have occurred, NMSU will act to stop the conduct, to prevent its recurrence, to remedy its effects, and to discipline those responsible in accordance with the *NMSU Policy Manual* and/or *NMSU Student Code of Conduct*.

**Sex Discrimination/Sexual Harassment Policy:** NMSU is committed to providing a place of work and learning free of sexual misconduct which includes sexual harassment and sexual violence. Engaging in sexual behavior that is inappropriate, unwanted and



unsolicited is a violation of NMSU policy. Where sexual harassment is found to have occurred, NMSU will act to address the reported conduct, to prevent its recurrence, to remedy its effects, and to discipline those responsible in accordance with the *NMSU Policy Manual* and/or *NMSU Student Code of Conduct*.

***At the School for Young Children, we pledge to follow NMSU in its Discrimination and Affirmative Action Plan in an effort to stay true to our philosophy, vision, mission and goals, and create a healthy, safe, and welcoming environment for you and your child.***

