

Parent Manual

Policy and Guideline Review

Revised January 2026



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University of Nebraska–Lincoln Children’s Center

This manual is intended to be a guide for parents about the University of Nebraska–Lincoln Children’s Center (UNL Children’s Center) policies. Many of the policies and guidelines described are requirements of the University of Nebraska and/or Health and Human Services–State of Nebraska Department of Education. A copy of licensing requirements is available for review in the Director’s office.

Telephone Numbers:

Main Line/Front Desk- Jessica Finke	472-2009
Director -Samia Moreland	472-2101
Team Lead Office –	472-8750
Assistant Directors – Alaina (of Administration) and Melissa (of Programing)	472-2115
Fax	472-2001

Notes:



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Welcome!

Greetings and welcome to the UNL Children's Center! We are pleased that you have chosen our program to provide care for your child. Choosing the "right" child care environment for your child is often a frustrating, even frightening, experience. There are so many things to consider—location, cost, number of children attending the center, and most importantly, the quality of the program.

As a parent, you can play an extremely important role in making the UNL Children's Center a quality program that is responsive to the needs of your child and yourself.

We encourage you to:

- Maintain open, direct communication with UNL Children's Center staff. We can always make time to answer questions or listen to concerns.
- Actively participate on the UNL Children's Center Parent Circle, as well as in fundraising projects and social gatherings.
- Carefully read the guidelines and policies in this manual, and fulfill the expectations and responsibilities of the parents as they are outlined.

We must work together to achieve our mutual goal of providing the highest quality of care possible for your child!

Mission of the Center

We provide a safe and educational environment for children and families. We value learning, all communities, and nurturing the whole child.

Philosophy Statement

"Play needs to be cherished and encouraged, for in their play children reveal their future minds".

—Friedrich Froebel (1887)

Children's Center Philosophy of Learning

We recognize each child as a unique individual with unlimited potential. We value the rights of each child as a member of our community, validating their thoughts, ideas, and beliefs. We encourage children to exercise their right to make a choice in situations that don't endanger themselves or others, focusing on safety, property, and rights.

We believe that children learn best through play and hands on experiences provided throughout each day. We value social and emotional learning; defined as the ability to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show



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empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. We know that social and emotional learning is the foundation of all other learning so we focus our energy on developing each child's social and emotional competence.

We believe in the value of the family-school connection and know that parents are a child's first and best teacher. We strive to work collaboratively with family members to ensure the success of their child in early childhood and beyond.

Program Funding

Financial support for this organization comes from the parent's tuition paid directly to the center.

Tuition

Tuition is based upon enrollment. Since the space is reserved for the child, tuition is set whether or not he/she attends. Tuition is also assessed to your account even though the UNL Children's Center may be closed for official holidays. Tuition will not be assessed during the last week of the year when the University is closed for Holiday Break.

Parents that are currently employed with the University may choose one of two options; employees have the option to deduct payments from their paycheck, or make payments via an automatic withdraw from their bank account each week. When a family is not employed through the University, tuition will be paid through an automatic payment from a checking account each week.

UNL Children's Center requires a 4 week notice to be given in writing if and when you decide to remove your child from the Center.

Tuition and Payment Policy

At UNL Children's Center, we are committed to providing high-quality early childhood education in a safe, nurturing environment. To ensure we are able to continue offering this level of care, it is essential that tuition payments are made on time and in full.

Please review the following updated tuition and payment policy, effective July 1, 2025:

1. Weekly Tuition Payment Requirement

- Tuition is due in full by the first day of care each week (typically Monday).
- Children may not attend care unless tuition for that week has been paid in full.



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- If tuition is unpaid by the start of the week, your child will not be admitted to care until the full payment is received.
- If a child does not attend care and no tuition is paid for two consecutive weeks, the family will be considered to have forfeited their spot, and the space may be offered to another family on the waitlist unless prior arrangements have been made with administration.
- For families utilizing payroll deduction, tuition will be automatically deducted from your paycheck at the end of each month when tuition is pulled. Please ensure that funds are available and that you are keeping track of your payroll schedule.

2. Backpay and Delinquent Accounts

- Families with any outstanding balance (backpay) must be on an active payment plan that includes:
 - Weekly tuition plus a portion of the backpay.
 - Payment plans must be approved by administration and consistently followed.

3. Late Fee Policy

- As of July 1, 2025, any backpay balance not paid in full by that date will incur a \$20 weekly late fee until the balance is resolved.
- Late fees do not reduce the amount of backpay owed. They are separate and will be allocated to the UNL Children's Center operating budget.
- These fees are non-negotiable and non-refundable.

4. Failure to Comply with Payment Agreements

- If a family fails to follow their payment plan or falls behind on weekly tuition, their child's enrollment may be suspended or terminated.
- Re-enrollment will only be considered once the account is in good standing and approved by the Center Director.

5. Communication and Support

We understand that families may face financial difficulties. If you are struggling with payments, please reach out to the Center Director to discuss your options before falling behind. We are committed to working with families to create reasonable solutions whenever possible.



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Thank you for your cooperation and support in helping us maintain a quality learning environment for all children.

Staff-to-Child Ratios

State Licensing Regulations require that childcare centers be staffed at the following staff-to-child ratios:

Birth to 18 months
18 months to 3 years
3 to 4 years old
4 to 5 years old

1 teacher: 4 children
1 teacher: 6 children
1 teacher: 10 children
1 teacher: 12 children

We strive to staff the UNL Children's Center at ratios lower than those listed above, to ensure children receive individual attention during the day. We maintain ratios within each classroom. We also have volunteers and practicum students periodically at our center. They are not included in the staff-to-child ratios, but rather as extra staff.

Parking

The UNL Children's Center has a specific area for dropping off and picking up. Please try to use this space for 20 minutes or less. If you plan to stay longer in the lot, please notify the front desk and you will be given a windshield permit. This will let UNL Parking Department know that you are eligible to be there and prevents you from being towed at your expense. This area is not to be used for a full day of parking.

Operating Schedule

The UNL Children's Center is open 51 weeks out of the year. Closings include:

- National Holidays
 - New Year's Day
 - Martin Luther King Jr. Day
 - Memorial Day
 - Fourth of July
 - Labor Day
 - Thanksgiving (Thursday & Friday)
 - Christmas Day
- Additional Closings
 - Holiday Break (time period between Christmas and New Year)



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- 4 Training Days per year (these are days that full-time staff are present for training while children are not present)
- Official closings declared by the Chancellor during inclement weather

An annual calendar noting the UNL Children's Center closing dates is available at the front desk.

The UNL Children's Center is licensed by the State of Nebraska to operate 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday.

It is best for a parent or guardian to call the UNL Children's Center to let the staff know of a later than normal pick up time. If the staff at the UNL Children's Center has not heard from the parent or guardian, they will call the parent or guardian to check on their whereabouts. If UNL Children's Center staff is unable to reach the parents, guardians, or their written emergency contacts by 6:30 p.m., the UNL police will be notified.

Authorized Pick Up

The UNL Children's Center considers child pickup an important process. Upon enrolling at the UNL Children's Center, you are required to submit 2 emergency contacts who are authorized to pick up your child. If someone other than yourself will pick up your child, please inform your child's teacher and the front desk. This can be done via email or by writing a note at our front desk. It is also our policy to obtain a picture ID verifying identity before releasing your child to anyone. To protect your child, UNL Children's Center staff will not release your child to anyone without proper authorization.

In the event of shared custody or co-parenting arrangements a court decree outlining the ordered custody agreement will be requested for your child's file. It is the guardian's responsibility to provide an updated court decree in the event of a change.

The UNL Children's Center also requires that parents sign their child in and out daily:

- At the reception desk, you are asked to sign your child in upon arrival and out upon departure.

This process is important as this information is used for various reasons:

- To keep track of the number of children present
- As a quick reference to assess which children are/are not present on a particular day
- During fire and tornado drills and/or other emergency procedures, to be sure all children are accounted for.
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) paperwork

Any parent/guardian who smells of alcohol, controlled substance or acts unusual will be asked to notify an authorized contact to pick up their child. If the child is taken out of the



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center against the better judgment of the staff, the center will notify the police of the situation.

In the event that a child is not picked up and out of the building by 6 p.m., a late fee of a minimum of \$20.00 per child will be charged. In addition to this, \$10.00 per minute per child will be assessed to the parent or guardian of the child/children. We will determine this by the time shown on the clock in/out computer when you leave the UNL Children's Center building. Regardless of the time children are checked out on Procure, parents and children need to be out of the building by 6:00pm due to licensing agreement or charges will accrue. The late fee payment will need to be paid fully in cash by the next business day in order to receive care that day.

Parent Visitation

The UNL Children's Center has an "open door" policy and encourages parents to visit their child/children during the day. The Children's Center does ask that parents consider the child's routine and be mindful of the time of day they come. If you have any questions about convenient times to visit, please ask your child's teachers.

Illness

It is the policy of the UNL Children's Center to keep contagious diseases and illness to a minimum. We require children to wash their hands upon entry of their classroom to decrease the spread of germs. Children will not be allowed to attend the UNL Children's Center if they exhibit any of the following symptoms:

- Pink Eye
- Fever
- Diarrhea (repeated)
- Nausea/vomiting
- Significant skin eruptions (i.e., chicken pox, etc.)
- Head Lice or nits

If any of the above symptoms appear during the day, UNL Children's Center staff will isolate the child from other children and staff as much as possible. The Teachers or Directors will make the final determination whether or not the parent needs to be called—keeping in mind the well-being of the sick child as well as the other children and staff at the UNL Children's Center. If called, a parent must pick up the child within 1 hour of the first attempt of contact. If we are unable to get in touch with parents or if the child is not picked up within 1 hour, the UNL Children's Center will contact the child's emergency contacts.

It is a subjective decision about whether or not a low-grade temperature is due only to teething. For that reason, the UNL Children's Center policy is that if the child's temperature (by the ear) is 101 degrees, the parent will be called to pick up the child.



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We realize that it is difficult for a parent to take time off from school or work to stay with a sick child, but this policy is for the protection of everyone at the Children's Center and must be strictly enforced.

We also recognize that the UNL Children's Center has a responsibility to keep the spread of illness to a minimum. We take the following steps to ensure this:

- Disinfect toys & equipment
- Require documentation of immunizations prior to a child's enrollment, with annual updates
- Post notices for parents if any communicable disease occurs at the UNL Children's Center

We feel that these precautions will assist in safe-guarding your child from illness. We ask that you cooperate with us by keeping ill children at home and by immediately picking up children who exhibit symptoms of illness at the UNL Children's Center. Here is a sample copy of our Illness Exclusion form:

Illness Exclusion Form



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_____ is being sent home from care because they have exhibited the following symptoms. They may return to care after being symptom free for a period of 24 hours (without the use of a fever reducer) or when a doctor's note stating the symptoms are not contagious is received by the center.

_____ Vomiting

- 2 or more times in the past 24 hours
- 1 time with an accompanying symptom **and** behavior change or other illness symptoms (e.g., sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea)

_____ Rash

- With fever or behavior change, until a physician has determined the illness is not contagious.
- Chickenpox (varicella), until all lesions have dried or crusted.
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment has been started.
- Mouth sores with drooling.
- Head lice or ringworm, until after the first treatment.

_____ Conjunctivitis

_____ Diarrhea

- 2 or more times in the past 24 hours.
- Diapered children whose stool is not contained in the diaper and toilet-trained children with diarrhea causing "accidents".

_____ **Fever:** Temperature above 101 degrees taken in the ear **and** behavior change or other illness symptoms (e.g., sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea)

Temperature_____ Taken By_____ Time_____

Temperature_____ Taken By_____ Time_____

Temperature_____ Taken By_____ Time_____

_____ **Not feeling well:** Any child who requires more care than can be provided by staff in a group setting or a child who is unable to participate in regular daily activities.

Teacher Signature: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

*Policy written in conjunction with Lincoln Lancaster County Health Department guidelines.



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Medication

Prescription medicine must be in the original container with the child's name and dosage clearly stated. Over-the-counter medicine must also be in the original container, labeled with the child's name, and the dosage for the child's age listed on the bottle. A note from your doctor stating an appropriate dosage must accompany any over-the-counter medicine that does not have a dosage listed for the child's age. Medicine forms need to be filled out in each child's room. Please make sure to give the medicine to a full time Teacher so they can store it in the appropriate lock box. We will administer only those doses of medicine that cannot be given at home. For example, if your child was prescribed three doses per day, we will administer one of the doses during the day. Also, in the case of medicine needing to be given every 4-6 hours, we will not administer until the child has been in our care for 3.5 hours to ensure the correct amount of time has passed.

Late Pick up Policy

In the event that a child is not out of the building by 6 p.m., a late fee will be assessed to the parent or guardian of the child/children. Late fees are as follows: \$20.00 per child, with an addition of \$10.00 per minute per child thereafter. If the centers hours are altered, the late fee will apply to the new closing time.

Late fees will need to be paid, in cash or applied to your account, before returning for care. We are licensed to operate from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. This means that your child needs to be picked up and out of the building by 6 p.m. or the late fee will apply.

Accidents

The UNL Children's Center strives to maintain a safe and healthy environment for the children, but accidents do happen. They may arise from children arguing over a toy, or from a child trying to do something that his/her motor skills are not quite ready to do. Also, particularly in the younger groups, biting may occur.

When an accident or injury does occur, the staff immediately assesses the first aid that is needed and responds appropriately. If it is a minor bump or scrape, soap and water, a cold compress, Band-Aid, and gentle care will usually take care of the problem. If your child has such an accident during the day, an accident report form is filled out by the staff and is given to you when you come to pick him/her up. The form summarizes the events leading up to the accident and describes what care was given.

Each Teacher is trained in giving first aid. Any injury requiring more treatment than that described above will be reported immediately to the child's parent or emergency contact. It is important to keep your emergency contact list up-to-date.



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If emergency medical personnel are needed, support staff will call 911 and immediate first aid measures, such as CPR, will be administered. Examples of such situations include severe bleeding, unconsciousness, compound fractures, head trauma, or spinal injuries. After calling 911, the parents will be contacted. The emergency contact person will be called if the parents are unavailable.

Emergency Preparedness

The UNL Children's Center conducts several drills throughout the year. These drills are carried out to help children, families and staff become aware of what to do in the event of an emergency. Below you will see the following drills and how often each drill is carried out.

- Evacuation are carried out monthly.
- Shelter Drills are carried out monthly between March and October.
- Secure Drills are carried out every other month, opposite of lockdown drills.
- Lockdown Drills are carried out every other month, opposite of secure drills.
- Evacuations to site A/B are carried out each semester.
 - In the event of an evacuation, children and staff will evacuate to one of two sites.
 - Site A- Facilities Building, located across the street.
 - Site B- Bob Devaney Center, 1600 Court St.

Cultural Awareness

An important element in the development of a child's self-esteem is an awareness and sense of pride in her/his cultural or ethnic heritage. As educators and caregivers of young children, we encourage a pluralistic outlook—an appreciation for one another and the differences that make each of us unique.

Of course, children need to know how people are alike. We share the commonality of basic needs for food, love, and sleep. However, our celebrations, the kinds of food we eat, our beliefs, and the way we do things may differ at the UNL Children's Center. We try to help children value this diversity and take pride in the unique characteristics that make each of us special. One way we show our diversity is with what we call a "This Is Our World" map; which shows where families in our center are from around the world.

Just as we try to avoid ethnic or cultural stereotypes, we are thoughtful about representation overall. At the UNL Children's Center, we:

- Encourage children to explore creative play in all areas.
- Use role concepts presented in books, finger plays, songs, etc. for discussion.
- Try to be sensitive to subtle yet influential gender role stereotyping in all experiences the children have.



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UNL Children's Center staff are intentional about how people and activities are represented. We try to introduce the children to the freedom of enjoying a wide range of roles from which they are able to choose.

Toilet Training

The UNL Children's Center works with parents in assisting their children to learn the procedures of toilet training. It is first introduced in the Pre-Toddler room (1 year to 2 years) by having children go to the restroom with their diapers. They are taught to take off their own diaper, sit on a toilet (though they may not go), put their diapers back on, and wash their hands. Hopefully they will start to go and the process will go smoothly. We strive to make this a very positive time for the children.

Discipline Policy

The goal of the UNL Children's Center discipline policy is to help children develop self-control and a sense of responsibility for their own actions. Children are respected as individuals and need the opportunity to make decisions concerning their behavior. We strive to turn inappropriate behaviors into teachable moments.

The first part of the discipline policy focuses on preventative discipline. This means avoiding potential problems before they materialize. Some methods we use include:

- Cueing appropriate behavior—We discuss rules and expectations with the children.
- Positive reinforcement—This includes giving praise for appropriate behavior “we catch them being good”.
- Positive redirection—We divert the child's attention and offer positive alternatives.
- Modeling—This includes showing appropriate behavior by our own actions.
- Positive verbal interaction—Examples include using “do” instead of “don't” when giving directions, and giving children choices, but only those we are willing to accept.

The second part of the discipline policy is after-the-fact-discipline. We recognize that not all unacceptable behavior can be prevented. When a child has acted inappropriately, we intervene and focus on the behavior. No matter what a child has done, that child is never told that he/she is bad or naughty, but that his/her actions are not allowed. Some examples of this type of discipline are:

- Logical Consequences—For example, the consequences for throwing a toy would be losing the chance to play with that toy. We always let the child know what the consequences are for a particular action, and then follow through.



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- Remove the Child—This is not a “punishment” but a quiet time in another part of the room or away from the group to allow the child to regain his/her composure.

Nutrition Program

We are very proud of the nutrition program that the UNL Children's Center has to offer. Meals, which meet or exceed USDA nutritional guidelines, are provided. Menus are planned on a five-week cycle. All food is provided by the Children's Center. Vegetarian meals are available upon request. Please visit our website at www.childcare.unl.edu for a current five week menu.

Parent(s) of infants may provide formula, breast milk or any foods they would like us to serve. Mothers wishing to nurse their infants at the Children's Center are welcome to do so, either in the nursery or our lactation room. The center will provide one type of iron fortified formula.

Menus are posted daily and substitutions are made for the children with food restrictions. Each classroom serves breakfast, lunch, and snacks at regular times. You are welcome to eat lunch with your child/children, in this case, please let the cook or office by 9 a.m. to ensure a correct lunch count.

Please let the teachers know about any food allergies that your child might have. In accordance with USDA, we must have a written note from a doctor when a child cannot have a food item offered by the program.

Parent Teacher Conferences

The Teachers in each room will provide times for conferences with parents at least twice a year. You will be given the opportunity to meet personally or by telephone, whichever is more convenient. Also, you are encouraged to schedule additional conferences whenever you have questions or concerns; you do not have to wait for the bi-annual conference.

Field Trips

From time to time, rooms will go on field trips to local sites such as museums, parks, businesses, etc. These trips are used to provide additional educational experiences for the children. Field trips are chosen with the developmental age group in mind. Occasionally, a nominal fee is needed to defray the costs of the trips. If this is the case, parents will be notified well in advance of the scheduled trip so they can plan accordingly.



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The Infant and Toddler rooms take walks which are considered "field trips". These are usually within close proximity of the Children's Center.

Summer field trips are typically taken by preschoolers. Parents are welcome to accompany their children on field trips. If you wish to do so, please contact your child's Teachers.

Photography

Upon enrollment, parents will be given a release to give permission for photos of their child to be taken. Only those children whose parents have signed a release may be photographed. The UNL Children's Center can only regulate the taking of photos within the Children's Center building and by UNL Children's Center staff. The UNL Children's Center attempts to prevent all taking of photos by third parties while in the playground or on field trips. If parents wish to take pictures of their child's classmates, they must first talk to the Directors and the Teachers of the room. The parent wanting to take the pictures must also obtain permission from each child's parents.

Birthdays & Holidays

The UNL Children's Center makes children feel special on their birthdays and you are encouraged to join us. The Children's Center requests that you do not bring homemade, edible treats for the children. We will instead, provide a birthday snack for every child's birthday. The classroom often allows the child to choose the special snack and they may make it in their classroom as a cooking/baking experience.

Instead of treats, you could bring small, inexpensive gifts for your child's classmates (such as stickers or crayons), or a gift that can be shared by all the children in your child's room (such as a book or tape).

The UNL Children's Center does not "celebrate" holidays due to the population of families we serve. We recognize that not all families may celebrate the same holiday nor celebrate in the same manner. Our teachers help the children understand the reason some people may celebrate holidays. This helps children/families grow to respect the rights and customs of other cultures.

Also, we often invite families to come and share a tradition or family time with the children. All families are welcome to do this. If you are interested in sharing about your family's cultural beliefs please talk with your child's teacher.

Room Transition

The Teachers in your child's room will advise you as your child approaches the time for advancement to the next room. This will usually occur 2-3 weeks prior to the actual



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move-up or transition date. During this time, your child will spend time in the new room a few hours each day to become familiar with the atmosphere, environment, staff, procedures, and routines. An attempt will be made by the Teachers of your child's new room to schedule a conference and provide you with information about the routine in the next room so you know what to expect. You will also read and sign a family transition form which is a plan for your child to get to know the classroom they are moving into.

Research Projects

From time to time, University faculty or students ask to conduct research projects involving the children at the UNL Children's Center. It is our policy to notify parents in advance of any such studies, including a description of the research. We will not allow a child to be included in a research project without prior parental permission.

UNL Children's Center Winter Weather Policy

In the event of inclement weather, the UNL Children's Center will communicate with families and staff on their decision to remain open, have a 10:00 am start, or close. The UNL Children's Center will follow the guidance of Lincoln Public Schools and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus.

In the event of a district closure at LPS due to winter weather and road conditions, the UNL Children's Center will change its hours of operation to 10:00am-6:00pm. In the event of a University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus closure, the UNL Children's Center will be closed, based on the recommendation from the university's inclement weather team.

If LPS closes due to winter weather and road conditions, the UNL Children's Center will automatically go to a late start of 10:00 am. If the University of Nebraska- Lincoln closes its campus after the LPS district closure, the UNL Children's Center will follow the guidance of UNL and remain closed for the day.

In the event of the center opening with normal operating hours and needing to close early due to weather conditions, the center will notify families of the closure and expect families to arrive for pick up within an hour of the notification. Any children who are not picked up within the hour, will be charged a late fee and alternative emergency contacts will be called.

A decision to close or shift to a late start will be made by 6:00 am the morning of. Communication of the closure or late start will be made via email from the center.

****The UNL Children's Center will have normal operating hours of 7:00am-6:00 pm if LPS closes due to the cold.**



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Body Safety at UNL Children's Center

In early development years, children are naturally curious about their bodies and the world around them, and it's crucial to understand the difference between developmentally appropriate and inappropriate sexual behaviors. Here's a breakdown to help guide that determination:

1. Developmentally Appropriate Sexual Behaviors in PreK (Ages 3–5)

These behaviors are typically normal and part of healthy development:

- Simple curiosity: Topics including, but not limited to:
 - Difference of body anatomy
 - Where babies come from
 - Asking why parents kiss or why people kiss in general
- Naming body parts: Using words that are age appropriate. Examples of this kind of language includes, but is not limited to the following examples: penis, vagina, flower, cookie, wee-wee, etc.
- Occasional exploration: Such as touching their own genitals during potty training or rest time.
- Mimicking adult roles: Pretending to be a parent, kissing dolls, or holding hands in play.
- Modesty begins: Some may start to want privacy when changing or using the bathroom.

These behaviors are generally non-secretive, spontaneous, and stop with gentle redirection or education. Teachers should not answer a question they are unsure about or uncomfortable about regarding sexual curious behaviors, while also not being dismissive. If unsure how to answer, a responsive example could be; "That is a great question and I'm not sure. I am going to ask someone who would know and let you know after they speak with me."

2. Concerning or Inappropriate Sexual Behaviors in PreK (Ages 3–5)

These may suggest a child has been exposed to adult sexual content (through media, environment, or abuse):

- Detailed knowledge of sexual acts: Talking about or pretending sexual behaviors beyond their developmental age (i.e. Masturbatory behaviors for sexual gratification purposes, oral sex, any comments or questions related to the act of intercourse, etc.).
- Frequent sexual language: Using words that are explicit and not age appropriate. Examples of this kind of language includes, but is not limited to the following examples: dick, hardon, pussy, etc.
- Sexualized behavior that is aggressive, coercive, or secretive: For example, forcing another child to touch or be touched.



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- Persistent problematic sexual behaviors that don’t stop after redirection or become more intense.
- Sexual behavior in public settings or with peers, especially if it mimics adult sexual behavior.

How to Assess and Respond

- Look at context: Is the behavior playful curiosity or intense, secretive, and repeated?
- Consider exposure: Has the child had access to inappropriate media or conversations at home?
- Watch for emotional cues: Does the child seem anxious, overly sexualized, or withdrawn?
- Observe patterns: A single instance of inappropriate language may not be cause for alarm—but repeated concerning and problematic sexual behaviors should be documented.

What to Do if You’re Concerned

- Gently redirect and set clear boundaries.
- Document what you observe: Be objective—record what was said or done, not assumptions.
- Consult with your supervisor or a school counselor.
- Follow mandated reporting laws: If behavior suggests abuse or exploitation.

Below you will find a clear breakdown of yellow flag and red flag behaviors related to potential sexual assault in an early childhood classroom, specifically when it comes to child-to-child interactions. These behaviors are organized based on developmental norms and safety concerns, keeping in mind that young children are naturally curious, but boundaries and context matter greatly.

Yellow Flag Behaviors (Inappropriate for Age)

These behaviors may indicate a need for closer observation, education on boundaries, and guidance, but do not automatically suggest abuse or assault.

- Excessive interest in private parts (e.g., talking about or trying to look at other’s bodies regularly).
- Inappropriate touching during play (e.g., touching genitals over or under clothes while pretending to be doctors or parents).
- Repetitive boundary testing even after being told “no” (e.g., continuing to hug or touch after a peer expresses discomfort).
- Imitating adult sexual behavior without context (e.g., kissing with tongue, or acting out intercourse using dolls or during play).
- Sexual language that seems beyond developmental level but is used sporadically or curiously.
- Touching other’s private parts out of curiosity, especially if it happens only once or in an exploratory setting.



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These behaviors can sometimes stem from exposure to inappropriate media or lack of education about body autonomy. While they may not be inherently abusive, they need immediate redirection and adult guidance.

Red Flag Behaviors (Strong indicators of potential sexual abuse or witness to aggressive sexual behavior)

These behaviors are developmentally inappropriate, harmful, and may indicate a child has been exposed to sexual content or behaviors that is harmful to their development or are victims of sexual abuse.

- Coercing or forcing another child into sexual contact or behavior, even in “play.”
- Persistent problematic sexual behaviors despite repeated redirection and intervention.
- Touching others' private parts with aggression or intent, over or under clothing.
- Asking other peers to touch their private parts.
- Engaging in masturbatory behaviors with the intent for sexual purposes.
- Engaging or attempting to engage in simulated intercourse with another child.
- Demanding secrecy about behaviors or saying things like “don't tell.”
- Using threats, manipulation, or bribery when engaging in sexual behaviors with peers.
- Sexual behavior that mirrors adult sexual acts or abuse, especially if it's detailed and repeated.

These behaviors signal the need for immediate intervention, protection of all children involved, and mandatory reporting. They often suggest exposure to sexual abuse, trauma, or significant behavioral health issues.

Suggestions & Concerns

If you have any suggestions or concerns about any aspect of the operation of the UNL Children's Center, there are several places you can go. The staff at the UNL Children's Center is always eager to visit with you about your child's care. If you do not feel the response is satisfactory, you may visit with the Directors.



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Parent Manual

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the terms and conditions regarding the parent manual and policies for the UNL Children's Center.

Print Name

Date

Signature

Print Name

Date

Signature



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