COLLEGE OF SOUTHERN IDAHO

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION LAB
FAMILY HANDBOOK 2011/2012
WELCOME!

CSI EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION LAB

This handbook contains information about our mission, philosophy, and our program. Family members are always welcome to visit the classroom at any time. We encourage your participation, observation, comments, questions, and suggestions.

The Early Childhood Education Lab at CSI has three related missions/purposes:

- **Provide Developmentally Appropriate Early Childhood Experiences for Young Children**
- **Provide a Learning Lab for CSI Early Childhood Education Students**
- **Provide a Collaborative and Educational Environment for Families**

**What is a Learning Lab?**
Many two and four year colleges and universities with early childhood programs provide settings where students in the field learn about and practice teaching, curriculum development, and program management. Often, college programs arrange for a combination of “Field” experiences in community early childhood settings, and “Lab” experiences in facilities on or near campus and supervised by college faculty. The Early Childhood Education Lab is a setting where faculty can provide the kind of “guided apprenticeship” necessary for students who are learning to take active roles in the education and care of young children. Under the supervision of experienced faculty and other mentoring teachers, students gradually assume responsibility for all classroom activities and management.

CSI Early Childhood Education students are required to complete 2-4 semesters of practicum experience, depending on the program in which they are enrolled. In the Early Childhood Education Lab, beginning and advanced students work in teams on assigned days to provide consistency for children. This arrangement also ensures that students gain experience in “Co-Teaching,” a common arrangement in the early childhood field. Early Childhood Education students spend time in the preschool and toddler lab programs. They may also spend time in a community early childhood setting.

Both components of our Early Childhood Education Lab program are based on the belief that learners of all ages should have meaningful, interesting, and challenging experiences. Child and adult development and learning are fostered by *active participation* of the learner. Both components are described in the sections that follow.

The College of Southern Idaho Early Childhood Education Lab is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Early childhood programs accredited by NAEYC have voluntarily undergone a comprehensive process of internal self-study, invited external professionals to review and verify compliance with the Criteria for High-Quality Early Childhood Programs, and been found to be in substantial compliance with the Criteria.

The Early Childhood Education Lab does not discriminate against race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. The College of Southern Idaho is an equal opportunity provider and employer.
Philosophy

The College of Southern Idaho Early Childhood Education Program is designed to meet the developmental needs of young children eighteen months through five years. It provides experiences that enrich and enhance each child’s cognitive, language, social, emotional, physical, and creative development. Within the program’s daily schedule, each child has opportunities to create, explore the environment, learn problem-solving techniques, personal interaction skills, and learn concepts through firsthand experiences. Children are not expected to perform beyond their abilities or to meet a set of standards based on “speeding up” learning or “hurrying” skill acquisition. Children develop a positive self-concept through a balance of self-and teacher-directed activities. Staff members serve as positive role models and provide care and education that is supportive, nurturing, warm, and responsive to each child’s individual needs. We respect families as the primary and most important providers of care, nurturing, and education. We believe parents and teachers are partners in children’s care and education.

Program Goals

The program goals include the following:

😊 Supporting Growth & Development
Children will have numerous opportunities and support to develop skills across the learning domains. These include: physical, cognitive, social, and emotional learning domains.

😊 Learning through Play and Exploration
There is a large body of research that indicates that children learn best through play and exploration. Play is a powerful tool children use to construct knowledge. Play is open—it does not have preset rules. Children experiment, investigate, and explore the world around them as they play. Overly structured environments not only do not provide children with opportunities to learn, but have also been shown to dampen children’s enthusiasm for learning and cause undue stress.

😊 Fostering Independence and Choice
Life-long learning skills begin in the early childhood years. Children should have many opportunities to make choices about what activities they will do, how they will accomplish the goals they set, and even about how they will handle their emotions and social interactions. At the same time, children need consistent, reasonable expectations for their behaviors and actions that ensure that everyone in the classroom is safe, secure, and comfortable.

😊 Involving Families and Community
Family members are children’s first and most important teachers. In developmentally appropriate programs, teachers and family members are partners in providing the best experiences for children. It is also important to draw on the experiences of the families and the characteristics of the community in order to provide culturally relevant experiences for all children in the program.

😊 Utilizing Developmentally Appropriate Practice
The Early Childhood Field has established professional standards based on knowledge of child development that guide teachers in their practice. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has published a position statement outlining the principles and guidelines of these professional standards (Bredekamp, 2009). Some of the key elements of Developmentally Appropriate Practice are outlined below. Additional information is available in the Early Childhood Education Lab.
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION LAB INFORMATION

Days/Hours and Closures
Preschool sessions: 4 Day-Tuesday through Friday, 8:30-11:30 (OR) 2 Day-Tuesday and Thursday, 1:00-4:00
Toddler session: Tuesday and Thursday, 8:30-10:30 (OR) Wednesday and Friday, 8:30-10:30

The Early Childhood Education Lab follows the calendar of the College of Southern Idaho. When CSI classes are not in session, the Labs are closed (Holidays, Spring Break, bad-weather days). In addition, the Labs are closed during the first week of CSI classes in the Fall and Spring for Student Teacher Orientation and during Finals week each semester. The CSI schedule is also closely aligned with the Twin Falls School District schedule. However, the Labs will usually be open on school district in-service days, conference days, etc. Weather closures may occur due to severe weather and the Preschool/Toddler Labs will be closed if CSI is closed. Local television and radio stations will broadcast any closures due to severe weather.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall 2011</th>
<th>Spring 2012</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/22– 8/26- Term Begins–ECE Labs closed for Student Teacher Orientation</td>
<td>1/17– 1/20- Term Begins– ECE Labs closed for Student Teacher Orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/30- Children begin in labs on assigned days and times</td>
<td>1/24- Children begin in labs on assigned days and times</td>
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<td>9/5- LABOR DAY HOLIDAY</td>
<td>2/20- PRESIDENTS DAY HOLIDAY</td>
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<td>10/10- COLUMBUS DAY HOLIDAY</td>
<td>3/26– 3/30- SPRING BREAK-Lab Closed</td>
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<td>11/11- VETERANS DAY HOLIDAY- Lab Closed</td>
<td>Last day of School-week of May 1st -exact day depends on session</td>
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<td>11/21- 11/25 THANKSGIVING BREAK-Lab Closed</td>
<td>5/7-5/10- LAB CLOSED DURING FINALS WEEK SUMMER BREAK</td>
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<td>12/12-12/15 LAB CLOSED DURING FINALS WEEK HOLIDAY BREAK THROUGH JANUARY 24</td>
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Lab Locations and Phone Numbers
Preschool (Morning Session)–246 Falls Avenue  Lab Number: 732-6884
Lab Facilitator-Jennifer Patterson  Office: 732-6884  Cell: 320-0320  Email: ipatterson@csi.edu

Preschool (Afternoon Session)–246 Falls Avenue  Lab Number: 732-6857
Lab Facilitator-Aubrie McArthur  Office: 732-6857  Home: Email: amcarthur@csi.edu

Toddler – Head Start, 296 Falls Ave. W  Lab Number: 734-5550-ask for Aubrie McArthur at CSI’s Toddler Lab
Lab Facilitator-Aubrie McArthur  Office: 732-6857  Home: Email: amcarthur@csi.edu

Fees and Payment
Registration fee $50.00 per year, per child
Preschool - $500.00 per semester for 4 day session or $250.00 per semester for 2 day session
Toddler - $175.00 per semester.

Should you choose to make monthly (four each semester) payments, fees should be paid by the first of the month Sept/Oct/Nov/Dec (fall) and Jan/Feb/Mar/April (spring), unless an alternative payment schedule has been arranged. An online payment system is now in place and will be available to families who have an email address. You may also pay by check at the preschool lab or through the business office. Please write account # 3844-4650-G8C on your check. You must pay a portion of the lab fees within the first week of school beginning in the Fall and Spring semesters. Non-payment will result in termination of your child’s enrollment in the program.

Arrival/Departure
- **Preschool**: Parking is available in the front of the building.
- **Toddler**: Parking is available on the side of the Head Start building.
- This is a great time for family members, teachers, and children to discuss happenings in the classroom, discuss the needs of children and families and to get to know one another through informal conversations.
- Family members are expected to accompany children into the building and into the classroom, and to come into the classroom to pick children up. Please complete the sign-in/out sheet on arrival and departure.
- CSI students and faculty are usually in the building a little before class starts, but we may not be in the classroom. This is our time to prepare for the day - make copies, collect supplies, etc. It is important that you be prompt in picking your child up since CSI students and faculty have classes.
- Persons other than yourself responsible for bringing or picking up your child must be noted on the enrollment form. For safety reasons, we cannot let children leave the Lab with persons not listed or without authorization from the parents. Please inform all authorized persons that the teachers will request photo identification.
Children’s Clothing

😄 Dress for Mess: Our program for children is active, hands-on, and oftentimes messy! Children will participate in a range of sensory experiences and outdoor play, so please send your child in appropriate, comfortable “play” clothing. We will get messy!

😄 Dress for the Weather: Most days, unless the weather is really bad, we will spend at least a brief time outdoors to get some fresh air, to experience all the seasons, and to learn about our outdoor environment. Please dress your children in cool or warm clothing, along with hats, mittens, and boots when necessary. Please bring shoes or slippers for indoor wear during boot weather.

😄 Change of Dress:
Please send or keep a change of clothes in your child’s cubby. Extra clothes are available in the children’s bathroom but children often feel most comfortable in their own clothing.

Accidents and Emergencies
Our environment is planned according to recognized early childhood health and safety standards. We also have a high adult/child ratio since there will be several practicum students, along with a faculty member during each lab session. These features ensure that children have a safe place to play and learn. However, children typically have accidents in the course of their play! If children get a bump, scrape, cut or bruise, parents will receive an accident report when you pick up your child from school. For more serious incidents, we will follow the emergency procedures as outlined on your enrollment form. If there is a family emergency while your child is in the Preschool or Toddler Lab please contact the Lab Facilitator for assistance.

Diapering/Toileting
Since the toddlers and preschoolers are at various developmental levels, they will be at various stages in terms of bathroom routines. There is a wide range of “normal” rates at which children are ready to be independent. Children who prefer to use the restroom independently will be observed by sound and will be checked on, when needed. Please help us be consistent with what you are doing at home by letting us know how you would like us to support you and your child at school. You should bring the necessary supplies for your child (diapers, pull-ups, wet wipes, training pants, change of clothes, etc.) and place them in your child’s cubby.

Supervision
Children are supervised by sight and by sound throughout the day; this includes both indoor and outdoor activities. Adequate supervision is provided and maintained at all times to ensure the safety of all children. Supervision allows an opportunity for practicum students and staff to monitor the room and the activities of children, while ensuring materials and activities are safe, engaging, and meet the needs of all children. Supervision also allows for observation of children and guides teaching practices by recognizing children’s needs and interests.

Appropriate Child Guidance
Learning to solve problems in a constructive way is a vital part of each day. Appropriate self discipline for each child is one of the goals of our program. Guidance or “discipline” is as much about encouraging positive, pro-social behaviors in children as it is about “controlling” behaviors that are disruptive or dangerous. As a basis for decision-making in the classroom, adults use the guidelines in Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood (Bredekamp, 2009), and when possible, we implement the “Problem Solving Approach to Social Conflict” that is part of the High/Scope Curriculum. See appendix D.
Health & Wellness

The health and wellness of children, parents, and teachers is important! We address Health & Wellness in several ways:

- **Snacks** - Snacks will have a minimum of two of the food groups in the food guide pyramid. Student teachers are often taking the Health & Safety class at the same time they are student teaching, so they are learning about nutritious, fun snacks for children. Foods that pose a choking hazard, such as popcorn, nuts, hard pretzels, hot dogs, spoonfuls of peanut butter, whole grapes, and raw carrots will not be served to children under the age of four. We use family style service, which allows children an opportunity to set the table and serve themselves. We use child size serving bowls, utensils, and pitchers. Adults eat with children to provide a model and to engage children in meaningful conversations. Snack time is a time that children can develop fine-motor skills, language skills, self-help skills, counting skills, etc. If you would like to bring a food item to share with the class it must be commercially prepared. Thank you!

- **Education** – We typically spend several weeks of our curriculum discussing ways to stay healthy and safe. We discuss: nutrition, exercise, safety, and preventing the spread of germs. On each of the snack trays there is a colorful Food Guide Pyramid (see appendix A) that children use to discuss the foods they are eating.

- **Hand washing** - Hand washing is a disease prevention practice which must be done correctly and at appropriate times to be effective. Young children are reminded to wash their hands at appropriate times and monitored to ensure the use of correct hand washing steps to ensure effectiveness. All diapered children, regardless of age, have their hands washed after diapering. Moistened towelettes are NOT recommended for routine hand washing practice and are only used in the absence of soap and water on a field trip or for the quick removal of dirt or sticky substances. See Appendix C for a complete list of appropriate hand washing times.

- We follow several procedures in the Early Childhood Education Lab to keep our environment clean and sanitary, and to prevent the spread of illness. However, a common problem in group settings for young children is contact with infectious or communicable diseases. Children who have not been in group care before may have less resistance to common illnesses. We follow the recommendations for disease control outlined in Healthy Young Children (2002), to help prevent illness from spreading.

**Immunizations/Doctor visits** – It is required by state law that all children have their immunizations up to date before entering group programs. You will be required to provide immunization records and keep your child’s shots up to date, or sign a waiver if you have chosen not to have your child immunized. We encourage families to have children seen by a doctor annually to maintain good health and monitor development.

**Illness and infection** - To protect the health of your child and others, we ask that you keep your child home when ill. Should your child become ill while in the Lab, we will contact you by telephone. Contrary to popular belief and practice, only a few illnesses require the exclusion of sick children to ensure protection of other children and staff. With most other illnesses, children have either already exposed others before becoming obviously ill (e.g., colds), or are not contagious at some point after beginning treatment (e.g., strep throat, conjunctivitis, head lice, etc.) The waiting periods after the onset of treatment vary with the disease. We will use the criteria in Appendix B to determine when necessary to exclude children from the Lab. If your child has been exposed to a communicable disease, please keep your child home and notify us. Cases of communicable disease will be reported to families in the Lab; a letter will be sent home to all families which will include information about the disease and what you can do to protect your child.
**Medication** - Parents must sign a medication release if medication is to be given during Lab hours. Medications are kept in a locked cupboard out of reach from children. Medication must be in its original container and labeled with the child’s name, physician’s name, pharmacist, dosage, and frequency.

**Smoking** – The CSI Preschool and Toddler Labs are non-smoking facilities. We ask that smoking take place at least 20 feet away from entrances and ventilation units in accordance with Idaho State Law.

**Child Abuse** - Should CSI students or faculty suspect possible child abuse or neglect, observations and dates must be documented. Where substantiated, this documentation will require that the local family services agency be notified. Parent/Guardian(s) will be notified that a report is being made. If a CSI student, staff, or faculty is accused of abuse or neglect, they will be suspended from interactions with children until the situation is investigated. Where substantiated, this documentation will require that the local family services agency be notified. The individual will be notified that a report is being made.

**AIDS** - Decisions on the type of educational and care settings for children infected with HIV should be based on the behavior, neurological development, and physical condition of the child. The child’s physician must determine whether a child infected with HIV is well enough to attend a group program. Guidelines from the Center for Disease Control will be used to determine admittance and continued enrollment of a child with HIV.

**Disagreements with teaching staff/Grievance Procedure**

If you have any concerns or issues regarding your child or your interactions as a family member in the Toddler and/or Preschool Labs please discuss your concerns with the Lab Facilitator. We want your experience in the Lab to be positive and we value the opportunity to work with families. Should you have concerns or issues in the Toddler and/or Preschool Labs that you feel are not being resolved through typical daily communication or a conference with the Lab Facilitator, you should follow the Grievance Procedures and complete the Grievance Form in Appendix E of this handbook.
ABOUT THE CURRICULUM

We will be using the *High/Scope Early Childhood Curriculum* curriculum was developed by the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation. The High/Scope curriculum is one of the most researched and evaluated in the United States and in several countries. It highlights the key features of the curriculum.

The environment, schedule, activities, and adult-child interaction will be utilized in the following learning domains:

**Physical:**
Learning how one’s body works in relationship to self, to space, and experiences such as running, climbing, and experiences such as placing puzzle pieces, grasping, cutting.

**Social/Emotional**
Learning to separate from the family, developing independence, solving social conflicts such as taking turns, learning to make decisions, and describing relationships in the environment.

**Cognitive**
Learning to problem-solve, self-regulate, make decisions, and describing objects, and expressing feelings and ideas.

Activities are also planned to incorporate **Key Indicators** – concepts to understand:

![Diagram of High/Scope Preschool “W”](image)