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About Helen Gordon Child Development Center

"We have much to do together. Let us do it in wisdom and love and joy. Let us make this the human experience" - Gary Zukav.

Helen Gordon Child Development Center is Portland State University’s full-day children’s program. In addition to offering preschool and infant-toddler programs, the Center is a laboratory for students and faculty participating in observation, research and practicum activities in Early Childhood Education and the related fields of Elementary Education, Child and Family Studies, Psychology, Social Work, Special Education, and Speech Communication. Our goal is to provide a model program for the children and families we serve, as well as for students, faculty and community members who visit and participate. Our teachers are professionals in early childhood education and have appropriate degrees and experience. They also guide students in their work with young children and serve as mentor teachers. In addition to our professional staff, each classroom has a number of PSU student classroom assistants. Many of the students are majoring in fields such as Child and Family Studies, Education, Social Work, and Psychology. We have found that our student assistants, with their various life and educational experiences, enrich and contribute greatly to our program.

Our History

Portland State University has supported on-campus childcare for more than forty-five years. Childcare began at PSU as the result of the efforts of a small yet strong group of student mothers who staged a sit-down in the university President’s office. The fledgling program began in 1971 with thirty children in a building on SW Harrison Street. The program moved to its current location in 1973 and gradually grew to its present enrollment capacity. In 1974 the Portland State Daycare Center was renamed Helen Gordon Child Development Center in honor of the late Helen Gordon, who was a strong advocate for the early childhood community and was instrumental in bringing childcare to PSU. While there have been changes over the years in response to family needs and progress in the early childhood professional field, the program has maintained a significant presence on the University campus and within the Portland community. We are fortunate to have a spacious and home-like environment. Our historic building was constructed for children’s programs in 1928 by the Fruit and Flower Mission and is on the National Register of Historic Places. A new wing, completed in fall 2003, doubled the program’s physical space and made possible an expansion in the total enrollment and the age-ranges served. The program currently enrolls up to 176 children daily.
National Accreditation and State Quality Rating

Helen Gordon Center is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). This is a voluntary, professionally-sponsored accreditation system for early childhood centers and preschools. All accredited early childhood programs undergo a comprehensive process of internal review and program evaluation followed by an external professional assessment to verify compliance with rigorous criteria and standards of quality. Helen Gordon Center was the first program in the state of Oregon to complete the NAEYC accreditation process in 1986 when the system was initiated. In 2015 Helen Gordon Center earned a five-star rating through Oregon’s Quality Rating and Improvement System (now Spark)—a program designed to raise the quality and consistency of child care and early learning programs across the state. Early learning programs participating in Spark are evaluated on a range of elements that are essential for quality care and preparing children for kindergarten and beyond. HGCDC was among the first early learning/childcare programs in the state to participate and receive a QRIS/Spark rating. Five-star is the highest rating awarded.

University Partnerships

HGCDC collaborates with PSU’s Early Childhood Education Specialization Master’s Program. Professor Emeritus, Christine Chaillé, PhD, Will Parnell, EdD, and John Nimmo, EdD are core faculty members in Early Childhood Education on our campus. The Early Childhood faculty members coordinate the Early Childhood Master’s Program and teach classes each term as well as work with the early childhood programs across campus to offer pedagogical support and integration with the academic programs. We have an ongoing relationship with the Graduate School of Education (GSE) faculty as they come to the school and work with us on designing curriculum, documenting learning, and researching childhood and development. This relationship is fruitful; significantly impacting our innovative work in the program. We are happy to share our building space with the GSE. Early Childhood and related courses are held in a university classroom space on the third floor of HGCDC. The third floor also houses Inventing Remida Portland, a project engaging educators in developing a creative and optimistic view toward our environment and resources. Inventing Remida Portland promotes the idea that waste materials can be resources and in this space, collects, displays and offers reclaimed materials obtained from local manufacturers and community members for use by children, teachers and families.

The ASPSU Children’s Center, our campus partner program, is a short-hour childcare center located in Smith Memorial Student Union (SMSU). The Children’s Center offers term by term scheduled short-hour and full-day care. With flexible hours, 8:00AM to 6:00PM Monday-Thursday and 8:00AM to 5:30PM on Friday, this program may offer a suitable option for our part-time families seeking additional hours or for part-time care for siblings. Children aged four months to nine years are eligible for enrollment. The program is available to PSU students, faculty and staff. Call 503-725-CARE for more information. Little Vikings is another PSU childcare option for parents seeking flexible reserved and “drop in” care by the hour. For more information: http://www.littlevikings.org/.

PSU’s Resource Center for Students with Children (RCSC) is a comprehensive center designed to meets the needs of student parents. The program offers a family-friendly space on campus with many resources and events for student parents and their children. The RCSC administers the Jim Sells Child Care subsidy supporting student parents with the cost of childcare on and off campus. The RCSC office is located in the SMSU, Suite 462. Phone (503)725-9878. HGCDC, the RCSC, and The ASPSU Children’s Center work together to: provide resources and a caring community for PSU families and children, promote a family-friendly campus environment and increase the visibility of children and families on campus, and support the campus community in their study and understanding of child and family issues.
### 2018-19 HGCDC Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, September 13</td>
<td>2018-19 School Year Begins for HGC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, October 12</td>
<td>In-Service Day—HGCDC Closed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday, October 20</td>
<td>Fall HGCDC Community Pancake Breakfast</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, November 12</td>
<td>Veteran’s Day Holiday, HGCDC Closed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon-Wed, November 19-21</td>
<td>Friends &amp; Family Visiting Days</td>
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<td>Th &amp; Fri, November 22 &amp; 23</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Holiday, HGCDC Closed</td>
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<td>December 17– January 1, 2019</td>
<td>Winter Break, HGCDC Closed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, January 21</td>
<td>Dr. MLK Holiday, HGCDC Closed</td>
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<td>Monday, February 18</td>
<td>In-Service Day—HGCDC Closed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed – Fri, March 27-29</td>
<td>Spring Break, HGCDC Closed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, April 12</td>
<td>Professional Development Day, HGCDC Closed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, May 27</td>
<td>Memorial Day Holiday, HGCDC Closed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, June 18</td>
<td>HGC Garden Parade and Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed – Fri, June 19-21</td>
<td>Summer In-Service, HGCDC Closed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, June 24</td>
<td>Summer Program Begins</td>
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<td>Thursday, July 4</td>
<td>Independence Day Holiday, HGCDC Closed</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 22- September 13</td>
<td>2019 Fall In-Service, HGCDC Closed</td>
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Helen Gordon Center Staff

Program Administration and Support
Program Director: Mary Schumacher-Hoerner
Coordinator, Student Employment: Erin Burns
Infant-Toddler-Transition Coordinator: Lynn Green
Studio and Preschool Coordinators: Laure Patrick & Justine Williams
Administrative Coordinator: Joanna Goll
Inclusion Specialist: Lacey Risner
Office Specialist: Marian Tannehill
Cooks: Sean Quigley & Jess Montee
CCAMPIS Grant Specialist: Laura West

Infant-Toddler and Transition Classrooms (First Floor)

Moon Room
Emi Dyett
Marie Morris

Sun Room
Christine Bizzell
Jessica Langsam

Star Room
Margot McKirdy
Katie Iubatti

Starfish Room/Seahorse Suite
Julie Watkins
Morgan Caprio
Emily Harris
Aubri Bishop

Turtle Room
Mayumi Sekigawa
Alisa Stull

Preschool Classrooms (Second Floor)

Ladybug Room
Mariola Staines
Michelle Domingues

Grasshopper Room
Clarissa Miller
Sable Tannahill

Caterpillar Room
Chyrstal Proue
Marsha Kennell

Bumblebee Room
Jennifer Artman

Dragonfly Room
Chris Holle-Bailey
Corina McCoy

Butterfly Room
Melissa Van Bergen
Sarah Williams

Floater/Substitute Teacher: Jack McCartor

PSU Student Classroom Assistants: Each classroom has several part-time PSU student classroom assistants working throughout the day.
About Our Staff

The Helen Gordon Child Development Center has a staff of over 30 professional full-time employees and 70-100 part-time PSU student employees. One of the strengths of the program is our low rate of staff and faculty turnover. We are fortunate to be employees through the State of Oregon and to work for a University where our staff can receive benefits, a living wage, and ample staff development opportunities. Portland State University is a strong and supportive employer where staff and faculty can organize, voice opinions, and get their needs met.

Many of our Lead Teachers have been working at the Center for a number of years. Our Lead Teachers hold a Bachelor’s Degree in Child and Family Studies, Education, Psychology, or a related field of study and have a minimum of two years of experience working in a full-day child development center. Most of our Lead Teachers have also completed a Master’s Degree in Early Childhood Education or are currently pursuing this degree. These long-term, committed teachers are leaders in the early childhood field and provide modeling and mentorship both within and outside of the program. They coordinate their classroom’s overall programming as well as envision and create affirming experiences for children, families, practicum students and student employees.

Our Assistant Lead Teachers hold an A.A. Degree in Early Childhood Education or related field and are typically pursuing or have just finished a Bachelor’s Degree. Many times these teachers are hired out of the Center’s valuable pool of eager student employees and stay in the program to become Lead Teachers. These teachers receive mentorship and ongoing coaching from their Lead Teachers and Coordinators. They also bring an amazing level of commitment from their diverse and remarkable perspectives. Classroom Assistants are a wonderful addition to our staff. They are PSU student employees studying in various departments and have a range of previous experiences with children. They are here to learn about and practice our philosophy, and gain valuable experience while contributing to our program.

Our Center Director Ellie Justice holds a Master’s degree in Human Development/Early Childhood Education and the Pedagogical Liaison, Will Parnell has a Doctorate in Education Leadership: Early Childhood Education and holds a tenured faculty appointment in the Graduate School of Education. Each has many years of experience within the early childhood field. As leaders in the program, they are visionary and innovative and seek to support families and staff as they journey with young children through the primary years of school and the educational experience. They work hard to build a community of learners and bring about opportunities for constructive changes in programming. They develop and mirror the values and goals of the overall program and its relationship as a place of study within the University. They uphold the primary aim of the Center, which is to give children, staff and families the best our culture and world has to offer.

Our Program Coordinators provide specialized leadership in the Center as well as support and mentoring to the classroom teaching staff. These experienced early childhood educators coordinate Center projects and facilitate collaboration across our classrooms. Each holds responsibility for particular areas program support and administration. They also share the responsibility for hiring, training and scheduling our student classroom assistants and office and kitchen assistants. Our Studio/Preschool Program Coordinators are master
teachers who provide leadership and support within the preschool classrooms and across the school. As Studio Specialists they design and maintain a studio environment as a welcoming, inspiring space for visual and expressive arts and creative inquiry within the school community. Along with the **Infant-Toddler-Transition Coordinator**, they support and mentor the classroom teachers and provide leadership within the age group areas of the school. The **Inclusion Specialist** is an early childhood special education professional who works collaboratively with the classroom teachers at Helen Gordon Center and the Children’s Center to support individual children within the schools. Our **Student Coordinator** oversees all aspects of student employment and daily scheduling and contributes to the daily program operations and leadership. The **Administrative Coordinator** manages business affairs and compliance, program enrollment and tuition billing, and coordinates the Center’s fund-raising and professional development initiatives.

Additionally, the program thrives in part due to the contributions of other important staff members. Our **Office Specialist** supports our front office and the administrative aspects of the program to keep things running efficiently. She greets families and visitors as they enter the building and assists parents in getting their needs met and questions answered. Our two talented and hard-working **Cooks** prepare nutritious breakfasts, lunches and afternoon snacks for the children. They create a weekly menu for the children that includes vegetarian meal options and alternative food choices for children with identified allergies.

Our **Student Employees** are essential members of the school community. Each term, 70-100 students work part-time across the program, assisting classroom teachers, the cooks, and helping to staff the front office. Many of our students are studying in fields that prepare them for future career in education or in other roles supporting children and families. Our students bring a rich diversity of perspectives, fresh energy and enthusiasm, and a wide range of prior professional and work experiences.

Helen Gordon Center serves as an **educational laboratory** for PSU. Practicum Students may assist in classrooms as part of their educational experience and practice for classes across many disciplines at PSU ranging from the Graduate School of Education to the Art Department. We are also a practicum site for the Portland Community College Early Childhood Education Program and other colleges and Universities in the surrounding area. Many early childhood professionals as well as students and faculty from other educational institutions view our program as a model for inspiration. We welcome visitors throughout the year. Practicum students are not included in our staff-child classrooms ratios. They bring a rich diversity of perspectives and expertise into our programming and take away creative ideas to use in their future work with children and families.
Our Philosophy and Goals

Our program provides a creative and engaging environment for children between four months and five years of age supporting each child’s growth, development, and sense of belonging in our community.

Professional co-teachers lead each of our classrooms with the assistance of several part-time PSU student employees. We maintain a 1:3 teacher-to-child ratio in our classrooms for children under the age of two, a 1:4 teacher-to-child ratio in our classrooms for two to three year-olds and a 1:7 teacher-to-child ratio in our programs for three to five year-olds. Although state licensing requires a 1:5 ratio for toddlers (24 months-30 months) and a 1:10 ratio for preschool children (thirty months to five years of age), we are committed to lower ratios because having more teachers:

- Allows us to spend more time with your child, developing closer child-teacher bonds of affection, trust, and respect;
- Allows us to observe your child’s social, emotional, cognitive, and physical growth and progress, and individualize our program accordingly; and,
- Allows us to work with children in small groups to facilitate language acquisition, cognitive development and social-emotional development.

Early childhood education practice and research have found that a child’s emotional, social, and cognitive development are interdependent. Our program encourages positive peer and social relations, development of critical thinking skills, and facilitates the development of positive self-concept by fostering independence and problem-solving skills.
Constructivist and social constructivist theories of development are foundational in the field of early childhood education and inform our teaching practices. Jean Piaget’s theories are particularly helpful in our understanding of the stages and processes of cognitive development. Based on his findings, we are less concerned with the traditional products of learning, for example, the recitation of the alphabet; instead we focus our attention on the process of learning. Attempts to hurry a child’s cognitive development are not worthwhile: Piaget’s research documents that the stages of cognitive development cannot be skipped, nor is it possible to speed through them. While most children, even at the youngest ages, are able to memorize and recite, these skills do not represent meaningful learning in the preschool years. Our goal is to help foster the development of a child’s critical thinking skills by giving them opportunities to experiment, explore, question and play. Vygotsky’s work on children’s development sheds light on the importance of the social community. Children construct knowledge through their interactions with the physical and social world. Social engagement is a primary stimulus for cognitive growth, especially in the early years. We believe that children co-construct knowledge within the classroom community. Learning is an inherently social phenomenon, making play, community projects and group dialogue important teaching tools.

Curriculum

Our curriculum is both emergent and constructive. This means that classroom studies and projects often emerge from the children’s interests or from events in the daily life of the classroom community. For example, a focus on babies might be prompted by the birth of new siblings and the discussion and play themes the children share through this real-life experience. Children construct their own ideas and theories about their world through play and social interaction, and experimentation. For example, children might explore the properties of weight and motion by constructing ramps and rolling various objects; they learn much more through this hands-on experience than they would from an adult’s verbal explanation or demonstration of these principles. Teachers observe and plan carefully to provoke, enhance, extend and document children’s learning.

The teachers will share classroom activities and emergent themes with you through their curriculum plans and documentation—pictures and words—that will allow you to follow the classroom events as well as the learning process of both individual children and the group as a whole. Through our rich curriculum and stimulating classroom environments, children gain the skills needed for more formal learning in first grade and beyond. Throughout the curriculum, children’s emerging interests in writing, reading and numbers are strongly supported and encouraged.
The classroom environment plays a crucial role in the teaching/learning process. The classrooms are thoughtfully designed and prepared by the teachers in collaboration with others in the Center to optimize small and larger group interaction, social learning and constructive play. The space is well defined for children to guide their exploration and invite social and cognitive experiences. Specific aspects of the classroom environment may include: a meeting space for group gathering and reading, a message/writing center, construction areas for blocks and other building materials, a mini-art studio space and a dramatic play area. The classrooms are organized with materials that are carefully chosen, presented and stored at the child’s level to encourage maximum independence. The daily classroom schedules include large blocks of time in which children, with support from teachers, make their own choices about how to use their time. We also have specialized spaces throughout our building that are shared by all the classrooms. The Rainbow Room provides a space for indoor, active play; our two large studios provide an aesthetically pleasing space for focused study through extended projects and visual arts; the projects. The children’s theatre offers a special place for music, dance, and drama. Our library stores our shared books and offers a cozy space for reading together.

A daily schedule, curriculum plans and on-going documentation of the children’s experiences are displayed in each classroom as well as our common areas. Parents are strongly encouraged to pay attention to the changing displays as they provide a glimpse into the inner life of the classroom community. Newsletters and email updates are distributed regularly with information concerning classroom events and reminders for parents.

Assessment of Development and Learning

The staff at HGCDC shares the vision of a child-centered, emergent, constructivist curriculum. We recognize the importance of family culture and experiences in children’s learning and development. The staff is skilled in addressing the developmental needs and assessing the learning of young children. Throughout the year teachers implement a variety of methods to document and reflect on children’s learning. Daily observations, anecdotal records, visual documentation, written reflections, checklists and screening tools are all used in order to keep track of children’s health, growth and development in areas of cognitive skills, language progression, social-emotional development, approaches to learning, motor development, creative expression and self-help skills. The results of these assessment methods are also used to develop the classroom’s physical environment and guide curriculum planning.

A.S.Q. Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Each family registering a child is asked to complete the Ages and Stages Questionnaire.
Questionnaire and the Ages and Stages Social-Emotional Questionnaire. By including the family in the assessment process the teacher takes advantage of parental knowledge of the child and builds a partnership with the family. The A.S.Q. is a screening tool with high validity when administered by the parent or teacher. The A.S.Q. covers five developmental areas including communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving, and personal-social. It is used as a first-level comprehensive screening for developmental delays and also communicates to families the stages of a child’s development in their child’s age group. The A.S.Q. is scored by our Inclusion Specialist. The results are shared with teachers to inform their classroom practices. If a score indicates a concern regarding an individual child, the teacher will meet with the family to consider further assessments. If the teacher and parents agree that further testing is needed, the family is referred to our local Early Intervention Agency.

**Assessment Results Confidentiality:** All formal assessments (such as the ASQ) and observations related to developmental or behavioral concerns are kept confidential in children’s files located in the teacher areas of the classrooms. The results of any assessments given are only shared with that child’s family members, teachers, and center leadership. Parents may access child’s assessment records upon request. Results from teacher observations, the assessment tool checklist and the A.S.Q developmental screening are used as a basis for referrals for further diagnostic assessment only when there is an indicated need and the families sign a Release of Information form.

**Portfolios** are created for each child in order to build a balanced view of their development. The portfolio profiles the child’s yearly progress in their social, emotional and cognitive abilities and includes work samples, documented projects, and photographs. The portfolios are accessible to the children and families for viewing in the classroom. **Parent-Teacher Reflections:** Twice a year, families are invited to meet individually with classroom teachers. This usually occurs during the fall and spring terms. The initial fall family meeting, allows teachers to establish relationships and partnerships with families. Family members have the opportunity to share information about their child’s development, special interests and family culture. The families are encouraged to share any cultural or language information that would help to support the child in the classroom or that would assist in open communication between the family and the teacher. Families are asked for their input on classroom curriculum ideas that may support their child’s interests and developmental needs. The spring meeting gives families an opportunity to discuss their child’s progress during the year. Teachers share a written narrative of the child’s developmental progress and examples of the child’s learning through work samples and photographs.

**Use of Media and Technology with Children**

At Helen Gordon Center, the use of media and technology is based on developmentally appropriate practice and intended to expand, enrich and support children’s learning process and curriculum goals. Teachers use their knowledge of child development and children’s interests and readiness to introduce and integrate technology or media into the classroom.

Teachers use technology as a communication tool to strengthen home-school connections. Teachers share online resources, exchange information and maintain ongoing communication with parents through e-mail, text and online social groups. Daily pages, photos, videos and narratives of experiences are shared with families on regular basis. Technology use provides a benefit for families as well as children and teachers. Families are invited and encouraged to use technology to communicate with teachers and other parents, ask questions, arrange meetings, seek advice and...
share information about their child. Teachers do not use electronic media for personal use while working with children.

Guidelines for media and technology use in the classroom

- Teachers and children may conduct research on topics of study by viewing short videos, photos or accessing information on laptop computers or tablets.
- E-mail and video conferencing may be used to communicate with distant friends, make connections between school and home and build relationships with other schools.
- I-Pads and other hand-held digital devices may be used as tools for augmentative and alternative communication to support children’s individual language development and communication. These devices may also support dual language learners by offering visuals or translation from a child’s home language to English.
- Digital cameras may be used to document children’s work and individual and group learning experiences. Children may participate in the documentation process by viewing and selecting photos on a digital device.
- Children and teachers may use digital technology such as computers, scanners and printers, and as tools to support and extend creative expression and for the reproduction of children’s work.
- LCD projectors may be used to display images to offer active, participatory experiences through video, such as music or dance or as a backdrop for play.
- Television or video is not used as a part of regular HGCDC curriculum. Video is used only on occasion and with intention. As a general guideline, when offered, the time of viewing does not exceed 20 minutes.
- Parents are informed ahead of time of the content and intention for a viewing experience. Alternatives are offered for children who do not show interest or whose parents choose not to participate. Requests from parents for no screen time are honored and negotiated on a case by case basis.
- Teachers avoid use of passive viewing for entertainment or reward.
- Teachers are aware of and monitor children’s total screen time during the school day/week.
- As a general rule, children under the age of two do not have screen time.

Social Media Guidelines

At HGCDC classroom teachers may opt to use an on-line, restricted-access social media or photo sharing site (such as Facebook, Shutterfly or Google groups) to support classroom connection and collaboration. Families will be notified in advance and will be asked to grant permission for photographs or video clips of their child and their child’s work to be posted and shared with the internal classroom community on the selected site. The photos and information shared on our website are intended only for the classroom families and teachers. In our experience, we have found blogs and other social media to be very powerful tools to support our communication and collaboration. To support our goals and respect the privacy of our community we ask that you adhere to the following guidelines:
• Please visit the classroom site regularly to stay current with classroom events, projects and opportunities for collaboration.

• Please respect the privacy of other families. Do not reproduce or share photos/videos from the classroom website of children other than your own, including groups of children, without expressed permission from the parents/guardians.

• Please do not post personal information about children, teachers or other community members.

• Do not remove or alter photos or information posted by a teacher.

• Please do not post videos/photographs taken at HGCDC or at HGCDC events that include children (other than your own) to your personal Facebook or other social media sites without permission from that child’s family.

Anti-Bias Curriculum

The core values in our program are grounded in shared respect for human diversity and commitment to social justice. These values are reflected in our curriculum, environment, programming and interactions with families and the larger community. We hope that you will see these values reflected in our classrooms and in our relationship with you as a family. We are fortunate to have a diverse community of children and families in our Center, which allows all children to experience a range of different cultures, abilities, appearances, languages, family forms, and ways of life in a positive, affirming environment. We firmly believe children’s early experiences with diverse communities and playmates will ultimately lead to the development of cohesive, non-violent and accepting communities in our future.

Our goal is to have every child and family welcomed, reflected and supported in our program.

We incorporate many anti-bias learning experiences into our daily classroom life and curriculum. We continually strive to provide materials, activities and an environment that reflect a respect for, and celebration of, diversity in race and ethnicity, physical appearance and ability, gender expression, and family composition and lifestyle. In developing a framework for anti-bias curriculum at the Center we have relied heavily on the work of Louise Derman-Sparks of Pacific Oaks College. Derman-Sparks defines broad goals of an anti-bias curriculum:

• Fosters each child’s sense of self-identity
• Fosters acceptance of diversity among people by allowing children to ask about and explore the differences
• Encourages critical thinking about bias by helping children to identify acts of discrimination and stereotypic images in their world
• Encourages empathy towards others
Helen Gordon Child Development Center

- Fosters children’s abilities to stand up for themselves and others in the face of bias

Our anti-bias curriculum is supported by a wide variety of multi-cultural and bias-free books, dolls and other learning materials as well as specific teacher-directed activities and experiences that are a regular part of each classroom. We strongly encourage your support, involvement and feedback regarding our effort.

Holidays and Celebrations

Over the course of the school year, we find many ways to celebrate together in classrooms and as a school community. We find joy in the anticipation and planning of special events and build our community through these shared experiences. We invite children and families to talk about or share their own home holiday traditions and experiences as they wish. This gives children the opportunity to learn more about each other’s celebrations and find out that not all families observe the same holidays or celebrate in the same way. With the over-commercialization of many holidays, we intentionally avoid adding to the hype and stress that sometimes comes with these events along with discomfort for children or families who do not share these traditions. You will notice that we don’t plan traditional, commercial or religious holiday celebrations or activities in the school, but instead focus on seasonal experiences and on creating our own sense of tradition and celebration that is meaningful to our community. Some of our favorite annual events include a fall Pancake Breakfast, Friends and Family Visiting Days, and a springtime Garden Parade and Party as well as a variety of celebrations to mark the end of the school year. Classroom celebrations include potluck meals, end of the year parties, and get-togethers marking the completion of projects and other milestones. We hope you will find time to join us throughout the year.

Family Involvement

Our program and teachers care about both the children and their families. We hope you will become involved in our program by participating in classroom activities, joining us on field trips, and attending school events. Parents are welcome to visit their children at the Center at any time. We hope our program will enrich your family as well as your child’s early years. Parents of young children face many challenges; we appreciate the opportunity to work with families and are happy to share our knowledge with you and refer you to resources when needed. Please do not hesitate to share information with teachers about your child’s development or to seek information from teachers regarding your parenting concerns.
There will be many opportunities throughout the year for you to join and build the Center community. In past years, program committees including the Music, Dance and Theatre Committee and the Garden Committee have given parents an opportunity to play an active role in shaping our curriculum and environment. Parents also play a vital role in supporting the classroom teachers and contributing to school community as **Classroom Parent Leaders**. In this role parents act as a liaison between teachers, other parents and center administrative staff. They take the lead in building a strong classroom community, mobilize participation in school events and class activities and support school wide fundraising efforts.

All parents can play a role in fund-raising for the Center by planning and/or participating in the annual Fundraising Auction and other small fundraising projects and events. Parents are welcome and invited to participate in their child’s classroom by visiting to volunteer, read or tell stories, share favorite recipes, sing, or play musical instruments. Please bring your ideas to your child’s classroom teacher. Additionally, over the course of the year there will be a number of social events within the individual classrooms or with the entire Center community including potluck dinners, ice cream socials, morning coffee socials for parents, and numerous other joyful celebrations. We hope that you will participate in our program whenever possible.

**The Advisory Board for Campus Child Development**

The Advisory Board for the campus Child Development Programs provides feedback to the program directors and advises on such matters as budget, University-Center relations, and policy. The Board also acts as an advocacy group on behalf of the programs and provides leadership within the community. Parents are invited each year to nominate themselves to fill vacant seats on the board. Elections are held at the beginning of the school year. Parents write bios and statements of interest, which are posted for other families to review and refer to in voting. Current HGCDC families vote to elect the new parent representatives. The Advisory Board generally meets four times each year.

The Advisory Board consists of:

- Six parent members, elected by parents currently using the campus programs.
- One public member not connected with the University, who has expertise in the area of child development.
- Four PSU student members nominated by the Associated Students of Portland State University or recruited from academic departments related to early childhood and family studies.
- And, four faculty members appointed by the University President, one each from the School of Education, the School of Social Work, the Department of Psychology and the faculty at large.
In-Service

We would like to thank families for helping us maintain a high quality program for young children by supporting our need for in-service time. Research shows that high quality programs for children include a strong in-service component. The state childcare licensing regulations and accreditation through the National Association for the Education of Young Children require frequent in-service training for teachers. It is especially critical for a full-day program to build in-service time into its schedule. Our program offers a ten-hour day, year-round; without in-service closures, teachers would not have any of the necessary time to do a wide variety of tasks critical to a quality program. Activities that teachers and administrators engage in during in-service include: attending classes or workshops, readying the classroom for new children or programs, organizing classroom environments and materials, developing teaching and classroom goals and curriculum, preparing children’s individual portfolios and preparing for parent conferences, and documenting children’s learning. Please check the calendar in this handbook for a listing of our in-service days and closures.
Our Programs

The Infant and Toddler Program

Three classrooms: the Moon, Sun and Star Rooms, make up our infant-toddler wing. In working with our infants and toddlers we have come to understand that there are many adventures and possibilities for learning and growing together. It is our goal to provide a nurturing, stimulating and supportive environment in which they can do this. Children are born with an innate drive to learn and explore and it becomes our responsibility to build on that natural curiosity and give them tools for learning that they will carry with them throughout their lives.

At Helen Gordon Center our youngest children are welcomed into an environment that is their own; offering choices of materials, tactile experiences to explore, a wide range of developmental opportunities, active and quiet areas, and caring adults supporting their daily play. Curriculum is spontaneous and child-directed, growing as the child grows. The infant-toddler shared studios offer invitations for deep exploration throughout the year focused on a particular material or expressive language such as dance, painting, clay or light and shadow. Teachers enhance the curriculum based on careful observations and close attention to individual needs. There is reciprocity of respect among children and caregivers. Learning occurs by providing an atmosphere of respect for infants and toddlers as they are and supporting them as they move naturally through their days. Routines are also a part of the learning experience to encourage children with opportunities for independence, socialization and self-assurance. Consistent predictable days contribute to infants and toddlers becoming confident, eager, lifelong learners. Nurturing care-giving opportunities present enriching moments for children and adults to connect, grow and understand each other.

We encourage parents to contribute to our understanding of their child.

We invite this process in our initial family visits prior to enrollment and work to sustain our relationship as the year progresses. We will share the children’s days through daily charts, which inform parents about eating, sleeping and other routine patterns in the day. We will highlight and share special moments in the life of our classroom through our daily pages featuring photographs and mini-stories of the children. In turn, we hope parents will enhance the school to home relationship by sharing observations and insights about their child's experience with us. We look
to parents as partners in this shared effort of helping children understand and thrive in the social community of the classroom. Parents are welcome at any time during the day and we invite you to fully participate in our program while your child is with us. Throughout the year there will be multiple opportunities and invitations for you to join our community.

The Transition and Preschool Programs
Our preschool program is made up of several classrooms for three to five-year-olds. The Grasshopper, Ladybug, Caterpillar, Butterfly and Dragonfly Rooms, offer a full-day program and the Bumblebee Room, offers a half-day morning preschool. There are three transition/early preschool groups, the Seahorse, Starfish and Turtle Rooms on our first floor for children aged two to three. In our transition and preschool programs, we find inspiration in several approaches to early learning. We are firmly rooted in the principles of anti-bias education approach and hope to connect with children's understandings of difference and similarities in the human experience. Difference is explored and celebrated and not feared or hidden in our program. We spend a lot of time in communication with children about whom and what is important in their world around them, understanding that social and emotional development are critical at this stage of life.

Our primary aim is to help children develop into communicative beings--children who are able to express and stay in touch with their inner selves and how they interact with others and the world around them.

We are also deeply connected to the ideas coming forth from the early childhood schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy. We say that we are “Reggio-inspired” because we see the roots of our creative research developing from the study of these schools and other schools inspired by their approach. We seek to capture children’s learning experiences and describe our teaching and learning process within our documentation. This shows up in daily pages and other documentation, where some aspect of the children’s day is captured in pictures, photocopied from children’s work-samples, dictated as a story by the children, or displayed from the many classroom “languages” they use to express their meaning-making and learning. Parents, visitors, and other teachers can see these displays of children’s expressions throughout our school, in the hallways, in the classrooms, and in our shared living spaces--our central piazza, library, children’s theater, lobby and studios.

Like the schools in Reggio Emilia, we have created studio spaces with specialists who play integral roles in the daily curriculum and planning of children’s experiences along with the classroom teachers. In the studio and classrooms, children have the
opportunity to explore their learning and develop a deeper understanding through long-term project work. A project may start as a seed of an idea, brought to the school by a parent, developed in a classroom, or generated through the ongoing studio work. For instance, a child becomes interested in birds and begins to tell stories of their experiences of birds in their nests. Then, the teachers share this discovery with the studio teacher and both in the classroom and the studio, a project is developed around birds, nests, eggs, mud, and sticks. Materials are explored and small groups of children decide how they want to proceed with studying, making, and remaking what they know and are learning about bird nests. Instead of knowing all of the answers from the beginning, teachers research the topic and bring in more materials so that children can develop theories, test their ideas, and inquire more about the study. Parents are invited to join the study of nests and the community of learners imagines, creates, and develops their study. All the while, children still play on the playground, scrape their knees, play with play dough, get angry with their friends, make-up and give hugs, say the most amazing things, become more of themselves as they interact with and see themselves in others, walk away with characteristics of others in them, and grow as competent learners.

Nutrition
The Center’s talented cooks prepare a breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. Weekly menus are posted in each classroom and on the board near the kitchen. We frequently review and update our menus, making changes aligned with family preferences and relevant current health research. We reduce consumption of processed foods and foods with high sugar content by preparing much of the food from scratch on-site. Our milk, milk products and meats are free of added hormones. Fresh fruits and vegetables are emphasized with an effort to include local, organic produce whenever possible. A vegetarian option is available each day and we fully accommodate most food allergies. Children are actively involved in growing a variety of herbs and vegetables in our outdoors areas. The Cooks incorporate these into their recipes and menu plans. Our Cooks visit regularly with the children and ask for their feedback as they try out new foods or recipes. Children are encouraged to send notes to the Cooks to communicate their requests and preferences.

If your child has food allergies, please have a physician fill out the food allergy form as required by the USDA Food Program. Parents of children on special diets or with multiple food restrictions should check with the Cooks to determine if additional
foods from home are needed to supplement or replace our meals. Please do not send foods that need to be cooked or prepared; we do not have the staff or kitchen space available for preparation of foods that are not part of our planned menu. Teachers work individually with parents to meet dietary needs of the infants and young toddlers in our program. The infant room has its own kitchen space where food and bottles are prepared and stored. Parents may choose to bring their own foods from home or use the food provided by the Center. Food and beverages from home must be labeled with the child's name and date.

We have a number of children enrolled with severe allergies to nuts and other food items. To keep everyone safe, we request your vigilance in making all of the classrooms and child-use areas of the school strict nut-free zones. Please do not bring nuts of any kind into these areas. This includes whole nuts, trail mix or peanut butter and also energy/protein bars and other items that contain nut products. Please wash your hands and your child's hands before entering the classrooms if you have been consuming nut products and again, immediately upon entering the classrooms. For some children, even nut oils can be potentially harmful.

HGCDC participates in the State of Oregon Child Nutrition Program, a program of the USDA that provides schools and child care centers with reimbursements for serving meals and snacks in accordance with their guidelines. If parents supply a meal or portion of a meal for their child, we work to ensure the food from home meets the set guidelines for serving sizes and food groups. Food from home will be stored in the kitchen until mealtime. The USDA program reimbursements cover our food costs, reducing this tuition expense for families.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov This institution is an equal opportunity provider.
Child Guidance: Philosophy, Values, and Practices

At HGCDC, we strive to provide the best possible experience for young children so that they develop a social and moral identity that is positive, resilient, and caring. We provide an environment that nurtures young children as they develop a positive sense of self and the ability to thrive as a member of a community. In doing so, we are very intentional about our own behavior and beliefs. This includes holding an image of children as responsible and capable, interacting with children in a way that reflects this image, and by developing strong and loving relationships with each child. Teachers structure the classroom environment and routines to offer children opportunities to build a sense of empathy and respect for others, to learn to cooperate with teachers and peers, and to practice resolving conflicts with others through negotiation and problem solving.

Our approach is inspired by several child development theorists, authors, educators, and specialists. This includes Jane Nelson, Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, Alfie Kohn, Ross Greene, Magda Gerber and Emmi Pikler. Their inspiration, combined with our values, provides a foundation for our teaching practices. For instance, we don't promote or use systems of extrinsic motivators to punish or reward children. Instead we rely on strong relationships and teaching responsibility through frameworks like Positive Discipline or Collaborative Problem Solving. Teachers offer children many opportunities to identify and express their emotions, both their big feelings as well as more nuanced and complex emotions. We encourage and support children as they are able, to resolve their own conflicts with peers by “using their words” to state their needs and feelings to each other. As well, we support children in learning to identify and pay attention to others’ feelings and to become aware of how their actions affect others.

We use a variety of strategies to support children in their developing capacity to collaborate and cooperate and to promote their positive engagement with peers and teachers, routines and within the environment. Some of these strategies include giving children real choices whenever possible, giving children advance notice before classroom transitions and by providing materials, experiences and classroom environments that are designed to meet the interests, needs and developmental capabilities of young children. Classrooms and common areas offer cozy spaces for children to find comfort when their feelings become overwhelming. Taking a break from a friend, group or an activity can give a child an opportunity to regain composure. However, “time-outs” are not used as a solution to problems. Under no circumstances will we use physical punishment or shaming as a means of controlling a child. We ask that parents also refrain from using these strategies while in the Center.

We believe that children thrive when the adults in their life see them as capable, valued members of a community and work together to support their individual learning styles and needs.
Working Together to Support Individual Children

If we have concerns about your child’s experience in the classroom, we will request a meeting to discuss our concerns. As well, we encourage families to reach out to teachers if they have concerns. We believe we are more successful when teachers and parents work together toward a common goal.

The following offers an outline of the steps teachers will take in their support of children when concerns arise. We also recognize the great degree of variability and individualized response that will be necessary in each situation. Here are some of the steps and strategies we use: We will collect information/data about the child and document reoccurring concerns using anecdotal records or, when necessary, the HGCDC Incident Report Forms; we will assess classroom environments and routines; we will consider and ask families about other possible contributing factors outside of the school experience (sleep, eating, length of day, changes at home etc.)

We will create an action plan to share with everyone involved in the child’s school day to ensure consistency.

We will request a meeting to develop a collaborative support plan together. In this process, we begin by reflecting together on the strengths and needs of the child. Using this information, we create a plan of action. Possible strategies that may be part of this discussion include: Inviting parents to the classroom as observers so they can see their child in the school setting and engage as full partners in the planning process; making a referral to Early Intervention, a play therapist or child-family therapist; making modifications to the child’s schedule: e.g., length of day, arrival and pick up routines; if appropriate or necessary, discuss with parents the circumstances under which the child will be sent home or when their day may be shortened. The teachers and family implement the agreed upon strategies. A follow up meeting is set with staff and family to determine success or regroup with a new plan. If the concerns are still present, in an additional meeting we will determine next steps: either continued enrollment with an updated plan, a schedule that includes reduced hours, or a decision that HGCDC is not the best fit or appropriate environment for the child and a recommendation and timeline for seeking alternate care.

We recognize that our program may not be the best match for every child’s developmental stage or individual needs. We may ask families to seek additional professional resources to support the child’s successful continuation in the program. We may require assistance from families in situations in which we feel the child may endanger themselves or others. If after working together, we feel that we have exhausted our abilities and resources and are unable safely and successfully to meet a child’s needs, we reserve the right to dismiss a child from the program. In the spirit of collaboration and dialogue, we will take the steps outlined above before we ever consider exercising that right.

Child Abuse Reporting

Please be aware that as early childhood professionals, each Helen Gordon staff member is legally required to report suspected child abuse and neglect to appropriate protective authorities. The staff members are trained to recognize and respond to signs of physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect. If children come to school with visible marks on their bodies or if they disclose to a teacher that they have been
physically or sexually abused, the teachers will respond by calling protective authorities. We are also required to protect children from neglect and endangerment. If we become aware that a child is in risk of harm due to inadequate care, including, but not limited to, deprivation of food, sleep, or nurturance, protective authorities will be alerted.

Children can also be endangered if their caregivers are under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If we believe that a parent’s functioning is impaired we will ask that they refrain from driving with their child and we will suggest that another adult come to pick the child up from school. We cannot legally refuse to release a child to their custodial parents. However, if a parent leaves the building with their child while under the influence of drugs or alcohol we will notify the police. This action will be taken for the protection of the child. Repeated signs of impaired judgment may indicate abuse or neglect and will be reported.

Our teachers use a variety of strategies to support child empowerment and to teach children about their rights. Books, puppets and role-play support the learning process. Through these strategies, teachers offer children tools to use to recognize their own physical and emotional boundaries and to protect themselves against unwanted or hurtful touches. Emphasis is placed on trusting their own feelings and telling the adults they trust about their experiences. The information and teaching strategies are age-appropriate and fit well with our philosophy for problem-solving and conflict resolution.

**Orientation to the Program**

The Center hosts orientation events in September to familiarize children and their families to our program. In addition, teachers schedule family visits in early September to meet and spend some time getting to know children and families before the start of the new school year. Even returning children benefit from this one-on-one time with their teachers.

Some children jump into school with both feet; others are hesitant to have parents leave them. We encourage you to attend orientation sessions and participate in the family visit. In addition, you may wish to spend some time in the classroom with your child before leaving on the first day. However, when it is time to leave your child, always say good-bye and then leave decisively. Children can sense a parent’s hesitancy to leave and may find ways to prevent them from leaving if they are not clear and positive about their intent. Please let the teachers know how they can best support you with your transitions. Children who cry when their parents leave almost always settle down quickly and begin enjoying the day. Parents are encouraged to call the Center to hear how their child is doing if they are concerned.

Families who enroll mid-year or in the summer are encouraged to visit the Center with their child before their first day of school. In addition, it is helpful for parents to spend some time in the classroom with their children before leaving the first day. Finally, if at all possible, it is helpful for parents to leave their child for a shorter time on the first day or two. A shorter day helps a child gradually to become accustomed to a full day at school.
Helen Gordon Center offers early education as well as child care for families. Many families chose our program because they need full-day child care and also desire the enriching opportunities a good school program provides. As detailed in the philosophy and goals section, and the curriculum section, teachers plan their program and activities to promote each child’s cognitive, social, emotional and physical development. We have our more structured program in the morning because generally young children are most able to engage and focus during the first part of the day when they are not tired. Teachers need a stable, consistent group of children and block of time, to successfully meet their curriculum goals. Therefore, we request that your child be here by 9:00AM. Children who arrive late often have a difficult time adjusting the day or separating from their parent. Children need time to greet friends and “settle in” before structured activities begin. When they arrive after 9:00AM they may not get a chance to do this.

If you are going to be late arriving, please make arrangements with the teachers in advance or if that is not possible, call the Center before 9:00AM so the teachers know when to expect your child. The class may be going on a field trip or have other special plans that you will need to know about. Arrivals at lunch or rest time can be especially difficult for the child or classroom. Our experience has been that children arriving at this time have difficulty because they are interested in connecting with friends and doing activities that they missed in the morning program. Please check in with the teachers to find the best time to arrive when you do need to be late.

The Center closes at 5:30PM. We understand, however, that sometimes you may come a few minutes after 5:30PM. At 5:40, parents who are late picking up their child will be charged a $10.00 late fee. After 5:40, there will be an additional charge of $1.00 per minute. The Center closes at 5:30 and although we do not charge a late fee until 5:40, parents should not take advantage of this policy by routinely arriving after 5:30. If parents arrive after 5:30 more than three times, the Center reserves the right to begin charging the $10.00 late fee at 5:30 and a $1.00 per minute thereafter. Our half-day programs end at 12:00 noon. Late pick-up fees will be charged at the rates outlined above beginning at 12:10 PM.

Signing in and out
The parent, or an adult authorized by the parent, must take the child to the classroom and sign in each day. The Center does not become responsible for children until they have been signed in and greeted by a teacher. Do not leave your child in the classroom until a teacher has greeted them. Parents or other authorized adults must sign their child out of school each day as well. Please make sure a teacher is aware that you are taking your child from the classroom. Often parents visit with one another or the teachers as they pick-up their children, please keep your child with you during these times. We have found that children seem to have greater difficulty staying within the classroom and Center boundaries and are more apt to leave the classroom or try to go out the front door after their parents have arrived.
Security System

The Center’s inside foyer door is locked at all times. The inside door is accessed with a card reader/keypad security system located to the right of the inside door. Parents with PSU student or staff ID cards must have their card code activated to allow for building entry during program hours. Parents who are not PSU faculty, staff or students will be issued a proxy card made by PSU ID Services. Please inquire in our front office for more information. With an activated ID card, parents can gain building access by passing their card in front of the keypad which will release the interior door. The card reader system allows the Campus Safety Office to track who enters the building. Your card will give you access to the building from 7:30AM to 5:30PM Monday through Friday when the program is open. If you arrive prior to 7:30AM or are late arriving to pick up your child you will not be able to enter the building until a staff member opens the door for you. Our front office is staffed at all times during program hours so visitors and parents who do not have activated cards can enter the building. You will be asked to present identification at the office window for building entry if you are without an activated entry card. To have your PSU ID card activated for building access, please bring your card to the front office so we can make note of the card number needed for identification and activation.

You may exit out the West, North (piazza) and East (main entrance) doors but please be aware of who is nearby and do not let anyone come in as you are exiting. Also, please make sure that the door is shut tight behind you as you exit. As you enter the Center, also be aware of who is entering with you. Please help us keep our program safe by directing any visitors to the Center to our front office.

Changes in pick-up and arrival routines

Most parents fall into regular arrival and pick-up routines individual to their schedules. Please let teachers know if there will be a change in your routine. This notice helps teachers to prepare children for schedule changes that can be upsetting to them. Also, most families fall into regular routines regarding who is bringing and picking up the child. Please note: Children may be brought to and picked up from the Center only by those adults listed on the child’s emergency card. We suggest that parents designate at least two other authorized adults in addition to themselves as emergencies do occur making it impossible for a parent to bring or pick-up their child. If you would like to have someone bring or pick-up your child who is not listed on you card, you must give verbal notice to the teachers and leave a written note in the front office giving names, dates, and times. Finally, notice in both the classroom and the office is appreciated for any change in adults to pick-up or drop-off children at the Center, even if the adult is listed on the emergency card.

Enrollment and Attendance

Each of our classrooms has a set maximum enrollment determined by the licensing and accreditation guidelines for the particular age group and room size. Our program is enrolled on an academic year schedule, with a September start for most children new to our program. Occasional mid-year openings are filled as they become available. Our program is designed to provide full-day care and education. A limited number of two-day and three-day per week enrollment slots are available in each classroom. A half-day program is available in the Bumblebee Room for children aged three to five. Each spring enrolled families are given the opportunity to request their attendance
schedule for summer term and for the following academic year. Changes in attendance during the academic year can only be made on a space-available basis. The Administrative Coordinator will track parent requests for changes in attendance and offer schedule options as space becomes available within each classroom.

Children enrolled for two or three days per week may add extra attendance days on an occasional basis if space is available due to a planned or anticipated absence in the classroom. These additional attendance days must be requested in advance. We cannot give “make-up days” for absences due to illness or family schedule changes. Any attendance on a non-scheduled day is considered an additional day and is billed at our daily rate.

Siblings of currently enrolled children are given preference for enrollment from our waiting list. Parents should submit an application for sibling enrollment as early as possible. Due to the limited number of spaces in each classroom and for each attendance schedule, we cannot guarantee enrollment for siblings. Due to the very limited space available in our infant-toddler wing, enrollment is limited to PSU student and faculty/staff families, regardless of sibling status.

Family status for enrollment at HGCDC families is based affiliation with PSU as follows: Active PSU Student Families - one or both parents are enrolled in at least 8 undergraduate credits or 5 graduate credits per term; Active PSU Faculty/Staff Families one or both parents are employed at least 0.5FTE as PSU Faculty or Staff. HGCDC Alumni Families one or both parents have been an active PSU student or faculty/staff for at least three out of four consecutive academic terms. Community Families- do not have an affiliation with Portland State University through a student or faculty/staff status.

Enrollment Policies Related to Family Status:
• A family will be granted HGCDC Alumni status for their child’s enrollment if they (parents) have maintained active PSU system status for at least three of the four consecutive academic terms. After that period if they are not attending/employed at PSU, their child will be able to continue enrollment at HGCDC at the Community/Alumni tuition rate.
• If a family does not maintain the three of four terms at Student status or Faculty/Staff status, their child(ren) will be able to finish out the current year but future enrollment will not be guaranteed.
• Families at the Community/Alumni status are not granted the sibling priority benefit for enrollment. Sibling benefit for enrollment is reserved for individuals currently connected to the PSU system (students, faculty, and staff).
• Community Families may not be considered for enrollment until their child is at least three years of age. New enrollment in the infant/toddler and transition wing classrooms is reserved for families currently associated with PSU.
• Community Families will be granted enrollment only when spaces are available after enrolling PSU affiliated families.

Classroom Information and Policies
Keeping the Focus on Children:
We strongly value the time we spend with the children. In order to stay focused on their needs during the day we limit our access to technology that can easily pull our focus away from this goal. Teachers are available to talk
in person with families at pick drop off or pick up times and are happy to schedule a meeting whenever needed. Teachers will respond to emails during scheduled planning times. Please allow 48 hours for a response to non-emergency emails. Parents may contact the office: 503-725-3092 for any emergency or to notify the staff of their child’s absence.

**Rest Time:** Our day is long, active and stimulating and we find that all children benefit from a quiet, restful break in the day. Children need some time alone and rest time offers an opportunity to rest, reflect, decompress and, if needed, sleep. Each full-day classroom has rest time beginning between 12:30 and 1:00 PM. Some children sleep during this time, others do not. Please check with your child’s teachers regarding additional classroom-specific guidelines. Infants and young toddlers sleep schedules are flexible to meet individual needs.

**Toys from Home:** We have a wide variety of materials available for the children at school. Toys from home often are difficult for children to share or get lost or broken at school. Your child is welcome to bring CDs and books to share and one soft toy for naptime. Please do not allow your child to bring toy weapons of any kind to school. Small trinkets and jewelry can be easily lost and may present a choking hazard—please leave these items at home.

**Community Excursions:** Our community is an important aspect of the curriculum and children’s experience at HGCDC. Walking trips to campus and other locations near the Center are a regular part of life in our urban school. Sometimes the teachers take advantage of good weather and plan a spontaneous outing. Emails or posted notices in the classroom will notify you of any off-campus excursion; on-campus field trips may be taken spontaneously with no prior notice given.

**Teacher-Parent Reflections and Conferences:** Teachers schedule individual meetings with parents once or twice each year to share observations, discuss individual goals, and reflect on the child’s experience at home and school. If at any time, you would like to arrange an additional meeting with a teacher, please feel free to do so. We try to avoid talking to parents about sensitive topics in front of children. Please ask if the teacher can step out of the classroom for a moment if you need to discuss something about your child’s behavior or emotions.

**Clothing:** Our program is active and engaging—we can’t prevent children from getting messy at school! We assume that you are sending your child to school in clothes that allow them to participate fully in our program and that you understand their clothes may get stained while at school. Playground equipment can be slippery and we often venture out on walks. Children benefit from shoes that provide good traction and are comfortable for walking. Flip-flops or shoes with slick soles generally do not work well for active play. Please bring a complete change of clothing to keep at the Center.

**Birthday Celebrations:** Each classroom has its own way to celebrate such as creating a birthday crown and singing. It isn’t necessary to provide birthday treats for a school celebration, but if you wish to, you may bring in a snack to share. Due to licensing and health regulations, we are not able to serve foods that are prepared at home. You may bring in purchased...
foods such as whole fresh fruits or packaged fruit snacks, granola bars, small cookies or juice popsicles. Please do not bring frosted cakes or cupcakes due to the high sugar content. Check with classroom teachers about their specific plans for birthday celebrations in their community.

Health Policies
As a state-certified child care program, we are mandated to exclude children who are ill or have symptoms of illness. Our child care license does not allow us to provide care for children when they are ill. Symptoms or conditions, which may exclude your child from school or for which they will be sent home, include but are not limited to:

- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Fever greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit
- Unusual color to the skin or eyes
- Rash
- Severe cough
- Skin infections
- Unusual behavior
- Child is cranky or less active than usual or listless
- Child cries more than usual
- Change in eating or drinking habits
- Sore throat, earache, swollen glands
- Skin or eye lesions that are severe, weeping or pus-filled
- Any of the communicable diseases including but not limited to chicken pox, strep, scabies, measles, etc. Please notify the Center if your child has contracted a communicable disease.
- Head lice
- Complaints of severe pain

In order to return to school, children must be fully recovered, without the aid of fever reducers or other medications that temporarily mask symptoms. Children must be able to fully participate in a busy school schedule. When children are sent home from school due to illness, parents are given an “Exclusion Notice” which indicates when the child can return. Our exclusion policies protect both ill and well children. There will be less illness at the Center if ill children are kept at home.

If your child is ill and not coming to school, please call the Center by 9:00AM to notify us. If your child becomes ill at school, we will call you and ask you pick your child up as soon as possible. It is imperative that your contact information is always up-to-date on your child’s emergency card in the front office, as well we ask for current names and telephone numbers of responsible adults willing to pick up your child in case you are unable to come or cannot be reached. Please leave alternate phone numbers or locations with the front office if you will be away from your office or workplace and cannot be reached at your listed phone number.

In the event of an emergency, the child will be given appropriate first aid, and if necessary, transported by ambulance to a hospital for care. The parent will be located as soon as possible, but if unavailable, one of the emergency contacts will be called to help locate a parent and/or assist with the situation. It is of the utmost importance that when a parent leaves the campus, changes their schedule, or leaves their work place that they notify the Center of an alternate phone number and/or location. It is
the parent’s responsibility to make sure the emergency card on file for your child is up-to-date and to make sure phone numbers, locations, class schedules, and emergency information is current and accurate.

Minor injuries which occur at the Center will be recorded and reported to parents in an “Accident Report Form.” In addition, when appropriate or as time allows, teachers will call parents to discuss minor injuries or speak with parents in person at pick-up. Minor injuries are treated with first aid, as appropriate, including washing and bandaging cuts and scrapes, applying ice packs to bumps or bruises and providing comfort and observing children after accidents to determine their readiness to return to play.

**Medication Policies:** If your child requires medication during the day, the medicine must be in the original, child-resistant container labeled with the child’s name, the name, strength, and dosage of the medication, instructions for how to administer, the prescription date, the name of the healthcare provider, the medication expiration date and storage instructions. A Medication Authorization Form must be filled out completely and signed by the parent before the medication can be administered by the teachers. Non-prescription medications can only be administered when accompanied by a signed Physician’s Authorization form indicting reason for medication, dosage, and instructions for how and when to administer. Please do not leave unused medicine at the Center. If a prescription medicine does not have a current date on it, the Center must have a doctor’s note in order to administer it. All medications must be in the original containers and clearly labeled with the child’s first and last name. If your child needs a topical ointment or medication (diaper cream, lotion, lip balm, etc.), you must sign a permission form specifying details for use.

Please keep your child at home if they are taking a medication for the first time. Children may develop allergic reactions to medications, especially antibiotics. At home parents can monitor their child and respond quickly to any adverse reactions that may occur.

**Health Protocols:** If your child has severe allergic reactions or on-going medical conditions that require emergency medications or procedures (such as use of an inhaler or epi-pen, or monitoring blood sugars), we will work with your child’s physician to develop an individual Health Protocol. Health Protocols define the actions teachers will take related to a child’s particular health care needs during the school day.

**Hand Washing:** Frequent hand washing is the single best way of preventing disease/illness. Please join us in helping your child develop good hand washing habits. Please encourage your child to wash their hands upon arrival to the classroom each morning.

**Payment Policies**
Current Portland State University students registered for eight undergraduate or five graduate credit hours or more per term for three terms in each calendar year are eligible for subsidized student rates. Extended Studies credits from PSU or from other
institutions do not apply. Families may not split the credit hours between the two parents, i.e., at least one student-parent must be enrolled each term for the full number of required credits. A PSU staff/faculty parent enrolled in classes at staff rate is not eligible for HGCDC student tuition rates. The spouse/partner of a PSU faculty/staff member using the staff fee privilege is required to pay PSU student fees with their PSU tuition and therefore, is eligible for student family rates. PSU faculty and staff families working at least .50 FTE are eligible for PSU faculty/staff rates. All others including PSU alumni, students not meeting the credit requirement, and faculty/staff appointed at less than .50 are charged the community rate.

Our administrative staff will verify student-parent enrollment and tuition payment during each academic term. Families claiming student status but not enrolled at the credit requirement or dropping below the credit requirement during the term and receiving a refund will be billed for the difference between community and student rates. Children of students may continue at the Center at the student rate during the summer if their parents attended PSU full-time continuously the previous year. Parents may also withdraw children for the summer and reserve a space for the following fall by paying a non-refundable reservation fee.

Families enrolling in the program for a continuous twelve month period are eligible for a rebate for two weeks of vacation time during summer program. Vacation time can be taken in one or two week blocks, Monday through Friday only. Families must remain enrolled through the end of the summer program to be eligible for vacation rebate; those requesting a vacation rebate and then withdrawing early will be back-billed. Vacation rebate requests must be submitted to the front office staff two weeks in advance.

Parents are required to sign a payment agreement as part of the intake process. Tuition is due on or before the 10th of each month for that month. On the 15th of the month, a $15.00 tuition late fee will be assessed. The late fee can be waived if notice is given in advance of a late payment. Failure to pay tuition is grounds for dismissal from the Center. In some cases, if a parent is temporarily having difficulty making payments, special arrangements may be made. Families withdrawing from the Center with delinquent accounts are not eligible for the Center’s services in the future.

**Parental Leave Policy:** The Center offers families the option of a temporary change in their child’s enrollment following the birth or adoption of a sibling. A full-time enrollment schedule can be reduced to part-time for the duration of the parental leave, or up to three months. Our intent is to give flexibility to families during the time following a birth or adoption while maintaining continuity for the enrolled child. Student parents also may reduce their PSU credit hours for the term following the birth or adoption. Please submit a written request to the director or front office staff to make these arrangements prior to the start of the parental leave.

**Inclement Weather**

HGCDC will follow the Portland State University schedule for a closure or late opening due to inclement weather. Under extreme weather conditions, the University and Helen Gordon Center will be closed. It is also possible that University will have a delayed opening or an early closure. In the event of an early closure we will call each family and request that children be picked up at the designated closure time. Updates
will be available on the campus information line at 503-725-3000 or on the PSU website: www.pdx.edu. In addition, there will be a message recorded on the HGCDC main office line, 503-725-3092. PSU community members may sign up to receive PSU Alerts, which is the easiest way to access up to date closure information. See below for more information on the PSU Alert system.

**Emergency Preparedness Plan**

HGCDC staff members have regular training in emergency response procedures. Our Center is strongly supported by the PSU Facilities and Campus Security offices and we have received their consultation and guidance in developing the HGCDC Emergency Preparedness Plan. The complete plan outlines step by step procedures to take during a variety of emergency situations. The complete plan is available to parents upon request and is summarized here. Our emergency procedures include conducting fire and earthquake drills with the children and practicing emergency evacuation procedures regularly.

If we have to evacuate our building in case of a fire or earthquake, the children and teachers will meet at each classroom’s designated meeting spot, located on the field across the street from HGCDC. If we are unable to re-enter the building for an extended time, all children and staff will evacuate to Hoffman Hall located at 1833 SW 11th Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97201. Parents will be contacted by phone. We will remain there until it has been determined that our building is safe. HGCDC staff will remain with the children until everyone has been picked up. Classrooms are equipped with an emergency backpack containing first aid supplies, children’s emergency medications and water. We expect parents to pick up children as soon as possible following an earthquake or other disaster. Children will be released *only* to parents and/or persons listed on child’s emergency card as authorized to pick up.

**Portland State University Emergency Alert System:**

We encourage all HGCDC parents who are members of the PSU community as students or faculty/staff to sign up for the PSU emergency alert system. PSU Alert is an emergency communication system used to send emergency alert notifications to your cell phone, phone and email account. In the event of an emergency, the university uses this system to alert the campus community about the emergency situation. Please use the following web address for instructions on how to sign up: http://www.pdx.edu/cpso/psu-alert-notification-system. As needed, PSU alerts will be followed as soon as possible by an email from HGCDC adding any information needed related to how the particular emergency situation is impacting the Center.

**Family Preparation for Emergencies:**

We strongly recommend that each family create their own emergency plan. The American Red Cross offers suggestions on how to create a family plan on their website. Family plans should include which family member will pick up the child and where the family will meet; and a plan for communicating with one another. Choose an out-of-area emergency contact person as it may be easier to text or call long distance if local lines are overloaded or out of service. If possible each family member could check-in with the out-of-state person and receive news from the others. It is very likely that a strong earthquake will cause many of the Portland bridges and freeways to become unsafe. If you are not on or near campus during the Center hours, please make sure that you have authorized and arranged for someone
to pick up your child in case you are unable to reach the Center. This person must be listed on your child's emergency card.

**Lock Down Procedure:**
Should an event ever occur which threatens the safety of the children and staff; the following lockdown procedures will be followed:

1. All doors and windows will be locked.
2. Children will be moved to a space with fewest doors and windows, authorities and parents will be called immediately.
3. All staff will remain with the children until parents arrive.

**Emergency Transport:**
When an emergency requires medical transport and/or escort from the program, designated staff members will ensure the following actions are taken: calling 911, providing first aid and/or CPR, calling parents and/or emergency contacts, and escorting the child to the hospital as necessary.

**Emergency Evacuation procedures:**
In an event our building becomes unsafe, such as fire or an earthquake; the following evacuation procedures will be followed:

1. Staff will quickly escort all children out of the building through safe designated exits.
2. The administrative staff will stay behind and scan all areas to ensure that all children have been taken out of the building.
3. The teachers from each classroom will bring the daily child/staff roster and an emergency backpack. The office staff will bring emergency cards.
4. All will meet at their designated meeting spot on the field across the street from HGCDC.
5. Once outside and clear of the building, at the designated meeting spot, head count will be taken to ensure all children are present.
6. We will return to the building when the all-clear is given by the appropriate authorities.

**Emergency Procedures in Case of an Earthquake**
In an event of an earthquake the following procedures will be followed:

1. Children and staff will crouch under tables until the shaking stops
2. If the building becomes unsafe we will evacuate, following the Emergency Evacuation Procedures listed above.
How to Contact Us

Mail: 1609 SW 12th Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97201

Phone: 503-725-3092

Fax: 503-725-5323

Email:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mary Schumacher-Hoerner</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td><a href="mailto:schum3@pdx.edu">schum3@pdx.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynn Green</td>
<td>Infant/Toddler/Transition Coordinator</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lmgreen@pdx.edu">lmgreen@pdx.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laure Patrick</td>
<td>Studio/Preschool Coordinator</td>
<td><a href="mailto:laurep@pdx.edu">laurep@pdx.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justine Williams</td>
<td>Studio/Preschool Coordinator</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jhlarson@pdx.edu">jhlarson@pdx.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura West</td>
<td>CCAMPIS Grant Specialist</td>
<td><a href="mailto:westl@pdx.edu">westl@pdx.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erin Burns</td>
<td>Student Coordinator</td>
<td><a href="mailto:eam@pdx.edu">eam@pdx.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joanna Goll</td>
<td>Administrative Coordinator</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jkonefal@pdx.edu">jkonefal@pdx.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacey Risner</td>
<td>Inclusion Specialist</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lrisner@pdx.edu">lrisner@pdx.edu</a></td>
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All of our staff email addresses are available on the PSU website. Use the faculty/staff search option to look up addresses by first or last name.