

*Revised: August 2015*

# RENSHAW EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER

# BIG RED SCHOOL

located at WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

# PARENT HANDBOOK

Dear Parents:

Welcome to Big Red School, which is provided through the Renshaw Early Childhood Center. This handbook has been designed to acquaint you with the policies of Big Red School and the Renshaw Early Childhood Center. If you have any questions regarding the information contained within this handbook, please see the director. We welcome parental involvement in our classroom and if you have special skills that you would like to share, please talk with a teacher.

Sincerely,

Lisa Murphy  
RECC Director

Renshaw Early Childhood Center  
104 Alumni Ave.  
Bowling Green, KY 42101  
270-745-4232

## **Philosophy, Purpose, & Procedure**

The Renshaw Early Childhood Center and Big Red School strives to advance the development and learning potential of young children of all abilities through developmentally appropriate early childhood services and hands-on training for Western Kentucky University students who are pursuing an education in the area of early childhood.

Big Red School provides early childhood services for children of all abilities. It is an inclusive environment that serves children with developmental delays and disabilities, as well as children who are typically developing. We provide adaptations and specialized interventions to ensure the success of all children. Picture systems and sign language are often used in addition to spoken language to assist children. We strive to teach through example that all children are valuable and have special talents and abilities.

Big Red School provides stimulation in all areas of development. Activities and the environment are structured to enhance motor, cognitive/intellectual, academic, communication/language, self-help, and social-emotional skills. We encourage independence in self-care needs and respect for the classroom. Big Red School strives to foster self-confidence, self-reliance, and self-discipline in the children we serve. We provide the foundation for children to think logically, concentrate, persist with difficult tasks, communicate effectively, interact and cooperate with others, and begin to become self-directed.

Big Red School is a training facility for WKU students who are receiving an education in early childhood. A video camera is present in the classroom and these videotapes will be used for education purposes. These videotapes may be shown in WKU courses and used for discussion and review of early childhood behavior, development, and education. Confidentiality will be maintained and children's names and identifying information will not be used outside of the early childhood classroom and within related courses. All WKU students participating in Big Red School sign confidentiality statements restricting their use of identifying information.

### **Programmatic Goals for Children**

- Children will develop acceptance of peers with disabilities and differing abilities.
- Children will use words/signs to communicate their wants/needs.
- Children will interact with peers and adults within the group setting.
- Children will follow the group routine and transition easily between activities.
- Children will learn to sit and attend to group activities, such as circle, snack, art, etc. in order to facilitate learning and to prepare them for school.
- Children will develop age-appropriate eating/drinking skills and try a variety of foods with different textures.
- Children will perform basic health/safety activities (hand washing, toileting, etc.)
- Children will follow basic classroom rules.
- Children will participate in and demonstrate enjoyment of a variety of sensory experiences in order to facilitate exploration and learning from the environment.
- Children will explore their environment through play and learn to assist with clean-up.

## RECC Teachers & Staff

All RECC lead teachers have masters' degrees in early childhood or a related field. RECC typically hires a graduate student and two student workers to assist in the classroom. The RECC is a training facility for WKU students who are receiving an education in early childhood. Many of these students interact in the classroom environment in addition to observing the children during sessions as part of their coursework. All WKU students participating in the RECC will attend a student orientation/training and sign confidentiality statements restricting their use of identifying information prior to participating in the classroom. WKU students are always supervised by a lead teacher when present in the classroom.

## How to Refer a child to RECC

- To initiate a referral call Shannon Sales-Family Resource Director at CEC at (270)745-2419 to begin the referral process.
  - RECC staff will then contact the family to gather more specific information. An application and additional developmental/educational paperwork will be requested at this time.
  - Once the paperwork is received, the child will be placed on the appropriate waiting list.
  - Before the beginning of each semester, applications are reviewed based on current information; however, RECC staff may contact families if additional information is needed prior to placement decisions.
- It is the responsibility of the parent/caregiver to update information (demographic information including phone numbers, addresses, availability, diagnoses, or change in services).
- RECC will contact parent/caregiver when there is an opening for their child.

## Upon Enrollment

**INITIAL INTAKE MEETING**—After the child has been enrolled and accepted a slot in the Early Childhood Program, RECC staff will assist in setting up an initial meeting with the Family Resource Director.

**STAFF/CHILD MEETING**—An individual meeting for the child and parent, if the child has a delay or disability, or attendance at the open house is required *before* the child can begin services. These meetings will help the child feel more *comfortable* and allow staff to provide each child the appropriate level of support. We ask that additional paperwork, evaluations, IFSP/IEP's be turned in at this time. Parents will receive a calendar with activities, themes, semester goals, snacks, etc. at the beginning of each semester. Days that Big Red School will not be in session will be noted on the calendar.

**IMPLEMENTATION OF IFSP/IEPs**—A current IEP/IFSP will be on file for children with special needs and those goals/outcomes will be implemented within the group session. Specific RECC/family goals will also be developed and implemented with specific strategies/activities/adaptations noted. Anecdotal notes will document progress toward goals and will be reviewed and updated each semester.

## **Transitions to Preschool/kindergarten**

If your child is three years old prior to the beginning of a new semester, he/she would be eligible to begin RECC preschool group. If the child is enrolled in kindergarten, he/she will be eligible for an RECC afterschool group. These transition decisions will be made collaboratively with RECC staff and the child's family. Consideration will be given to child/family's schedule and individual needs. RECC staff will assist with and collaborate with other community programs children may be transitioning to, such as; public preschool, head start, private preschool, daycare, Kelly Autism Program, private therapies, etc. RECC staff will attend IFSP/IEP meetings as requested by families and share information at family request with appropriate release forms.

## **Fees**

Tuition at Big Red School is due per semester. Tuition can be paid in full prior to the first day of classes or a deposit may be paid initially with the remainder due mid-semester.

Tuition should be paid by cash or check at the CEC front desk or in the drop box located at the RRECC entrance. Checks should be made payable to: WKU RECC. *There are no reimbursements for student absences, snow days, holidays, etc.* Each additional child per family will receive a 40% reduction in his/her tuition.

Tuition assistance is available on a limited basis. Please contact RECC staff regarding this program.

## **General Information**

**Class Sessions:** Separate classes are provided for toddlers, preschoolers, and kindergarten children. Classes are provided during the spring, summer, & fall semesters and follow the WKU calendar. Class times and days may vary according to semester and availability of WKU students. You will be provided a current schedule upon enrollment.

**Arrival:** Parents must provide transportation to RECC group sessions. Children and parents are asked to remain in the waiting area in the lobby until the scheduled class time. Teachers need at least 30 minutes prior to class to prepare for the day. RECC staff should be contacted in advance if a parent needs to drop a child off at an earlier time. The door to the classroom will be opened promptly at the beginning of the session. Parents are asked to bring children into the classroom and assist with placing personal items in the correct cubby. Parents are asked to sign their child in at the CEC front desk and leave an emergency contact number at every session.

**Departure:** All parents are encouraged to be prompt in picking up their child. Parents are asked to let a teacher know when they are leaving with their child. If parents are going to be late, they should call the CEC front desk (270) 745-4232 as soon as possible so staffing arrangements can be made. Children will not be released to anyone other than the persons authorized by parents on the application. The pick-up authorization should be updated as needed by child's guardian.

**Cancellations/No shows:** If for any reason you are unable to attend a session or a series of sessions please call RECC staff in advance to indicate when your child will not be in attendance.

It is very important that we know when your child will not be in attendance so that we can plan accordingly. Also, if for some reason your child will not be able to participate in Big Red School as expected please call and let the staff know of this change ASAP.

**Snow Days:** Please tune to WBKO, your local radio station, and/or WKU web page for school closing information. Big Red School will be closed when Warren County Schools or WKU is closed for inclement weather.

**Emergency Information:** The information that you enter on the application form is used in an emergency. Please update this information when needed so that the information remains current. An updated demographic form will be sent prior to beginning of the semester and must be returned. In case of emergency, we must know how to locate you.

### **Medical & Health:**

*Illness:* No child will be accepted in class if obviously ill or suspected of having a contagious or infectious disease. Children should not be brought to school if they:

- Have a sore throat
- Have a fever or have had a fever within the last 24 hours
- Have vomited within the last 24 hours
- Have had diarrhea within the last 24 hour

If your child becomes ill while at school, RECC will contact you asap. RECC will also notify parents when their child has been exposed to contagious or infectious diseases while at school. We also ask that parents notify the school if their child has been diagnosed with a contagious or infectious illness. Also contact Big Red School in advance if your child will be absent due to illness. In case of an emergency at school, you will be called immediately after any necessary first aid is given.

*Medication:* As Big Red School is typically a 2 or 2 ½ hour class, we ask that medications be administered by parents before or after the session. Only emergency medications will be administered during class (ie: seizure medication or medication for an allergic reaction). Please be aware that we must have specific written authorization and instructions from the child's physician, parent, or guardian to administer these medications. The written authorization to dispense medication should contain the following:

1. The name and/or prescription number of the medication to be given.
2. Specific instructions in the manner the medication should be given, including the dosage, amount, time of day, and dates.
3. Parent or guardian signature.

A medication authorization form will be provided to you upon request. All medication authorization forms will be kept in your child's chart. All prescription medication must be prescribed for the child we are administering the medication to.

*Medical forms:* Each child must have a current immunization certificate, physical form, and any special medical instructions/plans from the physician prior to the beginning of the semester.

*Diaper Changing/Toilet Training:* Children in diapers will be changed one time during a 2 or 2 ½ hour group session or as needed. RECC staff will work closely with parents with regard to toilet training and take children to toilet as needed.

**Food/Nutrition:**

Nutritional snacks will be provided for the children during each group session. Each snack will include 2 of the following in accordance with state requirements: milk, protein, fruit or vegetable (or 100% juice) and bread.

*Food/Drinks from Home:* If you send your child's snack, please make sure it also meets the above guidelines. Please do not send hotdogs, nuts, popcorn, hard pretzels, or raw peas as we do not provide these foods as snack items due to the choking hazard they pose for young children. If you send grapes, carrots, or meat; please cut these into bite-size pieces that your child is capable of chewing and swallowing easily. If you send a drink with your child, please be aware that they may drink this in the room at any time, but must sit at the table to eat or drink. Children are not allowed to walk around the room eating or drinking.

*Please notify us if your child has any food allergies or a special diet.* Any food restrictions will be posted in order to protect children from contact with problem foods. Any child with special nutrition needs or food allergies must provide the program with an individualized care plan that is developed in consultation with family members and specialists involved in the child's care. If your child has special feeding needs and you would like a daily record of type/quantity of food consumed, please notify staff and this will be provided.

*Birthdays:* Please feel free to bring special treats on your child's birthday to celebrate with his/her class. Please let staff know in advance that you will be bringing birthday treats along with an ingredient list.

*Candy & Gum:* Please do not allow your child to enter the classroom with candy or gum.

**Clothing/Diapers:**

Please send your child in simple, comfortable, easily washable clothing. The children will be painting and playing in sand on a regular basis! Many of the activities are messy. Please send an extra change of clothing each day, even if your child is not prone to accidents. If your child is not yet potty-trained, please send extra disposable diapers and wipes in their backpack. If your child must wear cloth diapers, a medical statement is required from the child's physician. Cloth diapers must have an absorbent inner lining and outer covering must be waterproof. Both cloth diapers and clothing that is soiled will be placed in a plastic bag without rinsing, and sent home for laundering.

**Toys from Home:** Please limit the number of toys brought from home. If a child does bring a toy from home, it will need to stay in his/her cubby during class time. We cannot be responsible for toys brought from home. Educational games and materials that can be shared with all the children are welcome.

**Campus/Community Excursions:**

Big Red School classes will participate in some campus activities and visit some campus and or community locations. Permission slips will be obtained for these excursions. Parents are welcome to participate in these excursions and should talk with the staff prior to the event. These trips will be walking field trips or parents will be asked to transport children. RECC does not transport children. RECC staff will have cell phones and first aid kits available during these outings for emergency use.

**Outdoor Play:** Our program is designed to include outdoor play or the inclusion of gross motor play indoors when weather is not conducive to outdoor play. Children who participate in RECC will not play outdoors in cases of extreme heat or cold. Children should be dressed appropriately for outdoor play in cold weather (ex: gloves, hat, and coat). Sunscreen should be applied by the parent immediately prior to drop-off during summer months if needed. Hats and sunglasses should also be sent with the child for extra sun protection. Please let staff know if your child cannot play outside for a medical reason.

### **Parent Involvement:**

*Parent/staff communication:* Communication between parents and teachers is encouraged on a daily basis. Parents are encouraged to talk with teachers about a child's day upon arrival and departure. Parents are asked to let staff know if there are concerns about a child's emotional or physical well-being. Concerns about development should be addressed with the director.

Parent/Teacher meetings can be scheduled as needed to discuss particular issues or concerns.

*Parent/Teacher Conferences-* Conferences will be held at the end of the spring and fall semesters to provide an opportunity to review progress on programmatic goals, individual goals and to adapt goals (if applicable) with input from the family as well as RECC staff. Signups for these conferences will be available at drop off/pick up or by phone/email.

*Fundraising:* Parents of children who participate in Big Red School will be asked to assist with some fundraising activities throughout the year to offset expenses. A limited number of parents will be asked to participate on a fundraising committee to assist with planning and organization of these events. If you are interested in assisting about with fundraising please contact the director.

*Advisory Committee:* A limited number of parents will also be asked to participate on the RECC advisory committee to discuss planning, procedures, and future direction of the RECC as well as funding and community needs. If you are interested in serving on this committee, please contact the director.

*Facebook page:* We invite all parents/caregivers to join the RECC Facebook page to stay up to date with upcoming events and announcements.

*Phone Calls:* Calls to teachers during class time should be limited to emergencies. Teachers and staff are busy working with the children. Please leave a message if the phone is not answered and someone will return your call as soon as possible. You may also call the front desk 745-4CEC to leave a message or to obtain an immediate response in an emergency.

*Changes in the Home:* In the event that significant changes occur in the home, please consider informing the director as soon as possible. All information will be regarded as confidential.

Common causes of stress include: either one or both parents being away from the home for an extended period of time; a new person living in the home; illness of either a parent or sibling; any hospitalization; accident or death in the family; new caregiver; moving; and death of a pet. Of course, we respect your judgment as to the kinds of changes, which may affect your child's behavior, security, and well-being.

*Observation Booth:* Parents are welcome to visit and observe their child at any time. An observation booth is available for parents and WKU students to observe children during a class session. Four headphones with individual volume controls are available for use. Please use these headphones and do not turn the volume up and listen without headphones as this breeches confidentiality. The observation booth should be entered from the hallway, not the classroom.

Please stop by the front desk in the CEC lobby if you want to observe. You will need to read Observation Room Rules and sign a confidentiality statement. Please keep your voice low when observing and be courteous of others.

*Child Records:* Your child's record is maintained in a confidential and secure location that is easily accessible to teachers and staff if needed. If you wish to review your child's record, please contact the director. Your child's record may also be made available to regulatory authorities as required.

**Toilet Training:**

Please let us know when you begin toilet training so that we may carry-through during class. Dress your child in pull-ups when beginning toilet training and discuss with staff the appropriate time to switch to underwear. Talk with a teacher about your child's toilet training schedule and any special techniques so that your child can be successful at school and home.

**Teacher Supervision of Children:**

RECC provides low child to teacher ratios within all aspects of the group program, including indoor play, outdoor play, and during field trips. A 1:3 (or less) teacher/child ratio is provided for all group sessions at RECC. Your child's group will have the same teachers for the entire semester.

**Discipline/Guidance:** Structuring of the classroom environment, teacher involvement in child activities, teacher modeling, and continuous supervision are utilized to manage behavior in Big Red School. Redirection and guidance are the primary forms of discipline used in the classroom. Behavior management will be individualized for each child and discussed with the family. No child will be asked to leave Big Red School based upon his/her behavior. It is the goal of Big Red School that all children are successful in a group situation with other children and we will work with you and your child to develop supports and techniques to help them manage unacceptable behaviors.

**Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting:** Staff members are required by law (KRS 620.030) to report child abuse or neglect to the Department for Social Services when they have reasonable cause to believe that abuse or neglect has occurred. If your child has an accident at home and you bring your child to the center with minor injuries or bruises, please make sure that you explain the circumstances to your child's teachers so that marks on your child are not misinterpreted. Likewise, if your child has an accident at school which results in minor injury, the teaching staff will supply you with a detailed written account of the accident when you pick your child up from school.