



# *Preschool Learning Lab*

**Psychology & Child Development Department**

**College of Liberal Arts**

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## ***Parent Handbook***

8/2018 revised

Preschool Learning Lab Website: [www.preschoollearninglab.calpoly.edu](http://www.preschoollearninglab.calpoly.edu)

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# *Philosophy, Purpose, Goals, Practices*

## Our Philosophy

At the Cal Poly Preschool Learning Lab, we believe:

- Young children develop mentally, socially, emotionally, and physically through their own explorations and active participation in playful learning experiences guided by responsive adults;
- Young children learn self-regulation and adopt healthy attitudes toward learning when they have regular opportunities to make choices, engage in meaningful activities, and interact with peers;
- Young children feel comfortable in educational/care settings when their primary caregivers (i.e., parents) and teachers communicate with one another;
- Learning and development applies to all members of the Preschool Learning Lab community, not just the children.

## Our Purpose

The purpose of the Cal Poly Preschool Learning Lab is to provide a Learn by Doing laboratory where undergraduate students gain practical experience working with young children and their families. The Lab provides a child-centered, inquiry-based learning environment where children are supported in their natural interests and curiosity through guided play and interactions with student teachers and peers.

## Our Goals for Children include:

- Attention to the development of the whole child, socially, cognitively, and physically.
- Creating an environment where children are free to experiment, test, and explore endless possibilities through play and exploration.
- Encouraging children's natural curiosity and interest in learning to build new knowledge and skills.
  - Special attention is given to supporting children's natural interests and engagement in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).
- Providing opportunities for children to learn how to manage their own behavior and get along with peers.
- Helping children develop healthy attitudes toward preschool.

## Our Goals for College Students are to:

- Develop more sophisticated skills in interacting with young children.
- Gain experience in planning and facilitating developmentally appropriate activities.
- Develop a professional approach to working and interacting with colleagues, children, and families.
- Better understand connections between developmental theory, research, and practice.

## Our Goals for the University and Early Childhood Field are to:

- Provide a laboratory for research on children's development and learning across disciplines.
- Demonstrate a model early education program.
- Promote interdisciplinary efforts across campus and engage students from all disciplines.

# Schedule

## Hours of Operation

The Preschool Learning Lab is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

## Available Schedules

Monday through Friday

Monday - Wednesday - Friday

Tuesday & Thursday

*Half Day* (8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.) or *Full Day* (8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.)

## Schedule Changes

The Lab will maintain full enrollment during the year and schedule changes may not be possible. However, if you need to change your child's schedule, please see the Lab Director for availability and a Change of Schedule Form. Schedule changes and tuition adjustments will only be made at the beginning of the month with proper notice and availability.

## Annual Calendar

The Lab will be open Fall term through finals week of Spring quarter.

The Lab will observe all academic holidays and will be closed Winter, Spring, and Summer breaks. Refer to the current school calendar available at the beginning of the year.

## Attendance

If your child is unable to attend Lab on any particular day due to illness or scheduling conflicts, please e-mail or call the Lab as soon as possible.

# Enrollment

## Priority

Priority enrollment will be given to Cal Poly Faculty/Staff, currently enrolled children and/or siblings, and the general public, in that order.

## Eligibility

The Learning Lab will admit children from 3-5 years of age who are fully potty-trained. Children must be 3 years old by September 1.

## Wait List Procedure:

The wait list is available to any child **within one year** of eligibility (age 2). To put your child on the wait list, please fill out the application available on our website ([www.preschoollearninglab.calpoly.edu](http://www.preschoollearninglab.calpoly.edu)), and return it with your non-refundable wait list fee to the PSY/CD office.

## Registration:

Once admitted, there will be a non-refundable annual enrollment/materials fee due with your enrollment contract and packet. See current tuition schedule for registration fees.

# Tuition

## Tuition Billing & Payment

Tuition is based on number of school days during the academic year, beginning Fall term in September and ending the last day of finals week in June. This means tuition is based on the number of days the Lab is OPEN each year, including a few holidays but, excluding quarter breaks when the Lab is closed.

Tuition payments are due monthly, September through May, to cover the entire academic calendar.. Those entering the program Winter quarter will be prorated for June attendance.

- Tuition bills are mailed on the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month and due on the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month. Billing reflects tuition due for the **next month prior to attendance**. For example, you will be billed August 10<sup>th</sup> for September tuition. September tuition will be due, August 25<sup>th</sup>.
- Any account that becomes delinquent as of the 26<sup>th</sup> of the month will receive a notice of termination of service to be effective on the last day of the same month unless the account is paid in full.
- Parents will be responsible for payment of the entire month upon termination of service.

Tuition reflects the reserved space for your child. There are no tuition credits or make-up days for days missed.

## Forms of Payment

Cal Poly accepts the following forms of payment: cash, personal check, or money order.

\*Cash must be paid at the university cashier's window. Please make sure to take an account slip with you when you pay. Account slips are available at the parent table.

\*Checks may be mailed to:

Cal Poly San Luis Obispo  
University Cashier - Bldg 01 Room 131-E  
1 Grand Ave  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407-0501

\*No cash or checks will be received at the Lab.

\*Checks that are returned for insufficient funds will incur a \$35 fee. The dishonored check amount must be paid immediately by cash or money order only. If a second check is returned, all future payments will need to be paid in cash or money order.

## Late Pick-Up Fees

It is important that you pick up your child from Lab on or before the pick up time. Please allow 5 to 10 minutes for parking and gathering your child's things. Late pick up fees will apply to the half-day schedule as well.

Half Day Late Pick Up (after 12:30 p.m.)

Full Day Late Pick Up (after 4:30 p.m.)

First 10 minutes =	\$5
11 to 15 minutes =	\$10
16 to 20 minutes =	\$20
21 to 30 minutes =	\$30
Over 30 minutes late =	\$30 plus \$1.00 per minute

## Termination/Withdrawal

A two-week notice must be given if either the parent or the Lab wishes to terminate enrollment, and tuition must be paid through the two weeks. The child is welcome to attend Lab during the two-week period. If two week's notice is not given, parents will be billed for the full two-week notice period.

# *Supporting Children's Activities & Communication*

## Clothing

Because Lab the philosophy encourages children to actively explore and play in their environment, children can become quite messy throughout the day. Parents are encouraged to dress their children in appropriate clothing for exploration and play. In addition, a thorough change of clothes is required to be kept at the Lab at all times. Shoes appropriate for running and climbing are required, although wearing shoes while at Lab is optional for children. Please do not send your child to Lab in flip-flops, crocs, high heels, or shoes that restrict movement. Please make sure to label all of your child's clothes and belongings.

## Sunscreen & Water Play

Please make sure to apply sunscreen to your child before Lab each day. The Lab staff will reapply sunscreen periodically throughout the day and parents need to sign a Sunscreen Permission form before the first day of enrollment.

Water play is a frequent activity at the Lab. Please make sure your child has a thorough change of clothes each day. Wet or soiled clothing will be sent home each day. Children are allowed to undress for water play down to their underwear and t-shirt for sun protection.

We allow children to explore a variety of weather conditions, including rain. Please make sure your child has adequate clothing for these conditions such as a hooded rain coat, rain boots, or other functional outdoor clothing.

## What Not To Bring To Lab

The Lab provides a variety of materials for children to enjoy each day. **We ask that children do not bring any toys or items from home (including costume attire).** Items from home can often cause conflict and hurt feelings when toys are accidentally broken, misused, or exclusive. Storing items from home in cubbies or pockets can also cause the same type of conflicts. The following phrase may be helpful in communicating this boundary to your child: "This is a home toy. Preschool Lab has many different toys and materials for you to enjoy every day. We can either keep this toy at home or put it in the car for you to use after preschool when I pick you up."

## Birthdays

Birthdays are celebrated by giving the child an option of having the group sing "Happy Birthday" and choosing his/her favorite Lab snack. In addition, parents are welcome to contribute to our library by donating a book to the Lab that can be shared by the child on his/her birthday. This way, the child enjoys the gift throughout the year. Please do not bring in any food for sharing.

## Parent Communication

We appreciate and encourage daily face-to-face communication with parents. We strive to keep you informed of your child's activities and growth in a number of ways through frequent e-mail memos, our private group ShutterFly account, Remind App, and flyers at the parent table. E-mail is used as a regular communication tool and we encourage parents to use e-mail as well ([preschoollabadmin@calpoly.edu](mailto:preschoollabadmin@calpoly.edu)). In addition we will provide an informational meeting during Fall quarter.

## Research In The Lab

Campus research is conducted with children in the Lab on a regular basis. You will be informed about current studies through the email and announcements by the sign in/out sheet.

## Visits

You are welcome to visit your child during the day at any time. Many parents visit occasionally for lunch or snack time. If parental visits cause distress for the child, the Lab staff will confer with the parent to reassess the visits. You may also use our observation booth at any time to observe your child without being noticed. Please see the Lab staff for the current code.

## **Discipline Policy**

At the Cal Poly Preschool Lab, it is our goal to provide rich opportunities for children to learn and explore through their play and interaction with the environment. We approach discipline in a positive manner through which children will learn social competence and self-regulation. The Lab does not use corporal punishment.

We will use a variety of tools such as redirection, positive reinforcement and natural or logical consequences. These tools are used with each child's developmental and maturity level considered. Children will be given consistent, age-appropriate limits, avenues to express their feelings, a physically and psychologically safe environment, and support from the family.

As much as possible, children will be included in determining the natural or logical consequence of an inappropriate behavior in order to support their ownership of responsibility in the action. With gentle, consistent guidance, children will have the opportunity to gain confidence in expressing themselves and the building blocks to support their self-esteem to work through difficult situations and conflicts.

A central component in the success of behavior-management, is the cooperation between parents and staff. It is important that children receive consistent messages between home and the Lab.

If a child's behavior becomes consistently disruptive to the typical flow of the Lab routine, the following protocol will be used:

1. Immediate or natural consequences will occur; including loss of privilege to engage in the activity tied to the behavior.
2. Lab staff will talk with the child regarding expectations and different choices for appropriate behavior.
3. If the behavior continues over an extended period of time, parents will be informed and an observation time will be scheduled. Parents can then observe their child with a Lab staff member to provide input and discussion to resolve the issue. A plan of action will be written at this time.
4. The parent may be asked to take the child home for the day if their behavior is severe.
5. If a child needs to be physically restrained from hurting himself/herself or others, parents will be called to pick the child up from the Lab. If the behavior continues, termination of enrollment will be discussed. Although this is a last resort, certain behaviors and issues are beyond the scope of what the Lab can provide for children and families.

## ***Health & Safety***

### **Sign In/Sign Out Procedures**

Every child is required to be *signed in* upon arrival and *signed out* upon departure from the Lab. State licensing requires that parents or authorized guardians sign in and out each day using **THEIR FULL LEGAL NAME**. Initials are not acceptable and the Lab can be fined for not complying with these state regulations. Please do not allow your child to write on the sign in/out sheet.

Please plan to arrive for pick up your child before the program ends; 10 minutes prior to 12:30 (half day) or 4:30 (full day).

During pick-up time, if your child needs to be released to another person other than a parent or legal guardian, please ensure that:

1. The person is listed on the child's Identification and Emergency Information Form (LIC 700).
2. You inform the Lab staff of the change.
3. The authorized person can provide picture identification upon arrival.

### **Meals & Snacks**

Children should eat a full nutritious breakfast before arriving to Lab and daily snacks will be served in the a.m. and the p.m. Snack preparation is facilitated by the college students. Snack time provides rich experiences for communication, cooperation, and literacy development as children participate in a "family-style" snack. Children are encouraged to try different snack foods and are not allowed to get food items from their lunch to replace snack, except for cases of allergies which is agreed upon with the classroom teacher ahead of time. Snack menus are available for you to review and discuss with your child.



Whenever possible, snacks will consist of locally grown fruits, vegetables, and dairy products. The snack menu consists of at least one serving from at least two of the four main food groups, and portions are in compliance with the supplemental food chart (LIC 101227) according to the general age of the children. Water is available at snack time as well as throughout the day. Snack menus are posted by the sign-in/out sheets and copies are available to parents upon request.

Children are required to bring their own lunch from home. Lunches should be nutritionally balanced: including protein, carbohydrate, fruit and/or vegetables, and water, milk or 100% juice. An ice pack may be placed in a child's lunch to avoid spoilage. Please do not send sugary foods or carbonated beverages in your child's lunch.

An Allergy/Sensitivity Form for any food allergies and/or sensitivities that may affect your child is available at the parent table. The form must also be signed by your child's physician and returned to the Lab director before the child begins the program.

### **Rest Time**

Children staying full day will have a rest time from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. We do not require children to sleep, however it is important that they rest their bodies quietly on their mat. Children who do not fall asleep may choose a quiet activity until rest time has ended or there is available staff to take them outside. Each child will be provided a rest mat. Parents need to provide a blanket and a crib-sized sheet for their child, which will be sent home weekly for cleaning. Please remember to mark all of your child's belongings with their first and last name.

### **Field Trip Provisions**

Children and students will be taking field trips periodically throughout the year. The Lab will notify parents by e-mail and/or note prior to any field trip. Parents may opt their child out of any field trip and make alternate arrangements for child care on that day. Field trips will be limited to the Cal Poly campus and most trips will be within walking distance. If traveling by vehicle, the state of California requires children under the age of six years or weighing less than 80 pounds to be in a child car seat, which meets the requirements of California law. When children attend field trips where transportation is needed, parents are required to provide a car seat for their child to be used during the field trip. The car seat needs to be clearly labeled.

### **Immunization Requirements**

Licensing requires that all children enrolled in a childcare center have a Physician's Report (LIC 701) on file. This report requires up-to-date immunizations, a screening of TB risk factors, and an original signature from the physician indicating that your child is physically and emotionally capable of attending a childcare program. The Lab requires that parents update immunization information annually or whenever your child receives an immunization.

### **Medication Policy/Plan**

If your child requires medications, including vitamins or supplements, during his/her time at the Lab, parents are required to provide written consent by filling out a Medication Permission Form each day the medication is to be administered. Medications must be in the original prescription container, marked with the medication name, physician's name, date, child's name, dosage, and times to administer. Over-the-counter medications are required to be in the original container with the label clearly indicating the specific dosage that should be given to a child with specific weight and age designations. If the over-the-counter medication states that a physician needs to be consulted for dosage, parents must obtain a note directly from the physician stating dosage and frequency for the specific child. As part of our incidental medical services, the Lab is able to enroll children who require an EpiPen/EpiPen Jr. and/or inhalers on site. Please see Lab staff for additional medical forms for this service.

### **Illness**

The Lab strives to maintain a healthy environment for children and is not licensed to accommodate sick children. We ask that parents do not bring their children to Lab if they have any symptoms of illness (i.g., respiratory illness, a cold, green runny nose, red watery eyes, cough, fever, vomiting, diarrhea, unexplained rash, pink eye, or lice). Upon arrival, your child's health will be assessed. However, if symptoms arise during the day, your child will be isolated from the group and you will be contacted to pick up your child. Your child may return to Lab when they have been symptom free for at least 24 hours.

The Lab will contact you by e-mail or note if your child is exposed to a highly contagious virus or illness so you can monitor their symptoms and wellness.

### **Injuries**

Children may experience minor injuries in a preschool setting such as bumps, bruises or scrapes. "Ouch Reports" for such minor injuries will be filled out and given to you for your signature. If a child is seriously injured at the Lab, the Lab staff will attempt to contact the parents. If immediate medical attention is necessary, the Lab staff will call 911 while continuing to contact parents or authorized persons on the child's emergency card.



## Medical or Dental Emergency

If a child requires medical or dental attention, the Lab staff will attempt to contact the child's parents first. If the parents are unavailable, the Lab staff will then follow the emergency plan indicated on the child's Identification and Emergency Information Form (LIC 700) while continuing to try to reach the child's parents. Persons listed as "additional persons who may be called in an emergency" as well as the child's physician and/or dentist, may be contacted during this process. In the case of a life-threatening emergency, the Lab staff will call 911 and continue to notify the child's parents.

## Emergency Plans

The Preschool Lab will conduct monthly earthquake and fire drills with the children. Full-time staff are current in CPR/First Aid and possess a certificate of completion of Health and Safety Training.

In the event of an emergency, the Preschool Lab is under the direction of Cal Poly campus emergency procedures and the SLO County Office of Emergency Services. If we need to evacuate our building, we have two location sites on campus; 1) Across the street at Campus Market courtyard, and 2) O'Neill Green located on campus off California Blvd. In the event that we would need to evacuate the campus, we will be under the direction of the SLO County Office of Emergency Services for transportation and relocation site. We will make every effort to notify parents and wait for them to pick up their children until it becomes unsafe to remain on campus. In addition, we will make every effort to leave a note as to where the children will be transported for safety.

## *Research & Class Projects in the Lab*

The Cal Poly Preschool Learning Lab provides a living environment to support children's development, and a model educational program where campus research and class projects are conducted on a regular basis. These activities provide valuable information to enrich and facilitate the Lab's progressive early education philosophy and practices. Children's full identity is protected and all photos or footage of the Lab children are for in-house use only unless your permission for a specific use is granted. Below, you will find a description of the scope of these activities.

## College Student Activities

**Student Teaching Assistants (Interns).** All students in the Child Development major are required to take one course in the Lab to gain skills in interacting with children and learn about quality early childhood education programs. They usually take this course during their sophomore year. Students interact directly with children, design and implement learning activities (e.g., gardening, art lessons), and assist the teacher in a variety of ways. These activities are conducted under the supervision of the director and a Child Development professor.

**Projects.** Cal Poly students from across campus work on short-term projects with children in the Lab. Some examples are:

- Engineering students designed a Materials Safari game with the input from children.
- Child Development students created additional science learning materials for children and observed their use for their senior project.
- A multi-disciplinary team worked on a "Farm to Table" project connecting the Lab's food sources to Cal Poly's agriculture and dairy programs. The students provided a full lesson on food sources with the Lab children involving a trip to the Cal Poly dairy and a scavenger hunt for Cal Poly products sold at Campus Market.

**Course Activities.** Students taking courses, such as *Observing Children*, *Research Methods*, and *Assessing Children's Development*, also utilize the Lab at times. For assignments, students practice observing and recording behavior of children, and practice conducting brief interviews and assessments. The purpose is to educate the students, not to obtain information about individual children. Any scores or records obtained under such conditions are not considered valid and not kept in the children's records. Students do not refer to children by full names in class reports or discussion.

These course assignments are typically brief and done in the observation booth or in the classroom or playground. If projects are more extensive or conducted outside the Lab, written consent from parents will be obtained first. Course projects are supervised by Cal Poly faculty, discussed with and monitored by the Lab director and teaching staff, and scheduled so that they do not overly interfere with daily preschool activities. The activities are always developmentally appropriate and children generally enjoy participating however, children can always decline to participate in any activities or projects.

In addition, some Master's level courses use the Lab for observation/play exercises and family interviews. In such cases, a separate form is provided for families to sign up for the activities and a thorough explanation and consent form is provided at that time.

## **Faculty Activities**

**Research.** Several times during the year, children may participate in research conducted by professors in the Psychology and Child Development Department. For example, Dr. Jipson conducted a study on children's interactions on the playground before and after the renovation. Parents sign a blanket consent form at the beginning of the school year to allow their children to participate in research studies like these, involving educational innovations and observations.

Faculty also conduct experimental and other studies at the Lab not included on the blanket consent form, such as a study conducted by Dr. Daniels on children's persistence in face of challenge. Children who participated in this study attempted to complete difficult puzzles and other tasks and were interviewed about their experiences. Studies like these—involving tasks and procedures not typically encountered in daily preschool life—require separate approval by the Cal Poly Human Subjects Committee and separate written parental consent.

Research in the Lab is supervised by Cal Poly faculty, and coordinated with the Lab director and teaching staff so that it does not detract from children's preschool experiences. Children can always choose not to participate in research. Further information about research projects conducted in the Lab is included in consent and other documents.

**Advisory.** Child Development faculty and administrators in the Psychology and Child Development also play advisory roles, and meet regularly with Dr. Clarkson to discuss the functions of the Lab. In addition, faculty are involved in parent meetings and special Lab events.

## ***Other Policies***

### **Non-Discrimination**

Cal Poly Preschool Learning Lab is operated on a non-discriminatory basis giving equal treatment and access to services without regard to actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, mental or physical disabilities, or a person's association with persons with one or more of these characteristics. Additionally, no religious instruction of any kind is provided at Cal Poly Preschool Learning Lab.

### **Child Abuse & Neglect**

All staff at the Lab are mandated reporters and required by law to report suspected physical, sexual, emotional abuse, neglect or exploitation to Child Protective Services and Community Care Licensing immediately (Penal Code 11166). We are not required to notify parents when a report is made.

### **Right To Interview**

Under Title 22 Regulation 101200(b), the Department of Social Services has the authority to interview children or staff without prior consent. (i) The licensee shall ensure that provisions are made for private interviews with any children or staff members. Regulation 101200(c) state the Department has the authority to inspect, audit, and copy child or childcare center records upon demand during normal business hours. Records may be removed if necessary for copying. Removal of records shall be subject to the requirement in Sections 101217(c) and 101221(d).

***“When we treat children’s play as seriously as it deserves, we are helping them feel the joy that’s to be found in the creative spirit. It’s the things we play with and the people who help us play that make a great difference in our lives.”***

-Fred Rogers

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***We’re so happy the you’ve chosen to join us in celebrating and supporting the playful learning of children.***

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