"As human beings, our job in life is to help people realize how rare and valuable each one of us really is."

-Fred Rogers

INSIDE:
- Family Engagement
- Policies & Procedures
- Health and Safety
- Learning Environment

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To receive this handbook in a language other than English, please contact the UWG Pre-K.
The University of West Georgia (UWG) Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) program recognizes families as children’s first teachers, and the home and community as an important environment where children grow and develop. Family support, engagement, and partnership are viewed as essential components for the optimum development and future success of all children.

The purpose of this handbook is to help families understand the goals and purpose of the program, to answer important questions about the program and its policies, and to offer suggestions that help children be successful at the UWG Pre-K.

**UWG Preschool Contact Information**

The UWG Pre-K is housed in the College of Education (COE) Early Learning Center at University of West Georgia.

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Glossary of Terms

**BFTS** Bright from the Start

**CDC** Center for Disease Control and Prevention

**DECAL** Department of Early Care and Learning

**GELDS** Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards

**NAEYC** National Association for the Education of Young Children

**Pre-K** Pre-Kindergarten

**UWG** University of West Georgia
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Program Overview

The UWG Pre-K is a one-year, lottery-funded Georgia Pre-K program that provides educational services to eligible four-year-old children of UWG students, faculty and staff, and surrounding communities to promote school readiness. All children and families are served according to grant requirements from Bright From the Start (BFTS).

Georgia’s Pre-K programs help children become independent, self-confident, enthusiastic learners. Participation in the program encourages children to develop good habits and daily routines. Pre-K teachers use Georgia Early Learning Development Standards (CELDS) to make the school environment complete with developmentally appropriate learning opportunities for all children.

The UWG Pre-K is also accredited by the National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC is a professional membership organization that promotes high-quality early learning by connecting early childhood practice, policy, and research. As such, the program, policies, and procedures of the program are also aligned with NAEYC standards of excellence.
The mission of the UWG Pre-K is to provide an environment that supports the whole child by promoting each child’s safety and developmental growth and learning.

The UWG Pre-K promotes the critical importance of early childhood education by:
- Providing High Quality Program
- Supporting Families and the Community
- Participating in Professional Development
- Connecting to the Field of Early Childhood

The UWG Pre-K values: program development, family engagement, high quality environments, nurturing and responsive relationships, a sense of belonging, and expression.
The role of UWG Pre-K program is defined in three areas: instruction, research, and service.

**Instruction**
The program provides 180 days of educational services, August through May. A total of 6.5 hours of instruction are provided from 8:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding school closures for teacher professional development and/or holidays/breaks. The UWG Pre-K utilizes the Ready to Advance curriculum, which was reviewed by BFTS and determined to be a model aligned with Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards. Instruction is supplemented with best-practice initiatives and strategies identified as the field of early childhood continues to advance.

**Research**
The program supports research in the field of child and family development achieved, in part, by the participation of the children and the families at the UWG Pre-K. These research opportunities are most often conducted by the faculty and students of the UWG College of Education and other units of the University. It is through child and family participation that new knowledge and insight into children’s development is gained and the quality of early care and learning can be enhanced.

**Service**
Opportunities for quality early childhood training are provided to both the community and to UWG students. UWG Pre-K staff provide professional instruction and guidance to those who observe and interact with young children and their families. Also, faculty and staff members of UWG are actively involved in the UWG Pre-K. These are respected scholars in the area of child development and the program benefits highly from their expertise.
UWG Fast Facts for Families

- Specific documentation is required to participate in the UWG Pre-K program (see Eligibility and Enrollment Requirements on page 12), including:
  - Proof of Age (Birth Certificate)
  - Proof of Georgia residency
  - Copy of child’s Social Security Card OR signed waiver form
  - Contact information/Bright From the Start Roster form (with relevant support documents)
  - Certificate of Immunization (DHR form 3231) within 30 calendar days of attendance*
  - Eye, Ear, Dental, Nutrition Certificate (DHR form 3300) with ALL sections signed within 90 calendar days of attendance

- Attendance is required. The instructional day is 6.5 hours (8:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday, as mandated by Bright From the Start (BFTS). Children who do not attend regularly may be referred to BFTS for disenrollment consideration (see Attendance Requirements on page 13).

- The UWG Pre-K is from 8:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The school calendar is available online, which lists all instructional days and school closings, at https://www.westga.edu/ugpreek/

- All emergency contact information must remain current. Additionally, any changes to who may pick your child up from school must be provided in writing, signed by an approved guardian.

- Children may only attend UWG Pre-K if they are healthy. All health and safety protocols must be followed by children, visitors, and volunteers (see Health and Safety on page 22).

- All students should eat healthy meals at school. Snacks will be prepared at the UWG Pre-K, but lunch should be provided from home. A snack fee (if applicable) is due the first week of each month, and may be paid online (see Fees on page 17 and Lunch and Snacks on page 24).

- Transportation to and from UWG Pre-K is the responsibility of families - the UWG Pre-K does not provide transportation.

- The UWG Pre-K does not provide any before or after school care. Families who need before or after school care must make their own arrangements. Some local day care facilities will provide transportation to/from UWG Pre-K for children who attend their before/after school programs. A program called PupU is offered by UWG Continuuint Education and is housed in the Pre-K facility.
Daily Pre-K School Checklist

A Nutritious Lunch
- Everyone loves a treat, but lunches at UWG Pre-K should be packed with whole, nutritious food that children can prepare and handle on their own.

A Backpack
- This accessory should be large enough to fit a file folder, lunch, and other individual items.

Seasonal Outerwear
- Clothing should be appropriate for the weather and for active play. This includes hats, gloves, and jackets in cold weather and clothing that can get (occasionally) messy.

Closed Toe Shoes
- Flip flops can cause falls in the UWG Pre-K so tennis shoes and strapped sandals are best.

Water Bottle
- One labeled, reusable water bottle should be kept at the Pre-K for daily water intake.

Change of Clothing
- One complete change of labeled clothing (including socks), appropriate for the season, in case of spills or accidents.

*Except for special occasions, personal items and toys from home are not permitted.

*Masks, pretend weapons, toys that launch projectiles, or balloons are not allowed at any time (BFTS, 591-1-1.12).
Additionally, if families would like to make a monetary donation to support activities and events at the UWG Pre-K, they can submit cash or a check to the "UWG Pre-K Foundation". These funds will be used to support the supplies and fees associated with field trips, holiday events, family engagement events, and special activities for students.
Family Engagement

This section of the Family Handbook contains information about:

- Family Visitors and Volunteers (page 8).
- Family Communication (page 9).
- Family Events (page 10).

About Family Engagement

Families have essential knowledge of children’s skills, interests, and needs. As children develop skills, habits, and attitudes, parents/guardians of children are the first and most important teacher. Research shows that active family participation in children’s learning experiences contributes to success in school. Parents/guardians provide valuable insight on their children, helping teachers better encourage, support, and motivate them.

All families are seen as an integral part of the UWG Pre-K program. Opportunities for families to participate in UWG Pre-K program activities will be provided throughout the school year. As often as possible, families will be provided with information about their child’s progress and classroom activities. Involvement in UWG Pre-K programming can occur in a variety of ways, such as helping to prepare materials, visiting, planning events, and/or working with teachers.

When young children see positive interactions between their parents and teachers, they feel safe and comforted so they can focus on learning. It is critical that teachers and families work together as a partnership to ensure meaningful learning opportunities for the young children that they share. Teachers can work to support partnerships with parents/caregivers by communicating regularly and being available to assist parents with resources and expert guidance. Parents can work to support partnerships with teachers by providing ongoing feedback and remaining involved throughout the year.
Family Visitors and Volunteers

Visiting the UWG Pre-K as a parent/guardian is an important, informative, and rewarding experience for families.

For all children’s safety, the UWG Pre-K is a locked facility. Doorbells equipped with cameras and speakers are positioned at both the front and the back doors. Staff members are able to converse with visitors and open doors remotely from several rooms in our school. There are also cameras placed throughout the building and on the playgrounds. Recordings from these cameras may be reviewed by UWG Campus Police.

In the 2020-21 school year, all visitors and volunteers, including parents/guardians as well as other family members, will require prior approval from the Site/Program Director in order to maintain health and safety protocols related to COVID-19. To request approval, please email the UWG Pre-K. Once approved, all visitors and volunteers will be required to follow health, safety, and cleaning protocols. All visitors and volunteers must be admitted by a staff member and sign in at the front desk upon arrival, complete a health screening (including a temperature check), and sign out when they leave.

As additional safety measures, anyone working or volunteering in the UWG Pre-K may be required to give consent for a background check, conducted by UWG Campus Police. Additionally, anyone who would like to volunteer will be given an orientation providing basic information about the program to prepare them for confidentiality, safety, and emergency expectations before volunteering.

Parking is very limited at the UWG Pre-K. There are three parking spaces available in front of the UWG Pre-K that may be used to access the facility. Alternatively, visitors must park in a legal parking space in the Tyus Hall/Commuter lot, or the Food Services (Z-6) parking lot at UWG. Parking at any red or yellow curbs, or in handicap spaces without a permit while on campus could result in a ticket. If the UWG Pre-K hosts special events, specific parking information will be sent to families.
Family Communication

Families and staff should have the opportunity to share information related to the child’s progress in the program. At the UWG Pre-K, parent/guardian information about their child and feedback are important to program implementation and development. There are a number of ways communication occurs.

First, families and teachers may communicate children’s needs and any related concerns or information about a child at arrival and departure. It is critical, however, that some related concerns and information are placed in writing and not just verbally communicated. This includes any medication changes, health/safety concerns, drop-off/pick-up changes, etc. UWG Pre-K parents should send these signed, written notes in a communication folder in children’s backpacks. Additionally, to maintain the speed of drop-off/pick-up required for a timely school day, lengthy conversations should be redirected by using the teacher’s email or calling the facility. If you call during instruction, please let the office know you are a parent. We will deliver a message, or take a number for a return call.

Second, social media and monthly newsletters are utilized to communicate with families the activities, events, and lessons that children participate in. All parents/guardians will be asked to sign a release form to approve/not approve their child’s photo/video to be shared in these communication tools.

Additionally, family conferences are scheduled two times a year. During these conferences, topics of discussion may include the child’s progress, developmental needs, educational program, and any other strengths/challenges. Parents/guardians may contact their child’s lead teacher to request a conference at times other than those designated.

Finally, UWG Pre-K provides an opportunity for families to be involved in program development and improvement process through an Advisory Board. The Advisory Board meets quarterly and is made up of UWG Pre-K staff representatives, site/program staff, community partners, and family representatives. If interested in serving in this way, parents/guardians should send an email or note to the UWG Pre-K.
Family Events

Throughout the school year, the UWG Pre-K hosts special events that give families an opportunity to socialize and collaborate with UWG Pre-K teachers, staff, and other families. Families can expect the following, related to events:

- In the 2020-21 school year, family events may require adjustment to maintain social distancing and to meet health and safety protocols.
- A parent/guardian orientation will be provided that explains specific information to help families navigate general program information, the UWG Pre-K curriculum, and necessary forms/information to be collected.
- Whenever possible, parents/guardians will be encouraged to participate in field trips (on campus only until further notice).
- Notification of events will be communicated through newsletters and invitations in a timely manner so parents have the opportunity to plan to attend.
This section of the Family Handbook contains information about:

- Confidentiality (page 12).
- Eligibility and Enrollment Requirements (page 12).
- Attendance Requirements (page 13).
- Inclement Weather (page 14).
- Arrival and Departure (page 14).
- Withdrawal and Program Dismissal (page 17).
- Fees (page 17).
- Program Assessment (page 19).
- Clothing and Accessories (page 19).
- Fire, Storm, and Other Emergency Drills (page 21), and,
- Grievances (page 21).

About Program Policies and Procedures

Policies and procedures ensure that the UWG Pre-K operates efficiently and that all grant requirements are met in order to maintain appropriate instruction and programming. The current program policies and procedures are provided by BFTS, as mandated by a grant agreement.
Confidentiality

All children’s records are confidential. Enrollment forms, health records, parent/teacher conference reports and all other information are secured in a locked file, and will only be accessible to parents/guardians, program personnel, and teaching staff who are directly involved in providing assistance or auditing records. Additionally, the BFTS consultant/monitoring team, as well as the NAEYC consultant/monitoring team may be granted access for the purpose of monitoring and accreditation. Sharing of information for any other reason, such as referral for additional evaluation or services requires prior written consent from the child’s parent/guardian.

Eligibility and Enrollment Requirements

Georgia’s Pre-K is a public/private partnership. A child may not be denied from registering or enrolling in the program, but all parents/guardians must complete certain requirements for a child to attend. To attend, children must be four (4) years old by September 1 of the current school year, and residents of Georgia. Children who are five (5) years old may attend if they have not previously attended a Georgia Pre-K program.

Parents/Guardians are required to complete and return all record forms by the required date in order for children to enroll. These required records are:

- BFTS Registration Form
- UWG Pre-K Family Enrollment Form
- Proof of Age (Birth Certificate)
- Proof of Georgia Residency
- Copy of child’s Social Security Card OR Signed Waiver Form
- Contact information/Bright From the Start Roster Form (with relevant support documents)
- Certificate of Immunization (DHR form 3231) within 30 calendar days of attendance*
- Eye, Ear, Dental, Nutrition Certificate (DHR form 3300) with ALL sections signed within 90 calendar days of attendance
- Current health check/date of last full health exam

*If your child has not had the required immunizations due to medical reasons or family beliefs, additional documentation is required. Please discuss any variance of required immunizations with the Site/Program Director.
Attendance Requirements

Regular school attendance is a key component to children’s academic and social/emotional success. Upon enrollment, a parent/guardian agrees to send their child to the UWG Pre-K program for 6.5 hours of instructional time for the full school year (8:00 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. Monday through Friday). The goal of the UWG Pre-K attendance policy is to assist families in establishing and maintaining regular school attendance patterns, consistent with BFTS guidelines. Children who are chronically tardy, frequently leave early, who are picked up late on a regular basis, or are chronically absent without medical or other reasonable explanation must be disenrolled from the program.

Daily attendance records will be maintained. BFTS monitors attendance and defines the following:

- Chronic tardiness as late arrival or early departure more than once per week.
- Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing more than two days per month without medical or other reasonable explanation.
- Chronic tardiness or absenteeism is also defined by a pattern of irregular attendance—such as arriving tardy every Monday, being absent every Thursday or leaving early on Fridays.
The UWG Pre-K attendance procedures, when concerns with tardiness, timeliness, or absenteeism occurs, include the following:

- Written notice of the first attendance concern (tardiness, absence, delayed pick-up) will be sent home to the parent/guardian and recorded in daily attendance records.
- Following two (2) unexcused absences in a one-month period or three (3) unexcused tardies or delayed pick-ups, the parent/guardian will be contacted requesting a meeting to determine the reason(s) for the attendance concern as well as what assistance can be provided to resolve attendance concerns.
- Inability to resolve attendance concerns after documented intervention will be referred to BFTS for disenrollment consideration.
- Children who do not attend school for ten (10) consecutive days without a medical or other reasonable explanation will be removed from the roster without BFTS approval.

**Inclement Weather**

In the event of inclement weather, UWG and the Carrollton City School system officials decide when to close schools based on public safety reports and other considerations. Due to geographic location, if either the UWG campus or the Carrollton City School system are closed, the UWG Pre-K will also be closed.

In the event of a weather-related closing, announcements will be made over the campus radio station, as well as radio stations in Carrollton, Newnan, Bremen and Douglasville and radio and television stations in Atlanta. If the need for an emergency closing occurs while your child is at the UWG Pre-K, you will be contacted by your child’s teacher.

**Arrival and Departure**

Parents/guardians are responsible for providing daily transportation for their child to and from the UWG Pre-K. The following procedures have been established for arrival and departure to ensure the safety and well-being of the children:
1. The UWG Pre-K front door is opened at 7:40 a.m. for arrival and at 2:30 p.m. for dismissal. In order to facilitate the process, families need to make a right turn off West Georgia Drive to the UWG Pre-K. If you come from the opposite direction, drive past the UWG Pre-K, turn around, and line up to use the right turn lane to join the drop-off/pickup line. No left turns off West Georgia Drive are permitted between 7:15-8:15 a.m. and 2:15-3:15 p.m. on UWG Pre-K school days. As families leave the UWG Pre-K circle drive, they must turn right onto West Georgia Drive. No left turns are allowed into or out of the UWG Pre-K drive between 7:15-8:15 a.m. and 2:15-3:15 p.m. on UWG Pre-K school days.

2. Families will drop-off and pick up their child in the drive-through lane in front of the building, utilizing two zoned spots. The adult should remain in the car at all times. All vehicles must display their child’s Arrival/Departure Name Card (provided at Family Orientation) so it is visible to Pre-K program staff members in the circle drive.

3. At arrival, a Pre-K program staff member will be at the drop-off spaces to open the car door, greet the child, take the child’s temperature (see Health and Safety, page 22), unbuckle the child, and walk them to the UWG Pre-K entrance. At dismissal, a Pre-K program staff member will be at the pick up spaces to put the child in the car, buckled. To help make this a smooth process, please install the child’s car seat/booster on the back passenger side of the vehicle.

Safety Precautions

- Do not allow your child to exit your vehicle at any other point on the UWG Pre-K drive. Children are not allowed to walk to the building alone.
- No child will be allowed to leave the UWG Pre-K if a safety seat is not installed in the vehicle. The UWG Pre-K has a safety booster seat that can be signed out in the event that a family needs to borrow the seat to transport their child home.
- Parents/guardians cannot leave their vehicle unattended in the parking lot drive-through lane.
- Parents/guardians may not drop off their child prior to the arrival time.
- The front door of the UWG Pre-K will be closed/locked at all times.
• Children will only be released to those adults whose names are listed on the release section of the Registration Form. A child cannot be released to an unauthorized person. Families are asked to keep their child’s approved adult list updated if changes need to be made to their child’s pickup list. If a temporary change is made, parents/guardians can authorize release of the child to someone not listed by providing a written, signed approval. The temporary person should be able to produce identifying information (e.g. driver’s license) in order to pick a child up.

• The UWG Pre-K reserves the right to refuse to release a child to anyone who appears to be in an impaired state that could endanger the child. UWG Campus police will be called to assess the situation and help determine the next steps for safe transportation for the child.

Late arrival (8:00 a.m. or later) and early dismissal (before 2:30 p.m.) procedures require a parent/guardian to walk the child into the building. In the event this occurs, the following are the procedures:

1. Vehicles must use a legal parking space and safely walk the child to the entrance.
2. Utilize the intercom system to gain access to the building.
3. The child must be screened at the front desk (i.e. temperature will be taken).
4. Children will be walked to/brought from the classroom by another adult.

It is important to note that any time a child arrives late or is picked up early, the attendance policies will be followed (see Attendance Requirements, page 13). On the third incident of the child being picked up after 3:00 p.m., the UWG Pre-K will charge the family $15 for the first 5 minutes and $1 per minute thereafter. For those who have reached the third late pick up, this fee will be in place for each late pick up following for the rest of the school year.

In some cases, arrangements may be made with local daycares to provide transportation and before/after school care. The UWG Pre-K should be notified if this is the child’s arrangement before they will be authorized to leave with any organization.
Withdrawal and Program Dismissal

If a parent/guardian wishes to withdraw a child, the program should be notified as soon as possible. A two-week notice is requested to facilitate necessary arrangements and paperwork. If a child enrolls as a four-year-old and the family elects to withdraw the child within the child’s first 30 calendar days of enrollment, the family may withdraw the child, and the child may be eligible to enroll in the UWG Pre-K the following year if local enrollment policies allow.

A child who is chronically tardy or absent can be dismissed from the program, including children who are not picked up at the end of the UWG Pre-K day on a regular basis (see Attendance Requirements, page 13).

The UWG Pre-K program follows an Inclusion and Behavior Support practice guide (see page 34) before requesting any intensive intervention, such as modified days, extended suspension, or program dismissals. Immediate suspension for up to two days (and no more than five days during the school year) may be made at any time the UWG Pre-K program staff determines a child is causing an immediate danger to themself or others to allow the program an opportunity to plan for successful participation, and not as punishment. Any extended suspension (more than two days at a time or more than five cumulative days) requires approval from BFTS.

Families will be given assistance in obtaining resources to help the child benefit from the program, including assessment referral and treatment options.

Fees

Funding through BFTS provides for quality educational services for eligible children at no cost to families for children to attend the UWG Pre-K program. Fees may be assessed for extracurricular activities (e.g. insurance, school photographs, T-shirts, extended day services, meals, etc.).
Snack Fee: The UWG Pre-K charges an admissible fee to cover costs of a daily USDA approved snack served to children. Families who qualify for Category One status (see Eligibility and Enrollment Requirements, page 12), based on information reported on the Registration Form and appropriate supporting documentation, are exempt from snack fees. Category Two families are required to pay snack fees. Issues of non-payment are referred to Bright From the Start. Disenrollment for non-payment is at BFTS discretion. Families may opt to pay the year's balance at the beginning of the school year. An online payment option is available through the West Georgia Mall, where families can pay monthly ($40.00, $15.00 in August), semester-long ($200.00), or yearly ($375.00) snack fees. The online portal can be accessed through the West Georgia Mall, or by using this embedded QR code: https://secure.touchnet.com/C21447_ustores/web/classic/store_main.jsp?STOREID=38&STCATID=1

Field Trips and Special Event Fees: The UWG Pre-K may request a per child donation per field trip, not to exceed $25.00 per child per year. Parents/guardians who participate in field trips may be charged a fee. If a child does not provide a donation, UWG Pre-K funds may be used to provide the fee for that child. A child cannot be denied participation in a field trip/special event based on whether or not a donation was received.

Late Pick-Up Fee: For late pickups, the following fee structure is in place: On the third incident of the child being picked up after 3:00 p.m., the family will be charged $15.00 for the first five (5) minutes and $1 per minute thereafter. For those who have reached the third late pick up, this fee will be in place for each late pick up following for the rest of the school year.

Make a Donation! Most field trips, activities, and special events that the UWG Pre-K plans are funded by donations designated to the UWG Pre-K through the UWG Foundation. When a monthly donation is made, it supports programming for its students and families. It is suggested that families make a monthly donation of $25.00 to support the projects and events planned for the school year.
Program Assessment

Program quality is monitored by BFTS. An assigned BFTS Pre-K Consultant can make announced and unannounced visits throughout the year to monitor and evaluate student and/or program progress. BFTS staff is available for consultation regarding program issues, training needs, etc. Compliance with BFTS allows the UWG Pre-K to maintain its funding viability. Additionally, submission of annual reports and quality monitoring through randomized site visits allow the UWG Pre-K to maintain its NAEYC accreditation.

Clothing and Accessories

Children should wear washable, comfortable clothing appropriate for active play. Activities are often messy and appropriate clothing is important for all children to fully participate fully. When children ready themselves for school each day, they should:

- choose comfortable, well-fitted, non-restrictive clothing.
- dress in clothing they can easily handle themselves (i.e. when going to the bathroom).
- wear well-fitted, age appropriate, comfortable footwear that ensures safety. Closed-toed shoes are to be worn at all times and being shoeless or wearing flip-flops is prohibited (strapped sandals are permitted).
- leave clothing with obscene language or symbols at home.
know that head gear (e.g. winter hats, caps) can be worn outside only, when appropriate.

prepare for the weather by wearing/bringing seasonal items including long/short sleeves, hats, gloves and jackets. All outerwear should be labeled with the child’s name and/or initials.

be prepared that clothing may get messy. A favorite shirt or special outfit could get something on it during active play at school.

At least one complete change of clothes should be stored in the child’s classroom at all times, including socks and undergarments. Any soiled clothes will be sent home for washing. Extra clothes should be monitored and replenished as needed. All items should be appropriate to the current season so that outdoor play will be comfortable. All clothing items should be labeled with the child’s name and/or initials. The UWG Pre-K is not responsible for lost clothing.

Toys and Other Items: Although sharing toys and other items from home is exciting for children, these should remain at home. If children arrive with toys and other items from home, they will be required to stay in the child’s cubby or a teacher’s closet until pick-up time. In some cases, however, such as “Show and Tell” days, there will be opportunities to share special items (fragile items should be left at home to avoid breakage). Families will be notified of these days in advance. Toy weapons (guns, knives, swords) are never permitted. Please do not send Videos/DVDs—screen time is very limited at UWG Pre-K and only permitted for educational purposes and special occasions.
Fire, Storm, and Other Emergency Drills

Schoolwide drills, both announced and unannounced, will be conducted at the UWG Pre-K site. Instructions for related procedures are posted in each classroom and associated facility rooms. When these drills occur, the child’s teacher will take attendance and emergency medical authorization forms and first aid kits will be readily available. It is the teacher’s responsibility to familiarize all personnel in each classroom with emergency procedures.

For fire drills, all children and staff evacuate the building and classes are accounted for at the designated location away from the building. Children may return to the building after an “all clear” statement is given. For storm drills, all children and staff are accounted for by the classroom at their designated location in an interior room or hallway until an “all clear” statement is given.

Grievances

It is important to maintain positive relationships with families, and collaborate in the best interest of the children. Best practice related to any grievances that families may have related to the UWG Pre-K is to utilize open discussion and communication with the childrens’ teachers and/or program staff. All Pre-K program staff and teachers are interested in providing the best services to all families, so all concerns, no matter how small, should be communicated as soon as possible. If a parent/guardian does not wish to raise a concern directly to the teacher or specific program staff, they may email concerns or email a request to be contacted by using prek@westga.edu, an account monitored by the Program/Site Director and/or supervising staff.

Should additional steps be needed, the Dean’s Office at UWG (see Contact Information, page X) may be contacted. Further, a Pre-K Consultant from the Pre-K Division of the Georgia DECAL may be contacted at (404) 656-5957.

To facilitate communication, all families have the right to an interpreter for any meetings, if needed.
Health and Safety Policies and Procedures

This section of the Family Handbook contains information about:

- Emergency Contact Information (page 23).
- Health Requirements (page 23).
- Tobacco Free Campus (page 24).
- Child Abuse/Neglect (page 24).
- Lunch and Snacks (page 24).
- Allergies (page 25).
- Illness (page 25).
- Medications (page 29), and
- Medical Emergencies (page 30).

**About Health and Safety Policies and Procedures**

Health and safety policies and procedures are necessary for Georgia’s Pre-K students so that any problems that might interfere with the child’s ability to learn can be identified and addressed as soon as possible. All components of this section are aligned with both BFTS requirements and have been adjusted, as necessary, to meet CDC and NAEYC recommendations for operating during the 2020 Coronavirus pandemic.
Emergency Contact Information

Contact information is required by state law and is essential in the event of an emergency. All parents/guardians are asked to keep emergency contact information updated at all times. This includes changes in names, addresses, employment locations, and/or phone numbers and emails. Also, an emergency contact should be notified and consented, and accurate information for that person should be provided, in the event that a parent/guardian cannot be reached.

Children will only be released to those adults whose names are listed on the release section of the Registration Form and Emergency Contact Card: a child cannot be released to any unauthorized person. Families are asked to keep their list updated and notify, in writing, when changes are required related to the person picking up the child. All individuals temporarily authorized to pick up a child will be required to produce a picture identification (e.g. driver’s license) for verification.

If a court has issued an order limiting or restricting access of a parent/adult to that child, a court stamped “Filed” copy of such an order must be provided to the Program/Site Director, and the registration form must be updated before we can restrict access to their child.

Health Requirements

All children enrolled in a Georgia Pre-K program must have hearing, vision, and dental examination certificates (DHR Form 3300) on file within 90 calendar days of program entry. Immunizations (DHR Form 3231) must be up-to-date or affidavits documenting the necessity of refusal must be on file within 30 calendar days of program entry. The local Health Department and/or a child’s physician can provide additional information. Children without these forms (DHR Forms 3300 and 3231) may not remain in the program. Children must also have a current health check and parents/guardians will be asked to verify the date of the child’s last full health exam.

In addition to preventative medical examinations, children are encouraged to develop desirable habits of personal hygiene. All UWC Pre-K students must be able to independently manage their toileting needs, including hand washing afterward. Children should also be encouraged to wash their hands before and after eating, after touching their mouths, and when soiled. At home, parents/guardians can support health in the classroom by reinforcing with children the necessity for frequent hand-washing, keeping their hands away from their face, covering their mouth with a tissue when coughing and sneezing, and sanitary disposal of used tissues.
Tobacco Free Campus

UWG is a tobacco- and smoke-free campus. The Board of Regents’ Tobacco and Smoke Free Campus Policy prohibits the use of tobacco in any form inside of University buildings or on campus, including personal vehicles. This includes all tobacco products (e.g., cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, e-cigarette).

Child Abuse/Neglect

In accordance with Georgia law, UWG Pre-K program staff and classroom substitutes are mandated by law to report any suspicion of child abuse, neglect or deprivation. Children are observed regularly for signs of injury, illness, or abnormal behavior. Unusual observations will be documented and immediately reported to the Program/Site Director or a designated person-in-charge, who will report the suspected abuse/neglect in accordance with state law.

Lunch and Snacks

Lunch and snacks are part of the UWG Pre-K program. A balanced lunch, and a drink for lunch, should be provided by home, brought to school each day in a labeled container, lunch box, or bag. Including an icepack can keep items cool, as no refrigeration is offered. Also, lunches can not be heated and all meals should be easily managed independently by children. Daily snacks are provided in the early part of the day, including milk (see Fees, page 17).

Children should not bring food for snack time unless required by special diet or food allergies. If a child has identified special food requirements, individual guidance should be provided by the parent/guardian and a plan should be put in writing to be followed.

The UWG Pre-K strives to promote healthy habits through nutrition and physical activities. It is essential that families participate in the promotion of health by ensuring children’s lunches are nutritious, including a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, healthy grains, and limited sugar.
If a child has food or other medical allergies, a written description should be provided on the Registration Form, so that appropriate precautions and responses can be ensured. If a child requires any first aid or medical intervention related to allergies, these must be documented and all necessary medications/materials must be provided by the parents/guardians.

Illness
Any child who attends the UWG Pre-K must be well enough to participate in all activities—both in the classroom and outdoors. Any time a child has a fever (a thermometer reading of 100.4 or higher) or demonstrates illness, they are not permitted to come to school in order to protect the health of all children, families, and Pre-K program staff. Symptoms of illness include, but are not limited to:

- fever,
- cough,
- shortness of breath,
- difficulty breathing,
- respiratory symptoms,
- chills,
- repeated shaking,
- muscle pain,
- headache, and/or
- sore throat.

In addition, all children attending the UWG Pre-K must be monitored for symptoms or exposure to COVID-19 as long as the pandemic is present in the U.S. A parent/guardian should notify the UWG Pre-K as soon as possible if the child is ill with or is not attending school due to COVID-19. This includes when a child a) shows signs of illness of any kind, b) tests positive for COVID-19 or, c) has been exposed to someone who has tested positive or shown signs of COVID-19.

When a child becomes ill, a parent/guardian must provide a signed note to excuse absences due to illness. A doctor’s note may also be submitted, if seen, and/or requested to return to school. Further, if an absence or illness is related to COVID-19, a child may only return to school when they have been without a fever for three (3) days and any illness symptoms have improved. If a child tested positive for COVID-19, they must be accompanied by two (2) negative tests for COVID-19, at least 24 hours apart.
## Most Common Illness/Symptom and Return Policies for the UWG Pre-K

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Illness</th>
<th>Definition/Symptom</th>
<th>Participation and Return Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fever</td>
<td>A thermometer reading of 100.4°F or higher.</td>
<td>Child may return when he/she has been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. If the fever is potentially related to COVID-19, the child must have been without a fever for three (3) days before returning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diarrhea</td>
<td>Loose bowel movements two (2) or more times in one (1) hour or three times in two (2) hours.</td>
<td>Child may return 24 hours after the last occurrence of diarrhea or when documented as not contagious by a physician. Diarrhea medication will not be administered at the center.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vomiting</td>
<td>Forceful discharge of stomach contents two (2) or more times in 24 hours (with no other symptoms) or one (1) time in 24 hours when accompanied by fever or lethargy.</td>
<td>Child may return 24 hours after the last occurrence of vomiting or when diagnosed as not contagious by a physician.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respiratory infection (including common cold with no fever)</td>
<td>Presence of coughing, runny nose, sore throat, red eyes, hoarseness, and/or swollen lymph nodes.</td>
<td>A child without fever who has mild symptoms may attend; however, if the child does not feel well enough to participate, has an associated fever, or they are not allowed to play outdoors, they should not attend school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rash or skin problems</td>
<td>An abnormal skin appearance that does not improve after a few days or with over-the-counter treatment.</td>
<td>If rash appears contagious, is at risk of infection, spreads or is accompanied by another symptom, the child should not attend school. The child may return with a written physician’s note stating the rash has been diagnosed as not contagious.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illness</td>
<td>Symptoms</td>
<td>Precaution</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chickenpox or Shingles</td>
<td>Itchy rash with small, fluid-filled blisters/infection caused by varicella-zoster virus.</td>
<td>Child may not attend school until all sores are dried and crusted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Lice</td>
<td>Tiny insects in the hair, found on the scalp, most easily seen at the nape of the neck and around the ears; often accompanied by itching, a tickling feeling, sores, or small bite marks.</td>
<td>Child may not attend school until 24 hours after beginning treatment. All nits must be removed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ringworm</td>
<td>A ring-shaped area, sometimes itchy and with a scattering of red or raised bumps.</td>
<td>Child may not attend school until after treatment has begun and affected areas have begun to fade. Affected areas must be covered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conjunctivitis (Pinkeye)</td>
<td>Inflammation or infection of the membrane that lines eyelids caused by bacteria or viruses and most frequently resulting in red, itchy, painful, or swelling of an eye with or without discharge.</td>
<td>Child may not attend school until written documentation from a doctor is provided, typically 24 hours after beginning treatment, and when active infection including redness and discharge are not present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strep Throat</td>
<td>Difficulty swallowing, swollen glands, swelling of tonsils, and/or abdominal pain with or without a positive strep throat test.</td>
<td>Child may not attend school until 48 hours after beginning antibiotic treatment and the fever has been gone for at least 24 hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand, foot, and mouth disease</td>
<td>Fever, reduced appetite, sore throat, painful mouth sores, and/or rash of red spots/blisters on palms/feet, and sometimes other body areas.</td>
<td>Children may not attend school until all symptoms have resolved and the fever has been gone for at least 24 hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measles or Rubella</td>
<td>Red, blotchy rash appearing most commonly on the face and behind the ears caused by a virus.</td>
<td>Child may not attend school until seven (7) days after the onset of the rash and after all symptoms have resolved. *Following confidentiality guidelines, all families will be notified of a potential outbreak.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mumps | Swelling of the glands in the cheek and mouth, pain, fever, and/or tiredness. | Child may not attend school until nine (9) days after onset of swelling and after all symptoms have resolved.  
*Following confidentiality guidelines, all families will be notified of a potential outbreak.*

Pertussis/Whooping Cough | Runny nose, sneezing, mild cough, and fever caused by bacteria. | Child may not attend school until after five (5) days of disease prevention measures have been initiated. All children must have a written release from a physician to return.  
*All children attending the center must provide evidence of immunization against Pertussis.*


If a child develops symptoms during the school day that require their exclusion from school, the child’s parents/guardians will be contacted to pick up their child promptly (within 45 minutes). Families are expected to have arrangements made for someone else to pick up their child if they cannot. A Pre-K program staff member will provide comfort for the child in an area away from the other children in the class until a parent/guardian/designee arrives to pick them up.

Contagious Disease Notification Policy: Parents/Guardians will be notified of their child’s exposure to some contagious diseases or potential outbreaks through written notices that will be sent home and posted in the hallway or classrooms. The UWG Pre-K will also report these occurrences to the local health department, when required. Any notification will follow confidentiality precautions and will include information about the disease, prevention methods, and a date of exposure, if applicable. Likewise, families are to notify the UWG Pre-K if their child is known to have been exposed to or contracts contagious diseases or potential outbreaks outside of school.
Medications

Whenever possible, families should arrange to give needed medications to children at home. However, Pre-K program staff can administer prescription and non-prescription medications at school with parent/guardian consent. The following requirements must be met in the event that medication is needed during the school day:

- Parents/Guardians must complete a medication permission form before prescription or non-prescription medication will be administered. The child’s name, the name of the medication, the dates to be administered, the dosage and the time must be noted and signed by a physician. The time must be specific and cannot be administered “as needed”. The permission form must be signed and dated by the parents/guardians.
- The teacher must note the time the medication was administered to ensure scheduling for administering the next dosage is appropriate.
- All medication must be in the original prescription container. All prescription medication must be labeled with specific directions, the child’s name, date and physician’s name. Medication prescribed for a sibling will not be administered.
- If medication must be kept on hand for emergencies, such as an epi-pen for allergies or an inhaler for asthma, an order from the child’s health provider with specific instructions regarding when it should be used, as well as the dosage to be given, will be required. Permission from parent/guardian is also required.
- Non-prescription medication (including sunscreen) must be labeled with the child’s name and the date the medication was brought to the UWG Pre-K. Non-prescription medication must be administered according to label directions, unless other instructions are approved in writing by the child’s physician. Parents/Guardians must complete a signed medication form.
- All medication will be stored in a locked container out of reach of children.
Medical Emergencies

In the case of all medical emergencies (illness or accident) Pre-K program staff will immediately notify the Program/Site Director. A Pre-K program staff will then attempt to contact the parents/guardians, or designated emergency contact person. If parents/guardians or designated persons cannot be reached within 10 minutes and the emergency appears serious, Campus Police in consultation with the Program/Site Director or a designated person will determine whether the child should be taken to an Emergency Room. When necessary, transport will be made by Campus Police or an ambulance. Emergency treatment may be provided in accordance to the wishes of the parents/guardians as expressed in the Authorization for Emergency Medical Treatment. If parents/guardians cannot be located, a designated Pre-K program staff may accompany the child for emergency treatment.

While attending the UWG Pre-K or any Pre-K related activities, parents/guardians are responsible for health and accident insurance that would cover any sickness or accident the child might incur. This information is to be noted on the Registration Form and updated if any changes occur during the school year.
Pre-K Learning Environments

This section of the Family Handbook contains information about:

- Instructional Communication (page 32).
- Expected Daily Schedule (page 32).
- The Pre-K Curriculum (page 32).
- Classrooms (page 33).
- Inclusion and Behavior Support (page 34).
- Outdoor Play (page 38).
- Rest Time (page 38).
- Child Assessment (page 39).
- Support Partners and Referrals (page 39).
- University and Community Partnerships (page 40), and
- Special Events (page 41).

About Learning Environments

A child’s learning environment plays an essential role in their learning and development. Children utilize home, school, and community environments to gain skills such as learning to explain and identify emotions, make relationships with peers and adults, cooperate with others, solve problems, and gain academic knowledge. The UWG Pre-K works to provide and support learning environments that include a developmentally appropriate curriculum and necessary social-emotional supports for all children that best prepare them to be ready for kindergarten programs.
Instructional Communication

The daily schedule of activities giving the time and type of activity (center time, small groups, story time, etc.) is posted in each classroom. Weekly lesson plans are written by the teachers, in collaboration with other Pre-K program staff and early childhood experts. The UWG Pre-K newsletter is sent home monthly, providing relevant information regarding the program, special guests, field trips, notices of research studies, and other announcements. In addition, reminders, weather updates, illness outbreak updates and other information may be distributed by email.

Expected Daily Schedule

7:40 - 8:00  Arrival/Health Screening/ Sign-in activities  
8:00 - 9:45  Large Group Meeting, Exploratory Activities, Small Group Meetings, and/or Music and Movement  
9:45 - 12:00  Snack, Center Choice Time, Outside Play, and/or Literacy Activities  
12:00 - 12:30  Lunch  
12:30 - 1:00  Clean Up and Story Time  
1:00 - 2:00  Rest Time  
2:00 - 2:30  Closing Activity  
2:30 - 3:00  Dismissal/Pick Up Time

Curriculum

The UWG Pre-K is using a curriculum approved by BFTS that aligns with both GELDS and NAEYC standards. The “Ready to Advance” curriculum uses whole-group, small-group, and purposeful play activities and instruction to help children reach their educational goals.

The curriculum is divided into ten (10) Units, each with a meaningful theme, such as All About Me and Families and Friends. Instruction will focus on:
- Language Development: listening and communicating, speaking and understanding communication skills
- Emergent Writing: expressing thoughts and prewriting skills
- Emergent Reading: phonological awareness, sound-symbol relationships, alphabet knowledge, reading comprehension, print concepts
- Math: pattern recognition, spatial sense, number sense, problem solving
- Science: the five senses, methods, color recognition, patterns, shapes
- Social Studies: roles and responsibilities, similarities and differences
- Social and Emotional: self-concept, self-regulation, relationships, cooperation, responsible decision making, identifying and expressing emotions, feelings
- Fine Art: drama, music, movement
- Physical Health and Technology: healthy hygiene practices, gross and fine motor skills

At the beginning of each unit, students may receive Take-Home Books, Student Practice Books, or Take-Home Activity Calendars. When this occurs, families are encouraged to utilize the materials at home to have discussions, read together, and use household items to practice skills. Note, all print resources are available online in both English and Spanish.

**Classrooms**

Classroom rosters are determined prior to the start of the school year. Children stay with their classroom peers and teaching staff throughout the day. Each classroom is staffed with a Lead Teacher and an Assistant Teacher, all of whom meet or exceed BFTS requirements, with a background in early childhood education, child development, or a related field. The UWG Pre-K Team, including the teachers, meet regularly to collaborate on lesson plans, themed units, and learning opportunities to provide similar experiences in each classroom.
All Pre-K classrooms are equipped with developmentally appropriate material and learning areas, or “centers” such as math centers, blocks, reading/literacy, science centers, writing, and music. Additional space is reserved in the facility for additional art, science/math, literacy opportunities for all children. Also, each classroom has space to accommodate individual, small, and large group instruction. Teachers interact with children and move about the classroom to facilitate use of classroom space and materials, engaging students in appropriate and expected learning activities.

The UWG Pre-K has a play-oriented, child-centered, educational learning environment. According to research in the field of child development, children need concrete objects and materials to play with, manipulate, and explore before they will be successful at mental representation, manipulation, and discovery. During center time, for example, children move freely and make choices from a variety of learning centers, allowing them to engage in different types of play and to practice a variety of learning skills.

**Inclusion and Behavior Support**

A child’s development is influenced by many factors including the environments a child participates in and their experiences. Given their developmental status, children can be expected to engage in challenging behavior because they often have difficulty using the skills or competencies for engaging in more appropriate behavior. As such, Inclusion and Behavior Support planning and intervention training is an integral part of the UWG Pre-K for social and emotional learning and growth.

The UWG Pre-K Team will utilize a multi-tiered system of support that includes the child, family, and teachers in order to help children be successful before requesting intensive interventions, classroom removal, suspension, or disenrollment. This multi-tiered system of support includes:
Universal supports for all children to ensure positive social and emotional development, including

- high-quality environments that promote inclusion and education in both the school and the home.
- nurturing and responsive relationships essential to healthy social and emotional development with other children, teachers, team members, and families.

Secondary prevention to prevent challenging behavior, including:

- targeted social and emotional supports.
- explicit instruction and supports for self-regulation, expressing and understanding emotions, developing social relationships, and problem-solving.

Individualized supports, including:

- family-centered, comprehensive intervention.
- assessment-based individualized planning.
- individually targeted skill-building.

Sometimes, concerning behavior may occur during the school day or be identified by a parent/guardian requesting help including, but not limited to: abusive language, disruption, defiance, fighting/physical aggression, harassment/bullying, inappropriate displays of affection, and/or property damage. The UWG Pre-K will utilize Behavior Incident Reports to document behavior and intervention strategies used to address concerns, which state the behavior, how often the behavior occurs, a plan and implementation of interventions to address the concern, and the child’s responses to the interventions. A conference with the child’s family may be suggested or required to discuss strategies or options for addressing behavior concerns.

Disciplinary actions used to correct a child’s behavior, guidance techniques, and any activity in which the children participate or observe will not be detrimental to the physical or mental health of any child in the UWG Pre-K. As regulated by BFTS (O.C.G.A. Sec 16-1-1 et seq.), and in accordance with NAEYC recommendations, disciplinary actions will never involve physical or sexual abuse, corporal/physical punishment, verbal abuse or humiliation (e.g. threats, profanity, belittling language), isolation, physical or mechanical restraints or devices, medication, unreasonable restrictions (e.g. prohibiting bathroom use, naps, or access to food).
Some of the preventative and intervention supports used at the UWG Pre-K, supported by the chosen curriculum and recommended by BFTS and/or NAEYC, which may be useful to families in the home environment, include:

- Anticipating problems to accommodate situations and needs prior to challenging behavior occurring.
- Providing children with options and choices throughout the school day to make independent and group decisions.
- Verbalizing and enforcing limits, routines, and schedules consistently.
- Stating expectations clearly and concisely, in a positive manner, focusing on appropriate behavior rather than corrective responses.
- Helping children generalize their skills by joining them and making suggestions during play and learning.

- Considering children’s feelings at all times, being alert and observant to changes.
- Noticing and mentioning positive, appropriate behavior and actions.
- Allowing for logical consequences to occur when necessary, helping children to understand the consequences of their choices and actions.
- Listening to and talking with children about solutions to problems.
- Helping children identify, name, and express their feelings appropriately.
- Diffusing power struggles by allowing the child to share their perspectives and including them in generating solutions.

Additionally, BFTS provides an “ABC’s of Behavior Management” that families are encouraged to use at home, located on the following page.
THE ABC’S OF BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

A lways consider the child’s feelings - avoid embarrassing a child.
B e alert and observant. This is perhaps the most effective way to prevent problems before they occur.
C hoose your words carefully when problems do arise.
D iscipline yourself. In other words, control your temper.
E xcessive flattery as a technique to motivate or control is ineffective.
F irmness and fairness should abide.
G ood humor goes a long way.
H andle problems without threatening.
I gnore those behaviors that are just ploys to get attention.
J oin your child by the hand to supervise them as you walk or cross the street.
K eep this simple idea in mind – children are not problems, but rather may have problems.
L ead and train children in everyday activities.
M ake positive statements as much as possible.
N ever underestimate the power of your appearance and behavior.
O ptions are important to children.
P roximity – stay close as an effective preventative approach.
Q uiet activities can be just as much fun as noisy ones.
R outines and rules should be consistent and clear.
S how children you are up for the challenge of parenting.
T ry to predict what would confuse or distract children.
U se natural consequences to unacceptable behaviors.
V alue your child and spend as much one-on-one time as possible together.
W atch the amount of attention you give to individual children.
X -pect to have fun.
Y elling is not effective with children.
Z oom in and handle problems quickly.
Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is important as a fun, healthy, skill-building and educational experience for all children. Outdoor play is scheduled daily, weather permitting and utilizes one of two playground areas attached/near the facility. Children who are not well enough to go outside should not be brought to school, as staffing ratios do not allow for a teacher to stay inside with one child. Children should wear clothing appropriate for the weather—such as warm coats, hats, mittens and long pants in cold weather and sun protective clothing in hot weather. The outdoor playgrounds provide shaded areas for the children to play to limit exposure to the sun.

Rest Time

All children in Georgia’s Pre-K programs are required to have a one-half to one-hour rest period, daily. At the UWG Pre-K, a one-hour rest period is scheduled in the afternoon. During this time, children are provided with a cot and cot sheet, and utilize small blankets to rest their minds and bodies. Children who do not fall asleep will be provided with books or quiet activities to occupy themselves on their cots. Families can encourage this practice by continuing “quiet time” or “rest time” on non-instructional days.
Child Assessment

The teaching staff continually assesses each child in order to plan activities and provide developmentally appropriate goals to meet their individual learning needs. Children are assessed on performance indicators from GELDS. Information about children is gathered during center time, outdoor play and appropriate structured activities using anecdotal notes, work samples, matrices, and photos. Observing children in this way allows for accurate assessment in a way that is appropriate regardless of the child’s culture, previous experiences, or abilities in a familiar setting. This allows the UWG Pre-K Team to plan classroom activities that build on the children’s skills.

All assessment documentation is uploaded into Work Sampling Online to create an electronic portfolio, according to requirements from BFTS, to track children’s progress during the year. These portfolios are considered confidential information. They are accessible only to necessary UWG Pre-K Team and BFTS representatives for the purpose of ensuring the child’s needs are being met in the program. Once the children move onto kindergarten, their portfolios can be made available to their new teachers to provide continuity in their development.

Twice annually, teachers share information with parents/guardians during parent/teacher conferences. These meetings provide an opportunity for collaboration to discuss the developmental progress and needs of each child. Families will receive a written report of their child’s progress twice each school year.

Support Partners and Referral

Concerns about a child’s development will contact the BFTS Pre-K Consultant for support and guidance and create a plan to ensure appropriate instructional activities to meet the needs of individual children, including following any recommendations to contact the local school system’s special education services department or the Inclusion and Behavioral Support Unit at DECAL, with parent/guardian permission.
The UWG Pre-K utilizes as many resources as possible to support the needs of all children. With parent/guardian’s permission, some of these resources may include referral to the STARS program at Carrollton City Schools, the PALS program in Carroll County Schools, the UWG Comprehensive Community Clinic for speech, hearing, and language screenings and support.

If a concern is raised by a child’s teacher or parent/guardian regarding the child’s development, a meeting will be scheduled with the parent/guardian, teacher and Program/Site Director. If it is determined that additional support may be needed to meet the needs of the child, a referral can be made to a community agency. No referral will be made for observation/evaluation by an outside agency (such as the public schools) without written consent from the parent/guardian. Recommendations can not be made by Pre-K program staff regarding specific providers, however, families will be assisted in finding resources that they may consider and determine what is appropriate for their child and family needs.

**University and Community Partnerships**

University and community partnerships are an integral part of training and service at the UWG Pre-K. They can support optimal family environments and educational programming for young children and provide new information related to best practice and research-based intervention. This includes being involved in observation and/or direct contact with students. Whenever involvement or participation of children and/or families benefits these partnerships, information on related projects will appear in a written letter to families. While families may refuse participation of their child or themselves for any particular project with no penalty, it is both appreciated and beneficial to the program for families to volunteer their time in support of the UWG Pre-K University and community partnerships, including research.

One important partnership is that with the UWG student population. University students participate in the UWG Pre-K program to complete coursework, to gain observation of young children, and in special projects and research. Some students spend time weekly experiencing and participating in activities and daily operations of the classrooms as part of a directed study or practicum in education fields.
Special Events

Holidays and Religious Instruction: No part of the UWG Pre-K instructional day may be religious in nature and no funding may be utilized for religious instruction. At the UWG Pre-K, holidays are presented in an educational way as part of appreciating and learning about cultural diversity.

Birthdays: Children’s birthdays are welcome to be celebrated within the school day. Families should contact the child’s teacher or the Program/Site Director (prek@westga.edu) to determine an appropriate number and nature of any celebratory items sent to school, including limiting sugary treats and appropriate toys/party favors and observing all classroom allergies and health protocols. Invitations to birthday parties can be distributed at school if all children are included. If only a few children are being included, invitations may not be distributed at school.

School Pictures: An opportunity to have school pictures taken by a professional photographer will be arranged by the UWG Pre-K. Purchase of the portrait packages is optional. A reminder will be sent home to families regarding the scheduling of Picture Days.

Field Trips: Field trips and events away from the University will not be scheduled while the COVID-19 health and safety protocol is in place, as recommended by guiding agencies.

The UWG Pre-K will utilize University opportunities to ensure children still participate in valuable learning opportunities away from the classrooms, such as taking campus walking trips, visiting the UWG archeological site, going to the UWG greenhouse and garden, and taking virtual trips at the College of Education’s Innovation Lab. Whenever possible, within the health and safety guidelines, families will be invited to participate in these events. Pre-K program staff keep families informed on upcoming field trips via newsletters, emails, and reminder memos.
When applicable, for liability reasons, children attending field trips as part of the UWG Pre-K group MUST ride to the event with their class. If a parent/guardian does not allow their child to ride with the UWG Pre-K, and transports them to the event in their private vehicle, the child must be counted absent, and the parent/guardian must incur the cost of the child’s ticket to the event. The UWG Pre-K cannot purchase a ticket for a child who is not “in attendance” at school that day.

Thank you!