

UCI Child Care Services

childcare.uci.edu 949-824-2100



Dear UCI Child Care Services Families,

We are so happy to be back working with your children. Although things are different in the centers, the children have adjusted beautifully to the changes in routines and ways of being in their classrooms. As is developmentally appropriate, they are understanding and practicing all of the new health precautions that we are taking. They are learning that through these measures we are helping ourselves, our families and our community to stay healthy.

We greatly appreciate your patience, understanding and willingness to follow all of our new protocols, especially drop off and pick up outside, following our illness exclusion policies and our different hours of operation. These changes allow for us to follow the recommended guidance for keeping everyone in the centers healthy, including your families.

Our teaching staff have been amazing at creating new ways for your children to learn, socialize and engage while still keeping them and the staff as physically distant as possible. This quarter's newsletter highlights the various ways the campus and our department have been keeping everyone healthy, as well as what that looks like in each of our centers.

On behalf of the entire department, we are so grateful to be back in person and we thank you for entrusting us with the care and education of your children during this time. I continue to wish that each of you and your family stays healthy and well.

Respectfully,

Laura Sanbrano, MA

Director, UCI Child Care Services

Upcoming Dates

Friday, March 26th

All centers closed for César Chávez Day

Monday, May 31st

All centers closed for Memorial Day

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New Procedures during Covid-19

At Child Care Services, and on the entire campus, we are doing many things to help keep our staff, children and teachers healthy. Every day, staff are required to complete the Working Well health check before going to work, and when they arrive, they show that they have completed it and have their temperature taken. Staff wear a face covering all day, as do children ages 2 and up. All of the centers receive one or two mid-day disinfecting of bathrooms and high-touch areas and children and staff wash their hands frequently. We receive guidance from the Campus Covid Response Team, and they advise us on next steps if we have a confirmed, suspected or close contact case of Covid-19. In addition to the Covid-19 trainings we completed before we returned to work in person, we did an additional training with the medical director of the UCI Student Health Center, focusing on prevention, testing and vaccination.

UCI is also offering weekly Covid-19 testing for essential on-campus employees, which many of our teachers and directors are participating in. Teachers are in phase 1B of the vaccine rollout and we are waiting to receive notification about when the vaccine will be available for us. We appreciate the efforts that families are taking to keep themselves safe by keeping six feet of distance, avoiding gatherings and wearing face coverings. During this time, the actions of each person can have a large impact on everyone else in their childcare "pod" and we all have to work together to stay healthy.

New Website

If you haven't already seen it, go to childcare.uci.edu and check out our new website! We have added pages for each center, information about our virtual preschool program, and sections with forms for each of the centers. You can also find our yearly calendars and tuition rates on the website. Many forms that you would normally go to our office to get can be downloaded and filled out in PDF format so that we have less contact during this time of Covid-19.

Child Care Notification System and signature reminders

We periodically put a reminder in our newsletter to sign up for the childcare notification system, which is similar to the ZOT Alert notification system but is just for childcare at UCI. During this time of operating during Covid-19, it is even more important that we have a way to reach families quickly in case we need to close a center for any reason. At last check, less than 25% of families were signed up at some centers, which can make it challenging for you to get information in a timely manner. Please log into: <http://notifications.childcare.uci.edu/> to check and see if you are signed up, and to complete your sign up if you are not. It only takes a few minutes. Also, please remember that it is a licensing requirement that parents sign their **full legal name** when they are signing children in and out each day. Signing initials or first or last name only can cause us to receive a licensing violation!

New ways of working during Covid-19

Each center director took some time to highlight the way they are working with children during this time and we hope you enjoy seeing it and reading about it.

The **ECEC** children have adjusted beautifully to all the changes upon returning in mid-September. Children as young as 2 years old, are wearing their facial coverings all day, except for drinking their water bottles, eating food, and napping. Changing into their "school" shoes is a routine that children are very comfortable with every morning.

Dan Shrey, Nathan's father, kindly volunteered to help make sneeze guards for the small tables in the youngest classroom. Children can happily and safely see each other while they eat their meals and engage in activities. Dan also constructed individual containers for children to sit in, promoting ways to express creativity and imagination. What could it be? A car, a plane, a boat, a train, or just a place for children to stimulate their brain! Nathan enthusiastically assisted his dad with both projects on the weekends. We want to thank the Shrey family for helping make our environment healthy and fun at ECEC.

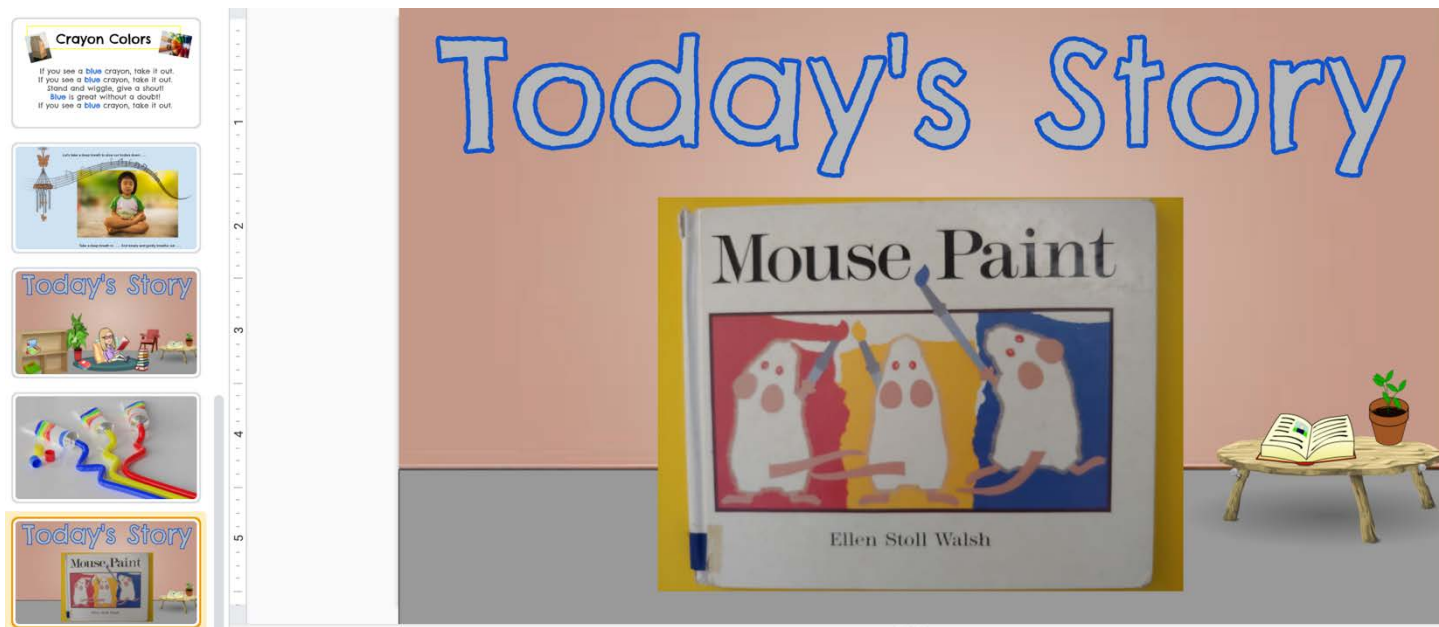


We have enjoyed being back at the **Children's Center**. The staff and I have created several wonderful spaces for the children to be social, all while giving each other the space they need. The children have personalized their space with family photos and their own artwork. This month the children downstairs learned about what they see in a library, expectations when in the library and that they need a library card to check out books. After all the discussion the children and staff set up a library. Each child made their own library card and checked out books to enjoy in their play space. Upstairs children have been interested in all the construction going on outside. While on a recent walk to get a closer look, they had a surprise visit to the police station where the officers came out and had a talk about safety. The officers let the children see their car and gave out badges. You can see some photos of these things below on the next page.

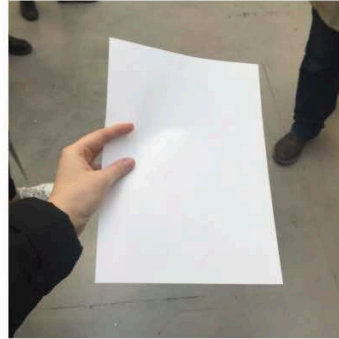
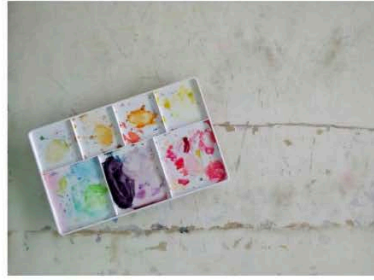


This month Child Care Services rolled out a new preschool option: **Virtual Preschool!**

In our live Tuesday/Thursday Zoom classes, the children are enjoying getting to know their classmates, singing songs, reading stories, and playing games together! We have started on some awesome activities such as our **Homes STEM Project** and our **Color Mixing Exploration!** The children have been excited to explore the different supplies and materials that are sent home each week and show each other their creations! Learning together virtually is fun!



Color Mixing Exploration!



padlet.com/veranopreschool/hppma7k5qiyjk4

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Class Community Board - UCI Virtual Preschool

Feel free to share photos of your family, activities, celebrations, helpful links etc. with our online classroom community!

"Getting Your Child Ready for School"

from Children and Families Commission of Orange County

Getting Your Child Ready for School
A Parent's Toolkit

Getting Your Child Ready for School
PDF document
padlet drive

Add comment

UCI Virtual Preschool

Add comment

Welcome Everyone!

Please introduce your family! Click on the pink "+" button on the Padlet screen (bottom right) to create a post.
Feel free to upload a family photo!
We're glad you're here,
Leslie

Add comment

Sierras other building project!!

Loved seeing all the houses today!

2 comments

L Bae 6d
I see you used squares and triangles to build this - great work, Sierra!

fujilai 4d
Nice!

Three Little Pigs Homes

Print, cut, and glue activity

threelittlepigsprintablepdf
PDF document
padlet drive

Add comment

VP Nature Club

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1KBKaWM0gSezsm6vBIP-UjfG9a3agvzpLjyV2X5w8x84/edit?usp=sharing>

Make a House Frame out of popsicle sticks!

Use 6 popsicle sticks (or more), glue, and family photo... ask your child to arrange the sticks to form the shape of a house. Glue the sticks together to form the frame.

Mouse Paint Video

Hanako loved the mouse paint story and activity this week! We found a very good narration video helpful for those who want to re-read/watch the story again:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?>

Extended Day has transitioned from being an after-school program to supporting children all day while they are doing distance learning online. After an initial period of adjustment, children and teachers have really enjoyed being able to spend most of their non-school time outdoors and have creatively adapted many activities during Covid-19. We eat our morning snack, lunch and afternoon snack outside, and have adapted many outdoor games, using long pool noodles for spacing. Every child has their own pair of kid-sized leather work gloves that they wear when tossing a ball back and forth or using a baseball bat so that we can still share some equipment, and each child also has a lot of their own individual equipment to use. We think there will be children who are not eager to return to in-person school in the fall because of all the fun they are having!



Upon returning to **ITC**, the children have been hearing scripted stories & singing songs about staying healthy by hand washing, covering coughs, and wearing masks. The older children have spent a lot of time practicing putting pretend masks onto pretend people and toys (laminated and Velcro-ed). We have been so proud to watch our children age two and up adjust to wearing face coverings at school.



The children at ITC have also been enjoying looking through the windows in the wall near our center to watch the construction workers and machines. The construction workers even bought little construction hats and vests for the children!



Screen Time during Covid-19

Common Sense Media had some thoughts about this in response to a parent's question:

Should I feel guilty about all the screen time my kid is getting right now?

Our lives have changed quickly since shelter-in-place orders started. For parents like me (I have a 5-year-old and a 7-year-old)—who are suddenly assuming multiple roles as caregivers, teachers, and playmates—the same questions are on repeat: What in the world am I going to do with my kids all day from now until who knows when? And ... how many movies is it OK for them to watch in one day?

Parents tend to think of screen use guidelines as a daily maximum amount that's acceptable. But if you look closely at popular recommendations, such as the ones from the American Academy of Pediatrics, the message—even before the coronavirus pandemic—is much more nuanced, and much less focused on time.

For a while now, media researchers have been advocating for a shift from screen quantity to content quality. If kids are engaged with high-quality content that stokes curiosity and fuels imagination, who's to say that should end when they've hit their screen limit? Research has also uncovered the importance of kids' experience with media, based on who uses media with kids (siblings? parents?), the purpose of the content (school? entertainment?), and who's talking with kids about what they're watching (Daniel Tiger and Tiger King both make for great mealtime conversation). In other words: Context matters, too.

Key to this nuance is understanding that all screens are not equal. We shouldn't act as though one hour of old Duck Tales cartoons is the same as one hour of Zooming with a family member, or one hour of playing Fortnite with a friend, or one hour of drawing tutorials on YouTube. What a kid gets out of each is totally different, and satisfies different needs—and that's OK.

One of the things the current crisis has really brought home is how unbelievably social kids are, and want to be. In some ways, our adaptations to staying at home have made us use technology in ways that are great for children: in service of relationships. Kids may be watching more Netflix

and playing more video games than usual. But they're also video-chatting more, playing games with schoolmates, and even enjoying online playdates. Though nothing will ever replace in-person interaction for children, using tech to strengthen relationships is more important than ever.

With that in mind, here are some recommendations when it comes to using screens during this time:

- Don't feel guilty. We are living through a massive cultural shock. Families have enough stress to deal with, and counting screen minutes should be very low on the list of concerns for any of us.
- Not all screens are created equal. Worried that the online classroom is adding to your kid's screen time? Don't be. [Screen activities shouldn't be lumped together](#). Some are educational; some are just for fun. Some are high-quality; some are a guilty pleasure. What we do on screens and how we do it is more important than time spent.
- Good content is key. Choose age-appropriate, high-quality media and tech for your kids. Use our reviews to [find good content](#).
- Get creative. Let kids use your phone to shoot photos and videos and then go to town with stickers, slo-mo, and other editing tools. Give them a prompt like, "Take ten pictures of something round, and then write a story connecting each thing." Have them make their own memes, record a song, choreograph a dance video—anything that gets them using screens to fulfill their imaginations.
- Use tech to bond. Relationships are critical to kids' healthy development. Tech can and should help kids connect to friends and family, collaborate with each other, play, and share stories, pictures, and videos.
- Talk about it. We're in a unique position where kids are likely using screens more, and we may have more opportunities to [join them](#)—or at least engage with them about what they're watching and playing. Ask questions about their favorite games, shows, and characters. Discuss ideas and issues they read about or learn about through a TV show or a game. This is an opportunity for learning about each other and sharing your values.
- Balance still matters. We should aim for a balance throughout the week. So, more screens? Fine. But also find time to be outside, to be active (indoors or outdoors, with or without screens), eat well, and talk to friends and family (on the phone, on social media, or on video chat).

The time at home with kids presents an opportunity to bond with them, even over media. This is not the time to try to deprive kids of something they enjoy and something that research has shown to have positive effects when used appropriately. There's a ton of great high-quality content out there—let your kids use it, use it with them, and don't guilt yourself over something that can still be part of a healthy, balanced childhood—especially during these times of heightened stress.