



Ready for school and a lifetime of learning

# FAMILY HANDBOOK



2880 Pottsville-Minersville Highway • Suite 210  
Minersville, PA 17954

**570-544-8959**

[www.childdevelop.org](http://www.childdevelop.org)

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Program Mission Statement .....	1
Expectations .....	1
<b>SERVICE INFORMATION</b> .....	<b>2</b>
Types of Service .....	2
Center Locations, Phone Numbers .....	3
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Open Door .....	4
Reporting Changes of Family/Child Information .....	4
Reporting Concerns .....	4
Release of Information Confidentiality .....	4
Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect .....	5
Arrival/Departure of Children .....	5
Release of Children .....	5-6
Emergency Closings and Delays .....	6
Property Damage .....	6
Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be a Team Player .....	6
Communication and Social Media .....	7
Gift-Giving and Gift Acceptance .....	7
Smoke Free Environments.....	7
Withdrawal/Termination of Service .....	7

## OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM SERVICES

<b>EDUCATION AND SCHOOL READINESS</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Goals .....	8
Service to Children With Disabilities .....	8
Dual Language Learners.....	8
Mental Health/Wellness and Behavioral Health .....	8
Transition .....	9
Programming .....	9
Policies .....	9
Family/Child Orientation Day .....	9
Conferences and Home Visits .....	9
Communication .....	10
Behavior Guidance.....	10
Toys from Home .....	11
Birthday Celebrations .....	11
Holiday Celebrations .....	11
Quiet Time .....	11
Educational Field Trips .....	12
Outdoor Play .....	12
Children's Belongings: What to Wear/What to Bring .....	12

At-Home (Non-Virtual) Lessons.....	12
<b>HEALTH .....</b>	<b>13</b>
Goals .....	13
Team Members .....	13
Requirements for Enrollment .....	13
Physical Examination .....	13
Immunization Schedule.....	14
Well Child Visit Schedule .....	14
Allergies .....	14
Policies .....	14
Physical Exam/Immunizations .....	14
Contagious Illness .....	14
Sick Child Policy and Illness Reports.....	14
Contagious Illness Reporting .....	15
Medication Policy .....	15
In Case of Emergency .....	15
Emergency Information .....	15
On-Call Health Team Member .....	15
First Aid Training .....	15
First Aid Kit .....	16
Accident Reports .....	16
Preventative Health Care .....	16
Annual Screenings .....	16
Daily Programming .....	16
<b>NUTRITION .....</b>	<b>17</b>
Goals .....	17
Policies .....	17
USDA Policy .....	17
Minimum Requirements .....	17
Menu Posting .....	17
Special Diet/Food Allergy .....	17
Family Style Meals.....	17-18
<b>FAMILY ENGAGEMENT.....</b>	<b>19</b>
Goals.....	19
Participating in the Program (Opportunities for Involvement and Volunteering) .....	19
Visit the Classroom .....	19
Volunteer in the Classroom and Center.....	19
Attend Committee Meetings for Your Center .....	19
Represent Your Center on Policy Council .....	19
Serve On Program Committees .....	19
Recording Volunteer Time .....	19
Program/Parent Information .....	20
Newsletter .....	20
Parent Bulletin Board.....	20
Resources and Information .....	20

Parent/Family Feedback Surveys .....	20
<b>FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS AND SUPPORT SERVICES .....</b>	<b>21</b>
Goals .....	21
Team Members .....	21
Enrollment Priority .....	21
Head Start and PA PreK Counts .....	21
Child Care Works (State Subsidy) .....	21
Financial Arrangements .....	21
Head Start and PreK Counts Option .....	21
Child Care Option .....	22
Registration Fee .....	22
Receipt for Payment .....	22
Fees for Days Absent .....	22
Fees for Program Holidays and Emergency Closings .....	22
Fee Payment Schedule For Child Care Families .....	22
Child Care Works.....	22
Tuition .....	22
TANF Sponsored Child Care .....	22
Reasons For Service Termination .....	22
Delinquent Fees .....	22
Failure to Report Changes .....	23
Withdrawal of Child.....	23
Abuse of Service Policy .....	23
Drop Off Policy .....	23
Attendance Policy .....	23
Head Start and PreK Counts Option .....	23
Child Care Works (State Subsidy) .....	24
Absence Policy.....	24
<b>TRANSPORTATION .....</b>	<b>25</b>
By Bus (Head Start Only) .....	25
Bus Rules.....	25
By Car .....	26
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>27</b>

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Child Development Inc. This Handbook was written to help you understand our Program and the services we will provide for you and your child. The policies and procedures are included to inform and guide you. It is not intended to be all-inclusive. You may need to refer to your Service Agreement, Program Memos, *Weekly Happening* Sheets, and/or other Program resources for any changes or more specific information. It is important to check our website ([www.childdevelop.org](http://www.childdevelop.org)) frequently for news, updates and other events/information.

It is our goal that the programs we provide will prepare your child for school and a lifetime of learning.

### PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT

**Child**  
Development, Inc.  
of Schuylkill County  
**MISSION STATEMENT**

**We work with families and the community to provide high quality, comprehensive early childhood education with an emphasis on family involvement and supportive services that prepares each child for success in school and a lifetime of learning.**

Families ♿ Head Start ♿ PreK Counts  
Child Care ♿ Early Intervention ♿ Community

#### Expectations

We ask that parents/guardians and family members read this handbook, the *Weekly Happening* Sheets, and any notes and newsletters that will be sent home to you. We ask that you become involved and cooperate with our policies and procedures so that, together, we can provide your child with the best possible early childhood education experience. As partners, we need your support and for you to be engaged so that your child is ready for school. We welcome your suggestions, comments, and constructive criticisms to continually improve our services for you and your child.

**\* \* \* YOU ARE YOUR CHILD'S FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT TEACHER \* \* \***

## **SERVICE INFORMATION**

### **Child Care**

For children whose parents are working or in training, there are state licensed centers with Keystone STAR 4 Designation (highest level of quality in Pennsylvania) located throughout the county which provide an educational program in a full-year, full-day option for preschool, and kindergarten age children, including children with disabilities

### **Head Start and PA PreK Counts**

For preschool age children, including children with disabilities and families who meet the specific age and income guidelines, there are state licensed, Keystone STAR 4 centers located throughout the county that provide an educational program Monday through Friday in a part-year, part-day option for a minimum of 5 hours per day or with expanded hours and days for children whose parents are working, seeking employment, or enrolled in a training program.

# Child Development, Inc. **LOCATIONS**

Ready for school and a lifetime of learning

## **CHILD DEVELOPMENT INC. – MAIN OFFICE**

**Mary Ann Devlin – Executive Director**  
2880 Pottsville-Minersville Highway, Suite 210  
Minersville, PA 17954  
**Phone: 570-544-8959 Ext. 202**  
Fax: 570-544-6915  
**Monday – Friday 8:00am to 5:00pm**

## **CHILD DEVELOPMENT, INC. FOUNTAIN SPRINGS CENTER**

★★**Keystone STAR 4 Award**★★

200 Catherine Street  
(Ft. Springs) Ashland, PA 17921  
**Phone: 570-875-1569 Ext 110 • Fax: 570-544-6915**  
Child Care • Head Start • PreK Counts

## **CHILD DEVELOPMENT, INC. SAINT CLAIR CENTER**

★★**Keystone STAR 4 Award**★★

Saint Clair Elementary School  
227 South Mill Street  
Saint Clair, PA 17970  
**Phone: 570-801-5838 • Fax: 570-544-6915**  
Head Start • PreK Counts

## **CHILD DEVELOPMENT, INC. MAHANAY CITY CENTER**

★★**Keystone STAR 4 Award**★★

80 North Main Street, Suite 2  
Mahanoy City, PA 17948  
**Phone: 570-773-2202 Ext 210 • Fax: 570-544-6915**  
Child Care • Head Start • PreK Counts

## **CHILD DEVELOPMENT, INC. SCHUYLKILL HAVEN CENTER**

★★**Keystone STAR 4 Award**★★

Schuylkill Haven Elementary School  
701 East Main Street  
Schuylkill Haven, PA 17972  
**Phone: 570-801-5926**  
Head Start ONLY

## **CHILD DEVELOPMENT, INC. POTTSVILLE CENTER**

★★**Keystone STAR 4 Award**★★

701 Mount Hope Avenue  
Pottsville, PA 17901  
**Phone: 570-622-6670 Ext 210 • Fax: 570-544-6915**  
Child Care • Head Start • PreK Counts

## **CHILD DEVELOPMENT, INC. SHENANDOAH CENTER**

★★**Keystone STAR 4 Award**★★

125 East Centre Street, Suite 6  
Shenandoah, PA 17976  
**Phone: 570-462-4808 • Fax: 570-544-6915**  
Head Start ONLY

## **CHILD DEVELOPMENT, INC. POTTSVILLE 2 CENTER**

★★**Keystone STAR 4 Award**★★

1515 Mount Hope Avenue  
Pottsville, PA 17901  
**570-990-1177 • Fax: 570-544-6915**  
Head Start • PreK Counts

## **CHILD DEVELOPMENT, INC. TAMAQUA CENTER**

★★**Keystone STAR 4 Award**★★

255 West Broad Street  
Tamaqua, PA 18252  
**Phone: 570-668-5404 Ext 210 • Fax: 570-544-6915**  
Head Start • PreK Counts

# ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

## Open Door

You are welcome to visit your child's center/classroom at any time.

Per Pennsylvania Code Title 55. Public Welfare, Chapter 3270.32--Suitability of persons in facility, the following applies to all centers operated by Child Development, Inc.:

*"(c) The operator may not allow an individual to enter the facility if the operator knows that the individual has been convicted or is awaiting trial on charges involving a crime of child abuse, child neglect, physical violence or moral corruptness."*

Entrance to all centers is controlled by a security system. **For everyone's safety, PLEASE do not allow anyone into the center.** Please be informed that all individuals entering the building and in public/common areas are under video surveillance and recording.

## Reporting Changes of Family/Child Information

It is extremely important that you report ANY changes of phone numbers and addresses for yourself, your emergency contacts and/or employers. Please contact your Family Advocate immediately so the correct information is on file at your child's center.

Remember, this is our only means of contacting you in case your child becomes sick or if there is an emergency with your child or at your child's center.

## Reporting Concerns

Should you have any concerns regarding our Program, we advise you to speak with the appropriate Program team member immediately.

Concerns regarding center operations should be discussed with your child's teacher first. If you have a concern or problem with which your child's teacher cannot help you, please talk with the Team Leader (at your child's center). If needed, you may call the main office to speak with a Manager or Director.

Concerns regarding program enrollment, fees, hours of service, or center committee activities should be discussed with your Family Advocate. Should your concern not be satisfied at this level, please talk with the Team Leader.

Any concerns which cannot be dealt with by Team Leaders, Managers or Directors must be submitted in writing to the Executive Director who will work to resolve your concerns. If the problem is not resolved, the Executive Director and Policy Council Chairperson will present the issues to the Board of Director's Executive Committee for resolution.

If a member of our community has a concern/complaint with the Program, the person must submit their concern/complaint, in writing, to the Executive Director, who will work to resolve the concern. If the problem is not resolved within a reasonable period of time, the Executive Director and Policy Council Chairperson will present the issue to the Board of Director's Executive Committee.

## Release of Information and Confidentiality

All information we gather about your child and your family is confidential. All eligibility, child, and family information will be kept in a locked file cabinet. All data entered into the computer is password protected. It will not be shared with any outside agency without your knowledge and written permission. The only exception to sharing information with an outside agency is with Child Protective Services.

For parents who are separated, divorced or have joint legal custody, it is the enrolling parent's responsibility to keep the other parent informed of the child's progress. The non-enrolling parent may schedule an appointment to come in and review his/her child's records; however, we do not copy file information,

attendance records, or payment receipts for him or her, nor do we verbally release this information. Non-enrolling parents may request conferences, progress reports, program information, etc. After your child leaves the Program, all records will be kept for seven (7) years.

### **Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect**

In Pennsylvania, all educators and child care providers are required, by law, to report the suspicion of child abuse or neglect. Failure to do so is considered an offense punishable by fine or imprisonment.

A team member suspecting abuse or neglect will report it immediately to the Child Line and Abuse Registry by calling **1-800-932-0313** or by completing the report on-line. This is followed by a call to the County Child Protective Service Unit (Schuylkill County Children and Youth) at **570-628-1050**. We must comply with state laws to protect children. We hope that families will receive supportive services and strengthen positive family relationships.

Any parent or guardian who has reason to believe that a child is being abused by a family member, friend, neighbor, school, or child care worker should call the above-mentioned phone numbers immediately.

### **Arrival/Departure of Children**

#### **Arrival**

For your child's safety, we require that you or an authorized adult (at least 16 years old) bring your child to the center each morning. Be sure that a team member is aware of your child's arrival before you leave.

If you are going to be away from your place of work for the day, please leave a phone number where you can be reached in case of an emergency.

We ask that you call the center by 7:30am, and leave a message, if your child will not be attending that day. Your phone call is important because it may have an effect on the teacher's planning, child-staff ratio, meals, and transportation.

#### **Departure**

For your child's safety, we require that you or an authorized adult (at least 16 years old) pick-up your child. If you pick-up your child in the classroom, please be sure a team member knows your child is leaving.

### **Release of Children**

#### **Authorized Persons (at least 16 years old)**

When you enroll your child, you provide us with names of persons who can bring/pick-up your child. We will release your child ONLY to the person(s) you have listed on the Emergency Information Form. Please notify your Family Advocate when someone new (name is not on our list) will be bringing/picking up your child. We will require new/unfamiliar adults to provide photo identification before the child is released.

#### **Unauthorized Persons**

In the event of an emergency, please notify the Program in writing that an unauthorized person (name is not on our list) will be bringing/picking up your child. Photo identification will be required.

We WILL NOT release your child to an unauthorized adult under any circumstances. This is for your child's safety.

#### **Court Orders**

Copies of legal documents must be provided to your Family Advocate before a team member can actively prevent non-custodial parents from picking up their child. Unless stated otherwise by a court order, either parent has the right of release of his or her child, and a team member may not refuse to release the child to either parent.

It is your responsibility to inform your Family Advocate of any changes in the names of persons authorized to bring/pick-up your child.

#### **No One Arrives to Pick-up Child**

If at closing time of **your child's** classroom, no one has picked up your child and a team member has not heard

from you, we will go through the authorized emergency/release adults and try to have someone pick up your child.

If, after thirty minutes from the official closing time of **your child's** classroom, we have been unable to reach you or an authorized adult to pick up your child, we must call the local police department.

#### Unsafe Release to Authorized Adult

If you or an authorized adult arrives to pick up your child at the center or bus stop and appears under the influence of alcohol/drugs, team members have been instructed to recommend that another authorized adult come for your child. If this unfortunate situation occurs when you (the parent) are not the one picking up your child, we will notify you immediately.

If the adult causes any problems as a result of this decision, team members must release your child and immediately notify the local police.

#### Emergency Closings and Delays

When the Program must have an emergency closing, delay, or early dismissal as a result of a power failure, broken/frozen water main, severe weather or hazardous road conditions, an announcement may be made using our automated messaging system and posted on our Facebook page. We also notify local radio/television stations. We make every effort to determine the need for a closings or delay by 6:00am. For our automated messaging, you will receive a text message and/or email. Please keep your contact information updated.

The Executive Director will decide if it will be necessary to close the Program or a specific center due to power failure, broken water main, severe weather or hazardous road conditions while the children are present. In the event of this type of early dismissal/closing, you will be notified by phone to pick up your child as soon as possible.

All decisions regarding the emergency closing, delay, or early dismissal of either the Program or a specific center will be made with everyone's safety and well-being as our primary concern. ***PLEASE NOTE: When Head Start and PA PreK Counts classrooms are closed due to weather or other emergencies, ALL evening activities are also cancelled.***

The cancellation or delay will be aired on the stations below:

WMGH	Tamaqua	FM 105.5
WPPA	Pottsville	AM 1360
WPAM	Pottsville	AM 1450
T102	Pottsville	FM 101.9
WNEP TV	Scranton	Channel 16

You will also receive information specific to your child's center regarding the location of an alternate site where children and team members will go in the event of an emergency evacuation.

#### Property Damage

If your child should intentionally damage the Program's property and/or a team member's property, the incident will be recorded, reported to the Team Leader, and discussed with you that day. If you will not be picking up your child, we will attempt to contact you by phone. If unsuccessful by phone, a note will be sent home with your child. You may be responsible for the repair and/or replacement of damaged property.

#### Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be A Team Player, Be Kind

We want our Program to be a positive environment where you, your child, and all of our team members work as a team, are respected, and feel safe. We expect our team members to act in a professional manner. Parents, children, and our team members need to work together and handle problems calmly and with respect for each other. For this to happen, abusive behaviors such as yelling, screaming, cursing or use of obscene language in the presence of children or directed at children, parents, or our team members will not be tolerated. We will meet with you to discuss this behavior and to resolve the matter immediately. Additional occurrences may result in restrictions and/or denial of access to program facilities and/or events.

Physical and/or verbal threats, as well as physical, verbal, or sexual harassment in the presence of children or directed at children, parents, or team members will be immediately reported to local authorities and may result in immediate removal from Program property and denial of future access to Program facilities, events, etc.

This policy applies to all parents, family members, and team members and at all Program facilities and events, not limited to: classrooms, offices, home visits, meetings, buses, bus stops, parking lots, field trips, and training events.

### **Communication and Social Media**

All e-mail communications will be directed to you, the enrolled child's parent/family member, using the Child Development Inc. email or messaging via Child Plus by designated team members. Team members are not permitted to use their personal devices to text or email. Team members will send and respond to electronic communications only during scheduled work hours. You may request, in writing, that you do not want to be contacted through any form of electronic communication or social media by Child Development, Inc.

Many of our team members and parents use social media to keep in touch with family and friends. Because we would prefer that the relationship between our team members and parents be kept on a professional level while your child is enrolled in our program, we strongly discourage team members from responding to "friend" requests from currently enrolled families.

Please remember that the information that is posted on social media is not always private. If you are interested in following our Program, you can become a fan of our Facebook page by using the link on our website.

When you enrolled your child, we asked for permission to photograph your child to use his/her image/voice for the purpose of enriching the program through public relations and to complete the ***All About Me*** book for your child as part of his/her transition to kindergarten.

In addition, we asked you for permission to allow other parents to video/photograph your child as part of a classroom/center activity. Therefore, it is important to check with your child's teacher regarding taking pictures of children with personal cameras, video recorders, including cell phone, tablets or other mobile devices.

We ask that you respect and understand that taking photos or videos could put a child or family in jeopardy if they have chosen not to be photographed or videoed and have not given permission. Upon reasonable request, we will make photos available to you.

### **Gift-Giving and Gift Acceptance**

Child Development, Inc. prohibits team members, consultants, and volunteers from giving to, or receiving gifts from, an enrolled child or a parent/family member of an enrolled child.

### **Smoke-Free and Tobacco-Free Environments**

We want to provide a safe and healthy environment for children, families, and team members and comply with all federal and state regulations regarding smoke-free and tobacco-free environments. Smoking and/or using any type of tobacco product, vapor pen or e-cigarette is not permitted at any time in any area of the workplace or any program property, which includes the administrative office, our centers/outdoor play areas, parking lots, in program vehicles, during home visits, and/or any program activities.

### **Withdrawal/Termination of Service**

If you no longer need our services, we require that you provide us with two (2) weeks notice. If for any reason, our Program does not meet your child's needs and/or your needs, please let us know. We will make every effort to discuss this with you.

When our Program feels that we are not meeting your child's needs, your child's teacher will make every effort to involve you and keep you aware of your child's adjustment and/or difficulties. If necessary, we will meet with you to discuss contacting other resource professionals (with your permission) to evaluate your child in order to decide on the best course of action for your child.

Lack of cooperation from you, with the Program's efforts, to meet your child's needs through meetings, conferences, or use of other professional resources may result in the loss of programming for your child.

# EDUCATION AND SCHOOL READINESS

## Goals

- To provide all children with a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment that will promote social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and language development in a manner appropriate to their background, age, and stage of development
- To respond to the needs of children and families
- To enhance parents' role as the child's first and most important teacher
- To create a safe and supportive social and emotional climate where children, families and co-workers work as a team and are treated as worthy, capable individuals and are respected and accepted as such
- To encourage self-confidence, spontaneity, creativity, curiosity, and self-discipline promoting each child's sense of dignity and self-worth

Our Program strives to accomplish these goals by providing an Early Childhood Education Program for children that is available through various service options.

## Services to Children With Disabilities

Your child's teacher will assist you when you have concerns about your child's growth and development. Our teachers work in partnership with staff from the Early Intervention Preschool Program.

It is important to talk with your child's teacher if you are having any concerns. Our teachers will be happy to provide information, answer your questions and/or support you in getting additional services for your child.

When there is a concern about a child between birth and three years of age, Early Intervention Services are provided by the Service Access and Management, Inc. (SAM, Inc.) in the county. If a child is between the ages of three and five, services are provided through the Early Intervention Preschool Program. These services are free for all eligible children.

Your child will not receive any services without your permission and input and only after all screenings and assessments are completed.

With your permission, a developmental screening will be completed by your child's teacher as a part of our education program. We will provide you with the results of the screening. If your child may need follow-up, your child's teacher will meet with you to discuss the next steps.

## Dual Language Learners

Child Development Inc. will provide an environment that supports the value of retaining and promoting a child's home language as he/she learns English. School readiness and success for children who are dual language learners is tied directly to mastery of their home language.

## Mental Health/Wellness and Behavioral Health

Daily programming and planning will include many opportunities for your child to grow in his/her social skills, develop a positive attitude, and good self-image. We are committed to working together to ensure a high-quality, comprehensive, preschool program that meets the social and emotional needs of all children.

We implement a **Positive Behavior Intervention Support or PBIS** approach in all centers and classrooms. Team members, children, and families are provided with a common language built around supporting children's social skills and appropriate behaviors. We will teach children and families rules focused on the expectations to **Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be a Team Player, and Be Kind**. Training opportunities will be available throughout the year for families to learn more about **PBIS**.

We will focus on prevention, early identification and intervention for problems to ensure that each child can reach his/her fullest potential. As always, your permission, involvement and cooperation will be needed. With support from our Mental Health/Wellness Team, we will work together, especially with social, emotional, and behavioral health issues such as: separation; anxiety; elopement; and serious injury to self and others. If parents do not work with us to address your child's behavior concerns; especially high-risk behaviors (elopement and serious injury to self and others), the Team Leader will notify the Executive Director and a conference will be scheduled with the family to discuss our next steps which may include: a report to Children

and Youth to ensure that the child receives the supportive services to succeed. Suspension of services or exclusion from services may be necessary after all other strategies and options have been tried.

Our Mental Health/Wellness Team is available to assist and guide program planning and supportive services for children, families, and our team members. We hope that a positive attitude toward social and emotional well-being and mental wellness will result, and that all families and children will benefit from participating in our Program.

### **Transition**

In an effort to support you and your child as he/she reaches kindergarten age, we are working directly with all of the school districts and non-public schools in the county. We will be providing you with information about kindergarten registration, procedures, and expectations. Family Orientations, school visitations, transition planning meetings and trainings will be scheduled throughout the year. In the spring, your child's teacher will review your child's *All About Me* book. This book, along with your child's health summary, will be given to you to present to your child's kindergarten teacher. Each child will also receive a *My New School* book for you to read together before going to kindergarten. Please try to take advantage of these activities to ensure a smooth transition from preschool to kindergarten.

### **Programming**

We have carefully chosen *The Creative Curriculum* as a framework for providing a developmentally appropriate program. The curriculum is in agreement with the Program's goals and objectives as defined by the Head Start Performance Standards, Regulations for Child Care Services for Children, NAEYC Guidelines, Pennsylvania PreK Early Learning Standards, and accepted child development theory and practice.

We believe that young children learn best by doing. Children need many opportunities to explore the world around them and to experiment to find out how things work by using their senses and real materials.

Classrooms are set-up with your child in mind and are well-equipped and organized with age-appropriate equipment and materials. Your child will be playing and working individually, in both small and large groups, to develop and strengthen skills in many areas. We will be working on language, literacy, mathematics, science, creative arts, approaches to learning, social and emotional development, and physical health and development.

Most importantly, your child will be treated as an individual, who grows and develops at his/her own pace. Your child will have fun learning about himself/herself, others, and the world in a safe, healthy, happy and relaxed setting - a place where he/she will have opportunities to choose, to be creative and expressive, to be successful and, above all, to make friends and to feel good about him/herself.

### **Policies**

#### **Family/Child Orientation Day**

New families, with your child, must visit the center before your child's first day. This visit will give you the time to meet with our team members in your child's room. We have found that families and children feel more comfortable with the daily routine and activities when they spend time together in the classroom.

#### **Conferences and Home Visits**

Conferences or home visits are scheduled every three (3) months. The teaching team will visit with you in your home for two of these conferences. You will be notified in advance, with a day and a time, which is convenient for you and your child's teacher. We will let you know about your child's adjustment to the center and classroom, his/her progress, and any possible concerns you or the teacher may have. We will ask you to update emergency information and child-release information. You will be provided with a copy of your child's progress report. The original report will remain in your child's file.

## Communication

At any time, you should feel comfortable asking questions or talking with our team members about your child. You may request a conference with your child's teacher to discuss any issues/concerns.

We hope to talk with you daily about your child. An open line of communication is important. Your child will receive a Communication Folder and a Center/Home Journal. Please use the Journal to write messages, questions, or things you want to share about your child. We will use the Journal to do the same.

## Behavior Guidance

Our Program promotes a positive approach to managing the behavior of all children. We utilize the **Positive Behavior Intervention Support or PBIS** approach and resources to provide an environment with support and guidance for each child that helps him/her develop a positive self-concept. We will use strategies that are constructive, positive, and suited to the age of your child.

Our Program complies with all federal, state, and local laws which prohibit corporal or abusive punishment of children in child care settings. Team members are prohibited from using any form of emotional abuse, such as shaming, threatening, humiliating or frightening a child. Toilet habits, or lack of, will not be a cause for punishment. Withholding food will not be used as a punishment nor will food be given as a reward.

We will try to prevent unacceptable behavior from occurring by modeling appropriate behavior, arranging the classroom to enhance the learning of acceptable behavior, praising appropriate behavior, and giving children individual attention.

When unacceptable behavior is about to occur/is occurring, we will use a variety of techniques, such as:

- Redirection:** Focus on "what to do" **NOT** "what *not* to do"
- Distraction:** Change the focus of the activity/behavior
- Investigation:** Look for underlying causes of behavior

We want to create an environment where your child will be happy, responsible, and cooperative. We will use positive discipline techniques to help your child develop internal control.

Your child is beginning to learn that what he/she does affects others. Our focus will be on children learning responsibility for their actions, respect for self, respect for the rights and feelings of others, and respect for the classroom/center environment. Your child will have opportunities to problem solve, test limits, learn new ways to respond to others, resolve conflicts, and experience consequences of his/her behavior. With **PBIS**, we will introduce and teach our three (3) expectations: **Be Safe, Be Respectful, and Be a Team Player.**

It is necessary for team members to set and enforce rules and limits. There will be a few clear, simple rules that vary according to the developmental level of the children that will reflect each of these expectations. We discuss and teach the rules to the children, post them, and review them frequently. Children will not be expected to immediately understand or follow the rules. We will remind them and re-direct them in a positive manner. We will send information home to you as we introduce each expectation so that you can work with and support the teaching team and your child in learning the expectations.

We offer training sessions for you and your family members called *Positive Solutions for Families* to support you in understanding and using a positive behavior approach with your child at home.

Guidance and discipline techniques that we use with preschool children include:

- respecting and protecting the rights of all children
- setting clear limits/rules
- building self-esteem
- recognizing child's individual needs
- planning a daily schedule which gives children a blend of choice and structure
- creating a well-designed and well equipped classroom
- recognizing and praising each child's efforts
- anticipating and eliminating potential problems
- helping children understand the problem
- re-directing "what to do" **NOT** "what *not* to do"
- encouraging children to talk about feelings
- using natural and logical consequences

We do not use "time-out" and instead talk with children like this:

- "Do you need to be by yourself for awhile?"
- "This seems hard for you right now."
- "Can I help you find something else to do?"

With support from our Mental Health/Wellness Team, we will work together, to address concerns with social-emotional well-being and behavior such as: separation; anxiety; elopement; and serious injury to self and others. If your child's behavior becomes a concern for our team members because it is happening more often and to a greater degree, we will schedule a conference to discuss our concerns and ask you for your input, support, and cooperation. Together we will develop a plan to support your child. When necessary and with your permission, we may contact appropriate professionals for additional services.

Our Mental Health/Wellness Team is available to assist and guide Program planning and supportive services for children, families, and our team members. We hope that a positive attitude toward social and emotional well-being and mental wellness will result, and that all families and children will benefit from participating in our Program.

### Toys From Home

We do not allow toys from home. If something is brought in, we cannot be responsible for it.

Your child's classroom is well-equipped with toys, games, puzzles, etc. If you have a book or music that may be of interest to all the children, we will appreciate it being shared with the other children.

### Birthday Celebrations

Children enjoy celebrating their birthday with their friends. We have simple birthday celebrations. Your child's teacher will make the day "extra" special for your child.

You may want to do something special for your child and his/her friends. If you want to bring in a special snack, we ask that you bring a healthy treat which can be served with lunch.

We can accept only store-purchased treats. We cannot accept home-made baked goods or treats.

Please do not send candy, chips, cupcakes, cookies, etc. Please do not send other things such as balloons, party favors, etc. We want to keep celebrations simple and affordable for all families.

### Holiday Celebrations

Teaching team members will gather information from all families during the initial home visit, which will enable them to develop an inclusive, sensitive approach to holiday celebrations and plan developmentally and age-appropriate activities for all children in the group. The questions on team members will be asking will be focused on family traditions and celebrations and ideas for sharing them.

### Quiet Time

We believe that children really need time to help them relax and unwind from a busy morning. Quiet time enables them to have a more positive afternoon and be a happier child at home with you.

Children enrolled in a full-day Program option participate in an afternoon rest or quiet time. Depending on your child's age, he/she will have a designated mat that will be used by **only** your child.

Children who use mats will be expected to remain quietly on it during rest time. Restful music is played and, at the request of the child, a team member will rub/pat his/her back. We will not rub your child's back if he/she does not want us to. We will rub/pat backs only over the child's clothing and blanket and above the waist.

Children are welcome to have security objects such as a blanket or a stuffed toy at rest time if it is important to your child. Any objects should be marked with your child's name.

At all other times of the day, we ask that security objects are kept in your child's cubby/locker.

Blankets must be laundered weekly.

Children who do not sleep will be given a quiet activity to do, such as books, puzzles or games, after an appropriate rest period. Children who wake up before rest time is over will also be given a quiet activity to do.

## Educational Field Trips

Field trips are an important part of our Program. First-hand experiences are important for young children. When preparing their weekly plans, teachers will schedule walks and visits to places in the community to enhance your child's learning.

Families will receive advance notice of field trips. You will need to sign a Permission Slip for each field trip. No child will participate without a signed Permission Slip.

Teachers will post the day, time and destination of field trip as a reminder for families. It will also be included on the *Weekly Happenings in your child's Communication Folder*.

When field trips require transportation, only the Program's contracted provider of transportation can be used. We recommend that every child is accompanied by a responsible adult. Field trips requiring transportation must be included and approved on the Center Committee Plan.

## Outdoor Play

Outdoor activity is scheduled daily, weather permitting, as required by state regulations. We believe it is a very important part of your child's day to get fresh air and movement for his/her general well-being and healthy development.

It is our policy that children who are well enough to come to the center are well enough to go outdoors. You must provide us with a doctor's written statement for your child to be excused from this activity.

If children are dressed properly, weather conditions should not be a health risk. You are responsible for providing appropriate clothing for your child such as mittens, gloves, hats, boots, etc. All clothing should be labeled with your child's name.

## Children's Belongings

### What to Wear

Children must wear clothing to the center that is comfortable, durable, washable and appropriate for activities, messy experiences, and outdoor play. We recommend sneakers or other comfortable shoes. **Please, no open sandals, jellies or flip-flops**, because of dirt, gravel and stubbed toes. If possible, clothes free of complicated fasteners make self-help in the bathroom more successful for your child.

### What to Bring

It is common for young children to have accidents, spills, and to get wet during water play. Families must supply the following items which should be labeled with your child's name:

- extra set of clothing (includes socks and underwear)
- sweater or sweatshirt

Please check regularly to see that we have a complete change of clothes that is appropriate to the season and your child's growth. All other supplies will be provided by the Program.

## At-Home (Non-Virtual) Lessons

We will provide At-Home Lessons, following pre-defined circumstances, such as: inclement weather closings that exceed the five (5) planned make-up days in our calendar; in-service days, emergency-related classroom or building closures; such as: unsafe building conditions, inadequate staffing, etc.

Your child's teaching team will share the plan with you during the Initial Conference. Lessons will be prepared by the lead teacher with the teaching team. At-Home Lessons will be planned and connected to the Weekly Lesson Plan and your child's Individual Development Plan. Lessons will include all learning domains. We will provide materials to support the learning objectives with additional activities and supplies sent home weekly. We will also guide you on how to use common items in the home to support your child's learning. You will be able to pick-up materials for At-Home Lessons at the center and, when unable to pick-up materials, a team member will deliver the at-home packet.

Lessons will be prepared for no more than 30 minutes. Depending on your child's interest level and your participation and engagement, lessons may exceed the planned 30 minutes. If your child completes at least 30 minutes of the at-home lesson, he/she will be counted as present for the day.

# HEALTH

## Goals

- To provide a comprehensive program, which includes medical, dental, mental health, and nutritional services
- To ensure the health and safety of all children enrolled
- To promote preventive health services
- To provide families with links to an on-going health care system
- To ensure that children continue to receive comprehensive health care after leaving the Program

## Team Members

The Health and Development Manager is responsible for training, assisting and guiding team members in the delivery of preventative health services, emergency responding, and routine medical concerns.

## Requirements for Enrollment

### Physical Examination

We require that ALL children have an age appropriate health check BEFORE the child attends the center - yearly up to age six (6), then every two years thereafter. If your child does not have a current physical examination before receiving services, you must call your Family Advocate with a date for a physical examination.

All appropriate sections of the form must be completed, including immunization dates, as well as lead, hemoglobin, vision, hearing, and the child's height and weight results. Any special concerns, illnesses, or other medical problems should be noted on the physical form.

### Immunizations

You must provide the Program with documentation (shot record) that your child has received the age-appropriate immunizations before enrollment.

Assistance will be given to you until all age-appropriate immunizations are received. If your child is not up to date, contact your Family Advocate for help.

## IMMUNIZATION SCHEDULE

**DTap:** 2 Months, 4 Months, 6 Months, 15-18 Months, and 4-6 Years

**Hepatitis B:** 0-Birth, 1-4 and 6-18 Months

**IPV:** 2 Months, 4 Months, 6-18 Months, and 4-6 Years

**Pneumococcal:** 2 Months, 4 Months, 6 Months, 12-18 Months

**MMR:** 12-15 Months, Booster at 4-6 Years

**Varicella:** 12-18 Months, 4-6 Years

**HIB:** 2 Months, 4 Months, 6 Months, 2-15 Months

**Influenza:** Annually

**COVID-19:** 6 Months to 5 Years as recommended by the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) and Boosters as need per child's physician.

**American Academy of Pediatrics**  
**Requires all children to have Well Child Exam**  
**according to the following schedule:**

2 Months of Age	15 Months of Age	3 Years of Age
4 Months of Age	18 Months of Age	4 Years of Age
6 Months of Age	24 Months of Age	5 Years of Age
9 Months of Age	30 Months of Age	6 Years of Age
12 Months of Age		7 Years of Age
		8 Years of Age

**Allergies**

If your child has an allergy, we require written documentation of the allergy from the doctor on the child's physical form.

If your child has a food or milk allergy, we need a separate note from your doctor. This is the only way we can give your child other foods or drinks. The doctor's note should specify what alternative food/drink should be given to child.

**Policies**

**Physical Examination/Immunizations**

When your child does not have a complete up-to-date pre-enrollment physical examination and immunization (shot) record, or the yearly physical examination, it will be necessary for you to call your Family Advocate immediately with an appointment date or for assistance when needed.

This policy will be enforced to:

- protect the health of all children and team members from the threat of communicable diseases
- provide appropriate health related services to children with any special concerns, illnesses or medical problems.

**Contagious Illness**

The following is a list of illnesses which will require us to exclude your child from services:

- infectious diarrhea
- chicken pox (7 days after outbreak of the rash or until all areas are dried and scabbed over)
- scabies, impetigo, ringworm, rash of unknown origin, hepatitis A, homophiles influenza, vaccine preventable diseases and strep throat

If your child has a disease or infection that could spread to other children or team members (directly or indirectly), he/she will be excluded from care until a note is received from a doctor that the child is no longer a threat to the health of others. You will be notified if your child may have been exposed to any disease/infection. Exposure means your child may have had contact with the illness/health problem. Our Program may not discriminate against serving any child who has an illness **NOT** transmitted by casual contact and verified with a doctor's note.

**Sick Child Policy and Illness Reports**

When you enroll your child in an early childhood program, you need to know that some illnesses will be inevitable. Most children will experience an illness which will require that they be excluded from care. It is important that you plan for alternative care for your child should he/she become sick and not able to receive care at the center.

We are concerned about the health of all children and realize we cannot provide the care your child needs during an illness. Team members are trained and responsible for making decisions about the illnesses which require you to come to the center early and pick up your child.

Your child's teacher will call you when your child becomes ill. We will consider all symptoms and factors before making the decision to call you. An Illness Report will be completed following procedures.

If your child is sent home with diarrhea or a fever of 101 or higher, we cannot accept him/her back into the center the next day if they still have the fever or diarrhea that morning.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call the Health and Development Manager at our main office.

When necessary, and with your written permission, we may need to call your child's doctor directly to get clear information about your child's physical examination/immunization records or the nature of your child's illness or problem.

Please remember that our policies are to protect the health of your child, the other children, and our team members.

### **Contagious Illness Reporting**

Please call the Health and Development Manager, immediately, if your child has an infection or communicable disease. It is important and necessary to prevent other children from becoming ill. Your child may return to the center with a physician's note stating that your child is no longer contagious.

### **Medication Policy**

Our policy is to give prescription medications when needed. If medications can be arranged around the hours of care, it would be beneficial. Prescription medication must be in the original pharmacy container with its original label. The doctor's name, child's name, name of the medicine, dose and number of times to be given must be on this original label, or on a form from the pharmacy stating the above information. This form with these instructions must be kept with the medication at all times.

You will need to sign a permission form at the center for a team member to give your child this medicine. The team member who gives the dose will record the time and dose on the medication log.

All medication is kept out of children's reach in a locked box/cabinet. If indicated, medication will be refrigerated and stored in a locked box.

With your permission, we will use, when necessary, the following: baby wipes, Vaseline for diaper rash, and sunscreen. These items are supplied by the program.

### **In Case of Emergency**

#### **Emergency Information**

When you first enrolled your child, you completed a very important Emergency Information form. This information is important for anyone who directly takes care of your child.

This information needs to be updated as any changes occur, especially the names, addresses and phone numbers of people we can contact in case of an emergency. Please let the people know that, if we are unable to reach you at home or at work, they may be called in case of an emergency with your child. The people on the list must be able to come to the center. Having a car or someone reliable to transport them is essential.

This information is very important. Please make sure it is complete and current. If changes are necessary, contact your Family Advocate as soon as possible.

Emergency Information is readily accessible at your child's center and is always taken on walks and field trips.

#### **On-Call Health Team Member**

The Health and Development Manager is available for team members from 6:00am to 5:30pm for non-emergency health concerns.

In the event of a serious emergency, team members are trained to call 911 for assistance. If necessary, your child will be transported to the nearest medical facility. You will be contacted immediately and instructed to report to that emergency facility. A team member may remain with your child until you arrive.

#### **First Aid Training**

All direct care giving team members receive training in Pediatric First Aid and CPR (*American Red Cross*). Training includes basic first aid procedures for bleeding, rescue breathing, seizures, poisoning, burns, care of fractures, choke saving, and shock treatment.

## **First Aid Kit**

There is a first aid kit in every classroom. First aid kits are kept well-supplied with up-to-date supplies. Kits are kept out of children's reach.

Team members must take a first aid backpack to outdoor play areas, on walks, field trips, etc. Emergency information and emergency phone numbers are always taken to ensure the safest, quickest response to your child's medical emergency.

## **Accident Reports**

Although team members are trained in providing the safest possible environment for children in their care; accidents can happen. When your child falls or gets injured and a team member must provide some type of basic first aid treatment, a three-part accident report form is completed immediately.

If your child comes to the center with signs of an accident/injury, we will also complete an Accident Report to document that the accident/injury happened at home.

You will receive the original accident report that day. A copy will be sent to the Health/Development Manager at the main office, and a copy will remain in your child's file at the center.

## **Preventative Health Care**

### **Annual Screenings**

All eligible children receive yearly screenings. Please remember these screenings do not replace a doctor's evaluation.

1. Your child's height and weight are taken twice each year and are documented and tracked. We will notify you of the results to share with your child's primary doctor.
2. A hearing and vision screening may be done yearly. You will be notified of the results of these screenings. We will recommend that you follow up with a visit to the doctor if your child has difficulty with the screening.
3. We partner with Geisinger Dental, St. Luke's Rural Health Dental Clinic, and Tri-Valley Dental Office to provide dental exams and treatment for our children. We will provide you with a list of local dentists for you to have a dental home. If you already have your own dentist, we will need verification of your child's last exam for our records.

By doing health screenings, we hope to find and correct any health problems which your child may have as early as possible. Good health is the foundation of school readiness. It is never too early to begin good health practices with your child.

### **Daily Programming**

Good health and hygiene practices are a part of the daily routine for your child. Children are taught proper hand washing procedures, as well as appropriate times to wash hands, such as after play, before meals, after toileting, after blowing and wiping their own noses. We will teach children to cough into their elbow rather than covering their mouth with their hand. Teeth brushing is supervised and practiced daily. Your child will be given his/her own toothbrush.

Activities will be planned that encourage children to learn about their bodies and how to keep them healthy and safe.

Children are taught basic pedestrian safety rules. We provide all families with a book on Transportation and Pedestrian Safety, which includes these rules, and ask that you review, practice, and model these and other safety rules with your child at home.

We encourage your involvement and follow-up in modeling good health and safety practices for your child.

Our team members are happy to provide you with any information relating to health concerns such as: area physicians and their accepted forms of payment or immunization checklists.

# NUTRITION

## Goals:

- To provide nutritious meals that will help meet the daily nutritional needs of all enrolled children
- To ensure a clean, pleasant, learning environment for the serving and eating of meals with children
- To encourage children's participation before, during, and after meals to strengthen self-help skills, independence, table manners, etc.
- To involve children, parents, and team members in mealtime to develop sound nutrition habits

## Policies

### USDA Policy

We operate according to the United States Department of Agriculture Policy, which does not discriminate because of race, color, national origin, sex, or disability. If you feel your child has been treated unfairly in receiving food services for any of the above reasons, you can write to:

USDA  
 Director, Center for Civil Rights Enforcement  
 1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
 Washington, DC 20250-9410

Or, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at:  
[http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) **OR**  
 email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

Your child will be receiving, at the least, the minimum daily requirements for breakfast, lunch, and PM snack.

BREAKFAST		LUNCH		SNACK*	
Milk	¾ cup	Milk	¾ cup	Milk	½ cup
Fruit or Vegetable or Both	½ cup	Meat or Meat Alternative	1½ ounce	Fruit or Vegetable or Both	½ cup
Grain/Bread	½ ounce equivalent	Vegetable (2 kinds)	¼ cup	Meat or Meat Alternative	½ ounce
		<b>OR</b>		Grain/Bread	½ ounce equivalent
		Vegetable	¼ cup	<b>*Serve 2 of the above</b>	
		Fruit	¼ cup		
		Grain/Bread	½ ounce equivalent		

### Minimum Requirements

### Menu Posting

We will post monthly menus in our website, in each center, and in your child's classroom. You may request a copy of the menu. All menus are approved by a consulting registered dietitian.

### Special Diet/Food Allergy

If your child needs a special diet or has a diagnosed food or milk allergy, we must have a doctor's written verification on file. This doctor's note should state allergy and what substitutions are to be given.

### Family-Style Meals

Meals are served family-style with a basic place-setting. When children help themselves, they learn to take

more appropriate serving sizes, to try new foods, and to eat healthier. We encourage children to take "second helpings" if available and they are still hungry.

Table manners, good hygiene practices, self-help skills, and conversation are encouraged and reinforced during family-style meals. Mealtimes are part of educational instructional time.

Children help with the set-up and clean-up of meals. We believe that meals are an important social and learning experience for children. We encourage you to reinforce this at home.

We ask that you support us in encouraging your child to taste new foods.

We will not force your child to eat, but all foods will be offered.

Food, especially desserts, will not be withheld for any reason.

# FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

## Goals

- To develop and maintain a positive working relationship with parents and family members of children enrolled in the Program
- To support and promote the parents' role as their child's first and most important teacher
- To create a supportive social and emotional climate where children, families and co-workers are treated as worthy, capable individuals and are respected as such
- To offer a variety of opportunities that foster development, maximize strengths, and encourage self-confidence, while viewing each individual as a valuable member of the family and community

## Participating in the Program

Parent and family engagement has been proven to be one of the most important factors in a child's future success. Our Program encourages families to participate in the Program and to understand the full range of opportunities available to them.

## Visit the Classroom

Observe or participate in the daily activities of the classroom with your child. You know your child best. Your suggestions, ideas, and concerns are welcomed by your child's teacher. *Weekly Happenings* from the classroom provide suggested activities that you can do at home to work on your child's school readiness goals.

## Volunteer in the Classroom and Center

Pennsylvania has new laws regarding the definition and requirements for volunteers that are responsible for the welfare of children or have direct contact with children. If you are interested in being a regular volunteer in your child's classroom or center, we are required to have you complete the Criminal History Clearance from the PA State Police, Child Abuse History Clearance from the Department of Human Services, and the clearance from the National Sex Offender Registry. Additionally, a fingerprint based federal criminal history (FBI) is required if you have lived outside of Pennsylvania. Our Program will assist you in submitting the clearances. There is no cost for the clearances. You will also be required to have a TB tine test. Please talk with your child's teacher or your Family Advocate about your interest in being a volunteer.

## Attend Committee Meetings for Your Center

All parents whose children are currently enrolled in Child Development are automatically members. At meetings, parents give and receive information on Program and community events, plan special activities for their group, and work closely with our team members to enhance the Program. Committees also request and/or organize trainings based on the interests of their group. It is also the responsibility of the Committee to elect representatives to serve on Policy Council.

## Represent Your Center on Policy Council

Policy Council is an important part of the Program where parent input is vital to decision-making about Program planning and operation. Along with the Board of Directors, Executive Director, and Leadership Team, Policy Council is responsible for overseeing various aspects of the Head Start Program, such as: short and long-range planning for the Program, personnel policies, grant applications, budgets, and the parent activity fund. Policy Council meets monthly.

## Serve On Program Committees

Contribute your ideas and talents to the Program by serving on one of our Committees. Whatever your interests, there is a committee that could benefit from your input. For a complete list of committees along with descriptions, talk with your Family Advocate.

## Recording Volunteer Time

We value and depend on the time you give to your child's Program. The time you give is important to your children and to strengthening our Program. As a federally funded, non-profit agency, we must match funds

that the federal government allocates with non-federal dollars. When you volunteer or make a donation to the Program, a dollar value is assigned to it. At least 20% of our total budget must come from this type of non-federal dollars. To keep accurate records of volunteer time and donations, we will ask you to complete forms that document your time and donation.

### **Program/Parent Information**

#### **Newsletter**

Every month we distribute a Program newsletter. You can refer to the newsletter for information about child growth and development, program information, and community resources.

#### **Parent Bulletin Board**

A parent bulletin board is clearly marked and located in every center. Please refer to it regularly for updated information, which will include Policy Council meeting minutes and notices, Center Committee meeting notices, notices of parent training opportunities, and the latest information on local community resources.

#### **Resources and Information**

Resources and information are available for parents/family members, at each site, and contain informative pamphlets on child development, a variety of family issues and health topics, as well as brochures from local community agencies. You are encouraged to browse through these pamphlets and take them home to read at your convenience. At the time of enrollment, every family will receive QR codes to access our Community Resource Guides as well as information on PA-Navigate.org and the 2-1-1 system available to access community resources. Copies of the Community Resource Guides will be provided upon request. Remember to check out our website: [www.childdevelop.org](http://www.childdevelop.org) and Facebook page for news and information that you can use.

#### **Parent/Family Feedback Surveys**

After your child has been enrolled with us for about eight (8) weeks, we will ask you to complete a survey to let us know how you are feeling about your experience with us. After six (6) months, we will ask you to evaluate the program and services your child has received. Your input is important. It helps us make continuous improvements and provide the best Program for children and families.

We will also ask you to help us by completing a survey, with your child's teaching team, during home visits/conferences. This survey assists us in evaluating our tools and resources that are shared with you as part of our ***PBIS Home + School Connection***.

All e-mail communications must be directed to the enrolled child's parent/family member and should be done using the Child Development Inc. email or messaging via Child Plus. Do not use your personal email.

# **FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES**

## **Goals**

- To help families choose the best educational service option for their children, depending on family circumstances and eligibility
- To provide support to families as they work towards goals they have set for themselves and their children
- To provide families with information on resources and services available in their community
- To ensure families are aware of and understand Program policies related to enrollment and service issues

## **Team Members**

### **Family Advocates**

Each center location has at least one Family Advocate who meets with parents to enroll your children in our Program. Your Family Advocate will:

- Collect enrollment information to plan for a smooth transition into the Program
- Set up an initial conference with your child's teacher and a Family/Child Orientation Day for you and your child before your child begins attending
- Be available to assist you if you need a change in Program services or services from other agencies
- Inform you of Center Committee meetings, training opportunities, and family activities

## **Enrollment Priority**

### **Head Start and PA PreK Counts**

Enrollment is from August through May/June. Full-day/part-year or full-day/full-year service can be arranged for eligible children whose parents are working, seeking employment, or enrolled in a training program.

Priority is given to:

- Financially eligible 4-year old children to help prepare them for transition to kindergarten
- Financially eligible 3-year old children depending on available openings

### **Child Care Works (State Subsidy)**

Enrollment is ongoing. Parents must be working a minimum of 20 hours per week or be enrolled in a training program a minimum of 10 hours per week and also working a minimum of 10 hours per week.

If funds are not available for immediate placement, a family will go on a waiting list by date of application. Placement will be made as funds are available. There will be no priorities for placement. Siblings of children already in care will be placed on a waiting list based on the date care is requested, not on family's original application date for other siblings.

## **Financial Arrangements**

### **Head Start and PA PreK Counts Option**

There is no fee for Head Start or PA PreK Counts services. Services are provided for each child and family through federal and/or state funding. Families may be eligible for extended hours and days of service if they are attending school or are working. Parents should discuss service needs with their Family Advocate.

## Child Care Option

General information pertaining to all families paying fees:

*Registration Fee:* A non-refundable fee of \$15.00 for one child, or \$25.00 for more than one child, is payable at the time of application for enrollment into all child care options. Families enrolled in *Child Care Works* through the Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC) will not be required to pay the registration fee. The registration fee is paid by the ELRC.

*Receipt for Payment:* Parents requesting a receipt for payments sent through the mail must enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope along with their request.

*Fees for Days Absent:* Parents must pay the required fee for days their child does not attend due to sickness, vacation, or other family circumstances.

*Fees for Program Holidays and Emergency Closings:* Parents must pay the required fee for days the Program is closed for holidays and emergency closings up to and including fifteen (15) days.

## **Fee Payment Schedule For Child Care Families**

Child Care Works - The child care fee is determined by the Early Learning Resource Center.

Tuition - The weekly child care fee is determined by the Child Development Inc. Board of Directors.

For both subsidized and tuition families, the following fees must be paid before the first day of service:

- A deposit of one (1) week's fee
- The first week of service fee

After service begins, you will be expected to pay the weekly fee every Monday of the service week by the close of business which is 5:30pm. Credit card payments are accepted online, by phone, or in person at the Administrative Office. To make payments on-line, visit our website at: [www.childdevelop.org](http://www.childdevelop.org) and click on "Tuition Payments" in the left side menu. For security reasons, you will then be re-directed to **My ProCare Online Parent Portal**. To make credit card payments by phone call: 570-544-8959 (Ext. 235 or 225).

Payments are also accepted in the form of checks or money orders. You must mail or hand deliver to the administrative office. The office hours are Monday—Friday, 9:00am to 4:00pm. If a personal check is returned for insufficient funds, future payments must be in the form of money orders.

TANF-Sponsored Child Care - The child care fee is paid by the Department of Human Services while you are involved in a job search or job training program. You may be assessed a co-pay, to be determined by the Early Learning Resource Center, once you obtain employment.

## **Reasons for Service Termination**

### Delinquent Fees

A fee shall be considered delinquent if not paid by the end of the first day of the service week (Monday). If payment is not made within this time, a "Delinquent Fee Termination Notice" will be mailed to you by the Fiscal/Admin Specialist. If a returned check causes your child care account to become delinquent, you will be charged a return-check fee.

The Delinquent Fee Termination Notice will state that service will end in seven (7) calendar days unless the delinquent fee, plus any accrued fees, are received and paid in full by the date stated. Additional fees may be added if more than two (2) **Delinquent Fee Termination Notices** are issued in a six (6) month period.

When a child's service is in jeopardy due to non-payment of child care fees, the Family Advocate will discuss the situation with the parent to determine the cause and to offer assistance to prevent termination of child care service. Should a third Delinquent Fee Termination Notice be issued, the Team Leader will intervene and monitor the situation. Further outstanding balances may result in immediate loss of service.

Failure to respond to the Delinquent Fee Termination Notice issued by Child Development may also result in an Adverse Action from the Early Learning Resource Center.

### Failure to Report Changes

Failure to report changes in your eligibility status to the Early Learning Resource Center may be grounds for termination from state child care subsidy benefits. These changes include layoffs, completion of training programs, changes in marital status, and/or changes in work hours or place of employment. As a licensed provider, Child Development Inc. is also responsible to report these changes as you make them known to us.

### Withdrawal of Child

If you no longer need our services, we require that you provide us with a two (2)-week notice. If your child has not been attending, but you have not notified your Family Advocate, you will continue to accrue service fees until a drop date has been verified. Failure to notify us may also result in the forfeit of your deposit.

### Abuse of Service Policy

When you enrolled your child, you signed a Service Agreement which stated the hours of care you needed based upon your work or training schedule. This information was verified by your employer or school. It is our Program's policy to provide care for your child during these hours only.

Should your child be in our care longer than the agreed-upon service hours specified, you will be charged One Dollar (\$1.00) per minute/per child. This includes care before and after the agreed-upon times.

Service Agreement hours will be changed only when Child Development Inc. receives written verification from your employer or school. Your Family Advocate will then approve a change in service hours and inform your child's teacher.

### Drop-Off Policy

We do not provide drop-off care at our centers. All children enrolled in Head Start and/or PA PreK Counts must arrive 15 minutes before the instructional time begins. Please talk with your child's teacher or your Family Advocate regarding your arrival and departure times. Times vary from center to center and even from classroom to classroom.

### Attendance Policy

Regular attendance is expected so that your child will gain a sense of belonging and feel comfortable with classroom routines. Your child's regular participation will provide team members the time to get to know your child's interests and needs so that he/she can fully benefit from the Program. Regular attendance prepares your child for school.

If your child will not be attending the center, we ask that you call the center by 7:30am and leave a message. This phone call is important to us for many reasons, including ensuring your child's safety, scheduling team members appropriately, providing accurate meal counts to reduce the waste of food, and daily planning for the children. Your Family Advocate or your child's teacher will follow-up with you daily if your child is absent and we have not heard from you.

### Head Start and PA PreK Counts

It is important for your child to be present on a daily basis as he/she works on developing the reading, writing, math and social skills necessary for a successful transition to kindergarten. Because of this, we are required to maintain 85% daily attendance at all times.

Only illness, doctor/dentist visits, and family emergencies will be considered excused absences. Ten (10) or more unexcused absences may result in dismissal from the Program.

Your Family Advocate will monitor classroom attendance and help with any problems that may be keeping your child from coming to the center.

### Child Care Works (State Subsidy)

If your child misses five (5) consecutive service days and you have not called us to let us know “why,” we must notify the Early Learning Resource Center. Your child care will be suspended (not terminated) on day 6 if your child has not returned. If you become unemployed, you will have the option to continue child care or suspend service until redetermination by the Early Learning Resource Center. When absences are not related to child care funding, if your Family Advocate has been unable to reach you, he/she will notify the ERSEA Manager.

If you become unemployed, you are eligible for 60 consecutive calendar days to find new employment and 30 days of paid child care. However, if you **choose** to end your current employment, you are eligible for only thirteen (13) consecutive calendar days to find new employment.

### Absence Policy

For children receiving *Child Care Works*, subsidized child care, the state of Pennsylvania has a policy regarding absences. If your child is absent, in one year (July through June), for more than 40 days—you will be responsible to pay the full daily rate to Child Development Inc. because the state will not reimburse Child Development Inc. for the 41st absence or any additional absences.

# TRANSPORTATION

## By Bus (Head Start Only)

When needed, transportation may be available for children attending Head Start classrooms at specific locations. Head Start buses are equipped with seatbelts and child safety restraints.

### Bus Rules

The following is a list of rules that we must have in order to run a safe transportation system for your child. Your child's safety is our main concern, so please follow these rules so that they can have an enjoyable year in Head Start.

1. You must walk your children to the bus in the morning and meet them at the bus in the afternoon. Please hold your child's hand.
2. Children should be dressed and ready when the bus arrives. The driver will not wait under any circumstances. If your child misses the bus, it is your responsibility to take him/her to school.
3. **You should be at the bus stop 10 minutes before the pick-up and drop-off times.** You must be standing at the designated stop in clear sight of the bus driver. If team members riding the bus do not see you, they may assume you are not there and will keep going. Children can get on and off only at their designated stop unless you call the center to receive approval.
4. Please DO NOT bring family pets to the bus stop because it is possible that children or other animals in the neighborhood may excite them, which may lead to the snapping or biting of others waiting at the stop.
5. Children will be returned to the place where they were picked up. If there is a change in pick up or delivery, your Family Advocate must be notified. All requests for changes will require a minimum of two (2) days to process. If you are moving, please notify your Family Advocate one week in advance.
6. You must notify the center by 7:30am when your child will not be attending. Please leave a message.
7. If your child misses the bus in the morning, please bring your child to the by 9:00am. Your child can return home on the bus in the afternoon.
8. If your child is going to be absent for several days due to illness, etc., please notify your child's teacher.
9. You must be at the bus stop in the afternoon. If no one is at the bus stop to meet and pick up your child, the following procedures will go into effect: Children will be returned to the center after the bus run is completed. It will be your responsibility to see that your child is taken home. We consider this a serious matter because it is very upsetting for your child. We will meet with you to make sure it does not happen again.
10. If your child has to cross the street to get on or off the bus, your child must be accompanied by an adult. You must cross in FRONT of the bus. Please hold your child's hand. Never cross in back of the bus. Do not stand near the bus.
11. Only Program team members, enrolled children, parent volunteers, and other approved volunteers will ride the bus to and from the center.
12. There is no food, drink, smoking, or vaping on the bus.
13. Toys, backpacks, etc. should not be sent with your child.
14. The proper adult-child ratio will be maintained on the bus at all times.
15. All bus passengers wear seat belts.

16. Our team member may determine, prior to your child boarding the bus, that your child is ill. We will ask that you keep your child home that day.
17. Please make every attempt to have your child attend on a regular basis.
18. HAZARDOUS WEATHER POLICY: Your child's safety is our main concern; therefore, we may delay or cancel transportation in the event of bad weather (snow, ice, etc.).

Transportation cancellations and delays may be announced on all radio stations in Schuylkill County and WNEP-TV Channel 16 between 6:00am and 7:00am or as soon as possible depending on conditions. We ask that you **DO NOT** call the center regarding cancellations or delays. Closing announcements and other types of information are also announced through an automated service using text messaging and email.

19. RELEASE OF CHILDREN: Your child will be released only to you, the parent, or to an individual designated in writing by you. Each child is released **only** at his/her assigned stop.

In an emergency, your child may be released to an individual only if you call us and if the identity of the person can be verified by a team member. A driver's license, photo I.D., or any official document with the person's name and address on it may be used as proof of identification. You are also requested to send a written notice stating the name of this person so that the person's name can be added to the Emergency/Release Information on file.

***(See: Release of Children, page 5, for more information)***

20. Daily bus attendance will be monitored. If your child does not ride the bus on a regular basis, your Family Advocate will contact you to discuss other means of transporting your child to the center and discontinue bus service.

***During the first few weeks of Head Start, we ask for your patience and understanding regarding pick-up and drop-off times until the bus runs are established.***

We are confident that this will be both an enjoyable and rewarding year for you and your child.

We appreciate your cooperation; and, if you should ever have a problem or questions regarding transportation, please contact your Family Advocate.

### **By Car**

If you will be transporting your child to and from the center, please remember that PA state law requires that you use a child safety seat appropriate for the age and weight of your child. If you have any questions regarding the right child safety seat to use, call our Health and Development Manager at 570-544-8959, Extension 222.

Please arrive according to the times agreed upon on your Service Agreement. If you are running late, please call the center.

***For safety, please always turn your car off and never leave children alone in your car.***

## CONCLUSION

On behalf of our Child Development Team, thank you for choosing Child Development Inc. and for trusting us with the early care and education of your child.

We know that our handbook contains a great deal of information. Please do not hesitate to talk with our team members if you have any questions or concerns.

Our dedicated, experienced, and qualified team members understand that you want what is best for your child.

We know that you are your child's first and most important teacher. We will work with you, as partners, to ensure that your child receives all the love, care, and opportunities for growth and development during this most important time in his/her life.

Together, we can provide your child with the necessary foundation for success in school and a lifetime of learning.

***Most importantly, we know that every child is special, especially your child.***

In the best interest of our children, families, and our team —

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary Ann Devlin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Mary Ann Devlin  
Executive Director

## IMPORTANT and HELPFUL RESOURCES

### Head Start Regulations (Head Start Performance Standards)

The link below will take you to **Head Start | Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center's POLICY & REGULATIONS** page for the most current Head Start Performance Standards:

<https://headstart.gov>

### Child Care Regulations

The links below will take you to the Pennsylvania Bulletin where you can find Pennsylvania Child Care regulations that were changed, effective Saturday, December 19, 2020. The correct chapter to reference is CHAPTER 3270. By clicking on each category in this list, you will be taken to the section you are interested in referencing:

- **Center:** <https://www.pacodeandbulletin.gov/Display/pacode?file=/secure/pacode/data/055/chapter3270/chap3270toc.html>

Go to our website: <https://www.childdevelop.org> and click on our “**RESOURCES**” page in the left-side menu. Here you will find these links, as well as other helpful ones.

## NOTES



# Child Development, Inc.

