

THE CHILDREN'S CENTER

PARENT HANDBOOK

Revised August 2011



childcare that works.

Table of Contents

Mission Statement.....	3
Program Philosophy.....	3
Daily Schedule.....	4
Curriculum.....	5
Group Size and Teacher/Child Ratios.....	5
Guidance/Discipline Policy.....	6
Enrollment.....	7
Confidentiality Policy.....	8
Hours of Operation/Holiday Closings.....	8
Fees.....	9
Disenrollment.....	10
Illness/Accident Policy.....	10
Medication Policy.....	11
Biting Policy.....	11
Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect.....	11
Staff Training.....	12
Emergency Procedures/Closings.....	12
Meals and Snacks.....	12
Arrivals and Departures/Custody Procedures.....	13
Field Trips.....	13
Tips and Other Information for Parents.....	13
Parent-Staff Communication.....	15

MISSION STATEMENT

The Children's Center provides preschool and childcare for children 6 weeks through 9 years old. Our goal is to meet the developmental needs of young children and their families including extended hours, full-day childcare with a written preschool curriculum, and before/after school care.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The Children's Center believes that every child can learn if given the proper opportunity, encouragement, and stimulating environment. Together, we provide experiences to enrich and enhance each child's cognitive, language, social, emotional, physical, and creative development. We are committed to providing opportunities for interaction with children of both similar and different cultural backgrounds and social life styles. We believe that in order for children to reach their full potential, they need a creative, happy, nurturing and safe environment, where they obtain care, guidance, and support. Children need love and caring balanced with structure, boundaries, and guidance/discipline to develop physically, socially, emotionally, and cognitively.

The Children's Center incorporates the High Reach learning program to enhance our learning environment. This program's scope and sequence includes children, Toddlers through Pre-K. This curriculum provides learning experiences which creates boundaries while at the same time allowing for creativity. We also believe that play is an important mode of learning. By balancing these two learning experiences our children have a well rounded education.

The teachers at The Children's Center understand how important education is for the development of the children. They have had both education and training workshops to have a clear understanding of how children learn more efficiently. The curriculum that the teachers follow, meet the full spectrum of the children's developmental needs, which include, physical, social, cognitive, and emotional. The children are provided with a resourceful environment to help in their developmental process.

The Children's Center encourages the children's family to involve themselves in their child's classroom at any time. We ask that they attend one day in the spring, as well as one day in the fall. It is then, that we can work together to help better our children's education.

Children need to develop a positive sense of self and it is our commitment to assist children with success each day.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Times vary by age groups

Breakfast	7:00 - 8:00
Center Play	8:00 - 8:30
Outside Play	8:30 - 9:00
Snack	9:00 - 9:30
Curriculum	9:30 - 11:00
Lunches	11:00 - 12:15 (staggered dining)
Outdoor play times vary	
Naps	12:00 - 3:00
Snack	3:00 - 3:30
Center Play	3:30 - 4:30
Outside Play	4:30 - 5:15
Dinners	4:30 - 6:00 (staggered dining)

Evenings: the children vary between outdoor play (weather permitting), center play, and homework time.

CURRICULUM

The Children's Center teaches the High Reach Learning Program as part of its curriculum for children 12 months (toddler) through Pre-Kindergarten. The center has music and art rooms for extended activities. Nutrition and meal times are an important part of the learning program. A weekly schedule of classroom activities for three year olds and up is posted in the classroom and in the front office. Younger classes work on important pre-skills such as colors, shapes, animals, numbers, letters and crafts each day.

Regardless of the room, the following goals remain the same:

1. To provide for each child a warm and supportive environment where he/she is respected and trusted.
2. To foster positive feelings in self, family, school and community.
3. To provide opportunities where play is the mode of learning.
4. To stimulate the child to explore and discover the world around him/her through concrete, manipulative experiences.
5. To encourage the child to actively participate in his/her learning by helping the child with his/her own planning, decision making, and problem solving.
6. To assure the child's feelings of success through encouragement and acceptance.
7. To provide the child with opportunities for interaction with children of similar and different cultural and social life styles.

Although each room may have similar learning stations, each room's environment is unique, because each teacher has arranged the class based on his/her observations of (1) the needs and social level of the class; (2) the interest of the class; and (3) the personality of the teachers.

GROUP SIZE AND TEACHER/CHILD RATIOS

The Children's Center group sizes and ratios are as follows:

	Group size	Child: Staff Ratio
YOUNGER INFANT (6wk-7mo)	10	1: 4 ratio
OLDER INFANT (7mo-12mo)	10	1: 4 ratio
YOUNGER TODDLERS (12-18mo)	9	1: 5 ratio
OLDER TODDLERS (18-24mo)	9	1: 5 ratio
YOUNGER TWO'S (24-30mo)	12	1: 6 ratio
OLDER TWO'S (30-36mo)	12	1: 6 ratio
YOUNG THREES	18	1:10 ratio
OLDER THREES	18	1:10 ratio
YOUNG FOURS	18	1:10 ratio
OLDER FOURS	18	1:10 ratio
PRE-KINDERGARTEN	20	1:10 ratio
AFTER-SCHOOL	15	1:10 ratio

GUIDANCE/DISCIPLINE POLICY

The guidance/discipline policy used by The Children's Center is redirection and "thinking time". When a child displays inappropriate behavior, the teacher tells the child what he did and that he/she may not continue to do that action. This is when redirection is used and the child is moved to a different activity or area. If the child continues the inappropriate behavior that is when thinking time will be initiated (one minute per year of child's age). This does not exceed 5 minutes! (Even for 5-9 year olds).

- Discipline is clear and understandable to the child. It is consistent and explained to the child before and at the time of disciplinary action.
- Discipline includes positive guidance, redirection, and the setting of clear-cut limits that foster the child's own ability to become self disciplined.
- Discipline is designed to encourage the child to be fair, to respect property, and to assume personal responsibility and responsibility for others.
- The Children's Center does not use any of the following negative disciplinary practices:
 - Yelling! (This includes raising voices. The teacher does not yell to a child that is across the room, they walk up to them and address them personally.)
 - Physical punishment of any type.
 - Withdrawal of: food, rest, or use of the bathroom.
 - Abusive or profane language.
 - Public or private humiliation including threats or physical punishment.
 - Unsupervised isolation of a child.
 - Any other type of punishment that is hazardous to the physical, emotional, or mental health of the child.

ENROLLMENT

Your child must be registered before attending the center. This requires an up-to-date immunization record, and the completion of an emergency card and enrollment agreement form. The information needed will include the parents work telephone numbers, two emergency phone numbers for emergency pick up in case the parents cannot be reached, a doctor's name and phone number, and a hospital name and phone number and permission to call an ambulance for emergency medical treatment. This information will be kept in your child's file. We will also need to be notified of any allergies your child has. If you have special preferences for your children that are not allergies please notify the teachers. Please notify the office of any changes so that your child's file will always be current.

If a child has not been in attendance for two weeks, we will dis-enroll that child. Exceptions to disenrollment are if the parent is a student, teacher or on maternity leave.

If you are an existing parent and you are expecting we will guarantee space for your newborn.

Child's Age	Shots Needed
Birth	Hep B
2 months	DTaP, Hib, IPV, Hep B, PCV7
4 months	DTaP, Hib, IPV, PCV7
6 months	DTaP, Hib, HepB, PCV7
12-15 months	DTaP, Hib, IPV, MMR, VAR, PCV7
24 months	Hep A (2 nd dose 6 months later)
4-6 years	DTaP, IPV, MMR

The Children's Center does not discriminate against any person because of race, color, age, national origin, sex or disability.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

All information given to The Children's Center for a child's file or otherwise will remain confidential. Parents may have access to their child's file at any time. In legal proceedings, a court order is required for us to release information to any party.

HOURS OF OPERATION/HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

The Children's Center is open Monday through Friday from 6:30am to 10:30. The center is closed on Saturdays, Sundays, and on the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Friday before MLK Day-Teacher In-Service
- MLK Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Second Friday in August - Teacher In-service
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Eve close at 6:30pm

FEES

FULL TIME:	WEEKLY RATE
Infants - Two Years	\$194.00
Three Years & Up	\$173.00
Additional Child	10% off the regular rate
Part Time Rates Three's and up only (up to 20 hrs. per week)	
Three's and up	\$ 98.00

For full time students there is a \$60.00 annual registration fee for one child (\$80.00 annual fee for family enrollment). Payments are due on the first day of attendance for that week. **If you have not made your payment by Wednesday at 10:30pm, a late fee of \$10.00 per week will be charged on delinquent accounts.**

- Children enrolled full time will not receive credit/pro-rated tuition for days missed. The reason for this policy is that we reserve space for your child and have fixed expenses that must be paid whether your child attends every day or not.
- Please call when your child will be absent.
- Please tell us of your vacation plans, only two weeks annually are allowed. For additional vacation weeks a fee of half the weekly rate will be charged.
- Tuition will not be charged for a vacation week if we have been informed at least one week prior. If the child attends any day during the week, the full rate will be charged.

DROP-IN:	HOURLY RATE
Infants - Two Years	\$7.00
Threes Years & Up	\$6.50
Additional Child	\$5.00

For drop-in students there is a \$30.00 registration fee. Payments are due at the end of each day or in advance. *** FOR DROP-IN SERVICE - YOU MUST CALL TO SEE IF THERE IS SPACE FOR YOUR CHILD.**

For full time and drop-in students, the center stops accepting children at 6:00pm for staffing reasons. Call by 5:00pm for reservation after 6:00pm.

LATE PICKUP FEE:

The Children's Center closes at 10:30 Monday through Friday and a late fee of \$1.00 per minute/per child after 10:30 will be charged for late pick ups.

RETURNED CHECKS:

There is a \$15.00 charge for any returned checks. Remember that we accept Visa/Mastercard, and bank debit cards (must have Visa/MC logo).

DISENROLLMENT

We require a two weeks notice that your child will be leaving The Children's Center. If your account is one week delinquent, your child will be disenrolled and will not be able to return to the center until full payment is rendered. If you are on vacation more than two weeks your child will be disenrolled. Whether the child would be able to return will also be based on available space.

The staff at The Children's Center makes every effort to meet each child's individual needs and to provide an optimal setting for each child. If, after a conference with the parent, and the Director/Assistant Director we feel that the child's needs cannot be met, a more appropriate setting may be recommended.

ILLNESS/ACCIDENT POLICY

Teachers and children get sick. Please help protect the teachers and other children by keeping your child home if:

- he/she is feverish or had a fever within the last 24 hours
- he/she is coughing and is miserable
- he/she has vomited or had diarrhea within the last 24 hours
- he/she has pink eye/impetigo: **May not return the next day(antibiotics 24 hours)**
- he/she has been on antibiotics for any contagious infections for less than 24 hours

Your child will be sent home if:

- he/she has a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher ,under the armpit
- he/she has shown signs of illness (vomiting, diarrhea, refusing to eat, achy, etc.)
- a care giver observes signs of contagious disease or severe illness

If your child becomes ill during the day, you will be notified and asked to pick up the child within 20 minutes. We are not equipped to keep ill children at school.

When handling sick children, our staff will wear non-porous gloves whenever there are bodily fluids involved.

Accident reports will be filled out in cases of bumps, bruises, and scrapes.

Parents will be called if the accident is more serious, and must come pick up their child within 15/20 minutes. Also parents will be advised if we have called an ambulance prior to calling them.

MEDICATION

Effective March 1, 2011...The Children's Center will no longer dispense medication for the children. If your child needs prescription or over-the-counter medication it will be the parent's responsibility to administer it.

THE CHILDREN'S CENTER BITING POLICY

Children two years and under often bite themselves and other children out of frustration, confrontation, or even just teething. Unfortunately, biting can become a serious problem if not addressed immediately. Incident reports will be completed for the children who are bit AND for the child that does the biting. If after several incident reports are made and parents are aware of the problem and the biting continues, parents will be called to pick up their child if their child bites more than once in the day. If the child comes back and continues to bite the next day, the child will be sent home and asked not to return for one week. If after the week off the child returns and bites again, the child may not return (possibly until the child is three years old).

SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

Staff members will document any changes in behavior or physical evidence that might indicate child abuse or neglect of a child in their care. If a staff member has reasonable suspicion that a child is abused or neglected, the involved staff member will immediately report the suspected abuse or neglect to the Director/Assistant Director and then to the Department of Children, Youth and Families.

STAFF TRAINING

Our staff undergoes training on a continual basis. Upon hire, all staff has a criminal background check. Each year, all staff must participate in 28 hours of continuing education in the area of early childhood development. As part of the 28 hours all employees will have CPR/OSHA/First Aid training annually. Within the teacher's first six months working at the center, they are to complete a 45 hour child development course (the first step towards a Child Development Assoc. Certificate). **The third Saturday of each month is a staff meeting and training day for all staff members. The Children's Center also conducts bi-annual In-Services.**

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES/CLOSINGS

At times, emergencies such as severe weather, fires, or power failures, etc. can disrupt The Children's Center. In extreme cases, these circumstances may require the center to close. In an instance of severe weather, we will follow APS delayed openings; if The Children's Center closes early due to any circumstance the parents will be called to pick up their children immediately. Parents should also listen to radio stations for information about our closings. They are KOB radio, Magic FM, and KOB FM. TV stations are: KOB, KOAT, and KRQE. The Children's Center prepares for emergencies by conducting fire drills at least once per month and keeping accurate emergency contact numbers for parents/guardians. If we would need to leave the building we would call all parents and relocate to Hodgkin Elementary 3801 Morningside and/or Evangel Christian School 4501 Montgomery NE. We would also call radio stations to help us inform you.

MEALS AND SNACKS

Breakfast, lunch and dinner meals are served daily and are nutritionally balanced. There is no charge for any meals or snacks. Breakfast is served from 7:00am until 8:15am. *See individual class schedules for lunch, snack and dinner times.

All foods prepared by The Children's Center conform to the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program. All food brought from home for children with special diets must be labeled with name and date. Recommendations for food brought from home include: 100% fruit juice and/or milk, variety of fruits and/or vegetables, and a selection of at least two different food group components from the four food group components.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES/CUSTODY PROCEDURES

All children will have to be clocked in and out each day. Parents of drop-in children must stop at the front desk to clock in and out. **Additionally, parents must sign their children in and out of their classroom. All children must be accompanied by an adult into and out of the center, and parents need to make sure the child gets to their classroom.**

Only those people listed in the child's file will be allowed to pick up that child unless the center is otherwise notified by the parent/guardian. Any person not recognized that enters the center will need to produce identification at the front desk before entering the classrooms for any reason. In the cases of split custody, The Children's Center must remain impartial. Court orders are needed to enforce any demands upon us to protect the child from an absent parent.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are an integral part of our summer program. Field trips are open to all children three and up. They allow the children to broaden their understanding of the world through experiences that the teacher cannot provide in the classroom. Once the summer program fee is paid, a field trip permission form needs to be filled out and is kept in the child's file. Children are transported by bus companies. Whenever possible we encourage parents to participate in the field trips as chaperons.

TIPS AND OTHER INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

DRESS: Please dress your child appropriately for school activities and the weather. Preschool can (and usually is) a very messy place by adult standards. It is important that your child not feel pressured to keep clothes clean. The children play outside every day. Even on cold days the children will play outside briefly (children that are not well enough to play outside for recess should not be at the center) so please dress your child appropriately. Mittens, hats, hoods and boots are needed on especially cold or snowy days.

In the spring and summer the children must wear sturdy shoes. Sandals without heel straps and flip flops are not allowed. We also have water play every Friday during the summer, so please remember to send your children with a swimsuit, towel and sunscreen.

It is necessary to have extra clothing in your child's cubby. The clothing must be weather appropriate, i.e. no shorts in the wintertime. Please mark all your children's items with their name including jackets, hats, mittens, etc.

TOYS FROM HOME: The Children's Center asks that you do not allow your child to bring in any toys from outside of the center unless arrangements are made with the teachers (show and tell, etc.). **It is never appropriate to bring toy weapons to school.**

IFANT-TWO's SUPPLIES: The parents of babies, toddlers, and two-year-olds need to provide the following:

1. Diapers, pull ups, or training pants (if diapers have to be supplied, \$1.00 charge per diaper will be incurred)
2. For infants - formula/milk bottles, bottled water if preferred and jar food
3. Change of clothes, several sets if potty training (at least 4)
4. Baby wipes
5. Crib sheet and blanket
6. Family picture collage

THREE'S AND UP:

1. Crib sheet for mats or cots
2. Blanket
3. Change of clothes for accidents
4. Family picture collage

EVERYTHING MUST BE LABELED WITH CHILD'S NAME!

SANITATION PROCEDURES: All areas are cleaned using 10% bleach solution as the State recommended disinfectant. For staff, hand-washing procedures are practiced according to health department regulations—washing hands with soap before and after every diaper change and before and after any meal. Children are required to wash hands with soap before and after all bathroom visits and before and after all meals. All mats and cots are sprayed with disinfectant daily.

PARTY DAYS: Throughout the year your child's class will have parties to celebrate various holidays and events. Usually a sign up sheet is provided for you to sign up an item of your choice. Parties are fun for the kids and give them a needed break from the normal routine. We encourage you to join your child at the parties. For your child's birthday, you may bring in snacks or other goodies. We ask that at other times parents do not bring in outside food for their child or other children.

TOILET TRAINING: This leap towards independence needs to happen between the parent and the child with support from The Children's Center. Teachers are happy to cooperate when your child is ready to come to school in "big boy" or "big girl" underwear. The two-year-old class has regular toilet training intervals (every 30-45 minutes) throughout the day. The teachers will have suggestions for you to work as a team to make this process successful and as easy as possible.

PARENT-STAFF COMMUNICATION

1. The office and classroom teachers send home monthly letters to keep parents updated of news and needs. This is a very important way of keeping parents informed.
2. The Children's Center has an open door policy. We encourage parents to visit the center whenever they are able. The Children's Center also encourages all of our parents to participate in the classroom at least once in the Fall and once in the Spring.
3. Teachers or parents have the opportunity to schedule conferences bi annually (in October and May) to discuss your child's progress.
4. Feel free to talk with your child's teacher when you pick up and drop off. They always have the anecdotal records available for you at anytime to keep yourself informed of your child's progress. Please remember that the teacher still needs to supervise the class and may be interrupted.
5. If there is a conflict within the classroom, we are asking the parents to first discuss the issue with the teachers in the classroom. At this point, if the conflict has not come to a resolution, please come to the Program Administrator to discuss the problem. The Program Administrator might call the teacher in with the parents for a supervised conference. Any conflicts should be resolved at this point. If further direction is needed the Center Director will be available to mediate.
6. Family crises can affect (and usually do) your child's preschool experience. It is very helpful if you can alert your child's teacher of events that may be creating stress in your child's life.

Center Owner:
Carol Wright
9:30 - 5:30 M -F
881-9565

Center Director:
Angela Swatzell
10:00am-6:00pm M - F
881-9565

PARENTAL ENROLLMENT AGREEMENT FORM

The Children's Center provides childcare and a learning program for children ages 6 weeks through 9 years of age. The center opens at 6:30am and closes 10:30pm Monday through Friday.

Prices for full time children:	WEEKLY-10 hours or less per day
Infants through 2years	\$194.00
3 years and up	\$173.00
Additional Child	10% off the regular rate

For full time students there is a \$60.00 annual enrollment fee (\$80.00 annual fee for family). Payments are due on the first day of attendance for that week. **If payment has not been made by Wednesday, a late fee of \$10.00 per week will be charged on delinquent accounts.**

Prices for drop-in children:	HOURLY
Infants through 2 years	\$7.00
Three years of age and up	\$6.50
Additional child	\$5.00

*For drop in students there is a \$30.00 registration fee. Payments are due at the end of the day or in advance. **For Drop-In service, you must call to see if there is space for your child.**

NAMES OF CHILDREN TO BE ENROLLED

Sex_____Name_____Birthdate_____

Sex_____Name_____Birthdate_____

Sex_____Name_____Birthdate_____

I have read the above and The Children's Center Parent Handbook and I understand and agree to the center's policies and costs. I agree to pay \$_____ weekly/monthly through August 31, 2012. I understand tuitions increase September each year. I understand that every precaution will be taken for the safety of my child and that proper supervision and instruction will be provided by the facility. Therefore, I release the school and staff from any liability for injury to my child. I also hereby grant permission for my child(ren) to participate in any athletic programs, lessons and field trips arranged by The Children's Center.

Parent Signature

Date

FIELD TRIP PERMISSION FORM

Field trips are an integral part of our summer program. They allow children to broaden their understanding of the world through experiences that the teacher cannot provide in the classroom. Please sign below to allow your child to be transferred by bus to and from the designated field trips (see summer field trip schedule).

Sex_____ Child's Name_____ Birthdate_____

Parent Signature

Date

SUNSCREEN PERMISSION FORM

The New Mexico Children, Youth, and Families Department included a provision in the New Mexico childcare regulations effective March 31, 1997. It states that sunscreen must be treated as a medication. Therefore, you need to provide sunscreen for us to apply to your child. Please sign below giving us permission to apply the sunscreen to your child.

Sex _____ Child's Name _____ Birthdate _____

Parent Signature

Date

