

**Parent Handbook**

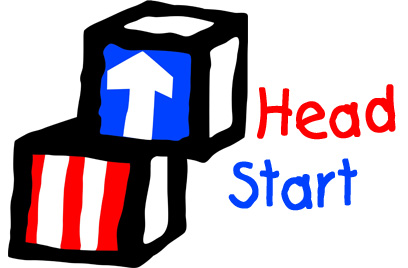
**2023-2024**

**PO Box 16639**

**Tallahassee, FL 32317**

**(850) 414-9800**

[**www.kidsincorporated.org**](http://www.kidsincorporated.org)

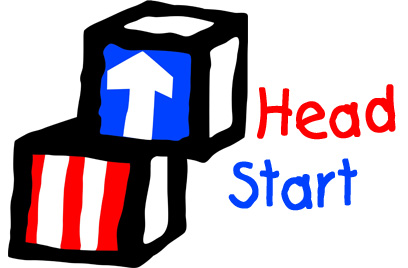
 

**2326 Centerville Rd.**

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Children



Children



Family



Family



Community



Community

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General Information

Vision

All children and families reach their full potential.

Mission

Supporting and educating families and young children through quality early learning, health and families services.

Slogan

Strong Families = Strong communities.

Program Regulations

*The Head Start Performance Standards and Head Start Act define the services that we are required to provide to the children and families we serve. We must abide by these regulations in order to continue providing services. If you would like to see a complete copy of the Head Start Performance Standards and Head Start Act, please ask your Family Advocate.*

Program Options

Kids Incorporated EHS offers two program options; Center-based and Services to Pregnant Women.

1. **Center Based** Full Day/Full Yearcenter-based child care is offered in Leon, Jefferson and Madison counties. This program option provides full day/full year services Monday – Friday, 11 months a year for eligible children ages 6 weeks – younger than 3 years old. Families receive education services, family services, health services, mental health services, and nutrition services.

*Kids Incorporated will ensure that transportation is provided, if needed, for children and/or families to participate and receive other program services (e.g., health screenings, oral health care, Policy Council, other program committees, etc.). For other transportation issues and concerns and/or emergencies, please contact the center’s Family Advocate for assistance.*

1. **Services to Pregnant Women** Prenatalservices areprovided through implementing the *Kids Incorporated Locally Designed Curriculum, FSU Partners for a Healthy Baby (Prenatal),* and/or through a community partnership agreement with a local service provider. In addition, staff is available to help with transportation and other services, within the parameters of the program guidelines and to assist with the needs of the pregnancy.
2. **Home-Based** program option is offered to those families living in Leon, Jefferson and Madison Counties. This program is a home visiting program, which uses the research-based curriculum Parents as Teachers Foundational Curriculum. In addition to the education services, the home based clients and their families receive family services, health services, mental health services, and nutrition services.

Days of Operation

Except for the following holidays and training days, all EHS centers are open five days a week (Monday through Friday). The center may designate other days as in-service at the discretion of the Executive/EHS Director. Or, the center may be closed for unforeseen circumstances (i.e. plumbing, air conditioning, heat, weather, contagious illnesses, etc.).

Closures for 2023-2024

Program Closed Full month of July 2023

Teachers Return Tuesday, August 1, 2023

Annual Agency-Wide Meeting/In-service Wednesday, August 2, 2023

All Centers Re-Open Thursday, August 3, 2023

Labor Day Monday, September 4, 2023

Teacher Planning Monday, September 25, 2023

Teacher Planning Monday, October 16, 2023

Veteran’s Day Friday, November 10, 2023

Thanksgiving Thursday – Friday, November 23-24, 2023

Christmas/New Year’s Mon. – Fri., December 18-January 1, 2024

Teacher Planning Tuesday, January 2, 2024

Students Return Wednesday, January 3, 2024

Martin Luther King Birthday Monday, January 15, 2024

Teacher Planning Monday, February 19, 2024

Teacher In-Service Wednesday, March 13, 2024

Teacher Planning Thursday, March 14, 2024

Spring Holiday Friday, March 15, 2024

Teacher Planning Monday, April 1, 2024

Kidsfest Saturday, April 27, 2024(tentative)

Teacher Planning Tuesday, May 28, 2024

Memorial Day Monday, May 27, 2024

Last Program Day Thursday, June 27, 2024

Teacher Planning Day Friday, June 28, 2024

Emergency Closing Policy

The child care centers will follow the **state** weather, contagious illnesses, etc.-related closure policy for your area/county, in which your child care center is located. Please tune in to your local television, radio stations and our social media page for closures. When local schools are closed for emergency purposes (weather, contagious illnesses, etc.) your center will be closed. Parents will be notified of emergency closings by staff when possible. Children and staff practice fire, tornado and lockdown drills regularly. Parents will be notified in the event that the center must be evacuated in an emergency. The off-site location is posted in the center and provided below for each site.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Budd Bell**  Faith Christian Family Center Inc.  310 Laura Lee Ave  Tallahassee, FL 32301  (850) 671-5755 | **Brandon’s Place**  Lavern F. Payne Community Center  450 West Fourth Avenue  Tallahassee, FL 32301  (850) 891-3930 |
| **Pamela Davis ELC**  Hartfield Elementary School  1414 Chowkeebin Nene  Tallahassee, FL 32301  (850) 488-7322 | **Jefferson County EHS**  Begg’s Funeral Home  485 E Dogwood St  Monticello, FL 32344  (850) 997-5612 |
| **Bright Days**  Villa Maria Hall (Catholic Church)  301 Orange Ave  Madison, FL 323240  (850) 973-2428 | |

Drug Free Environment

All of our Early Head Start Centers maintain a healthy environment that is free from smoke, alcohol, and illicit drugs. All federal, state, local policies and laws governing the unlawful possession, use or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol on these premises are enforced.

* If the smell of illicit drugs is apparent at drop off the child(ren) will not be accepted and persons dropping off must leave the premises.
* This causes a risk to other children in the classrooms with respiratory issues, as well as, health concerns for their own child(ren).
* We are mandated reporters if we suspect children are being exposed to substances and are concerned over their safety and welfare.
* If the parent appears impaired upon arrival, we will accept the child and follow procedure SE-03 Child Risk Management.
* If the parent appears impaired when coming to pick-up the child, the child(ren) will not be released and we will follow procedure SE-03 Child Risk Management. If an odor is detected, but the parent does not appear impaired, then the child is released.

Non-Discriminatory Statement

Kids Incorporated does not discriminate against children and/or families based on race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, political belief, sexual orientation, and marital or family status.

24 Hour Response

Please allow staff members one business day to respond to non-emergency inquiries or concerns.

**Enrollment**

**Phase- In Parent Child Orientation**

Family Advocates, Health Disability Coordinator, and Head Teacher will complete enrollment paperwork, Parent Handbook, Family Engagement Contract, Screenings, and Health Services forms. A 3-hour visit is conducted before the child’s 1st day in the program. Parent & child visit the classroom together for 1 ½ hours. The Teachers discuss Learning through Play, Routines, Activities & Understanding Classroom Expectations with the parents. Parents then meet with other center staff for 1 ½ hours while the child remains in the classroom with the teacher. During this portion of the Phase-in the Head Teachers discuss a Typical Day, Curriculum, Assessment, School Readiness Goals, Positive Guidance, and Clothing. Health & Disability Coordinator discuss Health Services and how it connects to closing the achievement gap, and highlights health policies. Site Directors discuss Achievement Gap, Family Life Practices Home Learning Logs, Open Door Policy, Attendance & Arrival Time. Family Advocate discuss Family Engagement Activities, Family Services Overview of Goal Setting, Family Workshops, Family Learning Parties, Shine on Families Curriculum, Home Visits and Parent Conferences.

**Diversity**

We believe that all families have the right to have their culture recognized and respected. Families are valued and accepted for who they are. Understanding the value of diversity promotes equal and fair treatment.  During enrollment families have the opportunity to share their cultural, religious, and lifestyle preferences through discussion and completing the parent interest form, which asks if families have an interest in sharing their culture with the children in an age-appropriate manner: language; music; art; games / activities. Also, families complete a nutrition intake form that asks families to list any cultural, religious, or ethical food preferences. Parents, staff, and other representatives from the community are valuable resources for presenting cultural activities, practices, and support in language differences. The cultures of all children served in the program are supported and represented. Diverse classroom materials are used to represent the cultures of all families served and includes materials that reflect various races, cultures, ages, abilities, gender and family dynamics without stereotyping, such as, books, posters, pictures, puzzles, music, instruments, dramatic play items, puppets, dolls, art, recipes, etc. Our curriculum includes planning routines and activities that support development of character qualities that promote tolerance, such as, gentleness, empathy, belonging, kindness, compassion, self-control, respect, listening, friendship, conflict resolution, individuality, self-care, honesty, responsibility, self-confidence, cooperation, communication, conversation, helpfulness and appreciation of differences. Home activities are shared with families through home learning logs and parent curriculum.

Education Services

Daily Schedule

Each classroom has a daily schedule posted that includes daily routines and meal times. Indoor and outdoor activity times are inclusive in the schedule to promote skill development in all school readiness domains of approaches to learning, physical health & development, cognitive and general knowledge, language development, pre-literacy and social emotional skills to lay the foundations for infant’s and toddler’s future growth and development. The daily schedule is not structured so much by time, but through events, transitions, teachable moments and consistent routines provided and supported by staff and other nurturing adults. Meaningful relationships and interactions are the focal point to infant and toddler learning. In addition, teachers and families share information daily regarding their child’s health, nutrition, daily routines, therapies and development.

Curriculum

*The Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers and Twos* is research-based and developmentally appropriate, allowing for a balance of child-initiated and teacher-directed activities. Children are provided materials, activities and opportunities to promote problem-solving, self-help, cognitive, language, physical and social-emotional skills. Planned activities are based on each child's individual development and intended to target skills and set goals for the children to achieve as they grow and develop in all school readiness domains. Parents are encouraged to provide input into their child’s individualized development plan and curriculum. *I Love You Rituals* are routines and activities that support development of character qualities that promote tolerance, such as, gentleness, empathy, belonging, kindness, compassion, self-control, respect, listening, friendship, conflict resolution, individuality, self-care, honesty, responsibility, self-confidence, cooperation, communication, conversation, helpfulness and appreciation of differences.

Screening and Child Assessment

Early intervention makes it possible for children with special needs to be identified. Children receive a developmental and a behavioral screening using the Ages & Stages (ASQ-3) and Social Emotional Questionnaires (ASQ-SE). Teachers conduct on-going assessment, observation and documentation using My Teaching Strategies online. Teachers share this information with parents and along with parent input they monitor child’s skill development and progress. Together teachers and parents use results to guide individualized planning activities to help their child(ren) at home achieve specific school readiness learning and developmental goals**.**

How Children Learn Through Play

**Building with** blocks provides opportunities to develop control of the small muscles of fingers and hands as blocks are added to a structure. Ideas of size, weight, shape, and math concepts are developing, as well as, language skills as children discuss what they are building. Cooperation and planning among children develops as they work together toward a common goal.

**Dramatic Play** provides opportunities for children to use their imaginations and "try on" various roles from the adult world. Through play, children try to make sense of the events happening around them and deal with the emotions surrounding them. Social skills grow as children choose definite roles in the "play" of the day whether it is playing house, school, doctor, or restaurant, etc.

**Science** opportunities include interacting and caring for nature and natural living things, such as, plants, animals, natural objects, weather, and natural events (sun, sky, rain, clouds, wind). Books, pictures, and activities with play materials and natural things promote science concepts of cause and effect, observing, describing, problem solving, making predictions, exploring with their senses, learning through trial and error, and asking “what if”, “why”, and “how” questions.

**Art** materials that are freely available to children allow them to make choices, interact with a variety of materials, and learn to think and be creative. The process of working with the materials is more important than what is actually made. Choices are made as children select paper, colors, textures and they experiment with the way they are applied. This also promotes pre-literacy-writing.

**Mathematical** patterns, concepts and ideas are introduced through real objects and experiences that are meaningful to the child, for example; counting the number of places when setting the table. Stories and songs also provide repetition. Hands–on experiences that are meaningful and fun are planned to promote grouping, patterning, matching, measuring, counting, shape recognition, and one–to–one correspondence.

**Small toys** provide controlled movements of the fingers and hands enabling children to master the muscles necessary for writing. As children work with colors and patterns, they develop memory and the ability to tell things apart. This also promotes pre-literacy-writing.

**As children explore books** on their own or with an interested adult, they begin to notice that print goes from left to right and top to bottom, that pictures often tell a story, and that the story stays the same as it is read over and over. Listening, paying attention, sequencing, and thinking skills are all being used as children enjoy a story. Children become used to new vocabulary words and the style of formal written English as they listen to stories. This also promotes pre-literacy-reading.

**Outdoor learning** opportunities include an extension of all indoor activities: gross and fine motor; art and sensory; blocks; dramatic play and music. Children are given plenty of space and time to move around freely and learn to control and coordinate large muscles. Children have opportunities to explore with their senses, develop mentally and physically, practice fine and gross motor skills, develop language and social skills, and begin to appreciate and respect living things. The outdoor learning environment is considered just as important to the curriculum as the indoor learning environment (e.g., classroom).

Use of Media in the Classroom

Infants and Toddlers learn primarily through interactions, exploration and hands-on experiences with the real world, therefore, we do not utilize TV, video or computers in the classrooms.

Adult/Child Ratios & Group Sizes

In accordance with the Head Start Program Performance Standards we maintain one adult to four infants/toddlers with a group size of 8 infants and toddlers. During a time of staff shortage crisis, it may be necessary to maintain the higher ratios and group sizes set by the Department of Children & Families Licensing Regulations.

Family Services

Kids Incorporated is committed to supporting your child **and** your family. We will help you to identify your individual goals and support you in reaching them by using your family strengths and community resources.

The entire EHS Program Team for your County is available to help with information and resources. We want to support your own personal growth and independence. Services provided include:

* Help in identifying concerns, needs and goals your family or child may have;
* Information regarding Resource Directory listing services available in the community;
* Emergency or crisis intervention;
* Encouragement and support for your own efforts to obtain the quality services you deserve;
* Development of goals and strategies that you identify as areas for personal growth;
* Parenting classes, informative workshops and family engagement activities;
* Support for child development, early learning and parent curriculum;
* Advocacy for you in dealing with agencies or individual;

Home Visits/Parent Conferences

Head Start Performance Standards require Teachers and families to engage in 2 home visits and 2 parent conferences per year. Family Advocates engage in 3 parent conferences (1st- Sept/Oct; 2nd- Jan/Feb; 3rd- May/June). Family Advocates may conduct home visits based on family’s needs, decreased attendance, family crisis, sensitive matter, etc. Parents/Guardians partner with your child’s teacher and your Family Advocate in home visits and parent conferences.  These meetings provide a critical opportunity for staff and parents to share information regarding their child’s progress, concerns, and to review child’s individual goals, as well as, determine new goals and activities. We plan a time that is most convenient for, the parents. We ask that you call at least 24-hours in advance to cancel and reschedule.

Parent Curriculum

Kids Incorporated provides *Shine On, Families*, a research-based Parenting Curriculum used to help our parents practice being their child’s primary teacher and nurturer while also meeting the Early Head Start (EHS) Program Performance Standards. *Shine On, Families* helps us extend learning in the classroom and goes beyond into the home so parents have the support needed to implement parenting skills that promote school readiness, learning and development. Family Advocates work closely with teachers in the classroom to identify the needs of the child, then provide parents the tools/resources to continue in the home. There are several opportunities provided to help parents intentionally engage in their child’s learning and development to support parent-child relationships. Parents are expected to:

* **Use** the *Shine on, Families* PEER mantra - **P**ause, **E**ngage, **E**ncourage and **R**eflect, to promote family interactions that build executive function, a foundational skill for school readiness. Parents will model and practice parenting skills found in the 50 EHS PEER Cards, Parent Child Learning Activities.
* **Complete** Weekly Home Learning Logs at home with child(ren) that highlights a Peer Card.
* **Use** Family Life Practices – Family Routines, Literacy: Read with Children, Positive Discipline, Experience Rich Environments.
* **Participate** inFamily Learning Parties (Family Engagement Activities).
* **Participate** in Family Engagement Network Meetings (Parent Workshops/Peer Networking).

Family Advocates and/or Teachers provide the PEER cards to parents as needed but also allow opportunities for modeling and practice during Parent Workshops and Family Engagement Activities, and Family Learning Parties. Ultimately, *Shine On, Families* empowers Family Advocates, Teachers, Parents and Families with the tools needed to extend school readiness goals in the classroom, beyond the classroom and into the homes of each child so he/she may gain more from the early learning experience.

**Family Engagement**

Family/Parent Engagement is an integral part of our program and a key component of a successful program.  Early Head Start’s vision for family/parent engagement is to create and sustain an environment of partnership and collaboration across all elements of the program that:

* Supports parents as primary educators, nurturers, and advocates;
* Assures that every parent has an opportunity for a positive experience, thereby offering a supportive environment for each family; and
* Assures the policy making role of parents.

A fundamental principle of our Early Head Start program is the ***shared decision-making*** functions of parents, staff and the governing Board of Directors. Parents are welcomed and have many opportunities to serve and participate in their child(ren)’s program.

**Male Involvement –** We have partneredwith Carter’s Corner we provide family support services to father’s and males in Leon, Jefferson, and Madison counties; virtually, face-to-face, telephone, to provide a comprehensive fatherhood program designed to help men build their parenting skills and fathering knowledge through the utilization of 24:7 Dad curriculum in Leon, Jefferson, and Madison counties; and a wide array of other support services for Father’s and male role models.

**Parent Committees –** A committee comprised of parents is established at each center. All parents are encouraged to participate in the center’s Parent Committee. At the first Parent Committee meeting in August/September, parents elect officers and organize for the coming program year. The Parent Committee will meet on a regular basis as determined by each Committee, in conjunction with the center Family Advocate. The committee plans, conducts and participate in informal as well as formal programs and activities for center parents and staff.

**Volunteers –** Parents participate as volunteers throughout the program in centers, classrooms, at home, Kids Incorporated’s main office and community events. Parents, as volunteers, help us meet our non-federal dollar match (in-kind) of $.25 for each dollar funded by the federal government. (Volunteer Handbook for more specific information)

**Policy Council Representative** - Policy Council is the vehicle used to promote the parents' participation in major program decisions including recruitment and selection policies, personnel policies, budget, and funding proposals. Serving on the Policy Council is a very important decision. Members are expected to attend meetings which, occur approximately six times a year, and to be fully engaged in the shared decision-making functions of the group, working cooperatively with staff, parents and community representatives. Specific duties include:

* Keeping other parents informed about issues facing the Policy Council;
* Attending meetings regularly and notifying staff in advance if you are unable to come;
* Advocating for the best interests of all Early Head Start families;
* Attending and facilitating family engagement activities;
* Representing parent concerns to the Policy Council;
* Attending trainings and sharing the information with other parents; and
* Working on committees that support the Early Head Start Program.

Health Services

Early Head Start advocates the importance of health care, emphasizing good health care practices, including disease prevention, health maintenance and early intervention. For these reasons, children participate in a comprehensive health care program.

We believe that it is important for each family to have ongoing access to a medical and dental home. If you do not currently have a medical or dental home, your Family Advocate and Health/Disability Coordinator will assist you in finding one. Parents and the Early Head Start staff work together as a team to schedule appointments and any necessary follow-up work to be completed.

Parents are involved in their child's health by preparing their children for screenings and exams, giving authorization for their child to receive health services, scheduling and accompanying their children to appointments, and by participating in parent trainings. Our Health/Disability Coordinator(s) will gladly assist you with ways to obtain all required Health Services. Children will receive an initial vision screen and a hearing screen within 45 days of entry into the program, if applicable.  Age-appropriate dental exams are also provided by the Florida Department of Health or other local dental clinics within 90 days of a child’s entry into the program.

Healthy habits are established and practiced in the classroom on a daily basis. Classroom routines that promote healthy habits include family-style eating, daily tooth brushing and an emphasis on hand washing and health education activities. Being healthy enables children to reach their potential.

Well Child Schedules

Parents and staff partner together to ensure that each child receives a well-child health examination at the appropriate age and frequency. Below is the EPSDT recommended schedule to follow:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Newborn visit within 2-4 days\* | 12 Months |
| 1 Month | 15 Months |
| 2 Months | 18 Months |
| 4 Months | 24 Months (2 years) |
| 6 Months | 30 Months |
| 9 Months | 36 Months (3 years) |

\* of being discharged from the hospital

Emergency Health Policy

In the event of an injury, the center staff must determine the extent of the injury and notify you. If the injury is minor, first aid will be provided and an Incident Report completed. If the injury is serious, an ambulance will be called first, and then you or the emergency contact person will be notified. If the injury warrants hospital emergency treatment, the nearest hospital will be used. Parents are notified of all unusual incidents.

Services Include

* Wellness, safety, mental health, nutrition education & support services for families and children
* Vision and hearing screenings
* Nutritious breakfast, snack and lunch each class day
* Daily oral care and yearly dental exams

When Your Child Is Ill (Exclusion Policy)

The well-being and good health of all of our children and teachers is highly valued. It is important that parents know that everything possible is being done to ensure sick and contagious children will not be in contact with healthy children. If your child becomes ill while at the center, we will call you or the designated alternate contact you have provided to come pick him/her up.  Please make sure that the emergency contact information is current and let your Site Director or a teacher know of any changes. If your child is brought to the classroom when sick, we will require that he/she be taken home immediately. Your child is not well enough to be in class if any of the following symptoms are noted:

* Temperature of 101 degrees
* Vomiting (**more than** one time)
* Diarrhea (two or more watery movements not explained by diet or medicines).
* Uncontrolled coughing
* Difficulty breathing or untreated wheezing
* Unexplained rash
* Complaints of a stiff neck and/or headache
* Possible eye infection (yellow discharge with redness and burning or itching eyes)
* Unusual yellow coloring of the skin or eyes
* Cuts or openings on the skin that are pus filled or oozing
* Lice or nits – (The program has a ***No Nit*** policy. Therefore, your child may not return until all nits are removed).
* Possible fungus infection (ringworm) on the skin or scalp
* Unusual dark urine and/or gray or white stool
* Any other unusual sign or symptom of illness as determined by the staff

**NOTE: Please contact your child’s Teacher or Site Director as soon as you know your child will not be coming to class.  If he/she is sick with a specific contagious illness, we want to know so that we can let other families know to look for signs/symptoms in their child. (The child’s identity is never shared with other families.)**

Medication Administration

Prescription medication brought to the center by the parent or guardian must be in its original container with the name of the physician, child, name of the medication, and medication administering directions written on the label. **Non-prescription medication should also be in its original container and must be accompanied by a written statement from the child's physician (on letterhead) stating the name of the medication, the child's name, and administering directions.** A ***Medication Authorization Form*** must be filled out and signed by the parent or guardian before the Site Director, Head Teacher or Classroom Teacher will administer the medication.

Health Records

Every child in the program is required to have up-to-date State of Florida School Entry Health Exam forms (DH 3040) on file that have been signed by a health care provider.  An up-to-date immunization record (DH Form 680) or the Religious Exemption from Immunization record (DH Form 681) is also required and must be provided upon enrollment.  Parents or guardians must ensure that both health forms are provided within 30 days of this entry into the center-based program, or your child will be temporarily excluded from services at the center. Some children enrolled at the center may not have current immunizations during this initial 30-day transition into the program.  Children must return to their health care provider’s clinic or Florida Department of Health BEFORE the expiration date to receive the immunizations needed (IMMUNIZATIONS GUIDELINES, Rule 64D-3.046, Florida Administrative Code).

A notice of your child’s Health Update is issued, as needed, by the Health/Disability Coordinator. The notice states what is needed (physical exam, lab tests and/or a specific immunization), as well as the deadline for compliance. Once notified that health records need to be brought up-to-date, parents should immediately schedule an appointment with their child's doctor in an effort to meet the indicated deadline. Please bring the appropriate well child check-up form and immunizations record to your child’s teacher or Family Advocate after each well child check-up appointment. Failure to maintain current health records on all the children in the provider's care may jeopardize our license to operate. Therefore, it is very important that parents help keep these records up to date.

**Nap/Rest**

Children will be supervised at all times within sight and hearing. Appropriate ratios will be maintained.

Cribs and cots are provided to the children for napping and resting. Children under the age of

12 months will be provided with a crib for napping. Children over the age of 12 months will be provided with a cot for napping. Children do not share cribs or cots unless bedding has been changed. Each crib and cot is individually labeled with the child’s first and last name.

Cribs/cots will be cleaned and sanitized weekly, before use of a different child, after it has been soiled, or as needed. Bedding (sheets and blankets) will be washed weekly, or more frequently, as needed.

Infants under the age of 12 months will be placed on their backs on a firm-fitting mattress for sleep in a crib. There will not be any blankets, pillows, comforters, stuffed toys, bumper pads, or any other soft products in the crib. Bibs will be removed before the infant is placed in a crib. Unless the child has a note from a physician specifying otherwise, infants will be placed in a back lying position for sleeping to lower the risks of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). When infants can easily turn over from the back to the front position, they will be put down to sleep on their back, but allowed to adopt whatever position they prefer to sleep. **“I roll” tags will be placed on individual cribs in the classroom to indicate when an infant has reached this developmentally milestone.**

Pacifier attachments will not be used in the classroom setting. The attachments will be removed upon arrival and given back to the parent/guardian or placed in the child’s cubby.

Nutrition Services

Each child will be provided a nutritious breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack; thus receiving two-thirds (2/3) of their daily nutritional requirements. Meals and snacks are planned in accordance with USDA Child Care Food Program (CCFP) Recommendations and Guidelines. Parents/guardians are welcome to join their child(ren) for meals periodically. We ask, however, that you give our staff at least 24 hours’ notice of your intent to do so. As outlined in the Performance Regulations, all menus and individualized menu items are reviewed and approved by a Registered Dietician. A variety of foods will be introduced and maintained on the regular menus.

Breastfeeding and breast milk are both welcomed and encouraged. Families are encouraged for as long as possible to breastfeed and provide breast milk for infants. Expressed milk for feeding is accepted and served according to food safety standards for handling and storing. A comfortable place to nurse or pump is available.

Infants will be fed on demand and according to their internal schedules. In addition, education is provided to teach parents how to select healthy foods and prepare well-balanced meals. If you or your child has any nutritional problems, such as anemia or food allergies, please inform your Health/Disability Coordinator.

Per USDA CCFP funding requirements, all food consumed by children under the supervision of the child care center shall be provided by the center. Information on special diets must be obtained in writing from the parents and/or medical providers and maintained on file at the child care center.

Children with allergies or special feeding schedules will be accommodated as needed. Allergies are posted in the kitchen and on classroom bulletin boards to ensure that no child is given any food for which she or he has known allergies. In the event that staff discovers new food intolerance, parents will be notified immediately. Due to choking hazards certain foods are not served, such as: whole grapes, hotdogs, peanut butter, nuts, popcorn, etc.

Because our menus meet and/or exceed the minimum nutritional standards established by the Department of Health's Child Care Food Program, parents should not send food items to school with their child(ren). Weekly menus are posted for your review in each classroom as well as on the Parent Information bulletin boards within your center. Bottles and food will not be sent home with children.

If your child has not received breakfast and arrives after the scheduled breakfast meal, a nourishing breakfast will be offered.

Alternate Nutrition Plan

A USDA Child Care Food Program Medical Statement attesting to the need for alternative food items to be substituted, signed by the physician, must be on file.

No Outside Food

Only food prepared by the center cook will be served to the children, staff, and volunteers in the classroom.

Mental Health Services

Kids Incorporated support children in mental health services by forming close and secure adult and peer relationships; experience, regulate, and express emotions in socially and culturally appropriate ways; and explore the environment and learn. Kids incorporated contracts with a license mental health professional, to support the children, families and staffs’ social and emotional well-being. The Mental Health Consultant conducts onsite center visits, child(ren) observations, parent and staff training, and individual consultations. The goal is to form relationships and positive interactions between staff and children, staff and families, staff and other staff, children and other children, and most importantly children and their families, as well as, structuring the environment so a child feels secure and can promote their social skills.

Disability Services

Early Head Start is a full inclusion program that is able to serve children with special health and developmental needs in our classrooms.  Adjustments are made to the environment and materials and teachers are provided training to meet children’s individual needs. Federal regulations require 10% of our enrollment to consist of children who have special needs.  Referrals are typically received through Children’s Home Society’s Early Steps (Part C).  Children receive an Individual Family Support Plan (IFSP) and on-site therapy services.

Important Policies

Attendance

Federal Early Head Start regulations require that all EHS children maintain an average daily attendance of 85%. In order for your child to get the most benefit out of their participation in the program, it is imperative that they regularly attend the center. It is important to recognize that young children depend on regular and consistent routines. Your child will have an easier time adjusting to being in a group setting when they come on a regular basis. It is therefore important that your child have a consistent environment in which to grow and develop trusting relationships with teachers who provide care and nurturing during your absence.

It is important to recognize that Early Head Start is not a child care program but rather a comprehensive early learning initiative. This means that attendance on a regular and consistent basis is essential in order to obtain the best outcomes for your child. Therefore, we maintain a strict attendance policy. This includes late arrivals and early departures as well. Furthermore, funding for the program is jeopardized when we fall below 85% daily attendance.

**Absenteeism**

Your child should maintain an average of 85% attendance each month. This means that your child should not be absent for more than three days per month.

Absences must be documented and you may be asked to have documentation from an approved source that includes one or more of the following:

* A doctor’s excuse;
* A copy of the signed Kids Incorporated 24-Hour Illness Exclusion Notice for the specified time required;
* Parent written notice of reason for absence provided to the Site Director or Family Advocate in advance of the absence
* Court ordered visitation plan or notarized shared parent agreement.

In the event it is necessary for your child to have a prolonged absence due to a medical condition documented by the child’s physician, the Site Director has the authority to grant an approved extended absence. Each of these cases will be evaluated on an individual basis consistent with the needs of your child and the numbers of children on the wait list who need the service.

**Failure to provide such written documentation will result in an unexcused absence. A child with more than three unexcused absences in one month will be terminated immediately.**

In the event your child demonstrates chronic absenteeism and/or tardiness (approved and/or unexcused), the following steps are taken prior to termination of services:

* You will be contacted regarding the absenteeism to reinforce the importance of regular attendance, the educational and social benefits of the program. A corrective action plan will be developed and signed by you and Site Director or Family Advocate.
* Your child’s attendance patterns will be reviewed over the next month to ensure a regular attendance pattern has been re-established.
* If attendance does not improve within the time limit set in the notice, your child will be immediately terminated from the program through written notification.
* It is important for parents to call the center and inform staff of a child’s absence and their reason for the absence. **Unexpected absences in which a parent has not contacted the center must be followed up with a phone call to the home within an hour of regular arrival time.** Parents are required to sign their children into and out of the center each morning and afternoon.
* If you plan on removing your children from our program, please let us know as soon as possible.

**Morning Arrival**

Each child is expected to arrive at the center no later than 8:30 (Bright Days) and 9:00 (Budd Bell, Brandon’s Place, Jefferson County EHS, and Pam Davis ELC) in order to benefit from the full instructional portion of the day as well as obtain meal services. Should there be an emergency situation that precludes arriving within the expected time period for that site, it is the parent’s responsibility to notify the center by telephone of the pending late arrival time. Late arrival should be for emergency purposes only and must not be on a regular basis.

**Departure, Pick-Up Authorization & Changes**

Children MUST be accompanied by a parent or guardian (16 years of age) when entering or leaving the center.

* Sign your child in and out DAILY at the classroom. (This is vital for security and emergencies).
* Make sure a teacher knows your child has arrived or is ready to leave.

Your child is expected to be picked up from the center no later than 3:30 (Bright Days) and 4:00 (Budd Bell, Brandon’s Place, Jefferson County EHS, and Pam Davis ELC). All parents enrolled in the program will have a Pick-Up Authorization form on file for each child providing the contact information - name, number and address of parent/guardian and anyone 16 years old or older that’s authorized to pick-up the child. It is the parent’s responsibility to ensure that emergency information is kept current at all times and most notify the staff in writing of any changes that may need to be made. It is the parent’s responsibility to notify the people who are added to or deleted from the list. **Child(ren) will not be released to any unauthorized persons or to an intoxicated/impaired individual.**

* Only those adults (age 16 years or older) listed on the Pick-Up Authorization Form are allowed to pick up the child/children from the center.
* If a parent knows in advance or in the event of an unforeseen circumstance where a person not listed on the child’s Pick-Up Authorization form will be picking up their child/children, they are to submit in writing by in person note, fax, text or email giving authorization along with the name and address of the individual. Parents will use the Site Director’s cell number to text, if needed, and the Site Director will respond with a phone call to that number to verify the sender and print a copy of the text. The Site Director, Head Teacher or Family Advocate will enter the information onto the Change in Authorized Pick-Up Log, as well as attach the note to the log for documentation purposes. The same staff person will inform the child’s classroom teachers of the change. This person must show photo ID and be cleared by the Site Director, Head Teacher or Family Advocate and then escorted to the classroom for sign-out and pick up.
* All individuals authorized by the parent to pick up children are to show their photo ID at time of pick up until the parent-teacher relationship is established and sign the child/children out according to licensing regulations.
* If assistance with arrival and departure of children due to physical or mobility impairment is needed the parent must provide handicapped parking permit documentation or a doctor’s statement that assistance is needed that includes the duration the assistance will be needed. The parent or person picking up or dropping off the child must call the center upon arrival at the center for assistance and must be in the designated drop off or pick up area determined by the site director of the site your child/children attend.

**Late Pick-Up**

It is essential that parents pick their children up on time from the centers. Parents or the authorized pick-up person is responsible for calling the center for any unforeseen emergency (e.g., car problems, illness, work related, etc.) that would result in a late pick-up situation. Failure to pick-up a child within the designated time period will result in the following:

* Staff will call parents and telephone numbers on the emergency list beginning at expected pick up time. Staff will then call 5 minutes after the expected pick up time. Staff will continue to call two more times in 10-minute intervals.
* Should a child not be picked up within 30 minutes of the closing time, local law enforcement and/or the Department of Children and Families will be notified. Center staff is required to call the appropriate authorities for child safety and liability protection.

Three late pick-up situations could lead to your child being terminated from the program. The first late notice will be provided as a verbal warning. The second late notice will be a written warning. The third notice will consist of notification of termination from the program. Each situation is determined on a case-by-case basis after fully reviewing the frequency and causes of the late pick-up history.

Procare Parent App

Kids Incorporated of the Big Bend is excited to offer you access to the Procare parent app. You will receive an email from Procare with a unique 10-digit code and instructions on how to download and log into the app. Once you sign up, you will receive another email from Procare thanking you for setting up your parent account. You can also use Procare via a web browser. Once you download the Procare mobile app, you can pay your child’s monthly tuition electronically using a credit card, debit card and/or ACH payment. You will receive monthly emails from Kids Incorporated of the Big Bend with your tuition invoice. Tuition is due on the **1st day of every month**. Procare app will also be utilized to sign in/out for all sites. You can sign in/out using the app or the tablet or tablets at each site.

Emergency Evacuation Pick-Up

In the event the center is evacuated and children are moved to a different location, families will be called to pick up children at the designated location. Parents or the authorized pick-up person are notified of this designated location during enrollment and will also be informed when notified of the emergency evacuation. Centers post the designated location for evacuation. Therefore, it’s important to keep all contact information current and accurate.

Celebrations

Birthdays are important and considered a special day for parent, child and staff. On the third Friday of each month, the center staff will acknowledge the children who have a birthday during that month. The cook at each center will bake nutritious birthday muffins so that all the children will enjoy this special birthday muffin with their lunch on that day.

Child Abuse Reporting

**Staff is required by Florida State law to report any suspected or identified child abuse and / or neglect** to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Child care personnel must be alert to the physical and behavioral indicators of child abuse and neglect. “Child Abuse or Neglect” is defined in s. 39.201, F.S., as “harm or threatened harm” to a child’s health (mental or physical) or welfare by the acts or omissions by a parent, adult household member, other person responsible for the child’s welfare, or for purposes of reporting requirements by any person. **Categories include**:

* Physical Abuse or Neglect (i.e. unexplained bruises, hunger, lack of supervision...)
* Emotional Abuse or Neglect (i.e. impairment in the ability to function, depression...)
* Sexual Abuse (i.e. withdrawal, excessive crying, physical symptoms...)

Staff will support families who have an involvement with DCF and will preserve **absolute confidentiality** of all records pertaining to a DCF report in accordance with the state law.

Child Guidance

Discipline problems are to be handled by staff in a way that encourages children to develop self-control. Constructive discipline and positive techniques will be implemented by center staff to guide children's behavior. These include:

* Redirection and positive reinforcement of child's effort;
* Anticipation of and elimination of potential problems;
* Encouragement rather than competition, comparison or criticism;
* Identifying and verbalizing the child's feelings.

Children will not be subjected to discipline which is severe, humiliating or frightening. Discipline will not be associated with food, rest, or toileting. Spanking or any other form of physical punishment is prohibited by all staff and parents. **Use of any inappropriate child discipline methods is grounds for immediate termination.**

**Approaches Used to Manage Child Behavior**

* Anticipate and plan ahead to avoid potential problems
* Identify possible reasons why a child’s behavior has changed: an unmet need; environmental; developmental; relationships; underlying feelings
* Discuss the situation (Teacher, Parent, Site Director, Family Advocate, Health & Education staff)
* Focus on the child’s behavior and feelings behind the behavior, not on the child’s value as a person
* Help the child understand the consequences of their actions
* Explain the choices available
* Help the child use problem-solving skills to develop solutions
* Help the child refrain from dwelling on mistakes so they can learn to move on
* Watch for restlessness
* Explanation of what **to do** rather than what **not to do**. (Example: "Let's get some paper to write on.” Rather than, "Don't write in the book.")
* Reinforcement of the child's positive behavior. (Example: "You remembered to give the truck to Daniel when you were finished with it. Good remembering!”)
* Explanation of reasons for the rules. Rules are focused around safety, respect for property and for others. (Example: "I'm concerned you will slip and hurt yourself when you run in our room. We walk inside.")
* Modeling valued behaviors for the child to use. (Example: adults are courteous to children and are good listeners.)
* Redirecting the child to more acceptable activity
* FLIP-IT: Helping children identify their **F**eelings behind the behavior; helping children identify and understand the **L**imits for acceptable behavior (class rules); helping children **I**nquiry ways to problem solve and what to do differently; teacher gives **P**rompts to help children with their inquiries.

A licensed child and family behavioral therapist is available to provide support to both the center staff and family when the above approaches cannot satisfactorily resolve inappropriate child behaviors. This therapist is used as an observer in the classroom in order to provide feedback and suggestions to the teacher. Additionally, the therapist is available for parent-teacher conferences to reinforce consistency in the behavior management techniques used both in the classroom and home.

**Unacceptable Discipline Methods**

Staff and all program participants (families, volunteers, etc.) are prohibited at all times to use any of the following methods:

* Corporal punishment, including hitting, spanking, swatting, beating, shaking, pinching and other measures intended to induce physical pain or fear;
* Threatened or actual withdrawal of food, rest or use of the bathroom;
* Abusive or profane language;
* Any form of public or private humiliation, including threats of physical punishment; and
* Any form of emotional abuse, shaming, rejecting, terrorizing, or isolating a child.

**Termination Policy Due to Unresolved Behavioral Issues**

After attempts have been made to meet the child's specific behavioral needs, including intervention from the licensed therapist, and it is demonstrated and documented that the child can no longer benefit from the services offered and/or whose presence is detrimental to the other children, it may be determined that it is not in the best interest for the child to continue participating in the program.

Prior to any such action being implemented, the following steps will be employed:

* A conference will be held with the parent(s) to discuss the issue(s);
* A behavior modification plan will be developed;
* Both classroom staff and the parent(s) will be responsible for implementing positive, appropriate discipline methods on a consistent basis and evaluating outcomes and modifications as needed; and
* Communication between staff and parents must occur.

If there is no improvement within set time lines, a staffing will be scheduled to include center staff, the parent, Health/Disabilities Coordinator, and if needed, therapist. A recommendation will be made and presented to the Executive Director/EHS Director. **Only** the Executive Director/EHS Director will make the decision to terminate services due to behavioral issues. Staff will assist families in transitioning the child to another setting suited to meet the child’s needs.

Standards of Conduct

All staff, volunteers and parents are required to sign the Standards of Conduct. Signature to the Standard of Conduct attests to the following principles:

* Children enrolled in our programs are our greatest asset. **Our priority is that children are protected and not harmed in any way.**
* Diversity is valued and differences such as disabilities, gender, age, education level, life style, personal values, and ways of thinking also need to be considered, understood and appreciated. Adult family members that have been traditionally under-involved in programs, including fathers, father figures, and grandparents are invited and welcomed into our classrooms and program activities.
* Families have the right to expect that personal information about a child or the family held by the program remains secure. We are responsible for maintaining confidentiality, and respect each person’s right to privacy. We refrain from disclosure of confidential information and intrusion into family life.
* Policies ensure the use of positive, non-punitive methods of guidance and discipline.

Further, the Standards of Conduct states that **employees**, **volunteers, and parents** will abide by the following:

* Commit to the safety and well-being of all children in my care;
* Respect the unique identity of each child and family;
* Use of Positive Guidance;
* Refrain from gossip, the use of profanity and inappropriate, unsuitable behavior not conducive to as positive and productive work and child environment;
* Comply with program confidentiality policies;
* Comply with all applicable laws, standards, policies and procedures.

**Consequences of Violating the Standards of Conduct –**

* **Employees** will be subject to disciplinary procedures as outlined in HR-409 and HR-902.
* **Volunteers** will be asked to not return to the classroom and/or participate in the program.
* **Parents** will jeopardize their continued participation in the EHS program which may include terminating their child from the EHS program.

**NOTE:** According to Florida State law, a person may also be liable for slander for unlawful disclosure of confidential information.

Complaint Process

“Community” in the context of this process is defined as families of enrolled children and other local residents. Complaints about the Kids Incorporated EHS program will be approached in an orderly, objective manner as follow:

1. A person, either parent or community member, with a complaint should first talk with the staff person most directly involved with the problem, in an attempt to satisfy the complaint and avoid future problems. Persons lodging complaints about the program will be asked to complete the Parent/Community Issues or Concerns Form. The complaint or concern may be made by phone, in which case the staff person will complete the form and read it back to the person complaining to ensure its accuracy. The first staff member to hear a complaint will respond to the complaint within three working days.
2. If the person complaining is not satisfied with the response of the staff person, he/she may talk with the appropriate supervisor overseeing the particular issue/concern. The written issues/concerns form should be given to that person, along with a brief description of the previous meeting. This next level staff person will respond to the complaint within three working days.
3. If satisfaction is still not obtained, the person may take the complaint to the Executive Director/ EHS Director. Again, the issues/concerns form and descriptions of what has happened so far should accompany the transfer of the issues/concerns to central office. The Executive Director/EHS Director will respond to the complaint within three working days.

At each level, alternatives for resolving the problem and who would be the most appropriate person(s) for implementing the suggestions will be determined and agreed upon. Actions decided on to resolve the complaint may go to all parties involved, if the issue is a program-wide concern.

All staff involved in the process of receiving or resolving a complaint will complete appropriate documentation and report to their supervisors upon receipt of complaint and updates throughout the process. Documentation of all complaints and resolutions will be kept on file at both the center and central office.

Confidentiality

Information is gathered so that Early Head Start can completely understand the needs for your child/family and work together to meet those needs.  All information obtained from you is completely confidential. At the end of your child’s participation in the program, records are locked in the Central Office or storage facility for seven years, and then destroyed.

Precautions are taken to ensure that staff members understand their responsibility in ensuring that information on children and families is kept confidential. They include:

* **Annual Confidentiality Training:** All staff that work with children and families are required to attend annual training on confidentiality.
* **Written Statement:** Staff is required to sign a confidentiality statement.
* **File and Record Storage:** All records containing information on children and families are kept in locked file cabinets and storage facilities at all times.
* **Release of Information:** All parents are asked to sign a release form before staff can share any confidential information with other agencies, doctors, etc. Staff will not release information about children or families without written consent from the parent/guardian. A “Consent to Release Information” form must be completed by staff and signed by the parent/guardian prior to releasing any information. Parents have the right to refuse the sharing of information if so desired. However, information can be shared if there is a court order with DCF and/or other legal agencies that request specific child information.

All staff at Kids Incorporated is required to respect the confidentiality of children and family’s records at all times. Failure to adhere to the guidelines listed above is terms for disciplinary action.

Child Custody

It is the Program’s intent to meet the needs of children, especially when the parents may be experiencing life changing situations such as a divorce, separation, or remarriage.  Sharing information about such situations may be helpful to the staff in working with your family and will remain strictly confidential. According to Florida Law an unmarried father has no legal rights to custody or timesharing until paternity is legally established (a birth certificate with the father’s name is not considered proof of paternity) by the courts and a custody order has been completed. This includes reviewing the child’s records and picking the child up unless the center has been furnished with legally filed, executed and current documents.  It is the Mother’s decision to allow the unmarried Father to pick up the child without a court order by listing him on the pick-up authorization form. Copies of all court documents must be submitted to the center.  Parents are responsible for keeping current/updated information available to staff.  If conflicting court orders are presented, our staff will follow the most recently dated order.  We will follow any court order based on clear content, and duration.  Our employees cannot allow a court order to be violated.  In case of extreme conflicts, the proper authorities will be contacted.

Contact Information

All information must stay current. Inform staff of any changes to your address, telephone number, email address, persons authorized to pick up your child and their current information and any other changes you need to make. Maintaining current contact information is an essential element to ensure easy access to you in the event of an emergency and is in the best interest of your child(ren).

Child Fingernail(s)

It is important to ensure the safety of the children from scratches and the possible spread of disease. This health and safety issue is a shared responsibility between parent and staff as follows:

**PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY:**

* + Parents will ensure that their child’s fingernails are kept clipped and short at all times.
  + Parents will communicate with staff concerning clipping fingernails.

**STAFF RESPONISBILIBTY:**

* + Staff will use their discretion to determine when a child’s fingernails should be clipped.
  + Staff will verbally tell the parent, as well as, write on the child’s daily report that the parent needs to clip their child’s fingernails.
  + If fingernails are not cut in a timely manner, the Family Advocate will send a letter home to the parent about clipping their child’s fingernails.
  + If parent still does not clip fingernails in a timely manner, the Family Advocate will schedule a parent conference to discuss safety reasons to clip their child’s fingernails.
  + Staff will give information to the parent as needed to help them clip their child’s fingernails safely.

Hair Beads, Barrettes and Jewelry

Small beads and barrettes in a child’s hair are a safety concern. Hair beads and barrettes sometimes fall out of a child’s hair and create a choking hazard. We have choking tubes at each site to measure any hair accessories to see if they are a choking hazard. Young infants and toddlers are exploring their environment using all of their senses and sometimes they put inappropriate objects into their mouths. Jewelry is also a safety concern. Children could choke themselves on small jewelry items, such as necklaces, bracelets, and loose earrings. In addition, your child’s necklace or bracelet could get caught on an object and break.

If your child has his/her ears pierced, they should have locking backs for safety purposes. This prevents backs and earrings from not only falling out, but also children accidentally put them in his/her mouth. Our first concern is for **your child’s safety**.

Remove any hair beads, barrettes, bracelets, necklaces and loose earrings before your child comes into the center. We will not be responsible for missing or broken items.

Illegal Substance and/or Contraband

Kids Incorporated has a **zero tolerance position** towards illegal substance(s) and/or contraband when found on the premises of all Kids Incorporated properties. In the event an illegal substance and/or contraband is found within the content of a child’s belongings, the local law enforcement shall be contacted immediately by the on-site supervisor.

Inclement Weather & Extreme Temperatures

Kids Incorporated adheres to the recommendations of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Maternal and Child Health Bureau’s Child Care Weather Watch Guidelines, for determining extreme weather and climate conditions for outdoor play. As recommended by the Maternal and Child Health and required by Florida Department of Children and Families, children will play outdoors every day unless current weather (i.e., raining, hurricane/tornado watch) dictates otherwise. Temperatures below 40 degrees and in excess of 94 degrees are considered uncomfortable and inappropriate for outdoor play. Children always have access to water indoors and outdoors.

Open Door Policy

While doors are locked for security purposes and the safety of the children, all parents and guardians are welcome at any time during our operating hours to visit our center. When visiting, we ask that you make every effort to blend into the natural processes and routines of the classroom. Please sign your child in, in their classroom. If you will be spending time volunteering, you will receive a nametag to identify yourself as a visitor. We ask that when you come into the classroom to volunteer that you sign in. The time you spend in the classroom is an In-Kind donation to our program.

Extended Day Fees

The center-based program option provided is supported by a number of funding sources for the full cost of this high quality program. These services include extended full-day and full-year services. All parents using the extended full-day option are required to pay a portion of this cost based on the State of Florida sliding fee scale. The amount of the parent fee is assigned at the time of enrollment and on an annual basis.

In order to maximize other revenue sources available for working families, all Early Head Start families working 20 or more hours a week are expected to apply for and maintain their eligibility status for tuition assistance with the Early Learning Coalition (ELC). Family Advocates are available to assist families applying online.

Families determined eligible for ELC and EHS simultaneously are considered as being “duel eligible” with both programs. Working families will be responsible for keeping their duel eligibility status current in accordance with EHS and ELC eligibility requirements.

ELC revenue received for duel eligible families is to support the extended hours of service and operating days for the EHS program to the maximum extent possible.

It is the parents’ responsibility to maintain an active status on the ELC wait list. Enrollment in the school readiness/tuition assistance program of the Early Learning Coalition is the responsibility of the ELC. Duel eligible families that have applied and on the waiting list cannot be held accountable if they have not been enrolled in the program.

When duel eligible families do not fully participate in the ELC and EHS programs, it could jeopardize our program’s ability to continue to provide extended hour services past 6 hours a day.

Parent fees will be assessed at time of enrollment for the extended hours of service (non-Early Head Start portion of the day). If your family’s financial situation changes, you must inform us and provide updated income information. **Families who are active and continue to keep an active ELC status will not have a parent fee. When a family is not eligible for ELC or does not maintain their active status with ELC, the parent will be responsible for payment of parent fees.** Fees will be updated on an annual basis and all parents are required to provide income information for the annual update.

Parents fees reflect full month payments August – May. No parent fees are charged during the month of June to offset our start time in August and the extended closure over the Winter holidays. Payments for parent fees are due the first week of session in August when the center opens and will be due in full by the 5th of each month following through May. Kids Incorporated will accept online payments through Procare or Money Orders as payment. Each month, you will pay online or drop your money order into the designated drop box for your center (see Site Director for location). Site Directors will collect the money orders from the drop box, after the 5th of the month, the parent will be responsible for holding onto the money order stub as a receipt. Online payment receipts will be sent to your email upon payment.

Personal Belongings

**Clothing**

* Every child needs to have at the center a complete change of clothes.
* All personal belongings and clothing such as caps, sweaters, coats, pants, shirts, etc. need to be marked with the child's name.
* Keep an extra LABELED set of seasonal clothing in your child's cubby at all times. This should include underwear, socks, pants/dress, and shirt. These clothes will be used in case of bathroom or playtime accidents or emergencies. If your child uses the clothes, remember to re-stock their cubby with another extra set the next day.
* Change the extra clothing as the seasons change and as your child grows.
* If your child is sent home in borrowed clothes from the program, please wash and return them promptly.
* Dress your child in comfortable "playable" clothes – we use paint, play dough, sand and water daily, and accidents/mishaps will occur.
* Dress your child in easy to fasten and unfasten clothing. This is especially important with those beginning toilet training.
* Dress your child in a pair of sturdy shoes, like tennis shoes. Sturdy shoes allow children to play safely both indoors and outdoors. Do not send your child in flip-flops or any opened-toed sandals. They can be dangerous to your child.

**Other Personal Belongings**

There are more than sufficient toys and educational materials provided to the children to meet their developmental learning needs. We discourage children bringing personal belongings to the centers and ask the parents’ support of this, except in two instances:

* Sending an extra set of labeled clothing for your child.
* Your child may bring one special item during the transition time of entering the program **if** he or she is having a difficult time adjusting to school and being away from you.

Pedestrian Safety Education

Infants and toddlers are quick and often unaware of danger. Each year, many children are injured or killed when they suddenly dart into the path of a car.

* Most infants and toddlers are injured near their homes or on their own street.
* Most crashes involving infants and toddlers happen between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.
* Most crashes involving infants and toddlers occur in fair and warm weather.
* Twice as many infant and toddler boys are injured than infant and toddler girls.

Incidents as described above can be prevented as follows:

**Supervise infants and toddlers at all times.** Never allow Infants and toddlers to cross the street alone.

**Show and** **explain** to your child the safe way you cross a street. “When I cross a street, I always stop at the curb. I look both ways for cars. When there are no cars, I cross the street, and keep looking both ways.”

**Teach by example.** When you cross a street with your child, always:

* Stop at the curb and say “**Stop**”.
* Look for cars and name the directions **Left-Right-Left** to your child.
* When it is clear say “**ok**” and start crossing the street.
* Keep looking for cars as you cross.

**Encourage your child.** As you both safely cross the street together, praise the child for copying your safe actions or words. Practice what you teach at all times.

When crossing a street with your child you should always:

* Hold your child’s hand.
* Stop at the edge of parked cars, the curb, or other vehicles.
* Look LEFT- RIGHT- LEFT for moving cars.
* Cross when clear, and keep looking left and right.
* Walk, not run or dart, into the street.
* Look for signs that a car is about to move (rear lights, exhaust smoke, sound of motor, wheels turning).
* Walk alertly.

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**Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Form**

**A copy of this form is kept in the child’s central file and the parent keeps this copy.**

**Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Form**

This handbook has been reviewed and explained to me by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. By initialing each policy and signing below, I acknowledge that the following policies have been explained to me and I accept the policies as they were explained.

\_\_\_\_Attendance & Days of Operation / Closures

\_\_\_\_Absenteeism

\_\_\_\_Phase-in Orientation

\_\_\_\_Celebrations (Birthdays)

\_\_\_\_Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting

\_\_\_\_Child Guidance

\_\_\_\_Standards of Conduct

\_\_\_\_Complaint Process

\_\_\_\_Confidentiality

\_\_\_\_Child Custody

\_\_\_\_Contact Information

\_\_\_\_Screening & Assessment

\_\_\_\_ Exclusion due to Illness and / or Health Record Requirements

\_\_\_\_Hair Beads, Barrettes and Jewelry

\_\_\_\_Child Fingernail(s)

\_\_\_\_Illegal Substance and/or Contraband

\_\_\_\_ Emergency Closing & Emergency Evacuation Pick-Up (Inclement Weather, Contagious Illnesses, etc.)

\_\_\_\_Nap / Rest

\_\_\_\_No outside food policy

\_\_\_\_Open Door Policy

\_\_\_\_Extended Day Fees

\_\_\_\_Personal Belongings

\_\_\_\_Arrival Time

\_\_\_\_Departure, Pick-Up Authorization & Changes, Late Pick-up

\_\_\_\_Termination Policy Due to Unresolved Behavioral Issues

\_\_\_\_Home Visits & Parent Conferences

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Staff Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_