



SOUTH HIGHLAND
Child Development Center

Parent Handbook

Revised and approved _____

South Highland Child Development Center
Parent Handbook

DISCLAIMER

The parent handbook policies and procedures contained herein were adopted by the South Highland Child Development Center Board of Directors and supersede previous policies and become effective _____. They are reviewed biennially, in part or as a whole. They are intended to provide the basis for reasonable and consistent treatment of all CDC parents. The policies contained herein do not constitute a contract and are subject to change at the discretion of the board of directors of the South Highland Child Development Center. The term Center, SHCDC and CDC throughout this document refer in all instances to the South Highland Child Development Center.

Philosophy and Program Goals

South Highland Child Development Center strives to provide Christian quality full-day child care for children of working parents. The center offers a safe and happy learning environment where all children ages six weeks through five years can receive developmental care Monday through Friday. Teachers plan and carry out daily activities which includes intellectual, physical, spiritual, and social developmental activities in a Christ-centered environment.

In an effort to aid young people to reach a productive and meaningful maturity, the center adopts a philosophy which reflects the belief that each child should be encouraged to reach his or her own, unique potential. Through the use of well trained staff, the center strives to facilitate social adjustment, increase emotional security, enhance cognitive development, promote physical growth, and support spiritual development in each and every child. The center provides a nurturing atmosphere and well-planned, creative activities. The children are exposed to new materials, technology and experiences. Comprehensive safety and health regulations are followed and nutritionally sound meals and snacks are provided. To ensure continued program superiority, the center supports continuing staff education, and established curriculum, community involvement, multicultural studies, and family participation. We are dedicated to providing a wonderful experience for your child, and our goal is for them to develop a lifelong love of learning.

Admission Procedure

Admission to the center is open to any child regardless of race or religion. No otherwise qualified individual with a disability shall, solely by reason of his/her disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under this program. Priorities for admission are as follows:

- Children of South Highland Presbyterian Church. Parents must be members in good standing.
- Children with siblings currently enrolled in the center.
- Children on the general waiting list.

Registration for the school year occurs in the spring with all re-enrollment forms due sixty (60) days prior to the new school year to secure your child's enrollment. The following items are due prior to the new school year, beginning on August 1.

- Pre-Admission Form
- Family Information Form
- Immunization Form
- Financial Agreement, including any monies due
- Handbook Review Acknowledgment
- Photo Permission Form
- Emergency Procedures Information Sheet
- Physician Form

School Schedule

The Center operates on an August to July calendar school year. It is open Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. Staff and teachers are not allowed to accept children before 7:00 a.m. Please refer to the annual CDC calendar or monthly eNewsletter for scheduled closing dates, and special events.

Holidays

The South Highland Child Development Center observes the following holidays.

- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and the day after Christmas
- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- Easter Monday
- Memorial Day
- 2 Teacher Workdays (TBD)

There are also additional professional development days in which the CDC may close early to ensure staff are properly trained to meet DHR and/or NAC requirements to properly care for your children.

Security

The CDC has a security system that requires electronic key cards for access. Two key cards will be provided to each family at no cost. The replacement cost for a lost, damaged, or broken key card is \$5. All cards are the property of the CDC and must be returned when your child withdraws from our program to ensure security deposits are refunded.

Fee Structure/Payment Plan

Security/Acceptance Deposit

A one-time fee of \$300 is due immediately upon a child's initial acceptance into the South Highland Child Development Center. The \$300 will remain on deposit with the center throughout the child's enrollment at the center, and may be refunded only upon satisfaction of the following conditions:

- The child has remained enrolled at the center and all payments have been made for the entire contract.
- A final accounting and satisfactory settlement of the account has been made.

Registration/Supply Fee

A non-refundable, annual registration fee of \$275 for the first child and \$250 for the second child is due by April 31 for all students re-enrolling. For new students, the fee is due by June 20. This fee is prorated to \$200 for students enrolling in the center on or after January 1.

Tuition

The tuition payment is due on the first (1st) day of each month that the child is enrolled at the center. Payments are received as automatic monthly bank drafts. The 3 scheduled options for automatic monthly bank drafts are:

- 1) Full monthly amount after the 1st
- 2) Full monthly amount after the 15th
- 3) ½ Full amount after the 1st and ½ after the 15th

If any portion of the monthly tuition payment or any other fees that may be due are not received by the center by the end of the month due, such amounts will be considered past due.

Tuition Assistance

South Highland Presbyterian Church offers tuition assistance to families in financial hardship. Eligibility requirements and application forms are available from the executive director. Families will have to reapply annually. Eligibility may be reviewed at anytime to remain on scholarship. Should your financial status change, you are responsible for updating the center.

Extraneous Fees

- Late pick up fee—Enrolled children shall be picked up from the center no later than 6:00 p.m. A minimum fee of \$20 will be assessed to your account following the first offense within a calendar month for any portion of time up to 10 minutes after 6:00 p.m. A second fee of \$20 will be added after 6:20 p.m. Additional fees may be taxed to your account, at the discretion of the CDC Board of Directors, following the third offense within a calendar month. Late pick up fees are added to your account and are payable on the first business day of the following month.
- Returned check fee—There will be a \$40 processing fee on all checks returned to the center for insufficient funds. The \$40 fee, plus the amount of the returned check,

must be paid to the center by cashier's check or money order within four (4) business days of the center's notice regarding such returned check to the parent/guardian who signed the financial agreement. In the event that a legitimate bank error results in a return of the check or in the case of the untimely posting of a deposit, arrangements must be made with the executive director to redeposit the check and pay the \$40 fee within the 4 day period. If the check is returned a second time and/or the \$40 fee is not paid, the center has the option to require all future tuition and fee payments be made by money order or cashier's check.

Late Payment

If any portion of the monthly tuition payment or any other fees due are not received by the South Highland Child Development Center by the fifth (5th) day of the month due, such amounts are considered past due. A \$40 late fee will be charged by the sixth (6th) day of the month. All payments on past due accounts must be made by cashier's check or money order.

If the tuition payment is not received by the thirtieth (30th) day of the month due, the child will not be allowed to return to the center until payment is received by the center. The center reserves the right, upon a 30-day written notice to the person/persons responsible for the account, to increase monthly tuition during the term of the Financial Agreement in the event that it becomes necessary to do so.

If the past due amount(s), including unpaid tuition, late fees, returned check fees, and/or any other outstanding fees due are not received as described above, the account will be deemed delinquent and upon notice given, the child will not be allowed to return to the center until the past due account is satisfied in full.

After an account is deemed delinquent, interest will begin to accrue on and outstanding balances at the statutory rate of six percent (6 %). With regard to delinquent accounts, if collection efforts become necessary the undersigned parent and/or guardian shall be responsible and financially obligated for any and all costs of collection, including reasonable attorney fees.

Withdrawal/Refund Policy

A 60-day written notice of intent to withdraw is required. It is understood and agreed that in the event a child is withdrawn from the South Highland Child Development Center for any reason prior to the end of the school year, you forfeit the security deposit and are responsible for paying the current month in full as well as the full two (2) months of your withdrawal notice. Tuition is not prorated for any partial month's attendance.

The \$300 security deposit will remain on deposit with the center throughout the child's enrollment at the center and may be refunded only upon satisfaction of the following conditions.

- The child has remained enrolled at the center and all payments have been made for the entire length of the contract. You must complete the contract for the entire current school year in order to request a refund.
- A final accounting and satisfactory settlement of the account has been made.

Suspension/Expulsion Policy

The CDC reserves the right to suspend or permanently expel a child from enrollment at any time for non-payment of tuition and/or fees, or for extended absences without appropriate notice. The center further reserves the right to take action at any time if, in the sole judgment of the CDC Board of Directors, the needs of the child are not being met or the child's continued enrollment is detrimental to the center.

Safe Arrival and Departure

Every child must be accompanied by a parent or other adult when arriving at the South Highland Child Development Center each morning, and escorted to a staff member in the child's designated classroom. Please remember that staff members are not allowed to accept children prior to 7:00 a.m. The center assumes responsibility for the child once they are correctly signed in. Children should arrive by 9:00 a.m. in order to participate in all academic activities scheduled for the day **and to be counted for lunch**. If a child will be late or absent, please call the center to ensure an accurate lunch count. Children will not be allowed to be dropped off at field trip sites. Please refer to the policy regarding field trips for more information.

A child is only permitted to leave the center accompanied by a parent or parent authorized person as indicated on the pre-admission form. Everyone must follow the sign-out procedure. Under no circumstance will a child be allowed to enter or leave the center alone.

CDC teachers/staff members who are authorized by the parent/guardian to sign a child out must leave the CDC and church premises with the child as soon as the teacher/staff member assumes responsibility for the child. The CDC will not be liable for any child who remains on the CDC and/or church premises once an authorized CDC teacher/staff member assumes responsibility for the child.

Children should not enter the CDC kitchen during drop off or pick-up time. Children are given an afternoon snack after nap as well as a small snack upon returning from the playground in the very late afternoon. DHR minimum standards state that children are not allowed in the kitchen and children must be seated while eating. Anyone on the CDC kitchen staff must have a Jefferson County Health Department Food Handler Certification Permit.

Enrolled children shall be picked up from the center on school days by 6:00 p.m. Failure to comply with this policy will result in the assessment of fines, calculated on a monthly basis. See fee structure/payment plan for more information regarding late pick up. Teachers will report late pick ups to the executive director.

Please observe traffic flow patterns and signs in the parking lots and driveways. The exit is beside the playground and the entrance is on Richard Arrington Boulevard. Drive slowly and be aware of children. Be respectful of handicapped parking spaces and spaces reserved for special events.

Illness Policy and Health Information Policies

In order to help prevent the spread of disease or infection and keep our children as healthy as possible, the South Highland Child Development Center requires adherence to the following policies.

1. Each child must have a current Immunization Form (Blue Form) on file at the center.
2. Each child is given a daily health inspection upon arrival. Children who appear to be ill will not be admitted to the center.
3. When a communicable disease has been introduced into the center, parents are notified. Parents are urged to notify the center if/when their child has been exposed to a communicable disease outside the center.
4. If a child is too sick to go outside and play, this child is too sick to attend the center. In order to maintain adequate teacher/child ratios, teachers/staff members cannot keep children from outdoor play.

SHCDC Guidelines for Parents with Sick Children

1. Make firm arrangements with a friend or relative for backup child care at the beginning of the school year.
2. A child must be symptom free for 24 hours (this includes fever) before returning to the center for illnesses other than a minor cold.
3. If a child sees a doctor for any illness, please obtain a note stating when the child may return to the center.

You will be notified if you child:

- Has a fever greater than 100 F oral
- Vomits more than twice during the day
- Develops purulent eye drainage or redness of the eye
- Has one loose, stools during the day
- Diarrhea
- Excessive or Wheezing Cough

When you are called to pick up a sick child from the center, please do so within the hour you are notified. The center does not have adequate staffing and space to care for sick children.

EXCLUSION OF ILL PERSONS

There are certain infectious diseases which require the exclusion of persons from work or daycare to avoid further spread. Children and staff members should be excluded from daycare centers when they present certain symptoms associated with these infectious diseases. Exclusion should continue until symptoms have disappeared or until a physician has declared that the symptoms are not associated with an infectious agent.

Children who are mildly ill may attend daycare should the center have the capability of caring for that child without disrupting normal activities.

General Guidelines

Exclusion should occur if an employee/child presents any of the following:

Signs/Symptoms of Illness- Exclusion should occur until physician determines the child may return. These signs/symptoms may include increased tiredness, increased irritability, increased persistent crying and uncontrolled coughing.

Fever- Exclusion should occur until physician determines the child may return. Temperatures of 100 degrees F or higher (oral), and 102 degrees F or higher (rectal) should be excluded. Center exclusion period is fever free, without medication, for 24 hours.

Uncontrollable Diarrhea- Exclusion should occur until diarrhea stops or until physician determines that is not related to an infectious disease.

Vomiting- Exclusion should occur until vomiting stops.

Rash with Fever or Behavior Change- Exclusion should occur until physician determines that it is not related to an infectious disease.

Eye Drainage- Exclusion should occur until 24 hours after proper treatment has begun.

Unusual Color- Exclusion should occur until physician determines that it is not related to an infectious disease.

Mouth Sores with Drooling- Exclusion should occur until physician determines the child may return.

Disease- Specific Guidelines

The following infectious diseases are of concern to daycare centers and those associated. Please follow the proper procedures when dealing with a possible case of one of these diseases. More information is provided on the individual fact sheets.

Campylobacteriosis- Until diarrhea is no longer present.

Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)- Bacterial- Until treatment has been in effect for at least 24 hours and person can participate in daily activities. Viral- None.

Cytomegalovirus (CMV) Diarrhea

- Norovirus- Until diarrhea is no longer present
- Rotavirus- Until diarrhea is no longer present
- Diarrhea (No Specific Pathogen)- Until diarrhea is no longer present

Ear Infection- Until fever is no longer present a person can participate in daily activities.

Enterovirus- Until diarrhea is no longer present

E.coli O157:H7-Until pathogen is not present in the stool

Fifth Disease- Until child can participate in daily activities

Giardiasis- Until treatment has been in effect for at least 24 hours and diarrhea is no longer present

Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)- Until treatment has begun and child can participate in daily activities

Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease- Until fever is no longer present

Hepatitis A- Until 10 days after jaundice

Hepatitis B- None unless there is a possibility of blood exposure (child bites, hemophiliac, person has open sores, etc.)

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)- See individual fact sheet

Impetigo- Until treatment has been in effect for at least 24 hours

Lice- After treatment and no more live lice or eggs are found

Lyme Disease- None

Measles- Until at least 4 days after rash appears

Meningococcal Disease- Until treatment has begun and can participate in daily activities

Mononucleosis- Until treatment has begun and can participate in daily activities

Mumps- During contagious period; the 12th through 25th day after exposure

Oral Herpes- Only necessary for those with active lesions who have no control over oral secretions

Pertussis- Until 5 days of a 14-day treatment has been administered

Pinworms- Until treatment has been in effect for at least 24 hours

Respiratory Infections (Viral)- Until fever is no longer present and person can participate in daily activities

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)- Until fever is no longer present

Reye Syndrome- Until person can participate in daily activities

Ringworm- Until treatment has been in effect for at least 24 hours

Roseola- Until fever is no longer present

Rubella- Until 7 days after rash onset

Salmonellosis- Until diarrhea is no longer present

Scabies- Until treatment has been in effect for at least 24 hours

Shigellosis- Until treatment is complete and 2 stool cultures taken 24 hours apart are negative

In the event of an illness, accident or injury while under the care of the center that requires emergency medical attention, the parents/guardians will be called immediately. Please refer to the emergency procedures for more detailed information.

The monthly tuition charge will be reduced by ten percent (10%) if a child is absent due to illness for a period of not less than two (2) consecutive weeks during a month. In order to qualify for this reduction, a statement from the child's physician must accompany the child upon return to the center.

Medication Consent Policy/Allergies

The CDC does not administer the initial dosage of medication, except with a physician's written permission for life threatening situations.

The CDC is not allowed to give ANY medication without the parent's consent and a completed Authorization of Medication form. A written medication form is required. This requirement includes over the counter medications and creams such as Desitin, Oragel, Mylecon, sunscreen and cold medicines.

If the required medication is going to be on-going you may have the doctor write a letter on letter head. You must still complete a medication form then we can attach it to the formal letter. The medication form must still be signed and documented by the parent and teachers administering the medication.

All medicine must be in the original container and bear the child's full name. Parental instructions must be consistent with the labeling on the medication or the doctor's note.

Medication must have a valid expiration date. Staff must be trained in administration of medication.

All medication must be under lock and key, inaccessible to children, and cannot remain in bags or purses.

Allergies/Medications delivered by a device:

Parents or a health care professional must provide written instructions on indications for use that include signs and symptoms that the medication is needed.

Parents or a health care professional must demonstrate use of the device and any special care after use to all staff who will be administering the medication. Documentation of the demonstration for use and care is made on the medication form including date and staff in attendance. Training and use and care of the device are provided annually or as needed with staffing or device changes.

Special diet needs and food allergies shall be kept on file in food preparation areas, the child's individual file, and in the children's classroom eating area.

Daily Health Inspection

The center tries hard to help prevent the spread of infection and disease. Children who appear to be ill cannot be admitted to the center. Each child is given a daily health inspection upon arrival. This daily health check will be conducted while greeting each child and parent as they arrive. It usually takes less than a minute. Teachers will also observe the child throughout the day.

SIDS Policy/ Back to Sleep

The Alabama Department of Human Resources and the National Accreditation Commission requires that all non-mobile infants should be placed on their backs for sleeping. The only way an infant will be placed in any other position for sleeping will be by written physician instructions only. A copy of these instructions must be on file at the center and discussed with the child's individual teachers.

Emergency Preparedness

Accidents/Injury: In the event of an accident or illness that requires emergency medical attention, parents will be called immediately. If the child's parents cannot be reached the center will contact the child's physician. In extreme emergency situations, paramedics will be called and/or the child will be transported to Children's Hospital and staff physicians will be used if the child's doctor is not available. One of the child's teachers or director will ride in the ambulance with the child and/or follow by car to hospital.

Detailed emergency procedures are posted on the bulletin board in each classroom; this includes emergency evacuation routes for fire as well as designated safety areas for tornadoes.

The children will be relocated to the downstairs small dining room and auditorium where there are no windows, to wait out any warnings.

We typically follow Birmingham City and Jefferson County Schools for weather closings; however, we will make and announce our decision independently. We use travel conditions, staff availability and church security guidelines for closing.

If we open late, this will be announced via emails, text messages and media all as electricity permits. We may close early if it appears conditions will worsen throughout the day.

If in doubt to our status, you may call the center's voice mail for an updated message at (205) 939-1210.

In the event of a local emergency requiring immediate evacuation of the building for an extended period of time the children will be relocated to Highlands United Methodist Church.

Infants and Toddlers will be transported via evacuation cribs, strollers and buggies. PreK-4k children will use a walking rope.

In the event of a national emergency affecting Birmingham, parents/guardians will be contacted about the status of the center.

In the event of a CDC lockdown, we will communicate to parents via text and/or email. In lockdown mode, no parent can enter or exit the CDC, which includes checking out your child until the lockdown is lifted.

Practice drills are held regularly so that children and staff understand the designated areas for safety. Each classroom has an emergency kit to accompany them when they evacuate the room.

Our staff receives training and certification in first aid and CPR, child abuse, standard precautions, fire extinguisher and also receives active shooter training.

Guidance/Discipline

The classroom environment, along with the curriculum and instructional practices, are designed to reduce or eliminate discipline problems. If problems should occur, teachers will work with children to help them identify the behavior, discuss feelings, and choose an alternate course of action that is in the best interest of the children. The goal is to promote re-direction, resolve conflicts, and help children understand the effects of behaviors on him/her and others.

Expected behavior is in line with each child's level and understandable to the child's developmental age. Discipline shall be consistent and fair. Certain punishment is prohibited by the CDC. These are punishments restricted by DHR and are not appropriate for group settings. This includes but is not limited to any sort of corporal punishment including hitting, spanking, swatting, shaking, verbal abuse, threats or derogatory remarks, withholding or forcing meals, withholding or forcing naps, or snacks. The center does not associate punishment with food, naps or bathroom procedures. While it is acknowledged that parents may use a variety of these techniques at home, they are expected to respect these prohibitions with regard to all persons, including their own children, while on the premises of the CDC.

Teachers are responsible for communicating with parents if/when problem behaviors occur as well as when positive behaviors occur. It is important for parents and teachers to be supportive of one another when it involved their children.

Biting Policy

Biting is unfortunately not unexpected behavior for toddlers. Some children and many toddlers communicate through this behavior. However, biting can be harmful to other children and to staff. This biting policy has been developed with both in mind. As a childcare center, we understand that biting, unfortunately, is a part of the child care setting. Our goal is to help identify what is causing the biting and resolve the issue. If the issue cannot be resolved, this policy serves to protect the children that are bitten. If a biting incident occurs, state regulations require that the parent of the child biting and the parent of the child who was bitten be contacted. Names of the children are not shared with either parent.

When Biting Does Occur:

We try hard to create an environment where biting does not occur. We work to keep staff to student ratios low, the children actively engaged, and the environment stimulating so that children are properly supervised and appropriately challenged, reducing the likelihood that biting will occur. Even with the best environment possible sometimes biting will happen. When it does, it is our job to keep the children safe and help the child that bites to learn different, more appropriate behavior.

For the child that was bitten:

1. First aid is given to the bite. It is cleaned with soap and water. If the skin is broken, the bite is covered with a bandage and ice is applied to reduce swelling
2. An "Accident Report" form is filled out documenting the incident.
3. Parents receive a copy of the notification form.

For the child that bit:

1. The teacher will firmly tell the child "WE DO NOT BITE!"
2. The child will be removed from the group to engage in sensory activities to calm down. The time should be no longer than the child's age.
3. A "Behavior Report" form is filled out documenting the incident.
4. Parents receive a copy of the notification form.

When Biting Continues:

1. The child will be shadowed closely to help prevent any biting incidents (while this can reduce the biting it will not eliminate it – a bite can happen with an adult in arms reach!)
2. The child will be observed by the classroom staff to determine what is causing the child to bite (teething, communication, frustration, etc.) The administrative staff may also observe the child if the classroom staff is unable to determine the cause.
3. The child will be given positive attention and approval for positive behavior and choices.

When Biting Becomes Excessive:

1. The **first** time a child inflicts 4 bites in a one week period (5 weekdays) in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leave a significant mark, parents will be contacted to discuss the child's behavior and how the behavior can be modified.
2. The **second** time a child inflicts 4 bites in a one week period (5 weekdays) in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, the child will be suspended for **one business day**.
3. The **third** time a child inflicts 4 bites in a one week period (5 weekdays) in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, the child will be suspended for **two business days**.
4. If a child once again inflicts 4 bites in a one week period (5 weekdays) in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, **the parents will be asked to make other child care arrangements**.

*If a child who has been through steps 1, 2 and/or 3 goes four weeks (20 business days) without biting, we will go back to step one if the child bites again.

*** If a child bites three times in one day the child will be required to be picked up from preschool for the remainder of the day and this time off will not count towards the suspension time.*

Anti-Child Abuse Policy

The CDC supports and maintains environments that are free of child abuse and neglect. Staff is trained to recognize signs of child abuse. All 50 states have passed some form of mandatory child abuse and neglect reporting law in order to qualify for funding under the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). CAPTA mandates "minimum definitions" for child abuse and sexual abuse.

Child abuse or neglect is any recent act or failure to act:

...resulting in imminent risk of serious harm, death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation of a child by a parent or caretaker who is responsible for the child's welfare (the definition of 'child' may vary from state to state, but is usually a person under the age of 18).

Sexual abuse is defined as:

...employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct; or rape, and in cases of caretaker or inter-familial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children, or incest with children. Sexual abuse may also include sexual touching and bodily contact, exhibitionism, voyeurism and/or involvement of children in pornographic material.

All states require certain professionals and institutions to report suspected child abuse. Failure to report suspected child abuse can result in criminal and/or civil liability. All states require the report to be made to some type of law enforcement authority or child protection agency. Reporting to a parent or relative will not satisfy the reporter's legal duty under the statutes. In accordance with these statutes, the CDC will neither condone nor tolerate:

- infliction of physically abusive behavior or bodily injury upon children;
- physical neglect of children, including failure to provide adequate safety measures, care and supervision in relation to CDC activities;
- emotional maltreatment of children, including verbal abuse and/or verbal attacks.

The CDC reserves the right to dismiss or to exclude from affiliation with the organization any employee or volunteer who is found guilty of child abuse or neglect or has been convicted of child abuse or neglect. Local (more stringent) prevailing statutes may supersede CDC policies.

If child abuse is suspected, it is to be reported to the executive director immediately. The executive director will alert DHR and the child's parents/guardians.

Role and Influence of Parents

The South Highland Child Development Center has various ways to reach out and connect staff to families. Teachers and parents are encouraged to keep open lines of communication regarding children, activities and any other pertinent information. The following list is examples of how family participation and teacher/parent communication is used by the center to enrich the development of children.

- Open door policy with the Executive Director
- Teacher conferences available by appointment
- Posted schedules and notices in each classroom
- Daily or weekly reports for your children
- Reports to parents about any ongoing education or training, and any seminars or pertinent conferences that teachers and staff attend or complete
- Drop-in visits by parents to a child's classroom
- Parents lunching with children and teachers at the center
- Informal chats with teachers while dropping off or picking up children

Parents have an important responsibility in helping children to achieve maximum potential. Some ways in which parents can supplement and extend the school program are:

1. Share an interest in reading with your children. Read to them and discuss with them the books they are reading.
2. Encourage originality
3. Encourage questions
4. Stimulate creative thinking and problem solving. Encourage children to try out solutions without fear of making mistakes. Help them to value their own thinking, learn from their mistakes, and encourage them to try again.
5. Foster good work habits. Help children to plan their work and then be sure they complete the plan.
6. Find time for the family to talk together about many things. Help your children work towards expressing themselves better.
7. Take trips together to places of interest like museums, exhibitions, fairs, government and community agencies.
8. Encourage a variety of experiences. Help your child become interested in activities and develop hobbies
9. Allow for free time to encourage your children to wonder, to engage in reflective thought, and to appreciate the world around them.
10. Be a real companion to your children. Enjoy them and help them to remember their childhood with pleasure.

--National Association for Gifted Children

Family Participation

Parents are welcome to visit their child's classroom anytime. Any other visitors must be cleared by the Executive Director in advance to insure the safety of all children.

Parent Teacher Alliance (PTA)

In March of 1997, a group of parents met to create a separate organization dedicated to strengthening the bond between parents and teachers at the center. It's named "alliance" because of its original goal to bring the teachers, staff and parents together to improve communication and relationships for the betterment of our children. The vision of the PTA is to facilitate communication and nurture the relationships between parents and teachers in order to create the very best possible atmosphere for the children of the center. Its mission includes supporting teachers' continuing education and providing informational parent meetings and opportunities for social interaction each year. The parents accomplish much of these good works through coordinated fund raising efforts. The PTA welcomes and encourages all families to join the SHCDC Parent Teacher Alliance in its efforts to provide for the safety, health and happiness of each child.

Parent Communication

Teachers communicate verbally with family members daily at drop-off and pick-up times. These discussions must be brief because the teacher's primary responsibility must be the care and education of the children. If a greater length of time is needed than is allowed in the morning or at the end of the day, please feel free to call the center and leave a message for the teacher to schedule a conference. Conferences will be offered to parents at least twice during the year to discuss their child's developmental progress. Conferences may also be called by teachers or parents as the need arises. During formal parent conferences, parents express goals for their child and give input into what they see in the child's progressing development.

Staff members seek opportunities to communicate frequently with parents concerning child rearing practices and to share specific ideas for promoting children's healthy development and learning. Within each classroom there will be a verbal and/or written system established for sharing day-to-day happenings. Parents will be further informed about issues concerning children and families through an eNewsletter, Remind 101 app, flyers, bulletin boards, parent information table, CDC website, and PTA meetings.

Staff should not discuss a child's medical or behavioral status with anyone other than the child's parent. A staff member may discuss medical, behavioral, or academic issues with his or her co-teacher(s) or administration in order to resolve the issue or facilitate discussions with the child's parent(s).

Parent-Teacher Conference Policy

Formal conferences will be offered to parents a minimum of two times per year. These conferences are to discuss the child's development and overall progress. On-going assessments will be completed throughout the school year to assess children in all content areas. Conference times should take parent's work schedules into consideration. Documentation should be made and kept in the child's file if a parent declines a conference.

Classroom Party Guidelines

We value family participation and it plays an important role in our children's education. Classroom parties should be scheduled to prevent disruption of the child's normal daily schedules. If you would like to plan a celebration of any kind at school please make sure the teachers are aware of your intentions and follow these guidelines. Most parties are held in the classroom during the normally scheduled afternoon snack time. While snack is always available parents may wish to provide something "special." According to the Jefferson County Health Department and the National Accreditation Commission all food items must be individually wrapped or provided by a bakery in which ingredients are available due to food allergy concerns.

Party invitations for personal parties held outside of the school day may be distributed at school only if each child in the room is invited. If you wish to invite other children from other classes to a parent planned party outside of school, we suggest that you mail these rather than distribute to classroom cubbies.

Parents should partner with classroom teachers when planning special activities. Parents should understand that the teacher's main priority is to attend to the children at all times, including parties. Parents are expected to help set up, if needed, and help clean up the party or activity. The classroom rules should be followed at all times. Children should not be allowed to walk around with food or drinks, or demonstrate other behaviors not typically acceptable during meal and snack times.

The CDC cannot be held responsible for the health, well-being or behavior of children during personal after hour parties or activities.

Curriculum

The Creative Curriculum for Early Childhood Our Philosophy

The philosophy behind our curriculum is that young children best learn by doing. Learning isn't just repeating what someone else says; it requires active thinking and experimenting to find out how things work and to learn firsthand about the world in which we live.

In their early years, children explore the world around them by using all their senses—touching, tasting, listening, smelling and looking. In using real materials such as blocks and trying out ideas, children learn about size, shape and color, and they notice relationships between things. In time, they learn to use one object to stand for another. This is the beginning of symbolic thinking. For example, they might pretend a stick is an airplane or a block is a hamburger. These early symbols, the stick and the block, are similar in shape to the objects they represent. Gradually children become more and more able to use abstract symbols like words to describe their thoughts and feelings. They learn to “read” pictures which are symbols of real people, places and things. This exciting development in symbolic thinking takes place during the preschool years as children play.

Play provides the foundation for academic or “school” learning. It is the preparation children need before they learn highly abstract symbols such as letters (which are symbols for sounds) and numbers (symbols for number concepts.) Play enables us to achieve the key goals of our early childhood curriculum. Play is the work of young children.

Curriculum Goals

The most important goal of our early childhood curriculum is to help children become enthusiastic learners. This means encouraging children to be active and creative explorers who are not afraid to try out their ideas and to think their own thoughts. Our goal is to help children become independents, self-confident, inquisitive learners. We're teaching them how to learn, not just in pre-school, but throughout their lives. We're allowing them to learn at their own pace and in the ways that are best for them. We're giving them good habits and attitudes, particularly a positive sense of themselves, which will make a difference throughout their lives. Our curriculum identifies goals in all areas of development and learning.

Objectives for Development and Learning

Social-Emotional: Objective is to help children regulate their own emotions and behaviors, establish and sustain positive relationships, and to participate cooperatively and constructively in group situations. Children will feel more comfortable as a part of the group at school, trusting their new environment and making friends. They will experience pride and self-confidence, develop independence and self-control and have a positive attitude toward life.

Physical: Objective is to help children increase their small and large muscle skills and feel confident in what their bodies can do. Children will demonstrate traveling and balancing skills, gross-motor manipulative skills and fine motor strength and coordination.

Language: Objective is progress in English language acquisition. Children will learn to listen to and understand increasingly complex language. They will find confidence in using language to express thoughts and needs, and acquire appropriate conversational and other communication skills.

Cognitive: Objective is to help children become confident learners by letting them try out their own ideas and experience success. They will demonstrate positive approaches to learning such as the ability to solve problems, ask questions, remember and connect experiences, think symbolically, and use words to describe their ideas, observations and feelings.

Literacy: Literacy objectives include demonstration of phonological awareness, knowledge of the alphabet, knowledge of print and its uses, and demonstration of emergent writing skills. Children will begin to comprehend and respond to books and other texts through interaction, re-telling of stories, and beginning reading skills.

Mathematics: Mathematical objectives include use of number concepts and operations such as counting. Children will explore and describe spatial relationships and shapes, compare and measure, and demonstrate knowledge of patterns.

Social Studies: Objective is to encourage knowledge of self, basic understanding of people and how they live, and demonstrate simple geographic knowledge.

The Arts: Children will explore visual arts, musical concepts and expression, dance and movement concepts and drama through actions and language.

The activities we plan for children, the way we organize the environment, select toys and materials, plan the daily schedule, and talk with children, are all designed to accomplish the goals of our curriculum and give your child a successful start in school and a lifelong love of learning.

Children's Daily Schedules

Parents are encouraged to work with your child's individual teacher to provide the best schedule for your child's needs. The center is required by law to feed any child who is hungry and allow a tired child to rest. The center staff will collaborate with parents to establish regular schedules for eating and sleeping. Staff will at a parent's request attempt to gently wake a sleeping child at a prescribed time, but will permit the child to continue sleeping if needed.

Stories and/ or music are used as children begin their rest period. The infants are allowed to nap according to their individual schedules and needs. All age groups will have a rest/ quiet time each day.

Parents are encouraged to avoid checking in your child during the class rest time. This disturbs the entire class rest period.

Field Trips

Children three years of age and older who are enrolled in the Center will be transported to and from planned field trips and other organized activities in South Highland Presbyterian vehicles. Such trips are expected to be educational in nature and plans must first be approved by a Center director. A written authorization form signed by the parent is required for a child to participate in field trips. This form informs parents of the destination, purpose of trip, date, time of the trip and an emergency contact number. Parents should be notified in advance of all field trips.

Car Seat Policy

All children are to be transported in age appropriate safety restraints with a 5-point harness and tether strap. The CDC is not responsible for either the condition or installation of car seats. The CDC is not liable for any issues that may arise from the use of a car seat.

Vehicles used to transport children should be equipped with first aid supplies and a communication device. Parents should be informed of contact numbers of drivers and/or adult/staff passengers and a contact number for the destination.

Current vehicle license, proper license of designated drivers, vehicle insurance, and proper maintenance/inspection documentation is required. Transportation logs and checklists should be kept by driver and/or adult/staff passengers for every trip.

Food Service Nutrition Policy

All food served at the CDC shall comply with USDA recommendations for meals and snacks. All food shall be served with rubber gloves after required hand washing has been completed. All food must be store bought or prepared in a commercial kitchen. Water shall be available at all meals and snacks.

No sugar sweetened beverages shall be served to children. Only 100% Juice

- No more than 6 ounces per day
- Only served at meal or snack time
- Only for children over 12 months
- Children 2 years and older (Milk with 1% or less milk fat)
- Unless medical documentation is provided for child

Food items that shall be served at least once a week

- Orange vegetable
- Dark green vegetable
- Legume

At least half of grains served each week shall be whole grains

Menus shall be posted in view of parents and food preparation staff and prepared at least 2 weeks in advance. Menus and receipts shall be retained for at least 90 days and shall be organized and maintained.

Special diet needs and food allergies shall be kept on file in food preparation areas and in the children's eating area. Documentation of amended menus must be corrected in writing and any substitutions shall be of equal nutrient value.

Babysitting Policy

Center management cannot be responsible or held liable if parents hire center employees for privately arranged childcare outside the scope of its employment.

CDC teachers/staff members who are authorized by a parent/guardian to sign a child/children out for babysitting or transporting must leave the CDC and church premises with the child(ren) as soon as the teacher/staff member assumes responsibility for the child(ren) by signing those child(ren) out. The CDC will not be liable for any child(ren) who remain on the CDC and/or church premises once an authorized CDC teacher/staff member assumes responsibility for your child(ren).

While parents may feel comfortable with your classroom teachers, it is highly recommended that your child's actual teachers not be asked to babysit as this may diminish the student teacher relationship within the classroom.

Complaint Procedure

The South Highland Child Development Center is committed to providing a high-quality program that creates the best environment for your children. In the case of concerns, first discuss the situation with your child's teacher. While viewpoints on specific situations vary, all teachers are expected to be responsive to parent concerns. Please listen to the professional suggestions and try to respect the teacher's judgment. Remember that the teachers must consider the needs of all the children. If the problem is not resolved, please discuss the situation with the Executive Director. You may take up grievances with the board of directors by requesting a Greivance Form and follow the submission instructions.

Every effort will be made to achieve resolutions that are in the best interest of children, families and the center. The CDC has an open door policy.

South Highland Child Development Center Parent Handbook Acknowledgement

This is to acknowledge that

has/have read the South Highland Child Development Center Parent Handbook and I/we understand fully the contents and will abide by the policies and procedures.

Child's Name and Age

Street Address

City, State and Zip

Parent's Signature and Date

Home Phone, Work Phone and Cell Phone
