



EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER
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PARENT HANDBOOK
(Revised January 2015)

The Early Childhood Development Center (ECDC) offers a comprehensive educational program that focuses on the cognitive, emotional, and physical development of children from infancy to five years of age. The safe nurturing environment and the structure of the daily activities are designed to ensure that each child is healthy, happy and stimulated.

The ECDC is open from 6:30 am to 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday and is licensed by the Department of Public Welfare and participates in the Keystone STARS continuous quality improvement program.

Programs offered:

- Infant Care (6 weeks -12 months)
- Young Toddler (13-25 months)
- Older Toddler (26-36 months)
- Pre-School (37 months -5 years)

Children are admitted without regard to race, culture, sex, religion, national origin, ancestry, or disability. ECDC will accept children with special needs as long as a safe supportive environment can be provided for the child. Children/families that are identified with an IEP or IFSP are asked to sign a permission form to share information with the Center Director and necessary staff persons.

Parents or guardians are asked to provide other items needed for their child's care as requested by the staff person assigned to their age group. A list of items needed for infants, toddlers, and preschool children are included in this packet.

(This parent handbook is not inclusive of all ECDC policies and procedures. The complete ECDC policies & procedures manual is located in the Director's office and is available for review upon request.)

PROGRAM GOALS AND COMMITMENT

ECDC AGREES TO:

- Promote positive relationships with all children and adults
- Implement a curriculum that fosters all areas of child development
- Give your child loving care, and constant supervision
- Provide breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack
- Cooperate with you in meeting your child's developmental needs
- Provide a safe and healthy physical environment
- Inform you in advance of any field trips or special activities away from the Center
- Follow all policies and procedures set forth in this handbook and Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare childcare regulations

PARENTS ARE REQUIRED TO:

- Sign your child IN AND OUT (or have a person age 14 or older do so with your permission. Identification will be required as well as name listed on the child's release form.)
- Check your child's bin daily for school work, homework, messages, notices, and soiled clothing.
- Provide needed items as requested for your child's care according to age group.
- Label all of child's personal items & belongings.
- Call to inform the Center if your child is ill, or will be absent from care.
- Keep your child at home if he/she has a fever, diarrhea, or other signs of communicable illness. (see illness guidelines)
- Pay for child care services in advance of services being rendered. Payments are due the first day of the service week. Payments are accepted by cash, money order, debit card or check.
- Follow all policies and procedures set forth in this handbook and Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare child care regulations.

CLOSINGS AND HOLIDAYS:

The ECDC will typically be closed on the following days:

- New Years Day
- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day & the Friday after Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Eve & Christmas Day
- New Years Eve

The Center will also be closed for a minimum of 2 in-service days. Parents will be notified in advance of these days.

If the ECDC needs to close or be delayed in opening due to inclement weather conditions, it will be listed on KDKA, WPXI, and WTAE. The listing will be shown as Mt. Ararat Early Childhood Development Center.

DAILY SCHEDULES:

The general daily schedule, as well as, lesson plans for infant, toddler, and preschool age children are posted in the Center at all times. Operating hours are 6:30 am - 6:00 p.m. Monday –Friday.

Parents will be notified of changes in the daily schedule. Parents should notify the center in advance if their child will be arriving after 9:00 a.m. Parents are strongly encouraged to have children at the center by 9:00 a.m. this helps ensure smooth transitions within the schedule of the day. Parents will be provided a written Daily Activity Report.

ECDC helps children transition from infant, young toddler, older toddler, to pre-school by gradually introducing the child to the next chronological age level grouping through social activities, art and gross motor. This permits the child to make a smooth adjustment to being with new staff and peers. The transition conversation begins to take place with the parent(s) and child as early as two months before the child's birthday. All learning materials for children are monitored and adjusted according to learning skills of the child.

It is important to notify the staff in writing if you are requesting that your child not participate in particular activities at the center. These activities may include but are not limited to holiday and birthday celebrations.

DISCIPLINE:

The goal of discipline is to help children learn to manage their own behavior. Your child will be given a safe, developmental, and appropriate environment with materials suited to his or her age and abilities. He or she will be expected to follow simple rules for the safety and well being of each child attending the Center.

As the child care provider, ECDC will use positive language in talking with children, show children how to behave by example, and give emotional support to each child in care.

DISMISSAL / SUSPENSION:

- Incomplete file for over 60 days
- Delinquent tuition or late fees
- Loss of grant funding from any organization without alternate payment arrangements
- Behavior that is detrimental to the child's self, other children, or staff
- Uncontrollable behavioral patterns

EXTENDED DAY SERVICE:

Extended day will be defined as more than 10 hours of child care services. The fee schedule for extended day services is included in the Center's rate listing.

MEALS:

Nutritional meals are important to a child's growth and well being. Meals are provided by the ECDC and are included in the monthly tuition fee. Monthly menus are distributed to parents for your planning.

Breakfast, lunch and snacks will be provided by the Center for the children of parents who sign and return food program enrollment forms. Please notify the staff in writing if you request that your child not eat, or is allergic to any specific food. Free meals will be provided to children whose families qualify for the free/reduced lunch program. The Center will only serve meals during the scheduled times. If children arrive after the scheduled meal time, it will be the responsibility of the parent to ensure the child has been fed prior to arrival.

Daily Meal Schedule:

- 8:30 – 9:00 – Breakfast
- 12:00 – 12:30 – Lunch
- 3:00-3:30 – Snack

Infant feeding schedules vary based on the child. Infants are to be fed prior to arrival in the morning.

PARENT CONFERENCES AND VISITS:

ECDC staff will meet regularly with parents to talk about the child's progress and growth. Every child/family will have a "Getting to Know You Meeting" with the Director or teacher of your child. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the child's learning opportunities in the program, to discuss the child's first few weeks of the program, and to clarify any questions on policies and procedures. A written observation conference within the child's first 45 days of enrollment will also be scheduled.

The Center welcomes parental support and involvement through bi-annual parent conferences, a parent advisory group, and various training and enhancement activities.

When scheduled conferences are offered by the center, a parent will have the option of accepting or rejecting the conference through signature designation.

You may drop in for visits, expected or unexpected, at any time. However, during unexpected visits, for safety reasons staff will continue to give the children their undivided attention. Should a need arise please schedule a conference with your child's teacher.

PAYMENTS:

Childcare fees will be charged for the weeks that the child is enrolled in the ECDC. Charges will not be prorated based on attendance.

At the initial enrollment, a one week payment in advance is due. Parents may make subsequent payments weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly in advance for childcare services. All payments, including private pay and CCIS co-payments, are due on Monday of each week. If payments are not received, services will be suspended until payment is received. CCIS will also be notified when applicable.

A monthly statement will be generated by MACAC. The statement will be dated for the last day of the month and will be distributed to parents by the 5th working day of the succeeding month. The statement will reflect all charges incurred and payments made since the previous statement.

All checks returned from the bank NSF will be assessed a \$30.00 fee. After the second NSF check, only cash, money order, or debit card payments will be accepted.

ECDC reserves the right to use a collection agency to collect fees owed and to report payment history to the credit bureaus.

RATES:

SERVICE	DAILY	WEEKLY
Infant	\$36.00	\$180.00
Young Toddler	\$34.00	\$170.00
Older Toddler	\$32.00	\$160.00
Preschool	\$30.00	\$150.00
Extended Day	\$20.00	\$100.00

SAFETY PLANS:

If the ECDC Staff must depart from the Center before a child is signed out of care the child will be watched by a qualified MACAC Staff person until picked up by parent/ guardian. If the parent or guardian does not contact ECDC within a reasonable amount of time CYF will be notified.

Fire drills are conducted every sixty days, and emergency plans called the “child’s safety plan” are posted as well.

(ECDC) has devised an Evacuation Plan and Drill Policy in the event of an emergency. You will be notified if your child has been evacuated from the building. In the event of an evacuation, you can pick up your child at the Kingsley Association located at 6435 Frankstown Avenue (corner of Paulson and Frankstown Avenues).

The safety of your child/children is our number one priority and we will make every attempt to keep you informed of the status during an emergency evacuation.

TRANSPORTATION ARRANGEMENTS:

Transportation and pick-up arrangements are the responsibility of the parent. A responsible person age 14 or older (and/ or authorized by the child’s parent or guardian) must sign their name when bringing children. Persons other than a child’s parent or guardian must show valid photo identification to a staff member before signing out a child. Parents must also call when authorized persons are going to pick up a child.

In an emergency, a child may be released to an individual upon the oral designation of the parent, if the identity of the individual can be verified by a staff person. The parent will be notified in the event that an unauthorized person attempts to pick up a child.

Parents must call Center if they will be delayed after the Center’s closing time. The late fee for pick up after 6:00 pm is \$1.00 per minute. Late fees are expected to be paid within 24 hours.