



HAYS AREA *Our work is child's play.*
CHILDREN'S CENTER

PARENT HANDBOOK

2008-2009

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide and promote
quality care and educational experiences
for young children and families.

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HEALTH POLICIES

Your child's health is a matter of major importance to you and us at the Hays Area Children's Center. There are several papers that we must have on file before your child begins attending. They are:

1. A health assessment signed by a physician, nurse practitioner, or a nurse certified by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to perform assessments
2. Authorization for Emergency Medical Care
3. Copy of current immunization records
4. Permissions and Authorization Form

Any changes to any of the above records need to be reported immediately to the HACC Business Office.

It is important the Hays Area Children's Center be able to contact you in the event your child becomes ill or injured. It is your responsibility to provide current phone numbers at which you can be reached or contacted during the times your child is in care.

If your child becomes ill at child care, it is very important you pick him/her up within 30 minutes after you have been notified of their illness. If you are unable to pick up your child within that time, parents should make other appropriate arrangements for getting them picked up.



Illness

As children spend a good deal of time together in close contact with other children, communicable diseases are easily spread. It is important to not only protect your child from exposure to communicable diseases, but to also protect others if your child is ill. Children cannot learn and participate in classroom activities and do not enjoy being at school when they do not feel well. If you have questions regarding your child's ability to attend school or returning after an illness, contact your child's teacher, the Health Services Coordinator, or your physician **before** your child returns to the classroom.

If your child is ill, you need to notify the center that they will not be attending. Please inform the school if your child has been diagnosed with a contagious disease, for example: chicken pox, strep throat, pink eye, etc. Other parents can then be notified that their children have been exposed to the illness, if appropriate.

DO NOT give your child medication to reduce a fever and then send them to school. They are still contagious and will pass their illness to others.

The following guidelines will assist you to determine whether your child can attend school or be kept at home. Our goal is to prevent the spread of infections and illnesses among the children and promote good health.

- Fever, temperature at or above 100°F. axillary (ar mpit) or 101°F. orally, accompanied by behavior change s or other signs or symptoms of illness. Child must be free of fever without medication for 12 hours before returning to the Hays Area Children's Center.
- Any unusual rash or outbreak on the skin unless it has been determined by a health professional that it is not contagious.

Illness (continued)

- Vomiting or loose watery stools accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness within the past 24 hours.
- Frequent coughing, breathing difficulties or shortness of breath of an unusual nature.
- Reddened, watery and mattering eye(s). The child must be seen by a health care professional and be on medication for 24 hours before returning to the Hays Area Children's Center.
- Evidence of head lice, either nits (eggs) or adult lice.
- Health concerns that inhibit the child's ability to participate in classroom and/or limits the staff from providing proper care of the other children in the classroom.
- Other indications of health concerns that put individuals assigned to the Hays Area Children's Center and/or other children at risk for communicable diseases as determined by the Health Services Coordinator, the classroom teacher, the Executive Director, or the Executive Director's designee.

Injury

If a child sustains a minor injury, the staff will treat that injury with prescribed first aid procedures. No cleansers or medications will be used other than soap and water.

If there is an incident that incurs a significant injury, appropriate first aid procedures will be followed and parents will be notified as soon as possible. If the injury is severe, 911 will be called for EMS transport to the emergency room at Hays Medical Center. The parent will be notified immediately, and the staff member accompanying the child will remain with the child until the parent arrives. The Authorization for Emergency Care and Health Assessment forms will be taken with the child. **Parents are responsible for any medical expenses related to emergencies.**

Medications

Medications to be given at school should be limited. HACC staff will not give a first dose of any medication. In some situations, medication times can and should be adjusted so the medication can be given outside child care hours by the parent. **Whenever possible, medications should be given before and/or after the child is in child care.**

Medication is given at the Center only with a written prescription from a physician that outlines administration instructions. Parents must sign a Medication Request form to enable the nurse or designated specially trained staff to administer any medication. Medications include prescriptions and over-the counter medications. Lotions, diaper ointments, sunscreens, insect repellents, etc. must also have a written request form signed by the parent or legal guardian.

All medications must be in original containers with the prescription label intact and legible. The label must have the child's name, the doctor's name and dosage instructions. Any changes to the prescription must be authorized in writing by the doctor.

All staff, substitutes and volunteers are provided training on the safekeeping of medications. Locked storage is required for all medications.



Nurse Availability

While the Hays Area Children's Center employs a full-time nurse, most of her responsibility is with the Infant/Toddler Early Intervention Services program. This program requires her to be out of the building frequently as she works with young children with disabilities in homes and child care settings. She oversees health policies and medication administration in a consultative role.

ENROLLMENT POLICIES

Enrollment Priority

Once children are enrolled, we pledge to maintain the enrollment slot and portion of the week for that child (Monday through Friday, Monday-Wednesday-Friday, etc.). If parents decrease their child's enrollment due to a change in their child care needs, we cannot guarantee child re-enrollment at the same level of enrollment prior to decrease. For example, a child enrolled full-time, switching to part-time for the summer session is not guaranteed full-time enrollment for the upcoming school year. Our center will seek to fill any open enrollment slots. Any child enrolled in the vacated enrollment time will be given first priority to continue in that enrollment slot. The purpose of this policy is to allow parents (and not HACC) control of any decision to decrease the amount of time that a child is enrolled.

Enrollment Fee

An enrollment fee of \$25.00 is to be paid at the time of enrollment for child care. The fee is non-refundable and will be paid annually. **If a child is dismissed, an additional enrollment fee will be required upon re-enrollment.** Re-enrollment will be subject to availability of space, payment history, satisfactory payment of balance due, and approval by the Executive Director.

Holidays & Hours

Child care is available year-round from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The Hays Area Children's Center is closed Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the day after, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and the day after, New Year's Day, Memorial Day and Independence Day. The Center will also be closed for child care on April 17, 2009 for our annual Goal Planning Retreat. A calendar is provided to families at the beginning of each school year and/or upon request.

Attendance Information

- ◆ **Please contact the Hays Area Children's Center if your child will be absent for the day.**
- ◆ Please check your child's/parent's box daily for messages.
- ◆ Each teacher will provide a list of items to bring when your child is enrolled.
- ◆ Please do not send pets, toys, snacks, or money to school with your child except on days specified by the teacher. **The Hays Area Children's Center is not responsible for lost or broken items.** Prior



- ◆ experience has shown that toys, money and personal items brought from home primarily result in conflict and stress among the children.
- ◆ The Hays Area Children's Center reserves the right to limit enrollment based on licensed capacity of children enrolled in different programs. Notify us as soon as possible if your child will be leaving the Hays Area Children's Center permanently. A minimum of two weeks notice is required upon leaving the center.

Tuition Payment Policy

Children are sometimes absent due to illness or family schedules; however, the Hays Area Children's Center costs continue while the child is absent. **Therefore, parents will be charged for each day the child is enrolled, and the Hays Area Children's Center is open for child care.**

The parent or guardian who enrolls the child will be responsible for payment of services. Private tuition is due on the 10th of each month billed. If the private tuition is not paid by the last child care day of the month, child

Tuition Payment Policy (continued)

care services will be terminated. Termination of child care services will not affect access to special services. Re-enrollment will be subject to a \$25.00 enrollment fee, payment of outstanding balance and availability of space.

Parents will be charged \$5 after the first 15 minutes and \$5 for each additional 15 minutes prior to or past the designated enrolled time.

There will be a \$30 returned check fee charged for any checks returned unpaid.

Two Weeks Notice

A minimum of two weeks notice must be given by parents or legal guardians of their intent to remove their child from child care. Tuition fees are to be paid through those two weeks, regardless of attendance.

Persons Authorized to Pick-up Children



Parents will complete the appropriate authorization form at the time of enrollment. Only those individuals who have been specified on the authorization form by the enrolling parent(s) will be allowed to take the child from the Hays Area Children's Center. **Without the consent of the enrolling parent(s), individuals picking up your child will be limited to those listed on the consent for release form.** We reserve the right to request identification of those picking up your child.

The enrollment process is considered a contractual arrangement between the center and the parent or parents enrolling the child. The parent or parents enrolling the child have legal authority to list those able to pick up the child. If the parent completing the authorization form does not list the other parent on the form, legally we cannot release the child to the other parent. A parent can only pick up a child if their name is listed on the

"Persons Authorized to Pick Up Child" form or if we have written documentation of a court order directing otherwise.

Each child must be accompanied and picked-up by a parent, guardian or authorized agent. Parents should **sign their child in and out** and make contact with a staff member so that he/she knows you have arrived to drop off or pick-up your child. If a parent is delayed in picking-up the child, the staff needs to be informed to prepare the child for a change in schedule. **An additional charge will be assessed if a child attends prior to or past the enrolled time.** If an emergency arises and the parent cannot pick-up the child by the designated time, the parent must inform the staff of the emergency. The emergency will be verified by the Executive Director or designee and the additional charge may be reduced.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

Your Child's Learning

The Hays Area Children's Center maintains an open door policy. We encourage you to visit school at any time. You may also schedule appointments with the teacher to talk about your child.

Messy Media and Clothing

Children enrolled at the Hays Area Children's Center will be exposed to a variety of creative activities that involve paint, markers, etc. While we strive to use materials that are washable and often have time to wash a child's clothing, parents are advised to send their children in clothes that can get dirty.



Think of your child's comfort and provide simple, washable, sturdy clothing that is free of complicated fastenings. Remember our changeable weather. We ask that you provide a set of alternative clothing to be kept at the Hays Area Children's Center.

The children will have an outdoor play period each day, except under extreme weather conditions, so appropriate apparel should be worn. We suggest they wear tennis shoes for comfort and the safety of the other children. **ALL CLOTHING MUST BE MARKED WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME.**

In the event your child's clothing becomes soiled, we will place the soiled clothing in a bag and send it home. This is to limit the chance of cross-contamination with other laundry items.

Snow Days

If USD #489 is closed for an entire day because of inclement weather, the Hays Area Children's Center will also be closed. Families are encouraged to listen to local radio stations for information on school closings.

When USD #489 is not in session, the Executive Director or designee will determine the need to close the Hays Area Children's Center due to inclement weather. If weather conditions deteriorate during business hours, the Executive Director or designee will determine the need to close the Hays Area Children's Center due to inclement weather and families and local media will be informed of that decision.

Weather Considerations/Outdoor Play Policy



Send your child to school dressed for the weather. In cold weather your child will need a warm coat, hat and mittens, possibly even long underwear, snow pants, and snow boots when snowy. **Please label everything with your child's name.**

Infants and toddlers will spend time outdoors daily unless extreme weather conditions prevail. Children ages 3-5 will play outdoors for at least one hour daily unless extreme weather conditions prevail.

- ◆ Parents are asked to provide the appropriate clothing.
- ◆ The Hays Area Children's Center has warm clothing available if needed in an emergency.

Field Trips

Several field trips are planned throughout the school year and during the summer. The teachers will post a notice to inform parents in advance of all trips. **Individual field trip permission slips must be signed prior to each trip.** Teachers will maintain contact with the center.

Field trips at the Hays Area Children's Center are geared to meet the educational and personal needs of the children. They are developed around themes and curriculum goals and include activities such as visits to the post office, farms, restaurants, swimming, bowling and miniature golf.

Birthday and Holiday Treats

Parents are welcome to bring special treats at any time, but especially on these days. Please send small, single serving items that are approved by your child's teacher. We prefer foods that are low in sugar and salt be served to the children.

As we have children with food allergies, the treats must be purchased in stores and contain complete ingredient declaration. If we do not have a list of ingredients, our teachers are instructed not to serve the food to the children. We feel that is the only way for our center to assure that food served to the children will not cause any allergic reactions. Peanuts and peanut products are not to be used in meals at the center.



If you would like to send small gifts, please check with the teacher to make sure it is age appropriate. **Balloons are not allowed because of the choking danger they present.**

Child Discipline

Child discipline guidelines will focus on preventive strategies that teach appropriate social behavior and techniques for when the child is engaged in challenging/harmful behavior. Appropriate use of punishment does not include any punishment that is humiliating, frightening or physically harmful to the child. Classroom teachers are available to assist parents with discipline appropriate to the child's development.

Nap Time

Nap time procedures will vary with the age of the child. Nap time for infants should be flexible according to the child's individual needs. Children enrolled in the School Age Program are exempt from naptime policy.

All other children are not required to sleep but will be encouraged to rest on their cot for a minimum of 30 minutes. After that time they may be allowed to do quiet activities either on their cot or other designated area. Children will be allowed to nap or rest with a blanket, small child-sized pillow, or other appropriate nap time item. Each child will have a crib/cot and personal bedding labeled with their name that is cleaned weekly or as needed.

Weapons

The Hays Area Children's Center will provide for the health and safety of children and staff in case of the presence of weapons. Students, parents, or staff shall not knowingly possess, handle or transmit any objects that can reasonably be considered a weapon, **including toy weapons and fireworks**, on agency premises or at an agency activity, function or event. Possession of a weapon may result in a child being dismissed.

Hurting Behaviors

Our Center strives to be a safe place for all children. Occasionally, in spite of our best efforts, one child will hurt another. When a child gets hurt, it creates stress for parents and staff. Parents are asked to remember two things:

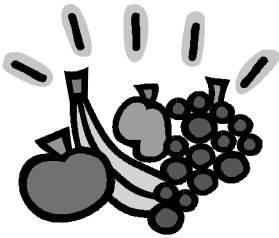
First, young children are more likely to push, hit, bite, scratch, etc. as a means of expressing themselves - especially before their language develops. It may be their way to defend their property. It may be a way to get attention. But it is normal, especially for toddlers.

Hurting Behaviors (continued)

Second, our center does not approve of hurting behaviors. Children hurting others will be dealt with using standard behavior management techniques, such as time-out. If necessary, we may bring in behavior specialists to assist the classroom staff in dealing with more difficult behavioral issues. Parents of the injured child as well as parents of the child doing the injuring will be notified each time an injury occurs. However, we will respect the privacy of each child, as each child's name will remain confidential.

FOOD POLICIES

Staff maintains a positive attitude about food served at the Hays Area Children's Center and will encourage the children to do the same. Staff become familiar with each child's food preferences and will verbally reinforce children who are demonstrating appropriate table behaviors. Each child will serve themselves with assistance from staff as needed.



Each food item will be available at each table. Children will be encouraged to taste each food item served. A taste does not necessarily need to be swallowed. If it is evident that a child does not like that food, he/she can be allowed to refuse it. A special program will be developed by the teacher and parents for children who have eating problems or food allergies.

Because of food allergies, peanut butter, peanuts, and products containing peanuts are not served at the Hays Area Children's Center.

The Hays Area Children's Center serves only milk and pure fruit juice as beverages. We strive to provide snacks that are low in sugar and salt. Good nutrition habits and appreciation for quality food are emphasized.

Late for Meals

Meals are offered at certain times in each of the classrooms. Check with your child's teacher about scheduled meal times. If your child arrives more than halfway through the scheduled mealtime, the meal may not be available. Starting a meal any later leads to children eating alone while their peers are beginning another activity. Placing an adult with the child creates an imbalance with our staff ratios per KDHE regulations. For example, if breakfast is scheduled at 8:00 to 8:30, children need to arrive by 8:15 to be offered meals.

Parents at Meals

Parents may participate with their child at meals for an established fee. Prior notification to the child's teacher is preferred to assure adequate quantities of food.

Meals Not Prepared at the Center

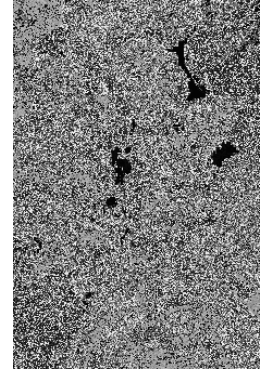
Unless approved by the Executive Director, children are to eat only meals prepared by the center. This provides consistency, assures that we meet federal food guidelines, and limits any jealousy of meal alternatives.

Likewise, we ask that parents that wish to feed their children on the way to the center make sure their child is finished with the meal before they come into the center. Our staff is only responsible to monitor eating of meals approved by the center.

CACFP Food Reimbursement

Our center receives partial meal reimbursement through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). As a site that receives these funds, we are required to share the following statement with parents:

In accordance with federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, The Hays Area Children's Center is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



GENERAL INFORMATION

Grievance Policy

The Hays Area Children's Center recognizes the value and importance of discussion in resolving conflicts and preserving goodwill. We ask that concerns be addressed directly with the individual or that individual's supervisor. If the conflict remains, parents can contact the Executive Director. If discussion with the Executive Director is not satisfactory, parents may take their concerns to any member of the Board of Directors.

Emergency Plans

In case of a bomb threat or other emergencies that require evacuation of the HACC buildings, all staff and children will be moved to the front lobby at Agnew Hall on Fort Hays State University campus.

Child Abuse

Any employee at the Hays Area Children's Center with reason to believe that a child has been injured as a result of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse or neglect **is mandated to** report the matter promptly to the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS).

Use of Media

The use of passive media, such as television, film, videotapes, audiotapes, CDs and DVDs will be limited to developmentally appropriate programming. Passive visual media will be used as infrequent events, rather than part of regular, daily routines. Children will not be required to view media. Another option for a separate activity will be available for children.

Respect for Families

We have many different cultures and faiths represented with our HACC families. Often one tradition or holiday is taken for granted while others are ignored. We also know that some holidays are extremely commercialized. We do not intend to offend any of our families by any of our activities. If you have a holiday or family tradition you would like to share with our HACC families, please let your child's teacher know.