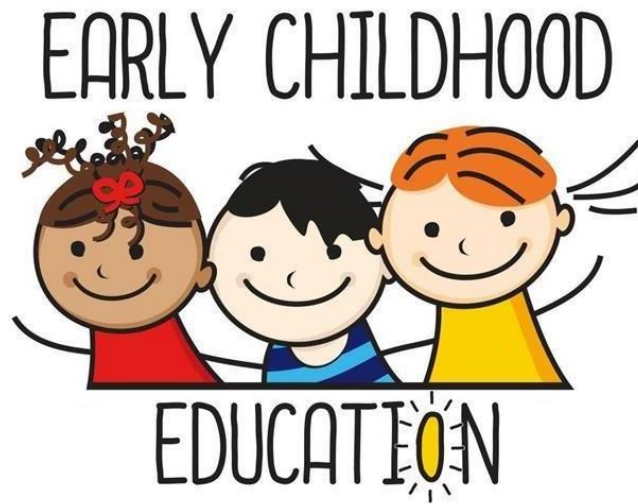


EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS

PARENT & FAMILY HANDBOOK

2023-2024



Updated 08.28.23

EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER INFORMATION

EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

TEACHER: _____

EDUCATION ASSISTANT: _____

TEACHER'S EMAIL: _____

CENTER HOURS: _____

FAMILY SERVICES SPECIALIST (FSS): _____

FSS PHONE NUMBER: CELL: _____ DESK: _____

FSS'S EMAIL: _____

EARLY CHILDHOOD HEALTH SERVICES: **412-529-8015**

WELCOME!

Dear Parents & Caregivers,

Welcome to the Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs! We believe this will be the beginning of a wonderful educational experience for you and your child as part of the Pittsburgh Public School family.

A strong early childhood program has countless benefits for children. Our program offers a strong educational foundation and addresses the social-emotional and self-help skills that children need to be successful in kindergarten and beyond. Our program also puts a large focus on purposeful play, as we believe this is the best way for young children to learn and try out the new skills they are acquiring daily.

In addition to working with the children, we also want to work with you, the parents and caregivers. We want to partner with you to make our program the best it can be. We encourage you to get involved in your center meetings, to join our Parent Policy Council, and to attend parent workshops and trainings. We also provide a number of social services that you and your family can benefit from, which are described in this handbook.

This handbook will be helpful to you throughout the year. Please refer to it when you have questions. You can also call our office at 412.529.4291 option #2 or contact your Family Service Specialist (FSS) with any questions or concerns you may have.

We look forward to a wonderful year together.

Sincerely,

*Kimberly Russo Joseph
Executive Director, Early Childhood Education*

VISION

All children and families will be prepared for kindergarten and beyond with the building blocks necessary for life-long learning, critical thinking, joy, and social-emotional wellness.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Early Childhood Education Program, including Early Intervention, Early Head Start, Head Start, Head Start Supplemental, and Pre-K Counts, provides an array of intentional and equitable learning experiences and supportive services to children and their families so they have the opportunity to achieve academic excellence in a healthy, safe, and playful environment.

CORE VALUES

- Program staff bring their best each day to help our children learn and grow
- Families are an essential part of the educational process
- There is shared stakeholder responsibility between the staff, families, and the community for the growth and development of our children
- We believe we are helping to develop global citizens who care about the well-being of others and the community around them
- We value diversity, culture, and the heritage of all children and families
- Children must be connected to their past and future
- We believe all children will learn and develop if their individuality is respected
- Children and adults will learn from each other
- The health, safety, and well-being of children are always top priorities

- Children's "play" is their work
- We are committed to establishing a community where children, families, and staff will be engaged in a challenging and joyful environment that encourages children to learn and grow confident

Please note that the Early Childhood department follows district policy/protocols for COVID. Information can be found at: <https://www.pghschools.org/covid19>

Procedures and policies in this handbook may note modifications due to COVID-19.

ARE YOU READY FOR SCHOOL?

Your child will need to bring the following items to school:

- ⇒ A complete change of clothing, including underwear and socks (please label all clothing with child's full name)
- ⇒ A blanket for rest time
- ⇒ A backpack / book bag for bringing items to and from school
- ⇒ An extra sweater or sweatshirt for chilly days
- ⇒ A warm coat, hat, and gloves during the cool months for outdoor play

***** Please note: Toys from home are not permitted to be brought to school without prior consent from the teacher.**

Please dress your child in clothing that is comfortable and appropriate for active indoor and outdoor play. Tennis shoes are recommended for appropriate footwear. For safety reasons please no flip-flops, sandals, jellies, or wheelies.

Children will occasionally have accidental spills at mealtime and may still have bathroom accidents. We do not punish a child for accidents. We use these times for teaching self-help skills such as hygiene skills, dressing and undressing, buttoning, snapping, zipping, tying, etc.

In order to assist your child in being ready to learn, it is recommended that your child has an average of 10 hours of sleep each night in a quiet environment without any background noise.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

PPS Early Childhood Education Programs provides early childhood services to approximately 2,300 children from infancy through five years of age throughout the City of Pittsburgh. The children and families served receive comprehensive services including education, nutrition, health, mental health, disabilities, and social services. By meeting the needs of the "whole child," we ensure that all children are prepared to enter kindergarten. The Program serves children through a variety of funding sources, regardless of family income. In addition to our Pittsburgh Public Schools classrooms, the program also partners with various community agencies and childcare centers.

The Early Childhood Education Program adheres to all Pittsburgh Public Schools policies and procedures and to the following guidelines:

Head Start Performance Standards and Reauthorization Act:

All programs within the Early Childhood Education Department follow the Head Start Performance Standards and mandates in the Head Start Reauthorization Act. These are mandatory regulations developed by the Federal Government that define the objectives and features of quality Early Childhood Education Programs in measurable terms. The Performance Standards set the vision for a comprehensive early childhood program and offer a structure for monitoring the provision of quality services. The ECE Program also has a Head Start School Readiness Plan based on the Head Start Child Outcomes that assures all students are prepared to enter kindergarten. If you would like a copy of the Performance Standards, the Head Start Reauthorization Act, or the Head Start Child Outcomes, please contact your supervisor or visit: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii>. Please be reminded that it is your responsibility to read and be familiar with the Head Start Performance Standards.

Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards:

The Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards were developed as a joint project of the Department of Education and Public Welfare as a part of the Governor's commitment to early childhood education and care. They are meant to guide the development of pre-kindergarten programs and provide the way in which young children learn and the way that early care and education classrooms and teachers can support children's learning. The standards are key statements that reflect quality practices. The standards are also available online at: <https://s35729.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/2014-Pennsylvania-Learning-Standards-for-Early-Childhood-PreKindergarten.pdf>

The use of the PA Early Learning and Common Core Standards is mandatory.

CLASSROOM CURRICULUM

Frog Street

The Frog Street curriculum continuum is a teacher-driven curriculum with a dedication to continually improving state-of-the-art products and services based on current research and early childhood expertise from classroom educators and caregivers. Frog Street products and services are well-grounded in a deep knowledge of child development, school readiness needs and essentials for successful implementation. Frog Street is uniquely positioned to empower educators to know not only what to teach but also the how and why of innovative instructional strategies to improve school readiness and sustain program effectiveness. Each curriculum is developed with key research cornerstones to provide rich activities that optimize learning and development for young children. The cornerstones include: 1) Responding to Early Brain Development Research, 2) Supporting Learning Domains, 3) Integrating Strong Social Emotional Development with Conscious Discipline®, and 4) Ensuring Intentionality to Meet the Needs of All Learners.

Conscious Discipline

Conscious Discipline is a trauma-informed, emotional intelligence, self-regulation classroom management program and social-emotional curriculum. It promotes desirable behaviors in children, embracing those skills found in the prefrontal lobes of the brain (Bailey, 2015). Conscious Discipline creates trusting, positive relationships and diminishes the use of external rewards and punishments in the classroom setting and in the home. Additionally, it provides educators with essential strategies that create a safe learning environment to optimize learning and develop Executive Function skills in young learners.

The three Core Components of Conscious Discipline are safety, connection, and problem-solving. Each of these components lies within everyday interactions and is integrated into the teaching of social-emotional regulation skills. These are valuable tools which will improve overall academics, school readiness, and quality of life in young children.

- Safety addresses the school community creating a physically and emotionally safe space for students to learn and for adults to work.
- Connection creates compassion for everyone in the school family. This teaches children to engage in healthy conversations about relationships and using conflict to teach problem-solving and self-regulation skills.
- Problem-solving changes how conflict is viewed and provides students and adults with the ability to grow their resilience and adapt as situations happen.

Appropriate application of the Conscious Discipline strategies promotes healthy social-emotional development for students and educators.

EARLY CHILDHOOD ENVIRONMENTAL RATING SCALE, THIRD EDITION

ECERS-3 is appropriate for state and district-wide Quality, Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) and continuous improvement; program evaluation by directors and supervisors; teacher self-evaluation; monitoring by agency staff; and teacher education. The Third Edition of the ECERS is a major revision that introduces innovations in both the content and administration of the scale while retaining the continuity of the two principal characteristics of the ECERS, namely its comprehensive or global definition of quality and the reliance on observation as the primary source of information on which to base assessment of classroom quality. The Scale consists of 35 items organized into 6 subscales:

- Space and Furnishings
- Personal Care Routines
- Language and Literacy
- Learning Activities
- Interaction
- Program Structure

EARLY HEAD START CLASSROOM CURRICULUM (BIRTH TO THREE)

The Early Head Start Program uses the *Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Twos*. It is a comprehensive curriculum that emphasizes the importance of nurturing and consistent interactions and environments for infants, toddlers, and twos. The curriculum guides teachers in providing appropriately challenging learning experiences in order to help children learn and grow. The curriculum focuses on the following areas:

- Building Relationships
- Responsive care
- Routines and experiences
- Thoughtful observation to be responsive to children's interests and needs
- Linking curriculum and assessment to allow teachers, home visitors, and parents to be intentional about the experiences they offer infants, toddlers, and twos while retaining the flexibility to be responsive to the changing needs and abilities of young children
- Creating learning experiences in social/emotional skills, language and literacy, math, and science, because very young children are already exploring ideas (their approaches to learning) and developing important skills that become the building blocks for future learning

The Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Twos is based in current research and theory, is aligned with the PA Early Learning Standards for Infants and Toddlers, and meets the expectations of the Early Head Start Outcomes and PPS Early Head Start Program's School Readiness Goals. This curriculum provides teachers, home visitors, and parents a framework to facilitate developmentally appropriate activities throughout children's daily experiences.

EARLY HEAD START HOME-BASED CURRICULUM

The Early Head Start home-based curriculum is designed to facilitate the partnership between Home Visitors and Early Head Start families. It is also aligned with the PA Early Learning Standards for Infants and Toddlers and the Early Head Start Outcomes Framework and PPS Early Head Start Program's School Readiness Goals. Because Early Head Start recognizes parents as their child's first and most important teachers, the home-based curriculum focuses on creating children's learning with parents as equal partners in the planning and assessment process.

EHS Home Visitors work with parents to screen and assess their child to determine developmental strengths and areas that require additional support. First the Home Visitor and parents identify the child's developmental needs, and then they plan weekly learning activities that will address the child's developmental needs during the 90-minute Home Visits. The initial 45-day Ages and Stages Questionnaire -3 screening and Ounce Scale Assessment are used to steer the scope and sequence of the Early Head Start home-based curriculum. The *Partners for a Healthy Baby* curriculum is also used as a supplemental resource. Home Visitors can utilize other developmentally appropriate resources (such as the Creative Curriculum Learning Games) to guide learning experience plans for both home visits and bimonthly socialization groups. Home Visitors carry over learning topics and themes from home visits to socialization groups to create a cohesive curriculum for home-based children and their parents.

ITERS (INFANT-TODDLER ENVIRONMENTAL RATING SCALE)

The ITERS is a tool used to assess the environment of group infant and toddler programs and is used in our EHS classrooms. The ITERS rates multiple areas of the environment on a scale of 1-7 (7 being the highest). In general, the ITERS looks at the room arrangement, displays of children's work, types and number of toys and materials available to children, areas of health and safety, teacher/child interactions, and language and literacy (including talking to and having discussions with children).

The rating scale consists of 39 items organized into 7 subscales:

- *Space and Furnishings*
- *Personal Care Routines*
- *Listening and Talking*
- *Activities*
- *Interaction*

- *Program Structure*
- *Parents and Staff*

TRANSITION INTO THE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

Children are eligible to register for the Early Childhood program when they turn three years old. There is a great deal of information indicating that a child's success in school can be linked, at least in part, to effective transition practices and activities. Children's early experiences lay the foundation for enjoying school and performing well.

As part of the ECE Program's preschool transition activities, parents are encouraged to visit the school/center for which they are applying and schedule a tour with an Early Childhood staff. Throughout the enrollment process, families will be asked to complete an Initial Parent Questionnaire which will provide staff with some additional information to get to know the child better.

If a child has been a part of the Early Head Start Program, they will have the opportunity to visit an Early Childhood classroom when they are age eligible. A student portfolio will also follow the child from EHS to Early Childhood to help the child's new teacher to learn more about him or her before they join the new classroom.

KINDERGARTEN READINESS AND TRANSITION SERVICES



Children are eligible to register for kindergarten when they turn five-years-old on or before **September 30th**. Our goal is for all children in the ECE Program to be ready for kindergarten. Being "ready" for kindergarten means that your child is able to learn what will be taught in the kindergarten classroom and can function comfortably with teachers and other children in that setting.

As part of the ECE Program's kindergarten transition activities, all students in the ECE Program will visit a kindergarten classroom when they are age-eligible, and a student information form will also follow your child from EC to K to help your child's new teacher to learn more about them before school starts.

Magnet registration for kindergarten typically occurs in the fall while Neighborhood School registration typically starts in February.

Some skills that are helpful to children as they make a smooth transition to kindergarten include:

Listening and Sequence	Size, Position and Direction:	Social and Emotional:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following simple directions • Recognizing common sounds • Retells a simple story in sequence • Repeats a sequence of sounds • Repeats a sequence of numbers heard 	<p>The child knows the difference between these words, and the relationship of each word to the other.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big and Little • Hot and Cold • Long and Short • Empty and Full • Up and Down • More and Less • In and Out • Fast and Slow • Front and Back • Top and Bottom • Over and Under 	<p>The child can typically do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expresses self verbally • Looks forward to coming to school • Knows how to take turns • Helps with classroom chores • Works independently • Knows own name and address • Identifies other children by name • Can take care of toilet needs independently • Cares for own belongings • Dresses self • Maintains self-control • Gets along with others • Talks easily with others • May meet new people with curiosity • Puts toys away

SCREENINGS and ASSESSMENTS

Screening and Assessment (Pre-school)

Newly enrolled children participating in Early Childhood Education Program will be screened within 45 calendar days of the enrollment date using the **Brigance Early Childhood Screen III**. Students who are returning for a second year are not required to have the Brigance administered again, but a teacher may choose to re-screen if he/she feels it is warranted. Also, within 45 days of enrollment, students will be screened using the **Preschool and Kindergarten Behavior Scale (PKBS)**. This again may be completed for returning students if the teacher finds the need.

Students will be assessed three times a year with the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) tool. This tool uses observation and gathering artifacts in the classroom to complete assessment checklists at checkpoints in November, February, and May. Teachers and administrators can use the data to gauge the status and progress of children's development and learning in an effort to inform instructional and programming decisions in support of individuals and groups within the programs. EC Teachers will communicate with families about the results of the DRDP as one part of larger conversations about supporting children's learning and development.

SCREENING/ASSESSMENT (BIRTH TO THREE)

Early Head Start Classrooms and the Home-based program use the **Ages and Stages Developmental Questionnaires (ASQ-3)** as the program's developmental screening and the **Ages and Stages Social-Emotional (ASQ-SE)** as the social emotional screening.

Teaching Strategies Gold (TS Gold) is the EHS program's assessment tool that is used to document on-going child progress, assist with program monitoring, child individualization, and measuring Early Head Start School Readiness Goals. In order to monitor the children's and program's progress, the TS Gold assessments will be conducted three times during the program year in November, February, and May.

EARLY INTERVENTION

Inclusion:

The Early Intervention (EI) program of the Pittsburgh Public Schools provides special education support services to any eligible young child in the Early Childhood program, which also includes the Community Childcare partners. In accordance with both Federal law (IDEA) and State law (Chapter 14 and Act 212) and under the guidance of OCDEL (Office of Child Development and Early Learning), the Early Intervention program strives to provide the support services to children inclusively.

It is the belief of both the EI and EC programs that children need to be able to participate in everyday activities with their peers and to have access to the same social and learning opportunities that they would have if they did not have a disability. The Early Intervention support staff work closely and collaboratively with the Early Childhood staff to ensure that services are provided in the Least Restrictive Environment. Currently there are children with disabilities included in every Early Childhood classroom as well as in a number of the Community Childcare partners. Each child's program is based on their need and an Individualized Education Plan is developed by the team of individuals, including parents, EI and EC teachers and other support staff as needed.

Early Intervention Identification:

In Pennsylvania, a child between 3 years of age and the school district's age to begin school who has one or more developmental delay(s) in the areas of: cognition, communication, physical, social/emotional and self-help development is identified as an "eligible young child."

The Pennsylvania Department of Education is responsible for providing programs and services to eligible young children under Act 212 of 1990, the Early Intervention Services System Act. Screening for preschool children is available on a weekly basis at convenient sites across our district. To schedule an appointment for screening call the Early Intervention Office of the Pittsburgh Public Schools at 412-529-3960.

EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION

What will my child's day look like?

The Early Childhood daily schedule consists of many different components including, but not limited to morning meeting, read alouds, learning centers, gross motor time, breakfast and lunch, and rest time. Read aloud times are typically when whole group instruction occurs, whereas during small group time more specific individualized instruction occurs to meet each child's specific needs. Meals in the early childhood program are served family style and are an excellent opportunity for social interaction and discussion, as well as learning to become more independent. Gross motor is another important time of the day. This is when the children get to go to the gym or play outside. According to the PA Position Statement on outdoor play, "Children are expected to go outside when the forecast temperature/wind chill are above 25 degrees, the forecast temperature/heat index is less than 90 degrees, there is no precipitation falling, and there is no current air quality alert." Rest time also occurs daily in the classroom for an hour to an hour and fifteen minutes.

Remote Learning-Early Childhood Policy:

The Early Childhood Program may utilize remote learning in circumstances where needed, which may include during an epidemic/pandemic, inclement weather, teacher in-service days, or emergency-related building closures. When remote learning is implemented, it may include virtual or non-virtual.

If virtual learning is implemented:

- Each Pre-K student will be issued an Early Childhood iPad.
- Microsoft Teams and Schoology will be the virtual platforms utilized. Families will be provided login information once enrolled.
- Depending on the event, synchronous and/or asynchronous instruction will be provided for no more than 30 minutes at a time.
- Synchronous instruction may include live meetings such as read alouds, small group activities, or one-on-one activities.
- Asynchronous instruction may include shared/posted lessons, activities, and stories on Schoology for students to access.

If remote learning non-virtual instruction is implemented:

- If non-virtual, teaching staff can send home activities from the Frog Street curriculum. Students can return the activities for the learning to be assessed by the teaching staff.
- Teaching staff can also set up times for office hours through Microsoft Teams if needed.

Attendance will be tracked as students participate, whether logging in for synchronous instruction or asynchronous instruction, providing photos, videos, or work/activities they have completed, or through communication with families.

If support is needed during and/or for remote learning, families can express technology needs via the District's Let's Talk system (<https://www.pghschools.org/contact>). Families can also access videos created and posted by the district online about Schoology and Microsoft Teams.

Parent Teacher Conferences and Home-Visits:

Parent teacher conferences provide an opportunity for parents/guardians and teachers to discuss a child's progress. It is also a time to discuss parental concerns and goals for each child. All parents/guardians will have at least two parent teacher conferences a year for their child.

Similar to a parent-teacher conference, home-visits provide an opportunity for the parent and child to meet the teaching staff (Teacher and Education Assistant) in familiar surroundings. Parents/guardians can discuss their child's development, education and adjustment to the program with the teaching staff. Families will also have at least two home visits per year.

In-Class Presentations and Field Trips

All in-class presentations and field trips are planned and scheduled in order to connect and extend classroom-learning experiences in a meaningful way. All classrooms will be provided with funds and opportunities to schedule in-class presentations and field trips during the school year. All presentations and/or field trips will be paid for through the Early Childhood Education Programs – at no time will children ever be excluded from presentations or field trips. If a parent/guardian chooses to not send their child on a school presentation or field trip day, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to care for the child on that day.

At the beginning of the school year the classroom teachers will give each parent/guardian a field trip form to sign for walking neighborhood field trips (ex. local park, walk around the building, etc.). This form will be maintained in the classroom for the entire year. For field trips outside of the EC center that involve transporting students on the ECE Program bus (which has booster seats with five-point safety harnesses), parents/guardians will be required to fill out a permission form for that specific field trip. The Early Childhood Education Program is not permitted to transport students on a regular school bus.

Parents/guardians may attend presentations and/or accompany their child's class on a field trip as a volunteer provided the parents/guardians attending have current clearances (FBI Background, PA Child Abuse, and PA Criminal Record check clearances) on file. Each class can take up to five (5) volunteers on a field trip and they will receive paid admission to the event. If more volunteers choose to attend, they are welcome to come, but they will not be paid for by the ECE

Program. If there is room on the ECE bus, volunteers may ride the bus with the class. If there is not room on the bus, it is recommended that volunteers follow the bus.

Volunteers are expected to adhere to the following program rules when attending ECE Program field trips & presentations:

- Volunteers are prohibited from smoking, cursing and engaging in any other activity that would be deemed inappropriate in the presence of children.
- Volunteers are not permitted to buy additional food or souvenirs for the students.
- Volunteers must remain with their assigned group of children.
- Volunteers must dress appropriately.
- Volunteers are not permitted to bring non-ECE Programs students (including other siblings/children) on field trips or to the center for an in-class presentation.

Special Events and Celebrations:

In accordance with Pittsburgh Public School's healthy food policy, and due to the number of food allergies (both diagnosed and undiagnosed) in young children, the Early Childhood Education Program **does not permit** outside food to be brought into the Early Childhood classrooms to be shared with other students for any reason.

As the ECE Program understands that birthdays, holidays, and other events are important in the lives of young children, we have listed some "celebration" treats and activities that are developmentally appropriate and acceptable in the classroom.

- Stamps or Stickers
- Silly Bands
- Coloring books
- Notepads
- Crayons
- Pencils
- Erasers
- Chalk
- Bubbles
- Play dough/clay
- Storybooks
- Have a parent/guardian come in to read or do an activity with the class
- Parent/guardian can donate a book to the classroom with their child's name/birthdate inside

End-of-Year Celebrations:

The End-of-Year Celebration is not a "graduation" - it is a time to celebrate the completion of a successful year. Under no circumstances are graduation robes permitted. Fund raising is also not permitted and the "no outside food policy" is applicable for the End-of-Year Celebration as well. Celebrations must be on the last day of school unless prior arrangements are made and agreed upon between the classroom staff, principal, and education coordinator. Teachers, Family Services Specialists, and families should work together to plan the celebration.

Child's Behavior at Home and School:

It is important to notify the Early Childhood Education Program staff (teachers and family services specialists) of any changes in your child's behavior. Staff, and consultants (if needed), are ready to work with all families to address social-emotional and behavioral concerns. It is also extremely important to alert staff of behaviors that can cause safety concerns at school, such as running away from adults, leaving buildings unattended, etc. In addition, it is also important to notify staff of any changes in the home that could possibly affect your child's behavior at school (i.e., the addition of a new sibling, the death/illness of a family member or pet, violence in the neighborhood, or the addition of a new household member).

Child Guidance and Behavior Management:

Young children can often present challenging behaviors as they learn to behave appropriately in the educational setting. Our programs are committed to using positive behavior support strategies when teaching young children how to manage their own behavior. Child guidance and classroom management decisions will promote positive social skills, foster mutual respect, strengthen self-esteem, and support a safe environment. If an outside behavior consultant is needed, then the parent will first be asked for consent.

Supervision of Children:

In order to maintain the safety of all children, **no child will be left alone at any time.** Supervision of children will occur at all times by program staff.

Classroom Arrival and Release of Students –

The person accompanies the child to the designated drop-off area and follows all procedures of the building. **At no time is it permissible for a preschool-aged child to enter the school/center without being accompanied by a staff member.**

At the end of the classroom day, staff will meet parent/guardian at the designated pick-up area. Children will only be released to the child's parent/guardian or to other adults who are identified by the parent/guardian on the contact information sheet. This information must be given by the parent and will be recorded in the child's file. If the people permitted to pick up your child changes, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to update this information with both the teacher and the FSS.

If a person who is not listed on the emergency contact form is going to pick the child up, the parent/guardian **must** call the teacher with the name and a physical description of the person picking up. The person who is picking the child up **must have photo identification and show it to the teacher when they arrive at the designated pick-up area.** The ECE Program staff may also ask for a photo ID at dismissal time, even if a person is listed on the emergency contact form, if the person is unknown to the staff. This is to ensure the safety of your child.

If the person picking up your child is visibly intoxicated or under the influence of drugs, then he/she will be asked to call someone else to pick up the child. If they are combative and/or unwilling or unable to have someone else come get the child, then school police will be notified. The Family Services Specialist and school principal will also be notified for follow-up and next steps.

For the safety and well-being of your child, we strongly recommended that you do not allow a minor under the age of 12 to drop off or pick up your child from the EC Program.

Late Drop Off:

A child's learning begins as soon as they come into the classroom. If the child is late, they miss opportunities to learn.

Children must be dropped off for class on time. If you are going to be late, please contact your child's classroom staff. You can also contact your Family Services Specialist if you are having difficulty getting your child to school and they may be able to assist in finding a solution. **Please make sure that your emergency contact information is current and update if there are changes during the school year.** If Chronic late drop off (morning-after breakfast), continues to be an issue, a meeting is set up with the Family Service Specialist, the Family Services Delivery Manager and the Family to develop a plan to ensure timely drop off of the child.

Late Pick-Up:

Children must be picked up promptly at the end of the school day. If a parent/guardian does not arrive or call by the end of the school day program staff will first contact the parent/guardian (by telephone). If they do not receive an answer at the parent/guardian's contact numbers on the emergency contact form will be utilized until someone is found who can pick up the child. If tardy departure becomes excessive and no one can be reached to pick up the child, CYF will be called, therefore, it is **important to make sure that your emergency contact information is current.**

Late pickups must also be documented by the classroom staff in Child Plus and reported to the Family Service Specialist and Family Service Delivery Manager monthly. The Family Service Specialist will also follow up and to offer assistance to the family to improve pick-up times. If late pick-up continues to be an issue, a meeting is set up by the Family Services Specialist with the family and the Family Services Delivery Manager to develop a plan. The plan must include coordination with the classroom teacher. (*if using the Child Plus App, late pick-ups will be documented automatically).

Absences:

If your child is going to be absent from school, please let the teacher know. This contact can be made by phone or email on the day of, or if you anticipate your child's absence in advance, you can let the teacher know the previous day. If your child is absent without excuse for more than three consecutive days without a call from the family, the Teacher and/or Family Services Specialist will contact you via phone and/or home visit. A Family Services Specialist will contact the family of a student that has poor attendance or chronic absences (more than 2-3 absences per month) to partner with the family on creating a plan to improve attendance.

In circumstances where excused absenteeism persists, and it does not seem feasible to continue to include the child in the program, the Family Services Specialist will send a letter home to the guardian to call and confirm that the child will continue to attend the program. If the guardian does not confirm, the child will be removed from the roster and then the next child on the waiting list will be placed in the classroom.

Upon return from an absence a note is required as listed below:A note from the doctor is needed if:

1. A child is seen in an emergency room and/or hospitalized.
2. A child is incapacitated or has a change in mobility (example - cast)
3. A child contracts a communicable/contagious disease
4. A child has other health ailments which temporarily prevent attendance.
5. A child has been absent for three or more consecutive days due to illness.

A note from the parent is needed if:

1. There has been absence due to a family situation (example – death in the family, moving, travel, etc.)
2. Child has missed 1-2 days due to illness following guidelines for an ill child.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION INFORMATION

The following are guidelines to help you decide when to keep your child home from school: Please notify the staff when your child is unable to attend school due to illness.

- **A doctor's note may be required depending on the combination of symptoms, severity and length of time a child is ill – Contact Health Manager if you need assistance with this.**

As we begin a new school year, please encourage your children to practice preventative behaviors: eat healthy, exercise and drink water, wash your hands often, and use hand sanitizer when unable to get to a sink. Remind your children to cover coughs and sneezes. Clean and sanitize frequently touched surfaces in your home.

Guidelines for an Ill child –

Fever:

If your child has an oral temperature of 100.4 degrees or above, keep your child at home until they are fever free for 24 hours without the use of medication.

Vomiting:

- If your child has had an episode of vomiting during the night or early in the morning, they should remain home for at least 24 hours after the last episode of vomiting. If your child has 1 or more episodes of vomiting, your child should remain home until the vomiting is resolved and a doctor determines that the cause is not contagious, and your child is not in danger of dehydration.
- If your child has one or more episodes of vomiting in the classroom you will be asked to take your child home and return 24 hours after the last episode.
- If your child is vomiting in class daily, you will be requested to seek a medical evaluation and return with a doctor's note.

Constipation:

With proper diet and activity, children in this age group should not need a laxative. However, if you have given a laxative to your child, please be aware of the possibility that they may have less control over their bowels on that day and should not be in school. If you must use a laxative, be sure it is one recommended by your physician for young children and use it on the weekend so your child does not miss school.

Diarrhea:

If your child has had 2 or more episodes of diarrhea during the night or in the morning before school, please keep him/her home for at least 24 hours after the last episode. This problem is difficult to manage in the classroom. If your child has 2 or more episodes of diarrhea in the classroom you will be notified and requested to take your child home and return 24 hours after the last episode. If your child is having diarrhea daily, you will be requested to seek medical evaluation and return with a doctor's note including any instructions for changes in diet.

Skin Conditions:

If your child has a skin condition which has pustules (fluid filled blisters), raised red blotches or very itchy rashes, please keep your child at home and have it checked by your doctor. If the staff notices any of these types of skin irritations, they will contact you and ask you to take your child home. You are also required to bring a note from your doctor stating the date your child can return to the classroom. Open, draining, or bleeding wounds must be covered with a bandage. If the bandage does not remain dry, you will be contacted by the staff and advised to seek a medical evaluation.

Respiratory Illness:

Your child should remain home if he/she has an upper respiratory illness and/or cough, which limits their ability to comfortably participate in classroom activities. You will be requested to seek medical care and return with a doctor's note if your child has a persistent runny nose, cough or upper respiratory infection which is preventing him / her from comfortably participating in activities, interferes with sleep or your child experiences excessive coughing, noisy breathing, fast breathing, or wheezing (uncontrolled by an inhaler if one is prescribed).

Head Lice:

Please notify the teacher if your child has Head Lice. Screenings will be conducted for the following reasons - as a precautionary measure, based on a parent's report, when children are scratching, staff notice crawling lice/nits or children have verbalized to the staff that they have or had "bugs." Screenings for complete classrooms will be completed in the classroom. Screenings for one child only will be completed in privacy. Designated Early Childhood staff, Early Childhood Nurse or District Nurse will complete the initial check.

If Head Lice are detected by staff, you will be notified to take your child home. Children may return when they are nit-free. A Doctor's note is not required to return to school. We do recommend you consult with your medical provider to determine which treatment option is best for your child. Your child's head must be checked before re-entry to school. All Lice checks for returning children will be completed in privacy and must be completed by an Early Childhood Nurse or District Nurse. Parent is requested to make arrangements with a Nurse for all return to school lice checks

Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis):

If your child's eyes appear red, irritated, swollen, itchy and have purulent drainage (thick, yellow or greenish-yellow), keep your child at home and have this condition checked by your doctor. If the staff detects any of these eye features, they will contact you and request you obtain a medical evaluation and return to school with a doctor's note.

Thrush:

If a child has irritation in and around the mouth, cracked skin in the corners of the mouth and/or whitish patches on the lips, tongue, or inside the cheeks, parents will be notified to seek medical care and return with a medical note.

Prescribed Eye Patching:

Any eye patching prescribed for 4 hours per day or less must be done at home, not at preschool. Any eye patching prescribed for 4 or more hours per day that requires patching during preschool hours will require a prescription from the physician and an evaluation by EC / EI staff to plan for safety, comfort and management of participation in preschool activities.

Biting:

If a child bites another child at school, staff must contact the Health Manager and the children's parents at the time of the incident (that includes parents of both, the child who bit and the child who got bit). If a child or staff member is bitten and the skin is broken and/or there is any type of bruising please notify the Health Manager, your building manager and/or Education Supervisor immediately. If the skin is broken – both the parent of child doing the biting and the parent of the child bitten must be notified at the time of the incident and advised to seek medical evaluation. Both children must return with a doctor's note. An accident report is required.

Foreign Object in Eyes, Ears, Nose, or Embedded in the Skin:

Staff are not to use any type of instrument, for example tweezers, to remove foreign objects from children such as splinters, rocks, beads or sequins in ears, nose, eyes, or embedded in skin. The proper procedure is to contact the parent at the time of the incident and request they take the child to seek medical evaluation. They must return with a doctor's note. Contact EC health services for guidance while awaiting parent arrival. Call 911 if breathing is impaired. Complete accident report.

Early Childhood follows district policy/protocols for COVID. Information can be found at:

<https://www.pghschools.org/covid19>

Medication Policy:

Early Childhood Students are to receive scheduled medications at home. There is not an Early Childhood Nurse on-site full time or routinely to administer medication. The Early Childhood Teaching Staff are only permitted to administer the following Rescue Medications: Albuterol inhalers, EpiPens, and Benadryl when it is prescribed as part of an anaphylactic allergy action plan. The Early Childhood teaching staff may only accept these medications in the pharmacy labeled boxes/original packaging and must receive health plan and medication training by an Early Childhood Nurse prior to the child attending. The Health Service Staff is available to answer parent or staff questions/concerns.

- **All medication must be maintained in a manner that is quickly accessible to staff and completely out of the reach of children.**
- **All prescribed emergency rescue medications and associated documentation must be carried in a go-bag when leaving the classroom and remain in the possession of the teacher at all times.**
- **Medication must be locked in a secure location/lock box when school is not in session or child is absent.**

Pittsburgh Public Schools Medication Policy: No.229 - Use of Medications

https://www.pghschools.org/cms/lib07/PA01000449/Centricity/Domain/19/Use%20of%20Medications_Clean.pdf

EARLY CHILDHOOD HEALTH SERVICES ~ 412-529-8015**Product Advisory:**

Please be aware when sending products, such as ChapStick, Vaseline, creams, lotion, and sunscreens into school with your child that they must remain in your child's bag in their cubby/locker out of the reach of all children. The children cannot have access to these products during school due to the risks involved with misuse, choking, and harm caused by ingredients that may result in a reaction to children with allergies or sensitivities. The teachers are not permitted to apply sunscreen, creams, lotions or ChapStick. The application of any of these products must be done at home prior to the student coming into the school.

Child Injury Guidelines (for injuries not occurring at school):

- If you are bringing your child to school with an injury or burn, please inform your child's teacher upon arrival.
- If your child comes to school with symptoms that include swelling, bruises, abrasions and / or burns that interfere with their vision, mobility, comfort and / or limits their ability to participate you will be called and notified to take your child to seek medical evaluation.
- You will also be requested to provide a note at the time of return, from your child's physician stating your child may return to the classroom, the date authorized to return, restrictions, care and / or accommodations needed at school. Further medical documentation will also be requested as follow up medical appointments occur.
- If your child is returning to school with a short term injury that has already been evaluated and is being treated by a Doctor such as burns and other skin wounds □ eye injuries □ broken bones □ sprains and strains □ you will be required to provide medical documentation at the time of return stating the type of injury and date that your child may return to preschool, anticipated length of treatment, restrictions, accommodations and follow up medical documentation as the treatment plan progresses.

Chronic Health Conditions:

If your child has a chronic health condition such a food allergy, asthma, seizures, Sickie Cell, diabetes or any other health condition requiring emergency rescue medications and/or special planning for school please contact the Early Childhood Nurse (412-529-8015), Family Services Specialist or your child's teacher.

The following will be required:

- Medication in pharmacy labeled box or original packaging
- Spacer if prescribed with inhaler
- Current physical exam
- Medication administration form completed by doctor and signed by parent if medication prescribed
- Food Service Plan of Care completed by parent and signed by doctor for medical diet restriction
- other required forms and documentation depending on condition
- health plan completed by Early Childhood Nurse
- staff training completed by Early Childhood Nurse

*** Completion of above required prior to attendance for Albuterol inhalers, EpiPens and Diastat orders, and most other cases – please contact Early Childhood Nurse to obtain forms and for assistance

Minor Health Incidents/Accidents:

In case of a minor accident, such as a bump, cut, bruise, or insect bite, first aid such as ice, soap and water and a Band-Aid should be applied. If body fluids such as blood are evident, universal precautions will be used. Teachers may **NOT** apply any type of medication or medical ointment. The parent will be notified by phone call at the time of the incident.

** When a child has an accident that requires medical care, a physician's note is necessary when returning to the classroom.

Serious Health Incidents/Accidents:

In case of a serious health incident or accident occurring at the classroom/classroom site, a staff member will call 911 and the principal or building manager and school police as needed. Staff will also call 911 directly if previously advised to do so by a written "Health Action Plan". The parent/guardian will be notified immediately. Early Childhood Education staff may not transport any injured child. Should an ambulance be called, the assistant teacher, or other staff member will accompany the child to the hospital if family member is not present.

When a child has an accident that requires going to the Doctor or Emergency Room, **a physician's note is required for the child to be permitted to return to the classroom.**

Nutrition:

Early Childhood Education Programs participate in the Child and Adult care Programs (CACFP) meal pattern.

All children receive free breakfast and lunch daily. The Early Childhood Education Program strives to offer children a variety of food experiences both through family style meals and nutrition education activities.

Please note: On 2-hour delay days, breakfast will not be served.

Menu Substitutions:

Food substitutions will be made for children with properly documented medical or cultural / religious reasons. Documentation should be forwarded to the Early Childhood Health Services Coordinator.

1. Medical Exemptions must be documented by a written statement from a Physician stating the child's condition, foods to be restricted and the appropriate substitutions. The documentation must also include The Medical Plan of Care for School Food Service with section 1 and section 5 completed by the parent and other sections applicable completed by the Physician. If medications such as an EpiPen and / or Benadryl are also required, then medication authorization forms are also necessary.
2. Religious / Cultural Exemptions require a written statement from a parent or guardian stating their religious / cultural practices, foods that are unacceptable and appropriate substitutions. This statement should be written by the parent on a Medical Plan of Care for School Food Service form. The parent must also complete Section 1 and 5 of this form. A Physician statement is not required.

Bag Lunches / Meals from Home:

Parent options for meals:

- **decline meals** - includes breakfast and lunch, milk included
 - parent required to complete declination of meals form
- **send in food to supplement meals provided**
 - parent request to be made to Health Services Manager and parent note required, doctor note if for medical reasons.
 - all food sent in must follow district and EC policy (**nut and fish free**), must also follow the child's food allergy restrictions if applicable.
- No fast foods, pizza, takeout food will be permitted to be brought in for children to replace or supplement meals, or as a treat/surprise for children.

Snacks and Food Treats for Special Celebrations:

Due to the increasing number of life-threatening food allergies, **snacks and food treats will not be accepted** in the Early Childhood Education Program classrooms and cannot be sent home with students. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated as we attempt to reduce the risk of accidental exposure to food allergens and provide a safe preschool environment for all children. Other celebration ideas are listed on pg. 9.

Health Examinations:

One of the major goals of Early Childhood Education Programs is to promote preventive health services and early intervention for our Early Childhood Education Program's families. To ensure that we promote a healthy environment, all staff and children are required to have yearly physical examinations. Each child's health assessment will determine if the child is up to date on the appropriate preventive health care, following the Pennsylvania Early and Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) program schedule. This assessment, **including lead and hemoglobin results**, is to be presented to the Early Childhood Education Program as quickly as possible, no later than 90 days from the child's entry date into the program.

The following are the health care requirements for children:

- All children are required to have a comprehensive physical and dental examination within 90 days of enrollment **and yearly**. The examinations will include:
 - complete medical history
 - An in-depth physical and dental assessment by a medical provider.
- Immunization records complete or up to date are required at enrollment. Every child must have the following immunizations prior to school entry:
 - 4 DTP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis)
 - 3 Polio (IPV, OPV)
 - 3 Hepatitis B
 - MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella)
 - Varicella (or documentation that child had chicken pox).
 - Lead and Hemoglobin test results
- Parents will also provide health and emergency contact information on student information sheet which will be maintained in the classroom.
- Returning children require yearly updated physical and dental exams.

NOTE: For kindergarten entry, all children must have a second MMR and a second varicella immunization in addition to the above vaccines.

Child Dental Assessment:

Each child **must** have a preventive dental assessment to determine if the child's teeth and gums are

healthy. This assessment must be less than a year old and is required to be updated annually. The assessment is to be presented to the Early Childhood Program as quickly as possible. If dental care is needed, the parent is to have the dental work completed as soon as possible. The parent must provide a written note from the dentist of the treatment plan to the teacher or FSS. If parents do not have a dentist the Family Service Specialist will assist in referring families to a dentist or dental services. If treatment is required as a result of an annual exam, parent is requested to provide documentation of treatment.

Referrals for Health Services:

If a family wants assistance looking for a primary care physician, dentist or any health services ask the Family Service Specialist. The Family Service Specialist will help with your goals for medical care.

Health Services:

The program offers the following screenings to all children:

- Vision
- Hearing
- Medical and Dental
- Height and Weight Measurements
- Speech and Language
- Developmental
- Behavioral Observations

Parents must complete a health consent form before these services are provided. A description of each screening is also available.

The program strongly encourages families to use their community resources for medical and dental services. Children should receive physical and dental exams from their private health care provider.

Hand Washing:

Hand washing is the most important way to reduce the spread of infection. Hand washing will also help to reduce the risk of food allergen exposure. Parents are requested to assist their child to wash their hands upon arrival to school.

How to wash hands:

- Wet hands with clean running water and apply soap.
- Rub hands together to make a lather. Scrub the backs of hands, between fingers and under nails.
- Continue scrubbing for at least 20 seconds. Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end, twice.
- Rinse hands well under running water.
- Dry hands using a clean paper towel.

Hand Sanitizer:

- Parents will complete the Permission to Use Hand Sanitizer consent form yearly for children over 24 months of age included with phase in day start up forms. Parents will have the option of allowing or refusing their child's use of hand sanitizer with the exceptions noted on the consent form.
- Supervised use of hand sanitizer is an alternative to hand washing when there is no visible dirt on the hands and a sink, soap and running water are not readily available. * *Exceptions apply*

PARENT, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (PFCE)

Parent/Guardian Involvement

Parents/Guardians are the most important influence on a child's development. The ECE Program

offers various opportunities for parents and guardians to become involved such as local parent meetings, attending workshops, home visits by program staff, and other educational activities offered throughout the year. Parents/guardians can also become involved by becoming a volunteer. All volunteers must have a current FBI Background check, PA Child Abuse clearance, and PA Criminal Record check clearance in order to volunteer. Parents are also welcomed to participate in activities that promote their own personal growth and increase their knowledge and awareness about the early learning standards through activities sponsored by the School District and federal, state, and local educational programs and organizations.

Head Start Family Outcomes:

- ***Family Well-being.*** Parents and families are safe, healthy, and have increased financial security.
- ***Positive Parent-Child Relationships.*** Beginning with transitions to parenthood, parents and families develop warm relationships that nurture their child's learning and development.
- ***Families as Lifelong Educators.*** Parents and families observe, guide, promote, and participate in the everyday learning of their children at home, school, and in their communities.
- ***Families as Learners.*** Parents and families advance their own learning interests through education, training and/or other experiences that support their parenting, career, and life goals.
- ***Family Engagement in Transitions.*** Parents and families support and advocate for their child's learning and development as they transition to new learning environments, including EHS to HS, EHS/HS to other early learning environments, and HS to kindergarten through elementary school.
- ***Family Connections to Peers and Community.*** Parents and families form connections with peers and mentors in formal or informal social networks that are supportive and/or educational and that enhance social well-being and community life.
- ***Families as Advocates and Leaders.*** Parents and families participate in leadership development, decision making, program policy development, and community and state organizing activities to improve children's development and learning experiences.

Parent volunteerism is valued because it:

- Gives the parent a better understanding of the purpose of the classroom activities and what to work on with their child at home.
- Shows the child the depth of his/her parent's commitment.
- Gives the teaching staff an opportunity to know the parents better and to learn from them.
- Volunteer time is considered an In-Kind donation that helps the program with funding.

Who is the volunteer:

- Volunteers are people who want to be actively involved.
- Current parents, former parents, grandparents, foster parents, community members, senior citizens, guardians and mature high school and college students with current clearances (FBI Background, PA Child Abuse, and PA Criminal Record check).
- Pittsburgh Public Schools Early Childhood Program also utilizes volunteers from *PNC Grow Up Great* and the *Foster Grandparent Program*.

Typical Duties of a Volunteer Note:

Volunteers can assist in carrying out responsibilities and duties in relation to the daily program, such as: sensory play, field trips, basic health activities (toilet, washing, eating, resting), dispensing of supplies and materials, breakfast and lunch help, working one-on-one with students, and help with classroom activities. Volunteers are not responsible for student discipline and must keep all student information confidential.

Male/Fatherhood Involvement (MFI) Committee:

The Male/Fatherhood Involvement Program is a part of the Pittsburgh Public Schools' Early Childhood Education Program. The program welcomes and is comprised of Early Childhood and Early Head Start fathers and significant males who play an important role in a child's life. Also, it can include fathers and significant males who have current and past children in the EC Program, community persons and a variety of organizations that strive to support the education and socialization experiences of children. **This program** offers a positive role model for children through male involvement and presents an opportunity for males to be included in a child's education that may help them succeed in their academic careers. The Male/Fatherhood Involvement Program's purpose is to support and encourage fathers/significant males to engage in their child(ren)'s academic and social experiences and events.

The Male/Fatherhood Involvement Program Mission

- The mission of the program is accomplished through Male/Fatherhood Involvement Program informational meetings, events, and various trainings whereby male parenting concerns are discussed. Free play, bonding activities and replication of classroom learning strategies are encouraged and supported. These methods reinforce the positive father/significant male-child relationship as they are directly engaged as a nurturer and lifelong educator.
- The committee ensures parent/child activities are offered, which is another opportunity to support their children's education.
- Monthly meetings are for sharing, planning and goals setting as well as activities to meet the goals of the males involved in the program.

The Male/Fatherhood Involvement Program Goals

- The goals of the Male/Fatherhood Involvement Program (MFI) are to increase connectivity between fathers and significant males who play an important role in the life of a child and father participation in the Early Childhood Program.
- Connect with peers and mentors who understand the needs of our diverse student population and provide solid guidance to enhance your father/significant male-child journey.
- Network with key organizations and community leaders to gain knowledge and skills to broaden the father/significant male-child experiences.
- Share valuable information that align with ECE Family Engagement and strengthens the Male/Fatherhood Involvement Program.
- If a father/significant male is interested in participating in the MFI Program, they should contact the Family Services Delivery Manager.

If you are interested in participating in MFI, please contact Nancy Hornsby, Family Services Delivery Manager at 412-529-4077 or nhornsby1@pghschools.org.

Clearance Procedure:

The process to obtain background clearances to volunteer in schools has recently changed. The following rules are now in place:

1. If you have previously been cleared to volunteer with Early Childhood, your clearances are good for 5 years from the date of the clearance.
2. If you need to obtain a new PA Criminal Background Record Check, you may do so online at <https://epatch.state.pa.us/>. There is no cost for this.
3. If you need to obtain a new PA Child Abuse History Clearance, you may do so online at <http://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home> . There is no cost for this. You will need to create an account and follow the instructions to complete the process.
4. Volunteers also need to obtain an FBI Clearance (fingerprint). You can register online for this at IdentoGo
– <https://ueroll.identogo.com>, the cost is \$21.35, and the **Service Code is 1KG6Y3**. If you do not wish to get fingerprinted and have been a resident of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for

the entirety of 10 years, you may fill out a waiver form instead. This form can be obtained by contacting Geraldine Carpenter at (412) 529-8702.

EARLY CHILDHOOD POLICY COUNCIL

Center Meetings

Parent meetings are conducted monthly at each ECE Program center to give parents an opportunity to actively participate in the program. Parents and/or staff conduct elections for Policy Council (PC) officers and Center level roles of chairperson, secretary, treasurer, and PC representative and alternate representative.

Center meetings provide families with the opportunity to engage Pittsburgh Public Schools Early Childhood Education Programs in the following ways.

- Families can engage early childhood about resources available in the community
- Connect families to community resources
- Families can receive information about the early childhood curriculum and how it supports their child's learning
- Engage parents about ways to advocate for their child such as transition to kindergarten
- Provide leadership and advocacy opportunities to parents and guardians

Policy Council Meetings

The Early Childhood Policy Council is a mandate of the Head Start Performance Standards. The purpose of this group is to facilitate the objectives of the program so that all children receive the maximum benefits of a comprehensive child development program. The Policy Council consists of various ECE classroom parent representatives who meet regularly for the betterment of the program as a whole and also enables parents with the opportunity to have meaningful input into the administrative decision-making process. Many parents and community representatives serve as members of the Early Childhood Policy Council and its various sub-committees. The sub-committees include: Health and Nutrition, Fiscal, Personnel, Fatherhood, Social Services, and By-Laws. All parents are welcome to participate.

For more information, please contact the EC Office 412-529-4291, Option 2.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

Contacting Your Child's Teacher:

If you should need to contact your child's teacher during the day, the best times to call are in the morning before school starts, in the afternoon after school dismisses, or during rest time. Phone calls received during the instructional times of day take away from student learning, so please try to limit these calls to emergencies only. Parents/Guardians are also welcome to email their child's teacher as needed.

Center closings, Delays, and Early Releases:

Please listen to local television/radio stations for up-to-date information on any school closings or delays. Automated messages to the primary phone number listed in the child's record are also used to communicate school closings, delays or emergency cancellations. Schools could be closed due to weather or other unsafe conditions. Please follow the school district's directive on delays or cancellations.

Parents/ guardians can also check the Pittsburgh Public Schools web site at: www.pghschools.org or the Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/PittsburghPublicSchools> for updates. **On two-hour delay days, children are not served breakfast.**

Approximately eight (8) times a year the Pittsburgh Public School District has early release days. Please check your calendar for the early release dates this year. All early releases are approximately three hours early. Please contact your child's teacher or FSS for the specific early release time of your school. On early release days, children are still served breakfast and lunch.

Concerns and Conflict Resolution:

Early Childhood holds parents to a high standard of conduct. We encourage a collaborative environment where all can feel safe. Should a parent/guardian have a concern with a staff member, parent, or other adult in the school setting, parents are urged to contact their child's teacher or Family Services Specialist (FSS) for further direction on who should be contacted. Parents are also always welcome to contact the Early Childhood Education Program's Administrative Offices at 412-529-4291. In addition, the Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) has established a Parent Hotline that can be accessed for concerns, complaints, questions, and information. The number for the Hotline is **412-529-7920**.

Child Custody Definitions:

Court Order – a legally binding document stating a judge's instructions or directions. All parties must follow court orders.

Protection from Abuse (PFA) - a civil order that provides protection from harm by family or household members, sexual or intimate partners or persons who you have a child in common with.

A Child Custody procedure has been drafted to ensure the safety of each child within the Pittsburgh Public Schools Early Childhood Education Programs:

- Proof of "**Court Orders**" regarding custody, and/or "**Protection from Abuse**" orders involving the child must be filed in the child's central file, as well as the classroom folder.
- Teacher and Principal or other appropriate staff will be notified of all court orders.
- The Authorization of Pick-Up Form is **strictly** adhered to:
 1. Only those persons listed on the form
 2. Any authorized person picking up a child must provide a picture I.D.

If a parent has been awarded full custody of a child through a Court Order issued by the Family Division, and the noncustodial parent has no visitation rights, then the non-custodial parent will not be allowed to volunteer in that child's center/classroom. All child custody Information will be kept confidential.

Child Abuse and Neglect and CYF Policy:

All school district employees are mandated reporters for suspected child abuse and neglect and therefore legally responsible for reporting any possible instances to the correct authorities. By reporting possible abuse and/or neglect, school district staff is not making any accusation against parents, guardians, or families – they are simply following protocol. The school district does not investigate possible abuse or neglect – they only report it. The school district also does not release the name(s) of staff who file the reports. Additionally, all school staff is required to cooperate with CYF and any law enforcement agency conducting investigations for the safety and well-being of our students and families. All information is kept confidential.

DISTRICT/SCHOOL BOARD POLICIES

School Safety:

To ensure the safety of all students, staff and visitors, each school follows the District's visitor procedures outlined below and has a comprehensive school safety plan. The safety plan outlines the roles and responsibilities of staff in the event of a school-based or external issue/emergency. In addition, throughout the year, students participate in various safety drills to ensure students and staff are prepared in the event of an emergency. Safety drills may include fire, lockdown, bus, and severe weather.

In the event of an emergency, School Police or Pittsburgh City Police, may recommend your building be placed in a modified lockdown, full lockdown or evacuate to an alternative site. The procedures for these actions are listed below.

Modified Lockdown:

A modified lockdown means that normal instructional activities continue as much as possible; however, no outside events, field trips or outside activities occur unless explicitly cleared by School Police. While in modified lockdown, entry and exit to the school will be restricted and only individuals with a pre-existing appointment are permitted to enter the school facility. A modified lockdown may be called when there is a community issue that is external to the school and not directed at the school.

Full Lockdown:

In the event of a lockdown, all exterior doors and windows will be locked and no one aside from emergency/ administrative crisis team personnel will be permitted to enter or exit the school facility. During full lockdown, students will be kept safe in individual secured classrooms during the event and are not permitted to go outside or attend outside activities or field trips. School Police or school leadership will place a school on full lockdown to minimize student/staff exposure to a potential threat. For example, this procedure may be used when City of Pittsburgh Police or School Police warn the school of a fugitive in the neighborhood or when a threat has been received by the school.

Evacuation:

Evacuations may occur in the case of a threat, fire or other event making the school building unsafe. Students and staff will be evacuated to a designated evacuation site when leaving the building is the safest alternative. Please know your buildings safe site. In the event of an evacuation, attendance is taken to assure all staff and students are out of the building and arrive at the designation site safely. The following standard reunification plan will be implemented to ensure all students are safely returned to their families. During a reunification, families are directed to:

- Bring a valid form of Identification (ID)
- Follow signage and parking direction of reunification location.
- Complete the provided reunification form.
- Choose the check-in line that corresponds to your student's grade.
- Provide school personnel at the check-in table with a valid form of photo ID and the completed reunification form.
- Wait patiently as a District staff member retrieves and escorts your student to you.

Only approved adults with valid photo identification will be allowed to pick-up students from the evacuation location.

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES DURING AN EMERGENCY

If your building is placed on a modified lockdown, full lockdown or is required to evacuate to an

alternative site, an attempt will be made by personnel at your building or the District to contact families as quickly as possible through the phone messaging system. This communication will occur when the school emergency occurs and again when the emergency is resolved, or information has changed. For this reason, it is important to complete all paperwork at the beginning of each school year and contact the school anytime primary or emergency contact information changes.

- While it is important for us to quickly update parents, it is also important that the information we send is accurate. Please be aware that emergency situations are fluid and always changing, and that information received from non-District sources such as the news media and social media may be inaccurate. Depending on the type of emergency, the district may also utilize its website, Facebook and twitter accounts to provide timely information to families.
- In addition to a phone call, an additional notice may be sent home with students or emailed to families. The notice may include other information as appropriate such as lunch changes, transportation adjustments and extra-curricular and co-curricular activity modifications.
- When receiving a phone call that your building has been directed to be placed on a modified lockdown, full lockdown or has been evacuated, please remain calm and do not attempt to come to the school. We understand that the first reaction of many families is to come to the school, however, families should wait until they are advised that it is safe to pick up their child. Families arriving unadvised to the school may actually hinder the emergency response and could jeopardize their own safety. In extreme cases, law enforcement can arrest anyone who they determine is compromising their efforts.
- The District has strong partnerships with local law enforcement and will work collaboratively with City of Pittsburgh Police to respond quickly to potential threats and ensure student and staff safety at all times. Please contact the main office if you have any questions regarding these procedures.

Visitor Procedures- Check with building manager/principals for specific procedures

The district reserves the right to deny an individual entry to any school building, when there is reason to believe that such individual's presence would be detrimental to the operation of the school and the learning environment.

Keeping Primary/Emergency Contact Information Up to Date:

Please remember to ensure your primary and emergency contact information is up to date at all times. Having working telephone numbers is important for staff to be able to reach you or your designated family or friends in the event of an emergency with your child or at the school. Please share our visitor procedures and school safety information with all of the individuals you designate as an emergency contact. A child's emergency contact is the person who is responsible for picking up your child in the event you or your child's additional guardian is unavailable. As a school, we take the

releasing of any child to an unknown adult very seriously. Therefore, it is important to make sure each of your child's emergency contacts know the following when visiting our school.

- **Must show proof of identification.** A child will not be released to an individual that does not show proper identification or if the identification does not match the information in the district's student information system.
- **Must understand the district's visitor procedures.** All visitors must use the main entrance of the school building and sign-in in the main office. No visitors are permitted to visit classrooms or

walk hallways or main areas of the school without signing in.

- **Must understand District's reunification procedures and know child's school reunification location.** Each school has an alternative location for pick-up in the event of a school-based emergency. Any individual wishing to pick up a child from an alternative location, must be listed as parent/guardian or emergency contact and must show proof of identification.

Audio, Video Recording or Photographs:

No visitor shall be permitted to photograph, record audio, or videotape any person or any part of the building or to tape record any conversation or non-public meeting (i.e. parent teacher conferences, IEP meetings, etc.) or event without the express consent of the school principal and each individual meeting/conversation participant. Audio or video recording of individual meetings may be permitted if such recording is required to permit a person with a disability to meaningfully participate in the meeting. Requests for accommodations should be directed to the school principal. This prohibition shall not apply to public meetings or work sessions of the Board or in any instance that would violate the Sunshine Act. With permission of the school principal or designee, visitors may be allowed to record or videotape school activities, i.e., assemblies and Commencement, for personal use only.

Smoking & Tobacco Policy:

The Board believes that as an educational institution the School District must maintain a tobacco-free environment in all locations utilized by the School District. The Board prohibits tobacco use by any persons in its school buildings and on any property, buses, vans and vehicles that are owned, leased or controlled by the School District. The Board also prohibits smoking electronic cigarettes or clove cigarettes by any persons in its school buildings and on any School District property, including its athletic fields.

Weapons Policy:

The Board recognizes the importance of a safe school environment relative to the educational process. Possession of weapons in the school setting is a threat to the safety of students and staff and is prohibited by law. The Board prohibits students from possessing, transmitting, handling and bringing weapons and replicas of weapons into any School District buildings, onto school property, to any school-sponsored activity, and onto any public vehicle providing transportation to school or a school-sponsored activity.

2023- 2024 Early Childhood Education Programs School Year Calendar



2023

<u>Back-to-School Dates</u>		
August 15	Tuesday	Family Services Specialists Return
August 22	Tuesday	Professional Development Day (First Day for Teachers)
August 23	Wednesday	Staff Clerical Day
August 24	Thursday	Professional Development Day (First Day for Assistants)
August 25	Friday	Staff Clerical Day/ Orientation Day for High School EHS
August 28	Monday	Orientation Day for Early Childhood Students & Families / First Full Day for High School EHS
August 29	Tuesday	First Full Day for Early Childhood Students
<u>No School / Early Release Days for Students</u>		
September 4	Monday	NO SCHOOL – Labor Day
September 25	Monday	NO SCHOOL – School Vacation Day
September 29	Friday	Early Release Day – Staff Professional Development
October 9	Monday	Parent Teacher Conferences & Visits for Elementary and Early Childhood Families

October 13	Friday	Parent Teacher Conferences & Visits for Early Head Start Families and Sci-Tech Pre-K
October 27	Friday	Early Release Day – Staff Professional Development
November 7	Tuesday	NO SCHOOL – Election Day / Staff Professional Development
November 10	Friday	NO SCHOOL – Veteran's Day
November 17	Friday	Early Release Day – Staff Professional Development
November 23-27	Thurs.– Mon.	NO SCHOOL – Thanksgiving Vacation
December 15	Friday	Early Release Day – Staff Professional Development
December 25-29	Mon.-Fri.	NO SCHOOL – Winter Break

2024

January 1-2	Mon.-Tues.	NO SCHOOL – Winter Break
January 15	Monday	NO SCHOOL – Dr. Martin Luther King Day
January 25	Thursday	NO SCHOOL – Staff Clerical Day
January 26	Friday	NO SCHOOL – Staff Professional Development Day
February 2	Friday	Early Release Day – Staff Professional Development
February 16	Friday	Early Release Day – Staff Professional Development
March 1	Friday	Early Release Day – Staff Professional Development
March 15	Friday	Early Release Day – Staff Professional Development
March 25-29	Mon. – Fri.	NO SCHOOL – Spring Break

April 10	Wednesday	NO SCHOOL – School Vacation Day
April 23	Tuesday	NO SCHOOL – School Vacation Day
May 27	Monday	NO SCHOOL – Memorial Day
June 12	Wednesday	Last Day of School for Students
June 13 & 14	Thurs. & Fri.	Staff Clerical Day – Last Day for Teaching Staff
June 17	Monday	SCHOOLS CLOSED – Juneteenth
June 24	Monday	Last Day for Family Services Specialists

*As of August 2023
Subject to change as needed*