

**Knox Educational Service
Center**

**Preschool
Staff Handbook**

2017-2018

Preschool Educational Philosophy

We believe that high quality childhood programs provide a safe and nurturing environment that promotes the physical, social, emotional, language, and cognitive development of young children while responding to the needs of the family.

We believe programs that serve young children should be developmentally appropriate and should encompass six components – developmental screening and assessment, curriculum, adult-child interaction, relations between home and school, developmental evaluation of the child, and transition to an appropriate program. The program at all times should be responsive to individual differences of both typically developing children and children with special needs.

We believe that child-initiated, child-directed, teacher-supported play is essential to quality education for young children. Through this play, the program supports the construction of self-image, a crucial developmental task.

The curriculum should be organized flexibly so as to provide many opportunities for children to make choices, select from alternatives, and determine their own course within an established program. Our programs are set up to foster a trusting relationship which allows and encourages autonomous functioning of the child characterized by the ability to make choices, develop preferences, take initiative, risk failure, set an independent course for problem-solving, and accept help without sacrificing independence. The keystone of our program is active learning in which the child is given the role of questioning, probing, exploring, and planning.

We believe that working with the family of young children plays an integral part in a child's healthy development. Through working with parents, and collaborating with other community agencies, the needs of the child can best be met. Fostering a good relationship with parents is of utmost importance to us.

It is through this nurturing of the whole child and the family that we seek to provide a program that will encourage the optimal growth and development of each young child.

Goals

Primary goals of the Early Childhood Program are to:

- Provide an environment that respects children
- Foster the development of positive self-esteem
- Support and promote positive relationships with peers and adults
- Facilitate and encourage the construction of knowledge within an integrated curriculum
- Plan and implement a wide variety of multi-age, multi-level materials and activities
- Model and promote opportunities for large motor activities and healthy nutritional choices.
- Offer opportunities for children's active exploration of their environment through play
- Maintain confidentiality surrounding children and their families
- Strengthen the relationship between families and school

Parent Involvement

Parent participation is a vital component of a child's school experience. Parents provide valuable input to ensure a successful transition between home and school. Parents are encouraged to become actively involved and are welcome to observe and visit the classroom during operating hours. If a parent is helping in the classroom, they are not permitted to remove a child from the room. If the parent is responsible for the student(s), the parent must have a background check.

Custody Agreements

If a family has custody agreements directed by the courts, they must provide papers to the program where their child is enrolled. These papers will be kept in their file and referred to when questions arise regarding transportation, enrollment, medical issues, etc.

An agreement must be made between custodial parents in regards to communication from the school. Both parties may be given information about their enrolled child by submitting a signed request to the teacher.

Confidentiality

As professionals who work closely with children and families, it is important that information about each child and family be kept confidential. Please be aware when talking about your classroom and your children that your conversation with others must not identify families or children. Arrange to have conversations with family members in a private area.

When labeling art work or lists that will be hung outside the classroom, you will need to use only a child's first name. You will need to limit the information that can be seen by the public. Parents need to grant permission for their child to be photographed.

Professional Dress

It is understandable that you will be careful not to wear your best clothes to work so as to avoid ruining them with paint, messy snacks, etc. Teachers are professionals and we should be proud of our chosen profession. Therefore, dress appropriately and discreetly when working with children. Jeans are permissible if your school district accepts them. Jeans should have no holes or thin spots and be worn properly. All clothing should not reveal any body parts such as behind or chest area. You need to be comfortable when sitting on the floor and handling young children.

Staff Medical/Accident Issues

Any accident involving injury to a staff person must be reported to your supervisor immediately. Injured staff person must fill out an employee incident/accident report. The report form can be found on the www.kcesc.org website under forms. The completed form should be returned to the supervisor.

Emergency Contact Info

At the beginning of each school year, staff will be asked to complete a staff emergency contact form. These forms are to be given to the preschool secretary. Please keep a copy of the form in your classroom along with your student emergency medical forms.

New Staff and Returning Staff

All staff is required to have 3 letters of reference. When the person is hired, references will be checked before approval is completed by the Board. The staff should have a current medical statement stating the person is free of communicable disease, statement free of neglect and abuse, and statement of non-conviction. Each itinerant must carry a copy of their credentials, transcripts, and above mention items to the different locations.

Absences/Substitutes

A sick day will require that you call a substitute of your choosing or call Renhill so that they can locate one. Renhill can be reached at 419-254-2872, 6:00am-3:00pm. The contact person is Lynn Dowling.

If you have arranged for your own substitute, it is not necessary to call Renhill to report your absence. However, the sub should list on the Renhill site a non-work day. This lets Renhill know the sub is not available.

A personal day requires that you submit a form (found on the https://k12-web01.treca.org/APP_PROD/WebClient/SignIn.aspx?tenant=ohknoces website) in advance. Your submission must be approved by the supervisor and superintendent. Please read the qualifications for a personal day on the form.

School days are now recorded by hours, not days. You are contracted for a specific number of days. A snow day procedure for teachers and children is specific to each district. A call list to notify teachers will be in place each year according to the needs of the teachers. If necessary, classes will follow a delay schedule specific to their district.

Staff Working Hours/ Training Hours

All teachers are to work a 7.5 hour day with a ½ hour for lunch. Your start and end time may vary according to your district. You should plan to arrive

½ hour before your children arrive and leave about ½ hour after they are gone.

Teacher's assistants are required to work a 7.5 hour day with a ½ hour for lunch. Include lunch time on your time sheet only if you are required to stay with your student during that time.

Your salaries are based on the hours and days that you work. As a teacher, some days will need to be longer in order to do the job to your satisfaction.

One-on-one aides are required to keep a daily time sheet. Before submitted to the Educational Service Center or Mount Vernon Central Office, the time sheet must be signed by the supervisor.

Training hours

All preschool teachers and assistants will need to complete 30 hours of training per school year. Hours for certification in CPR/First Aid, Child Abuse, and Communicable Disease do count toward the 30 hours. The hours must be Step Up To Quality and Ohio Department of Education approved. Professional Development opportunities will be available to meet additional hours. Courses may also be found on the Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Association (OCCRRA) site (<https://login.occrra.org>).

Classroom Behavior Management

The goal of discipline is to help children build their own self-control and ultimately direct their own behavior. We recognize the important role self-esteem plays in this process and strive to enhance each child's positive feelings of self.

Clear and reasonable ground rules are established for each child's safety and to protect the rights of all children. The rules are few in number and are frequently discussed in the classroom. When ground rules are broken, they are clearly and firmly restated. When a child is in a conflict situation, he/she is encouraged to verbalize his anger or concerns. When a child infringes on the rights of another, the child is encouraged to talk about how he/she feels. Problem-solving techniques are encouraged in the classroom during which

time the teacher often acts as a facilitator, helping young children express and generate solutions.

Classroom environments are structured to encourage positive behavior; redirection of children occurs in a positive manner, keeping in mind the child's interests and motives. Teacher intervention in potential problem situations is well-timed and logical consequences of behaviors are implemented. Physical punishment is not used.

If behavior problems persist, an individual behavior management plan will be developed with parent participation. On-going discussions will occur to review possible solutions and alternatives.

Reporting to Children's Services

If the need to report a child abuse/neglect suspicion to Children's Services arises, you must contact your supervisor. Best practice is to contact the supervisor first. However, that is not always possible. Therefore, if you believe it is necessary, then you must report the suspicion and notify your supervisor of the report. Teachers are mandated reporters and the report must be based on first-hand information or observation.

Lesson Plans/Daily Schedules

Classroom teachers should have their daily schedules posted in the classroom, assuring parents and visitors that children's needs are being met. Weekly lesson plans are to be made for the entire week and must remain in the classroom in the case of a teacher's absence. The lesson plans must be posted for parents to see. The lesson plan template is Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) approved and will be used.

Assessment/Progress Reports

Classroom assessment tools include:

- children's portfolios
- individual classroom assessment tool

- Denver II developmental screening
- Early Learning Assessment (ELA)
- Ages and Stages Questionnaire
- Early Childhood Outcomes

A schedule of assessment dates will be determined by Ohio Department of Education (ODE) for some of the assessments listed above. Assessing children's progress is important and will aide in planning your teaching.

Assessment tools used should be presented to parents at parent-teacher conference time to talk about their child's progress.

A progress report must be completed on **every child** being served in November, February, and May. Related Service Personnel, Special Needs Teachers, and Itinerant Teachers need to report progress on the goals being addressed in the IEP for the same time. The reports are to be completed and given to the parents as per the calendar. All itinerant children must have progress reports. The May progress report is to be filed in the child's permanent file and attached to the IEP that it addresses in the preschool office.

Licensing Visits

Each classroom is licensed by the Ohio Department of Education and should have a current license posted. The program will be visited every 1-2 years by a licensing agent to assure that the classroom meets the expectations of a quality program. The training manual in your classroom should be updated and kept current for a licensing visit. You should have a current roster, parent roster, fire inspection, fire drills, snack calendar with 2 of the 5 food groups, all the licensing rules, parent and staff handbook, lesson plans, and files up to date with the checklist for each student.

Step Up To Quality

Each classroom is Step Up To Quality approved. Every year a report must be completed. The report requests change often. Currently the request is lesson plans, student's goals, teacher's goals, teacher assistant's goals, classroom goals, and building goals or Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP), along with policies. Your Step Up To Quality books must have all the components up to date. A checklist can be found at:

http://earlychildhoodohio.org/sutq_forms.php .

Sign-In Sheets

Parent Sign In/Out sheets

Located in each classroom is a sign-in/sign-out sheet for each day that the children are in session. Parents/guardians/caregivers must sign-in and sign-out their child. It should be by student and not just a list. In the event of a safety drill, the teacher must take the sign-in sheet with them to the safe area. It will help them account for every child at school that day.

Related Service Personnel sign-out sheets

Each child on your caseload will have a sign-out sheet in the classroom. You must sign-out the child when you arrive for therapy. Please sign the sheet even if you remain in the classroom with the child. It is a record of their service minutes and will help to locate a child during a safety drill.

Itinerant teachers' sign-in/sign-out sheets

Please sign-in and out when visiting a classroom for a specific child. It is a record of your visit and assists in locating a child if they are pulled from the classroom for therapy.

Related Service Personnel/Itinerant Teacher Schedules

If you are not serving a child at the beginning of your day, then you must report to your home office at the designated start time. The same applies for the end of your work day. You must end your day either serving a child or at your home office.

Schedules for related service providers and itinerant teachers should be given to the supervisor.

Purchasing Supplies/Equipment

Budgets are limited and ordering supplies will be limited to 2 times per school year. A building supply list for construction paper, paint, and other items for craft will be completed in August. At the end of the year, it is

important that orders are given to the secretary. All other ordering will take place in either the spring or fall/winter. You will be notified of your budgeted amount and will be asked to keep within that amount.

You must fill out a requisition form and submit it to the supervisor. The requisition must have the catalogue name, address, phone, website, and fax number. The items must have the page number and item number as well as the amount. You must complete one for each different vendor. The orders are submitted to the supervisor. The supervisor will have the secretary complete the ordering.

If you need items from Walmart, Staples, or Kroger's, your process will be different. Obtain a requisition form from the office and go "shopping". List the items and price of each item. Then return your requisition to the supervisor for approval. You will then get the charge card and be able to purchase your items. Please return the charge card, sign the back of the sales slip, and return the sales slip to your supervisor.

Field Trips

Field Trips for the year must be submitted before October of each year. You may plan for as many as you would like to do with projected dates. This includes any walking field trips or when parents drop the students off at the designated site. If you need to have a bus, you must complete a requisition and have it approved. If you are unable to do as many as planned, a decision to omit can be done later. The field trips must be board approved.