



Supporting the development of the whole child, through active, hands-on involvement with their environment, peers, and caring adults.

PARENT HANDBOOK

ELLSWORTH AFB

CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

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28 Force Support Squadron Child Development Center

Welcome

Welcome to the Ellsworth AFB Child Development Center. This parent handbook was designed to introduce you to the Air Force Child Development Program as well as the role of the program and staff. Parent involvement is an integral part of our program, and we encourage you to visit regularly and participate in the program. Please feel free to contact the center if we may assist you in any way. We look forward to working with you and your family.

Director- Susan Ratkovsky

Operations Manager- Kara Brown

Training and Curriculum Specialists- Kristin Houghton

Program Philosophy

The practice of the Air Force Child Development Program is based in current knowledge of Child Development and Early Childhood Education. We are responsible for supporting the development of the whole child, meaning all areas of development are considered inter-related and equally important. Our program acknowledges that children learn through active, hands on involvement with their environment, peers, and caring adults.

We respect each child's unique interests, experiences, abilities, and needs, thus allowing us to be responsive to each child. Children are valued as individuals, as well as part of a group. Likewise, our program respects and supports the ideas, cultures, and values of families in their task of nurturing children. We advocate for children, families, and the early childhood professionals within our programs.

Curriculum

The Child Development Center curriculum is based on guiding and supporting all aspects of development for individual children using the Creative Curriculum and developmentally appropriate practice for infants, toddlers and pre toddlers. The preschoolers is Early Learning Matters (ELM) focusing on school readiness. Our daily curriculum grows out of the following principles:

Children:

- *learn at different rates
- *learn best when they interact with their environment
- *acquire, store, and retrieve knowledge through hands on experiences
- *learn through life-based experiences

Children's:

- *learning is affected by conditions in their environment
- *present and future learning influenced by their early experiences
- *learning is progressive in nature.

These principles guide the design of our planning for the children. Teaching staff create weekly and daily activity plans based directly on their observations of each child in relation to their individual cognitive, social, creative, language, and physical development. The plans are implemented to support the child at their current development and challenge them to accomplish new skills.

Goals

- foster positive identity and sense of emotional well-being
- enhance social skills
- encourage children to think, reason, question, and experiment
- promote language and literacy development
- build physical development and skills
- support sound health, safety, and nutritional practices
- advance creative expression, representation and appreciation for the arts
- appreciate and respect cultural diversity
- develop initiative and decision making skills

Outcomes

Children

- Children will experience growth and learning in their social, emotional, physical language and cognitive development
- Children will develop a positive sense of self as valued members of the community: will progressively gain social competence and display pro-social behaviors.
- Children will gain competence in problem solving strategies, will gain understanding of concepts and relationships, and will develop logical, representational and symbolic thinking skills; children will also learn to take initiative and make relevant decisions.
- Children will gain competence in their home language to include ability to communicate through language, to discriminate the sounds of language, to ask/answer questions to gain understanding of print concepts, and to make sense of print.
- Children will display a progressively higher level of competence in their gross and motor skills, eye-hand coordination, mobility and balance.

Family

- Families will feel supported and nurtured in their child rearing efforts
- Families will experience greater support in dealing with the challenges of life in a military community
- Family experiencing lengthy separations due to deployments will be supported via formal or informal parents/staff support groups and networks with community agencies

Special Needs

When applying for care, registering for a program or currently participating, if a child is identified as having a disability, medical condition or specific need, the CDC will work with the family to determine if an Inclusion Action Team meeting is needed. The case will be reviewed as soon as possible to ensure environments,

accommodations and any training required are in place before the child starts care.

Benefits of the Program

Our program provides developmentally appropriate care and education through a variety of program offerings which are designed to meet the specific needs of the children and families in our military community. We offer a full day program for children 6 weeks to 5 years old. Classrooms are divided by age to meet the developmental needs of children:

Infants-6wks-12mos

Pre-Toddlers-12mos-2 years

Toddlers-2-3 years

Preschoolers-3-5 years

Hours of Operation

The child development centers are open daily 0615-1730. For hours outside of the CDC operating hours arrangements can be made with the Family Child Care office to use the extended duty care program.

Admission Policy

In accordance with the child development admission policy, all children of active duty military, including Guard and Reserve on active duty, DOD civilians, non-appropriated fund employees, contractors and AFEES employees are eligible to enroll in the Child Development Center.

Closed Circuit Video

All children that attend the CDC may be subject to closed circuit video monitoring and recording as part of their participation/enrollment in Child and Youth Programs.

Guidance Policy

Positive guidance employs techniques that teach children respect for themselves, others, and their environment. It is our goal to guide children in a manner that helps them develop self-control, self-esteem, and the ability to acknowledge the rights of others. It provides them with the ability to express their frustrations verbally, and teaches them to evaluate, make choices, and solve problems fairly.

Enrollment

To enroll in the Child Development Center, the following requirements must be completed prior to admittance:

- AF Form 1181, Air Force Youth Flight Program Patron Registration
- immunization verification- All immunizations must be current prior admission
- Family Data Sheet
- updated local emergency contact information
- medical verification of allergies and/or special requirements
- acknowledgement of this Parent Handbook
- a copy of both service member and spouse's most recent LES

Teaching Staff

- We provide a nurturing atmosphere for children. All the program teachers (Child Development Program Assistants-CDPA's) are trained in child abuse reporting, child neglect, CPR, first aid, and safety procedures. An ongoing training program, including Program Assistant Training Modules, is a requirement for all program assistants. The CDC Training and Curriculum Specialists provide extensive training on early childhood topics such as classroom environments, child development, and curriculum.

Fees

The Military Child Care Act of 1989 (Public Law 100-189, Section 1504) requires that the Department of Defense establish uniform fees for child care based upon total family income. For the purpose of determining child care fees in DOD Child Care programs, total family income (TFI) is defined as all earned income including wages, salaries, tips, long-term disability benefits, and voluntary salary deferrals for sponsor and spouse's. All earned income before deductions for taxes, social security, etc. is to be included in the TFI calculation. This would include allowances for quarters, subsistence, and other type of allowances appropriate for rank and status of military/civilian personnel whether received in cash or in kind. For dual military, only the BAH of senior member is used. If you do not wish to disclose your total family income, your rate will be set automatically at the highest fee level. The current fee schedule can be obtained at the child development center.

All fees are due in advance and will be electronic using Visa/MasterCard and Discover card. Fees are due on the 1st and 15th of each month.

Children not picked up by close of business will be assessed a \$5.00 for every five minute or portion thereof after the 3 minute grace period. Late fees will be due on the next business day. If you have work commitments that will exceed the facility closing time, contact the director or FCC office for information on the FCC Extended Duty Care program.

Withdrawal/Termination of Enrollment

In order to withdraw your child from care, you must provide the center a written notice two weeks in advance to your child's last day of care to avoid penalty fees. Penalty fees assessed would be required weekly/bimonthly fees prorated as necessary for the two weeks.

Refunds and/or credits will not be given for days missed by illness, down days, disciplinary suspensions, federal holidays, or days in which the base is closed and civilian staff are given administrative leave.

Continued abuse of child development center policies may result in removal of your child from the program. If the spouse becomes unemployed or loses regular full-time status once the child is enrolled, the spouse will have 60 days to obtain new employment before childcare will be terminated if there are working parents on the waiting list. Parents must provide written notification of withdrawal two weeks in advance to avoid penalty.

Closures

The CDC will be closed all Federal Holidays, and AFGSC Family Days.

Care and Exclusion of Sick Children

The Child Development Center will not accept children into care that are exhibiting signs of illness. For a list of these signs, please refer to the American Academy of Pediatrics, Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools, 4th Edition. Children will be sent home when the illness prevents the child from participating or require greater care than the staff can provide.

The following illnesses could prevent your child from attending:

- fever greater than 100
- vomiting twice
- diarrhea three times
- unexplained rashes and/or rashes accompanied by a fever
- conjunctivitis at the end of the day
- chicken-pox
- strep throat
- ring worm/head lice
- impetigo

Certain conditions do not require a child to be sent home. Providers will focus on the needs and behaviors of the ill child and the ability of staff in the program setting to meet those needs without compromising the care of other children in the group. If your child becomes ill while in the center, you will be called to pick him or her up to prevent others from being exposed. Parents must pick up their child within 1 hour of notification.

If a parent or emergency contact cannot be reached by phone or fail to pick up the child within 1 hour, your First Sergeant or Commander will be contacted to pick up the child. Children removed from the CDC with symptoms of infections may not return to the program until they are symptom free without the use of medications or a physician informs the program in writing that the child is healthy enough to return. Children must be well enough to participate in ALL CDC activities.

Medications Administration

Medications are administered twice daily at the hours of 1000 and 1400. Parents must administer the first dose of medication. Parents must wait 20 minutes if the first dose is administered in the program or home. Only certified staff members will administer medication. Parents will be required to complete and sign the AF Form 1055, Youth Flight Medication Permission, daily. If the AF Form 1055 is incomplete or has not been initialed for the day, the medication will not be administered. This policy applies to all ingested prescription medications. The only exception is sunscreen, insect repellent, lip balm, diaper cream and hand cream.

All medications must have the following information on the prescription label: name of physician, date filled, prescription number, child's name, dosage amount, frequency, expiration date and end date. Prescriptions must be current within 10

days of the date filled.

SIDS Policy

Providing infants with a safe place to grow and learn is very important. For this reason, the Air Force created a policy on safe sleep practices for infants up to 1-year-old. We follow the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Consumer Product Safety Commission to provide a safe sleep environment and reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). SIDS is "the sudden death of an infant under 1 year of age, which remains unexplained after a thorough investigation."

Sleep Position:

Infants will be placed flat on their backs to sleep every time unless there is a required documentation from the child's health care provider and approval from the medical advisor, the Child and Youth Services Flight Chief, and AFSVC/SVPY. A notice will be posted on the infant's crib without identifying medical information. Documentation is kept in the infant's file.

Infants will not be placed on their side for sleep.

Devices such as wedges or infant positioners will not be used, unless specified by a physician, since such devices are not proven to reduce the risk of SIDS.

Infants who use pacifiers will be offered their pacifier when they are placed to sleep, and it will not be put back in should the pacifier fall out once they fall asleep.

Pacifiers will be cleaned between each use, checked for tears, and will not be coated in any sweet or other solution; parents are asked to provide replacement pacifiers on a regular basis.

While infants will always be placed on their backs to sleep, when an infant can turn over from back to front and front to back, they can remain in whatever position they prefer to sleep.

Sleep Environment:

To avoid overheating, the temperature of the rooms where infants sleep will be checked and kept at a level that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult.

Sleep clothing, such as sleepers and sleep sacks, will be used while an infant is sleeping.

Bibs and pacifiers will not be tied around an infant's neck or clipped to an infant's clothing during sleep.

Supervision:

When infants are in their cribs, they will be within sight and sound of staff at all times.

A staff member or substitute staff, will visibly check on the sleeping infants frequently by standing and looking into the child's crib at least 3 times each hour.

Checking on a sleeping child should not disrupt that child's sleep or interrupt the staff member, substitute staff, or family child care provider interactions with children who are awake.

When an infant is awake, they will have supervised "tummy time." This will help babies strengthen their muscles and develop normally.

Infants will spend limited time in bouncer and infant seats when they are awake.

Emergencies

When emergencies arise, the staff will first attempt to contact the parents. If the parent cannot be reached, the staff will contact the designated emergency contact. If the emergency is such that immediate attention is necessary, an ambulance or emergency vehicle will take the child to the hospital.

In the event of an immediate area threat (i.e.: bomb threat, fire, other major building problem) we will evacuate the building and gather in TLF. Parents will be notified of the alternate pick up location.

If there is a more widespread threat (i.e.: facility evacuation, chemical spill, widespread fire, etc.) we will leave the building and/or the neighborhood and proceed to the Dakotas (primary) or Youth Center gym (secondary). Parents will then be notified of the alternate pick up location.

In the event of a mass ordered evacuation we will evacuate the building to a mass shelter as determined by Security Forces or the Command Control Center. Parents will then be notified of the alternate pick up location.

In the event of a natural emergency (i.e.: tornado, severe storms, or hazardous air borne chemicals) outside the CDC, the children and other occupants will shelter in place in prearranged designated areas. If we must evacuate the building, parents will be notified of the alternate pick up location.

If there is a missing child the CDC will notify Security Forces that there is a child missing. Parents of the child will also be notified.

If the base commander releases the base early due to worsening weather conditions, parents are expected to pick their children up as soon as they are released from duty. The CDC will also notify parents of the early release.

It is very important for you to keep the AF Form 1181 up to date at all times. Parents must provide a valid emergency contact number at the front desk when signing children in. The emergency contact name must correspond with the name left as the emergency contact on the child's AF 1181. It is critical that we are able to locate the sponsor, spouse, or emergency contact if your child needs to be picked up. The person must be at least 14 years of age and be able to produce proper identification. If your emergency contact cannot be reached by phone, your First Sergeant or Commander will be contacted to pick up the child.

Concussion policy: From the Center for Disease Control: Seek immediate medical care if one pupil is larger than the other. If the child is drowsy or cannot be awakened, unusual behavior or vomiting.

Food Policy

All food, beverages, and formula (Similac Advance and Soy Isomil) are provided by the center. In accordance with AFI 134-144 8.1 and 134-144 8.2, parents/children are not allowed to bring food into the center. A physician's statement must be provided to support special diets due to medical conditions or allergies. A clergyman statement must be provided to support special diets due to religious reasons. If special diet requirements cannot be purchased through normal channels, parents will be required to bring the specified items in for their child/ren. These items must be in compliance with the nut free policy, Child and Adult Care Food Program guidelines, Public Health storage requirements, as well as the physician's recommendations. All dietary items will be cleared through medical channels. Weekly menus are posted in the lobby on the parent information board. In the event the menu is changed, substitution will be notated on the weekly menu.

Meals are served family style and parents are always invited to join their child for meal time. The meal schedule is:

	Breakfast	Lunch	Snack
All Ages	8:00-8:30	11:00-11:30	2:00:-230

Accountability

Parent/designee must sign the child/ren in and out at the front desk on the AF Form 1182 and on the AF Form 1930 located in each classroom. This procedure is critical for the accountability of children. Parents must also provide a valid emergency contact name and number on the AF Form 1181. This person must be someone other than the parent of the child or a staff member. It is critical that we are able to locate the sponsor, spouse, or emergency contact if your child/ren needs to be picked up. Only persons listed on the AF Form 1181 will be authorized to pick up the child/ren. This person must be at least 14 years of age and be able to produce proper identification.

If your child will not be signed in by 0800 you **must notify/call** the front desk to inform the staff of your child's absence or late arrival. The CDC staff is required to have contact with every family whose child is absent.

Parent Orientation

Parents are encouraged to attend initial orientation provided by program staff on the first and third Wednesday at 0900. During the orientation, the program is explained with age group specific information, building tour, and classroom introductions. This also gives you the opportunity to ask any questions you may have about the program.

Family Involvement

Family involvement is actively solicited. Below are some of the many ways we

encourage you to become involved with our program:

- attend parent orientation
- attend the Parent Advisory Board (PAB) meeting
- join in on field trips and classroom activities
- participate in training opportunities
- caregiver appreciation week
- donation of recycled materials for art
- Spring and Fall cleanup days
- parent/teacher conferences
- share your talents and skills
- share family traditions/stories
- serve in a position on the PAB

Parent Advisory Board (PAB) meets quarterly and parents are highly encouraged to attend.

Parent Communication

We will send out information for parent socials by email. We will also post on our Ellsworth AFB Child Development Center Facebook page information about closures or late starts due to weather.

Group Care

Child Development Centers (CDC's) provide large group care. We adhere to Air Force and DOD regulations/policies and developmental practices that do not always meet individual preferences. Some children have difficulty adapting to a large group environment and exhibit signs such as inconsolable crying (45 minutes or more), continuous biting, hitting, etc. Every effort will be made to help children adjust to their surroundings. Parents will be consulted and their assistance sought in working with the staff to support the child.

Adjustment in ratio, group size, age group placement, menu modifications or other arrangements will not be made without written guidance from a physician, therapist, or other appropriate health professional. The program will accept any special needs child as long as the program is capable of meeting the child's need and the child does not pose a danger to themselves or others.

Outdoor Play Policy

Children will play outside twice daily weather permitting. Children will not play outside if the temperature with wind chill is below 15 degrees. On warm weather days the children will not play outside when the temperature is over 88 degrees. If your child is healthy enough to attend the CDC, your child is healthy enough to engage in outdoor play.

What do I bring?

Parents are reminded that the Child Development program is not responsible for your child's personal items. Please ensure that all items brought into the center are labeled with the child's name. Toys can only be brought on special days specified by your child's teacher.

The center provides Similac Advance, and Soy Isomil for your child. Bring bottles labeled with your child's name. Also bring diapers, wipes, and several change of clothing for your child. Dress your child appropriately for weather

conditions; children will go outside to play daily, weather permitting. **No open toed shoes may be worn in the center.**

Field Trips

Field trips are an integral part of the curriculum. Children will experience the larger community by getting out of the center. Parent and/or guardian will be notified of the location and times of the field trip in advance. At the time of notification the staff will need a signature from the parent/guardian giving permission for their child to participate. Children must be able to participate in all class activities or the parent will need to find alternate care. If the child arrives after their class has left for their field trip, the child will be signed into another classroom until their class returns.

If a child is left behind on a field trip the parents will be notified immediately.

Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect

All employees of the child development programs are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse or neglect. Any techniques that incorporate humiliation or frightening punishment are strictly forbidden. Failure to comply with this policy could result in an employee's termination of employment. Keeping children safe is everybody's business. If you suspect child abuse, child neglect, or a safety violation in your child development center, please report it to Family Advocacy.

Extended Duty Child Care Program

This program assists military families working extended hours by increasing the hours of care available in Air Force licensed Family Child Care (FCC) homes. The Extended Duty Child Care program provides services beyond the standard hours of care that families are already purchasing in child care programs on base.

No Smoking, Drugs, or Alcohol Policy

The Child Development Center facility and outdoor play areas are entirely smoke free. No smoking, drugs or alcohol is permitted in the presence of children.

No Idling Vehicles

28 SFS Policy is that no vehicles are allowed to be idling in the Child Development Center parking lot unattended.

Community Resources

Birth to Three Connections- Jennifer Scott 394-6089

Youth and Family Services Head Start 341-6448

Ellsworth Pediatrics 385-3285

Common Sense Parenting Classes 348-6086

New Parent Support Nurse- Helen Romeyn 385-3488

Love & Logic Classes 385-3486

Black Hills Health and Wellness Center 341-7500

S.M.I.L.E Classes for separating and divorcing parents 348-6086

Learning Solutions 716-2929

Early Childhood Connections- 342-6464

Douglas School District Special Education Director- 923-0013

WIC Office Ellsworth 385-3465

WIC Office Rapid City 394-2516

Child Care Services 394-2525

Behavior Management Services- Melissa Stanton 381-6272

This publication supersedes all other handbooks/pamphlets and will be valid until otherwise specified. This publication is subject to revisions and modifications. Notification of all changes will be made public.

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