



Executive Child Development Center

at HHS/ED Children's Center
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Family Handbook

ECDC's Family Handbook
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Mission Statement</i>	<i>4</i>
<hr/>	
<i>Philosophy</i>	<i>4</i>
<hr/>	
Guiding Principles	
Program Goals	
<i>Description of the Program</i>	<i>5</i>
<hr/>	
Children	
Staff	
Assessments and Parent/Teacher Conferences	
Program Evaluation	
Parent/Guardian Participation	
Committees and Boards	
General Schedule	
<i>Calendar/Holiday Schedule</i>	
<i>Inclement Weather Closings</i>	
<i>Early Drop-off / Late Pick-Up Policies</i>	
<i>Enrollment</i>	<i>9</i>
<hr/>	
Eligibility/Equal Opportunity	
Priority Enrollment	
Annual Registration	
Early Admission	
Custody/Guardianship	
<i>General Information</i>	<i>11</i>
<hr/>	
Absences	
Addresses/Telephone Numbers	
Clothing	
Toys	
Birthdays	
Extra-Curricular Activities	
Community Resources	
Translation Services	
Grievance Procedure	

Health and Safety ***13***

Emergency Evacuation Policy
Safety Rules
Nutrition

Medical Policies ***15***

Medical Requirements
Consent Forms
Administration of Medication

Financial Policies ***16***

Budget
Tuition
Late Payment
Additional Fees
Damage Charge

We are pleased to have you join us and hope that you and your child will have an enjoyable learning experience during your stay at HHS/ED. This handbook describes certain policies pertinent to your enrollment with Executive Child Development Center at HHS/ED Children’s Center in conjunction with the most recent Enrollment Agreement and Health and Safety Manual. The policies contained herein supersede all previous manuals.

If you have any questions, please ask the Director.

Mission Statement

ECDC provides quality child care and education to children of diverse economic and ethnic backgrounds from infancy through school-age. ECDC’s multi-cultural environment cultivates a collaborative, multi-disciplinary approach to meeting the needs of our families. In the broader community, ECDC seeks opportunities to advocate for the well-being of all children.

Philosophy

ECDC has been founded on the premise that each child, regardless of circumstance, claims the world as their own. Respect, positive regard, and learning opportunities are cornerstones for healthy and happy families.

ECDC strives to provide a “community of inquiry” where children and adults are continually translating experience into meaning.

Guiding Principles

- Active exploration is essential to learning.
- Learning is a social endeavor, an exchange of ideas which results in deeper conceptual understanding.

- Foundational skills and achievable challenges create the stepping stones to future learning.
- Learning strategies must be developmentally appropriate, individualized, and personally meaningful.
- A positive and secure environment opens the door to true learning.

Program Goals

- Creating a safe, secure “neighborhood” community for all families.
- Preparing children for future academic success.
- Motivating and supporting staff to continue their progress towards excellence through continued education.
- Allowing children opportunities to fully participate in group settings while expressing their own unique individuality.
- Respecting and nurturing families in their efforts to raise caring and contributing members of society.
- Enjoying each other in our respective roles.

<h3><i>Description of the Program</i></h3>

HHS/ED serves Health and Human Services employees, Department of Education employees and federal employees. Executive Child Development Center (ECDC) is currently serving the Center as its child care provider.

ECDC is a non-profit, parent corporation providing child care for the National Institutes of Health employees (NIH) and federal employees. The members and Board of Directors are composed of community members and parents/guardians of the children enrolled in the child care program. The Center has been open and operating since 1975.

HHS/ED is licensed by the District of Columbia Department of Health. The Center is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Children

HHS/ED serves approximately 76 children of diverse economic and ethnic backgrounds ages six weeks through five years.

The children at HHS/ED benefit socially and intellectually from being in a multi-cultural environment which allows them to learn respect and appreciation for people of different countries and backgrounds.

Staff

ECDC is known for its highly qualified personnel. Our policy is to employ teachers of mixed ethnic backgrounds, and to provide children with a balance of both male and female teachers. All staff must submit and be found suitable for work with children by the Federal Protective Services Security Bureau.

Education is a priority at ECDC for all ages. In order to maintain quality personnel, ECDC offers education scholarships to staff members to further their knowledge and expertise.

Assessments and Parent/Teacher Conferences

Assessment is an integral part of any quality program for the purposes of identifying children's needs and interests, and for improving curriculum, teaching practices, environment, and family involvement.

In an effort to demonstrate children's growth, all children will receive a developmental screening within three months of enrollment at HHS/ED. Ages and Stages Questionnaires, which is a nationally-recognized, normative based instrument designed to be used by

caregivers will be used. All results will be shared with parents/guardians. Ongoing informal assessments including observations, checklists, rating scales, and work samples will be collected and shared at your parent/teacher conferences. All areas of learning including cognitive skills, language, artistic expression, physical growth, and social-emotional development will be covered. If needed, these results will assist us in making appropriate referrals for services. Additionally, multiple data assessment of children will assist teachers in making sound decisions regarding curriculum content, daily planning, and personal interactions.

Semi-annually through staff meetings and literature searches, ECDC actively engages in a literature search for the most appropriate screening/assessment tools published. Parents/guardians will be informed if the assessment instruments and procedures are changed. Parents/guardians are invited to help guide our assessment process to best meet the needs of their children.

Parents/guardians will be provided information, verbally or in writing on a quarterly basis with written reports at least two times each year.

All children's files will remain confidential unless a parent/guardian gives written permission to ECDC to release the information to a third party. Staff who interact regularly with your child will have access to ECDC-generated reports.

Program Evaluation

We are continually evaluating our curricula, policies, and procedures. At least annually, we will ask you to fill out formal evaluation forms. The results will be shared with HHS/ED's families. Your comments and suggestions are always welcome, so please communicate with us. No concern is too small!

Parent/Guardian Participation

Parents/guardians of children enrolled in ECDC programs are encouraged to participate in the program. We invite you to visit the Center anytime. Accompanying your child on field trips and sharing your cultural practices and home traditions with your child's class are wonderful ways for parents/guardians to be involved with their children's education. Please arrange these visits with the appropriate teacher.

HHS/ED is delighted to host luncheons, open houses, graduations, and other celebrations throughout the year. These are great opportunities for parents/guardians to get to know their child's friends as well as other parents/guardians. If you have any suggestions for an event, please feel free to share your ideas with your child's teacher or the administration.

Please check the bulletin boards and your child's classroom cubby or mailbox daily for information about activities, projects, trips, and special notices. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to read announcements and return forms and field trip fees.

HHS/ED offers a list-serv to facilitate communication between the center and the parents/guardians by sending reminders and important announcements. You can join at any time by signing up at the front desk, adding as many email addresses as you'd like.

HHS/ED offers a student directory to assist parents/guardians in communicating with each other. You may choose what information to share with other HHS/ED families, or you may opt to not be included in the directory.

General Schedule

Calendar/Holiday Schedule

HHS/ED is open 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The Center will be closed on all public federal holidays, as well as up to five professional days. There will be no

refund or credit against the tuition fee for these days or for days we close due to circumstances beyond our control (i.e., electrical problems, flood, etc).

Inclement Weather Closings

DCDC is closed only if the federal government is closed. Please refer to your Enrollment Agreement for a more detailed explanation of late openings and early departures of the federal government. A copy of the enrollment agreement is included with this handbook.

Early Drop-off / Late Pick-Up Policies

We will not be responsible for children left unsupervised before our official opening time at 7:00 a.m.

If your child is picked up after 6:00 p.m., you will owe a late fee of \$5.00 for each five-minute period, or portion thereof, after the scheduled time. This late pick-up fee is due to the teacher immediately at the time of pick-up. If your child is picked up over thirty minutes late, he/she may not be admitted to the Center the following day.

Enrollment

Eligibility/Equal Opportunity

HHS/ED is open to all children, ages 6 weeks to 5 years. Children are admitted to programs without regard to race, creed, sex, disability, or socioeconomic class. No discrimination is practiced in the treatment of children in the programs or in program administration or operation.

Priority Enrollment

Children enrolled in HHS/ED's federally-funded space will be selected from the HHS/ED Child Care Waiting List in the priority given to HHS/ED by the Center's Board of Directors. Priority will be given in the following order:

1. Siblings of children of employees of HHS and ED who are currently enrolled in the Center.
2. Siblings of children of employees of other federal agencies and departments who are currently enrolled in the center.
3. Siblings of children that are currently enrolled in the Center from the general public, including federal contractors.
4. Children of employees of HHS and ED with an attempt to allocate the number of slots at the center between HHS and ED families.
5. Children of employees of other federal agencies and departments.
6. Children of families of federal contractors.
7. Dependents of families from the general public.

Annual Registration

Children in the preschool and older programs must be registered annually for the following school year. The registration period occurs in January and/or February.

Custody/Guardianship

If your family is experiencing custody concerns, please inform the Director/Assistant Director immediately and furnish the appropriate documentation. Legal documentation of guardianship may be required.

General Information

Absences

Please notify the Center if your child will be absent on a specific day. You are responsible for paying the full biweekly tuition when your child is enrolled in the Center, even if your child is absent due to illness or vacation.

Addresses/Telephone Numbers

The Center must be notified if there is a change in your address and/or home or office telephone numbers. The names, addresses and phone numbers of persons to contact in an emergency (if you are not available) must be provided. The names and telephone numbers of those persons authorized to pick up your child must also be on file. Please review and initial all registration record information at least annually.

Clothing

All outer clothing and change of clothing items should be labeled. An extra set of clothing should be available at the Center.

Children should be dressed warmly during cold winter months, including boots, mittens, and snow pants on snow days and days following snow, so that children can play outdoors.

We encourage children to wear casual clothing.

Toys

Toys may be brought to the Center if they are suitable for sharing with other classmates. The Center does not assume responsibility for the loss or breakage of these toys. Toy weapons are not allowed.

Birthdays

The Center encourages the parents/guardians of children having birthdays to participate and to provide nutritious birthday foods for a party. Please do not send candy, gum, or other junk food. Please let the teacher know when you are planning a birthday celebration.

Latex balloons pose a choking hazard, however mylar balloons are permitted at the Center.

Please be conscientious of the children in your child's classroom when planning a birthday party outside of the center. If you are inviting all the children in your child's class, HHS/ED is happy to put the invitations in the classroom's mailboxes. If you are not inviting everyone, please mail the invitations to the children's homes. Many families share their information in the annual student directory. If a family is not in the directory, the administration will be happy to assist without sharing the addresses.

Extra-Curricular Activities

HHS/ED has several on-site extra-curricular programs that are in addition to the activities included in the curriculum. Payments for these programs are by contract between the activity's provider and the parent/guardian. HHS/ED will have an ECDC employee present at all activities except for private lessons.

Community Resources

The ECDC administration would be happy to help you with attaining resources throughout the community for many needs your child or family may have. Please feel free to stop by and speak with an administrator at any time. Additionally, HHS/ED posts community information in the front lobby and classrooms.

Translation Services

If at any time you need translation of documents or to communicate with a staff member with the assistance of a translator, please notify a member of the administration.

Grievance Procedure

Grievance complaints are best handled informally and expediently between the involved parties. ECDC staff are interested in providing the best service to your family, so feel free to communicate your concerns, no matter how small. The Director and Assistant Director are available to discuss any concerns.

<h3><u>Health and Safety</u></h3>
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Emergency Evacuation Policy

Children who are capable of walking will be trained how to exit the building in an orderly manner during emergencies and monthly drills. These procedures will include establishing a “buddy” system, line drills, holding onto a rope, etc.

Non-walking children will be placed in evacuation devices such as evacuation cribs on sturdy wheels and will be rolled out of the Center to our assembly point.

Our child care staff will maintain an up-to-date roster of the children present. The supervisor will be responsible for verifying the safe evacuation of all children listed on the roster.

The Director and HHS/ED Security will be responsible for physically checking all areas within the Center. Facilities Management will be notified of the evacuation and its progress. Parents/guardians will not be allowed to remove a child from the Center’s custody until we have accounted for all children.

If the telephone is not answered at the center, call back in approximately ten minutes since we may be practicing our emergency procedures.

Upon evacuation of the facility, no one will be allowed to re-enter the facility until an official “all-clear” signal is given.

All child care staff and support personnel will be trained in emergency/evacuation procedures.

Safety Rules

Our Center has been designed to provide children with a safe and healthy environment. The following is a list of safety rules for all programs at the Center. Please be aware of them. Discuss them with your children.

- Do not leave children in a car without supervision.
- Supervise your children carefully while walking into the center.
- If you have made arrangements to have your child picked up by someone not listed on your child’s emergency card, please notify us with the person’s name and relationship to the family. The person may be required to show photo identification.

Nutrition

HHS/ED offers breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. Due to increasing numbers of severe nut allergies, ECDC is requiring that nuts are not served at the center. This includes nut butter and candies with nuts. Soy products are acceptable.

For further details regarding health and safety issues, please refer to ECDC’s Health and Safety Manual.

Medical Policies

Medical Requirements

Please refer to ECDC's Health and Safety Manual regarding ECDC's exclusion and readmission policies, which follow the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Please call the Center if your child will not be in school due to illness, and specify the illness. Diagnosed illnesses will be posted on classroom doors anonymously.

As your child receives immunizations, please provide HHS/ED with documentation.

Consent Forms

In an effort to maintain the most appropriate practices for each child and provide staff members with a visual reminder of such necessities, HHS/ED may post children's specific allergies, medical information, and/or dietary information in food preparation areas and within the classrooms with the permission of a parent/guardian.

Administration of Medication

The administration of prescription and non-prescription medication is permitted with prior written permission from the child's parent, as well as a written medical order or prescription from the child's licensed health care practitioner.

A separate medication order form is to be filled out for each prescription and non-prescription medication.

All medication must be in its original container, and clearly labeled with your child's first and last name, the name of the medicine, the dosage, the method of administration and the

name and telephone number of the child's licensed health care practitioner. The first dose must be given by the parent.

Non-prescription topical creams, moisturizers, sun blocks, and diaper creams may be administered with the written permission of the child's parent or guardian.

All nonprescription topical ointments must be in their original containers.

The intent of the regulation is that a child not be medicated repeatedly or in an on-going manner without the parent/guardian having consulted and/or visited a medical professional.

Financial Policies

Budget

ECDC is committed to affordable, quality child care for all families needing services. Parent/guardian tuition provides the greatest source of operating income. Additionally, ECDC participates in various subsidy programs, including Federal Employee Education & Assistance Fund, a tuition assistance through the HHS/ED's Board of Directors and any other programs that you may qualify for. Other sources of funds are derived from fundraising efforts.

Tuition

Tuition payments are due on Mondays for the following two-week period. Payment must be mailed or delivered directly to the ECDC Center office by the end of the first tuition week or a late fee will be charged. Unpaid late fees will be deducted from the tuition deposit when the child leaves the Center. ECDC does not bill for tuition unless a payment is late. A schedule of payments (tuition calendar) is distributed annually, with additional copies readily available from the administration.

Receipts are available on a four-week or end-of-year basis when requested. If you would like receipts, please include a request with a tuition check. Flexible spending account forms and similar requests require 48 hours.

Tuition payments must be made if a child is absent for vacation or illness.

A two-week deposit is required and will be applied to the tuition for the last two weeks the child is in the program. Written notice must be given at least thirty days before the child leaves the program.

A fee will be charged for checks returned because of insufficient funds.

Late Payment

If the Center has not received any tuition payment by the sixth day after payment is due, the Center may refuse to admit your child until you pay the amount. If the Center has not received your payment by the thirteenth day after payment is due, your child's enrollment in the Center may be terminated and his/her space will be offered to another child. You will not be entitled to a refund of your deposit.

Additional Fees

Fees may apply to field trips and special events held for your child's class. During summer camp, an activity fee will be added to the biweekly tuition for children in the two's through kindergarten programs. This activity fee includes all field trips, swimming, and special events.

Damage Charges

You may be held financially responsible for any property damage due to destructive behavior of your child.