



**TOP Early Learning Centers  
Parent Handbook**

**TOP North**

2330 Opportunity Drive  
Wichita, Kansas 67219  
Enrollment Office – 440-2788

**TOP South**

4600 S. Clifton  
Wichita, Kansas 67216  
Enrollment Office – 749-4982

**TOP Northwest**

2665 N. Arkansas  
Wichita, KS 67204  
Enrollment Office – 361-2000



Dear Parents,

It is with great joy, anticipation, and excitement that we meet and welcome you and your children. Thank you for entrusting each of them to our care. We assure you that they will be loved and respected, given guidance, nurtured, and taught with developmentally appropriate teaching methods. We invite you to join us at any time to revisit childhood at its best. Welcome to our exciting environment for children, families, and educators.

Yours for the future of our children,



Cornelia Stevens,  
Executive Director

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## **About TOP Early Learning Centers**

TOP Early Learning Centers are nonprofit facilities licensed by the state of Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), established to provide quality early childhood education for children in Sedgwick County. TOP is funded by partnership agreements with Child Start, local school districts, donations, grants, registration fees, and charitable contributions. The Centers serve children twelve months and walking through five years of age.

TOP Early Learning Centers are committed to a policy of nondiscrimination involving equal access to education, employment and childcare opportunity to all regardless of race, religion, color, sex, national origin, citizenship status, age, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, disability or any other protected status in accordance with the requirements of all federal, state and local laws. We will attempt to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities. The administration and teachers will review each child's situation on a case-by-case basis to determine if the needs of the child can be met.

## **Mission Statement**

*Our mission is to deliver a high-quality early learning experience to children living in poverty, providing them the tools needed for emotional, academic, and lifelong success*

## **TOP Early Learning Centers Hours**

The hours of Center operations are 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

## **Enrollment**

Children are accepted for enrollment on a first-come, first-served basis. If space is not currently available, a child may be placed on the Center wait list at no charge. The registration fee is due upon actual enrollment.

Siblings, cousins, relatives, or those living in the same household are generally placed in separate classrooms from one another if space is available.

If building access is allowed, parents/caregivers and children should visit the classroom and meet with the teacher prior to the first day of attendance. This transition will help ease the adjustment for the child and the parent/caregiver.

All required forms must be on file at the Center before the first day of attendance as required by KDHE Licensing Regulations.

Requests for any change in schedule after initial enrollment must be documented with a new Parent Agreement. Changes in schedule will be approved by a member of the enrollment team if space allows and will start on the next billing cycle

A parent shall be allowed to withdraw a child from the Center for the following reasons:

- Serious illness of a child or parent
- Permanent move from the area
- Joint decision between caregiver and Center that attendance is not in the best interest of the child and/or the Center

The Center shall withdraw/terminate enrollment for the following reasons:

- If a child's attendance continues to fall below 85% after working with the parents to improve attendance
- Inability of child or parent to adjust to the school program, policies, and procedures, or philosophies
- Delinquency (14 days past due) in payment of tuition, enrollment, supply, or late fees
- Teachers' safety and well-being
- Safety of other children in the class or Center
- Parental conduct unbecoming to the Center or staff

If a parent/caregiver would like to withdraw their child from TOP Early Learning Centers, two weeks' notice shall be required, except in the case of serious illness or accident. The enrollment fees and two-week prepayment at the time of enrollment are non-refundable. All fees for the two weeks following the notification are due.

A child's enrollment will never be terminated without first informing the parents/caregivers of the problem and working together with them to resolve the problem. Parents will be given 3-10 days' notice before termination (except where the child's safety and well-being or other children's safety and well-being are in danger) in order to make other arrangements and ensure a smooth transition.

Please understand that your child can only attend the Center if the following have been completed:

- 1) The Parent Agreement has been reviewed and signed by the parent/caregiver and the enrollment staff
- 2) Enrollment paperwork including the Physical/Health Assessment is completed and checked by the enrollment staff.
- 3) Meal Modification Forms filled out by a doctor, registered nurse, or physician's assistant must include specific substitutions for a child with any type of food allergy
- 4) Payment has been made for all current or past due fees and the first two weeks' tuition

### **Special Needs Statement**

TOP Early Learning Centers strive to meet the individual needs of children. However, there are a limited number of children whose needs we cannot accommodate. If we receive an application from a family who has a child requiring a special educational environment or special health accommodation greater than our resources will allow, we will try to help the caregivers find a more appropriate program. If we determine attendance at TOP Early Learning Centers should be a part of the child's educational program, the following conditions apply:

- We cannot provide one-on-one supervision for children on a consistent/daily basis for special education or special health needs.
- We cannot be responsible for providing a therapeutic program.
- The child's attendance cannot compromise the program.

### **Breakfast Policy**

TOP Early Learning Centers open at 7:30 a.m. and breakfast is served between 8:00 a.m. and 8:20 a.m. Breakfast will not be available for children after 8:30 a.m. due to Health Department food regulations.

### **Nutrition, Snacks, and Lunch**

Nutrition education is a vital part of the TOP Early Learning Centers' curriculum. Children learn best when they are not hungry. TOP prides itself on the nutritional food experiences and menu options prepared each day for breakfast, lunch, and snack.

In accordance with USDA nutrition standards, as well as the food and nutrition guidelines for choking hazards, the Center prohibits whole grapes, nuts, raw peas, hard round pretzels, spoonfuls of peanut butter, or large chunks of raw carrots during meals. Food is cut into small pieces no larger than ½ inch square for toddlers/twos according to each child's chewing and swallowing capability.

If your child has any food allergies, your physician must complete a Meal Modification Form ***designating appropriate substitutions***. The form is available in the enrollment office. Menus are posted monthly.

During meal times, staff will sit with the children at the table in small groups, and socialization will be encouraged. Children will be allowed to pour their own drinks, serve themselves if able, and help with preparation, serving, and cleaning up. This is as much of a learning process as the rest of the curriculum. The Center intends to serve nutritious, fresh, and often creative selections. No child will be forced to eat, but positive modeling and encouragement will be used.

Meals are included in fees. TOP Early Learning Centers participate in the USDA Child Care and Adult Food Program.

### **Attendance**

**Parents arriving after 8:30 a.m. are considered late and will be asked to speak with the director in charge to determine whether an exception will be made.** Exceptions to this policy will be made for scheduled doctor's appointments, and a limited number of unforeseen events. If your child has a doctor's appointment and will arrive at school late, please call before 8:30 a.m. and bring a note from the doctor saying the child was seen in the office that day. Children may not leave the school and return later in the day unless parents return with a doctor's note. If you have another adult who will be bringing your child to the Center, it is your responsibility to make sure they understand this policy as well. Please see your Center director for any questions or concerns

### **Staffing Curriculum, and Program**

**All classrooms have at least two adults present at all times. One full-time lead teacher and one full-time assistant teacher is assigned to each classroom. In addition to the full-time teachers, the Center has lead and assistant teacher floats to assist in the classrooms as part of the adult/child ratio. All staff members are certified in Pediatric First Aid and CPR.**

**Two background checks will be administered on each TOP employee including a comprehensive fingerprint-based check consisting of:**

**1. A Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) fingerprint check**

**2. A search of the National Crime Information Center's National Sex Offender Registry**

**3. A search of the following registries, repositories or databases in the state where the individual resides and each state where the individual has resided in the previous five years:**

**a. State criminal registry or repository**

**b. State sex offender registry or repository**

**c. State-based child abuse and neglect registry and database**

**TOP Early Learning Centers also completes a national background check through the National Screening Bureau (NATSB) on all employees and volunteers.**

The Center staff includes:

- Executive Director
- Finance Director
- Accounting/HR/Payroll Assistant
- Center Director
- Assistant Director
- Curriculum Coach
- Assessment Coordinator
- Studio Coordinator
- Kitchen Manager
- Lead Cook
- Assistant Cook
- Dishwasher
- Enrollment Coordinator
- Enrollment Assistant
- Family Services Coordinator
- Lead Teachers
- Assistant Teachers

## **CURRICULUM**

Each lead teacher is responsible for preparing weekly lesson plans based on developmentally appropriate learning activities. These plans are posted on the bulletin board near each classroom for parents to view. Activities are planned in the developmental areas of language and literacy, numeracy, science, social studies, fine motor and gross motor physical skills, self-help, and social-emotional skills. Please ask your child's lead teacher if you have any questions about the plans. Teachers welcome parent input in planning activities for children.

Toddler classrooms use the nationally recognized Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers & Twos in developing their classroom activities. The five components of this curriculum are 1) creating a responsive environment, 2) children's learning, 3) caring and teaching, 4) partnering with families, and 5) knowing infants, toddlers, and twos. These five components are met through the routines and experiences the teacher develops with the children. These experiences are based around free-play, dramatic play, stories and books, music, art, food, sensory, and outdoors. Intentional learning and relationship-building activities are planned during routine times such as, hellos and good-byes, diapering and toileting, eating and mealtimes, sleeping and

nap time, and getting dressed. Through daily observations, teachers create an individual curriculum for each child.

Preschool classrooms use Connect4Learning, an interdisciplinary prekindergarten curriculum that was developed through funding from the National Science Foundation. It integrates research-validated teaching methodologies from early childhood mathematics, science, literacy, and social-emotional learning. The prekindergarten curriculum is divided into six units that address 134 measurable learning objectives and support children's development of 10 fundamental thinking skills. The learning objectives are fully aligned with state early learning standards.

Connect4Learning seamlessly integrates child-centered activities with teacher-led instruction. With its project-based approach and rich vocabulary use, it aligns with recommended practices to support dual-language learners and children from under-resourced communities. TOP Early Learning Centers use the same pre-k curriculum as Wichita and Derby Public Schools in order to provide a seamless transition to public school.

### **Personal Education Plans**

All children attending TOP Schools receive a personal education plan. This plan enables teachers to provide individual and small group instruction tailored to the child's needs.

### **Health Policies**

A child must have a current Physical/Health Assessment with a KCI Immunization Record prior to enrollment. These must be updated yearly. A licensed physician or a nurse approved to perform health assessments should sign the physical form.

Each child is required to have his/her immunization up to date when entering. If not, the parent must present a note from the doctor stating the appointment schedule for finishing the required immunizations. Exceptions for immunizations will only be made for children exempted from the laws requiring immunization for the following reasons:

1. The parent or legal guardian has provided certification from licensed physician stating that immunization would endanger child's life
2. The parent or legal guardian of a religious denomination whose teachings are opposed to immunizations

To protect children from illness, TOP Early Learning Centers must refuse to receive any child who is obviously ill or running a fever, etc. The child should not be brought to the Center if, within the last 24 hours, he/she has shown such signs of illness as rash, fever, vomiting, or diarrhea. Please note: Your child must be symptom free for 24 hours without the aid of medications (such as Tylenol, Ibuprofen, etc.) before returning to the Center. Illnesses that appear to be gone in the morning tend to flare up again later in the day. After an illness, please keep your child home until there are no symptoms for 24 hours. The Center reserves the right to request a doctor's note that **"releases the child to return to the Center and a release for participation in regular activities"** if the illness is determined by the Center staff as **"severe."**



If your child becomes ill while at the Center, you will be asked to pick him/her up immediately if he/she displays the following symptoms:

1. A fever higher than 100 degrees
2. Two or more episodes of diarrhea within four hours
3. Vomiting
4. Symptoms of other communicable illness

If a child is suspected of having a temperature, a staff member will take a temperature reading. Temperatures are taken twice to assure accuracy of reading before parents are called. If it is 100 degrees or higher, the child will be isolated, and the parent will be contacted by the Center director to pick him/her up immediately. If the child is not picked up within one hour of the call, administration will contact the Department for Children and Families to report a child in need of care.

If a child will be absent due to illness or for any other reason, please call the school as early as possible.

### **Emergency medical treatment**

When a staff member accompanies a child to the source of emergency care, that person shall remain with the child until a parent or parent's designee assumes responsibility for the child.

### **Reporting illnesses and injuries**

The parent or guardian shall be notified immediately for each illness or injury of a child which requires medical attention.

It is important that we are able to reach you in case of an emergency. Parents' schedules with active phone numbers are to be on file on the child's first day. **Any exception or change to the regular daily schedule should be given in written form to the enrollment assistant or enrollment coordinator.** Hospital emergency forms are required to authorize hospital personnel to contact your physician and administer care in the event a parent cannot be located. If at any time your phone number or work number changes, please notify the enrollment staff at the Center immediately, and fill out a Parent Update Form as soon as possible.

### **Infection Control Policies and Actions:**

#### **Screening**

All adults and children entering the building will be screened for any signs and symptoms on a daily basis. Screening will include:

- Taking the temperature of each person upon arrival each day to ensure they do not have a temperature of 100°F or higher
- Observing each person for signs or symptoms of a respiratory infection such as a cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat
- Asking several screening questions including:

- In the previous 14 days have you or anyone in your household had contact with someone with a confirmed diagnosis of an infectious disease; is under investigation for in infectious disease; or is ill with a respiratory illness?
- In the previous 14 days have you or anyone in your household traveled internationally to countries OR domestically to states or counties with widespread, sustained community transmission?
- Have you given your child(ren) Tylenol® or Advil® in the past 24 hours? If screening an adult for entry, ask if they have taken Tylenol® or Advil® in the past 24 hours.
- Is there anyone in the home showing signs of illness or who have the following:
  - Fever greater than 100 degrees
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing sudden loss of smell or taste other signs of illness (headache, sore throat, general aches/pains, fatigue/weakness/extreme exhaustion)

#### Observing for signs of illness

- New or worsening cough
- shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
- other signs of illness (tiredness/lethargy/weakness/extreme exhaustion, flushed cheeks, rash, runny nose, drainage from eyes)

#### **Exclusion**

***If the person has a temperature greater than 100°F, has answered yes to any of the infectious disease related questions, or has any infectious disease related symptoms they will be denied entry for 14 days or until the person presents medical verification from their physician that they not contagious to any person.***

- Individuals who have a fever or other signs of illness will not be admitted.
- Individuals with history of infectious disease exposure, including travel within the last 14 days in a state or country identified as a hot spot shall not be admitted.

#### **Other Illnesses during an infectious disease pandemic:**

- All adults and children with other illnesses (vomiting, rash, diarrhea, pink eye, sinus/ear infections, etc.) must present medical verification from their physician that they are not contagious to other persons, and those Individuals should be fever free for at least 72 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medications (Tylenol® or Advil®) before returning and entry to the facility will be allowed.

#### **Building access**

There will be a single point of entry for staff, students, vendors, or anyone else requiring access to our schools.

The following individuals will be given access to the building:

- Current TOP employees
- Children enrolled at TOP
- Parents/guardians who have children enrolled and present at TOP will have a limited access to the building but will be able to make payments, complete paperwork, or meet with program staff if scheduled.
- Persons with legal authority to enter, including law enforcement officers, Child Care Licensing staff, and CPS staff.
- Vendors or janitorial providers
- Professionals providing services to children
- Therapists like speech, occupational, physical, and other therapeutic support staff (TSS) must be allowed access to children to provide services.

### **Pickup/drop-off**

Each TOP School will have staggered drop-off and pick-up times to avoid overcrowding of children and parents/guardians in a confined space. Parents will be greeted at the door or outside.

### **Communication**

- TOP will maintain regular communication with all parents regarding any updates and policy changes.

### **Medications**

**The following policies are in place regarding medicine in the classroom:**

- If a child requires over-the-counter or prescription medications, it must be stated, with written parent and doctor's permission, in the child's file along with written instructions on how and when the medication is to be given.
- Only trained TOP Early Learning Centers staff will be permitted to administer medication and will document that they:
  1. Verified the right child
  2. Verified the right medication
  3. Verified the right dose
  4. Verified the right time
- This document must be signed by the teacher. At TOP Early Learning Centers, lead and assistant teachers, director and assistant directors are all trained in medication administration.
- Medications must be labeled with the child's first and last names, the child's physician, prescription number, directions for administration and storage, and the expiration date or period of use.
- All children's medication is kept in locked storage.
- Sunscreen and insect repellent are considered medications and must have written permission from the parent.

Adults in the classroom are not to carry any medications, whether prescription or over the counter, on their person at any time. If a teacher or staff member is required to have medication, it is stored away from the classroom. This includes aspirin, Tylenol, nasal spray, inhalers, etc.

## **Confidentiality**

Within TOP Early Learning Centers, confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with employees or designated partners of TOP Early Learning Centers who “need to know” to appropriately and safely care for your child. Confidential and sensitive information about faculty, other parents and/or children will not be shared, as TOP Early Learning Centers strive to protect everyone’s right of privacy. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to names, addresses, phone numbers, disability information, or other health related information of anyone associated with TOP Early Learning Centers.

Outside of TOP Early Learning Centers, confidential and sensitive information about a child will only be shared when the parent of the child has given express written consent, except where otherwise provided for by law. Parents will be provided with a document detailing the information that is to be shared outside of TOP Early Learning Centers, persons with whom the information will be shared, and the reason(s) for sharing the information.

Any parent who violates the Confidentiality Policy will not be permitted on agency property thereafter. Refer to the policy regarding Parents Right to Immediate Access for additional information regarding dis-enrollment of a child when a parent is prohibited from accessing agency property.

You may observe children at our Center who are disabled or who exhibit behavior that may appear inappropriate (i.e. biting, hitting, and spitting). You may be curious or concerned about the other child. Our Confidentiality Policy protects every child’s privacy. Employees of TOP Early Learning Centers are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you.

## **Social Media**

All employees are strictly prohibited from initiating “friend requests” to or from any children, or families associated with TOP.

## **Neglect or Abuse**

Under the Child Protective Services Act, mandated reporters are required to report any **suspicion** of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. The employees of TOP Early Learning Centers are considered mandated reporters, under this law. The employees are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior or condition prior to making a report. Under the Act, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. We take this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the Kansas Department for Children and Families as required. The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children.

As mandated reporters, staff cannot be held liable for reports made to Child Protective Services which are determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made in good faith.

Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ Unusual bruising, marks, or cuts on the child’s body
- ◆ Severe verbal reprimands

- ◆ Improper clothing relating to size, cleanliness, season
- ◆ Transporting a child without appropriate child restraints (e.g. car seats, seat belts, etc.)
- ◆ Dropping off or picking up a child while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
- ◆ Leaving a child unattended for any amount of time
- ◆ Failure to attend to the special needs of a disabled child
- ◆ Sending a sick child to school over medicated to hide symptoms, which would typically require the child to be kept at home until symptoms subside
- ◆ Children who exhibit behavior consistent with an abusive situation

### **Biting**

Anytime a child is bitten by another child at the Center, the teacher fills out an “Accident Report Form.” A copy of the form will go to parents of both children involved. The teacher will try to make a personal contact to each parent. The teacher in charge shall either talk with the parent personally when he/she comes to the Center to get the child or by phone call. If a child is bitten and the skin is broken, parents of both children involved shall be notified immediately by the teacher. The teacher will report to the director/assistant director any incidents of biting. Persistent biting may be cause for a child to be dismissed from the Center.

### **Parent Code of Conduct**

TOP Early Learning Centers require the parents/caregivers of enrolled children to behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect at all times. One of the goals of TOP Early Learning Centers is to provide the most appropriate environment in which a child can grow, learn, and develop. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of the employees of TOP Early Learning Centers but is the responsibility of each and every parent or adult who enters the Center. **Parents who violate the Parent Code of Conduct will not be permitted on agency property thereafter.** Please refer to the Policy on Parents’ Right to Immediate Access for additional information regarding dis-enrollment of the child when a parent is prohibited from accessing agency property.

### **SWEARING/CURSING:**

No parent or adult is permitted to curse or use other inappropriate language on agency property at any time, whether in the presence of a child or not. Such language is considered offensive by many people and will not be tolerated. If a parent or adult feels frustrated or angry, it is more appropriate to verbally express the frustration or anger using non-offensive language. At NO time shall inappropriate language be directed toward members of the staff or children.

### **THREATENING OF EMPLOYEES, CHILDREN, OTHER PARENTS OR ADULTS ASSOCIATED WITH TOP Early Learning Centers:**

Threats of any kind will not be tolerated. In today’s society, TOP Early Learning Centers cannot afford to sit by idly while threats are made. In addition, all threats will be reported to the appropriate authorities and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. While apologies for such behavior are appreciated, the agency will not assume the risk of a second chance.

**PARENTS MUST BE RESPONSIBLE FOR AND IN CONTROL OF THEIR BEHAVIOR AT ALL TIMES.**

## **PHYSICAL/VERBAL PUNISHMENT OF YOUR CHILD OR OTHER CHILDREN AT TOP EARLY LEARNING CENTERS**

While TOP Early Learning Center does not necessarily support nor condone corporal punishment of children, such acts are not permitted in the child care facility. While verbal reprimands may be appropriate it is not appropriate for parents to verbally abuse their child. Doing so may cause undue embarrassment or emotional distress. Parents are always welcome to discuss a behavior issue with the teacher and to seek advice and guidance regarding appropriate and effective disciplinary procedures.

Parents are prohibited from addressing, for the purpose of correction or discipline, a child that is not their own. Of course, no parent or other adult may physically punish another parent's child. If a parent should witness another parent's child behaving in an inappropriate manner, or is concerned about behavior reported to them by their own child, it is most appropriate for the parent to direct their concern to the classroom teacher and/or center director.

Furthermore, it is wholly inappropriate for one parent to seek out another parent to discuss their child's inappropriate behavior. All behavior concerns should be brought to the classroom teacher or director's attention. At that point, the teacher and/or director will address the issue with the other parent. Although you may be curious as to the outcome of such a discussion, teachers and/or the center director are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you. All children enrolled in our agency have privacy rights and are further protected by our Confidentiality Policy. You may be assured that we will not discuss anything about your child with another parent or adult visiting the Center.

### **SMOKING:**

For the health of all TOP Early Learning Centers employees, children and associates, smoking (including electronic/battery operated smoking devices) is prohibited anywhere on agency property. Parents are prohibited from smoking in the building, on the grounds, and in the parking lot of TOP Early Learning Centers. Parents who are smoking in their cars must dispose of the cigarette prior to entering the parking lot.

### **VIOLATIONS OF THE SAFETY POLICY:**

Parents are required to follow all safety procedures at all times. These procedures are designed not as mere inconveniences, but to protect the welfare and best interest of the employees, children and associates of TOP Early Learning Centers. Please be particularly mindful of entrance procedures. We all like to be polite; however, we need to be careful to not allow unauthorized individuals into the Center. Holding the door open for the person following you be polite; however, that person may not be authorized to enter the premises. Security procedures are only as strong as the weakest person in our organizational chain. Be alert and mindful. Immediately report any breaches to the Center Director.

### **CONFRONTATIONAL INTERACTIONS WITH EMPLOYEES, OTHER PARENTS OR ASSOCIATES OF TOP EARLY LEARNING CENTERS:**

While it is understood that parents will not always agree with the employees of TOP Early Learning Centers or the parents of the other children, it is expected that all disagreements be handled in a calm and respectful manner. Confrontational interactions are not an appropriate means by which to communicate a point and are strictly prohibited.

## **VIOLATIONS OF THE CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY:**

TOP Early Learning Centers takes the responsibility of maintaining the confidentiality of all persons associated with the agency very seriously. Parents must understand the implications of this responsibility. Parents need to recognize that the Confidentiality Policy not only applies to their child or family, but all children, families and employees associated with TOP Early Learning Centers. Any parent who shares any information considered confidential or pressures employees or other parents for information that is not necessary for them to know, will be considered in violation of the Confidentiality Policy.

## **Babysitting by TOP Early Learning Center Employees**

TOP employees/teachers are not permitted to accept babysitting jobs for children enrolled at our Center. Please do not ask teachers to care for your child outside the Center. Our staff are professional educators, and we request that parents treat them as such. The personal relationships that are formed when teachers babysit for families make it difficult for teachers to remain objective. Real or perceived favoritism can become a problem along with real concerns about professional confidentiality. Young children also find it hard to understand and relate to the differing roles of babysitter and teacher. It then becomes hard for them to “share” the special person who comes to their home to play and entertain.

## **Hand Washing**

All children need to wash their hands in the classroom immediately upon arrival in the classroom. Children and staff will also wash their hands according to state and partner regulations.

## **Guidance Plan**

1. **Redesign**: Redesign our program to meet needs of individual children.
2. **Reinforce**: Positively encourage children to act in positive ways.
3. **Respond**: Teachers respond in a positive manner when a behavior is inappropriate such as “Use your walking feet, please. We run outside.”
4. **Remind**: Children are reminded when their behavior is becoming disruptive.
5. **Redirect**: A child may need to move to another activity.
6. **Remove**: If the above techniques are not working, a child may need to sit out for a while and talk with the teacher to develop a positive plan of action.

**If a child is unable to function acceptably in the classroom, the teacher may request administrative assistance. The administrator in charge may choose to contact a parent in order to pick up the child if the behavior is unacceptable and consistently out of control.** Also, if a child hurts or injures a teacher, the parent will be called to come take him/her from the Center. Parents need to be supportive of acceptable consequences. Children must learn appropriate limits so that they will develop appropriate social skills with others.

## **Prohibited Punishment**

Punishment, which is humiliating, frightening, or physically harmful to the child, shall be prohibited. Prohibited methods or punishments include:

1. Corporal Punishment
2. Verbal abuse, threats, or derogatory remarks about the child or the child’s family
3. Binding or trying to restrict movement or enclosing in a confined space such as a closet, locked room, or similar cubicle
4. Withholding or forcing food

### **Developmental Assessment**

In keeping with our belief in the value of early intervention for children with developmental problems, our staff members are alert to normal developmental behavior. They may express concerns to parents about children who seem to differ from the norm. This is our attempt to be of support and help to parents and is considered our professional responsibility. Staff members are not trained to diagnose special needs. We, instead, attempt to point out variance from the norm and recommend further assessment, appropriate programs, activities or other helpful information if parents desire.

### **Pets**

Pets are an important part of our school community. Classroom pets or visiting animals will be in good health. We will have documentation from a veterinarian to show that the animals are fully immunized (if the animal should be so protected) and that the animal is suitable for contact with children. Teaching staff supervise all interactions between children and animals and instruct children on safe behavior when in close proximity to animals. Program staff will make sure that any child who is allergic to a type of animal is not exposed to that animal if it is documented on the child's health form.

The care of pets is a valuable experience for children. All animals will be properly caged. The children may help with the feeding of pets with staff supervision. Staff is responsible for keeping our pets' cages and aquariums clean. Reptiles are not allowed as classroom pets because of the risk for salmonella infection

### **Toys**

We request that toys be brought to the Center only for show and tell. Guns, toys, or books of violence, candy, and gum should not be brought to the Center. Although we will encourage proper care of toys, we will not be responsible for any breakage or loss of toys brought to the Center. Children are not to bring videos or DVDs to school.

### **Birthdays**

Birthdays are a very special day in a child's life. Families choose to celebrate their children's birthdays in many ways. We recommend bringing a healthy low-fat and low-sugar snack if you wish to celebrate your child's birthday at school. Following are some recommended birthday/holiday treats: low sugar/low fat cake/cupcakes, cheese, crackers, low fat dips, baked chips, yogurt, sugar-free pudding, sugar-free Jell-O, fruit snacks, fruit (bananas, melons, apples, etc.), granola bars, juice popsicles, 100% juice, rice cakes, Chex mix, applesauce, teddy grahams, fat-free caramel dip, salsa, fat-free yogurt ice cream. **All items must be store bought and in an unopened package.**

### **Holidays**

Holidays are celebrated; however, our program is non-denominational. We do not teach a specific religious belief to the children. We do, however, encourage each child to share with us the traditions and beliefs practiced in their homes. The teachers may also share the customs practiced in their homes. Many celebrations of other cultures are enjoyed as we incorporate a multicultural curriculum.



### **Vacation**

Each family will be allowed one week's (5 days) vacation/leave per year (September – July) with two weeks' notice in advance. The account must be current at the time vacation/leave is taken. A credit for five days will be issued during the week of the absence. Please contact enrollment.

### **Clothing**

We suggest that your child wear comfortable, washable clothing. In accordance with the Kansas Regulations for Licensing, “Each child shall have at least two complete changes of clothing.” We ask that you bring two extra changes of clothing appropriate for the season to leave in your child's classroom, to include undergarments. Each garment must be clearly marked with your child's name.”

We spend time outdoors every day, so dress your child accordingly. Please send hats, mittens, and sweaters or coats with your child during the cold weather.

### **Naptime**

Children shall be encouraged to nap or rest according to his/her individual needs. They will be directed to nap/rest on their cots. After 30 minutes, children who do not nap will be permitted to have quiet time using books or toys that will not disturb other children. These guidelines are required by the state licensing regulations. Naptime may include quiet stories and soft music.

Plastic framed nylon covered cots are provided for each child. Individual sheets and blankets are furnished by the Center. Children may bring a pillow and/or stuffed animal from home.

### **Tuition and Fees**

Tuition will be agreed upon at enrollment and clearly outlined on your Parent Agreement.

Private Pay Families - Enrollment fees and the first two weeks' tuition are due at the time of enrollment. Tuition is due within four business days of invoice date, or every other Friday after the invoice date.

DCF Child Care Funding – Enrollment fees and the first two weeks' tuition are due at the time of enrollment. DCF will make a determination for the number of hours per day the child will be funded. If your DCF funding does not cover all the child's tuition, you will be responsible for the difference. Tuition is due within four business days of invoice date, or every other Friday after the invoice date.

USD Pre-K Program – This program is funded by the Public-School District for four and five year old children. The child must meet the program eligibility criteria for the Public-School Program. Pre-Qualified school district preschoolers qualify for 2.5 hours of tuition paid for by the local public-school districts for half day at both USD 259 and USD 260. A limited number will qualify for five hours of tuition paid for by USD 259 or USD 260 for full-day tuition during the months of August through May. Both schools utilize online enrollment applications.

- USD 259 Wichita: <https://www.usd259.org/Page/4172>
- USD 260 Derby: <https://www.derbyschools.com/parents/enrollment>

Full-Day Head Start Program – Covers the tuition from 7:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. each day for year-round services except those times TOP is closed. Enrollment fees for children ages three to five

are also covered. Parents must meet Head Start qualifications and be assigned to TOP Early Learning Centers as an attendance center.

A limited number of scholarships are available to families who meet our qualification guidelines. For more information, please ask the enrollment coordinator.

The enrollment fee is \$40.00 per family and the supply fee is \$20.00 per child.

If your child or family has been pre-qualified by any of the public schools or Child Start, and you are interested in obtaining more hours of care beyond what has been funded by either organization, you must contact the enrollment coordinator of TOP Early Learning Centers to see what you should do in order to get the extended day services, **providing they are available:**

- 3:00-4:00 p.m. \$6.00/day = \$ 60.00 bi-weekly
- 3:00-5:00 p.m. \$12.00/day = \$120.00 bi-weekly
- 3:00-5:30 p.m. \$15.00/day = \$150.00 bi-weekly

Payments are due according to each Parent Agreement. We require two weeks' prepayment of child-care services, with no more than three (3) billing cycles paid in advance. If your child begins school in the middle of a billing cycle your statement will catch up the middle week of the billing cycle and the current cycle. Please ask the enrollment team for the billing schedule. Payment is required regardless of attendance or absence of the child. Tuition pays for the child's budgeted space. The cost remains the same. A \$10.00 late payment fee will be applied for each seven (7) days your account goes past due. Should your past due balance go to 14 days past due you will be assessed an additional \$10.00 late fee penalty and asked to sign a payment agreement. If you are unable to bring your account current, or violate the terms of your payment agreement, your child will no longer be able to attend. Non-payment of tuition is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program. Timely payments are essential for continued enrollment at TOP Early Learning Centers however; if you anticipate difficulty with paying on time, please discuss the matter with the Enrollment Coordinator immediately. If alternative arrangements for payment are approved you will be notified by the Enrollment Coordinator.

Annual tax statements for out of pocket child care expenses are available upon request for the preceding year. Your account must be current and in good standing to obtain this statement from the enrollment team.

### **Late Pick Up Policy**

If you will be late to pick up your child, please call so arrangements can be made as soon as possible.

Your Parent Agreement will specify the agreed upon hours of attendance for your child(ren). Please remember we close at 5:30 p.m. regardless of the pickup time. There is a charge of \$1 per minute for each minute you are late picking up your child, regardless of funding. Staff members will turn in a late fee charge for each minute the parent is late picking the child up. All late fees are due within four (4) business days of being charged. If the children are not picked up within 15 minutes of the specified pick-up time, the teacher, director or the extended day director will try contacting the parents, guardians and/or emergency pick up contacts. If none of

the phone numbers supplied to the Center work or the parents cannot be contacted, 911 will be called and the police will be asked to pick up the children.

### **Proper Procedures of Arrival, Departure, and Release of Children from Child Care Centers:**

- When building access is granted, the parent or authorized adult **must check in the child at the computer station in the reception area upon arrival and check out the child upon the adult's arrival to pick up the child from the classroom.** The child's arrival and departure times must also be noted on the attendance forms in the classroom with the time, and name of the person dropping off and picking up.
- The person bringing or picking up the child must be at least 16 years of age. As parents leave the building with children, the parent must be beside or in front of the children to prevent the children from running into the parking lot.
- It is very important for you to accompany your child to his/her classroom when they arrive at the Center since:
  - The teachers have no way of knowing that the child has entered the building, therefore, he or she is unsupervised in the hallway
  - The parents must check the child in/out and sign the attendance sheet
- Any authorized person needs to be informed that they are listed on the permission form and that they will need to present **photo identification** to the front office before the Center will release the child. **Even if they have picked up the child previously, they need to have identification with them in case a new teacher is in the child's room.**
- The Center **will not accept phone messages** for the release of the child to an unauthorized person.
- Any time there is reason to believe that an unauthorized person might try to remove a child from the Center, the administration (center director and extended day director) and parents will be notified, and the **police will be contacted.**
- If any authorized person picking up a child appears to be under the influence of alcohol or any other substance, the employee responsible for the child will offer to call another authorized individual to pick up the child. If the authorized individual insists upon taking the child while under the influence, the police will be called immediately. Please remember we have mandated reporter responsibilities.

### **Parents' Rights to Immediate Access**

Parents of a child in our care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their child whenever they are in care at TOP Early Learning Centers as provided by law.

In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (e.g., Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order) TOP Early Learning Centers must be provided with a **Certified Copy** of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The orders of the court will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent(s) requests a more liberal variation of the order in writing. In the case where both parents are afforded shared/joint custody by order of the court, both parents must sign the request for more liberal interpretation of the order.

**In the absence of a court order** on file with TOP Early Learning Centers, **both** parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. TOP Early Learning Centers cannot, without a court order, limit the access of one parent by request of the other parent, regardless

of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, TOP Early Learning Centers suggests that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued, since our rights to retain your child are secondary to the other parent's right to immediate access. TOP Early Learning Centers staff will contact the local police should a conflict arise.

Visitors are asked to schedule appointments with the center director and are allowed in the child care facility only at the discretion of the center director. An employee of TOP Early Learning Centers will accompany visitors at all times, throughout the Center.

TOP Early Learning Centers will dismiss any child whose parent is prohibited from entering upon agency property. Due to the parents' rights to immediate access policy, as well as state and federal regulations, TOP Early Learning Centers cannot have a child at the agency when the child's parent is prohibited access. TOP Early Learning Centers will not agree to any request to maintain a child's enrollment even if the parent agrees to stay out of the Center. Such an agreement is a violation of the law and will not be entertained.

### **Home and School Partnership**

We value the importance of good relationships between home and school. Parent involvement is not only welcomed, it is necessary to achieve a program that offers maximum benefit to the children. We encourage parent participation in a variety of ways:

TOP Early Learning Centers have an **Open-Door Policy** – Parents are welcome to visit the classroom anytime when building access is not limited, please schedule an appointment with the director. Please refrain from disrupting the confluence of the classroom as your child may be upset when you depart.

### **Parent Orientation to the Center – “Open House”**

Under normal operations, we have Center orientation for parents and children to drop by to see the classrooms and to meet with teachers before school begins.

### **Classroom Participation**

Parents can volunteer to be room helpers, party helpers, and /or special project workers when building access is not limited. Parents are also welcome to volunteer to work in the classrooms (subject to a current comprehensive background check).

### **Parent/family Activities**

TOP Early Learning Centers and several of our partners offer a variety of activities to engage and support families including, family nights, parent café's, parent support groups, and case management services. Parents are encouraged to attend any and all events that interest them.

### **Classroom Communication**

Under normal operations, every child at the Center has a cubby and mailbox with his/her name. Please check your child's cubby and/or mailbox daily. This is where you will find notes from your child's teacher, newsletters, artwork, and other mail. Classrooms also have a communication board with lesson plans, the daily schedule, lunch menu, and other information.

TOP utilizes an online parent engagement platform called HiMama. HiMama will be used by our educators to record activities and updates throughout the day. Everything from naps to snacks, it will provide you with a complete history of your child's experience in our program with photos stored safely and securely in a journal format.

### **Conferences**

Conferences will be scheduled at least twice per year. These conferences are provided for parents who want to discuss their child's assessments and progress and to plan strategies to work on next steps of development. If you need a conference at any time during the school year (parents of any age child), please contact the teachers and we will be happy to make arrangements.

### **Concerns**

This is your Center and we are here to serve you and your child. If something is bothering you, do not delay voicing your concerns. Small worries tend to grow if they are not spoken. Please talk with your child's teacher, and talk to administrators, or enrollment at any time. If they are not available, leave your name and phone number and someone will contact you as soon as possible. The teachers have a planning period 3:00-4:00 p.m. each day. This is an excellent time to contact them to discuss concerns. If you are unable to resolve your concerns through conversations with teachers or administrators, you may request a conflict resolution form from any administrator. You may fill it out and mail it to the executive director who will investigate the situation and contact you.

### **School Community**

Under normal operations, there will be many opportunities for you to participate in the school community throughout the year. We have parent meetings, parent café's, or parent support groups that will provide learning opportunities on topics of interest to parents or provide you an opportunity participate in fun learning activities with your child. Classrooms frequently need experts on topics they are studying and there are opportunities to participate in volunteer workdays at the school. Parent input is encouraged through Head Start and TOP Early Learning Centers Parent Meetings and TOP's Parent Advisory Council. Parents participate in interest surveys and annual surveys for continuous school improvement. Each school has a Facebook page that parents may access for school updates and photos of ongoing activities.

### **Communicating With Two Households**

When parents are living separately, we will make every effort to provide newsletters and all-school correspondence to both parents. We consider both parents important to the child's school experience and avoid expressing any alliance with either parent over the other. It is necessary for us to refuse to become involved in disagreements the parents may have. Parents should come to terms of agreement for purposes of instructing the Center as to their wishes regarding their child.

### **Emergency Procedures**

**Fire / Tornado** – Fire Drills are conducted monthly. Tornado Drills are conducted monthly April through September. An Emergency Exit Plan is posted in each classroom. In the event of an actual fire, we will follow the drill procedures and will call 911. We will not go back into the

building until the fire inspector gives the “all clear.” In the event of an actual tornado warning, we will follow the drill procedures and will stay in the shelters until the “all clear” is given.

If you arrive at the Center during a fire drill, you may not go into your child’s classroom. Your child must remain with his/her class until the drill or crisis is over.

If you arrive at the Center during a tornado warning, tornado drill or other lock down, you must remain with the classroom or the designated location until the drill or emergency is over.

### **Outdoor Play Policy**

Unless extreme weather conditions prevail or air quality poses a significant risk, children will have a daily period of outdoor play under the supervision of an adult. Children spending more than four consecutive hours at the Center shall play outdoors for at least one hour daily. If your child is unable to go outside for the day, they should be kept at home.

In cold weather, children’s clothing shall be layered and dry. Each child should have appropriate hats, mittens and foot wear for the weather.

In warm weather, children’s clothing shall be light colored, lightweight, and limited to one layer of absorbent material to facilitate the evaporation of sweat. Before prolonged physical activity in warm weather, children shall be well-hydrated and shall be encouraged to drink water during the activity. Children shall be protected from the sun by using shade, sun-protective clothing, and sunscreen with UVB-ray and UVA-ray protection of SPF-15 or higher during outdoor play. Written parent permission for use of sunscreen is required.

Weather that poses a significant health risk shall include wind chill at or below 15 degrees F and heat index at or greater than 90 degrees F, as identified by the National Weather Service.

Air quality conditions that pose a significant health risk shall be identified by announcements from local health authorities. Such air quality conditions shall require that children remain indoors where air conditioners ventilate indoor air to the outdoors.

When public health authorities recommend use of insect repellents due to high risk of insect-borne disease, only repellents containing DEET will be used, and these are applied only to children older than two months. Staff apply insect repellent no more than once a day and only with written parent permission.

### **Snow/Inclement Weather Days and Other Closings**

If either the Wichita Public Schools (USD 259) or Derby Public Schools (USD 260) close due to snow, ice, or other inclement weather, TOP Early Learning Center South will also be closed. If Wichita Public Schools (USD 259) close, TOP Early Learning Center North and TOP Early Learning Center Northwest will also be closed. If Wichita Public Schools or Derby Public Schools do not close because of inclement weather, you may assume that we are also open. However, the TOP organization does reserve the right to close if we consider the weather conditions to be hazardous whether or not the school districts are in session. TOP will make the decision as early as possible and post notices where and when appropriate. Other prevailing factors such as water main breaks, power outages, etc...may cause the Center to close outside of school district policies. We will try to notify staff and parents as early as possible.

For school closing announcements listen to KFDI radio or watch the local television channels (3, 10, or 12). There are rare but extreme conditions that might cause the closing of the building (water breaks, electrical outage, bomb threat, etc.).

### **Days School is Closed**

School Maintenance and

Teacher In-service – may include the dates encompassing the first and second week of August  
Labor Day

Thanksgiving - Thurs. & Fri.

Christmas Holiday (see parent calendar)

New Year's Day – January 1

Martin Luther King Day –

Zoo Day – To be announced

Memorial Day – Monday

Independence Day –

Parents will receive notice at least two weeks in advance of any other days that the Center schedules a closing except for inclement weather days.

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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) Email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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