



HAYS AREA Our work is child's play.
CHILDREN'S CENTER

PARENT HANDBOOK 2016-2017

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide and promote quality care and educational experiences for young children and families.

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HEALTH POLICIES

Your child's health is a matter of major importance to you and us at the Hays Area Children's Center. There are several pieces of information we are required to have on file before your child begins attending. They are:

1. A health assessment signed by a physician, nurse practitioner, or a nurse certified by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to perform assessments
2. Authorization for Emergency Medical Care
3. Copy of current immunization records
4. Permissions and Authorization Form
5. Field Trip Release Form

Any changes to any of the above records need to be reported immediately to the HACC Business Office.

It is important the Hays Area Children's Center be able to contact you in the event your child becomes ill or injured. Therefore, it is essential to provide current phone numbers at which you can be reached or contacted during the times your child is in care. **It is your responsibility as a parent/legal guardian to inform the classroom teacher of any changes in your child's health status.**

If your child becomes ill at child care, it is Center Policy that you pick him/her up within 30 minutes after you have been notified of their illness. If you are unable to pick up your child within that time, parents need to make other appropriate arrangements for getting them picked up.



Illness

As children spend a good deal of time together in close contact when attending any child care, communicable diseases can be easily spread to other children and staff. It is important that children who are ill stay home in order to protect your child and other children from exposure to communicable diseases. Children cannot learn and participate in classroom activities and do not enjoy being at child care when they do not feel well. If you have questions regarding your child's ability to attend child care or returning after an illness, contact your child's teacher, the Health Services Coordinator, or your physician **before** your child returns to the classroom.

If your child is ill, you need to notify the Center that they will not be attending by 8am. Please inform HACC if your child has been diagnosed with a contagious illness, for example: chicken pox, strep throat, pink eye, etc. Other parents can then be notified that their children have been exposed to the illness, when appropriate.

DO NOT give your child medication to reduce a fever and then send them to child care. They are still contagious and will pass their illness to others.

Illness (continued)

The following guidelines will assist you in determining whether your child can attend child care or be kept at home. Our goal is to prevent the spread of infections and illnesses among the children and promote good health.

- Fever, temperature at or above 100° F. axillary (armpit) or 101° F. orally. **Child must be free of fever without medication for 24 hours before returning.**
- Any unusual rash or outbreak on the skin unless it has been determined by a health professional that it is not contagious.
- Vomiting or loose watery stools accompanied by fever, blood in stools, behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness within the past 24 hours.
- Frequent coughing, breathing difficulties or shortness of breath of an unusual nature.
- Reddened, watery and mattering eye(s). The child must be seen by a health care professional and be on prescribed medication before returning to child care.
- Evidence of head lice, either live nits (eggs) or adult lice.
- Health concerns that inhibit the child's ability to participate in classroom and/or limits the staff from providing proper care of the other children in the classroom.
- Other indications of health concerns that put individuals assigned to the Hays Area Children's Center and/or other children at risk for communicable diseases as determined by the Health Services Coordinator, the classroom teacher, the Executive Director, or the Executive Director's designee.

Nurse Availability

While the Hays Area Children's Center employs a full-time nurse, her primary responsibility is with the Infant/Toddler Early Intervention Services program. This requires her to be out of the building frequently as she works with young children with disabilities in homes and other settings. She oversees health policies and medication administration in a supervisory role.

Medications

Medications to be given at child care should be limited. The first dose of any medication must be given by the parent/guardian then the Health Services Coordinator/Registered Nurse can administer the medication at HACC. **Whenever possible, medications should be given at home, before or after child care.**

Medication is given at HACC only with a **written prescription from a physician** that outlines administration instructions. Parents must sign a Medication Request form to enable the nurse or designated specially trained staff member to give the medication. Medications include **prescriptions and over-the-counter medications**. Lotions, diaper ointments, sunscreens, insect repellents, etc. must also have a written request form signed by the parent or legal guardian. **No herbal or homeopathic medications or supplements will be given under any circumstances.**

Medications given on an "as needed" basis will be given only by the Health Services Coordinator when she is available. No other staff members are allowed to give these medications.

All medications (including over-the-counter) must be in original containers with the prescription label intact and legible. The label must have the child's name, the doctor's name and dosage instructions. Any changes to the prescription must be authorized in writing by the doctor.

All medications at HACC will be kept in locked storage. Parents/Legal Guardians will be notified in writing and have ten business days to pick up discontinued or outdated medication. If the medications are not picked up within that time, they will be disposed of by the Health Services Coordinator/Registered Nurse.



Injury

If a child sustains a minor injury, the classroom staff will treat that injury with standard first aid procedures. No cleansers or medications will be used other than soap and water.

If there is an incident that results in a significant injury, classroom staff will follow standard first aid procedures and parents will be notified as soon as possible. If the injury is severe, 911 will be called for EMS transport to the emergency room at Hays Medical Center and the child will be accompanied by a staff member. Parents will be notified immediately, and the staff member accompanying the child will remain with the child until the parent arrives. The Authorization for Emergency Care and Health Assessment forms will be taken with the child.

Parents are responsible for any medical expenses related to emergencies.

ENROLLMENT POLICIES

Enrollment Priority

The Hays Area Children's Center reserves the right to limit enrollment based on licensed capacity of children enrolled in different programs. Notify us as soon as possible if your child will be leaving the Hays Area Children's Center permanently. A two-week notice is required upon leaving the center.

Once children are enrolled, we pledge to maintain the enrollment slot and portion of the week for that child (Monday through Friday, Monday-Wednesday-Friday, etc.). If parents decrease their child's enrollment due to a change in their child care needs, we cannot guarantee child re-enrollment at the same level of enrollment prior to decrease. For example, a child enrolled full-time, switching to part-time for the summer session is not guaranteed full-time enrollment for the upcoming school year. HACC will seek to fill any open enrollment slots. Any child enrolled in the vacated enrollment time will be given first priority to continue in that enrollment slot. The purpose of this policy is to allow parents (and not HACC) control of any decision to decrease the amount of time that a child is enrolled.

Enrollment Fees

An enrollment fee of \$25.00 is to be paid at the time of enrollment for child care. The fee is non-refundable and will be paid annually. **If a child is dismissed, an additional enrollment fee will be required upon re-enrollment.** Re-enrollment will be subject to availability of space, payment history, satisfactory payment of balance due, and approval by the Executive Director.

Application Fee. An enrollment application fee of \$100.00 is to be paid at the time of the child's initial enrollment into child care (infant, toddler and preschool). Tuition fees for the first month of enrollment will be reduced by \$100.00. Refunds of the application fee are available after a child is on the waiting list for 90 days past the parent's requested start date or extenuating circumstances approved by the Executive Director.

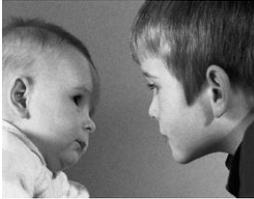
For the summer-only School Age Program, an enrollment application fee of \$300.00 is to be paid annually at the time of enrollment. Tuition fees for the last month of enrollment will be reduced by \$300.00.

Holidays & Hours

Child care is available year-round from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and doors are unlocked at 7:25 a.m. The Hays Area Children's Center is closed Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the day after, Friday, December 23rd and Monday, December 26th for Christmas Break, January 2nd, Memorial Day and Independence Day. The Center will also be closed for child care on Friday, August 12, 2016 for an orientation day and April 21, 2017 for our annual Goal Planning Retreat. A calendar is provided to families at the beginning of each school year and/or upon request.

Attendance Information

- ◆ Please contact the Hays Area Children's Center by 9:00 a.m. if your child will be absent for the day.
- ◆ Please check your child's/parent's box daily for messages.
- ◆ Each teacher will provide a list of items to bring when your child is enrolled.
- ◆ Please do not send pets, toys, snacks, or money to child care with your child except on days specified by the teacher. **The Hays Area Children's Center is not responsible for lost or broken items.** Prior



- experience has shown that toys, money and personal items brought from home primarily result in conflict and stress among the children.
- ◆ The Hays Area Children's Center reserves the right to limit enrollment based on licensed capacity of children enrolled in different programs. Notify us as soon as possible if your child will be leaving HACC permanently. A minimum of two weeks notice is required upon leaving the center. Tuition fees are to be paid through those two weeks, regardless of attendance.

Tuition Payment Policy

Children are sometimes absent due to illness or family schedules; however, the Hays Area Children's Center costs continue while the child is absent. **Therefore, parents will be charged for each day the child is enrolled, and the Hays Area Children's Center is open for child care.** Note: Tuition credit will be issued for emergency days such as snow days, power outages or water outages, beginning with the third emergency day of the fiscal year (July 1 – June 30).

As a benefit to our families, the Hays Area Children's Center calculates monthly tuition through Even Pay Billing. To calculate your monthly bill, the days in each session are added, multiplied by the daily rate and then divided by the number of months in the session. Our School Year session is September through May and our Summer session is June through August. If your child leaves before the end of the session, your account will be switched from Easy Pay Billing to Actual (number of days enrolled by the daily rate).

The parent or guardian who enrolls the child will be responsible for payment of services. Private tuition is due on the 10th of each month billed. If private tuition is not paid by the last child care day of the month, child care services will be terminated. Termination of child care services will not affect access to other programs at HACC such as Infant/Toddler Special Services or Healthy Start. Re-enrollment will be subject to a \$25.00 enrollment fee, payment of outstanding balance and availability of space. Parents will be charged \$5.00 for every 15 minutes if your child is here past 5:30 p.m.

There will be a \$30 returned check fee charged for any checks returned unpaid.

Persons Authorized to Pick-up Children



Parents will complete the appropriate authorization form at the time of enrollment. Only those individuals who have been specified on the authorization form by the enrolling parent(s) will be allowed to take the child from the Hays Area Children's Center. **Without the consent of the enrolling parent(s), individuals picking up your child will be limited to those listed on the Permissions and Authorizations form.** Photo identification of those picking up your child will be requested.

The enrollment process is considered a contractual arrangement between HACC and the parent or parents enrolling the child. The parent or parents enrolling the child have legal authority to list those able to pick up the child. If the parent completing the authorization form does not list the other parent on the form, legally we cannot release the child to the other parent. A parent can only pick up a child if their name is listed on the "Persons Authorized to Pick Up Child" form or if we have written documentation of a court order directing otherwise.

Persons Authorized to Pick-up Children (continued)

Each child must be accompanied and picked up by a parent, guardian or authorized agent. Parents need to **sign their child in and out** and make contact with a staff member so that he/she knows you have arrived to drop off or pick-up your child. If a parent is delayed in picking-up the child, the staff needs to be informed to prepare the child for a change in schedule. **An additional charge will be assessed if a child attends past 5:30 p.m.** If an emergency arises and the parent cannot pick-up the child by the designated time, the parent must inform the staff of the emergency. The emergency will be verified by the Executive Director or designee and the additional charge may be reduced.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

Your Child's Learning



The Hays Area Children's Center maintains an open door policy. We encourage you to visit your child at any time. You may also schedule appointments with the teacher to talk about your child.

Clothing

Children enrolled at the Hays Area Children's Center will be exposed to a variety of creative activities that involve paint, markers, etc. While we strive to use materials that are washable, parents are advised to send their children in clothes that can get dirty.

To help with your child's comfort during the day, provide simple, washable, sturdy clothing that is free of complicated fastenings. Due to our changeable weather, we ask that you provide a set of alternative clothing to be kept at the Hays Area Children's Center.

The children will have an outdoor play period each day, except under extreme weather conditions, so appropriate apparel should be worn. We suggest they wear tennis shoes for comfort and safety. **ALL CLOTHING MUST BE MARKED WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME.**

In the event your child's clothing becomes soiled, we will place the soiled clothing in a bag and send it home. This is to limit the chance of cross-contamination with other laundry items.



Weather Considerations/Outdoor Play Policy

Send your child to school dressed for the weather. In cold weather your child will need a coat, hat and mittens, possibly snow pants, and snow boots. **All children** will spend time outdoors daily unless extreme weather conditions prevail. Children will play outdoors for at least one hour daily unless extreme weather conditions prevail. Parents are asked to provide the appropriate clothing.

Snow Days

If USD #489 is closed for an entire day because of inclement weather, the Hays Area Children's Center will also be closed. Families are encouraged to listen to local radio stations for information on school closings.

When USD #489 is not in session, the Executive Director or designee will determine the need to close the Hays Area Children's Center due to inclement weather. If weather conditions deteriorate during business hours, the Executive Director or designee will determine the need to close the Hays Area Children's Center due to inclement weather and families and local media will be informed of that decision.

Emergency Alerts

The Hays Area Children's Center is part of the emergency alert system developed by USD #489. You can sign up for emergency alerts (school closings, etc.) by texting the word "join" to 56360. You should receive a text message saying you were successful in signing up for the service. If you receive a message saying your number is not in the system, please email Amy Arnhold at aarnhold@usd489.com to have your contact information added to the system.

Note: This is a free service provided by the Hays School District USD #489. Please check your cell phone plan for any text message fees your wireless provider may charge. This is a SPAM-free application. Your name and personal contact information are protected and will remain private.

Birthday and Holiday Treats

Parents are welcome to bring special treats at any time, but especially on these days. Prior approval is required from their child's teacher. Please send small, single serving items that are approved by your child's teacher. We prefer foods that are low in sugar and salt be served to the children. Family members and friends are welcome to participate in birthday celebrations.

As we have children with food allergies, the treats must be purchased in stores and contain complete ingredient declaration. This is the only way for our center can assure that food served to the children will not cause any allergic reactions. We do not give the children any items that contain peanuts and/or peanut products.



Any birthday toys/treat bags will not be allowed. Balloons are also not allowed because of the potential choking danger.

To protect confidentiality, children's names, addresses and phone numbers will not be released. Invitations to birthday celebrations outside of the classroom will only be distributed at HACC when all children in the classroom are invited. Children will not be required to participate in birthday celebrations if this is against their religious or cultural beliefs.

Field Trips

Several field trips are planned throughout the school year and during the summer. The teachers will post a notice to inform parents in advance of all trips. **Individual field trip permission forms (provided by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment) must be signed prior to each trip.** Teachers will maintain contact with the center.

Field trips at the Hays Area Children's Center are geared to meet the educational and personal needs of the children. They are developed around themes and curriculum goals and include visits to the post office, farms, restaurants, and activities such as swimming, bowling, miniature golf, etc.

Publicity Releases

Photographs, audio or video recordings will only be released for children who have a signed publicity release. Publicity releases are only for the use of the Hays Area Children's Center. Any other individual or agency wishing to use photographs, audio or video recordings must obtain written permission from the parent/ legal guardian of each child. The Hays Area Children's Center is not responsible for photographs, audio or video recordings by non-staff members at agency sponsored activities (e.g., class programs).

Nap Time

Nap time procedures will vary with the age of the child. Nap time for infants should be flexible according to the child's individual needs. Children enrolled in the School Age Program are exempt from the nap time policy.

All other children are not required to sleep but will be encouraged to rest on their cot for a minimum of 20 minutes. After that time they may be allowed to do quiet activities either on their cot or other designated area. Children will be allowed to nap or rest with a blanket, small child-sized pillow, or other appropriate nap time item. Each child will have a crib/cot and personal bedding that is cleaned weekly or as needed.

Safe Sleep. All children under twelve months of age will be placed on their back to reduce the risk of SIDS. Infants that can turn from their back to their stomach will be placed to sleep on their back, but allowed to adopt whatever position they prefer for sleep. No additional items such as pillows, blankets, bibs, burp cloths, mobiles or toys will be allowed in the cribs. Children under twelve months of age may sleep in appropriate clothing and/ or a sleep sack. Children under twelve months of age will not be allowed to sleep in clothing with strings or hoods. Exceptions must be signed by a physician.

Child Discipline

Child discipline guidelines will focus on preventive strategies that teach appropriate social behavior and techniques for when the child is engaged in challenging/harmful behavior. Appropriate use of discipline does not include any punishment that is humiliating, frightening or physically harmful to the child. Classroom teachers are available to assist parents with discipline appropriate to the child's development. Staff at HACC will follow Kansas Department of Health and Environment Behavior and Guidance Policy, which is posted in all classrooms

Hurting Behaviors

Our Center strives to be a safe place for all children. Occasionally, in spite of our best efforts, one child will hurt another. When a child gets hurt, it creates stress for parents and staff. Parents are asked to remember two things:

First, young children are more likely to push, hit, bite, scratch, etc. as a means of expressing themselves - especially before their language develops. It may be their way to defend their property. It may be a way to get attention. But it is normal, especially for toddlers.

Second, our Center does not approve of hurting behaviors. Children hurting others will be dealt with using standard behavior management techniques. If necessary, we may bring in behavior specialists to assist the classroom staff in dealing with more difficult behavioral issues. Parents of the injured child, as well as parents of the child doing the injuring, will be notified each time an injury occurs. However, we will respect the privacy of each child and each child's name will remain confidential.

BEHAVIOR AND GUIDANCE

The following strategies are used to promote positive behavior at the Hays Area Children's Center:

1. The goal of discipline is to help children learn self-control. Our staff will help teach children about appropriate behavior and how to get along with others.
2. Our staff will be consistent when interacting with the children. Confusion occurs when providers respond in different ways to the same behavior.
3. Appropriate guidance needs to follow a child's misbehavior immediately so that the child understands why he or she is being corrected.
4. Our staff will provide a good role model. They will act with patience toward each child. They will respect and talk to children about their feelings.
5. When a child behaves inappropriately, our staff will talk with the child about their behavior and what is expected. It will be explained to the children what they can do rather than what they can't. (Example: "Please walk" is more effective than "Don't run".)
6. There will be a consistent daily schedule so that children know what to expect and are prepared for changes in activity throughout the day.
7. The children will be given choices whenever possible.
8. Good behavior will be praised and reinforced often. Children (and adults) need to hear that the good things they do are appreciated!
9. Information will be shared with parents about both the good things their child(ren) has done while in child care and those things that require additional attention if necessary. Our staff will work with the parents about effective ways to provide guidance for their child(ren). Consistency between the child's home and the child care is very effective. Our staff will never spank or use another method of punishment that is prohibited by law or regulation, even if parents give permission.

Suggestions for Infants and Toddlers:

1. By nature infants and toddlers are curious about people and things. They are just learning. Therefore, duplicates of popular toys will be available since infants and toddlers do not yet understand the concept of sharing.
2. Distraction and redirection will be used with the infant/toddler to guide him/her away from the activity that is not desired. The child will then be given a better choice.
3. Certain behaviors may be ignored if the child is not in danger or causing someone else to be in danger.
4. The word "NO": will be used sparingly. "NO" should be only be used when the infant/toddler is approaching danger.
5. Rather than placing a child in time-out, a toy or item that is causing the disturbance will be placed in time-out. Infants/toddlers have short attention spans and are naturally active. Time out for infants/toddlers is not appropriate.

Suggestions for Preschool Age Children:

Any of the above methods of guidance PLUS:

7. The preschool age child will be given acceptable choices and let the natural consequence of the decision be the teacher (as long as the consequence is not dangerous).
8. Children will be assisted in learning how to solve problems. Suggestions will be offered when necessary and the child will be allowed to decide.
9. Classroom rules will be discussed. The preschool aged children will be allowed to help develop these rules.
10. Time-out will be used sparingly. Over use of time out or any other method of guidance causes the method to become "old hat" which causes it to lose its effectiveness. Time out provides the child the opportunity to think, cool off, and calm down. If a child is placed in time-out, he or she will be nearby so that supervision may continue to occur. The child will be invited to rejoin the group when he/she is ready.

Suggestions for School Age Children:

Any of the above methods of guidance PLUS:

11. The school age children will be involved in planning activities.
12. School age children will assist in setting their own guidelines and consequences when the rules have been broken.

Weapons

The Hays Area Children's Center will provide for the health and safety of children and staff in case of the presence of weapons. Students, parents, or staff shall not knowingly possess, handle or transmit any objects that can reasonably be considered a weapon, **including toy weapons and fireworks**, on agency premises or at an agency activity, function or event. Possession of a weapon may result in a child being dismissed.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Grievance Policy

The Hays Area Children's Center recognizes the value and importance of discussion in resolving conflicts and preserving goodwill. We ask that concerns be addressed directly with the individual staff member or that individual's supervisor. If the conflict remains, parents can contact the Program Director. If discussion with the Program Director is not satisfactory, parents may take their concerns to the Executive Director and then to the HACC Board of Directors.

Emergency Plans

Emergency and evacuation plans will be prominently posted throughout HACC. In case of a bomb threat or other emergencies that require evacuation of the HACC buildings, all staff and children will be moved to the east side of Lewis Field on Fort Hays State University campus.

Emergency Communication

We strive to communicate center-wide emergency information to families and staff in a number of ways.

- Local Radio
- Emergency Alert System by USD #489 (see page 7)
- E-mail list from the current enrollment forms.
- Facebook

We encourage families and staff to take advantage of these information sources.

Child Abuse

Any employee at the Hays Area Children's Center with reason to believe that a child has been injured as a result of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse or neglect **is mandated to** report the matter promptly to the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF).

Use of Media

The use of passive media, such as television, film, videotapes, audiotapes, CDs and DVDs will be limited to developmentally appropriate programming. Passive visual media will be used as infrequent events, rather than part of regular, daily routines. When visual media is used at HACC, children will not be required to view it and an option for a separate activity will be available. Staff are encouraged to discuss what is viewed with children to develop critical thinking skills.

Disposal of Abandoned Items

When a child is no longer enrolled at HACC, the child care staff will gather their remaining items such as clothing, medications, diapers, etc. and give them to the family on the child's last day of child care. In the event items remain at HACC after the child's last day, the family will be contacted by phone and/or letter notifying them to pick up the items within ten business days. If items are not picked up within ten business days, the items will become property of HACC.

Respect for Families

We have many different cultures and faiths represented with our HACC families. Often one tradition or holiday is taken for granted while others are ignored. We also know that some holidays are extremely commercialized. We do not intend to offend any of our families by any of our activities. Families are encouraged to discuss concerns with their child's teacher. If you have a holiday or family tradition you would like to share with our HACC families, please let your child's teacher know.

FOOD POLICIES

Staff members will maintain proper sanitation and health standards in the preparation, storage and service of food. They will also maintain a positive attitude about food served at the Hays Area Children's Center and will encourage the children to do the same. Staff become familiar with each child's food preferences and will verbally reinforce children who are demonstrating appropriate table behaviors. Each child will serve themselves with assistance from staff as needed.



Each food item will be available at each table. Children will be encouraged to taste each food item served. A taste does not necessarily need to be swallowed. If it is evident that a child does not like that food, he/she can be allowed to refuse it.

A special program will be developed by the teacher and parents for children who have eating problems or food allergies. Because of food allergies, peanut butter, peanuts, and products containing peanuts are not served at the Hays Area Children's Center.

Children with food allergies that have been identified by a physician's written notice will have their exposure to those foods limited while at HACC. Please notify staff if your child has or develops a food allergy.

The Hays Area Children's Center serves only milk, pure fruit juice and water as beverages. We strive to provide snacks that are low in sugar and salt. Good nutrition habits and appreciation for quality food are emphasized. Children will brush their teeth after breakfast and lunch.

Infants will be served food that is appropriate for their individual nutrition requirements and developmental stage. Staff members will feed infants on demand unless the child's health care provider gives written instructions otherwise. Once your child is old enough to start eating solid foods (oatmeal cereal & baby foods), parents must first try foods at home before they are served at HACC. Hays Area Children's Center will encourage and support breastfeeding.

Late for Meals

Meals are offered at certain times in each of the classrooms. Check with your child's teacher about scheduled meal times. If your child arrives more than halfway through the scheduled mealtime, the meal may not be available. Starting a meal any later leads to children eating alone while their peers are beginning another activity. Placing an adult with the child creates an imbalance with our staff ratios per KDHE regulations. For example, if breakfast is scheduled at 8:00 to 8:30, children need to arrive by 8:15 to be offered meals.

Parents at Meals

Parents may participate with their child at meals for a minimal fee. Prior notification to the child's teacher is preferred to assure adequate quantities of food.

Meals Not Prepared at the Center

Unless approved by the Executive Director, children are to eat only meals prepared by the center. This provides consistency, assures that we meet federal food guidelines, and limits any jealousy of meal alternatives.

Likewise, we ask that parents that wish to feed their children on the way to the center make sure their child is finished with the meal before they come into the center. Our staff is only responsible to monitor eating of meals approved by the center.

CACFP Food Reimbursement

Our center receives partial meal reimbursement through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). As a site that receives these funds, we are required to share the following statement with parents:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)



If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form.

Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.