

SOUTHERN HILLS CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

PARENT HANDBOOK

2023-2024

Program Philosophy of Southern Hills Child Development Center

It is our **belief** that each child is a unique individual and requires nurturing and guidance to develop. Our program is designed to encourage the intellectual, social, emotional, spiritual, and physical growth of each child. Our approach to learning is child centered, with self-selection as an important aspect of our activities. A variety of developmentally appropriate activities are available to encourage the process of learning in a “hands-on” environment.

We **believe** that in the early childhood years, children are learning self-control. We endeavor to help them do this by setting clear, consistent, age appropriate limits. We believe in promoting a positive self image and respect for all persons.

We **believe** that adults who work with young children must be sensitive, enthusiastic, concerned, flexible, and highly skilled. The quality of any early childhood program depends largely on a dedicated staff. Our staff is selected with care and is required to continue their training in child development and/or early childhood education.

Because we **believe** a safe, healthy environment is necessary to a child’s well being; we strive to maintain ourselves and our facility according to the highest standards. Through our actions, we hope to teach children responsibility for themselves and their world.

Bridging Home and School Together

We all know that if a bridge is not structurally sound, it will eventually collapse. Likewise, if relationships are not built on a sturdy foundation, they too will fail. Too often parents and program staff are intimidated by each other. But by willingly beginning the home/school relationship with an open, sharing approach, we can build trust. Then, when issues arise – even tricky ones – we can talk about them without hesitation. All of us at Southern Hills Child Development Center “SHCDC” try our best to keep you informed, by posting pertinent information through our Seesaw App. Clearly, ongoing interaction and support from both families and staff make the connection between home and school a two-way street. You can help by sharing information about your child with us. Particularly during any crisis or period of change, when children are under stress and act or react differently, please keep us informed. Of course, anything you share with a member of our staff will be held in confidence. In turn, we’ll alert you to anything out of the ordinary that we might notice in your child while here at the center. Only by sharing information can we build a bridge strong enough to support our children.

Policies for the Child Development Center

Ages Served

SHCDC serves children age 6 months through pre-kindergarten during the school year. An 8-week summer session is available to children ages 6 months through the completion of second grade. Children are placed in age appropriate classes based on their birth date and development.

Enrollment Records

Before a child may attend we will need the following:

1. Current proof of immunizations or a current medical exemption form for the current school term (2023-2024). No child will be admitted to class without proof of current immunizations or without the exemption form filed properly through the OK Health Department. If your child is on a delayed schedule as directed by a physician for medical reasons, documentation is required and needs to be cleared with the office. Thank you for helping us keep all the children healthy.
2. A completed and signed enrollment form and DHS forms.
3. An orange student information sheet will be kept in the classroom.

Tuition and Fees

Tuition is set up on a monthly basis and is due on the 1st of each month (after August's half month charge).

All payments received after the 10th of the month are considered late and a \$20.00 late fee will be posted to your account.

Students will not be admitted to class after the first of the next month if tuition and fees for the preceding month have not been paid, unless special arrangements have been made through the office. Checks or cash may be given to the staff greeting your child at drop-off, or you can put it in the tuition box in Rhonda's office. *Please do not leave checks in your child's backpack.* If writing a check, please put their name on the memo line. Please put cash in an envelope labeled with your child's name on it. Make checks payable to Southern Hills **CDC** or SHCDC. Any returned checks will result in a \$20.00 charge. Please do not mail cash to the office. You can mail checks to:

Southern Hills Child Development Center
3207 South Blvd.
Edmond, OK 73013

Enrollment and consumable fees are due around the time of enrollment (all nonrefundable). Typically, Summer Fees are due mid-March, and Fall Fees are due mid-April. May tuition for the following school year is also nonrefundable and is due in May of the current school year. The consumable fee covers the children's school supplies for the year.

Attendance and Withdrawal

You are paying for your child's reserved place in the program, not the child's attendance. Illness and/or vacations will not be subjected to tuition reimbursement. Two weeks paid notice is required prior to withdrawal from the program. Should two weeks' notice not be provided, you will be billed for the additional two weeks (a full month). We will not accept drops for the school term after April 15th. If you choose to drop for fall after August 1st there will be a two-week tuition charge. Southern Hills follows the Edmond Public Schools calendar for holidays observed and weather closings, but starting dates and ending dates may vary. Please look at the published SHCDC calendar for school start days and ending days.

Payment List for 2023-2024 School Year

August Tuition (which is one half of your normal month's tuition)

Due: 8/25/2023

Full Tuition of \$125 per child per day of the week enrolled is due the **1st day** of each month:

Due:

9/1/2023

10/1/2023

11/1/2023

12/1/2023

1/1/2024

2/1/2024

3/1/2024

4/1/2024

If you receive placement for Summer 2024:

Summer Enrollment Fees of \$30 per day per child and Consumable Fees of \$40 per child

Due: 3/15/2024

(For example, if you have one child coming on Tuesday and Thursday, you would owe \$100.)

If you are returning for Fall 2024/Spring 2025:

Fall Enrollment Fees of \$30 per day per child and Consumable Fees of \$40 per child

Due: 4/22/2024

(For example, if you have two children coming on Monday and Friday, you would owe \$200.)

AND

May 2025 Tuition Prepayment Due: 5/1/2024 -(\$125 per child per day of the week enrolled.)

A reminder invoice will be sent around the 25th of each month. Payments are listed here, so reminder invoices are sent as a courtesy. All payments received **after the 10th** of the month (or 10 days after the due date) are considered late and a **\$20.00 late fee** will be posted to your account.

Scholarships

Southern Hills Child Development Center has a limited number of scholarships available each year. Each application will be evaluated on an individual basis by the SHCDC Foundation Board of Trustees. Scholarship requests should be made through the SHCDC Director. Families who receive scholarships pay Enrollment and Consumable Fees when due. Scholarship families do not pre-pay the next May's Tuition. It is paid during May of the actual school year. August tuition is not included in the scholarship.

Scholarship funds are always needed, and donations would be greatly appreciated.

Drop-ins

Children currently enrolled in the program are welcome to "drop-in" when we have available spaces. Drop-in fees are \$40.00/day and are due at the time of service.

Arrivals and Departures

The Child Development Center operates from 9:05-2:25 Monday through Friday during the school year. An eight-week summer session is held during June & July. Please be sure to check SHCDC's calendar for changes. A complete school year school calendar will be made available on our website by August 1, 2023.

Arrival Procedures:

- The East door (facing Boulevard) and the South door (facing Clay St.) are the only two doors that are unlocked.
- Drop-Off will begin at 9:05.
- Please do not allow your child to have any toys from home and have all his/her belongings packed in his/her backpack to assist with a quick drop-off..
- If you need to bring your child late, please escort them to their classroom or to their teacher (if the class is outside) to complete drop-off.

Pick-Up Procedures:

- Children are to be picked up in their classrooms. Doors will be unlocked at 2:15.
- Parents will sign out children on the list at each classroom door.
- Anyone other than a parent who is picking up the child must be authorized in writing on the enrollment form and/or student ID card. Please call the office if someone other than yourself or who is not on your list of approved persons is picking up your child/children. The SHCDC staff reserves the right to request identification of anyone unfamiliar to them.
- If you are late for pick-up, late fees can be assessed according to the policies listed below

If you arrive more than five minutes late, your child will be in the Director's office. You will need to call the office upon arrival so your child can be brought to you. If you are unavoidably

detained, call the office (405-341-0100). Late pick up fees will be assessed at every 5 mins = \$5.00 past 2:25.

If there is a child custody agreement that would restrict a biological parent from picking up their child, a copy of that agreement or court order **MUST** be on file in the Director's office. Should the custodial parent agree to an exception, a note to that effect, listing the days or dates of the exception must be presented before we will release a child to a non-custodial parent.

Clothing

Please send your child in comfortable, easy to manage clothing. Try to avoid belts, jumpsuits, and lots of buttons. No jewelry or jewelry like items can be worn by the children for safety and choking reasons. We do many "messy" activities so plan to dress for "messy" and not for "dressy".

Dress your child for the weather. We do not have the staff to keep a child inside. We go outside unless it is raining, below 32 degrees, above 100 degrees (heat index), or windy with severe wind chills. Please send your child in tennis shoes or other rubber soled shoes. Cowboy boots, sandals, crocs, and flip-flops are fun but not safe for climbing, running, or riding trikes and scooters.

Toys

Children are not allowed to bring toys to school. Toy guns, knives, or other things which could be considered disruptive and/or dangerous are not allowed at SHCDC.

Potty Training

SHCDC will assist you and your child(ren) in the potty training process. We do ask that you follow our guidelines. After starting the process, and until they can tell the teachers they need to use the restroom, they must be in a pull up with velcro. This is for sanitary reasons. Home and school situations are different.

Biting

We pride ourselves on having a wonderful child care program. With that in mind, periodic outbreaks of biting can occur among infants and toddlers. When a child is bitten, we are careful in responding to the biter. Our goal is not to reinforce the biting behavior with negative attention. The biter is immediately removed with no show of emotion, and all our attention is directed on the child who has been bitten. We clean the wound thoroughly. We look into the context of the biting incident for reasons. Was this a one-time incident? Was the biter teething? Was it a bite that was meant to be a show of affection? We work with each biting child so that he or she will choose to not bite again. We make special efforts to protect all children. Each biter will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

School Safety

Board policy prohibits the possession and/or carrying of any dangerous weapon or replicas of weapons by students, employees, parents, or any others while on school property. If infractions of this policy occur, they will be handled by the SHCDC Administration on an individual basis.

Playground and Big Room Safety

We do our best to maintain the big room and playground areas in a safe condition and inspect them daily. We monitor the children while they play in these areas and teach them safety rules on an age appropriate level. Parents should dress their children as per the Clothing and Shoes sections above. We cannot be held responsible if they fail to follow the rules or are not dressed appropriately. We will also not be held responsible if a child is hurt in the course of play for reasons not caused by Southern Hills Child Development Center's negligence.

Lunch

Parents provide lunches each day. Send a nutritious lunch and drink (no soda please) that your child enjoys and that is easy for your child to manage. Do not send foods that need to be heated in the microwave. All lunches containing perishable foods must be in insulated containers with an ice pack or frozen juice box so that foods are kept at 45 degrees or cooler. We ask that you do not send candy. It is often the first and only thing eaten. Children need a good source of protein at lunch.

The children in the Guppies class have access to a refrigerator and a microwave. Clearly label all containers, bottles, lunch boxes, backpacks, etc.

Snacks

Parents are asked to sign up monthly to bring snacks for each child's class. Sign ups will be through the SeeSaw app. Please send a simple nutritious snack which has been prepackaged by a manufacturer, not packaged at home. We ask that you avoid sweets and sugary treats. Teachers are happy to offer suggestions and class favorites. At times, we have children with severe allergies to specific foods. The most common is a peanut allergy. As situations arise, we may post notes on your classroom Seesaw asking parents not to send products containing peanuts or peanut products.

Parties

We have 3 or 4 parties during the school year. You may be asked to provide a special snack for those occasions. Each child's birthday will be recognized at school, and you are welcome to bring a special snack on that day. Party invitations may NOT be distributed at school unless each person in the class receives one. This prevents hurt feelings.

Health

Please help us maintain a healthy and safe environment for the children. State licensing regulations will not permit us to keep an ill child in the classroom. You must come to pick-up your child as soon as you are notified by the school of illness, please be respectful of the health

and well-being of others within the building. Please call us if your child will be staying home due to illness. Please do not bring your child if they show signs of the following:

- If your child has received vaccinations that day, please keep him/her home that day.
- Fever, over 100.4, for any reason. Your child must be fever free without medication for 24 hours.
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea for any reason. Your child must be free from vomiting and/or diarrhea for 24 hours.
Common cold – excessive cough.
- Any symptoms of childhood diseases such as; scarlet fever, measles, chicken pox, strep throat, flu, etc.
- Chicken pox – all sores must be completely scabbed over and dry underneath.
- Heavy nasal discharge (green).
- Any unexplained rash.
- Any skin infections – boils, ringworms, impetigo, thrush, hand-foot-mouth disease, fifth disease.
- Inflammation or discharge from eyes. Your child must be on medication for 24 hours before returning to school.
- Head lice.

When in doubt, please apply the golden rule by keeping your child home.

SHCDC does not routinely administer any medications or essential oils. Two exceptions to this policy are the use of an epi-pen for children with severe allergic reactions and asthma inhalers.. The epi-pen or inhaler must be in its original container with the child's name and specific instructions for use included. The epi-pen or inhaler will be stored in a safe location in the child's classroom.

If your child is too ill to play outside, please keep him or her at home. If your child contracts a contagious disease, please notify the school immediately.

Communication

We think of communication with parents as a continuous process. We will rely heavily on Seesaw for day to day school wide and classroom information. Please be sure to register for school-wide and classroom Seesaw for each of your children. Also, email will be utilized for billing/account communication.

We want to let you know how your child is participating in the classroom. We also appreciate any information about changes, concerns, or celebrations in your child's life that will help us get to know him/her better. We ask that all adults respect the children by not talking about their behavior in front of them, other children, or other parents. Children hear everything and often misinterpret the information. Ask the teacher for a phone appointment or a conference time if there are issues that need to be addressed.

Conferences for children in rooms Explorers, Monkeys, Super Heroes, Super Stars, and Discoverers will be held in the fall and spring. If you feel the need for a conference at any other time, simply schedule with your child's teacher or contact the Director.

Behavior Guidance

The behavior guidance techniques used by the staff will focus on positive reinforcement, positive role modeling by adults, intervention techniques, and redirection. By consistently following these techniques, we hope to lead the children toward self discipline. Children will be involved in finding solutions to their problems.

Safety of the child and his/her classmates is of the highest importance. Children who know classroom limits feel safe. If a child's misbehavior is disruptive or dangerous, a time out in the Director's office may result. If the child does not respond to the above behavior guidance techniques, parents will be contacted and the child will be sent home. A Parent/Teacher/Director conference will be scheduled. The results of the meeting will determine the action to be taken.

As educators, we recognize that there are developmental concerns that arise during the early childhood years. We believe in educating the whole child; however, our facility and staff may not be equipped to assist all children's needs. We want the best environment for the children currently attending our school, as well as the least restrictive environment for the child with special needs and/or children who present a-typical behavior issues. Therefore, it is the policy of Southern Hills Child Development Center to make reasonable accommodations for the children with special needs and/or children who present a-typical behavior issues. It is our intent to integrate children with special needs and/or children who present a-typical behavior issues into the program to the extent feasible, given each child's situation. Our program may not provide the least restrictive environment if accommodations result in significant difficulty or expense to the program, if adaptations for behaviors fundamentally alter the nature of the program, or are not readily achievable; or if the child's condition will pose or does pose a significant threat to the learning, health, or safety of other children or staff and there are no reasonable means of resolving the situation. The Director may request documentation that the child is receiving proper outside services. After consultation with the parents, the child, the teachers involved, and if necessary the child's doctors and/or therapists, the Director will make a case-by-case decision whether SHCDC is capable of meeting the needs of the child with special needs. If we are unable to assist your child, we will attempt to direct you to the proper resources.

Child Abuse

Oklahoma statutes define child abuse as harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare by a person responsible for the child. This includes non-accidental physical or mental injury, sexual abuse or neglect (Section 7102 of Title 10 of the OK Statutes). Every person, private citizen or professional who has reason to believe that a child has been abused, is mandated by law to promptly report the suspected abuse. Failure to do so is a misdemeanor. A person making a report in good faith is immune from civil or criminal liability. The Director and staff of this facility are obligated to report any suspected child abuse under this statute.

Human Trafficking

As per State Law 21 O.S. 870, every person having reason to believe that a person or child-placing agency is engaging in the crime of trafficking in children, as described in 21O.S. 866, of the Oklahoma Statutes, reports the matter promptly to the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs Control at 1-855-617-2288

Weather Closings

If bad weather occurs, the Child Development Center will reserve the right to close school to protect staff, students and families. Please watch Seesaw for postings of school closure due to weather. Southern Hills CDC follows Edmond for weather closings. Weather closure days will not be refunded, but the school calendar may be adjusted for missed days.

Fire & Severe Weather

Southern Hills Christian Church is equipped with an electronic fire alarm system. Evacuation plans are posted in each classroom. Fire and tornado drills are carried out routinely. For tornado drills, we meet in the East/West hallway between two fire safety doors. The school has an emergency kit and we will monitor the weather. We do not have a safe room. If a tornado watch/warning is high, SHCDC will notify parents and close. Please contact the office if you have questions concerning fire or severe weather policies.

Intruder Drills

Each class determines the best place to keep their children safe during an intruder drill/active intruder. We have made arrangements with the First Nazarene Church next door to use their gym. We also unlock all unused rooms for classes to be able to go into. Above all we use our best judgment to exit or hide safely. The Director, Assistant Directors and Secretary keep a binder with each child's information off site in case of an evacuation.

Curriculum

“The Power of Play”

Have you ever heard someone remark about an early childhood program – even ours, perhaps – “All the children do there is play?” At good early childhood programs there is a lot of play – and there should be!

Years of research on children's learning and development document the many benefits of play for children's intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and language development. Children at play are actively involved in creating themes, exploring and establishing environments, solving problems, and developing shared understandings.

Children play in many ways. They play independently, sometimes near each other but with each child engrossed in his own activity. They engage in what is called “parallel play”, perhaps using each others' toys or even talking, but not coordinating their play. They also play cooperatively, organizing roles and scenarios for group play. As they get older, children are capable of more cooperative, coordinated play. But all kinds of play are valuable.

As kids play with each other, they learn to see other children's points of view and begin to become more empathetic and caring. They come to understand customs and rules in their own culture and to appreciate those of others. They learn to use language in new ways to describe their play and to interact with others. And in play, children develop their muscles and coordination.

At SHCDC we organize our curriculum into thematic units and support children's play by providing space, opportunity, and materials. We offer opportunities to stretch and expand horizons while respecting the child's need and right to learn at their own pace. We provide them with simple, interesting materials – no newfangled, expensive gadgets required – and the kids take it from there.

Daily Structure

Children are enrolled in classes by age and development. The children participate in a variety of activities throughout the building during the day. The big room and playground are used for large motor activities. We rotate classes in the lunchroom and use this area for cooking activities. There is a music room, which can also be used as a room for small group activities.

Schedules vary for each class as is fitting for their age group. Younger classes have a very flexible schedule with more structure added as it benefits the development of the children.

Learning Centers: A variety of hands-on activities are planned for the children in the 2, 3, 4, and 5 year old classrooms. Children choose to participate in one or all activities. Some centers are independent while others require teacher interaction. The learning centers are planned to foster development of fine motor skills, social and emotional skills, cognitive skills, and language skills. Learning centers change often to fit the unit and the class.

Circle Time: Circle time includes stories, songs, finger plays, show & tell, and learning games. Children's literature is an important part of circle time.

Music: All classes participate in a music time each day. The children are given an opportunity to sing, dance, play musical instruments, and experience creative movement activities. Music class is suspended during our summer session.

PE (Physical Education): All classes from the Lil Critters up will participate in a PE class weekly. During this time, children will be given an opportunity to dance, run, jump, play games of taking turns, and experience movement activities of various types. During our seasons we will have special PE activities adapted to be themed for holidays or upcoming events. (examples would be: Olympics, Christmas PE, Valentines PE, etc.) PE is suspended during our summer session.

Free Choice: At some time each day, every class has a free choice time when the children are encouraged to choose from the materials in their classroom. Our classrooms are well equipped with manipulative materials, dramatic play props and toys. Equipment and materials are alternated frequently so that new experiences are available on a regular basis.

Outside/Big Room: Each class goes to the playground/big room at least once each day. This is an important time for large motor activities and unstructured play. Social development is also a key element of this time. A variety of equipment is available to support children's play.

Lunch: Lunch is a social engagement for preschoolers and a tactile experience for toddlers. We hope for a good deal of conversation at this time and are seldom disappointed.

Naptime: Our younger classes have a planned naptime. The infants are in cribs and the toddlers have mats for naps. All teachers in the napping rooms have had safe sleep training. Babies under 1 cannot have anything in the crib with them, so they will need a sleep sack not a blanket. If your child sleeps with a pacifier it must be only a pacifier- it cannot have an animal or string attached. Older classes do not nap, but usually have a quiet time which provides a change of pace.

Teachers

Teachers are responsible for planning and implementing the curriculum for their classrooms. All of our teachers are certified by degree, training, and/or experience. Ongoing staff training keeps teachers aware of current trends and new ideas in the field of early childhood education. We boast a very low turnover rate. Most of our staff has been at SHCDC for many years.

SHCDC/Big School Connection

We seek to enrich the learning experience for the children of Southern Hills Development Center. Our curriculum is carefully designed to support a child's construction of knowledge. In this process, children learn to make choices, to solve problems, to negotiate solutions, to socialize with peers, and to trust themselves as learners. Our hope is that as children construct knowledge and skills in all areas – physical, social, emotional, and intellectual – our curriculum establishes a foundation for lifelong learning.