



HIGHLAND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CENTER FAMILY HANDBOOK

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*Our mission.....To provide comprehensive high quality early care
and education at an affordable cost to families.*

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HISTORY

Highland Day Care Center Inc. (HECEC) was founded in 1983 by a group of concerned community members who recognized the need for a quality child care center in Weld County. At the time the center began operations, there was no licensed child care facilities in the area. In 2004, the center began doing business as “Highland Early Childhood Education Center” in

order to more accurately reflect the purpose of the center to provide early childhood education in a caring and nurturing environment.

Supporting parents in their pursuit of care and education for their children is key to a family's success in school and their future. A quality early education is the foundation for their success in school and their future. Our services are provided to children from 1 year and walking to age 12. HECEC is a private non-profit and operates independently of any local school system.

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer. If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination. Complete the USDA program discrimination complaint form found on line 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. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form letter to us by mail at:

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Adjudication 1400 Independence Avenue S.W.
Washington D.C. 200250-9410 by fax (202) 690-7442 or email program at program.intake@usda.gov.

STAFF

HECEC employs staff according to the requirements of Colorado Office of Early Childhood, Department of Human Services. All staff are required to participate in on going staff development to enhance their professionalism. Licensing requires 15 hours of training per year. Staff are additionally trained in CPR, First Aid, Universal Precautions and Mandatory Child Abuse reporting.

All staff must pass the required background checks and are required to keep their file current, including updated physicals and trainings. All staff receive a preservice training in orientation and new staff are mentored and trained under seasoned staff who have experience.

REGULATORY AGENCIES

HECEC is regulated by the following:

- Colorado Office of Early Childhood, Department of Human Services
- Weld County Health Department
- Ault-Pierce Fire Department
- Colorado Child and Adult Care Food Program



OUR PROGRAMS

TODDLERS

The toddler program is for children 1 to 2 ½ years old who are walking and focuses on a safe environment with age appropriate play, active exploration and socialization.

PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

A variety of preschool programs are available. Each of these programs features age appropriate play, exploration and learning while also encouraging children to gain independence and make new friends and preparing children for kindergarten.

COLORADO PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

This program is offered in conjunction with RE-9 school district and is available free of charge to children who qualify. Children must meet several criteria including living within the RE-9 school district in order to enroll. Morning and afternoon sessions are offered four days a week for three hour sessions.

SCHOOL AGE PROGRAMS

School age care is available before and after school. During the summer months the center offers a fun and exciting camp program that includes field trips.

CENTENNIAL BOCES

The center has a collaborative relationship with BOCES to provide screenings and special education services. The contact phone number for BOCES is: (970) 352-7404.

EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM

Families who have infants and toddlers can seek developmental intervention through The Early Intervention Colorado Program. The contact phone number is: (888)-777-4041

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES



- A.) Our Philosophy: We believe that parents/ guardians are the most significant individual in the child's life. All children develop best within a supportive, caring and nurturing family. A partnership between parents/ guardians and teachers creates mutual respect enhancing the child's learning experiences. Each child is a unique individual developing at his/her own pace. A culturally diverse and developmentally appropriate curriculum creates unique individual, developing at his/her own pace. A culturally diverse and developmentally appropriate curriculum creates an environment where a child can learn through child-centered and experiential activities. A child allowed to grow in this environment will develop good social skills and an inquisitive mind.
- B.) The center is licensed by the State of Colorado Department of Human Services to provide childcare for children ages one and walking to twelve (12) years of age.
- C.) The center is open from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. the center is closed on the following days: New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. The center may also opt to close for an additional day during the year for staff training and necessary classroom work, advance notice will be provided to the families regarding any closure.
- D.) The center closes when RE-9 school district closes due to inclement weather; please listen to the local radio stations for closures. If RE-9 has any type of delay, we follow the same delay for opening the center. When the center is open we observe outdoor play in the following manner: If the temperature drops below 20 degrees or above 90 degrees; we do not go outdoors. **The center also reserves the right to close due to inclement weather even if RE-9 school district does not close.**
- E.) The center requires all children to complete a registration packet that includes an enrollment document, physical and immunization records, permission forms, proof of insurance and any other documents necessary to have complete information on each child. There is a \$45.00 non-refundable registration fee and \$60.00 per family.

- F.) An itemized fee schedule is enclosed in the registration packet.
- G.) The center takes attendance of children every 30 minutes in a procedure called “names to faces” where staff indicate on a form the presence of a child by identifying each child.
- H.) The centers strives to create an environment that is socially and emotionally respectful. Our teachers are encouraged to have positive interactions with the children and other staff as well as the parents/guardians we serve.
- I.) Parents or guardians are contacted in the case of a child’s illness during their care. Children must be picked up if they have 2-3 bouts of diarrhea or spike a fever of 100 degrees or higher or are vomiting. Children with these symptoms are not allowed to return to the center for 24 hours following the incidences. Staff will notify parents if their child sustains a head injury of any type. Incident/accident reports will be filled out by staff if an incident/accident occurs. These reports need to be read and signed by the parent/guardian and then signed by the director or assistant director.
- J.) Emergencies are handled as a top priority and families are called when anything happens that affects the care of children. Emergencies may include, tornadoes, fires, and lost children. In the event that a child is lost, proper authorities will be contacted as well as the staff and the parents/guardians will be notified immediately. We conduct fire and tornado drills to ensure that in the event of a real emergency everyone would be prepared.
- K.) Our school age program is the only program that utilizes transportation. We require the bus driver to have a current CDL license. Proper permission forms are handed out to families before the field trip and they are required to be signed and dated before children can be released to a field trip.
- L.) The center is a media free center; we do not have any TVs in the facility.
- M.) Throughout the year the preschool may go on nearby walking field trips. A qualified teacher will be accompanying the children on the field trip and staff ratios will be maintained throughout the trip. Permission slips will also be required for children to attend the field trip. While being transported on a field trip, we ensure that Colorado State Laws are being followed. The bus or other school vehicle provided by school district RE-9 is equipped with a first aid kit. The teacher also has a backpack with a first aid kit as well as emergency contact information for each child on the trip. The backpack will also have any medication that is provided for the child such as an inhaler or Epi Pen. The driver gives the teachers and children special instructions in case of an emergency

before each departure. Children are required to remain in their seats and keep their feet and hands out of the aisle during the trip.

- N.) Children are never left unattended in a vehicle. A head count is done before and after getting in a vehicle.
- O.) Children may be released only to adults whom the parent or guardian has given permission. The enrollment agreement requires the names of these individuals to be listed. In the event that someone other than those listed is needed to pick up a child, the parent or guardian must sign a change of pick up form. Identification is required for those picking up children other than the parent or guardian and those individuals must be informed that they will be required to show identification and a photocopy of the identification will be made to keep on file at the center.
- P.) The center closes at 6:00 PM daily. Before 6:00 PM, rooms are cleaned for the day and the trash has been taken out. As soon as every child has been verified on the sign out sheets, the gates to the playground are locked. At this time staff can check the playground to ensure children have been picked up. We also check every classroom before locking the front door. If a child hasn't been picked up by 6:00 PM and the center hasn't been notified of a late pickup, staff is required to give the parent/guardian a phone call to notify them that their child is still at the center. If the parent/guardian can't be reached, the emergency contacts that the parent/guardian provided, will be notified. For every minute the child is late a \$1.00 late fee will be charged to the parent. After 30 minutes (6:30 p.m.) if no one shows up to pick the child, Child Protection and or the Ault police will be contacted.
- Q.) If a child arrives late and their class has already left for a planned field trip, the child will be placed in the preschool room until their class returns.
- R.) All medications will be administered by trained and delegated staff. The center employs a nurse consultant who is responsible for training and delegating. Delegated staff will keep a record of the medication given in the medical log at all times. All medication is stored in a locked box in the staff room inaccessible to children at all times. All medication must be in the prescription box containing a label and the name of the child. Families are required to have their doctor complete a medication form signed by the doctor for prescription as well as over the counter medication. Diaper cream does not require permission from the doctor unless the skin is broken. If there is expired medication or medication that is left over; it will be given back to the parents.

Emergency medications such as inhalers and Epi Pens will be stored up high in the cabinet in the classroom and will be easily accessible for teachers to get to. These emergency medications will also be taken with the teachers on field trips.

- S.) Classrooms are stored with enough equipment and manipulatives that children do not need to bring toys from home. Teachers do allow items from home for show and tell one day a week. After show and tell, these items will remain in the child's cubby. Children may bring a special blanket for nap time. We discourage children from bringing money to the center. This could be a choking hazard.
- T.) The center provides a breakfast, lunch and snack. We receive funding from the Child and Adult Food Care Program. We discourage children from bringing in outside food as it could be an allergy hazard to others. Bringing in outside food is allowed for special occasions such as a birthday, however the cake or cupcakes must be store bought. Juice isn't allowed to be served with a birthday or special event. Anything homemade will not be accepted in the building. Homemade food in the center is against health department rules and regulations. If a child has a milk allergy we can supply a different kind of milk with a doctor's statement. We do not allow nuts in the center and we do not serve food that has been processed with nuts.
- U.) We begin toilet training around the age of 18 months as long as the child is developmentally ready and the parents are in agreement to start. Parents are responsible for bringing extra clothes due to accidents. Toilet training is done on a case by case due to the varying developmental abilities of children.
- V.) All visitors must sign in at the front desk in the visitor log book. Visitors will be accompanied by staff at all times during their visit.
- W.) Parent and Staff conferences will be held twice a year to inform parents about their child's developmental progress and behavior. These conferences will be conducted in the fall and If there is a developmental concern with a child, we can refer that child to BOCES to be screened. We conduct two developmental screenings a year. The screenings also involve hearing and vision. The local Lion's club also offers a vision screening once a year.
- X.) The center has an open door policy concerning complaints and encourages families to bring any concern forth to the staff. Families also have the right to file a complaint relation to the child care program to:
Office of Early Childhood, Division of Early Care and Learning Licensing
1575 Sherman St. Denver, CO 80203 303-866-5948

Y.) If child abuse is suspected with the program, please contact Colorado Child Protection Hotline: 1-844-264-5437

Z.) If you need to withdraw your child from the HECEC, we require a two-week notice. In the event that the center is not a good fit for your child, we will give you a two week notice to find alternative care if at all possible.

In the event that the staff feels that a student's behavior is becoming a safety concern to others, the parents will be notified. A conference will be held with the family in order to communicate needed steps forward. If staff sees habitual behavior, parents will be notified and we may need to come up with a behavior plan.

Discipline is not punitive and centers on re-directing children. Consequences consist of brief time-outs. Children who are destructive, violent and hurt others including staff or any children will be sent home and can be dis-enrolled.

THE USE OF INTERPRETERS

Anyone needing the assistance of an interpreter should inform the front desk, the Director or the Assistant Director. The center employs several staff at any given time who can assist families with interpretation. Interpreters are available to:

- Translate the enrollment packet
- Translate family conferences
- Translate phone calls between the non-English speaking family and the center
- Translate any concerns that the family or center might have

TRANSITIONS

Transitions are an important part of the center's procedures as children move to new classrooms that are age appropriate as well as kindergarten transitions. Teachers are in direct contact with family members' months before the transition is to occur. Children experience a slow, methodical move to a new room that includes increasing the amount of time they spend in their new room and new experiences such as eating meals, napping etc. Families are provided with a transition document that outlines the domains that will be used in the new room. Kindergarten transition is supported through RE-9 school district in the spring when children are bussed from the center to Highland Elementary school for a tour. Strategies to help children feel more comfortable on their first day include:

- The family and the child are invited to take a tour of the center
- The family and the child meet with the child's new teacher
- The family can come early and stay and read a book to their child



FAMILY CONFERENCES

Family conferences are held twice a year in April/May/ June and November/December.

PORTFOLIOS

Upon 90 days of enrollment teachers will begin the process of developing a portfolio for the children in their classrooms. These portfolios will be shared at the family conferences.

VISION, DENTAL AND HEARING SCREENINGS

We ask that you have your child's vision and hearing tested at their required annual well check. The center partners with the Lion's club annually to offer a free vision screening and with Adventure Dental for a free dental screening. Our enrollment packet requests that you indicate information regarding your child's hearing, vision and dental well-being. We track this information with our nurse consultant to monitor any changes or concerns.

MEDICAL HOME AND HEALTH/MEDICAL INSURANCE

The center requires in the enrollment agreement that families list their medical doctor and the center requires a copy of the child's health care card. The center has health care resources available upon request.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLANS

Annually the center participates in a component of improving quality. Families are asked to answer survey questions and the information regarding plans to implement the quality components are shared with families and all of the stakeholders through the center newsletter.

PARENT AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES



- Families must provide a crib size sheet and blanket for their child that fit into the containers that we provide.
- Families must make sure that children do not bring toys and personal items into the center (unless it is show and tell and the teacher has requested the children to bring an item).
- All children must have extra clothes at the center and if applicable wipes and disposable diapers (the center does not accept cloth diapers).
- Families must pay their bill within the month of care no later than noon the last day of the month per the contract signed in the enrollment packet to avoid termination.
- Children must be in attendance by 9:00 a.m. unless prior arrangements have been made. **HECEC is not a drop in center**. Please, do not pick your child up during nap time unless it is absolutely necessary. Communicate with your child's teacher if you need to come during nap time.
- Families are expected to handle any concerns and issues directly. The center will not tolerate any rude or offensive behavior from any family member or anyone entering the building to pick up an enrolled child. Any behavior that the center construes as harassment or threats, will result in expulsion of the family from the premises permanently.
- Families should call the center when their child will not be in attendance, if you call after business hours please leave a voice message.
- Do not put jewelry on a child under the age of three (3) as it is a choking hazard and we will have to remove it.
- If your child is ill or we have a reason that you need to pick them up, we will first try to reach you and if we are unsuccessful; we will call the person listed as your emergency contact. Please make sure that the persons that you list are aware that they will be responsible for picking up your child if the need arises.

I have read the Highland Early Childhood Education Center Family Handbook and I understand that these are the rules that guide the center.

I understand that as a parent, family member or guardian I am expected to follow these rules in order for my child to enrolled at Highland Early Childhood Education.

Name of child/ children

Printed name of parent/family member/ guardian

Signature _____

Date _____

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE FRONT DESK AND A COPY WILL BE MAINTAINED IN YOUR CHILD'S FILE