

REVISED JUNE 2012



Parent Handbook

The Children's Center of Cicero – Berwyn Directory

CORE

Office of the Executive Director

5341 W. Cermak Road
Cicero, IL 60804
(708) 652-3377
Fax: (708) 222-9984
Email: cccb5341@comcast.net

Grant Works Site

1447 S. 50th Court
Cicero, IL 60804
(708) 652-1202
Fax: (708) 652-1665
Email: cccb1447@comcast.net

Red Feather Site

5341 W. Cermak Road
Cicero, IL 60804
(708) 652-1201
Fax: (708) 780-9681
Email: ccrf@comcast.net

Patricia Makris Child Development Center

2831 S. 49th Avenue
Cicero, IL 60804
(708) 652-1284
Fax: (708) 863-6515
Email: cccb2831@comcast.net

P.A.C.T. Site

6223 W. Ogden Avenue
(708) 795-7228
Fax: (708) 795-0014
Email: thepactcenter@comcast.net

MIECHV

5341 W. Cermak Road
Cicero, IL 60804
(708) 652-1201

Morton Site

2423 S. Austin Blvd.
Cicero, IL 60804
(708) 652-1220
Fax (708) 222-4502
Email: brodriguez@east.ismorton.org
EHS Fax: (708) 652-0559
EHS Email: ehsmorton@yahoo.com

Riverside Drive Site

7022 Riverside Drive
Berwyn, IL 60402
(708) 788-4548
Fax: (708) 788-5622
Email: riversidedr@comcast.net

Head Start II

6223 W. Ogden Avenue
Berwyn, IL 60402
(708) 222-4519
Fax: (708) 484-7693
Email: homevisiting@comcast.net

Concordia Site

3144 S. Home
Berwyn, IL 60402
(708) 222-4517
Fax: (708) 484-4001
Email:

0-3 Prevention Initiative

2831 S. 49th Avenue
Cicero, IL 60804
(708) 652-1284
Fax: (708) 863-6515
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Clyde EHS II

2724 S. 61st Avenue
Cicero, IL 60804
(708) 222-4508
Fax (708) 222-4290

GENERAL HISTORY

Founded in 1978, The Children's Center of Cicero-Berwyn is a private not-for-profit corporation chartered in the State of Illinois to provide childcare services. The agency is designated a 501(c)(3) organization by the Internal Revenue Service and is registered as a charitable trust. We are governed by a voluntary Board of Directors. All daycare programs are licensed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). All daycare sites are accredited through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Responding to community needs, our first site, Grant Works, opened in 1978 serving 28 children. Since then, other sites have been opened for programs serving children from six weeks to ten years of age and their families. We also have parent and child drop-in centers which have been opened to provide activities, workshops and seminars.

PHILOSOPHY

We provide a warm, loving, nurturing and stimulating atmosphere for children. We respect the child as an individual, unique and special. We help children develop appropriate social competencies and learn to accept themselves, as well as others.

Our primary goals are to:

- ~meet the needs that are essential for children's best social, emotional and intellectual development.
- ~promote children's growth and well-being through the development of cognitive skills, social competence and positive self-image.
- ~provide a program that strengthens and enhances what children receive from their fundamental influence – the family.

In order to achieve our goals, we attempt to provide a well-organized, yet flexible program that is geared to the individual child. We need not only the consent, but the full participation of our parents.

MISSION STATEMENT

Partnering with parents and community, we provide a strong educational foundation to prepare children for future success.

WHAT OUR PROGRAMS OFFER

All programs give children a chance to participate in a wide variety of experiences that will help meet their developmental needs. The child's total development is our primary concern. Activities are arranged to meet the following needs:

Social-Emotional

- Getting along with both children and adults
- Expressing feelings in an acceptable way
- Learning self-control

Physical

- Using large and small muscles to promote growth and development

Intellectual

- Gaining skills that encourage thinking, reasoning and problem solving

Cultural

- Developing pride in self, family and culture

Activities are arranged for individual and group experiences, as well as free-choice play. Teachers work with children individually to address specific needs.

The staff is reflective of a variety of educational backgrounds, learning experiences and cultures. They are truly involved, hard-working and invested in meeting the needs of your children.

The Agency promotes an open-door policy (transparent) and welcomes you at any time. This is your program and it can only work with input from you. Your feedback and suggestions are always welcome.

The Agency staff is composed of:

- Executive Director
- Head Start Director
- Business Manager
- Education Director
- Site Directors
- Teaching Staff
- Family Service Team
- Food Service Team
- Facilities Team
- Bus Monitors

ABSENCES

If your child will be absent, you must notify the Center as soon as possible. Attendance is very important. The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) and Head Start require that we have 85% attendance. If excessive absences occur, additional charges may be applied equal to the daily rate as determined by the Agency.

Half-Day Head Start: Absences must be reported by the parent within the first hour of attendance.

School-Age: If a child is absent from school for any reason, they cannot attend the Center.

AGENCY CLOSINGS

The Agency will be closed in observance of the following federal holidays:

Labor Day	Columbus Day	Thanksgiving & the day after
Christmas Day	New Years Day	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Presidents' Day	Pulaski Day	Good Friday
Memorial Day	Independence Day	

The Agency will be closed for two weeks for Winter Break.

Centers may be closed for additional holidays or trainings. You will be notified in advance of these closings by your site director.

ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE

Arrival

Children must be accompanied to the Center by a parent, guardian or other authorized person who is 17 years of age or older. All children must be dropped off by the scheduled site time. Parents or others who bring children to the Center must sign the "Sign-In Sheet" located in each classroom. If your child must arrive late due to unforeseen circumstances, you must contact the Center to inform them of the expected arrival time. Admittance may be denied if you have not notified the Center of late arrival.

School-Age: Parents will need to complete an Arrival/Departure Plan for your child upon enrollment. Agency staff will be responsible for the pick up of children from Liberty School only, and will walk them back to the Center. Pick-up service can be terminated at any time due to unsafe or uncooperative behavior en route to the Center.

Departure

Children must be picked up from the Center by a parent, guardian or other authorized person who is 17 years of age or older. If necessary, a parent may arrange to have the child picked up by a person 15-16 years of age who

possesses a valid Illinois drivers' license, a photo identification card issued by the Illinois Secretary of State or other photo identification to establish their identity. Written permission must be provided for the 15 or 16 year old in the child's file.

Anyone picking up the child must be listed on the Emergency/Pick-Up Form. Persons picking up **must** be able to show photo identification. Parents or others picking up the child must sign the "Sign-In Sheet" located in each classroom. It is the enrolling parent's responsibility to notify the Center of any changes in custody, court orders, orders of protection, etc.

The Agency reserves the right to refuse release of a child to any person who appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Cell Phone Use

Please refrain from using your cell phone during drop-off and pick-up time. This is an important transition time for your child, and our opportunity to communicate with you.

Late Pick-Up

Children must be picked up by the Center's/Program's closing time. If an emergency arises and you will be unavoidably detained, you must call the Center. A late fee will be assessed at the rate of \$5.00 per quarter hour past program ending time. Late fees are assessed 1 minute after scheduled pick-up time. After the third late assessment, the child's pick-up time will be changed to one half-hour earlier. If lateness continues, the child may be withdrawn from the program.

Section 407.260

When a child is not picked up, staff will begin calling families and/or emergency contacts at one minute after closing. Calls are made to everyone on the emergency/pick-up list until we reach someone, or until the family contacts the Center. If we are unable to reach a parent, guardian or emergency contact 1½ hours after closing, the police will be notified and the child will be escorted to the police station.

BIRTHDAYS AND OTHER SPECIAL EVENTS

Each child will be recognized on his/her birthday. The child's teacher will plan an appropriate celebration with parent input. Some possibilities may include parents bringing a store-bought cake, pizza, or participating in a classroom nutrition activity. **HOMEMADE TREATS CANNOT BE ACCEPTED**, per Health Department regulations. Balloons are not allowed due to the choking hazard they pose.

We encourage parents to bring healthy snacks for other occasions such as Halloween, Valentine's Day, etc. Parents must work with the teacher to coordinate any treats. All treats must be store-bought and in original packaging.

CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT POLICY

All childcare personnel are required to report suspected child abuse or neglect in accordance with Illinois state law as Mandated Reporters. It is not the place of our staff to **determine** if a child is or is not being abused, but **ONLY TO REPORT SUSPECTED ABUSE AND/OR NEGLECT**. A call may be made based on a child's report, or the observation of bruises, scars, burns or other marks that might be the result of suspected abuse. A call may also be made when neglect is suspected, including, but not limited to, inadequate food, clothing, medical attention or protection. A staff member may seek to inform the parent of the situation and try to secure parent cooperation in making this report. The parent's explanation of the child's bruise, etc. will be recorded along with the staff observation.

THE OBSERVATION WILL BE REPORTED TO D.C.F.S. CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE WITH OR WITHOUT PARENT INVOLVEMENT.

CONFIDENTIALITY

To respect the privacy and dignity of children and families, all employees are expected to keep all information in the strictest of confidence. Discussion of confidential information with anyone other than authorized personnel for business purposes is prohibited. Children's cumulative files are available to employees and regulatory agencies only. A Release of Information must be signed before employees can discuss a child with outside professionals.

DISCIPLINE AND BEHAVIOR

General Policy

It is the policy of all Agency programs to discipline children with fairness, firmness and kindness. The policy is as follows:

- 1) Consistent reminder of simple rules
- 2) Redirect child to another activity
- 3) Time out, if necessary (no more than one minute per year of child's age)

The philosophy of this Agency is that no physical or mental punishment is acceptable. Corporal punishment or the withholding of food as punishment is strictly forbidden. Parents will be encouraged to follow this policy when dealing with their children within our programs/buildings.

Behavior

Our aim is to meet the child's needs within our existing programs and resources. If your child finds it difficult to meet the standards of expected behavior, it may be necessary to review his/her participation in Agency activities or programs. In an effort to be clear about these expected standards, we will take into consideration age-appropriateness, frequency and intensity of the behaviors.

Although biting can be a developmental issue, it is not an acceptable behavior for children over three years of age. The Agency's general rule is that after three bites occur, the child's last day may be scheduled. Staff will work with parents to develop a plan to modify this behavior before dismissal is considered. As stated above, we will take the child's age, frequency and intensity of incidents into consideration.

DISMISSAL FROM PROGRAM

There are various reasons why a child may need to be removed from Agency programs. These may include, but are not limited to, unsafe behavior, poor attendance, non-payment of fees, continual lateness, frequent toilet accidents, or violation of other Agency policies. Any consideration of dismissal will be determined on a case-by-case basis. This will occur after:

- frequent communication between staff and parents (by phone, in person, or in writing)
- sharing of resources
- all attempts at resolving the issue have been made

If no feasible alternative can be provided in the present program, a last day will be scheduled.

If at any time, the best interest or safety of your child, another child, a staff member, or the Agency is at risk, **immediate** dismissal may be required. The Agency reserves the right to remove any child from any program at any time.

DRESS CODE

Please dress your child in clean, comfortable play clothes so that he/she can move freely from one activity to another. We will be very active and not always tidy, so please do not let children wear any "special clothes".

GYM SHOES PLEASE! Shoes should have non-skid soles and closed-in toes. If your child comes in any other type of shoe, it may limit their involvement in many of our activities. **ABSOLUTELY NO OPEN-TOED SHOES!**

Classrooms are required to go outside daily, so please be sure your child is dressed appropriately for the weather.

Winter: Children may go outside as long as it is over 25 F, including the wind chill. Please be sure to send a warm coat with hood or a hat, gloves and boots. Teachers will often plan activities in the snow, and as long as your child is present, they will be participating in all activities. When your child wears boots to school, be sure to send extra shoes for them to wear inside.

Summer: Children may go outside as long as it is under 95 F, including the heat index. Hats and sunglasses can, and should, be worn outside, but are not allowed to be worn indoors. Backless or strapless shirts are not allowed. Water shoes or flip-flops may be worn *outside only during water play*, so be sure to send extra shoes for them to wear inside.

Except on days designated by your child's teacher, pajamas should not be worn as clothing.

FIELD TRIPS

When funds are available, children may go on field trips. A permission slip must be signed by the enrolling parent in order for the child to participate. Parents will be notified if volunteers are needed.

Morton: Parents are required to attend all field trips with their child.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

Medical

All children are required by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to have a current physical and a current immunization record on file.

Section 407.310 Health Requirements for Children

- 1) **The initial medical report shall be dated less than six months prior to enrollment of infants, toddlers and preschool children. For school-age children, a copy of the most recent regularly scheduled school physical may be submitted (even if more than six months old) or the daycare center may require a more recent medical report by its own enrollment policy. If a health problem is suspected, the daycare center may require additional documentation of the child's health status.**
- 2) **If a child transfers from one daycare center to another, the medical report may be used at the new center if it is less than one year old. In such a case, the center the child is leaving shall maintain a copy of the child's medical form and return the original to the parent.**
- 3) **The medical examination shall be valid for two years, except that subsequent examinations for school-age children shall be in accordance with the requirements of the Illinois School Code.**

- 4) **The medical report shall indicate that the child has received the immunizations required by the Illinois Department of Public Health. These include poliomyelitis, measles, rubella, mumps, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, haemophilus influenzae B, hepatitis B, and varicella.**

Other tests required by The Children's Center include a TB test, a hematocrit or hemoglobin screening, and a lead screening. Results of all tests must be indicated on the physical form. A dental examination dated within six months of enrollment is also required.

Illness

Children shall be screened upon arrival daily for any obvious signs of illness or head lice. If symptoms of illness are present, the childcare staff shall determine whether they are able to care for the child safely, based on the apparent degree of illness.

A child might be excluded for the following: rash, fever, red and watery eyes, puffy eyes, coughing, runny nose, open sores, head lice, unusual lethargy, vomiting, diarrhea, etc. If any of these symptoms should occur during the course of the day, the parent will be called and asked to pick up the child within the hour.

Parents are expected to report a child's illness to the Center as soon as possible.

Head Start: Children's illnesses must be reported within the first hour of their scheduled start time.

School-Age: Children's absences must be reported prior to dismissal of school.

Whenever a child has a communicable disease, (including but not limited to: strep throat, ear infection) or is absent due to illness for 3 or more consecutive days, the following procedure must be followed:

A doctor's statement, indicating that the disease is no longer communicable or that the child may return to a school setting, must be given upon return.

Guidelines for Returning to School After Illness

- 1) Child must be free of a fever for 24 hours
- 2) Child should be free of other symptoms (diarrhea, vomiting, pain) for 24 hours
- 3) Child must be free of lice and/or nits (eggs).
School-Age: Children should be brought to the Center before school to have their head re-checked.
- 4) Child should be feeling well and able to participate in all activities.
- 5) In the case of stitches or a cast, a doctor's note indicating any restrictions must be given upon return.

Medication Policy and Procedures

The Children's Center will **ONLY** administer Inhalers and Epi-Pens. Parents of children who require the use of Inhalers or Epi-Pens must attend a staffing prior to enrollment, with the designated agency staff, to address child's health issues and individual needs, and sign appropriate documents. All documents must be returned **before** any medication can be dispensed. All other medication must be administered by the parent or authorized delegate. If the medication must be stored on-site, it will be stored in a locked box.

If an Epi-Pen is administered to the child, 911 must be called immediately and the parent will be notified.

If an Inhaler is administered to the child, the parent will be notified immediately. 911 will be called only if the child remains in distress.

Accidents and Medical Emergencies

In case of slight injury, the staff will respond according to American Red Cross First Aid training. An accident report will be filled out for the parent to sign. The parent will be called and informed of any injury to the head or face.

In case of a medical emergency, the parents of the child will be contacted immediately and 911 may be called. If the child must be transported in an ambulance, the teacher or supervisor will accompany the child in the ambulance and will remain with the child until the parent arrives. If further assistance is needed by the parent at the hospital, the staff member will stay until the parent is comfortable.

Morton Site: The high school nurse or the Dean's office will be called to get the teen parent from class.

All children are covered by an accident insurance policy while they are on the premises. Should you have any questions regarding this policy, please ask the site director.

Sunscreen Policy

It is highly recommended by the Cook County Department of Public Health that children's skin be protected from the sun while at the pool or engaging in other outdoor water activities. Sunscreen should be applied by the parent daily before arrival at the Center. Parents should also send the sunscreen of their choice, labeled with their child's name (in permanent waterproof marker). The product will be applied by the children with staff assistance at the Center prior to scheduled water play activities. Because of the importance of this type of protection, any child who does not have their own sunscreen will be given sunscreen with a minimum SPF of 45.

PARENT CONCERNS

Parents should bring any concern they have to their child's teacher. If the concern is not resolved, the parent should speak to the Site Director. If the concern is still not resolved, please refer to the Agency's Impasse Policy, which can be found on the last page of this Handbook.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

The Agency establishes and maintains collaborative relationships with each child's family. Parents are encouraged to participate at the Center through meetings, volunteering, parent/teacher conferences and fundraising. Information regarding Center and community events will be shared with parents through newsletters, calendars, and other notices.

PAYMENT

When a child is enrolled, the family is given a weekly or monthly co-payment. Weekly payments are to be made on Mondays. Monthly payments are to be made by the 7th of each month. The fee is a set fee and will not be waived for absence, illness, vacation or holidays. Failure to make payments as required may result in an interruption of services or dismissal from the program. Any outstanding balances must be paid in full before a family can add another child, transition to another site/program, or return to the program. Parents are responsible for any uncovered time at the current daily rate as determined by IDHS. Head Start and part-time Pre-K are offered at no cost.

PHOTOGRAPHY

The Children's Center staff will take pictures of your child during various activities. These pictures may be displayed throughout the classroom, building or Agency. Photos may also be used in the Agency's printed material, on the Agency website, and in other media during and after your child's enrollment. Photos of your child will not be used for these purposes if you have not signed the agreement included in your enrollment packet.

REDETERMINATION

Parents receiving IDHS Child Care Assistance Program (Action for Children) must contact the Grant Works Site, when notified, to complete the redetermination process. Parents who fail to follow through with the redetermination process will be responsible for the full weekly fee, pending reapproval.

SCREENINGS

Developmental screenings will be conducted on all children enrolled in our programs. Based on availability, vision and hearing and speech screenings may also be conducted. Results of all screenings will be shared with the parent upon completion. Consent for these screenings was included in your enrollment packet.

SNOW/HAZARDOUS WEATHER CLOSING

In case of heavy snowfall or other hazardous weather conditions, the Center will follow the local school closing policy. Tune in to your local news for school closing information. If your child is attending a site located in Cicero, follow District 99. If your child is attending a site located in Berwyn, follow District 100. If your child is attending Morton, follow District 201.

TOILETING

Children are expected to be toilet trained upon enrollment in our preschool programs (3-5 years old). Frequent toilet accidents (not due to medical or special needs) will result in a staffing where a plan will be developed to help your child be successful. If accidents continue, your child may not be ready for our preschool programs and a last day may be scheduled. When your child becomes successful with toileting at home, enrollment may be revisited.

TRANSITIONS

Agency staff will do their best to accommodate each child as they move to a new program. The following address some expectations for these transitions.

Toddler to Preschool

When children are toilet-trained and approaching their 3rd birthday, the toddler teaching staff will begin visiting the child's new preschool classroom with the child. As the child becomes more comfortable, the child may visit for longer periods of time with their toddler teacher present. As the child adjusts to the new teaching staff and classroom schedule, the child will be able to visit without a teacher from the toddler room. If the child appears ready and comfortable in their new class, they will begin there permanently on the day following their 3rd birthday.

Preschool to Kindergarten (school district)

During the months of May and June, preschool classrooms will begin talking with children about what to expect in kindergarten. Classroom teachers may help prepare children in some of the following ways: by visiting a local kindergarten classroom before the school year ends, having a kindergarten teacher conduct a meeting for parents about expectations, having a kindergarten student talk to the class about their experience and answer questions.

Preschool to After-Kindergarten Care (Grant Works)

For children who will move into the Grant Works After-Kindergarten program from one of our other locations, a visit to the site is required so the child and parents can meet the new teachers and see the Center. Space is very limited and first priority for enrollment in this program will be given to children currently enrolled at Grant Works. If you are interested in transitioning to this program, please speak to your site director.



1447 S. 50th Court • Cicero, IL 60804

WRITTEN GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE/IMPASSE POLICY

Policies of this agency are based on mutual trust between funding sources and the agency. It is the practice of the agency to consider: DCFS Licensing Regulations, NAEYC Standards, staff input, parent input and community needs. All policy changes will be submitted to the Board of Directors for final approval.

To be initiated after no satisfactory results are received through verbal communication with Site Director and Executive Director.

1. Parent/Community member will submit written concern on form (or letter) describing the nature of the problem to the Board of Directors. Copies may be forwarded to the Executive Director, Site Director and/or Program Director.
2. Concern will be reviewed by the Center Policy Committee or the Program Committee of the Agency's Board of Directors.
3. If the complaint is not resolved by the Committee, the entire Board of Directors will be consulted.
4. If there is an impasse, C.E.D.A. and/or an outside mediator will be consulted.

All complaints should be handled within a reasonable length of time.

Forward to:

Board of Directors
1447 S. 50th Court
Cicero, IL 60804

Executive Director:
Head Start Director:

Lurlean Chodora, B.A., C.D.A.
Beverly Dawson, M.A.

Grant Works:
Red Feather:
Makris Center:
P.A.C.T.:
Morton:
Early Head Start:
Riverside Drive:
Head Start II:
Concordia Head Start:
Early Head Start II:
MIECHV

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Teri Lyn Mannes, M.A.
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