

FAMILY HANDBOOK 2020-2021

A handbook for families in the Early Care and Education

Programs provided by:

Southern Kennebec Child Development Corporation



Southern Kennebec Child Development Corporation (SKCDC)

Main Office

337 Maine Ave.

Farmingdale, Maine 04344

207-582-3110 or toll free: 800-525-2229

fax: 207-582-3112

email: info@skcdc.org

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: <http://www.skcdc.org/>

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/MaineSKCDC/>

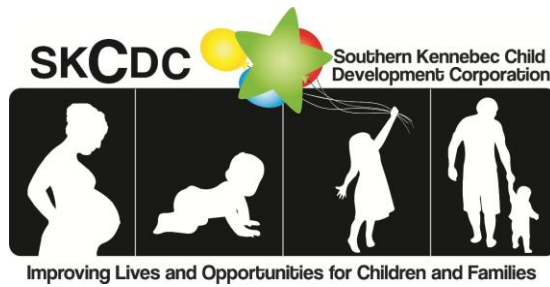


Table of Contents

Welcome to our program	3
SKCDC Management	5
Family Engagement	6
Calendar and Snow Days	8
Emergency Procedures	9
Safety	10
Confidentiality	11
Child Care Fees and Schedule	12
Health and Wellness	13
Early Childhood Education	17
General Resources That Are Here to Help you	22

Welcome to our program.....

SKCDC is a non-profit agency governed by a fifteen-member Board of Directors. The agency operates Head Start, Early Head Start, and Child Care programs in licensed facilities in southern Kennebec County, sponsors Family Child Care Providers for participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and is an authorized Car Seat Distribution Center.

MISSION

To improve lives and opportunities for children and families.

VISION

Provide and support the development of quality, accessible, flexible, affordable early care and education options designed to address the child care needs of income eligible families that support economic self-sufficiency.

Provide Head Start and Early Head Start services and options for eligible families.

Provide or facilitate the development of comprehensive developmentally appropriate programs for children through an integrated family-focused service delivery system to promote school readiness and long-term success.

Expand existing collaborative and partnership efforts with the State, public school systems, community agencies, and early care providers to increase and enhance quality services and positive outcomes for children and families.

Promote family partnerships that recognize those who parent as the primary educators, nurturers, and advocates for their children, that encourage a meaningful role in decision making and other parent training/involvement opportunities.

Provide or sponsor training and professional development opportunities for staff and providers.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with some basic information about SKCDC services, activities, policies and procedures. Please contact staff if you have questions or would like additional information.

SKCDC Child Development Centers and Options

AUGUSTA	Webster: Head Start Preschool and Extended Day Classrooms Children 3 to 5 years old Magic Years: Head Start Preschool and Early Head Start Year-Round Child Care available Children 6 weeks to 5 years old
CHELSEA	Public Preschool Partnership Children 4 years old by Oct. 15
GARDINER*	Head Start Preschool and Early Head Start Year-Round Child Care available Children 6 weeks to 5 years old
MONMOUTH	Public Preschool Partnership Children 4 years old by Oct. 15
SOUTH CHINA	Lake Region: Head Start Preschool and Extended Day Classroom Children 3 to 5 years old
SOUTH GARDINER	Infant Toddler Center Children 6 weeks to 3 years old
WINDSOR	Public Preschool Partnership Children 4 years old by Oct. 15
WINTHROP	Public Preschool Partnership Children 4 years old by Oct. 15

*SKCDC's **HOME BASED program** welcomes expectant parents and children ages birth to 5 years old from any community in Southern Kennebec County. Twice monthly Family Discovery Days (socializations) occur at the Gardiner centers.

Exact locations and phone numbers for all sites are on our website: www.skcdc.org.
Call 582-3110 or email info@skcdc.org for more information.

Head Start

Head Start serves children ages 3-5 years. The hours and number of days are dependent on program option. Head Start's approach strengthens children's school readiness in partnership with parents/guardians. There is no fee for Head Start services.

Public Preschool Partnerships

Partnerships between SKCDC Head Start and public-school systems offer developmentally appropriate preschool programs for children and families. Preschool partnerships follow the public-school calendar. Transportation is provided by the public school. Children must be 4 years old by October 15th.

Early Head Start - Center Based

Early Head Start Center Based serves infants and toddlers ages 6 weeks – 3 years old and operates 6.5 hours per day, four days per week for 48 weeks per year. There is no fee for Early Head Start Services.

Expectant Families Program

The expectant families program is for families who are pregnant and anticipating the need for Child Care or Early Head Start services after the baby is born. The 48-week program (year-round) provides prenatal home visiting services.

Home Based - Early Head Start and Head Start

The Home Based program offers services for children birth - 5 years old, through weekly home visits and several group Family Discovery Days for parents/guardians and their children each month. Early Head Start Home Based (ages 0-3) operates 48 weeks per year; Head Start Home Based (ages 3-5) operates 32 weeks per year.

Child Care

Full day year-round Child Care services for infants, toddlers and preschoolers are available at one center in Augusta and in Gardiner.. Families, based on their eligibility, utilize DHHS child care vouchers, ASPIRE or pay the full private fee for child care services. Some free services are available.

SKCDC Management

If you have a question about any policy or need more information, please speak to the staff at the center or the Home Visitor. Parents/guardians are also welcome to call a Manager or Director for assistance.

Agency Director

Cristina Salois 582-3110 ext. 101

Operations Director

Sue Sidelinger 582-3110 ext. 103

Finance Director

Monique Morin 582-3110 ext. 102

Human Resources Director

Lucinda Long 582-3110 ext. 104

Project Director

Debbie Vinci-Hall 582-3110 ext. 105

Program Manager

Melissa Savage 582-3110 ext. 108

Early Childhood Coach/Program Manager

Kelly Theberge 582-3110 ext. 112

Disabilities/Mental Health Manager

Carly Lowell 582-3110 ext. 107

Program Manager

Casey Beaudoin 582-3110 ext. 110

Family/Community Services Manager

Emily Fortin 582-3110 ext. 113

ERSEA (Enrollment) Manager

Leslie Eastman 582-3110 ext. 111

Health /Nutrition Manager

Julie Plummer 582-3110 ext. 109

Quality Assurance and Data Manager

Rita Fullerton 582-3110 ext. 114

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Parents and guardians are the “forever” people in a child's life. Parent, guardian and staff are partners in the child's learning process. Parents/guardians are valued as their child's first and primary educator. SKCDC supports parent and guardian engagement in:

- Active participation in the process of goal development for their child.
- Sharing information about their child, family, culture, beliefs, traditions and values.
- Sharing the families' talents and interests.
- Participation in ongoing formal and informal communication with the staff.
- For Home Base participating in 90-minute weekly Home Visits, regularly scheduled Discovery Days and Community Events.
- Ensuring their child's regular attendance.

Volunteers

Donations of time and materials benefit the whole program and are an essential part of the overall program budget. In kind contributions from parents/guardians and the community are always welcome, such as participation on committees, supporting a lending library or toy/clothing exchange, helping to interview when new staff are hired, participating in group socializations, and much more.

Family Support Services

The program works to build partnerships with parents/guardians. Assistance to parents/guardians is offered through support, information and advocacy. Staff support and encourage parents/guardians in their role as nurturer, teacher and advocate. Parents/guardians are given the opportunity to work with staff to develop goals through an assessment and partnership process. This helps families to identify strengths and goals, address challenges and concerns, and work to achieve goals. Staff offer resources and referrals. All parents/guardians can participate in this process.

Family Service Coordinators (FSCs)

FSCs are available at each center to support parents/guardians with case management when it is desired by the family-teaching team. FSCs will work with parents/guardians on an individual basis to help identify needs, learn about community resources, meet goals, and build advocacy skills.

Increasing Male Engagement

Men play a significant role in the lives of children. Since 1998, SKCDC parents, guardians and staff have been working to support male engagement throughout the agency. Men Influencing the Lives of Kids (MILK) is the name of SKCDC's fatherhood initiative. The goals of MILK are to increase children's positive experiences with nurturing males and to expand staff's awareness and ability to involve fathers and other male figures in the agency's programming.

Community Connections

Throughout the year, SKCDC collaborates with individuals and organizations. Some examples include: visits from local librarians, firefighters or policeman, and presentations by area artists and musicians.

Policy Council

The Policy Council is the decision-making group for SKCDC Head Start and Early Head Start and is comprised of parents, guardians and community representatives. Parents/guardians are elected to the Policy Council in October by the parents/guardians at their center or Home Based parent/guardian group/committee. The Policy Council is a link between the parent/guardian committees, public/private organizations, Board of Directors and the community. The Policy Council is involved in all major decisions about the operation of the program including planning programs and budgets, hiring staff, evaluating the program. Additionally, the Policy Council elect individuals from its membership to serve on the SKCDC Board of Directors.

All parents/guardians are welcome and encouraged to attend center/program meetings, Policy Council and Board of Directors meetings.

Attendance

Children learn best when they attend on a regular basis. The specific hours and days your child attends are determined at the time of enrollment. For all children, research shows that regular attendance is vital for positive school readiness outcomes.

If your child is going to be absent on a day he/she is normally scheduled to attend, please call to inform the center/home visit as early as possible. If we do not hear from families regarding absences, we will call the parent /guardian on the same day to check in. The Head Start program requires us to make a home visit if we are unable to contact you. We are here to help.

Transportation

Parents/guardians are responsible for transporting children to and from programs. We assist parents/guardians in accessing community-based transportation services and financial supports. Transportation stipends are available for eligible parents/guardians.

*In the Home Base Program, home visitors are available to assist with transportation to and from Discovery Days and Community Events, as well as on an individual basis in some circumstances.

***In Public Preschool Partnership locations, transportation is provided by the school district, in accordance with the district policies.**

To ensure the safety of children - when transporting children to or from school, we request that no vehicles be left running and that children are not left unattended in vehicles. Please let us know if you need assistance at drop off or pick up time.

The Maine Child Safety Seat law requires that all children up to 8 years of age and 80 lbs. ride in approved car seats or booster seats when riding in a car. The law also mandates that children under the age of 12 weighing less than 100 pounds be in the back seat of the vehicle. We will ensure that families receive information on available resources for car seats/booster seats.

Children with identified disabilities, may be eligible for transportation to and from school. Transportation reimbursement may also be available through Child Development Services or Maine Care.

CALENDAR AND SNOW DAYS

In snowy weather, Child Care always remains open, except in extreme emergencies.

Head Start programs may close on storm days and home visits may need to be rescheduled. Watch WCSH6 or call the SKCDC main office at 582-3110 for storm closures. You can also access the text alert service at www.wcsh6.com for texts to be automatically sent to your phone about school closing.

When a family or guardian enrolls with SKCDC, the primary parent/guardian is automatically signed up for phone, text and/or email alerts about school closings from One Call Now. If the parent/guardian wishes to add phone numbers or email addresses, s/he needs to go to the One Call Now Self Service Portal on the website: www.mycallnow.com. First time users will need to click on the "signup" button. If a parent/guardian does NOT want to receive alerts from One Call Now, s/he can go to the website www.onecallnow.com/opt-out and submit the form or call 1-877-698-3262, option 5 and follow the prompts. The staff can help, if needed.

All programs are closed for State and Federal holidays and for required Staff Professional Development Days. **Public Preschool Partnerships please review your school's calendar for details and additional closed days.** SKCDC programs are closed for the following weeks:

Closed Weeks

December 21-25, 2020

July 5-9, 2020

Holidays

All programs are closed for 2020/21 State and Federal holidays.

September 7: Labor Day

October 12: Columbus Day
November 11: Veteran's Day
November 26: Thanksgiving Day
November 27: Thanksgiving (Friday)
December 25: Christmas
January 1: New Year's Day
January 18: Martin Luther King Day
February 15: President's Day
April 19: Patriot's Day
May 31: Memorial Day
July 5 Independence Day (Monday)

SKCDC Professional Development Days

All programs are closed for the following staff professional development Fridays:

August 28, 2020
October 9, 2020
January 22, 2021
April 16, 2021

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

If your child is injured or sick at school, we will contact you at home, at work or use the emergency contact person(s) the parent/guardian has identified on the Emergency Information Form. Staff will provide immediate first aid. In emergency situations, we will contact EMS. Please keep us updated with current phone numbers for use in emergencies.

Fire Drills

Fire drills are conducted monthly in each classroom using varying days and times. All children and adults present participate. Each classroom has at least two exits and staff practice using different exits during drills.

Building Evacuations

****Public Preschool Partnerships follow the policies and procedures of the local school district.***

Emergency Evacuation Floor Plans and the Classroom Emergency Response Aid which contains emergency phone numbers are posted in each room utilized by children with two (2) means of exiting identified by Route #1 and Route #2. In and Out of Neighborhood evacuations are practiced during the program year.

In the case of an emergency evacuation, we will notify the parent/guardian where to go. Parent/guardian (or a person listed on the Emergency Information Form) must pick the child up at the reunification site. Individual site evacuation plans are discussed and reviewed with the

parent/guardian during enrollment. Parent/guardian will report to the assigned reunification site and give the name of their child. The person picking the child up must present a picture I.D. to ensure the person requesting the child matches the name on the Emergency Information Form. Staff will bring the child to that person.

To ensure security and proper evacuations of facilities during an emergency, all visitors are required to sign the volunteer/consultant Sign in/Sign out sheet. Staff consistently monitors people entering or leaving our sites.

SAFETY

Releasing Children and Late Pick-Up Policy

****Public Preschool Partnerships follow the policies and procedures of the local school district.***

Staff will not let a child leave the center with anyone unless the parent/guardian has given the program permission in writing. A photo I.D. of the person the parent/guardian is authorizing to pick up the child may be required before staff release a child.

Staff will not accept children before the center opens in the morning. A parent/guardian or approved person must stay with the child until s/he is safely in the classroom and the child's teacher or other classroom staff has been informed that they are there.

Children must be picked up by a parent/guardian, or approved person by the established closing time. If that person is late, they will be required to initial the classroom In/Out Sheet attendance sheet acknowledging they are picking up past the closing time. If the staff has not heard from a parent/guardian or approved person at the time of closing, they will contact that person at that time. If there is no response, the staff will contact all persons on the emergency pickup list. If there is no response, the staff will, within a reasonable timeframe, notify the Police Department that the parent/guardian or approved person are unreachable.

If a parent/guardian or approved person is late in picking up the child more than once, the family services coordinator will establish action steps which ensure the child is picked up on time every day.

If a parent/guardian is unable to comply with the program opening and closing schedule and/or they do not meet the action steps and goals on the goal plan, they will be asked to transfer to another program option that better meets their needs.

Pedestrian Safety

Pedestrian Safety education materials are provided to all families during home visits. The staff plans opportunities for children to practice pedestrian safety throughout the year.

Smoking

SKCDC's centers, Pre-K Partnership sites, playgrounds and vehicles are tobacco free zones. Smoking is not allowed during home visits. We require that all home visits be smoke free to provide children, families and staff a healthy learning environment.

Every effort is made to reduce children's exposure to secondhand smoke.

Safety on Home Visits

Parent/guardian shall provide a safe environment for scheduled home visits with staff. When there are unsafe conditions in the home, such as: icy walkways, unsecured animals, unsecured weapons, threatening behavior, cigarette smoke, toxins, or other unsafe or unhealthy conditions, we will work with the parent/guardian to provide home visit services in an alternative place, while working with the family to support a safe, healthy home environment.

Weapons

SKCDC does not allow weapons on agency property, except by authorized law enforcement personnel. Persons in possession of a weapon (guns, knives etc.) are prohibited from SKCDC properties. Persons determined to be in possession of a weapon will be required to leave the property.

Child Abuse and Neglect

If there is reason to believe a child has been abused or neglected, we are required, as mandated reporters, to contact the Department of Health & Human Services, Child Protective Services. We follow the state law in prohibiting identified sex offenders from unauthorized presence on our properties, which by statute are defined as "sex offender restricted zones." Please inform the staff of anyone in your household who is prohibited or restricted from contact with children.

We are always available to help support parents or guardians who are dealing with the many challenges of raising children.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Photo Permission

With parent/guardian written permission, staff is authorized to take pictures in the classrooms and at family/center events for the following purposes: portfolio samples, classroom labeling, educational projects, news articles and social media. Only a child's first name will be used in news and social media. With permission, parents/guardians may be authorized to take pictures during family/center events. **Pictures taken by parents or guardians must not be posted on the internet or sent by email to any other individual.** Staff must ensure that any child for whom photo permission has not been received is excluded from all pictures taken.

Boundaries

At SKCDC we respect the boundaries of parents/guardians we serve and their right to privacy. This extends outside the classroom and into the community and the world of social media. Employees are expected to avoid sending or accepting requests to/or from parents/guardians on social media.

Records

We keep a record of services received by parent/guardian and their child. Parent/guardian may arrange to see these records at any time. Records are not sent to public schools or any other agency without written consent from the parent or guardian. We make every effort to share information and to provide opportunities for involvement with both biological parents/legal guardians. SKCDC adheres to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Acts regarding confidentiality of client records. In circumstances involving children's safety, personal identifying information on family or guardian, may be required to be released to DHHS.

It is necessary that records are kept up-to-date at all times. Please inform the staff in writing of changes in address, phone numbers, place of work, emergency numbers, new doctors or service providers, dates of immunizations, etc.

Consultants

During the year, Therapists, Special Educators and/or Mental Health Consultants may be in the classroom or home, working with children and helping staff to learn new skills. These consultants are also available to work with parent/guardian groups or individually. Please ask the Teacher, Home Visitor or Family Services Coordinator for more information.

Staff discuss their concerns and observations with parent/guardian, and obtain their permission to refer for any child evaluation. Results are discussed with the parent/guardian and no action is taken unless they agree.

CHILD CARE FEES AND SCHEDULE (*private child care enrollees only*)

A \$25.00 registration fee, non-refundable, is due at the time of enrollment for non-subsidized private child care enrollees.

***Fees are due on Monday of the week during which care is provided and are assessed for the full week, including holidays.**

PROGRAM	PRIVATE NON-SUBSIDIZED RATE
Infant Program	\$250.00 a week
Toddler Program	\$250.00 a week
Preschool Program	\$200.00 a week

Two weeks of vacation is available each calendar year (scheduled Monday - Friday). There will be no fee charged for those two vacation weeks. For any additional weeks that your child is absent, payment of the regularly scheduled weekly fee is required.

Child care fee subsidies are accepted. Voucher or subsidy participants may be required to pay a weekly fee, based on their income, as determined by the Office for Family Independence or the Office of Child & Family Services.

ASPIRE, CCSP, and TANF Transitional voucher participants who access child care in SKCDC programs must designate that their child care subsidy be paid directly to SKCDC.

Parent or guardian must sign a written fee agreement for services. If the subsidized child care payment is not received by SKCDC by the due date from the subsidy source, the parent or guardian will be responsible for the full weekly fee.

If 15% of the child population at any one time is diagnosed with pandemic type illness, the agency will suspend the childcare fees for up to 2 weeks for families of children who are less than 6 months of age and the parent chooses not to send their child to the program. An extension may be possible depending upon a continued 15% diagnosis.

NOTE: *Fees are reviewed annually and are subject to change with written notice.*

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Communicable Diseases

***Public Preschool Partnerships follow the policies and procedures of the local school district.**

SKCDC is committed to the health, wellness and safety of the children who attend our programs. Effective procedures such as routine hand washing prevent and reduce the spread of communicable diseases to other children, adults, and their parents or guardians throughout the program and community. Please call the center if your child is not coming to the center or call your home visitor to let them know if you need to cancel a visit.

Children are temporarily excluded from the center if:

- 1) The child's illness prevents them from participating in the daily routine of the classroom.
- 2) Having the child participate poses an increased risk to the child, other children or the adults with whom the child comes in contact.
- 3) The illness requires more care than the staff is able to provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children in the group.

When can a child return to the center/home visits? Staff can support a child and family through any illness or injury in order for a child to quickly return to his/her normal daily routines. Children may return to the program if the exclusion criteria (listed above) are resolved. If parents or guardians have questions about their child's illness and/or want to discuss if s/he can return to

school, they may call the Health/Nutrition Manager. (The phone number is at the front of the handbook)

There may be additional exclusion criteria for specific conditions as determined by specific SKCDC policies, the Maine CDC, the child's health care provider, and recommendations in Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools, American Academy of Pediatrics. Note: If there is a difference between SKCDC policies and the recommendations of others, the Health/Nutrition Manager should be consulted.

Immunization

SKCDC requires parent or guardian to provide immunization records within 30 days of the child's first day of attendance. An exemption statement must be written and signed yearly by the parent for a religious or philosophical reason; and by the child's doctor if the child has a medical exemption.

In the event of a disease outbreak:

Children who are not vaccinated because of the exemptions noted above or are not old enough to receive immunizations are excluded from the program until the outbreak no longer exists or until the child receives the necessary immunization.

Medication

****Public Preschool Partnerships follow the policies and procedures of the local school district.***

Parent or guardian can request that staff give medications at the center when:

- The dosage times cannot be adjusted to permit home administration, or
- The child has a chronic medical problem such as asthma and/or an allergy which requires emergency medications.

For medication (prescription or non-prescription) to be given at the center:

- The medical provider must provide documentation of the treatment/medication needed, and
- The documentation must include the child's name, name of the medication, dosage information and the length of treatment, and
- The Health/Nutrition Manager has met with the parent or guardian to complete the Individual Health Plan and Authorization to Dispense Medication Forms, and
- The Health/Nutrition Manager has reviewed the plan with staff and staff has been trained to administer the medication/treatment.

With the exception of Emergency Medications (ie: Epi Pens), new medications will be given at home by the parent or guardian and monitored for 24 hours.

NOTE: For the health and safety of the child, the child will be excluded until all the above criteria are met.

To ensure the integrity of non-prescription medications, SKCDC will purchase all non-prescription medications.

*In the Home Base Program parents or guardians will be responsible to administrate medication or treatments to their own child if necessary.

Transportation of Medication

***Public Preschool Partnerships follow the policies and procedures of the local school district.**

All medication must be transported by the parent or guardian. For the health and safety of children, medications will not be transported by children in their backpacks. When children are transported by someone other than the parent or guardian, parents or guardians are responsible to bring the medication to and from the center or make appropriate arrangements with the transporter to safely transport the medication.

Sunscreen, Insect Repellent, and Diaper Cream Policy

SKCDC will apply the following non-prescription topical preparations to children with the permission of the parent or guardian.

- Diaper Rash Cream/Ointment: Desitin supplied by SKCDC.
- Insect Repellent: 30% DEET, for children ages 12 months and older: supplied by SKCDC.
- Sunscreen Lotion: SPF 30 or higher, for children ages 6 months and older supplied by SKCDC

*In the Home Base Program, non-prescription topical preparations are provided for parents or guardians to apply on their children.

If a child cannot use products provided by SKCDC due to allergic reaction and/or parental or guardian preference, a note from a medical provider will be needed. The Health/Nutrition Manager will meet with the parent or guardian to complete the Individual Health Plan.

Sun Safety Policy

SKCDC has in place Sun Safety practices to protect your child from excessive sun exposure. SKCDC provides Sunscreen Lotion SPF 30 for children over 6 months of age who have a signed permission slip from a parent or guardian. If your child requires a different brand of Sunscreen due skin sensitivity a doctor's note is required.

If your child is under 6 months of age, you must consult with your physician regarding the use of sunscreen and provide written physician permission on the type of sunscreen that can be used for your infant.

Children are allowed and encouraged to wear hats and/or sunglasses during outside activities.

Insect – Borne Disease Safety

SKCDC recognizes that there is a risk of exposure to insect-borne disease in Central Maine. Insect

repellants help prevent the spread of diseases by keeping mosquitoes and ticks away.

To reduce the risk of insect-borne disease the following methods are implemented:
Written parental/guardian permission is obtained at enrollment and updated annually. Staff apply repellent to children's exposed skin.

Repellants should be washed off with soap and water at home at the end of the day. Children are encouraged to wear shoes, socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt when outdoors for long periods of time. Wearing light colored clothing increases the likelihood that ticks will be spotted. Staff visually scans children's clothing and skin after being outdoors for the presence of ticks.

There are many types of insect repellants available. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends the use of a repellent that contains 30% DEET on children 12 months of age and older. The concentration of DEET varies from product to product. Products with more than 30% DEET are not recommended for children. Please discuss any questions with your Primary Care Provider.

Diapering Policy

Many children in program settings are not toilet trained and diaper changing is necessary. SKCDC will provide the same diapers the parent or guardian uses at home. Staff receives training in techniques to reduce the spread of germs when handling any body fluids or items contaminated with body fluids as well as training in SKCDC's Diapering Procedure. Diaper changing guidelines are posted in all changing areas at programs. Parent or guardian of infants and toddlers are given daily updates regarding diaper changes and any concerns that may arise. Older toddlers and preschool children are supported through the process of toilet learning. Staff is available to offer support and strategies to families as well. Please feel free to discuss your questions and concerns with staff.

Meal Times

Children in full day programs receive breakfast, lunch and a snack. Children in part day programs receive breakfast and lunch. Parents or guardians who attend Home Base Discovery Days and Community Events are provided a snack or lunch. Infants are fed on demand. Breastfeeding is supported as the most appropriate first food for infants. Formula fed infants are fed the same formula at Early Head Start as the parent or guardian is feeding the child at home. Staff and the parent or guardian work together to plan individual infant feeding schedules and to introduce new foods.

When age appropriate, meals are served family style. Children learn to serve themselves and to pour their own milk. They are encouraged to try new foods and to help with food preparation as part of the curriculum.

To protect children, parents, guardians and staff from food-borne illnesses, SKCDC has a practice of "No Food In and No Food Out". We do not allow food to be brought into the center and/or

leftover meals to leave the center.

Snacks for parent/guardian meeting and center sponsored activities will be provided by SKCDC.

Free & Reduced Price Policy: All participants in the Child and Adult Care Food Program under the jurisdiction of Southern Kennebec Child Development Corporation are served meals at no separate charge.

Special Diets / Allergies

****Public Pre-K Partnerships follow the policies and procedures of the local school district.***

SKCDC's Health/Nutrition Manager is available to meet with parent or guardian groups and with individual parents or guardians on request.

If a child has food allergies, food sensitivities or is on a special diet, the Health/Nutrition Manager will meet with the parent or guardian to complete a Nutrition Accommodation Plan. If a child's treating therapist recommends a feeding plan, staff will work to make those accommodations.

Oral Health Care

Tooth-brushing with fluoride toothpaste happens daily. For infants and toddlers, whose teeth have not erupted, staff wipes the child's gums daily.

USDA Non-Discrimination Policy

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

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

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to the USDA by: (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

SKCDC believes in providing a safe, healthy, nurturing and inclusive environment that encourages young children's growth, development and school readiness skills. SKCDC's early childhood programs are designed to support each child's development in the social-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, mathematics, science and technology, social studies, and the arts domain areas. This is accomplished through child centered experiences that recognize children learn individually, in sequence and at their own pace. We believe that it is essential to meet children where they are at and partner with parents and guardians as the most important educator. Parents, guardians and family members are the "forever" people in a child's life. We are partners in the learning process.

Curriculum: Preschool

We use the *Opening the World of Learning (OWL)* curriculum – a research informed, comprehensive integrated curriculum. The OWL curriculum supports developing language and early literacy skills through rich, integrated content in all domains of early learning. SKCDC also uses the Pyramid Model. The Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children is a positive behavioral intervention and support framework early educators can use to promote young children's social and emotional development and prevent and address challenging behaviors.

Curriculum: Infant Toddler

SKCDC uses the Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers and Twos, which emphasizes essential aspects of responsive care:

- Building a trusting relationship with each child
 - Providing individualized care
 - Creating environments that support and encourage exploration
 - Recognizing the importance of social-emotional development
 - Building a foundation for lifelong learning
 - Developing partnerships with parents or guardians

Curriculum: Home Based

In the Expectant Family Program, SKCDC utilizes the Partners for a Healthy Baby: Before Baby Arrives Curriculum, which emphasize:

- Establishing trusting nurturing relationships
- Enhancing parent or guardian/child interactions
- Conducting risk assessments for prenatal health and mental health
- Ensuring healthy outcomes for the mother and for the child in the early months of life

The Home Based program also uses Partners for a Healthy Baby Curriculum and the Creative Curriculum Learning Games, which assist parents to plan developmentally appropriate activities for the child with an emphasis on strengthening the parent-child relationship and daily routines

and materials readily available in the home environment.

Program Approach: Preschool

Each child is unique, learning in his or her own way. Activities are planned to meet the individual needs of each child. Children may choose small or large group activities or a child may also choose to do an activity alone. Young children learn best through a combination of direct instruction and self-directed exploration supported by an adult. The child development environment is set up with interest areas. Each of these areas gives the child a chance to discover new things, learn to solve problems, create wonderful artwork, make choices, and to develop a sense of competence. The teacher visits each family in their home and schedules parent/guardian conferences during the year in order to share the child's progress, develop goals with the family, suggest things families can do at home with their child, and listen to parents' ideas for program activities.

Children go outside to play every day except during extreme weather. In the winter, boots, hats, and mittens are needed. Parents are asked to please send slippers or shoes for their child to wear inside. Children should be dressed in comfortable play clothes and safe, sturdy footwear with a closed toe. Sand, water, paint and play-dough are a part of a child's play world. Parent or guardian should send an extra set of clothes to be kept in their child's cubby. If at any time you need help with resources for any of the above, please let us know.

Program Approach: Infant Toddler

The emphasis is on the individual developmental needs of each child and the provision of the utmost security, love and nurturance for each child in the program. SKCDC provides a primary caregiver model to support infant's emotional security. Each infant's eating/sleeping schedule is honored to allow for their optimal development.

In order to offer an environment in which children can explore freely, we ask that everyone remove their shoes before entering a classroom serving infants. Booties are provided outside of the classroom or stocking feet may be worn.

The consistent daily routine for toddlers helps them become familiar with and secure in their surroundings. Daily activities include group time, large motor activities, stories, a variety of creative exploration and fine motor activities, and time for free play each day. Classrooms are language rich, providing many opportunities for enhancing literacy development. Children are given assistance to identify and deal appropriately with emotions and feelings. Learning social skills is encouraged throughout the day as teachable moments present themselves. We encourage cooperative play while fostering independence and responsibility. When signs of readiness for toilet learning are shown, we provide guidance to help with proper toilet habits.

Program Approach: Home Based

The Home Based program offers child development services through weekly home visits and monthly Family Discovery Days and Community Events for families and their children. The Home Visitor assists parents or guardians to plan developmentally appropriate activities for their

child/children with an emphasis on strengthening the parent/guardian-child relationship using daily routines and materials readily available in the home environment. Parents/guardians connect goals for their child's development by planning activities for the group Family Discovery Days. Family Discovery Days occur twice a month at a licensed facility equipped with materials to promote school readiness and parent-child interactions by utilizing the Parents Interacting with Infants (PIWI) philosophy approach. Home visitors collaborate with parents/guardians in providing developmentally supportive environments for their children by expanding on families' knowledge and understanding of their children. Children's development is enhanced when parents/guardians recognize and act on their own important roles in supporting their children's developmental agendas. The primary role of the home visitor is to support and enhance parent/guardian-child relationships.

Rest Time

Each infant, toddler, and preschooler is provided with their own crib, cot or mat, as appropriate. Preschool full day classrooms have a designated rest time. Preschoolers in full day programs who do not sleep have a rest period based on their individual needs. The daily program includes plans and activities for children who do not nap.

Toys from Home

Children in full day programs may bring in a naptime cuddly that remains in their cubby except during naptime.

Generally, bringing toys from home is discouraged. It can be hard for young children to share a favorite toy or treasured possession. Classrooms may have a "show and tell" time on occasion.

School Readiness Goals

School Readiness Goals are the outcomes that have been established for the learning and development of children. These skills are what we would hope to see most children demonstrate upon their entrance into kindergarten and are skills that will support their long-term success in school. It is important to note that children grow, learn and develop at different rates and these goals *are not* intended to be a list of everything that a child must know before entering kindergarten.

Children's growth and development is assessed throughout the year using the Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment System. Along with parent/guardian input, this information is used to plan curriculum and develop individual goals for children. The Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment System is an observational assessment tool that allows staff and parents/guardians to gather information on children's developmental progress from 6 weeks to five years old. The intent of this assessment process is for Teaching Staff and Home Visitors, in partnership with parents/guardians, to learn where each child is developmentally, to help each child strengthen and build upon the skills that they have already acquired, and to help each child move further along the continuum of development. The staff and parents/guardians look at the areas where a child is doing well and also at the areas where a child might need a little extra help. This information is used to guide

instruction and support curriculum development.

Children with Special Needs

SKCDC welcomes children with special needs. As part of a team, we work with parents/guardians and community agencies, including CDS, to plan and provide the best possible program for your child and family. If we are concerned that the program is not meeting a child's needs, there is a process that parents/guardians and staff follow to ensure services that will be best for the child.

Animals in the Classroom

****Public Preschool Partnerships follow the policies and procedures of the local school district.***

SKCDC recognizes that exposure to live animals presents a wonderful learning opportunity for young children but we are also aware of the need to ensure the health and safety of children, adults and animals. We limit live animals who reside in our classrooms to fish. This allows children to observe and take some responsibility for the care of another living creature, but also recognizes that many children have health considerations that would preclude having any animals with fur or feathers as classroom pets. Additionally, reptiles, amphibians and chickens (including eggs) are known to be carriers of salmonella and are not allowed in our classrooms due to potential risk of contamination. Staff ensures that containers are kept clean and odor free and that all related tasks are completed by adults only. Close supervision is ensured at all times.

Holidays

****Public Preschool Partnerships follow the policies and procedures of the local public-school district.***

Families are encouraged to share their traditions and culture within our curriculum framework throughout the year. While holiday celebrations or activities do not typically occur in the classroom, children will participate in seasonal activities such as harvest time or spring planting.

Preschool Child Guidance Practices

SKCDC's Child Guidance Practices outlines expectations for adults relative to pre-school child guidance. Staff follows these practices for effective child behavior management. They are rooted in solid early childhood principles and are based on a model of trust and respect for the individual. SKCDC adheres to the Maine Department of Education Rule Chapter 33: Governing Physical Restraint and Seclusion. Preschool staff are trained and have been certified in "Safety Care"™ Behavioral Safety Training, per these regulations.

It is important to keep in mind that expectations of children are developmentally appropriate and approaches are individualized for each child. Staff are more likely to meet with success if they use available resources, meet often with and keep parents informed through daily contact i.e., daily notes, communication logs, phone calls and personal contact. Parents/guardians are

also kept informed through home visits, parent or guardian/teacher conferences and regular discussion of goals and progress. Remember, what works with one child may not work with another, and what worked yesterday, may not work today.

Behavior Management Techniques include:

Establishing consistency, setting limits, positive reinforcement, positive guidance, behavior specific directives, active listening, redirection, ignoring, choices, humor, natural consequences and private time. For a more detailed description of these techniques, please ask for a copy of the [Child Guidance Practices](#).

Infant/Toddler Guidance Practices

Parents/guardians are their child's first and primary educator. We encourage families to participate in home visits and parent or guardian/teacher conferences, share information about their family's culture, share their talents and interests, and participate in ongoing formal and informal communication.

SKCDC's classrooms use a primary caregiver model. Each child and their family have a designated primary caregiver (Early Head Start Teacher) who will have the primary responsibility of meeting the child's and family's needs. This model enables children and their primary caregiver to establish and maintain a warm, secure relationship which promotes children's growth and development. This model further enhances our ability to form partnerships, and to develop meaningful and supportive relationships with families. For a more detailed description, please ask for a copy of the [Infant Toddler Guidance Practices](#).

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK

GENERAL RESOURCES THAT ARE HERE TO HELP YOU:

Department of Health and Human Services:

624-8090

35 Anthony Avenue, 11 SHS, Augusta, ME 04330

<https://www.maine.gov/portal/index.html>

DHHS Office of Child and Family Services:

624-7900

2 Anthony Ave, Augusta, ME 04330

<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/>

DHHS Child Abuse or Neglect Hotline:

1-800-452-1999

(Deaf/Hard of Hearing Call Maine Relay 711)

211:

211 is a free, confidential information and referral service that connects people of all ages across Maine to local services. 211 Maine is based in Maine and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Specialists are trained and friendly; they know we all need help sometimes. Just dial 2-1-1.

Family Violence Project:

1-877-890-7788

83 Western Ave, Augusta, ME 04330

<https://www.familyviolenceproject.org/>

Children's Advocacy Center of Kennebec and Somerset Counties & the Sexual Assault Crisis and Support Center:

1-800-871-7741

<http://www.silentnomore.org/>

Bridging the Gap:

Clothing and Basic Hygiene Pantry & Warming Center

207-248-1782; 209 Eastern Avenue, Augusta, ME 04330

<https://www.btgaugusta.org/>

Healthy Communities of the Capitol Area:

A coalition of local people who work to improve the health and quality of life in Kennebec County

588-5012

11 Mechanic St Suite 101, Gardiner, ME 04345

<https://hccame.org/>

Maine Equal Justice Partners:

A civil legal aid and economic justice organization working to increase economic security, opportunity, and equity for people in Maine

626-7058

126 Sewall St, Augusta, ME 04330

<https://maineequaljustice.org/>

Pine Tree Legal:

Provides free civil legal assistance in cases where it can make a difference in one's ability to meet one's basic human needs or in enforcing one's basic human rights, including access to housing, food, income, safety, education, and healthcare.

622-4731

39 Green St #7436, Augusta, ME 04330

<https://ptla.org/>

The Warm Line:

Callers will receive support, social connection, assistance with referrals to community resources, recovery programs and an opportunity to connect with others during a time of fear, grief or sadness.

1-866-771-9276

Maine Crisis Hotline:

Helps to stabilize individuals and families while assisting in crisis resolution and action planning
1-888-568-1112

Poison Control Center:

Provides immediate treatment advice for poisonings and answer questions about poisons and prevention
1-800-222-1222

NAMI Maine Hotline:

It provides confidential support, education and advocacy for anyone with questions about mental health concerns.
1-800-464-5767

The Maine Tobacco Helpline:

When you're thinking about quitting, just call.
1-800-207-1230

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA):

1-800-737-6237
csoaamaine.org

Narcotics Anonymous (NA):

1-800-974-0062
www.namaine.org

Statewide Al-Anon:

1-800-498-1844
www.maineafg.org

*For more support with whatever you need, for example including accessing your local general assistance office or food pantry, please reach out to your Teacher, Family Services Coordinator so we can help connect you with a resource.