

# Early Childhood Program

Parent Handbook



**Providence Family Support Center**  
**3113 Brighton Road Pittsburgh, Pa 15212**  
**412-766-6730**

[www.providenceconnections.org](http://www.providenceconnections.org)

**Welcome**

Dear Parents,

I would like to welcome you to our Early Childhood Program. Here at Providence Family Support Center, we strive to provide an environment that will nurture each child’s unique strengths and abilities, giving every child the opportunity to be successful in the present, as well as in the future.

Open communication between parents and staff is essential to children’s well-being, and this is a hallmark of our program. We encourage you to discuss any concerns you have directly with the staff, and we shall keep you informed of upcoming and ongoing activities at the center and how you can become involved.

We look forward to watching your child grow up happy and fulfilled through his or her experiences here. Thank you for choosing our program.

Sincerely,

Leslie White  
Director of Early Childhood and Youth Programs

**Our Early Childhood and School Age Programs are accredited by:**



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## **Mission Statement**

Providence Connections, a ministry sponsored by the sisters of Divine Providence, strengthens families and enriches lives through comprehensive education and developmental opportunities for parents and children.

**We fulfill our mission in our Early Childhood Program with these objectives:**

1. To help children feel special about themselves by learning respect for themselves and others
2. To bring children of different races, cultures, abilities, and religious beliefs together and introduce them to diverse social backgrounds
3. To stimulate and excite children while providing a safe, warm, loving, and healthy environment
4. To promote harmony through the encouragement of fair play and friendship
5. To provide varied experiences to enrich each child's conceptual understanding

## **Program Description**

Providence Family Support Center's Early Childhood Education Program consists of curriculum-based classes that provide care and instruction to children ages 6 weeks to 5 years. The program operates in seven, separate infant, toddler, and preschool classrooms, each of which is staffed by a group supervisor/teacher and assistant group supervisors. The program is licensed by the Department of Human Services, and we participate in Keystone STARS, an initiative of the Office of Child Development and Early Learning to improve, support and recognize the efforts of early learning programs in Pennsylvania. Providence is a **STAR 4** facility.

In the infant room, the daily routine is always flexible to accommodate the infants' individual needs. Because of the different feeding/sleeping schedules of each infant, the daily routine revolves around the child. There is always time for age-appropriate play, verbal communication, songs, and outdoor experiences.

The toddler program provides more planned activities to meet the changing needs of a growing toddler. We provide a range of age-appropriate activities including art, music, dramatic play, and storytelling, gross and fine motor activities, free play, and outdoor play. Staff members facilitate children's social play and fair play. Through our program, children learn respect for others as well as themselves.

Our preschool program serves children ages 3 to 5. The curriculum provides children with appropriate yet challenging experiences through a variety of themes and activities that allow for the development of social and emotional skills. Children are encouraged to engage in hands-on activities to build pre-Kindergarten skills and develop a sense of accomplishment and responsibility.

Our staff-child ratio in all sections of the program meet the requirements recommended by licensing authorities.

**Our center also offers an After-School Program during the school year and a nine-week long Summer Camp to students in kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade. To learn more about this program please contact the Manager of Educational Quality and Innovation at 412-766-6730 x 213.**

## Hours of Operation

The Early Childhood Education Program is open Monday through Friday from **7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.** **All children must be picked up no later than 4:30 p.m.** If a parent is not able to pick up his/her child by 4:30 p.m., the parent must notify one of the persons designated for emergency contact/pick up on the Emergency Contact/Parental Consent form to pick up their child and remind them to bring a picture ID.

**Any parent who has not picked up his/her child by 4:30 p.m. will be charged a late fee of \$1/minute per child. Late pick-up charges will be included in the family's next weekly statement. Frequent late pick-ups are grounds for termination from the program.**

## Head Start and PreK Counts Program Hours

If your family receives Head Start or PreK Counts funding, please note there is a limit on the number of hours your child may attend each day.

For children participating in these programs, there is a limit of 6 hours per day. Program hours are 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

## Parent Communication

Please be sure to check your child's mailbox each day for important information such as daily communication sheets, newsletters, notices, and other communication. *Brightwheel* will also be used to communicate important information between parent and teacher, or from the administrators to the entire program at once.

## Enrollment Procedures

**Registration Fee:** A non-refundable fee of \$50 is to be paid before the first day of admission to the program.

A meeting with the Director or designated staff is required to enroll a child. The following forms must be completed and signed:

**Registration Form:** This form registers your child for the early childhood program.

**Agreement Form:** This form will determine the amount of the fee to be charged per week; the date on which the fee is to be paid; the services to be provided; your child's arrival and departure times; the persons designated by you, the parent, to whom your child may be released; and the date of your child's admission. This form is to be updated and signed every six months and each time there is a change in tuition and/or copay amount.

**Emergency Contact/Parental Consent Form:** The Emergency Contact/Parental Consent Form must be completed upon entry into the program. Every six months, this form must be reviewed and/or updated. Please use care in determining who you designate as emergency contacts and people to whom your child may be released. These are the people who will be contacted if you, the parent, cannot be reached

in an emergency. He/she will be responsible for providing necessary care for him/her once they leave our care. Please make sure you provide us with current contact information for yourself and emergency contacts.

**Child Health Report:** An enrolled child shall have an age-appropriate health report on record at the facility no later than 30 days following enrollment, using the DHS approved Child Health Report. After the initial health report is received, **the form must be renewed every 6 months for children 6 weeks – 2 years and annually for children 2 – 5 years.** DHS requires all children in regulated childcare programs to have a flu shot. If you choose not to have your child vaccinated, please submit a written, signed and dated note that states your reason for exemption (strong personal or religious belief). Health forms that are overdue may cause interruption in your child’s services.

**Child Food Program Enrollment Forms:** These forms allow us to receive state funding to subsidize food costs so we can offer meals to children. Without the completion of this form, we will not be reimbursed for food costs and may not be able to offer meals during childcare. Every parent regardless of financial status needs to fill these forms out completely.

**“Getting to Know You” Form:** This form will ask some basic questions to help us get to know your child and your family a little better. It will be passed on to your child’s teacher to help make your child’s transition a smooth one.

**All necessary paperwork must be completed before the child’s first day of attendance. These forms must be reviewed every six months or as soon as there is a change in information. It is the parents’ responsibility to keep us informed of new phone numbers and emergency contacts.**

**Ages and Stages Questionnaire:** In order to determine that all children are developing age-appropriate skills and abilities, children are assessed within their first 45 days of enrollment in five developmental areas (Communication, Gross Motor, Fine Motor, Personal/Social and Problem Solving). The *Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)* is used initially, and then every six months an observation-based assessment is used. *The ASQ – Social and Emotional* may be used, as well, if staff have concerns about the child’s social and emotional development. The findings from the initial and subsequent assessments are shared with parents or caregivers through face-to-face or telephone conferences several times throughout the year. Teachers use their findings along with input from the parent for curriculum planning, to create individual goals and objectives, and to determine transition readiness. At times, findings are used to build a case for referral, to obtain a more comprehensive assessment for your child.

### **Tuition Payment Policy**

Providence’s early childhood program is tuition based and every effort is made to keep the tuition as affordable as possible for all families.

- Providence uses *Brightwheel*, a childcare management software application for billing, attendance, enrollment and communication.
- A billing statement will be sent through the app to all families every Wednesday for the upcoming week of care detailing any charge or payment activity on your account.
- **Payments are due every Monday for that week of childcare service.**
- **Sibling Discount:** 10% discount to the oldest child when enrolling two or more children. This discount is for private pay families only.

### Online payments on *Brightwheel* by credit card or bank transfer:

- Parents can add as many payment methods as they would like to their *Brightwheel* account.
- Just like with credit cards, parents can add checking or savings accounts to their profile to make payments.

### Offline payments by cash, check or money order:

- All checks and money orders should be made payable to Providence Connections, Inc. Please write your child's name on the memo section of the check.
- Payment is placed in an envelope (available at the front desk) and dropped in the "**Payment Box**" located at the main entrance. Please make sure that the payment envelope slides down into the payment box.
- Payment envelope must specify what the payment is for: Child Care, Registration, After School, or Late Fee.
- For every returned check, a **\$35.00 NSF (non-sufficient funds)** fee will be added to your account. The full amount due is payable immediately with CASH or MONEY ORDER. We cannot hold checks. Please do not place post-dated checks in the payment box.

### CCW Co-payments:

- Parents/guardians will be responsible for paying their copayment each week.
- Accounts that are more than 2 weeks behind will be reported to the ELRC as being delinquent. This will affect the status of funding and may result in suspension or loss of funding.
- Families who have been reported as delinquent on their accounts must get to a \$0 balance before PFSC will contact the ELRC to report that the account is current.
- If you have arranged for your child to attend an additional day or on a day that they do not have CCW funding, the daily rate will be added to your child's account. **This additional fee must be paid with the following week's tuition.**

### Attendance:

- Attendance changes are requested in writing in advance of attendance changes. They must be discussed with and approved by the Director of Early Childhood and Youth Programs.
- Tuition payment amounts remain the same regardless of the child's attendance. This includes instances of illness, family vacations or days that the center is closed due to severe weather, staff in-service training days or holidays.
- Children are only to attend on the days that they are registered for. If there is a change in the schedule you must contact the director before adding or switching days of attendance.

**Delinquent Tuition/Outstanding Balances:**

All unpaid balances must be paid in full before your child is admitted to a tuition-based program or re-enrolled at Providence Family Support Center.

Please be proactive with your child's care. If a problem arises and you foresee some difficulty in making your childcare payment on time, please contact the Director of Early Childhood and Youth Programs, at 412-766-6730, extension 207. Every effort will be made to work with you so that there is not a break in your child's care.

**Tax Receipts:**

All families will receive their tax receipt by the end of January, each year. You may also access a receipt via the *Brightwheel* app.

**Procedure for Withdrawal or Extended Leave:**

Please submit your child's last date of attendance in writing to the Early Childhood Director. All existing fees must be paid before the child's last day.

If a family chooses to return for any reason they must re-enroll and pay the \$50 registration fee and be put on the waiting list, if applicable. There is a \$125.00 holding fee for families withdrawing for the summer and returning in the fall.

**Absence and Vacations:**

Please use Brightwheel or call 412.766.6730 and speak to your child's classroom teacher if your child is sick and will not be attending the center, your family is on vacation, or your child will not attend for any other reason. Please note that you are responsible for paying your child's weekly tuition or copayment amount regardless of your child's attendance.

Head Start and PreK Counts Families: If children are absent more than 3 consecutive days, please notify your child's teacher. In the event of illness, you will need a doctor's excuse to return.

If a child is absent from the center for a two-week period without any contact with the Early Childhood Director, the child may be withdrawn from the program. The parent/guardian will be responsible for payment of the weeks missed.

**CCW Absences**

Your participation in the CCW subsidized childcare program through the ELRC requires that we follow certain provider guidelines:

- You are allotted 40 days of absence from July 1 – June 30 of each year. Please be mindful if you are thinking about suspending your child's care. The ELRC will not pay for suspended childcare, but you will receive a statement of charges for the unpaid days.



*For example, if you're going to be away for one week for vacation, use 5 of your 40 days allotted and there will be no charge upon your return – you'll just pay your copay. If you suspend the care, you will be charged for five full days.*

- When your child misses 5 consecutive days of absence, we are required to report the absence to the ELRC on the 6<sup>th</sup> day. The ELRC will pay for the first five days of absence but then stop payment until your child returns. Providence's policy for absences is that the parent is responsible for paying the weekly copayment and any days that are unpaid by the ELRC. So, if your child misses more than 5 consecutive days you will be charged.
- The ELRC will only pay for 40 absences within a fiscal year. Fiscal Year is July 1 – June 30. Any absence beyond 40 will be charged to the parent as a full day rate by Providence. This charge will be added to your child's account within the next week and will be due immediately.

### **Arrival and Departure Procedures**

It is important for your child to arrive on time for the program. Beginning the day on time allows your child to participate in valuable social interaction and learning experiences that would otherwise be missed. It assists in your child's full participation in and enjoyment of classroom experiences.

**It is for this reason that we ask that you bring your child in by 9:00 am.**

Breakfast is served from 8:30-9:00am. We ask that children who arrive after breakfast time have breakfast provided at home.

**To ensure the safety of all children, we ask that everyone observe the following safety rules and procedures each day:**

1. As you enter the building, remember to close the door completely behind you.
2. Never allow anyone else to enter the building with you.
3. An adult must accompany your child into the classroom and your child must be handed over to the staff person in the room. At the time of pick-up an adult must enter the room and notify the staff person that the child is leaving.

**No child will be released to a person:**

- **not authorized by a parent**
- **under the age of 16**

**Anyone other than the parent must have, besides prior notification to the center, proper photo identification to present to the staff. In the case of custody issues with non-custodial parents, a court order must be on file at the center. Otherwise, we are obligated to release a child to his/her parent.**

4. Parents are required to sign their children in and out daily through *Brightwheel*. It is essential to have a completed roster each day and a digital record for each month.
5. Please help your child settle in and put belongings away. This will help your child have a smooth transition into the day.
6. If you wish for your child to wear their play shoes while at the center, please put them on your child before leaving.

7. At the end of the day, be sure to check your child's mailbox and "cubbie" for any information or items that are being sent home.

### **Doctor's Appointments:**

If your child will be late due to an early morning doctor's appointment, we ask that you please call the front desk at least one day in advance, and an exception will be made. Children arriving late with no excuse will not be accepted in the program that day. Children will not be accepted after 12 noon.

### **Field Trip Policy (ages 3 and up)**

Parents are informed of all scheduled field trips. Permission slips providing details about each trip will be sent home to be signed and returned. For a child to attend the field trip, the form and fee, if any, must be returned by the due date listed on the form. If you do not want your child to participate in a scheduled field trip, please make alternate care arrangements for the day. We do not have additional staff members to care for children who are not able to attend a field trip.

If a field trip to a location other than the library is scheduled for a day that your child is not scheduled to attend the center, arrangements can be made so that he/she can attend. An adult will need to accompany your child on the trip, and arrival and departure times will be discussed in advance of each trip. Children not scheduled to be at the center for that day, must always have an adult with them.

Children are not able to be dropped off at the location of a field trip or any place other than the Providence building.

### **Severe Weather/Snow**

During severe weather please listen to the media station listed below. If a storm arrives during the day and it is necessary for an early dismissal, we will contact you at your listed telephone number. If we cannot reach you, we will contact the persons designated by you on your child's Emergency Contact Form. Please make arrangements, prior to such an event, to have someone available to pick up your child in the case of an early dismissal.

A closing or delay may be called due to cold temperatures, or when the roads are unsafe for travel due to snow or ice. The policy is as follows:

❖ **Providence will call in the delay or closing by 6:00 a.m. to:**

**WPXI (Channel 11) Website: [www.wpxi.com](http://www.wpxi.com)**

**The listing will read: Providence Family Support Center – Childcare**

### **Parent Council**

Providence Family Support Center has a Parent Council, which meets monthly, made up of parents, former parents and at least one staff member who serve as equal partners. Their job is to identify, develop, implement, and evaluate their center's activities, services, and programs.

## **Curriculum**

Through a grant from the Grable Foundation, Providence was able to purchase *The Creative Curriculum® for Infants, Toddlers & Twos*. The curriculum includes everything teachers need to know to build a high-quality program. For infants and toddlers, a rich collection of resources helps teachers put knowledge into practice and helps them foster children's learning and growth, including detailed guidance for providing intentional care, responsive daily routines, and meaningful learning experiences for our youngest learners.

For preschool, the curriculum focus will be on setting up the learning environment and partnering with families as our Head Start and PreK Counts classrooms recently began implementing *The Frog Street PreK Curriculum*, a comprehensive early-learning program that is designed to meet the needs of diverse learners while celebrating the joy of learning for each child. It helps foster social-emotional development and ensures kindergarten readiness by building a foundation for success in school and life.

The preschool and pre-kindergarten classrooms are utilizing the PATHS Curriculum through their partnership with the Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program (HSSAP). The curriculum assists staff in creating an environment that helps young children to develop better social skills, problem-solving skills, self-control, self-esteem, emotional awareness, and friendships through lessons and activities that highlight telling stories, reading, puppetry, singing, drawing, and use of concepts in science and math. These lessons and generalization throughout the day help to build the critical cognitive skills necessary for school readiness and academic success.

Parents are encouraged to be active participants in their child's learning. We invite parents to work together with program staff to create a "home to school" partnership where parents can share their experiences and learn new skills.

## **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Providence Family Support Center's early childhood education program is committed to forming a partnership with families to help design a program that meets their individual needs. Open communication is essential in developing this partnership; we welcome your comments and questions.

Formal, documented conferences are scheduled at least twice a year for teachers to meet with parents to share their child's academic and social progress. These conferences are a regular part of our program; please plan to attend. In addition, if at any other time you desire a meeting with your child's caregiver, please speak to the caregiver/teacher and one will be arranged. The Director may also be present if so requested.

Please share with the teachers any family events or problems that may affect your child at the center (a move, the loss of a loved one or pet, separation or divorce, an addition to the family, etc.) so that they can understand any behavioral changes and offer appropriate support.

## **Transfer of Child's Records**

Your child's records including DHS documentation as well as assessments and other paperwork are available to you if you choose to leave the center and/or when your child ages out of our programs. Please turn in a written request to the Director and the information will be copied and sent to the address you provide within two weeks of the request.

## **Mandated Child Abuse Reporting**

Providence Family Support Center is required by the Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law to report any suspected abuse of a child enrolled in the facility, to Child Line.

## **Holidays and Special Celebrations**

We take a multicultural approach to holiday celebrations to expose children to different cultures. We typically offer a brief overview of the holiday and design our activities for the day around that holiday.

If a holiday celebration or special day celebration is scheduled for a day that your child is not scheduled to attend, arrangements can be made so that he or she can attend. Arrival and departure times will be discussed in advance of each celebration. Please be sure that someone will be able to pick up your child by the designated departure time; we are not staffed to keep unscheduled children all day.

We are happy to celebrate your child's birthday at the center. If you wish to provide a birthday snack and/or party favors, please make arrangements with your child's caregiver/teacher. Parents are welcome to join the class celebration. All birthday celebrations will take place during afternoon snack.

## **Meals**

The center provides breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack. Breakfast is served between 8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. If the parent is aware that the child will be arriving late, we ask that breakfast be provided at home. A bi-weekly menu will be posted in the elevator and in each classroom.

For infants, one type of formula, baby cereal, and jarred baby food is provided.

## **Food Allergies & Restrictions:**

Please notify the center if your child has any food allergies. Our center requires a doctor's note explaining the food allergy. An Allergy Action Plan, including a detailed treatment plan, to be implemented in the event of an allergic reaction, must also be completed by the parent. If your family has religious or other beliefs that certain foods may not be consumed, we will need a written letter from the parent.

Individual allergies will be posted in the classroom where staff can view before serving food.

Please note that our center tries very hard to accommodate a variety of food allergies and restrictions. If your child has extensive allergies and restrictions, we may not be able to accommodate them, and food may need to be provided by the family.

*(Adapted from Caring for Our Children, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition)*

## **PFSC Food Program Practices**

PFSC receives state funding to assist with our food costs. We need to follow their guidelines regarding foods served and portions. Therefore, we are asking parents to help by:

- Not bringing any food for your child unless your child is NOT participating in our meal program. (This would mean parents provide all food for breakfast, lunch and snack.)
- If your child needs a milk substitute, a doctor's note is required.
- Contacting your child's teacher if you want to bring a Birthday treat at least 3-4 days ahead of the planned treat.
- Birthday treats will only be served at **snack time**. Due to regulations, they cannot be prepared at home.
- Treats for other special occasions will also be served at snack time only.

We have a terrific chef on staff that prepares healthy and delicious meals and designs a menu that is approved by the state.

### **Statement from the CACFP Program**

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202)720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service (800)877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866)632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of the alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **mail:**  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:**  
(833)256-1665 or (202)690-7442; or
3. **email:**  
[Program.Intake@usda.gov](mailto:Program.Intake@usda.gov)

This program is an equal opportunity provider.

## Health Policy

To ensure the health of your child and the other children enrolled in the center, and to adhere to state regulations, the following forms are required:

1. The DHS-approved Child Health Report completed and signed by a licensed physician must be submitted within 30 days of the child's admission to the center.
2. A record of up-to-date immunizations
3. The Emergency Contact Form must be signed by the parent or legal guardian giving permission to take a child for emergency medical treatment, if necessary. Please be sure the insurance and insurance policy number on your child's Emergency Contact Form are current.

Daily health checks will be performed in our classrooms during the arrival of each child, each day. All families should have a back-up plan for childcare if their child is to be excluded from care due to illness.

- If an illness is keeping a child from participating in activities comfortably, he/she should be excluded from care.
- Also, if the child's behavior due to illness results in greater care than the staff can provide without comprising the health and safety of the other children in the group, the child should be sent home.

*(Adapted from Caring for Our Children, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition)*

### **Therefore, if a child becomes ill during the day we will:**

- Notify and ask the parent to arrange to **pick up the child within an hour** after contact. (If we cannot reach the parent, the emergency persons specified on the Emergency Contact form will be contacted.)
- Parents will be provided with an Illness Report explaining the symptoms and when your child may return to the center.
- A doctor's note may be required for your child to return to the center. This note must be completed by a doctor and turned into the classroom teacher at drop off in the morning. This note must be written by a doctor or health professional after having a visit to a doctor's office. Please do not bring in a note completed by friends or family members that are health professionals. **Please do not have your doctor fax a note; we need to have the paper note at drop off.**

All situations will be reviewed by classroom teachers and the director.

### **Administering Medication & Treatments:**

We will administer medication & treatments that are provided by the parents whether prescription or non-prescription, **only** if procedures are strictly followed:

1. Medication must be in the original container, labeled with the child's name and must not be expired.
2. The physician must provide or there must be typed written instructions on the prescription label.
3. **If a doctor prescribes antibiotics, a child must be on medication 24 hours before returning to the center. This 24-hour period starts when child receives first dose of medication.**
4. The label must identify the name of the medication, the name of the child for whom it is intended, and the frequency of administration.
5. The Medication Log Form must be signed and dated daily by the parent.
6. Over-the-counter medications that say "Under 2 years of age, consult a physician" will **not be administered** to children under the age of 2 years, **without a physician's written note** detailing the name of the medication, the name of the child and the dosage to be given.
7. If your child has severe allergic reactions parents must complete an Allergy Action Plan.
8. If your child requires emergency medication such as an EpiPen or Rescue Inhaler we request that you provide two EpiPen's or Inhalers to be kept at the center. One will be kept in the classroom and the other will be kept in the travel bag that teachers will carry with them.
9. Over the counter lotions and diaper rash creams will be applied to children only if a Medication Log Form is completed by the parent. If a rash or skin condition is ongoing, we will request a note from the doctor as well as a Health Action Plan to be completed by the parent.

#### **Tylenol/Fever Policy:**

1. If your child develops a fever of 100 °F or higher during the day, we will notify and ask the parent to arrange to **pick up the child within an hour** after contact.
2. A child should return to the center when they are fever-free, no longer in pain, able to participate in daily activities and have been symptom free for at least 24 hours.
3. If a child spikes a fever and had immunizations within the previous 72 hours, we will contact the parent to pick up their child. The child may return the following day (and will not have to wait the full 24 hours) if the fever is gone, the child is able to, and we have a doctor's note stating that the child had immunizations.
4. Tylenol, or any other fever-reducer, may **not** be kept at the center "just in case". If a child needs a fever-reducer due to illness, they should not be at the center.

#### **We ask that children be kept at home if he or she is ill, or has any symptoms or health concerns listed below:**

- Diarrhea- 2 or more times in the previous 24 hours at home or while at center
- Vomiting – 2 or more times in the previous 24 hours at home or while at center
- Excessive Coughing and/or Sore Throat that keeps child from being able to participate in daily activities.
- Fever – 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
- Unusual lethargy, grouchiness or weepiness that keeps a child from being able to participate in daily activities.
- Inflamed/pink eyes or eyes with excessive discharge (may be conjunctivitis/Pink Eye)
- Unidentified skin rash on body
- Prolonged cough or serious colds that keep a child from being able to participate in daily activities.

Parents will be contacted to pick up their child if any of the symptoms or health concerns listed above occur while at the center.

## Return-to-Care Guidelines

Please refer to listing below to identify when you may bring your child back to the center after an illness. Please also note that children must be able to participate in daily activities to return to the center.

### Confirmed Illness

Chicken Pox

### When your child may return

Five days after last pox appears and all scabs have crusted over

Common cold

After all signs are gone and child is able to participate

Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)\*

After medical treatment and with doctor approval

COVID\*

After day 5, if symptoms have improved and child is able to wear a mask for the next 5 days. If not, child must stay home for the 10 day duration

Croup\*

When fever is gone, able to participate and with doctor approval

Diarrhea

24 hours after last occurrence

Flu

After all signs are gone and child is able to participate

German measles\*

Eight days after onset of illness and with doctor approval

Hepatitis A\*

Seven days after onset of illness, any jaundice has disappeared, and with doctor approval

Hand Foot and Mouth Disease\*

Upon doctor approval

Hepatitis B\*

Upon doctor approval

Hepatitis C\*

Upon doctor approval

Impetigo\*

24 hours after treatment & sores are drying and with doctor approval

Lice (head and body)

After treatment has begun, caregiver will check and clear for return to the center

Meningitis\*

Upon doctor approval

Mononucleosis\*

Upon doctor approval

Ringworm\*

24 hours after treatment, sores must be covered and with doctor approval

Scabies\*

After treatment has begun and with doctor approval

Strep Throat\*

Twenty-four hours after medical treatment has begun, fever is gone and with doctor approval

Scarlet fever\*

After all signs are gone and with doctor approval

Thrush\*

Upon doctor approval

Unidentified Skin Rash\*

Upon doctor approval

Vomiting

24 hours after last occurrence

Whooping Cough\*

Seven days after medical treatment has begun and with doctor approval

Pinworms\*

After medical treatment, and with doctor approval

***Illnesses not listed will be dealt with at the discretion of the Director on a case-by-case basis.***

**\*If your child contracts one of these illnesses a statement from the child's doctor indicating that he/she is no longer contagious and may return to school is MANDATORY.**



**We request that parents notify the center if your child contracts a communicable disease or infection that can be transmitted directly or indirectly, so that we may notify other parents to be aware of and alert to the symptoms.**

### **Emergency Medical Care**

Minor injuries (bumps, bruises, scrapes, minor cuts) will be assessed and treated by staff. The area will be cleaned, and bandages/ice will be applied. Parents will be notified of all minor injuries requiring first-aid treatment verbally and/or in writing.

In case of a serious accident or injury parents will be notified immediately. If necessary, paramedics will be called and the child, accompanied by a staff person, will be transported to the nearest hospital.

### **Clothing**

We recommend that you dress your child comfortably. Children participate in many activities that may get their clothes messy each day. Children should wear clothing they can have fun in and are permitted to get dirty.

Avoid articles of clothing that have drawstrings, which can pose a strangulation hazard to your child. Shoes should cover your child's toes and the back of the foot. We recommend that your child wear socks and sneakers with non-marking soles. Please no flip-flops or open-toed or backed shoes, as children will be running and playing in the gym and on the playground. Please do not bring your child to the center in pajamas.

Each child must have a complete change of clothing in case of an accident. This includes a shirt, shorts/long pants, underwear, and socks. Whenever clothing is soiled and sent home, please replace it the following day. Mark all items with your child's name including blankets, coats, sweaters, jackets, mittens, hats, shoes, boots, and extra clothes. Please remember to change your child's extra clothing supply with the weather.

***Note: Providence Family Support Center is not responsible for lost clothing or outerwear. We ask, too, that parents refrain from allowing their child/ren from bringing toys from home into the classroom. Providence has an abundance of stimulating learning materials to keep children engaged and toys from home have a tendency to cause problems throughout the day.***

Children will go outside each day unless the weather is severe (severe heat/cold or excessive rain). All children should have weather appropriate clothing to go outside. This includes jackets, coats, gloves, mittens and/or hats. Please note that all children must go outside with their class—children will not be permitted to miss their outside time at parent's request.

Rest/nap time is scheduled from 12:30 to 2:30 - 3:00 p.m. daily, except for infants. Please send one child-sized blanket for your child to use during rest/nap time. Weekly laundry will be scheduled for each classroom.

If your child wears diapers/pull ups, please supply a box of wipes and a bag of diapers for daily use. These items MUST be replaced when the supply is low.

**Infant/Young Toddler Supplies (Please label everything):**

Bottles

Milk/Formula (if not using ours)  
Food (if not using ours)  
Burp Cloths  
Diapers/Pull Ups  
Wipes  
Extra Clothes  
Pacifier (if needed)  
Bibs  
Blanket (Toddler over 13 months)  
Ointment/Powder signed in on medication log)  
Any other required items (your child's caregiver will give you relevant information).

**Older Toddler/Young Preschool Supplies (Please label everything):**

Pull-ups/Underwear  
Wipes  
Extra clothes  
Blanket  
Any other required items (your child's teacher will give you relevant information)

**Older Preschool Supplies (Please label everything):**

Extra clothes/Underwear  
Blanket  
Any other required items (your child's teacher will give you the relevant information)

**Diapers/Pull Ups:**

When a child is running low on diapers their teacher will inform parents by communicating with them in writing (usually through *Brightwheel*) or by speaking to parents at pick up and/or drop off.

**Toilet Training**

Toilet training is a task that a child cannot successfully undertake until he/she has grown physiologically to the point of being ready for it. When the child is ready and the parent initiates the process, the staff will reinforce proper toilet training techniques. Successful toilet training requires the combined efforts of both parents and caregivers. Please keep in contact with your child's classroom teachers about toilet training and any efforts that are being made at home.

**Separation**

Each child will adjust to separating from his/her parent/guardian in his/her own unique way. Although some crying initially at separation is perfectly normal, we recognize that it can also make separation more difficult for the parent.

We suggest helping your child get settled, putting his/her belongings away, providing the teacher with any information about the child's night or morning that may be relevant, a reassurance that "I'll see you later", a hug, then leave. Most times the child is fine after a few minutes and becomes engaged with friends or an activity. Often times, a prolonged good-bye may make the situation worse and create a habit that is hard to break later.

Sometimes there is a false separation or false adjustment. A child who appears to have separated and adjusted well for the first few weeks or months may suddenly not want to attend the center. This is considered a false adjustment. Please let staff know about this type of problem so that careful observation and handling can result in a happy, lasting adjustment. You are welcome to call the room at any time during the day to check on your child.

### **SIDS Policy (Infants only)**

In accordance with state regulations (Regulation 3270.119), infants are to be placed in the sleeping position recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics, unless there is a medical reason documented by a physician, physician's assistant, or CRNP.

The following recommendations were taken from an article in the journal "PEDIATRICS" Vol. 116 No. 5 November 2005, published by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

1. Infants should be placed for sleep in a supine position (wholly on the back), for every sleep. Side sleeping is not advised.
2. Use a firm sleep surface: soft materials or objects should not be placed under a sleeping infant. a firm crib mattress, covered by a sheet is recommended.
3. Keep soft objects and loose bedding out of the crib: soft objects such as pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, stuffed toys, and other soft objects should be kept out of an infant's sleeping environment. Loose bedding such as blankets and sheets may be hazardous. Use an infant sleep sack that is designed to keep the infant warm without the possible hazard of head covering.
4. Avoid overheating.

In following the recommendations of the AAP, these are the guidelines that the childcare program will use.

### **Changes in Information**

Please notify the center of any changes to your address or phone number. Please be sure to update your Emergency Contact Form when your information or your designated contact person's information has changed. Also notify us if there is a change of parent/guardian custody. (A court order is needed for custody changes.)

If you take a day off from work or are home during the hours that your child is at the center, please provide us with a phone number where you can be reached.

Please feel free to contact the **Director of Early Childhood and Youth Programs** if you have any questions or concerns about anything listed in this handbook.

**Thank you for choosing our center to care for your child!**

# **APPENDIX**



## INCLUSION POLICY

Providence Family Support Center (PFSC) welcomes all children and provides developmentally appropriate early learning and development experiences that support the full participation of every child. We believe that each child is unique, and work in partnership with families and other professionals involved with the child to provide the support every child needs to reach their full potential.

The staff at PFSC use developmentally appropriate practices and consider the unique needs of all children when planning activities and experiences. Staff will make every attempt to make any adaptations or modifications necessary to meet the needs of the children. Schedules, routines, and activities are flexible, and staff will work with therapists, special educators, and other professionals to integrate individual accommodations, modifications and strategies into classroom routines and activities. Any adaptations will be reviewed with families and other professionals supporting the child. PFSC acknowledges and respects the priorities each family has for their child. Families are encouraged and supported to collaborate with staff to ensure that each child has an opportunity for their greatest success. PFSC regularly communicates with families and has meetings, as needed, to discuss the child's strengths and challenges.

Training and support are provided to ensure that all staff are competent to meet the developmental and educational needs of all children. All staff participate annually in training focused on effective inclusion and/or other disability topics. The director provides additional support and resources as appropriate.

Many children with disabilities or other special needs receive support services from developmental and educational professionals such as therapists and special educators. PFSC welcomes those professionals and works with them to assure the child's success, encouraging them to provide services to the child in the context of the early childhood classroom. Our staff and the service provider work together to determine the best strategies to support the child in the group setting.

Successful inclusion involves preparing the environment, working with families, finding out more about a child's strengths and needs, partnering with school districts, collaborating with special education stakeholders, and embracing an attitude that truly welcomes all children into the program.

For more information regarding your rights regarding inclusion please visit:

<https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/disability/ada>



### **Early Intervention/Early Childhood Services**

Providence Family Support Center seeks to meet the needs of all children. If your child is currently receiving early intervention services, itinerant therapists (speech, developmental, OT and PT) are welcome to deliver services to your child during the day. Please share this information with the Director upon enrollment so that scheduling arrangements can be made.

We would appreciate a copy of the IFSP/IEP to incorporate the plan into the classroom routine and to modify curriculum and lesson plans, as needed. If possible, we will actively participate and/or provide input at scheduled IFSP/IEP meetings, as well.

We are always open to hear parent concerns and will share concerns as well, in order to best serve your child. We will share referral resources, as needed, if you are interested in obtaining more information regarding support services in which your child may be eligible.

Communication with your child's teacher is vital to your child's development and progress.



## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Providence Family Support Center (PFSC) offers programming designed to partner with parents as they strengthen their families and encourage their children to reach their highest potential.

The Center is part of a national movement committed to promoting healthy families. PFSC's focus is on prevention and is specifically intended to fill the gaps that many families experience in their support systems, as well as provide educational enrichment programs that improve parenting and other life skills. Family support is not intended to be only for "at risk" families; it assumes that every family deserves help, support and access to resources.

For families with children under age six who would like more intensive, one-on-one support, the center employs two full-time family development specialists and a designated fatherhood specialist, who visit households regularly, providing parental support, problem-solving and age-appropriate activities for children.

Weekly enrichment classes designed to empower and strengthen adults in their roles as parents, nurturers and providers are held in six-week sessions during the fall and spring. Topics may include job readiness, parenting, budgeting, anger management and self-improvement. Dinner and childcare are provided free of charge.

The fatherhood program is designed to support fathers as they provide financial, emotional, and physical care to their families. By offering the fathers different opportunities and experiences, the program equips dads to become more self-sufficient and nurturing.

Our early childhood and school age care and education programs invite parents/caregivers to participate in all aspects of their child's programming. Goal setting, decision making and sharing knowledge and skills with the school community, that can be integrated into the classroom curriculum, are encouraged to fully engage the families in their child's education. Parent conferences are offered two times per year and two-way communication is ongoing, from school to home, and home to school, with a focus on the child's educational experience as well as the care and educational program.

Parent Council invites families to actively participate in making decisions about the program itself. Families are also invited to advocate for early childhood education in the wider community,

Providence Connections also offers an array of free programs designed to help families grow to their fullest potential:

**Family Unity Nights** - Carrying unique themes and held each month of the year, "FUN" nights include dinner and family-strengthening activities.

**Parent-Child Together Time** - Held monthly during the day, activities are aimed at creating an opportunity for parents and children to share quality time.

**Field Trips** -With the financial support of both Tickets for Kids and various grants, the center provides periodic outings to local cultural and recreational events that many of our families would be unable to attend otherwise.

**Holidays** - Families can celebrate all major holidays together at PFSC, giving them an opportunity to spend special time with each other and with other families. Typically, a themed holiday meal is accompanied by a crafts center, photo opportunities and other family-oriented entertainment. Our families are also invited to attend the *Gifts of Providence*, held annually near Christmas where – thanks to numerous donations from neighboring Parishes and the local community – we invite the neediest families to “shop” for children’s holiday gifts.





## TRANSITION POLICY

### **Transitioning from One Age Group to Another:**

Transitioning to a new classroom requires changes for children, their parents/caregivers, and teachers. Group sizes and staff-to-child ratios will change along with staff communications. There will also be new opportunities for exploration, discovery, and learning.

**When it is educationally appropriate for a child to be transitioned to another classroom, parents will be notified and requested to conference with the teacher. No transitioning will occur until parent/teacher information is exchanged and discussed and children have had an opportunity to visit and feel comfortable in the next classroom.**

As infant's transition to the Young Toddler classroom individualized care will continue but the ratio of adults to children will be larger as children become more independent and do for themselves. Some physical changes will be moving from a crib to a cot and from two naps per day to just one. Using a sippy cup and self-feeding are also changes that you can expect. There will be a period of visitation before a child is moved permanently.

As children move through our two other toddler classrooms, their routines will change, their play and exploration spaces will become more activity-filled, and the class size and ratios will increase. Parents will continue to receive daily written communication – activities, mealtimes, and toileting habits.

As toddler's transition to the preschool classroom, you will notice more consistent routines. There is still individualized attention but with consistent structure – everyone playing, eating, and sleeping at approximately the same time each day. You will notice a slightly higher staff-to-child ratio with their growing independence from adults. Each child will still have lots of one-on-one time but also time to interact with other children as well as the environment, given their newly acquired social skills. Children will be engaged in all sorts of exploration and discovery in well-planned learning centers. The teachers' role is to provide varied experiences in which children can practice newly learned skills, engage in discussions about the world around them, and learn self-control.

As preschooler's transition to Pre-K, the focus is now on kindergarten readiness. Much of the day is spent in smaller groups with teacher-directed learning activities, individualized instruction or experiencing learning centers throughout the classroom. School survival skills (e.g., raising hand to answer, walking as a group) are practiced daily and the teacher focuses equally on building a child's social, physical, emotional, and cognitive development. With the larger group size in both preschool and Pre-K, written communication will decrease and daily face-to-face communication increases.

### **Transition to Kindergarten:**

Throughout the school year, the teacher will be assessing each child's skills and abilities and sharing information with parents or caregivers through conferences and/or home visits. Parents are encouraged to visit elementary schools to observe the kindergarten class. Teachers also offer ways that families can participate in their child's transition:

- Attend annual Ready Freddy event – community awareness program that encourages families to register for kindergarten on time
- Attend kindergarten Open Houses
- Attend kindergarten registration events that are scheduled March/April
- Grant permission for teacher to share information between the early education site and the school
- Kindergarten Here I Come and Kindergarten Here I Am activity booklets
- Attend Pre-K Graduation in June

### **Supporting School Age Children Transitioning to Self-Care:**

As children “age-out” of our afterschool program, parents will be faced with decisions regarding their child being on their own after school. Parents will receive On My Own and OK, a guide for parents with school-age children who are home alone, which will help them to prepare their child to assume responsibilities, handle problems and acquire skills in caring for themselves.



### **Behavior Management and Suspension and Expulsion Policy**

Providence Connections, a ministry sponsored by the Sisters of Divine Providence, strengthens families and enriches lives through comprehensive education and developmental opportunities for parents and children.

#### **We fulfill our mission in our Early Childhood Program with these objectives:**

1. To help children feel special about themselves by learning respect for themselves and others
2. To bring children of different races, cultures, and religious beliefs together and introduce them to diverse social backgrounds
3. To stimulate and excite children while providing a safe, warm, loving, and healthy environment
4. To promote harmony through the encouragement of fair play and friendship
5. To provide varied experiences to enrich each child's conceptual understanding

One of our goals at Providence Family Support Center (PFSC) is to develop self-confidence in every child. The level of a child's self-confidence determines to a large degree how he/she will perform with others and how she/he handles life's problems. We teach children many things, but the most important thing we teach is the social skills necessary to become confident and successful people.

Part of self-confidence is self-regulation, and it has been found to be a key attribute in children's success. All children need structure and behavior guidelines to develop self-regulation. At times children will challenge rules and even disregard them. We want to partner with you, the parents, in helping your child develop appropriate social skills. This can seem like a long tough journey, and it is! If we do it together your child will be the winner. Self-confidence will grow and with appropriate social skills your child will achieve both in school and in life.

We know that children may become angry or frustrated, but we want to help them express these emotions in an appropriate way. Staff work with children to encourage them to develop self-regulation and conflict resolution skills each day. Staff will also use the following strategies as needed:

- Request assistance from program leadership to determine need for individual program modification
- Give positive feedback to build upon strengths
- Provide clear expectations (show or tell the child what is expected)
- Provide accommodations to increase success
- Give choices, within parameters to maintain control
- Provide access to breaks
- Provide a safe, calm down space
- Use positive reinforcement to reward desired behavior

- Teach skills and replacement behaviors to build new abilities

If behaviors continue, a conference with the parent will be scheduled for discussion, sharing of literature and other supportive resources and guidance as to next steps. An outside referral may be necessary to request an assessment and interventions. Childcare providers will utilize these community resources as needed:

- Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation
- Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) – ECE professionals and families can request assistance by completing an online survey at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/PAExpulsionHelp](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PAExpulsionHelp). Families and ECE professionals do not need to complete the survey under the following circumstances:
  - The family has an established relationship with their local Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC), in which case providers and families may reach out directly to the ELRC to receive program support.
  - The child is already receiving Early Intervention (EI) Services, with parent permission, in which case the provider should reach out to the child’s local EI program to request assistance.
- Families who have concerns about their child’s development can still call the CONNECT Helpline at 1-800-692-7288 for information and to connect to Early Intervention Services and Supports in Pennsylvania.
- The Alliance for Infants/Toddlers
- Project Dart (3 -5 years old)
- Child Development Unit (Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh)
- Behavioral health organizations

Employees of PFSC will participate in all required professional development activities, seek technical assistance, and engage in culturally sustaining practices based upon current needs of staff and the children and families served. Teacher’s expectations, management skills and intervention techniques will be evaluated and changed to adapt to individual circumstances. And, staff will work with therapists, special educators and other professionals to integrate individual accommodations, modifications and strategies into classroom routines and activities. Any adaptations will be reviewed with families and other professionals supporting the child.

PFSC will work with and support the parents and professionals if parents actively follow recommendations. If the behavior challenges are severe, and if we feel, as a team, that the child has not made any progress, by using the above-mentioned resources, we reserve the right, after professional observation, to recommend another pre-school environment that would benefit the child. We may not be equipped to meet the special needs of every child but want every child to succeed. If PFSC makes the decision to discontinue a child’s enrollment in the program, we will maintain on file, a record of the circumstances, parental notification and any action steps taken to assist with finding alternate arrangements for the family.

*Note: Parents or caregivers who use profanity, threatening language, and acts of violence are all grounds for termination from our programs. Providence Connections has zero tolerance for behaviors and actions that make others feel threatened and unsafe. Our Family Support Center focuses on providing families and their children with a safe and comfortable environment for childcare and family support. Any individuals who disrupt the work and the sense of safety by using profanity, threatening language, and acts of violence will be asked to leave the center immediately and will face additional consequences, up to and including having their enrollment terminated.*

**Parent Handbook Acknowledgement**

My signature below acknowledges my reading, understanding, and willingness to abide by the policies for enrollment as stated in the Parent Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date