

# Healthy Kids Early Learning Parent Guide

We are so grateful you have taken the time to explore Healthy Kids Early Learning Programs.

Within this booklet, you will learn much about our programs, mission, centers and staff.

We hope to meet you in person soon.

Sincerely,

*The Healthy Kids Team*



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# Mission & Vision

A part of Healthy Kids Programs, which has been providing Before & After School and Summer Camp Programs throughout New York State since 2007, Healthy Kids Early Learning focuses on Infant, Toddler, Preschool and Pre-K Programs.

## Our Mission

Our Healthy Kids Early Learning Center's mission is to provide a safe, nurturing, and engaging early learning environment that effectively supports the needs of our children to enter kindergarten with the social, emotional, and academic skills to be happy and successful.

We creatively implement our structured curriculum in a well-designed classroom space with regular assessments to enhance and challenge each child's social, emotional, and learning development and spark each child's creative individualism. We believe that with structured guidance, best-practice teaching strategies, and gifted staff, each child will reach their developmental milestone with the overall goal of preparing each child to enter a school-age program.

## Our Philosophy

We believe children learn best through meaningful interaction. Our program reflects the integration of physical, cognitive, social, emotional, language, and self-help areas for the total development of the child. Meaningful activities encourage curiosity, discovery and problem solving, which allows individual growth and development of a positive self-image. We have a responsibility to run a safe program that is in compliance with every single law and regulation. The policies outlined on the following pages will ensure that we deliver both our obligations and our responsibilities and run the best program possible.

## Licensing

Each Healthy Kids Early Learning Center is a NYS Licensed Day Care Program through the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and operates in accordance with the NYS Day Care Center regulations.

# Registration & Communication

## Registration

Before your child can attend our center, completed registration forms must be submitted, along with documentation of current immunization records. We encourage families to call us to set up a tour with our director prior to enrolling to view the facility and to meet our staff.

### Notice of Change of Enrollment

One month's written notice is required for withdrawal from the Healthy Kids Early Learning Center. Notice must be sent to [elcregistration@healthykidsprograms.com](mailto:elcregistration@healthykidsprograms.com).

### Fee Information

Rates and billing information can be found on our website. A signed "Tuition and Payment Agreement" must be completed prior to the start of care.

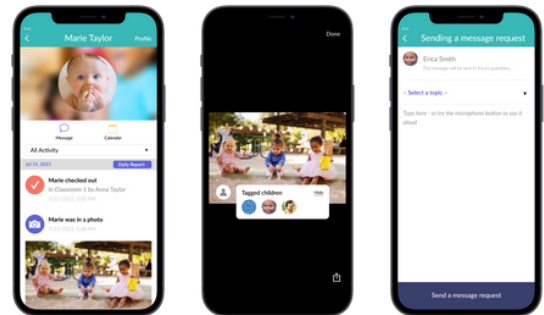
The Registration Team can be reached at [elcregistration@healthykidsprograms.com](mailto:elcregistration@healthykidsprograms.com) or 845-330-0220.

## Communication

Feel free to speak to the director or any staff about any special needs, concerns or information. We utilize a family-friendly software program called Brightwheel. Brightwheel allows teachers to send you updates and pictures, staff to sign children in and out of our program each day and parents to send messages to the staff and director.

### Additional Ways to Communicate

In addition to the Brightwheel App, parents can reach out to their director via phone or email. A directory is on page 7 and our staff contacts are also on our website. You may also call our general line at 845-568-6100 to be transferred to the director.



## Discharge from the Program

While we will do our best to meet the needs of any child that attends, there are times when we cannot provide the right fit. We want all children to thrive, and if we find that your child is not best served by our ELC we will discharge them. The following are reasons that a family may be discharged:

- Neglecting to follow the policies of the Healthy Kids Program/Office of Children and Family Services
- A continuing problem that negatively affects other children. This may include, but is not limited to: hitting, biting, inappropriate behavior, bullying, or being unsafe.
- Defacing ELC property
- Bringing or using illegal items or substances
- Nonpayment
- Inappropriate, disruptive or "bullying" behavior from a parent or guardian towards center staff, other parents or children.

# Drop off & Pick Up

We take your child's safety seriously, therefore we ask you to follow the guidelines here to ensure a smooth beginning and ending to the day.

## Drop Off Procedures

Staff will sign your child into care using Brightwheel.

## Pick Up Procedures

Staff will sign your child out using Brightwheel.

Remember to check your child's cubby for art work or notes. We will not release a child from our program to anyone:

- Who is not listed on the registration form or Brightwheel
- Who is not authorized to pick up
- Who is under the age of 16
- Who appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol

If there is someone new coming to pick up your child, you must inform us who the individual is. We also ask that they are aware of our pick up policy, and that they are required to present a photo ID to our staff. We cannot take instructions over the phone. Please let us know if a new person needs to be added to the pick-up list, or you can easily update your approved pick up list on Brightwheel.



**\*\*LEGAL ISSUE:** By law, the program staff is not allowed to keep a child from their natural parents. If your child is involved in a custody battle where a parent is not allowed to come into contact, or pick the child up from care, it is necessary to inform us in writing. A copy of any court documents stating this information is required, and will be kept confidential.

## Late Policy

You are expected to pick your child up on time. If you are going to be late, please message the program to notify us. A \$5 fee will be charged for every 5 minutes you are late. This fee will be added to your billing payment. More than three late pick-ups will be grounds for dismissal from the program.

# Hours of Operation

The Early Learning Center will be open Monday to Friday all year with the exception of the following:

### Holidays

New Year's Day, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving day, The day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year's Eve.

### Professional Development Days:

The Healthy Kids Early Learning Center supports staff in their ongoing professional development. Please make arrangements for alternative care on the following days: the Friday before Memorial Day and Veterans Day.

# Inclement Weather

We understand that our decision to open, close or delay school opening during inclement weather often disrupts family schedules. We also understand that our children are better served – academically, emotionally, and socially – by being in school or daycare. But, as always, our top priority is the safety of our children and staff.

## Who makes the decision?

Ultimately, The Healthy Kids Early Learning Center Directors and Administrative Team are responsible for the final decision based on the above factors and recommendations from our plow service that are out on the road observing transportation conditions. Often our directors consult with other area center directors and local school districts who are similarly affected by inclement weather/school closures.

## When is the decision made?

We strive to make decisions on delays and closings as many hours in advance as possible. The decision will be made the night before, or in uncertain conditions, no later than 5:45 a.m. on the morning of the closing. Communications will be sent as quickly as possible following a decision, via Brightwheel.



## How is the decision made?

Please understand that we make the decision to open, close or delay the center in bad weather based on a careful analysis of all relevant factors, including:

- Information on road conditions from transportation staff and from local law enforcement and road crews
- Amount of snow and/or ice accumulated
- Whether precipitation will continue throughout the day
- Temperature and wind chill
- Weather predictions (including those from a weather alert service)
- Storm timing, trajectory, and projection
- Building conditions (such as whether our building's electricity and/or heat service is disrupted)
- Parking lot conditions

**Generally, The Healthy Kids Early Learning Centers will be closed or delayed for inclement weather when local school districts decide to delay and/or close.**

## Will we close if conditions worsen?

Even if the weather conditions worsen, we cannot reverse our decision in the morning without endangering the children and staff. If conditions worsen throughout the day, we may need to have an early dismissal, but we will give as much notice as possible through the previously mentioned methods of communication. However, it is very important for parents to have plans in place in case the decision needs to be made later. We encourage you to consider driving conditions. Always allow yourself plenty of time to pick up your child when the center closes early. Although we do our absolute best in this process, we know that often no perfect decision exists. If you do not feel that it is safe for your child to attend, we encourage you to use your best judgment as to whether your child should attend the program or not. We prefer to exercise flexibility in these situations as opposed to an inflexible policy.

# Our Staff

Our staff are very special people who demonstrate a resourceful and loving commitment to children, a high level of skill, education and experience.

Staff consists of our Executive Director, Regional and Center Director, Early Childhood Teachers, Infant and Toddler Teachers, Early Childhood Assistants and Support Workers. The director is responsible for the overall program at the Center, and divides his/her time between overseeing programs, supporting staff, and administrative responsibilities. All permanent staff are licensed early childhood educators with current CPR and First Aid certification. All staff, substitutes, students and volunteers complete a screening process that includes a complete background check, fingerprinting, passing a physical and TB test and reference checks as per NYS OCFS regulations.

## Supervision: Staff/Child Ratio

We follow New York State staffing guidelines which are as follows:

### Ages of children Staff : Children Ratio

6 weeks to 18 months	1 staff for 4 children
18 to 36 months	1 staff for 5 children
3 year olds	1 staff for 7 children
4 year olds	1 staff for 8 children

## Staff Training

We are committed to continually develop our staff by giving them the tools and skills to be better caretakers. All employees complete a minimum of thirty hours of training every 2 years. The training consists of CPR/First Aid Foundations in Health and Safety, Mandated Reporter, Prevention and Identification of Brain Injuries, including Abusive Head Trauma, and other training topics which include:

- Principles of child development
- Nutrition and health needs
- Child day care program development
- Safety and security procedures
- Business record maintenance and management
- Child abuse and maltreatment
- Statues and regulations pertaining to child abuse
- Identification and prevention of shaken baby syndrome
- Status and regulations pertaining to child day care



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# Health & Wellness

## Daily Health Checks

Each day, the director and/or staff will visually check each child and document it.

### **This check includes:**

- Behavior typical or atypical for time of day or circumstances
- Skin: pale, flushed rash (feel the child's skin by touch affectionately)
- Eyes, nose, and mouth: note color, are they dry or is there discharge? Is the child rubbing eyes, nose or mouth?
- Breathing: normal or abnormal, cough?
- Ask parent how child seemed to feel or act at home
- Sleeping normally?
- Eating/drinking normally?
- Bowels and urine normal?
- Any signs of sickness like fever, breathing difficulties, rashes, unusual spots or stomach ailments,

**If any of these conditions are found, the child will be brought to a quiet place and kept under direct supervision by staff. Parents will be notified immediately by phone.**

Any open wounds found on a child should remain covered to prevent infections or contact with blood.

## Sick Policy

Coughs, colds and mild flu symptoms are a reality for all children. We prepare for these illnesses and seek to protect your child by maintaining a high quality of cleaning standards. We also require that sick children stay home. Any child attending the center must be well enough to participate in all the day's activities, including time spent outside daily. If your child becomes ill, the director or designated staff member will notify you and ask you to pick up your child.

### **A child may not attend the program if they have:**

- A fever of 100 or higher
- Two bouts of diarrhea
- Skin infection, undiagnosed rash, infected eyes
- Parasite related condition (scabies, impetigo)
- Coughing, colored nasal mucus, sore throat or ears
- Vomiting
- On antibiotics less than 24 hours
- Unexplained pain or headaches
- Difficulty breathing (wheezing, persistent cough)
- Head lice

### **A child may return to the center when:**

- Fever free for 24 hours WITHOUT the aid of Tylenol
- Has had 2 normal bowel movements
- Has been on antibiotics for 24 hours since the first dose
- In the case of coxsackie all blisters must be healed over and scabbed

## Child Abuse Policy

New York State mandates caregivers to report any suspected child abuse. A caregiver does not need to witness or have positive proof that abuse has occurred to report it. Staff members will use injury incident reports for any accident or injury occurring in the program. If the child comes to the program with unexplained bruises or physical injuries; it will be documented. If a staff member suspects abuse, they will immediately contact Child Protective Services based on documentation and any indications of abuse or neglect. A DSS 2221-A form will be submitted within 48 hours to DSS. The Director will also inform the Office of Children and Family Services after contacting DSS. The contact number for the New York State Child Abuse and Neglect hotline is 1-800-342-3720.



# Boo-boo's

## Boo-boo's While In Care

If your child is injured while in care, the staff will offer first aid as needed, including TLC. We will wash a scraped knee, apply ice to a bumped elbow, etc. The staff will fill out an incident report which they will bring to the administrator on duty. If your child was injured above the shoulders, you will be contacted. At pick up, you will receive two copies of the report; one to keep for your records and one that you will need to sign for our records.

## Biting Policy

Biting is a **very common behavior** among children birth to three years of age. Biting is a form of communication and is almost always a response to the child's needs not being met or coping with a challenge or a stressor. **If your child is bitten:**

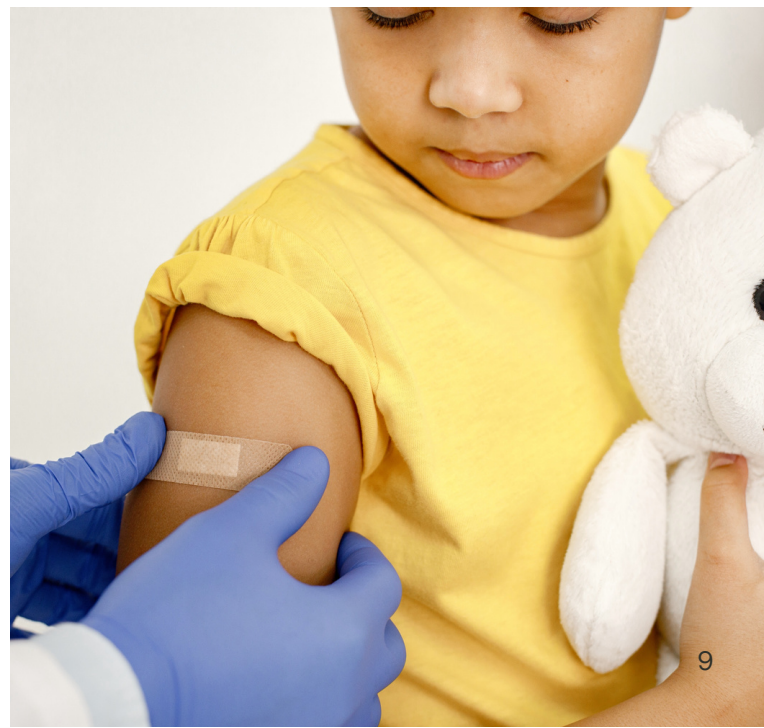
- Staff will separate the child from the biter
  - Special attention will be given to comfort the child
  - Staff will be sure to administer first aid as follows:
    1. Assess the wound, and if it is bleeding, apply pressure directly to the wound
    2. Clean the bite wound with mild soap and warm water for approximately 3-5 minutes
    3. Rinse thoroughly and pat dry with a clean dry cloth
    4. Cover the wound with a clean dry dressing
    5. Should the wound require immediate medical attention, appropriate action will be taken and parents will be notified immediately.
  - Staff will complete an incident report to notify the parent/guardian of the incident For the child who bites:
  - Staff will complete and incident report, and contact the biters parent/guardian immediately
- If a child bites more than twice in a day, they will need to be picked up from our center.** If we have a child that is constantly biting we will meet with the parents to create a "Care Plan" to help resolve the pattern. The name of the child who has bitten is confidential.

As we know, boo-boo's are a part of childhood. We will always do our best to prevent injuries, but boo-boo's do happen.

## Emergency Medical Situations

The safety of your child is our number one priority. Although most of our medical situations are fixed with TLC and a band aid, on rare occasions we come across a serious medical situation. In the unlikely event that your child is injured or is seriously ill while in our care, and immediate medical attention is required, a staff member will call 911 and request emergency assistance. We will immediately reach out to parents/guardians to inform them of what is happening, and what has happened.

We will support you and your child in every way, including comforting them, communicating with you and if needed, accompanying your child in the ambulance and by staying at their side until you can arrive at the hospital. The attending staff will have your child's emergency card, which you will fill out during registration time. If we cannot reach you, we will call your alternate contact, and continue trying to reach you.



# Day to Day

## Diapering

The infant and toddler program will work hard to make **diapering a stress free moment in the child's day**. We regularly diaper the children every two hours and anytime the child has had a bowel movement, or as needed. To maintain the health and safety of all children and staff, the staff will always wash their hands before and after diapering and sanitize the changing table after each use. If you prefer cloth diapers please make sure you talk to staff to determine the best method of containment for the diapers.

## Toilet Training

**Potty training can seem like a daunting task. We are here to help.** We encourage parents to let us know what stage their child is at in regards to toilet training. We let children get comfortable with the toileting routine, then encourage them to sit on the toilet. Children are encouraged to pull their own pants up and down when using the toilet and all children wash their hands after toileting and diapering.

## Napping and Quiet Time

**Daily, between the hours of 12:30 until 2 pm, we will have a center wide "Quiet Time"**. This should allow for the children to have some much needed down-time. Rest time should be a time for children to regroup and recharge. Each classroom will establish a routine that leads into rest time. Quiet music will be played and backs may be rubbed. **No child may be required to stay on their mat after 20 minutes of being awake. If a child is not willing or able to rest, alternative activities will be made available to them.**

**All infants will be placed on their backs in their cribs.**

Once an infant is able to roll, we will place a "rolling over" sign on that child's crib in case, licensing should visit. This policy is in agreement with the OCFS regulations.

Children cannot be covered in heavy blankets or quilts. Parents may provide a sleep-sack for their child. We are unable to place soft toys in cribs with a child. We are able to use white noise machines and pacifiers. **All naps will be recorded on the Brightwheel app.**

