



## **KIDS CENTER**

**Bear Creek  
Bainbridge  
East High  
Community Center**

# **Policies and Procedures for Families**

**2023-24**

## **GEARS KIDS CENTER**

**Policies, Procedures, and Standards**

## **Welcome to the GEARS Kids Center!**

The GEARS Kids Center is a non-profit childcare center. We serve a Preschool class and a Kindergarten Enrichment class at our GEARS Community Center on 70 South Poplar Street. Our Before and After School programs operate out of Bear Creek, Bainbridge and East High Elementary Schools in partnership with the Elizabethtown Area School District. Our GEARS Community Center also provides a secondary location for our School Age children when the school district has scheduled days off or for Early Dismissal days.

### **Mission Statement**

**Our mission is to create an active community where children can grow in mind and body.**

**Being active within their community, both large and small, allows children to see how they can respect and grow in their community. It teaches them to be humble and appreciate what they have. It shows them that it takes many different people to create a community where they live, learn and play. Interactions and challenges they come to face in our program, become learning experiences that our teachers assist in guiding them through the experience in a positive nurturing way. Giving the children the time, space and encouragement to find their words, make their own opinions and views while respecting others.**

### **Child Admission and Enrollment**

- GEARS Kids Center admits children 3.6 years-11 years of age. During the school year, children in Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade need to attend the Elizabethtown Area School District. Children attending private schools, with their own transportation can also attend the programs with special arrangements.
- The GEARS Kids Center does not discriminate in our admissions policies based on race, sex, religion, place of national origin, or physical or mental abilities. Parents are encouraged to meet with staff before enrollment to determine if the center is the right environment for their child. Upon enrollment, staff and parents will keep open communication on the child's progress through daily communication as well as conferences held throughout the year. Please see attached Non-Discrimination Policy.
- Children with special needs are admitted as long as a safe, supportive environment can be provided for the child. In addition, a copy of the child's IEP/IFSP needs to be provided to help staff and administration better understand your child's needs. The program will attempt to accommodate children with special needs consistent with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If the program is unable to accommodate the child's needs as defined by the child's

health care provider(s) or the Individual Family Service Plan/Individual Education Plan without imposing an undue burden as defined by federal law, the director will work with the parent or legal guardian to find a suitable environment for the child.

- The following paperwork needs to be completed by the parent or legal guardian in order for the child to be admitted. The information will be stored in the office and copies kept at the physical site.
- Contract agreement \*special care form \*non-discrimination form \*emergency form \*allergy and asthma form \*All about your Child” form within 30 days of starting our program, a physical form and immunization records need to be submitted to the office. It is important to have these forms back prior to your child attending our program to maintain appropriate records for the Department of Human Services.

### **Tuition**

Tuition is due Monday of every week. If payment is not made by the end of the day on Tuesdays by 6:00 pm; if not received by the date due a \$20.00 late fee will be placed on the family account. If payment is not received for 2 consecutive weeks, your child will not be allowed to attend GEARS until the family account is brought current. If payment is not received by the third week, enrollment will be terminated and the account will be sent to collections. Parents are responsible for all charges and fees when an account is turned over for collections. The child may not return to GEARS until the account is paid in full, tuition fees and collection fee

### **Schedule Change or Withdrawal**

Whenever a child’s schedule changes or you need to withdraw your child from the program, a two-week notice form will need to be submitted to the GEARS Kids Center main office. This form can be acquired from the site leaders and can be returned to a site leader to be sent to the main office. **Accounts will still be charged during the two weeks before withdrawal from the program.**

### **No School, Early Dismissal & Late Start Days (School Year Only)**

#### **Pre-Registration**

We ask that all parents sign their children up for early dismissal and non-school days (including Preschool); this allows Administration to plan appropriate staffing to maintain ratio on these non-school days. Sign up sheets are available by your Site Director two weeks prior to a non-school day or scheduled early dismissal days. Please note that if you sign up for these days and your child does not attend the fee is not refundable.

(NSED contracts are available in the Kids Center office)

## **Non-School Days**

All day service (6:30 am to 6 pm) is offered during the week, when there is a non-school day, during the school year, if at least **15 children** are pre-registered. (NSED contracts are available in the Kids Center office)  
Part Time Contracts have an additional fee for non-school days.

- **Children must be pre-registered to attend any scheduled days.**
- **Unexpected non-school days for weather or emergencies, no pre-registration is required**
- **Children are required to pack a lunch for these days. Breakfast and snacks are provided.**

## **Early Dismissal & Late Start Days**

Service is provided for days when school delays or lets out early. Breakfast is provided and an afternoon snack. Children must be pre-registered to attend any scheduled days.

**Unexpected Early Dismissals or Late Starts for weather or emergencies, no pre-registration is required**

(NSED contracts are available in the Kids Center office)

## **Late Pick-Up Policy and Fees**

If a child is picked up past our operational time of 6:00 pm, a late fee will be charged for \$1.00 per minute. The fee will be added to the parent account.

## **Diversity**

GEARS Kids Center welcomes all cultures and languages. We accommodate family's unique languages and culture to provide a comforting, supporting atmosphere for all children. GEARS Kids Center will find ways to incorporate the home language of all the children into our programs such as labeling, books, and teaching other children and staff a few words or phrases. We will help guide children to connect to the English language and their academic studies by researching and understanding the cultures and backgrounds of the children.

Courts have held that denying persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) access to programs is discriminatory on the basis of their national origin under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. The LEP Policy Guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services states that it is the Department of Public Welfare's obligation to ensure all persons with LEP have meaningful and equal access to services and benefits. This obligation includes providing competent, free language assistance services.

## **GEARS KIDS CENTER RULES**

### **WE ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO:**

- 1. Respectful**
- 2. Safe**
- 3. Trustworthy**
- 4. Fair**
- 5. Understanding**
- 6. Energetic**

## **Curriculum Statement**

Using the child-centered approach staff will support and empower children to build on their knowledge and understanding. Learning through play, exploration and exposure to the community, children will have fun while they connect what they have learned into their everyday life. There will be a focus on life skills and social-emotional development alongside the academic. We will use the PA Learning Standards as well as the Environmental Rating Scales to guide our planning. Parents, children and staff are encouraged to share their passions and culture with the program. Preschool Rooms will follow the Early Learning Scales curriculum and also the PA Early Learning Standards for Preschool.

## **Parent Announcements**

Parent communications will be sent through the Bright Wheels App messaging and email platform. These communications can be on your child's daily sheet or sent to the parent's email on file. We also communicate various events through Facebook as well. A monthly newsletter will be sent through the "S'more" Newsletter program.

## **Parent Involvement**

At GEARS Kids Center we invite parents into our classrooms to learn what we do each and every day with your child. Kids Center Director and Assistant Director are available for any questions or concerns about the programs we provide. We seek your active involvement as parents in the program. We encourage you to attend Parents Meetings and Parent-Teacher Conferences. Conferences are offered twice a year. We welcome your contribution of ideas to assist GEARS Kids Center to continue to implement high quality programs.

## **Supervision Policy**

**“SEE, HEAR, ASSESS, DIRECT”**

**Supervision of active play will be as follows:**

As set by state regulations, a face to name tag system is used. Face to name tags are broken down into “Primary Care Groupings” between staff working in the same classroom or group. This allows for consistency in care. We also use our Tadpoles App as a tool to partner with the face to name cards as a way to aid in our supervision of children. The Tadpoles App allows staff to check children in and out of GEARS Kids Center with accuracy; and serves as another tool to maintain accurate attendance numbers throughout the school day.

Pennsylvania State staff-child ratio shall be followed: Preschool 1:10 (1:5 For water activities, 1:20 for Nap Time) K-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade 1:12 (1:6 for water activities) 4-5th grade 1:15 (1:8 for water activities)

The children will be regularly counted to confirm their safe whereabouts at all times as well as using face to name cards. A written plan will be prepared by the Site Director or the primary caregiver and used to inform staff of high-risk areas that need to be manned such as alleys, parking lots & adjoining driveways when kids are at play.

**Active Supervision consists of the following:**

- 1. Staff Communication**
- 2. Staff will designate the boundaries for children.**
- 3. Staff will agree on the zone they will actively supervise.**
- 4. Staff will actively supervise by the following methods:**
  - a. Actively walk the perimeters of their zone.**
  - b. Actively listen to what is being said in their zone.**
  - c. Actively view what is taking place in their zone.**
  - d. Be accountable for the location of all the children in their zone.**
  - e. Provide feedback to children regarding safety issues.**
  - f. Mediate situations and positively redirect.**

## **Accident Prevention**

When active supervision is taking place, every effort is made to prevent accidents. Staff secure a safe environment and proceed by following it up with preventative and active supervision.

## **Authorized Pick-Up**

Only authorized folks are permitted to pick up a child from any of our program sites. Authorization forms for these approved folks are kept in the Kids Center office and at the Site. Staff will reference the Emergency Contact form to appropriately determine the approved persons to release a child. Staff will assure that written authorization by the child's parent or legal guardian of the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of individuals whom the parent or legal guardian has approved before releasing a child. Authorized people should bring their driver license or other photo ID to identify face to face.

## **Family Communication**

Site staff and administration will communicate with parents; face to face, Bright Wheels messaging, phone calls, email, and conferences.

### **Phone #'s**

**Wendy Musser, Director** – Office: 717-367-0119  
Direct line: 717-874-9454

Families can text and call between 6:30 am and 6 pm. Please leave a detailed message, and your call will be returned within 24 hours.

**Preschool phone:** 717-689-6133

**Kindergarten phone:** 717-689-0688

**East High site:** 717-368-5944

**Bear Creek:** 717-689-6412

**Bainbridge:** 717-418-8761

**Main Office Emails:**

**Director:** Wendy Musser

[WendyMusser@GetintoGEARS.org](mailto:WendyMusser@GetintoGEARS.org)

**Assistant Director:** Kelly Flowers

[KellyFlowers@GetintoGEARS.org](mailto:KellyFlowers@GetintoGEARS.org)

**Site Directors:**

**Bear Creek-Katelyn Trego**

[katelyntrego@GetintoGEARS.org](mailto:katelyntrego@GetintoGEARS.org)

**Bainbridge- Rhonda Shank**

[rhondashank@GetintoGEARS.org](mailto:rhondashank@GetintoGEARS.org)

**East High- Tracy Carl**

[tracycarl@GetintoGEARS.org](mailto:tracycarl@GetintoGEARS.org)

**Community Center: Preschool and Kindergarten**

**Preschool-Rebecca Spencer**

[Rebeccaspencer@GetintoGEARS.org](mailto:Rebeccaspencer@GetintoGEARS.org)

**Kindergarten Wrap Around - Caitlin Fenvyes**

[CaitlinFenvyes@GetintoGEARS.org](mailto:CaitlinFenvyes@GetintoGEARS.org)



## **Family Vacation Procedures**

One vacation credit is allotted for families during the school year (following the Elizabethtown Area School District calendar) to take for the number of days the child attends GEARS. Vacation credit must be used in the same week. A two week notice is needed to schedule a vacation credit. One vacation credit is also allotted for families who attend GEARS' Summer Program during the scheduled weeks. A two week notice is needed to schedule a vacation credit. Please contact GEARS Kids Center Office for details.

## **Child's Absence**

Parents are responsible for notifying GEARS Kids Center if your child will be absent on a particular day. Parents may notify the Kids Center office or directly connect with your child's Site Director or teacher by means of the site's cell phone, Director's email or message through the Bright Wheels App. If a child does not come on a scheduled day and the site was not notified of the child's absence, it is our policy that we search for the child and contact the parents. If parents cannot be reached, staff will connect with the emergency contacts listed on the child's emergency contact form. If GEARS is unable to contact parents or other family members, the police will be notified that your child may be missing. Notifying staff prior to the normal scheduled time of your child's arrival will help our programs to run smoothly.

## **Emergency Numbers**

Emergency numbers of the Fire Department, Police Department, Hospital, and Poison Control, plus emergency contact information for each child and staff member, will be kept readily available. The list of emergency telephone numbers and copies of emergency contact information and authorization for emergency transport will be taken along any time the children leave the facility in care of the staff. Emergency phone numbers will be updated at least every 6 months. Please be sure to read our "All Hazards & Emergency Plan" which will give you detailed information regarding different types of emergencies. A copy of this plan is available in the GEARS Kids Center office.

## **First Aid Kits**

First Aid Kits are located in room backpacks, locked, making them inaccessible to children. They will be checked and restocked by site leaders to maintain the supplies. Additionally, there will be a kit containing an emergency dose of medication for any child in the group who may require such medication. An appropriately supplied first aid kit will be taken on trips (walking or vehicular) to and from the facility. A supplemental emergency bag is available as well, if children need to be evacuated from their classroom.

## **Weather and Outside Play**

If the temperature is 25 degrees or higher, with consideration to the wind chill factor, we will take the children outside every day. Please have the children dressed appropriately for the weather conditions, especially when it snows they will need boots, gloves, hats and coats. If the temperature is below 95 degrees, considering the air quality, we will take the children outside every afternoon. Please see and sign the center's sunscreen policy during the Summer program. If it is raining or our play area is too wet, we will not go outside and have indoor play instead. (See reference attachment at the end of the handbook)

## **Children's Backpacks**

In order to keep our centers safe, we will be following DHS recommendations to periodically check child's backpacks. This procedure is practiced to be certain that the backpacks do not contain any dangerous items that could harm other children or your own child. Please do not send medication, sunscreen, or other "Keep out of Reach of Children" items in your child's backpack. These items should be labeled with your child's name and given directly to your child's teacher.

## **Personal Belongings**

Vast arrays of toys and activities are provided for your child to play and interact with. It is not necessary for your child to bring items from home. Personal items such as toys, jewelry, or electronics are suggested to stay at home. Children need to be responsible for their personal belongings. GEARS Kids Center staff are not responsible for lost or broken items.

## **Sign In & Out Procedures**

1. The adult bringing the child to the center must acknowledge that staff on duty sees your child and staff will clock the child into the Bright Wheels App.
2. Parents or an authorized person picking up a child at the end of the day must acknowledge that staff on duty see that the child is leaving with the correct person and will clock the child out of the Bright Wheels App.
3. Releasing to a person not on the Emergency Contact Form requires:
  - A. With a written note: in order to have us release a child to someone not on the list, parents must send a written note that includes the person's name and address. The person must be identified by the child and have identification such as a driver's license. Pick up folks need to be 18 years of age to release the child.

- B. Without a written note: a parent can call into the center to let us know that someone other than the persons on the emergency contact form was picking up their child. Site staff may call you back on a phone that is listed on our emergency sheet to verify it was the parent calling if they do not recognize the voice.
- C. Biological parent who is not listed on the emergency contact form is able to pick up a child unless there is a court order to the contrary. A biological parent cannot be refused permission to see or take the child, but before the child leaves we will need to see photo identification of the parent, and we will need to notify the legal guardian and let them know that the biological parent will be taking the child.

#### 4. Drop off and Pick up points

**Community Center:** please park perpendicular to the building so you do not need to cross the alley. If space is limited, please park in the lot across the alley and carefully walk with your child. Please walk your child into and out of the building using the side door by the playground. Ring the doorbell and a staff member will let you in if you do not have a key fob.

**Bainbridge:** Park on the left side of the building by the cafeteria/loading dock. Walk up the stairs to the double doors. There is a walkie talkie, hit the 'call' button and a staff will let you in.

**Bear Creek:** Enter into the school driveway and turn left towards the playground equipment. Park to your left and walk your child through the blacktop playground to door #6.

**East High:** Enter the school driveway according to the one-way signs. Park in the front of the building in unmarked spots. DO NOT park in 'RESERVED' spots. Walk your child to the front door and push the call button to your left. A staff person will buzz open the first set of doors for you and walk down to open the second set. Please walk your child down the main hallway to the cafeteria and sign them in or out

**NOTE: STAFF MAY ASK FOR ID AT ANY TIME IN ORDER FOR A CHILD TO BE RELEASED. THIS IS FOR YOUR CHILD'S SAFETY.**

#### Movie Policy

Gear Kids Center will periodically show G and PG rated movies as a special event for the kids. If you have an objection to your child viewing PG movies, please contact the office. If for a special reason, we want to show a PG13 movie, parents will be notified ahead of time to give their permission.

#### Electronics

GEARS Kids Center asks that all electronics stay at home.

GEARS will not be responsible for damage to the electronics.

**(Virtual School Days not included)**

What electronics are we concerned about?

- Game systems
- Music equipment such as CD players, MP3 players, & IPODs
- Video systems such as personal DVD players
- Ipads, Laptops or Kindles

## **Health Plan**

Immunizations will be required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Service and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Every January, the childcare Secretary will check with the Public Health Service and the American Academy of Pediatrics for updates of the recommended immunization schedule. The state health department regulations regarding attendance of children who are not immunized due to religious or medical reasons will be followed. Children who are not vaccinated will be excluded during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illnesses as directed by the state health department.

Routine preventive health services will be required according to the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Documentation of age-appropriate assessments should be obtained before, but is required no later than, 4 weeks after the child's initial enrollment. Parents or legal guardians are responsible for keeping their children up-to-date and getting a copy of the results to the program. A visit to the doctor for a special assessment or new documentation is not necessary for admission if documentation of an age appropriate assessment can be given. Questions regarding the child's health will be directed to the family or with the family's permission, to the child's health care provider for explanation and implications for childcare.

Children will not be excluded for failure to be immunized if they have an appointment for immunizations and have their immunizations initiated within one month. Three months after admission will be the maximum period allowed to obtain required immunizations unless the health of others at the facility is at risk. A child whose immunizations or health assessments are not kept up-to-date will be dismissed after three written reminders to the parent or legal guardian over a three-month period.

## **Health and Nutrition Policies**

### **Snacks and Menus (CFOC Standard 4.2.0.5)**

Children are offered two snacks per day, morning and afternoon. Children are served lunch typically around noon. The snacks include protein, grain and fresh fruit. Milk, juice (4 ounces) and water is always offered. Lunch is provided by parents. We ask parents to please provide a protein and a fruit/vegetable in packed lunch. Each child should bring their lunches in a labeled lunch container. The label should have the child's name and date. Lunch will be stored in a refrigerator kept at 45 degrees. (See reference attachment at the end of the handbook)

Food is never used as a reward or punishment.

Children should be offered food at intervals of 2 hours, not exceeding 3 hours apart, unless napping.

Children will have access to clean drinking water.

Portion sizes for children are based on the recommended guidelines by the USDA.

[https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP\\_childmealpattern.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP_childmealpattern.pdf)

Menus are created and shared with parents and classrooms each month. The information is shared through monthly newsletters and menus are posted at each site/classroom.

Snacks brought into GEARS for special occasions must be store bought so labels can be read to be able to read ingredients to avoid any issues with allergens. (ex. Eggs or Nuts)

### **Food Safety**

- o GEARS will avoid using canned food from rusted or dented cans
- o Food should be fresh and have no signs of mold or spoilage, discard out of date items
- o Food will be rotated by date, discard out of date items
- o Dairy items purchased should be Grade A
- o Meat, fish, poultry, milk, and egg products should be refrigerated until used

## Oral Care

- o GEARS Kids Center encourages oral hygiene in our Preschool and Kindergarten programs. Promoting dental hygiene while at school encourages children to practice this healthy habit. Teachers will supervise and aid children who are in need of help to brush teeth, properly rinse and appropriately store toothbrushes in their labeled toothbrush holder. This will occur after a meal once per day.
- o Children will have their own labeled toothbrush and toothbrush holder. (provided by GEARS)
- o Children will not share toothbrushes. Children will have toothbrushes sanitized if contamination would occur.
- o Toothbrushes will be replaced every 3-4 months.

## Outdoor Play (COFC Standard 3.1.3.2)

- o GEARS Kids Center follows the Weather Watch Guidelines for Childcare Centers to determine the weather and safe temperatures for children to play outdoors.

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<https://www.c-uphd.org/documents/wellness/weatherwatch.pdf>

- o Children may play outdoors in temperatures of 25 degrees or above.
- o Children may play outdoors in warm temperatures under 90 degrees, staff will refer to the “Weather Watch” chart to determine the heat index and the temperature.
- o “Air Quality” alerts from our local authorities will be followed for outdoor play
- o Teachers will encourage physical activity with the children
- o Children and staff will wear comfortable and appropriate footwear to play outdoors
- o Children should not have strings on clothing such as hoodies, shirts, scarves hats to play on playground equipment to avoid strangulation.

### **Sun Safety (CFOC Standard 3.6.3.1)**

- o During warm weather seasons, sunscreen should be applied twice a day
- o Wear hats when outside or play in shade while playing outdoors
- o Teachers should watch for heat exhaustion or sunburn of children, if this occurs, children should be taken indoors to a cool environment
- o Sunscreen of SPF-15 or higher to be protected by the sun and UVA protection. Children should also wear protective clothing if playing outdoors for long lengths of time.

### **Insect Repellant**

- o Insect repellant can be applied to children when playing outdoors, however a signed parent consent must be on file at GEARS, insect repellant would be provided by the parent.
- o Children should be checked for ticks if needed, with parent written consent, ticks can be removed from a child using the “Tick Twister” tool if parent’s consent
- o Children should avoid playing near grassy and bush areas or stagnant water

### **Health Education**

Health Education will be a part of the curriculum for staff, families and children. Topic areas for staff and families may include: nutrition, stress management, exercise, child development, safety, first aid, control of infectious disease, and other topics based on community needs and interest. Speakers and materials may be obtained from community hospitals, children’s hospitals, public health departments, drug and alcohol programs, health providers, health agencies and local colleges and universities.

All health education activities and materials for children shall be developmentally appropriate. Health practices will be integrated into daily routines and focused on such topic areas as Child Passenger Safety Week, Heart Month, and Fire Prevention Month. Topic areas for children include: physical health, oral health, social health, emotional health, medication and

substance abuse, safety, first aid, and preventing infectious diseases.

Programs will notify parents and legal guardians if sensitive topic areas are included in the health education plan. Parents or legal guardians must notify the staff of the facility if they do not want their children involved in activities related to a specific topic.

### **Children's Clothing**

Comfortable play clothes are highly recommended. GEARS staff encourage children to be careful when playing outdoors to remain as clean as possible. We do highly recommend that girls wear shorts under their dresses and skirts for outdoor/playground play. We highly recommend that your children wear closed toe shoes and/or sneakers and avoid sandals or flip flops when at GEARS. Playground mulch can cause splinters very quickly on tiny little feet. We also ask to keep expensive jewelry or clothing at home.

During summer water activities, we ask that bikinis stay home. Best practice is to supply an extra set of clothing and sneakers each day in case of spills or emergencies.

### **Homework Time**

Homework times and supervision are provided for children who choose to do homework or are required by parents to complete homework at the Kids Center. After being in school all day, kids will participate in a period of active and unstructured time. The timing of the homework time can be different at each site.

### **Screenings and Assessments**

GEARS Kids Center uses the Desired Results tool to assess K-5<sup>th</sup> grade children in our programs. The assessment will be completed and shared with families in November and April. Parent conferences will be offered.

Preschool children are assessed by the Early Learning Scales curriculum. Preschool assessments will be completed and shared with families in November and April. Parent conferences will be offered. New students that enter into our Preschool program will be screened within 45 days of their start date. GEARS Kids Center uses the "Ages and Stages" developmental screening tool. Results of this assessment helps parents and teachers determine where the child is developmentally so appropriate lessons and activities can be planned to assist the child to grow.

### **Child Observations**

Our teachers are always observing the children in our programs. At times the observations may be recorded on a checklist, rubric, mental note, anecdotal note or by taking photos of a demonstrated skill. Our staff use these observations to



plan developmentally appropriate lessons and activities to assist the children wherever they are in their development.

### **Behavior Management**

GEARS Kids Center focuses on the children's social and emotional development by implementing the PATHS Curriculum. Children are guided by GEARS staff with a lesson each week. Our goal at GEARS is to model for children appropriately and use positive techniques to practice "conflict resolution". Our staff model and teach ways for kindness, forgiveness, patience, helpfulness and trust. If children are struggling in situations that arise while at GEARS; staff will positively walk them through the situation and find acceptable ways to handle their feelings. If undesired behavior occurs consistently in the classroom, the teacher will communicate with the parent by the means of a "Parent Communication Report". The report will be completed by the teacher and shared with Administration for review. We ask for a parent signature and what next steps will be to help the child. If the behaviors continue, a parent conference will be scheduled with Administration to discuss next steps. Next steps include: seeking behavioral evaluation from STARS or referral to IU 13 or creating a simple "Behavior/Incentive Plan" for the child. GEARS retains the position whether or not GEARS is "a good fit" for our program and could lead to termination of the child's contract.

### **Suspension and Termination**

Suspension or termination of a child from our program is always a last resort. There may be times when a child's behavior continues to be concerning, such as physical hitting of staff or other children, breaking school property or the possibility of a child fleeing the center's property. When these concerns arise, we need to ask two important questions:

- 1) is our center the best place for the child?
- 2) How is this affecting the other children in our care?

Kids Center Director has the discretion as to what incidents/behaviors require suspension or termination. Termination due to a child's behavior, will only occur after we have exhausted our program's resources and have taken every available step to work with the child and parents.

Parents, staff, as well as children, are expected to show respect and appropriate behavior to children, other parents, and staff. Abusive language, gestures, and/or actions will not be tolerated, termination of childcare contracts will occur.

### **Bully Prevention**

**Bullying is when someone keeps doing or saying things repeatedly to have power over another person.** Bullying is: calling them names, saying or writing inappropriate words about them, isolating them from activities, ignoring,

threatening, making them feel uncomfortable or scared to name a few. GEARS staff will intervene with anyone who displays this behavior and alert Administration immediately.

## **Community Resources and Referral Numbers**

Staff observe the children's actions and behaviors on a daily basis. If a staff member has a concern about a child they will speak with the GEARS Kids Center Director. The Director will review staff observations and "Parent Communications Reports" and schedule a meeting with the parents regarding this concern. After conferencing with the parents, the Director will share the list of our community resources with them. It is the responsibility of the parent to contact these resources.

### **Community Resources**

**Community Action Program: 299-7301**

**Lancaster Mental Health Case Management Unit: 717-393-0421**

**ELRC: 1-800-937-4546**

**Mental Health Assoc in Lancaster County: 717-397-7461**

**Department of Human Services: 1-800-692-7462**

**Philhaven Behavioral Healthcare: 1-800-932-0359**

**Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222 Community Services Group**

**ETC: 717-394-4436**

**Milestones Community Healthcare: 717-652-5355**

**T.W. Ponessa: 717-490-8801**

### **Behavior and Education Plans**

Because of the diverse set of needs of the children in our program, it is important to gather as much information about the best ways to educate each child. 504 Plans, IEPs and IFSPs are created by service providers working with children with special needs and include this information. The Keystone STARS Performance Standards therefore requires each early learning provider to request copies of IEPs and IFSPs for the children in their care. Staff use these to help the child succeed in their plan and it also helps in creating developmentally appropriate plans for your child.

Privacy laws including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) protect the information found on an IEP/IFSP. Releases of information may also be required to speak to members of a child's treatment team.

### **Transitions & Transfer of Records**

GEARS Kids Center provides transitional activities for the children to assist them for upcoming changes in programming or advancing to another grade level. Transitions help children become familiar with their next step in their education or care. These activities would include "Back to School Night", "Visiting their new site or classroom, or a tour of their next Before and After program.

We will also transfer children's records, at the request of the parent, when the child transitions to another educational setting.

### **Visiting Pets**

Any pets or animals present at GEARS, indoor or outdoors, shall be in good health and known to be friendly to children. A veterinarian's certificate of current rabies immunizations is required for a cat or dog visiting GEARS. A copy of the immunization certificate needs to be on file at GEARS before the visit can occur. GEARS staff will be present when pets are visiting.

### **Community Stakeholders**

The community stakeholders give support and information to GEARS Kids Center. Kids Center families & staff compiled this list through site mail responses.

1. Girl Scouts & Boy Scouts
2. 4-H
3. Community Youth Groups
4. Etown Public Library
5. Communities that Care
6. Big Brothers/Big Sisters
7. Local Churches
8. Etown Aquatics Club
9. Dance Studios
10. Pep Club
11. Elizabethtown School District
12. Elizabethtown College
13. Elizabethtown Boys Club
14. Karate Programs

15. WIC
16. Community Action Program
17. GEARS Recreation
18. Rheems & Conoy AA
19. Geisinger Health

## **Medication Policy**

1. Medication will be administered to children with the correct 'Caring For Our Children' forms filled out.
2. First dose of medication should be given at home to see if the child has any type of reaction.
3. Parents or legal guardians may administer medications to their own child during the childcare day.
4. **All Prescription Medications** must be stored in the original container, and labeled by a pharmacist.
5. **All Over-the counter Medications** must be stored in the original container
6. All facilities need to have on file the written 'Caring For Our Children' plan for the medication
  
7. **All Staff will follow these safety procedures:**
  - A. Check the expiration date on the medication.
  - B. Check the name of the medication
  - C. Check instructions on medication form.
  - D. Match the medication form instructions to the bottles instructions. (If instructions do not match, call the parent and/or doctor. We need physician's permission in writing to change bottle instruction dosages.)
  - E. Give the medication.
  - F. Record the time given, amount given, and staff signature.
  - G. For liquid medication, always pour from the side opposite the label to avoid spills on the label.
8. If a child does not receive medication, that and the reason must be marked (example: child not here, child left before medication time, parent forgot to send medication).
9. Spills, reactions, and refusal to take the medication will be noted on the log.
10. Medications will not be used beyond the date of expiration on the container or beyond any expiration of the physician instructions.
11. **All medications** must be locked up at all times. This includes medication being sent with the child for school. **If medication is in the backpacks, the backpack must be locked.**

**WE CANNOT AND WILL NOT ACCEPT ANY MEDICATION IF IT IS NOT IN THE PROPER CONTAINER by the Pharmacy OR NOT PROPERLY LABELED!**

## **Transportation and Field Trip Procedures**

Employees will not transport children in their personal vehicles, unless it is an extreme emergency. All children must have permission to be transported in an emergency. The staff-child ratio must be maintained during transportation. For school age children, the driver is counted in the ratio.

### **While on Field Trips:**

1. A staff member will always be off the bus first and another off last.
2. Staff will check that they have all their kids when they get off the bus by using face to name tags.
3. Staff will take a headcount and face to name tags often to make sure that all their children are present.
4. Staff will follow lost child procedures if they find that a child is missing.
5. Staff will complete a face to name and count to assure that they have all their kids before they get on the bus.
6. A head count and a face to name will be conducted before the buses pull out to leave.

### **Walking Trips:**

1. Children will learn pedestrian safety by staff role-modeling and verbal instruction and reinforcement. Staff will teach children to cross only at crosswalks with an adult.
2. A designated adult will supervise the children at the front and another at the back of each group.
3. Children may not walk on private property, touch personal property, pick up or break objects.
4. Dogs and cats may not be approached on the walk.
5. Staff must check face to name tags to assure the correct number of children are in your care.

### **Naptime (Preschool Only)**

DHS Regulations require children to have a scheduled rest period during the portion of their day in preschool. All children are required to rest for a portion of this time. For individuals who do not nap, quiet activities will be provided to those children. Each child will have their own assigned and labeled cot. Blankets, sheets and stuffies can be brought from home but these must be taken home and washed weekly.

## **Personal Storage Spaces**

**Preschool** - Each child is given a personal cubby to use during the year. These cubbies are placed at the child's level and they hold lunches, special items from home and extra clothing. Jackets and backpacks can be hung on the hooks inside of the cubbies. The use of the cubbies encourages the children's sense of responsibility and independence.

**Kindergarten** – Each child has a designated area in the Community Center hallway. Each child is provided with a hook to hang jackets and backpacks.

**Before and After School Care/Summer** – Children are provided with small wash baskets to hold their personal belongings, such as jackets, backpacks, lunch bags, etc.

## **Schedules**

Daily schedules vary from site to site. Individual sites will have their Daily Schedules posted. These schedules give a snapshot of the learning activities, snack or meal times, center times, and outside times.

## **Hand Sanitizer**

GEARS Kids Center will use hand sanitizer when soap and water are unavailable. Hand sanitizer cannot be used as a substitute to washing hands, before eating or after toileting. The Community Center site must keep all hand sanitizer out of the reach of children except when being used under supervision.

## **Emergency Care, Prevention and Injury Reporting**

All paperwork regarding injuries will be tracked with an injury tracking report. Any reports requiring the child to seek medical attention (Emergency Room) must be signed by a physician and returned to the Kids Center office. Staff will complete an “Injury Report” and present the report to Administration for a signature. Report will be signed by the staff, Administration and the parent the same day as the injury. A phone call will be made to the parent of the injured child to alert the parent of the injury.

1. First person on scene or staff who saw the injury should assess the scene for safety, assess injuries, and assess child or adult according to First Aid training.
2. Determine type of emergency.

### ***A. Non emergency***

1. Slight cut or scraps
2. Not located at back, neck or head

### Non-Emergency Procedures

- a. Get emergency kit
- b. Put on gloves
- c. Use supplies needed to cover injury

#### **B. Minor Emergency**

Bleeding wound

Allergy attack

Difficulty Breathing (if child does not respond to their inhaler or the child does not have asthma consider a major emergency)

#### Minor emergency Procedures

- a. Get emergency kit
- b. Put on gloves
- c. Apply pressure to wound if bleeding
- d. Follow first aid training
- e. Call parents and alert them of the situation and whether or not we feel the child needs to be picked up.
- f. Call Director

#### **C. Major emergency ( CALL 911 AND CONTACT DIRECTOR IMMEDIATELY)**

1. Major Head, back, or neck injury
2. Significant loss of blood
3. Child is unable to move
4. Unconsciousness
5. Difficulty breathing and does/does not have an inhaler or is unresponsive

### Major emergency

- a. Call 911
- b. Call Parents – make sure they know that 911 was called.
- c. Call Director (or person in charge)
- d. Parents or staff members must accompany the child. If a parent is not present when an ambulance arrives the staff member will accompany the child.
- e. Take emergency contact form and injury report.

#### NOTES:

1. If the Director transports or goes with the child, sign outs will be in a classroom and leaders will relay information to parents.
2. If staff person transports or accompanies child, staff staying back shall combine groups and/or reassign staff to assure adequate coverage. Administration or substitute should be called, if necessary for coverage.

### Child Illness

All known illnesses must be tracked with injury/illness tracking reports.

#### **Admission and permitted attendance:**

Specific conditions that do not require exclusion are:

1. Children who are carriers of an infectious disease in their bowel

- movements or urine that can cause illness, but who have no symptoms of illness themselves.
2. Children with conjunctivitis (pink eye) who have seen a physician and are getting eye drop treatment for 24 hours.
  3. Children with a rash, but no fever or change in behavior.
  4. Children with cytomegalovirus infection, HIV or carriers of hepatitis B.

**If a child is too sick to go to school, they are too sick to come to the GEARS Kids Center.**

### **Cold**

Symptoms include runny, stuffy nose; scratchy throat; coughing; sneezing; watery eyes; fever. · If a child exhibits these symptoms accompanied by behavioral change a parent will be contacted to pick up the child.

If these symptoms are accompanied by vomiting, diarrhea or stomach ache a parent will be contacted to pick up the child.

A child can be readmitted to the program when the child no longer appears ill & the symptoms are no longer present.

### **Fever**

If a child has a fever of **100.0 degrees or more** they will be excluded from the program and may return after they are fever free for 24 hours with fever reducing medication.

### **Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)**

Symptoms include watery eyes; mucus in eyes; red/pink eyes, itchy & painful eyes.

- If a child exhibits these symptoms and has not been seen by a physician the child cannot attend the Kids Center until the appropriate precautions are taken.
- A child can be readmitted to the program when the child feels well and after treatment has been started. Child may return to care when receiving the eye drops for 24 hours.

### **Sore Throat**

Symptoms include scratchy; painful throat; difficulty swallowing; white patches on throat/tonsils; spots on throat/tonsils; red throat; enlarged tonsils; fever; stomachache; drooling.

- If a child exhibits these symptoms and has a change in behavior, looks or acts very ill; is unable to swallow anything; and/or has excessive drooling, a parent will be contacted to pick up the child. If strep throat is suspected, a parent will be called to pick up the child.



- Once a physician has seen a child with these extreme symptoms, they may return to the Program. If **strep throat** is documented a child cannot return to the program before 24 hours of antibiotics have been taken and fever free.

### **Cold Sores**

- Symptoms may include fever; painful small, fluid-filled blisters on mouth, gums or on lips · A child will be excluded from the program when such a sore has oozing open lesions that are unable to be covered.
- A child may be readmitted to the program when the lesions are no longer oozing.

### **Stomachache, Abdominal Pain**

- If a child exhibits severe pain that causes the child to double up and be uncomfortable; refuses to eat or drink; has vomiting or diarrhea a parent will be contacted to pick up the child. · A child can be readmitted to the program within 24 hours if symptoms have subsided.

### **Vomiting**

- If a child is vomiting a parent will be called to pick up the child. If a child is vomiting at home more than twice-in 24 hours, they are to be excluded from the program.
- A child may be readmitted to the program 24 hours after the vomiting resolves.

### **Splinters**

Splinters are often difficult to remove and that is why our staff is not permitted to take them out. To avoid infection, we will make sure parents are aware of the splinter and the child should not return to GEARS until the splinter has been removed.

### **Chicken Pox**

Symptoms include fever, runny nose, cough rash (pink bumps, blisters and scabs) · If a child exhibits these symptoms a parent will be contacted to pick up the child immediately. · A child may be readmitted to the program

6 days after the onset of the rash or as soon as all the lesions are crusted and dry and a doctor's note is submitted for child's clearance to return to school.

### **Lice**

Symptoms include lice on the scalp or hair shaft, nits (eggs) deposited on the hair shaft near the scalp especially on the top of the head, behind ears, and on the nape of the neck.

- A child must be excluded from the program as soon as it is suspected.
- A child can be readmitted to the program 24 hours after treatment has begun and has no more nits or lice on them.
- Staff will check head upon the arrival back to care to be certain the lice has been removed.

### **Poison Ivy**

Symptoms include itchy, red rash with blisters on exposed surfaces.

- If a child with these symptoms has oozing lesions from the affected area, a parent will be contacted to pick up the child.
- If a child is infected, they may be readmitted to the program 24 hours after treatment has begun and have the infected area covered.

### **Ringworm**

Symptoms include reddish scaling circular patches with raised edges and central clearing or light or dark patches involving the face and upper trunk or cracking, peeling of skin between toes; scalp redness, scaling of scalp with patches of hair loss.

- If a child exhibits such an infection a parent will be contacted to pick up the child.
- A child may return to the program 24 hours after treatment has begun.

\*Children must have a bandage covering the infected area of skin while at GEARS.

### **Scabies**

Symptoms include extremely itchy red bumps or blisters in a thread line, commonly between fingers/toes but can appear anywhere.

- A child will be excluded as soon as the infection is suspected.
- A child may be readmitted to the program 24 hours after treatment has

begun.

**Overall if a child tells a staff member they are not feeling well the staff will keep an eye on them. If we feel that the child is not being as productive as they can be due to illness we will contact a parent to pick up the child. The best place for a child to be when they are ill is at home resting.**

### **Menstruation Policy**

1. No male staff will assist with this situation.
2. Guide the female through the event.
3. Assist the female in the restroom.
4. Guide female with the usage of sanitary products.
5. Call the parents to alert them of the situation.

**GEARS staff do not explain menstruation to the child, we allow the parents to explain the process of this developmental stage.**

### **GEARS Kids Center's Policy**

#### **Shaken Baby Syndrome, Abusive Head Trauma and Forbidden Actions**

##### **Statement**

GEARS Kids Center believes preventing, recognizing and responding, and reporting of shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma is important to keep children safe and protect their healthy development. GEARS Kids Center thrives on providing quality child care and educating our families.

Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma is a form of physical child abuse that occurs when an infant or small child is shaken violently to where trauma is brought to the head. This occurs from shaking, jerking or tossing children into cribs, chairs, strollers or car seats. Also, pushing children into walls, doors or furniture. These are forbidden actions against children.

Recognizing the symptoms of this trauma includes: irritability, high pitched cries, difficulty staying alert or awake, loss of consciousness, difficulty breathing and lifting the head. Other symptoms also include seizures, lack of appetite, vomiting, bruising, not feeding well, and decreased muscle tone.

According to the CDC, "Abusive head trauma (AHT), which includes shaken baby syndrome, is a preventable and severe form of physical child abuse that results in an injury to the brain of a child. AHT often happens when a parent or caregiver becomes angry or frustrated because of a child's crying. It is caused by violent shaking and/or with blunt impact. The resulting injury can cause bleeding around the brain or on the inside back layer of the eyes." This trauma

could cause vision problems, development delays, physical disabilities and hearing loss.

If a staff member suspects abuse, call 911 immediately, call the parents and if the child has stopped breathing begin pediatric CPR immediately by a trained staff. After attaining medical help, the incident must be reported to the child line immediately by reporting to <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/KeepKidsSafe/Pages/Report-Abuse.aspx> or call Child Line at 1-800-932-0313. Your state license representative should also be alerted of the incident.

### **Prevention**

#### Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma and Coping Skills

- Determine what the child needs (hungry, needs a diaper change, needs cuddles)
- Rock the child by holding closely and calmly
- Stand up and hold the child and move gently
- Sing or talk softly with the child
- Gently rub or stroke back or head
- Offer a pacifier
- Offer a toy
- Ride in a stroller
- Play soft and calming music
- If staff become frustrated allow staff to take a break from the classroom

### **Forbidden Actions of Child Care Staff**

GEARS Kids Center Staff are forbidden to act or demonstrate the following list:

- Corporal punishment: no hitting, spanking shaking, slapping, twisting, pulling, squeezing or biting
- May not force excessive physical exercise or strenuous postures
- May not forcibly feed a child, force foreign objects, spices, soap into a child's mouth

- May not expose a child to extreme temperatures
- May not isolate in a room, hallway, closet, or darkened area
- May not bind a child, restrict movement or taping of the mouth
- May not withhold food or beverage
- May not use methods for toilet training that would demean, punish or humiliate a child
- May not use any form of emotional abuse, rejections, terrorizing, ignoring, or isolating a child
- May not abuse or do any maltreatment of a child
- May not use abusive, profane, sarcastic language or verbal abuse
- May not use derogatory remarks about a child or the child's family
- May not use any form of public, private or threats of physical punishment
- May not place an infant or child in a crib for time-out or disciplinary reasons

### **Resources**

**The American Academy of Pediatrics**

[www.healthychildren.com/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/Abusive-Head-Trauma-Shaken-Baby-Syndrome.aspx](http://www.healthychildren.com/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/Abusive-Head-Trauma-Shaken-Baby-Syndrome.aspx)

**The National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome**

<http://dontshake.org/family-resources>

**Caring for Our Children, Standard 3.4.4.3 Preventing and Identifying Shaken Baby Syndrome/Abusive Head Trauma**

<http://cfoc.nrckids.org/StandardView.cfm?StdNum=3.4.4.3&>

**Early Developmental & Well-Being, Zero to Three**

[www.zerortothree.org/early-development](http://www.zerortothree.org/early-development)

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/Abusive-Head-Trauma.html>

### **Application of the Policy**

The policy applied to all children who are enrolled at a GEARS Kids Center, our staff and our volunteers.

Staff will read and sign the policy after reviewed on their date of hire and again on a yearly basis. Parents will be notified of this policy through the GEARS Kids

Center Family Handbook.

**GEARS Kids Center**  
**70 S Poplar Street**  
**Elizabethtown, PA 17022**  
**717-367-0119**

**Department of Human Services**

**1-800-222-2217**

**Childcare Regulations**

<https://www.dhs.pa.gov/providers/Child-Care/Pages/Child-Care-Regulations.aspx>

**GEARS Family Policies & Procedure Handbook**  
**Updated on June 2022**

**Reference Attachments:**

1. Child Weather Watch Document
2. USDA Child Meal Pattern and Serving Sizes

