



FCCA Forest Green Children's Center

Child Care

Parent Handbook

2020-2021

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**Family & Community Christian Association
Pre-K Counts / Child Care Administration Office**

378 Chestnut Street ▪ Meadville PA 16335 ▪ 814-337-4279 ▪ www.fccafamily.com

WELCOME

Welcome to the Family and Community Christian Association (FCCA) Child Care program. We look forward to caring for your child and developing a warm partnership with you.

PROGRAM AND STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

Our child care centers are licensed by the Department of **Human Services**. Our license must be renewed annually. You can contact the Regional Office by calling toll free - 800-222-2149.

Our staff meet all of the qualifications to work in a licensed child care facility including age, training, experience and all required background clearances. We have chosen staff with personal characteristics suitable for working with young children.



FCCA PKC has earned a higher-quality rating and is a STAR 4 facility with Keystone STARS!

Why is this great news?

Keystone STARS helps us meet **quality standards** to keep your children safe, happy and learning so that they can succeed in school and life!

What does a Keystone STARS rating mean?

Pennsylvania's Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) sets the quality standards for early childhood programs to join Keystone STARS and earn a STAR 1 to a STAR 4 rating. In order to earn our Keystone STARS 4 rating, we had to meet quality standards that:

- ◆ Provide a clean, safe, healthy and supportive place of children.
- ◆ Require all education staff to be trained in child development.
- ◆ Encourage children's active learning through play and activities.
- ◆ Involve families as partners in their children's learning.
- ◆ Require Teachers to have a Bachelor's Degree in Education with Early Childhood certification.
- ◆ Encourage collaboration with staff, community, school districts and families.

Learn more about Keystone STARS at:
www.pakeys.org/keystone-stars/

We will release your child only to the people you have listed on the Emergency Contact form. We will ask those people for identification unless we know who they are.

OUR DAILY PROGRAM

We use the guidelines established by the National Association for the Education of the Young Child (NAEYC) and PA Early Learning Standards to design our daily activities so that they are developmentally appropriate. Some of the hallmarks of our approach are:

- ◆ High/Scope Curriculum/Conscious Discipline/Social-Emotional Curriculum
- ◆ Language-rich classroom environment
- ◆ Emphasis on decision-making skills with children
- ◆ Activities and materials that support child interests and needs
- ◆ A close working relationship with Early Intervention and the Intermediate Unit to provide for the special needs child
- ◆ Age-appropriate developmental screenings
- ◆ A variety of hands-on, active learning experiences
- ◆ Assessment of child progress that is shared with families periodically; such as Teaching Strategies GOLD

TRANSITION

We will provide a variety of activities and experiences to help children through transitions that occur while in our care. These transitions may include transition from home to center, from classroom to classroom and from our center to public school. We will work individually with each family to provide guidance and support as they help to ease the various transitions in their child's life.

FEES AND PAYMENT POLICIES

Current rate sheets are available upon request.

Payment is due by check, money order or in cash on the first day that a child attends each week. Checks are payable to FCCA Child Care. A deposit of one (1) week of fees will be collected before enrollment begins.

Payments may be made weekly, biweekly or monthly, but they must be made in advance. A receipt will be issued for every payment. There will be a \$30 service charge for any returned check for insufficient funds.

If you do not return to pick up your child on schedule, we will charge you a late fee that is detailed on the enrollment agreement. Also, if you withdraw your child without notifying us, we will not return your deposit.

We reserve the right to terminate service due to delinquent fee payment.

Fees listed on the enrollment agreement are in effect until a new agreement has been signed.

Our Approach to Behavior Management

The FCCA program follows the OCDEL initiative of Inclusion/Reduction of Suspension/Expulsion throughout or program.

We believe that behavior management should be a learning process with the overall objective helping the children grow toward greater self-control while maintaining a safe environment for all. The FCCA program maintains a pro-active, strength based approach to behavior management. The teachers will use the Conscious Discipline Social Emotional Curriculum as well some of the following techniques.

- ◆ **Positive Reinforcement:** Teachers will acknowledge and reinforce the positive behaviors they see the child demonstrate. They will avoid giving attention to behaviors they do not want the child to engage in.
- ◆ **Physical Proximity:** Teachers will position themselves in close proximity to children who are having a difficult time managing their behaviors. Often times the mere presence of the teacher will provide enough support for children that the unwanted behaviors will decrease.
- ◆ **Verbal and Visual Prompts:** Teachers will give children verbal prompts and visual reminders when necessary. They remind children verbal of the classroom rules and will ask children questions to help them solve the problem they are experiencing.
- ◆ **Redirection:** When a child is unable to control his or her behavior in a situation even with the interventions before, the teachers may redirect the child to another activity in the classroom. The child will be allowed to return to the activity when they are ready.
- ◆ **Take a break:** Teachers may suggest that a child take a break from the activity that is creating a problem. They will take the child to a quiet area for a short period of time to take some deep breaths and calm their bodies before rejoining the group.
- ◆ **Social Development Plan:** When children are exhibiting behavior difficulties that are outside the realm of typical behaviors for their age group, parents will be asked to meet with teachers to develop a plan that will focus on helping their child develop the skills needed to control his or her behavior. This can happen in several different ways.
 - A referral may be made to the Intermediate Unit to distinguish if there is a developmental need
 - A referral may be made to a Mental Health agency for a mental health evaluation.

The teacher and parents will come up with strategies and goals to achieve what is best for their family and child in the classroom. The teachers will work with community agencies and parents to help make a successful classroom experience for their child.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Excused Absences

Excused absences are defined as those absences when a student is prevented from attending for mental, physical or other urgent reasons. This can further be defined as illness, family emergency, death of a family member, medical or dental appointments, fire, natural disaster, or other extenuating circumstances deemed as excused by the program.

Unexcused Absences

Any absences that are not included in the above definition.

Attendance Requirements

- When a child is absent from school, the parent must send in a written excuse within three (3) days of the absence.
- Families will be contacted when children are absent three (3) consecutive days to learn the nature of the absence and offer support, as appropriate.
- When children have more than five (5) consecutive unexcused absences, the provider and the family together must discuss the reasons for the absence and determine ways to support the child's attendance at school.

The policy will be:

- reviewed with each family at Orientation and as deemed necessary by each provider.
- reviewed with the parent anytime a child has an unexcused absence
- included in each provider Parent Handbook.

Please notify us if your child will be absent. Fees shown on the enrollment agreement will be charged regardless of whether or not the child attends.

Parents needing to change contracted hours or days of care must make arrangements with the Center Director. If you are a subsidy client, you must also notify Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC) of Meadville.

MEDICATION POLICY

Medications will be given in the center only when necessary. Please try to schedule doses so they will be given when the child is home whenever possible.

If medication must be given during child care hours, a Medication Log must be filled out by you (the parent).

Medication must come in its original container showing the name of the medication, the child's name, the proper dosage and timing of doses, and the name of the physician. It may be necessary for you to obtain two containers from the pharmacy, one for home and one for the center. If the medication is in liquid form, parents must provide a dropper or spoon.



ILLNESS

Please have a plan for what you will do if your child is sick. Do not send him or her to the child care center if she is vomiting, has a fever, has diarrhea, is listless and irritable or has any contagious skin sores. If your child comes to school and is unable to participate in daily routine activities, a staff member will ask you to pick your child up and take her home. Your child must be free of fever for 72 hours and diarrhea and vomiting free for 24 hours before returning.

If your child comes ill while he or she is in our care, we will call you at work to come and pick him or her up.

A doctor's certificate will be required to return to the center if your child has any of the following conditions:

Strep Throat	Measles
Pinworms	Mumps
Whooping Cough	Impetigo
Hepatitis A	Rubella
Bacterial Pink Eye	Scabies
Chicken Pox	Shigella
Stitches	MRSA during an outbreak
COVID-19	Influenza A and B

HEAD LICE

If we find lice or nits in your child's hair during health checks, we will ask you to come pick him or her up. If we are unable to reach you or someone on your Emergency Contact form, your child will remain at the center engaged in activities that limit head-to-head contact. Once your child has been treated with a lice shampoo and the nits have been removed, your child may return to the center to be checked by the teacher. Your child will need retreated within 5 - 7 days to kill any maturing nits.

ITEMS FROM HOME

Parents are asked to supply their child with several items from home. Please be sure to label them so they will not get lost or mixed up with other children's belongings.

1. A change of clothing in case of an accident.
2. Jackets, sweaters, coats, hats, mittens and boots as needed for the day's weather. We will take toddlers and preschoolers outside for a while almost every day.
3. For toddlers and preschoolers: a sheet and blanket for quiet times. You will be asked to take them home weekly for laundering.
4. For toddlers still in diapers: diapers and wipes to last the week.

We have a large selection of toys at the center for children to play with, so we ask you not to let your child bring any of his own from home unless his or her teacher has given permission to do so.

REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

State law requires that child care staff report all cases of suspected abuse or neglect. If your child comes to the center and tells us that someone hurt him or her, we must report it. If we don't report it, we are breaking the law. If a report is made, please try not to get angry at us or your child. We are trying to make sure your child is safe from harm. If a report is made, a worker from Children and Youth Services may visit to check things out. If the report has no basis, it will be unfounded.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Child care families and staff have a right to expect that personal information about them will be treated with respect and confidentiality. Sometimes when you spend time at the center, you might observe or hear about problems that children or parents are having. Please **do not** discuss these things in other places or on social media including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, etc. This is gossiping and there is no place in child care for gossiping. If something you see or hear at the center worries or disturbs you, please feel free to talk to a staff person at your center or the Administration Office.

Remember—we want to respect everyone's privacy.

TOBACCO-FREE ENVIRONMENT

Because smoking is a health hazard, it is prohibited inside the center. Please consult Forest Green Children's Center's guidelines on smoking.

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The FCCA will not permit discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, disability, ancestry, national origin, age or gender in any aspect of its operation, including enrollment, employment and procurement.

FCCA PRE-K COUNTS/CHILD CARE
Outdoor Play Policy

Children shall play outdoors daily when weather and air quality permit; however, some precautions must be taken due to air quality, cold and sun exposure.

Children must go outside when:

- the forecast temperature/wind chill are above 25 degrees and
- the forecast temperature/heat index is less than 90 degrees
- there is no significant precipitation falling and
- there is no current air quality alert

IN COLD WEATHER:

1. Parents should send their child dressed in layers.
2. Teachers will check children's extremities every 15 minutes for normal color and warmth.
3. All teaching staff will dress appropriately for the weather and participate in children's play.

IN WARM WEATHER:

Parents will provide sunscreen for their child.

Teachers will ensure that children play in the shade whenever possible.

Children's clothing should be limited to one layer made of absorbent material, dry, light-colored, and lightweight to facilitate the evaporation of sweat.

Teacher will ensure that before prolonged activity, children are well hydrated and drinking water should be available during the activity.

Teachers will apply sunscreen to skin that will be exposed the sun about 20 minutes before going outside.

Teachers should reapply sunscreen if children are exposed to sun for more than 2 hours, or if children return to outdoor play after 2 hours.

After applying sunscreen, teachers will document the time it was applied so parents and other staff members will be aware that sunscreen was applied and will know when to reapply, if necessary.

PARENT NOTIFICATION:

1. Teachers will explain the Outdoor Play Policy and leave a copy with the parent.
2. Parents will sign the bottom of the Outdoor Play Policy saying that they have received and understand the policy. The signed copy will also serve as a permission slip for center staff to apply sunscreen and will be retained in child's center file.

Child's Name

Center

Parent Signature

Date

EXCEPTIONS TO ABOVE:

The exception to above policy will be for children who have documentation from their doctor stating why they cannot go outside, the duration of the exception and any other information including alternate parameters.

Please sign this copy and return to your child's Teacher.

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CLASSROOM COPY to be signed and returned.

SAFETY DURING DROP OFF AND PICK UP

If you are driving and a space is available, please pull into a designated parking space in the parking lot. Otherwise, please pull up beside the building next to the curb along Forest Green Drive. Do not park in the middle of the parking lot. This only makes the pick up and drop off more difficult for others. Please at no time leave your car running or other children in it.

A brief description of how drop off and pick up will work will be explained to each parent at orientation.

Staff will also make a visual inspection of the child for signs of any illness.

Parents will ring the bell to alert a staff member that you will be dropping off or picking up your child. If a different person will be picking your child up, please call ahead of time and let staff know who and when.



ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE POLICIES

We expect your child to arrive no earlier than 1/2 hour before work and you must pick up your child within 1/2 hour after work unless special arrangements have been made because of the location of your job. If your work schedule varies from week to week, you **must** provide us with a copy of your work schedule the Friday before you work.

If you will be bringing your child in late, you must contact the center staff to tell them this. If you arrive more than 45 minutes after your schedule time, we cannot guarantee care for that day.

If an emergency prevents you from arriving on time to pick up your child, please call immediately. You may be excused from the late fee once or twice for true emergencies such as an auto accident or a work place disaster. The late fee will be due that day.

Please notify us immediately if you have a change in your work schedule.

OUR SERVICE HOURS

We are open Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. We offer year-round services to children from one (1) year old until they start kindergarten. Children residing in Forest Green Estates, Pre-K Counts children and the siblings of Pre-K Counts children are given preference for enrollment.

There are fifteen (15) weekdays during the year when we will be closed so that employees may enjoy the holidays and attend in-service workshops. Please watch your calendars for the exact dates. **Closed days are always posted one (1) week in advance.** Fees shown on the Enrollment Agreement must be paid for these fifteen (15) days by **all** Forest Green clients.

Holidays:

New Year's Day
Human Rights Day
Good Friday
Memorial Day
Independence Day
Labor Day
Thanksgiving
Friday after Thanksgiving

Christmas Eve
Christmas Day
Day after Christmas
New Year's Eve

Staff in-service days:

All Staff Meeting and Training (in the fall)
Staff Appreciation Day (in the spring)



See our calendar for exact closing dates. Our center will be closed between Christmas and New Year's.

MEALS

Meals are provided through CACFP. Menus will be given to you monthly. Diet restrictions can be followed with a doctor's documentation.