

# 2019-2020 Mary Shaw Branton Therapeutic Preschool, Therapy and ABA Services Family Handbook



*Services at Ability KC are provided on a non-discriminatory basis.*



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# INTRODUCTION

## Ability KC's Mission

Our mission is to build brighter futures for children and adults with disabilities by providing comprehensive educational, vocational and therapeutic services.

## Therapeutic Preschool Philosophy Statement

Ability KC believes that learning begins at birth and that all children deserve to be taught with respect by highly skilled educators and therapists. Children should be considered as a whole; developing in the physical, social, communicative, emotional and cognitive domains. We believe that the needs of the children's families are equal to the needs of the children. All families must be treated with respect and feel valued. Their need for information for purposes of advocacy and educational/therapeutic assistance for their children is of primary importance and contributes to the wellbeing of the children and the family. The most powerful services are provided when a collaborative relationship is established among the team inclusive of the family.

We believe that children learn trust and respect for others, positive self-image, and initial independence during early childhood through experiences addressing their individual needs. The school environment is designed for learning; physically and emotionally safe; physically accessible; and, services are offered on a non-discriminatory basis. The strengths of the children, as well as the cultural and linguistic differences of the children and families are considered in programming.

Early intervention that is based on developmental levels, as well as chronological age, promotes maximal potential in the children and family.

**Therapy Services** inclusive of individualized physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy and assistive technology services are offered to children in the preschool, as prescribed by a physician, toward improved physical, language and cognitive functioning, directed toward the child's increased participation and engagement socially, educationally and physically.

**Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) services** are offered to children in the preschool and on an outpatient basis. ABA treatment has been shown to be effective with individuals on the autism spectrum in building and enhancing skills and decreasing functionally disruptive behaviors.

## Our History

Ability KC is built on a strong founding legacy that continues to inspire the work done each day for children, adults and families with disabilities.

In 1947, Mary Shaw Branton, Jeanette Luhnnow and Jane Dick founded the therapeutic preschool for children with special needs. At the same time Vivian Shepherd worked to provide medical rehabilitation and employment services for veterans returning home from World War II. Seventy years and thousands of celebrations of success later those founding organizations came together as one organization, Ability KC.

Today, Ability KC is uniquely positioned to provide a continuum of care for all of life's milestones. No other organization in the region is able to join families for their child's first steps, the first time receiving driver's training when they turn 16, or land their first job.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Administration

The Ability KC Board of Directors has governance responsibilities for the organization including services provided at 3101 Main/Children's Center Campus. Operational leadership includes the Director of Pediatrics and Educational Services, Director of Developmental and Behavioral Health, including ABA Services, CFO, and CEO/Executive Director.

### Regulatory Bodies

- State of Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services/Child Care Licensing
- National Association for the Education of Young Children Accreditation- NAEYC
- Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities-CARF
- U.S Department of Health and Human Services- Administration of Children and Families-Head Start and Early Head Start
- Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

### Non Discrimination Statement

Ability KC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations. We are committed to providing an inclusive

and welcoming environment for all members of our staff, students, patients, families, volunteers, subcontractors and vendor.

### Important Phone Numbers

Ability KC Children's Center Campus **phone number:** 816-756-0780

Ability KC Children's Center Campus **fax number:** 816-756-1667

Children's Center Campus Nurse: 816-753-5758, ext. 2204

<b>Classroom Name</b>	<b>Classroom Number</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>
"The Starlight	408	816-389-2715
"The Fountains"	412	816-389-2716
"The Birdies"	414	816-389-2717
"KC Jazz"	417	816-389-2718
"Sealife"	420	816-389-2719
ABA	415	Ext. 2114

<b>Title</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Email</b>
Program Manager	Nicole Bolte	816-389-2702	<a href="mailto:nicole.bolte@abilitykc.org">nicole.bolte@abilitykc.org</a>
Therapy Manager	Rachael Rama	816-389-2714	<a href="mailto:rachael.rama@abilitykc.org">rachael.rama@abilitykc.org</a>
ABA Manager	Jennifer Suter	816-756-0780 ext. 2139	<a href="mailto:jennifer.suter@abilitykc.org">jennifer.suter@abilitykc.org</a>
Social Worker	Joyce Harper	816-389-2704	<a href="mailto:joyce.harper@abilitykc.org">joyce.harper@abilitykc.org</a>
Agency Coordinator	Helen Smith	816-389-2701	<a href="mailto:helen.smith@abilitykc.org">helen.smith@abilitykc.org</a>
Education Coordinator	Kimberly Brooks	816-389-2713	<a href="mailto:kimberly.brooks@abilitykc.org">kimberly.brooks@abilitykc.org</a>
Case Manager	Kerri Perks	816-389-2703	<a href="mailto:kerri.perks@abilitykc.org">kerri.perks@abilitykc.org</a>

## Hours of Operation

The Ability KC Therapeutic Preschool is open from 7:30 AM -5:00 PM Monday through Friday\*. We will be closed one day each month for Professional Development Day.

Please refer to the school calendar for all dates the preschool is closed. The calendar is located on the back of this handbook.

<b>Regular School Hours</b>	8:00 AM – 3:00 PM
<b>Before School Program</b>	7:30 AM – 8:00 AM
<b>After School Program</b>	3:00 PM – 5:00 PM

*\* Before & After School program enrollment will be determined in advance with the Social Worker. Additional fees may apply.*

## Ability KC Staff

The teachers, assistant teachers, and therapists at Ability KC have the training and certification required for their position. All staff participates in ongoing professional development to stay current in their knowledge and skills. All program staff members are trained in CPR and First Aid. Each staff member is screened by the Missouri Family Care and Safety Registry and fingerprinted for any criminal history, child abuse/neglect history, and other complaints tracked by the registry.

## ATTENDANCE, ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

### ATTENDANCE POLICY

**It is our recommendation that students attend school 5 days a week as part of our Therapeutic Philosophy.**

1. Attendance is recorded daily in Child Plus.
2. If a child is unexpectedly absent and the parent has not contacted Ability KC, a representative of the center will attempt to make contact with the parent that same day.
3. **IMPORTANT- STUDENTS NEED TO BE AT SCHOOL NO LATER THAN 8:30AM. IF YOUR CHILD HAS AN APPOINTMENT IN THE MORNING AND THEY WILL ARRIVE LATE, PLEASE NOTIFY YOUR TEACHING STAFF AND LET THEM KNOW. STUDENTS THAT**

**ARRIVE AFTER 8:30 WITHOUT PRIOR NOTIFICATION THEY WILL BE LATE, WILL NOT BE PERMITTED INTO THE CLASSROOM THAT DAY. THERAPIES AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES ARE DURING THE MORNINGS. CHILDREN ARRIVING AFTER 8:30AM MISS THESE OPPORTUNITIES.**

**YOUR CHILD'S THERAPY SCHEDULE IS SET TO ACCOMMODATE THE CLASSROOM SCHEDULE. IF YOUR CHILD IS TARDY, LEAVES EARLY OR IS ABSENT, WE CANNOT GUARANTEE A MAKE-UP THERAPY SESSION. MISSING MULTIPLE THERAPY SESSIONS WILL IMPEDE THE PROGRESS FOR YOUR CHILD. CHILDREN RECEIVING ABA SERVICES AS AN OUTPATIENT ARRIVING MORE THAN 15 MINUTES LATE FOR THEIR APPOINTMENT TIME ARE MARKED AS TARDY.**

4. Breakfast is served at 8:00 AM each day. An alternative breakfast will be offered if your child arrives after 8:20 AM. You will be asked to take your child to the bus room to eat breakfast and then return your child to the classroom for daily activities if you arrive after 8:20 AM.
5. When a child is absent for two or more consecutive days, the family will be contacted by the social worker; that contact will be documented in Child Plus.
6. Within 60 days of the start of the program year, each child's attendance will be analyzed. For families whose attendance is at risk of falling below 85% appropriate strategies will be developed by the program.
7. When the average daily attendance for the month falls below 85% Ability KC will:
  - A. Complete an analysis of absenteeism by reviewing the number of absences, reasons for absences and the number of consecutive absences.
  - B. Use the summary explanation describing why attendance is below 85% and create strategies to increase attendance at the monthly preschool meeting.
  - C. Notify the family in writing at the end of each month if they fall below 85%.
  - D. Create an attendance plan with the family to help them identify barriers of attendance and problem solve strategies with the social worker. This plan will be documented in Child Plus and in the child's file.
  - E. Families who consistently fall below 85% attendance and have not followed the attendance plan will be dismissed from the program.
  - F. The program will send a certified letter to families who have been unable to be reached. There will be a request to connect with the Ability KC program manager and a possible dismissal plan will be discussed at this time.

## Attendance Probation

Inconsistent attendance, chronic tardiness, and/or chronic early pick-up over a two week time period may result in attendance probation and/ or potential dismissal from the program. If attendance falls below the 85% requirement for two consecutive weeks your child will be placed on attendance probation requiring no more than three absences within a month's time. Any child on attendance probation, who is absent three times during the 30 day probation period, will be withdrawn on the third absence.

## Drop-Off

**Upon arrival, a full signature by a parent or authorized adult acting on your behalf in the classroom is required on the sign in and out clip board.** Please record the actual time you arrive. This is a Missouri Childcare Licensing requirement.

Separation when dropping your child off can be difficult. We have found that it is best to give children a hug and kiss, say "good-bye", and reassure your child that you will return at the end of the day to pick them up. Good-byes that are drawn out can be even harder for the child and make the transition process more difficult. Please do not attempt to "sneak out" of the room. Although it might seem to help, this can upset children when they realize that you are missing.

- Greet the teaching staff
- Assist child in hanging up belongings
- Help them to find their photo and move it from home to school
- Help them wash their hands

Please use drop-off time to communicate information to your child's teacher to let them know what will make your child's day more successful. Do not hesitate to communicate with a staff member verbally or in writing.

## Pick Up

The routine varies by classroom. Please discuss with your child's teacher whether your child should be picked up in the room or if your child will be brought to the bus room, located to the right of the front doors. You will have an opportunity to visit with your child's teacher and/or therapists at this time. If you will be picking your child up early from school, please let the classroom teachers know prior to pick-up. After picking your child up **you must sign him or her out on the clip board. Your child will only be released to persons identified by the parent in writing on the authorized to pick up form. People**



**picking up for the first time will be asked for a photo id and a copy of the id will be kept on file.**

### Late Pick-Up

If children are not picked up by the designated time, the following procedure will occur:

- A form will be completed for each late pick up and will be signed by the staff member and the parent indicating the time of pick up and late fee if applicable.
- After 3 late pickups, the social worker will meet with the family and discuss future action.
- If this pattern of late pick-ups continues, your child may be subject to dismissal.

In the event your child is not picked up on time, staff will attempt to reach you and others authorized persons on the *Consent to Release* form. If we are unable to contact anyone for pick-up by 5:45 PM, we will call the Missouri Children's Division.

### LATE PICK UP FEES

Families will be charged a late fee of \$15 for the first 10 minutes. After the first 10 minutes a fee of \$1 per minute will be charged until you pick up your child. You will be billed for the appropriate amount depending on time of pick up.

### Severe Weather / Utility closings

School closings will be listed on the Ability KC Facebook page. A text, call, and email will be sent to parents who have a working phone number and email address on file.

A decision will be made prior to 6:00 AM with closing information, when possible.

If Ability KC Therapeutic Preschool closes school once the school day is in session, we ask that you pick up your child within one hour of being notified to allow our staff to get home safely.

### Parent/Family Conduct

In order to support a peaceful and safe school environment, Ability KC and the school has zero tolerance for the following behaviors from parents, families or others authorized to pick up children:

- Physical intimidation, such as threatening to do bodily harm to a member of the staff, Board members, visitors, and/or fellow parents/children.
- Physical aggression, including pushing, hitting or throwing objects at staff, visitors, and/or fellow parents/children.
- Displaying behavior that is offensive, bullying and/or using derogatory comments regarding the school or any of the students, parents or staff, whether verbally, in writing and/or on social media.
- Using loud/offensive language, using profanity or displaying temper in front of children.
- Violating the building security or theft.
- Violating the confidentiality policy.
- Violating the no firearm policy,
- Violating the no smoking policies.

Should parents display any of the above behavior(s), the school will contact the appropriate authorities and if necessary, prevent the offending parent from being on school grounds. Any acts, as listed above, toward staff, visitors, and/or fellow parents/children on Ability KC property may be grounds for immediate suspension of your child from the therapeutic preschool and services.

All parents, family members and/or caregivers will be asked to sign off on the parent conduct policy at the beginning of each school year.

## COMMUNICATION AND INVOLVEMENT OF FAMILIES

### Parent-Staff Communication

It is vital to your child's success that we have open and honest communication that is timely between all of the members of your child's team and your family.

Please contact your child's teachers or therapists if you have information to share with them or if you have any questions or concerns.

#### **Please provide up to date contact information.**

- **We must have a current phone number and address for parents/guardians.**
- **Please make sure to let us know immediately when you have change in phone number, email address, employment, and insurance or address change.**

- **Each child must have at least two (2) working telephone numbers on file in case of an emergency. (Please inform the emergency contact person (s) that they are listed as an emergency contact for your child.)**

**Parents are welcome to visit their child's class at any time.** Please sign-in at the Ability KC administrative desk before using an observation room.

**Parent Teacher Conferences** are scheduled four times throughout the year to set goals and have opportunity to discuss your child's progress.

**Home Visits** are scheduled two times throughout the year. Building relationships that connect school and home add to your child's sense of belonging and trust in teachers. Parents and teachers will discuss goals for the child and family as well as provide opportunity to share other information included on the Family Cultural Profile Form.

**Monthly Parent Newsletters** are sent home at the beginning of each month.

**Surveys** will be sent to families throughout the school year to measure family satisfaction.

### **Classroom Involvement/Confidentiality**

Your direct involvement in your child's classroom will increase the benefit they derive from the program. We have an open door policy to encourage families to participate in the daily activities whenever possible.

- We do require that parents maintain a standard of confidentiality toward other families and children enrolled in the program.
- Respect individual differences and work to provide a safe and supportive environment.

### **Observation Rooms**

The observation rooms are designed to offer you an opportunity to observe your child in the classroom environment. Please check in with the office when you would like to use one of our rooms. Please review the rules (lights off, no eating, etc) that are posted in each of the observation rooms. Due to confidentiality and HIPAA privacy issues, please exit the observation room if your child leaves the classroom. All information that you hear and see while observing is private and confidential. Video and photos are prohibited.

## Parent/Family Advisory Group

All families are welcome to participate in our parent lead advisory group that meets monthly. The purpose is to provide time for families to support one another and gain information on quality improvement. Head Start and Early Head Start families will have voting rights. Contact the social worker if you would like to be a part of the executive leadership of the advisory group.

Parent meetings are held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month at 8 AM.

## Classroom Information

### Staff - Child Ratios /Supervision

State licensing and NAEYC accreditation required ratios for supervision are maintained or exceeded at all times.

Teachers will stay within ratio at all times including during indoor and outdoor play and nap time. If additional assistance is needed, teaching staff will contact another classroom for assistance or call the Preschool Manager, Social Worker or other administrative staff in order to provide appropriate supervision. All teaching staff will supervise children by positioning themselves to see as many children as possible at all times.

### School Clothing

Your child should be dressed in loose fitting, simple, **washable clothing**. The children often play on the floor and do artwork that may be messy.

- Please consider the weather when dressing your child. During cooler weather your child should be dressed in layers to provide for adequate warmth.
- Please keep an extra change of clothing in your child's cubby for mishaps. *(note if your child is sent home in clothing provided the school please launder and return as soon as possible.)*
- Send your child in tennis shoes with either Velcro® or tie closures. Please save party shoes, flip flops and sandals for home. Children cannot safely and fully participate in planned activities and work on their motor skills in shoes that do not support and remain on their feet.
- We also ask that you please mark your child's clothing with his/her name to reduce the risk of loss.

- Our corporate guidelines do not allow for non-employed therapists to provide professional services of any kind to any students/patients while on the premises of Ability KC.

### What to Bring

- Please provide a blanket and crib sheet for your child during nap.
- Please send a back pack with your child. Information will be sent home in their back pack.
- Extra set of clothes can be stored in your child's cubbie.

### Outdoor Play

Your child will play outside most days unless the weather does not permit due to rain or snow or extremely low or high temperatures.

- Children will not be allowed to play outdoors if a High Ozone Alert has been issued for our city.
- Your child will need to wear appropriate clothing for the weather (i.e. coats, hat, mittens, sunhats etc.).

Our campus is fortunate to have a sun shade covered playground from May – October, therefore sunscreen will only be applied during times that we are offsite or in situations when exposure to the sun will be longer than 15 minutes. Sunscreen with UVA and UVB protection of SPF 15 or higher will be applied with parent permission when children are exposed to the sun. When public health authorities recommend the use of insect repellents due to high risk of insect-borne disease, only repellents that contain DEET will be used with parent permission and applied no more than once per day.

## Celebrations and Special Days

### Birthdays

A child's birthday is very special! We encourage parents to bring nonfood treats to share with your child's classroom friends to uphold the school's nutrition standards and accreditation requirements. Your child's teachers will make sure your child's birthday is acknowledged on his or her special day. This policy is to assure that your child consistently receives good nutritional meals and snacks while he or she is attending school.

Examples of nonfood items might be stickers, books, Mylar balloons, **Only MYLAR balloons may be brought to the Children Center Campus.** We are latex free building. Bubbles, etc.

If food (cupcakes, etc) is brought to school for your child's birthday please make sure that it is purchased from a store and in the original container. We are unable to serve home baked goods or items containing nuts (as it is easier to chew food without nuts).

Please contact your child's teacher to determine the number of children in the classroom. Families are welcome to participate in the child's birthday celebration in the classroom. *If you do not wish to have your child's birthday celebrated in the classroom, please notify the classroom teachers.*

### Other Celebrations

At Ability KC we do not celebrate religious holidays. The children are exposed to children's literature that covers cultures and traditions from around the world. Throughout the year all children enrolled at the Children's Center Campus (CCC) participate together in special integrated activities. They might include: Trick or Treating, picnics, parades, or a visit from Santa Claus.

**If you do not wish for your child to participate in these activities please contact your child's teacher.**

Families are encouraged to share any special customs or celebrations with their child's classroom. Please schedule this with your child's teacher.

### Ability KC Nap Policy

Families are asked to provide a sheet and blanket that will be used on the child's cot during nap time. Bedding will be sent home to be laundered on Fridays. Please return bedding with your child on Mondays.

One – three year old children will nap for approximately two hours immediately following lunch. Teaching staff will monitor the children by sight and sound during nap. When a toddler wakes she/he will be engaged in a quiet activity.

Three – five year old children will nap/rest immediately following lunch, for at least 30 minutes and for no longer than 60 minutes when not sleeping. Teaching staff will regularly check on napping children to ensure their safety. When a child wakes she/he will be engaged in a quiet activity.

Outpatient children enrolled in ABA therapy are not offered a nap. If an outpatient child falls asleep during their scheduled therapy hours, the parents/guardians will be called to pick up early. If the outpatient child typically naps in their day, their therapy hours will be scheduled around their nap time.

## Field Trips

We believe that field trips enhance classroom learning and provide children a wider base of experiences. Before a classroom goes on a field trip, families will receive a permission slip with the following details: location, date, times, and transportation information. If you do not wish for your child to attend the field trip you should arrange for alternative care for the day. Children may be transported on field trips by a local school bus company or by walking short distances.

Children who arrive after a class has left for a field trip either have to return home or may remain on site in one of the common areas under parent supervision until the class returns.

## Disenrollment

A family may be asked to leave the program if:

- The Preschool Manager and team members have determined the child is a danger to him/herself, to other children enrolled in the program, or to Ability KC staff.
- The family has failed to pay the agreed upon fees or are two weeks late in payment.
- A student violates attendance probation agreement.
- The child is repeatedly dropped off or picked up late without prior notification.
- The child's medical or health records are not kept current per Missouri Childcare Licensing regulations.
- Fraudulent acts are committed that may put the facility at legal risk.
- Parent violates parent conduct policy outlined in the handbook.

## CURRICULUM

At Ability KC an all-inclusive play based curriculum is implemented throughout the school day. **The Creative Curriculum** is a research-based curriculum designed for children's success; it is based on 38 objectives for development and learning. These

objectives are fully aligned with the **Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework** as well as **Missouri Early Learning Standards**.

Creative Curriculum addresses 10 areas of development and learning; social, emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, mathematics, science and technology, social studies, arts and English language acquisition. It enables children to develop confidence, creativity and lifelong critical thinking skills through the use of exploration and discovery as a way of learning.

**Project Approach** provides children the opportunity to do in-depth studies of real world topics. We will increase children's ability to think critically and provide them opportunity to explore their individual questions.

**Individualized Instruction via Play Based Interventions** - Our teachers, therapists and parents work together to achieve best outcomes for our children through play based transdisciplinary interventions. When developing lesson plans and setting goals for individual children, each child's strengths are considered. Strength-based learning enables children to be involved, take charge of their learning environment and continuously build on previously learned skills. It is the collaboration between all team members working towards the child's common goals for development that creates the best goal achievement.

**Developmental Screenings** - Ability KC is committed to ensuring that all areas of children's growth, development are assessed on an on-going basis. All children who do not have a current IEP or IFSP will have a developmental screening completed. We will use the **Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)** to help identify areas of developmental need that may need referral for extra support. The areas of content assessed are: Communication, Gross Motor, Fine Motor, Problem solving Skill, Personal-Social.

**Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)** for social emotional measurement. The three social emotional areas assessed are the following: Initiative, Attachment/Relationships, and Self-Regulation.

Parents will complete a Parent – DECA during enrollment. DECA and Post-DECA's are administered throughout the school year by the classroom team. The results are compared and used to develop necessary interventions for each child. Results of your child's assessment are shared with all families during home visits and parent/teacher conferences.



Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) is designed for teachers to observe, document, and reflect on the learning development, and progress of children in early learning programs. Information from the DRDP will be shared at Parent Conferences.

## Social Emotional Supports

Conscious Discipline® - is a comprehensive classroom management program and a social-emotional curriculum. It is based on current brain research, child development information and developmentally appropriate practices.

Conscious Discipline is a way of organizing schools and classrooms around the concept of a School Family. Each member of the family—both adult and child—learns the skills needed to successfully manage life tasks such as learning, forming relationships, communicating effectively, being sensitive to others' needs and getting along with others.

### DISCIPLINE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Only positive, developmental, age-appropriate methods of discipline shall be used. Positive guidance and redirection is used to support children's growing self-control.
- There will be no physical punishment such as, spanking, slapping, or shaking. No discipline that is hurtful to children will be used.
- No discipline that is associated with food, rest, toileting accidents etc. will be used.
- Children will not be placed in seclusion.
- Children will not scare or harm others, harm themselves, or destroy property.
- When a child does not follow directions, the teaching staff will help the child through the steps needed to follow a direction.
- Minor behavior aimed at gaining adult attention is ignored.
- When a child continues to display inappropriate or disruptive behavior, the child will be encouraged to go to the "safe place". Time in the "safe place" is spent helping the child to self-regulate, identify feelings or emotions and calm down using the Conscious Discipline strategies.
- Ability KC exists to work with children with disabilities. We will address situations when children may exhibit behaviors or tantrums. When a child injures another child or staff and cannot de-escalate to return to classroom activities, the family may be called to pick up the child. This step will only be

utilized in extreme cases of behavior but will be implemented to ensure the classroom environment is safe.

Parents will be notified of behavior that requires multiple redirections or when we notice changes in behavior.

## FEES AND FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

### Tuition

Tuition is to be paid monthly and is due on the first for the upcoming month's attendance. Payment arrangements may be made if necessary. A locked box is available by the office for the deposit of payments. We accept checks, Visa and MasterCard. Electronic withdrawal is available. **Discharge will occur after payments become two weeks late.** If a family chooses to take a vacation or short leave (no more than four weeks) with the intent to return, full payment will continue to be required in order to ensure your child's placement in their designated classroom.

### Scholarships

Scholarships are available on a limited basis for families of children who meet the eligibility guidelines and may be applied toward tuition. A financial assistance application and documentation of financial need must be submitted to the Chief Financial Officer for consideration.

### Access to Records

Parent(s) and guardian(s) have the right to review or receive copies of their child's health information. Parent(s) and guardian(s) have the right to withhold all or part of any information contained in their child's records. You may review your child's records at any time during regular program hours. A staff member will be present with you to explain any information in your child's records at Ability KC.

All requests for copies of records will be handled by our Medical Records Department. An authorization signed by you or your child's authorized representative must be submitted prior to releasing records. A 72 hour notice may be required to fulfill your request and a reasonable fee may apply.

## THERAPY SERVICES

Therapy may be covered by a school district or other third party payer such as health insurance. If a payer is not identified or your health insurance has denied coverage for therapy, you will be responsible for paying the hourly rates for therapy.

It is very important that we have correct and current health insurance information. You are responsible for providing a current copy (front and back) of your health insurance card. **If your health insurance coverage changes, you must make sure Ability KC is informed and receives a copy of the new card.**

**You will be responsible for payment of services provided if we do not have current insurance information.**

**You are also responsible for any co-pays or co-insurance or deductible required by your insurance plan.**

Co-pay payments and private payment for services are to be made at the front desk as services are provided. We accept cash, check, MasterCard and Visa.

Occasionally we find some children do not make the progress that parents and/or staff desire due to a variety of factors. If this occurs, the staff will discuss this with you to determine if other options are more appropriate for your child's needs. We are unable to provide a service that is not beneficial for your child in which case your child's therapy will be discontinued.

### Applied Behavior Analytic (ABA) Therapy

ABA services are available for children in the preschool diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder ABA services are available to children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, ages 1-6, on an outpatient basis. Children in the program will receive a comprehensive behavior assessment by a Missouri licensed Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA), who will design an individualized treatment plan. The process includes obtaining a thorough history of the child's development, home setting, family support system, and medical history. It is important to provide updated reports to the referring physician and/or primary care physician. The parent will be asked to sign a release of information allowing sharing progress reports with the child's medical doctor(s) as well as identified school where the child is receiving educational services. The parent is asked to sign a release of information allowing Ability KC to obtain medical records from the child's treatment physicians. Upon completion of the initial assessment and

development of the treatment plan, treatment is provided by Registered Behavior Technicians (RBT) under the supervision of the child's lead BCBA. Reassessment is completed and submitted to the insurance company every 6 months. Per the child's treatment plan, treatment may include co-treatment with your child's medical therapist(s).

### Parent Training

A key component of the ABA treatment includes parent training. Since ABA services are intended to be time limited services, the parent's ability to intervene with challenging behaviors and support generalization of skill acquisition at home is vital. Each family will have goals included in the child's treatment plan (this is an insurance requirement as well) that will be worked on during this parent training time. Each child's supervising BCBA will work with parents to choose these goals, ensuring they are practical and functional to the family's lives. Training will be provided on the basics of behavior, how to intervene with challenging behaviors and naturalistic teaching methodologies in addition to specific programs the child has. At least once a month, the clinical staff will update parents on their child's progress and answer any questions they have. This training is required by both Ability KC and most insurance companies. These trainings will be scheduled in coordination with parents to ensure they can attend. Parents are required to attend at least 80% of all scheduled training sessions throughout the 6 month authorization period. If they do not, it could impact insurance funding of their child's ABA treatment. If the parent/guardian cancels or fails to attend three (3) consecutive scheduled parent meetings, the BCBA will contact the parent and discuss the impact on the child's progress and eligibility for continued services including possible discharge from ABA services.

### Transitions

A key goal of ABA therapy is to better equip a child for learning in their educational environment. Children typically enter ABA services upon diagnosis on the autism spectrum. Oftentimes, the initial treatment plan includes a higher number of treatment hours in the ABA treatment room and in the therapeutic classroom for those enrolled in the Ability KC therapeutic preschool. In the initial assessment, the BCBA will create a transition plan detailing the skills the child and their caregivers need to acquire to fade out of ABA services. As the child begins to age out of the ABA program at Ability KC, the BCBA will create a treatment plan directed toward transitioning from ABA services to community based and educational services. This transition plan is developed by the BCBA overseeing the child's treatment and will be discussed with the parents/guardians

to gain their input. This transition plan may include but is not limited to: a decrease in hours, a goal to obtain additional services, increased parent involvement, and/or a discharge date. A transition plan of scheduled therapy hours will be developed and provided to the parent/guardian 1 to 12 months prior to the discharge date and include implementation dates to help the parent in planning.

Parents/guardians are expected to work with the team to develop and implement the transition plan for optimal benefit. Concerns about the transition plan should be discussed with the BCBA. All children are discharged from the ABA preschool services no later than upon beginning kindergarten/age 6.

The ABA staff arrange the environment to best manage disruptive behaviors. However, if a child engages in behaviors that endanger the safety of other children or ABA staff, the BCBA will set a team meeting with the parents/guardian to develop a plan that may include:

- \* Pausing treatment for consultation with the child's physician or another medical provider followed by a future meeting with the parent/guardian and BCBA as to appropriateness for return to ABA services.

- \*implementing a plan of altered and possibly reduced therapy hours for a set number of weeks, followed by a future parent meeting to discuss progress in decreasing the disruptive behaviors.

- \*discharge from ABA services with recommendations for additional services in the community.

Ability KC reserves the right to alter therapy services or discharge from ABA services if a child's behaviors pose a significant risk of harm to self or others in the ABA treatment setting.

### **ABA Program Calendar**

For children in the therapeutic preschool, ABA services may be offered during days and times when the preschool is not in session. Ability KC will inform the parent/guardian of treatment dates and times during the scheduled therapeutic preschool breaks and professional development days.

### **ABA Health Insurance Providers**

We are providers of the following plans for ABA Services. Your specific plan benefits will be verified prior to enrollment.

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AETNA	Blue Cross Blue Shield	Cigna
Humana	Tricare	Missouri Health Net

We will seek to negotiate individual agreements with other health insurance plans for ABA services as appropriate.

**In Network Health Insurance Providers for Other Therapies**

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Aetna	Blue Cross Blue Shield	Cigna
Coventry	Freedom Network	Humana
Missouri Health Net (Medicaid)	Missouri Care/Well Care	Tricare

**Out Of Network Health Insurance Providers**

We are not "in network" but accept the following plans for therapy services, if the provider offers out of network benefits.

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United Health Care	Sunflower State Health Plan	Optum Behavioral Health
United Health Care Community Plan (KS/MO)	Optum Behavioral Health	

Discounts may be available to families. Determination of discounts available can usually be provided in three business days. To explore discount options for your family please submit the required documentation. The Social Worker can provide you with the forms.

This information changes periodically so please check with the billing department for current information. You can reach the billing department at **816-751-7793**.

**HEALTH AND WELLNESS POLICIES**

The Children's Center Campus is fortunate to contract with Children's Mercy Hospital to have RNs on-site each school day.

**Children's Center Campus Nurse: 816.753.5758 ext-2204**

**EMAIL: [cccnurse@ccc-kc.org](mailto:cccnurse@ccc-kc.org)**

**Nurse Visit** If your child visits the school nurse while at school a written note from the nurse will be sent home with the student. The nurse will document what was treated or examined and determine if the student may remain at school safely. We will notify the parent or guardian when your child develops new signs and symptoms of illness.

When a child becomes ill a determination will be made regarding if the child should be sent home. The school nurse, preschool manager and teacher will consider the following:

- Prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities
- Results in a need for care that is greater than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children.
- Poses a risk of spread for harmful diseases to others
- Causes an unexplained fever and behavior change or other signs and symptoms (e.g. sore throat, rash, vomiting, and diarrhea)

If your child develops an illness that requires exclusion we ask that you remove the child from our care as soon as possible or within one hour of notification.

If your child has any of the above problems while they are at school, you will be contacted and asked to pick up your child. Please help us to reduce the spread of illnesses and keep all of our children healthy.

### Returning to School

- Your child may return to the campus after the symptoms are gone for **at least 24 hours without medication** or with a physician's written permission to return.
- If an antibiotic was prescribed, the antibiotic will need to be given for 24 hours before returning to the school.

### Contagious Diseases

If your child becomes ill with chicken pox or other communicable diseases (i.e. pink eye, strep throat, etc.), please notify the school so parents of exposed children can be alerted. You will receive the *Contagious Notice Form* if your child has been exposed to a contagious disease.

## Illness

Please **DO NOT** send your child to school if he/she has any of the following:

- Diarrhea
- Severe coughing – if your child gets red or blue in the face or makes high-pitched croup or whooping sounds after coughing
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Open wounds
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Pinkeye-tears, redness of eyelid lining, irritation, followed by swelling or pus
- Unusual spots or rashes
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing
- Impetigo, an infected skin rash
- **Fever over 100 degrees Fahrenheit**
- Headache and stiff neck
- Vomiting (more than once)
- Complaints of sore throat and upset stomach
- Severe itching of the body or scalp

## Immunizations

Children enrolled at Ability KC are required by state law to have up-to-date immunizations. A medical exemption is allowed if there is written certification from a licensed health care provider that the immunization would seriously endanger the child's health. When a child has not had immunizations due to parental objection or religious reasons a form must also be completed. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to provide current immunization records to Ability KC. Please check with your health care provider or the school nurse if you have questions about your child's immunizations. If your child is diagnosed with a vaccine preventable disease to which children in the program are susceptible your child will be excluded from the program.

## Physical Exam Requirements

All enrolled children must meet Federal requirements of the Office of Head Start. You must:

- Obtain a physical examination by a licensed physician for your child within 30 days of enrollment or provide a copy of a physical that has been completed within the past year. Physicals will be updated every 12 months.



- If the physical is not obtained within 30 days of enrollment, the child will not be permitted to attend the center or socializations. Once the physical is obtained, the child may resume attending. If the physical is not obtained, the child will be withdrawn and placed on the reconsider list.
- Health Screenings: Health problems treated early may prevent long term problems later in life. Let your child's doctor know the screenings listed here are required by Head Start and must be completed. If health screenings are not done by the doctor, with your consent, we will complete missing screenings. Those screenings are blood pressure, hearing, iron screening, lead, age appropriate screenings, measurements for height and weight, and vision

If you have any questions about how screenings are done, please call the social worker. You will receive written results of screenings conducted. If there are any concerns noted during these screenings, you will be notified. We are available to help you locate providers for further services.

### Medication Administration Policy

All medication is stored in a locked cabinet or refrigerated in the nurse's office.

- Written orders from a physician licensed to prescribe (the physician may use his/her office letterhead) **and** written permission from the parent/guardian must be provided for any prescription medication to be administered at school. The information should include the name of the student and the medication. It should also include dosage information, route of administration, the time the medication is to be taken and potential side effects.
- If your child takes medication, the doctor's orders and medication must be provided on the first day of school. If the doctor's order and medication is not brought to school, your child will be sent home until we have both. This includes any prescription medication, EpiPen, etc.
- All prescription medication must have the label attached by the pharmacist/physician and should include on the container: the child's name, the name of the medication, dosage, side effects, and the physician's name.
- All non-prescription/over the counter medication must be sent in the original container marked with your child's name and accompanied by a physician's authorization to administer. A dosage higher than the manufacturer's recommendation will not be given, unless the physician provides alternative documented instructions. If a question arises, the school nurse has the right to

refuse administration of the medication until further clarification is received and documented from the physician.

- All medications should be taken to the nurse by the parent.
- Any change in the time or dosage of the medication must be accompanied by a written request from the physician.
- If medication is no longer needed or the child is **discharged** and **the medication** is left at school, the nurse will dispose of the medication at the Children's Mercy Hospital Pharmacy.

You must sign a "Medication Permission Form" giving the Children's Center Campus nurse permission to give medication to your child during the school day. These forms may be obtained from the school nurse or classroom staff. The signed form **must** be sent to the school nurse prior to the administration of the medication. This form must be renewed annually.

The school nurse will administer all medication. Please note the first dose of any medication will not be administered at school.

### Oral Health Policy

Children have the opportunity to brush their teeth at school each day. Due to many of our children needing oral motor stimulation to increase awareness of their tongue and structures for feeding and speech, brushing may occur before or after breakfast, and before or after lunch.

### Nutrition Policy

Ability KC participates in the Federal Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The food is prepared on-site in the Children's Center Campus (CCC) kitchen. The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services administers and monitors the CCC nutrition program. All menus comply with the standards of the CACFP program. Menus are included in the monthly Parent Newsletter.

Children enrolled in a full day will receive breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack. Skim milk is served to all children ages two and older.

In limited circumstances, children may bring a lunch from home. This would be due to either medical reasons or special diets. We must have documentation on file for this to occur for the external agencies that review and oversee the CCC nutrition program. Please discuss this with the social worker and your child's teacher.

***It is important that you notify the social worker and your child's teachers about any food allergies your child may have***

### Food Supplements/Modifications

- If your child requires supplements, special milk (i.e. soy, rice) thicket or has other dietary restrictions, you must provide these food items to school. Head Start and Early Head Start families are exempt from this requirement.
- Please label and date all food items with your child's name.
- Parents should discuss the child's special feeding needs with the Social Worker, classroom teaching team, and therapists at enrollment or when a change in your child's diet occurs.
- If your child requires a tube feeding, you will need to meet with the CCC nurse to sign paperwork and request an order for a specialized procedure from your primary care physician.
- If your child is on a special diet or has certain food restrictions you must have your physician complete a food substitution form. This form is available from the social worker.
- The CCC does not serve pork or any peanut products.
- Vegetarian menu items are available.

## SAFETY

### Child Abuse Reporting

Our staff is required to report to children's protective services any unusual marks or injuries on a child, and statements made by or behavior of a child that may indicate abuse or neglect. Please understand that this is not an option for our staff. It is our obligation as mandated reporters (per Missouri Law Code). All staff complete mandatory reporter training upon hire.

If you are impaired to safely transport your child to and from school please send another responsible adult to get your child to and from school.

### Minor Injuries

Ability KC will inform you of any injuries or accidents that occur to your child at school.

**Accidents/Injuries** are documented on an *Incident Report* form that is completed by the staff members that witnessed the incident. The report is then signed by the

Preschool Manager and a copy will be sent home. The original copy is placed in the child's file.

## Medical/Dental Emergencies

In the event of a serious illness, medical problem, dental emergency, or accident, Ability KC staff will contact you immediately.

- A release for medical treatment must be signed during enrollment so that the proper medical care can be provided if you or your child's emergency contacts cannot be located in the event of an emergency.
- Under all emergency circumstances first aid will be administered.
- If necessary, an ambulance or other emergency services will be called. The *Medical Release Form* you sign at the time of enrollment gives the school permission to have your child treated by the closest medical facility. When children are at the school, that facility will be Children's Mercy Hospital. If the students are on a field trip they will be taken to the closest medical facility.
- In the event that we are unable to locate you, we will contact the person listed as your emergency contact on the *Enrollment Form*.

## Emergency Procedures

An evacuation plan is posted in all classrooms, gyms, and therapy rooms. Fire drills occur monthly and the times of the drills vary so that all children and staff have the opportunity to practice evacuation procedures. Tornado drills are held every other month. Disaster drills including those related to: bomb threat, earthquake, medical emergency and violent intruder are held periodically throughout the year.

## Building Security

The Children's Center Campus (CCC) maintains a secure environment for all children. All staff members have a swipe card for access into the building. All other individuals must be checked into the building by our security guard. Visitors **MUST** sign in at the front desk and **MUST** wear a visitor sticker for the duration of their stay. The security guard will call for someone to come to the front to escort visitors to their appropriate destination. **All Ability KC children and families must enter the building through the South Door by the flagpole.**

## Firearms

Firearms are prohibited on the Children's Center Campus property. Signs are posted at both entrances of the building enforcing this policy.

## Smoking

Smoking is prohibited on the entire Children's Center Campus, **including the parking lot.**

## Car Seats

All children must be properly restrained in car seats as required by Missouri and Kansas laws. If Ability KC staff becomes aware of children arriving or departing from the school without proper safety restraints, we are required to notify the proper authorities. If you need assistance in obtaining a car seat or booster seat, please contact the Social Worker for available resources.

## Parking

We share the building with other agencies who serve children. For this reason, our parking lot can be very busy. It is important for the safety of your child that you hold his/her hand at all times while in the parking lot. It is also important that you drive slowly through the parking lot to ensure the safety of the children served in our building. We do have handicap parking for appropriately marked vehicles. Please respect the marked spaces and the families needing the spots, by using the appropriate parking spots when picking up and dropping off your child. **Please do not park along the front of the building** to bring your child into the building. It is reserved for school buses and emergency response vehicles. Overflow parking available on the street (31<sup>st</sup> Terrace) and a second lot is available directly east of the CCC parking lot (at the top of the hill by the sensory garden).

## Consent to Release a Child

Children will only be released to an adult listed on the *Consent to Release* form, unless you give **written authorization (note, fax or email)** for another individual to pick up your child prior to the departure. If the person you are requesting to have pick-up is not on the *Consent to Release* form completed at the time of enrollment, you will need to complete a new form providing the new individual's name and information with the Social Worker. Any unfamiliar individual picking up a child will be asked to provide a

photo ID for the protection of your child. Ability KC will not release a child to someone who you have not given written authorization to.

**Ability KC cannot refuse to release a child to his/her parent or legal guardian who shares legal custody of the child. If the individual claims to have sole custody of their child/children, Ability KC staff will request reliable evidence of their custody claim along with a photo ID.**

If you have sole custody of your child and you do not authorize the other parent to pick up your child/children, you must provide the school with a copy of the court order awarding sole custody to you or denying custody to the other parent. Without such an order, Ability KC **cannot** prevent the other parent from picking up the child.

If an individual determined to remove a child from Ability KC threatens the safety of the staff or children, the staff will attempt to detain the individual and will call building security. If necessary, local law enforcement will be contacted. If you are experiencing custody difficulties, please keep Ability KC staff aware of the current status of the custody dispute. In the event that a restraining order is issued against anyone, preventing them from seeing or contacting your child, you must provide a copy of the order to Ability KC Social Worker as well as a picture of the individual that cannot have contact with the child. This information will be kept in your child's main file.

## OTHER INFORMATION

### Therapeutic Pool

The Children's Center Campus has a therapeutic pool. The pool is a very specialized, state of the art design which is different from a public or private swimming pool. It is used only as a support or method for providing therapy and therapeutic instruction. Your child's therapist will determine if your child will participate in water therapy.

The water in the CCC pool and air around the pool are kept at a comfortable 90-92 degrees Fahrenheit. The warmer temperature creates a more relaxing and soothing environment. The pool has a state of the art filtration system, which is regularly tested. Our therapists are trained in pediatric water therapy techniques. It is CCC policy to always have direct supervision of at least one adult per child in the pool area.

## Therapeutic Equipment

If your child wears braces, eyeglass, hearing aids or splints, please send them to school every day. Send any mobility devices that your child uses. Label the devices with your child's name. If you have any questions, please check with your child's therapists or teaching team.

## Training of Student Teachers and Therapists

Ability KC believes strongly in furthering the education and experiences of future professionals. Each year we take student teachers and therapists and provide 6 week to 3 month practicum assignments. These students are supervised and provide quality services under the direction of their assigned teacher or therapist.

## Research

Occasionally the opportunity for participation in a research study occurs at Ability KC. Although we desire to participate in evidence based research projects, no research will be conducted with your child without your informed written consent.

## Head Start / Early Head Start

Ability KC has been a partner site for Mid-America Head Start since 2010. Head Start and Early Head Start are federal programs that provide many benefits for children and families along with certain expectations. Below is a summary of agency policies that apply specifically to those children enrolled in our Head Start/Early Head Start Program. If you have questions, please discuss them with our Social Worker or the Program Director.

- No fees are charged to the family for classroom services and supplies during school program.
- **Children MUST maintain 85% daily attendance.**
- Families participate in Home Visits twice a year and Parent Teacher Conferences twice a year.
- Families provide current medical and dental information for the child and keep updated as needed.
- Families take child for medical, dental, vision and hearing screenings, lead and hemoglobin testing as recommended by best practices.
- Families serve in leadership roles within the Parent Advisory Committee or represent Ability KC at other HS/EHS meetings.

- Families complete a Needs Assessment and Family Partnership Agreement with the Social Worker. Then meet quarterly to review progress and updates.
- Families may participate in interviewing hiring candidates

## FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

### Family Bill of Rights

In support of the mission, and values that guide Ability KC, and to nurture and protect the rights of all children and families served, the agency has adopted and shares this Family Bill of Rights.

In accord with the agency's guiding principles, all families receiving educational and therapeutic services have the right:

- To be treated with dignity and respect
- To receive services without regard to race or ethnicity, gender, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability
- To know in advance the fees for services, regardless of the method of payment
- To know the name and professional qualifications of the person or persons providing services
- To receive an explanation of evaluation results; to be informed of potential for improvement; and to participate in making decisions concerning goals and outcome development and methods of service delivery
- To accept or reject services to the extent permitted by law
- To receive services in a timely and competent manner, which includes referral to other appropriate professionals when necessary
- To receive services in a safe treatment environment without the use of seclusion, restraint or intrusive procedures; any treatment that could be perceived as intrusive or restrictive to the child must have specific parental consent
- To receive adequate notice of and reasons for discontinuation of services, an explanation of these reasons, and referral to other providers if requested
- To personal privacy and confidentiality of information to the extent permitted by law
- To review information contained in their records, to receive explanation of record entries upon request, to place information in their records, and to request correction of inaccurate records, to the extent permitted by law
- To provide informed consent or refusal or expression of choice regarding:
  - service delivery



- release of information
- concurrent services
- the composition of the service delivery team
- involvement in teaching, research, or promotional activities
- To access or receive referral to legal entities for appropriate representation
- To access self-help and advocacy support services
- To adherence to research guidelines and ethics when persons served are involved
- To investigation and resolution of alleged infringement of rights; and
- To freedom from abuse, financial or other exploitation, retaliation, humiliation, or neglect when receiving services or exercising their rights.

These rights belong to the families needing services at Ability KC. For sound legal or medical reasons, a family member, guardian or legal representative may exercise these rights on the person's behalf.

### Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act

Ability KC is in full compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Upon enrollment/admission, you will receive a copy of our Notice of Privacy Practices. You may also access a copy on our website at [www.abilitykc.org](http://www.abilitykc.org). Out of respect for our students and patients' privacy, staff will conduct conversations about your services in private settings.

### Family/Caregiver Grievance Procedures

Ability KC believes in fostering an environment of open and honest communication between and among staff members and families. If parent(s)/ guardian(s) have concerns, we suggest that you try to address them face-to-face and when you have adequate time to discuss the issue. In the event that a translator is required for clear communication Ability KC will provide the service. In some cases this may mean scheduling an appointment with a staff member, preschool manager or therapy manager. Please follow this procedure if you have a problem or concern:

#### **STEP 1: PROBLEM WITH A POLICY, PROCEDURE, OR WITH A STAFF MEMBER**

Discuss staff concerns directly with the staff member(s) who are involved. Please do not discuss the matter with other teachers, staff members, or other parents. This undermines our policy of open and honest communication. If you have a problem with a policy or procedure, please speak directly with the preschool or therapy manager.

## **STEP 2: PROBLEM REMAINS UNRESOLVED**

If the matter remains unresolved, please bring your concern to the preschool manager or therapy manager. At this time you may be asked to schedule a meeting with the appropriate manager and the staff member(s) who are involved. If your concern relates to the preschool or therapy manager, please bring that to the COO.

## **STEP 3: WRITTEN GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

Ability KC has grievance procedures to help solve concerns expressed by families and/or caretakers. If you have a concern, you may request a form from one of the managers. Forms are also available in the front office. Please follow the instructions on the **Family Complaint Form** and return the form to the appropriate manager.

**Ability KC maintains a policy that parents and children will not face any retaliation or barriers to service as a result of a complaint filed.**

**My Child's Classroom**

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**Classroom Phone Number**

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**Teacher** **email**

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**Teacher** **email**

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**Teacher** **email**

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**OT Name** **email**

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**PT** **email**

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**Speech** **email**

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**ABA/BCBA** **email**

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