



# FAMILY HANDBOOK

ABILITY<sup>KC</sup>

2022-2023

## Mary Shaw Branton Therapeutic Preschool Outpatient Therapy ABA Services



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

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# INTRODUCTION

## **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. Over 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. Annually, Ability KC joins more than 3000 individuals with disabilities and their families to support them in reaching their greatest potential.

## **Ability KC's Mission**

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

## **Therapeutic Preschool Philosophy Statement**

We believe that learning begins at birth and that all children deserve to be taught with respect by expert educators and therapists. Children should be considered as a whole, developing in the physical, social, communicative, emotional, and cognitive domains. All families must be treated with respect and feel valued. Their need for information for purposes of advocacy and educational/therapeutic assistance for their child is of primary importance and contributes to the wellbeing of the child 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 their early childhood, through experiences addressing their individual needs. The school environment is designed for learning; protects each child's physical and emotional health; is 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.

## **Therapeutic Classroom Goal**

It is the goal of the Mary Shaw Branton Therapeutic Preschool to provide therapeutic services within an age-appropriate and natural environment. To support this goal, we strive to develop classroom settings in which the child's peer group, facilitated by staff, helps to emphasize the strengths of the individual's capacity to cope with any difficulties that may arise based on their differences. Within such a setting, children are encouraged to examine their challenges, identify and advocate for their needs, recognize and name distressing feelings, and explore alternative expression of such feelings all while becoming more independent and successful in the natural classroom setting.

This child-focused therapeutic intervention is provided within a natural, yet clinical, classroom setting with the child's peer group.

Group therapeutic activities address:

- Social skills development
- Social problem-solving
- Self-regulation
- Language development
- Physical development
- Activities of daily living

These interventions are delivered through:

- Organized and free play
- Recreational activities
- Art
- Music/movement
- Other activities within an early childhood setting

We believe in the power of play. Play provides a singular opportunity to build the executive functioning that underlies adaptive behaviors at home; improve language and math skills in school; build the safe, stable, and nurturing

relationships that buffer against toxic stress; and build social–emotional resilience. (Yogman, Garner, Hutchinson, Hirsch-Pasek, and Golinkoff, 2018)

**Therapy Services** inclusive of individualized physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy and assistive technology are offered to children in the preschool and on an outpatient basis, as prescribed by a physician. The goal for these services is to maximize each child’s abilities and propel them toward their greatest independence.

**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. Because of our unique access to a therapeutic classroom setting, within our program there is a strong emphasis on Natural Environment teaching, which is not often seen in other ABA clinical settings.

**Natural Environment Teaching (NET)** is a term that is used for when skills are taught or generalized within the natural environment. For example, you might teach a student to label colors of items receptively and expressively at the table. Then, during NET, the student would get to practice the skill by labelling colors of crayons that you are coloring with or asking for colors of playdoh that you are playing with.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Administration**

A Board of Directors has governance responsibilities for the Ability KC organization including services provided at 3101 Main/Children’s Center Campus. Operational leadership includes Amy Castillo, CEO/Executive Director; Sherry Early, CFO; Janet Padley, Chief Impact Officer; Dr. Terrie Price, Director of Developmental and Behavioral Health and Jewell Cockrum, Programming Director of Early Childhood Education and Development.

Ability KC’s CEO/Executive Director manages organizational operations and works directly with the Board of Directors for strategic planning of programs and services and the Chief Financial Officer for financial oversight. The Chief Impact Officer and the Director of Developmental and Behavioral Health coordinates

services to maximize outcomes for children with disabilities across their lifespan while addressing quality, safety, efficiencies, culture, and fiscal management.

## **Regulatory Bodies**

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

## **ABILITY KC PRESCHOOL SERVICES STAFF**

The teachers, assistant teachers, and therapists at Ability KC have the training and certification required for their position. All staff participate in ongoing professional development to build on 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.

Our current care giver staff includes Teachers, Assistant Teachers, Board Certified Behavior Analyst, Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapist, Speech Language Pathologists, Registered Behavior Technicians, Toddler Classroom Coordinator, Preschool Classroom Coordinator, Family Advocate, and Nurse,

A list of current staff and their contact information will be made available at the beginning of the school year with updates to staff provided throughout the year as needed through teacher newsletters, Learning Genie announcements, and Parent Press.

## **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 vendors.

## **HOURS OF OPERATION**

**Preschool Hours:**

8:00 am – 3:00 pm

**Extended Care**

Early 7:30 am- 8:00/ late 3:00 pm- 5:30 pm

**Individual therapy:**

by appointment

**ABA services:**

Classroom based 8:00-3:00

**Outpatient:**

by appointment

## **EXTENDED CARE**

**Before Care Hours: 7:30-8:00 am**

**After Care Hours: 3:00-5:30 pm**

Before and after care for children can be arranged as needed by families for each semester. There is an additional charge in some circumstances. If you are interested in learning about the fee structure, please contact a coordinator.

Enrollment for this program will be open 4 weeks prior to the start of the new school year and will be closed 1 week prior. During the Semester, openings for before and after care will be limited.

- First semester enrollment: **July 25-August 5, 2022.**
- Second Semester enrollment: **December 5- December 16, 2022.**

Please indicate your need for care by submitting your completed enrollment prior to the deadline to allow for appropriate staffing.

Building access to those children who are not formally enrolled in before or after care will be limited to the hours of 8:00 am- 3:00 pm.

\*Note: there will be no nurse on duty before 8:00am and after 4:30 p.m.

## **ATTENDANCE, ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE**

### **Preschool Arrival and Dismissal**

We are excited to be able to move back to our single arrival and dismissal time for the first time since the Covid shut down. Please continue to observe social distancing and mask wearing while inside our facility to support our efforts to keep our families safe.

### **Professional Development Days**

We will be closed periodically throughout the year for Professional Development Days. These dates are designated in the preschool family calendar that was provided in your enrollment paperwork. Copies are available upon request.

Some outpatient therapy and ABA services are available before and after school and some additional calendar days in which there is no school by individual appointment.

Please refer to the preschool family calendar for all dates the preschool is closed. The calendar was provided with your enrollment paperwork. Copies are available upon request.

### **Drop Off**

We ask that all adults wear a mask when entering our building. Your child will be provided with a mask and encouraged to wear it. Please escort your child to the classroom door and hand them off to their teacher.

Drop Off can be a time of increased emotion for children. It is best to establish a routine for this time that is predictable and will keep the transition time to a minimum. We can assist families in developing a plan to address any concerns that may arise.

All children must be signed in upon arrival using our digital attendance tracker. You may complete this task by scanning the QR code or by using the tablet located at the entrance of the building.

*\*\*as a reminder, please arrive as close as possible to the time assigned to your child for drop off.*

*\*\*We ask that you wait in your car with your child until just a couple minutes prior to your child's assigned class time. Following these guidelines will support our efforts to ensure that everyone remains as healthy as possible, and that the classroom is ready for your child to learn.*

## **Pick Up**

We ask that all adults wear a mask upon entering our building. You may proceed to your child's classroom to pick them up at their dismissal time.

Please feel free to interact with your child's teacher at that moment for quickly exchanged information. If you need more time, the members of your team would be happy to schedule a meeting that will allow them to give you their undivided attention.

## **Early Pick-up**

If you need to pick your children up early, please call ahead of time so that we can have them ready for you. If you are entering the building, you will be screened again, and you must wear a mask. You must sign your child out on the tablet. 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, Coordinators or Family Advocate 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 other authorized people on the *Consent to Release* form. If we are consistently unable to contact anyone on the approved list for pick-up, when necessary, we will call the Missouri Children's Division.

## **LATE PICK-UP FEES**

### **For Children who are 3:00 dismissal**

- Families will be charged a late fee of \$15 for the first 1-10 minutes.
- After the first 10 minutes a fee of \$1 per minute will be charged until you pick up your child.
- You will be required to pay this fee within 5 days or services will be suspended until the fee is paid.

### **for eligible **extended-care** participants:**

- Each family must arrive at their assigned pick-up time or earlier to assure that we have adequate supervision in place.
- Anyone who arrives after their assigned time, per the extended care agreement, will begin assessing a late fee immediately as follows:
  - \$1 per minute for the first 5 minutes
  - \$10 will be assessed at minute 6
  - \$1 per minute following minute 6
- Late fees must be paid prior to your child returning to extended care.
- After 3 late pickups, Coordinators or Family Advocate will meet with the family to discuss a resolution.
- A continued pattern of late pick-ups will result in dismissal from the extended care program.

## **Attendance**

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

1. Attendance is recorded daily.
2. If your child will not be in attendance, please notify us as much in advance as possible by contacting our receptionist at 816-756-0780 or by sending a message via Learning Genie. Following this procedure, rather than contacting the

classroom directly allows for consistent documentation and preparation for student absences.

3. If a child is unexpectedly absent and the parent has not contacted Ability KC, a representative of the center will attempt to contact the parent that same day.
4. **IMPORTANT- TO INCREASE STUDENT OUTCOMES AND REDUCE DISTRACTIONS IN THE CLASSROOM, WE ASK THAT STUDENTS BE AT SCHOOL NO LATER THAN 8:30 AM.**
  - **IF YOUR CHILD HAS AN APPOINTMENT IN THE MORNING AND THEY WILL ARRIVE LATE, PLEASE NOTIFY PRESCHOOL STAFF BY CONTACTING 816-756-0780 SO THAT WE CAN PLAN FOR YOUR CHILD'S ARRIVAL.**
5. YOUR CHILD'S DAILY SCHEDULE IS SET TO REMAIN AS CONSISTENT AS POSSIBLE TO SUPPORT THE ROUTINES OF THE CLASSROOM AND THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CHILD.
  - IF YOUR CHILD IS TARDY, LEAVES EARLY OR IS ABSENT, WE CANNOT GUARANTEE THAT WE ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE ANY OF THE SERVICES OR ACTIVITIES THAT THEY HAVE MISSED, INCLUDING THERAPY.
  - BEING ABSENT FROM ANY SERVICES WILL IMPEDE YOUR CHILD'S PROGRESS.
  - CHILDREN RECEIVING THERAPY SERVICES AS AN OUTPATIENT ARRIVING MORE THAN 15 MINUTES LATE FOR THEIR APPOINTMENT WILL BE CONSIDERED ABSENT AND THEIR SESSION WILL BE CANCELLED UNLESS PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS ARE MADE WITH THE THERAPIST.
6. Breakfast is served between 8:00 and 8:30 AM each day. If your child will arrive later than their scheduled drop off time, please plan to provide their meal prior to arrival.
7. When a child is absent for two or more consecutive days, the family will be contacted by program staff; that contact will be documented in the child's record.
8. 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.
9. 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. Notify the family in writing at the end of each month if they fall below 85%.
  - c. Create an attendance plan with the family to help them identify barriers of attendance and problem solve strategies with the coordinator, and the family advocate as appropriate. This plan will be documented in the child's file.
  - D. Families who consistently fall below 85% attendance and have not followed the attendance plan will be dismissed from the program.
  - e. The program will send a certified letter to families who have been unable to be reached during this process. There will be a request to connect with

the Ability KC program director and a dismissal plan will be discussed at this time.

## **SEVERE WEATHER**

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.

## **FAMILY ENGAGEMENT**

### **Parent and Family Conduct**

To support a peaceful and safe school environment, Ability KC and the school have 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**

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

### **How to contact staff:**

To reduce interruption to classroom routines and care of children, we ask that phone calls during classroom hours be directed through our main phone number **(816-756-0780)**. Your call will be placed in voicemail for the teacher to respond to at a time that is appropriate.

If you have information that is necessary for someone to respond to immediately, you may contact your classroom coordinator so that they are able to assist in a more immediate response.

### **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.)***

**Parent Teacher Conferences and/or Home Visits** are scheduled throughout the year to set goals and to discuss your child's progress. Preschool Classrooms will have 3 on-campus Parent Teacher Conferences and one back-to-school night.

Toddlers will have 2 on-campus visits and 2 home visits. Please see attached calendar for dates.

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 opportunities to share other information.

**\*\*Note: Due to COVID-19, parent teacher conferences and/or home visits will be conducted on campus or virtually as needed to maintain client, family and staff safety.**

**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
- We welcome parents to participate in onsite or virtual visits as schedules and Covid-19 precautions allow.

### **Observation Procedures:**

We are always excited to share what is happening in the classroom with our families. The best way for you to be able to observe and see your child exhibiting their highest level of independence is to participate in a virtual observation.

We can accomplish virtual visits in one of two ways:

- You may make an appointment to come into the building and view via one of our devices.
- You may make an appointment; we will send you an invitation to a Teams meeting and you would log in at the appropriate time to observe.

Please schedule a time with your child's classroom coordinator when you would like to observe.

- A coordinator will accompany you on your visit to be able to answer questions or address any topics that may come up.
- To keep the observation as disruption free as possible, we ask that you not plan to visit your child in person during your observation unless you plan to take them home with you.
- Due to confidentiality and HIPAA privacy issues, please exit the observation if your child leaves the classroom.
- All information that you hear and see while observing is private and confidential.
- Recording and photos are prohibited.

### **Family Advisory Group**

All families are welcome to participate in our parent lead advisory group that meets monthly via Zoom. The purpose is to provide time for families to support one another and gain information on quality improvement. Early Head Start families will have voting rights. Contact the Family Advocate 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> Tuesday of each month. Meetings will take place on campus when COVID protocol allows. A link to virtual access will be provided for those who cannot attend in person.

### **Ground Hog Run**

This event is the largest of its kind in support of our preschool program and we are thrilled to be back IN PERSON for this race, benefiting the children with disabilities receiving services at Ability KC.

This unique event gives athletes the opportunity to participate in the 5K, 10K and Tunnel-to-Tunnel experiences. With a consistent temperature of 65 to 68 degrees and paved underground streets, the Hunt Midwest Sub-Tropolis, a **USATF Certified 5K and 10K Course**, is the ideal venue for runners from all over the country to compete in this annual winter event which takes place in January.

We invite you to join us by registering to run, volunteering to help, or sponsoring financially. Become one of the thousands of individuals who have become part

of Ability KC's legacy and helped support this event to build brighter futures for children with disabilities. No matter how you choose to support Groundhog Run, this year will be packed with excitement and celebration.

## **CLASSROOM INFORMATION, PROCEDURES and POLICY**

### **Staff - Child Ratios /Supervision**

State licensing and NAEYC accreditation required ratios for supervision are always maintained or exceeded.

### **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.

- Consider the weather when dressing your child. During cooler weather, your child should be dressed in layers to provide adequate warmth.
- Keep an extra change of clothing in your child's cubby for mishaps.
- When 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. 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.
- Mark your child's clothing and other personal belongings with his/her name to reduce the risk of loss.

### **What to Bring**

- Provide a blanket and crib sheet for your child during nap.
- Send a backpack with your child. Information will be sent home in their backpack.
- Send an extra set of clothes to be stored in your child's cubby for mishaps.
- Provide diapers and pull-ups for children who are not potty trained. (does not apply to Early Head Start families)
- For Early Head Start families, we have partnered with Happy Bottoms to source diapers. Please make sure that your teacher knows what size diapers/pull-ups are required.

### **Outdoor Play**

- Your child will play outside most days unless the weather does not permit.
- 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 sunshade 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.

## **CELEBRATION AND SPECIAL DAYS**

### **Birthdays**

A child's birthday is 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.

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

### **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**

Preschool age families are asked to provide a sheet and blanket that will be used on the child's cot during nap time. Bedding should be taken home, washed, and returned weekly.

Toddler age families will have bedding provided and cleaned by staff weekly.

Ability KC follows the Missouri State Guidelines for napping based on age

### **One-year-old to three-year-old**

- As a rule, children will lay on their cots for nap immediately after lunch.
- If children need a nap at other times of the day, they will be given access to a cot within the classroom
- The teaching staff will monitor the children by sight and sound during nap.
- According to Missouri Childcare Guidelines, the length of a nap for this age group will be designed to meet the individual child's needs.
- Children who do not fall asleep will be taken out of bed for other activities.
- Children will be allowed to leave their cot for alternative activities upon awakening following a nap.

### **Three to five-year-old**

- Children will lay on their cots for nap/rest immediately following lunch.
- Teaching staff will monitor children by sight and sound during nap.
- Children should remain on their cots for 30 minutes of rest, if capable.
- If they are content to remain on their cot after 30 minutes, they may remain, but should not be required to remain longer than 60 minutes when not sleeping.

- Teaching staff will regularly check on napping children to ensure their safety. When a child awakens, they will be engaged in a quiet activity.

### **Therapy**

- Children who have therapy as a part of their school day may be scheduled for therapy during nap time if they have naturally phased out a nap time and/or with their parent/guardian approval.

### **Outpatient**

- Children enrolled in any therapy as an outpatient are not offered a nap.
- If an outpatient child falls asleep during their scheduled therapy hours, the parents/guardians will be called to pick them up.
- If the outpatient child typically naps in their day, their therapy hours will be scheduled around their nap time to the extent possible.

## **Disenrollment**

A family may be asked to leave the program if:

- The Program Director 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 is 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.

### **A note about Progress:**

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 cannot be shown to be beneficial for your child in which case your child's therapy will be discontinued.

## **CURRICULUM**

At Ability KC an all-inclusive play-based curriculum, Creative 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
- English language acquisition.

It enables children to develop confidence, creativity and lifelong critical thinking skills using exploration and discovery as a way of learning.

### **Individualized Instruction via Play Based Interventions**

Our teachers, therapists and parents work together to achieve the 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.

### **Play Time, Social Time**

Play Time, Social Time curriculum is designed to teach social interaction skills to children and to provide a variety of strategies to increase the social interaction and social competence of children enrolled in the class. Social interaction skills are those social behaviors that children use to begin or maintain social interaction with peers. In this curriculum, Children are taught six social interaction skills that include:

- Sharing- offering toys or materials to initiate play and interaction
- Persistence- maintaining efforts to initiate social interaction
- Requesting to share- asking other children for toys to initiate play and interaction.
- Play organizing- suggesting specific activities or themes to other children for play and interaction
- Agreeing- agreeing with other or offering positive responses to social initiations from others.
- Helping- giving or requesting assistance to other children.

Play Time, Social Time may be recommended for a child based on their individual needs.

## **INDIVIDUAL SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT**

Ability KC is committed to ensuring that all areas of children's growth and 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 at enrollment and periodically during their time with us, as needed.

At any time during evaluation that individual needs are identified that require outside referrals, Ability KC staff will work with families to identify appropriate resources within the community.

### **Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ3)**

The ASQ3 and ASQ SE2 will be used to help identify areas of developmental need that may need referral for extra support. The areas of content accessed include communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving skills, personal-social skills and social-emotional skills.

### **Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP)**

The 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 for children in toddler classrooms.

### **Verbal Behavior Milestones Assessment and Placement Program (VB-MAPP)**

The VB-MAPP is a criterion-referenced assessment based on typical language development. It is utilized with learners that present with developmental disabilities that are not acquiring language typically in their natural environment. The VB-MAPP systematically tests for the presence of the elementary verbal operant uncovered by Skinner (labeling, asking for items, repeating, imitating, and answering questions) in their verbal repertoire. The VB-MAPP will be administered to measure progress as deemed appropriate by a child's team.

### **Other Assessments:**

Other assessment protocols may be recommended for an individual child to identify areas of potential developmental delay or disorder which would benefit from early intervention services.

### Potential Areas of Evaluation:

- Communication- speech and language
- Gross motor
- Fine motor
- Social emotional
- Cognitive
- Adaptive

## **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 having a good relationship with others.

### **BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**

- 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.

**Our Guidance and Discipline Policy can be found attached to this family handbook. A copy will be provided upon request to the receptionist, classroom coordinator or any other staff. (NAEYC 1E.1 Addressing Challenging Behavior)**

### **Safe Crisis Management**

Our program has chosen to participate in training and implementation of a crisis management program called Safe Crisis Management. Safe Crisis Management® “SCM” is a comprehensive training program focused on preventing and managing crisis events and improving safety in agencies and schools. Safe Crisis Management has a trauma-sensitive approach with emphasis on building positive relationships with individuals. Our program is designed to assist staff with responding to the needs of all individuals and particularly with the needs of the most challenging. If a child gets into a position where they are harming their life or the life of another within our facility, our staff is trained to use Emergency Safety Physical Interventions (ESPI) that ensure the utmost health, safety, security, and dignity of each party involved. If an ESPI is used, we will follow protocol to debrief with the child, staff, and parents to ensure our relationships are retained, communication is clear, and best practices are maintained.

### **Social Worker**

On an as needed basis, we will have a PRN Social Worker who can support the center-based preschool and outpatient therapy services. The Social Worker will provide education, resources, emotional support and guidance to families, children, and staff in dealing with family situations.

## **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. 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 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.

### **Third Party Fundings**

Therapy may be covered by a school district or other third-party payer such as health insurance. If a payor 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 especially 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-payment and private payments for services are to be made at the front desk as services are provided. We accept cash, check, MasterCard and Visa.

### **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 fulfil your request and a reasonable fee may apply.

## **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 the sharing of progress reports with the child's medical doctor(s) as well as an 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 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 up 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 reduced therapy hours for a set number of weeks, followed by a future parent meeting to discuss progress in decreasing 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.

### **Insurance**

The Case Manager will gather your insurance information and check your coverage. They will reach out to you about this information prior to starting your child's services.

## **HEALTH AND WELLNESS POLICIES**

Ability KC Therapeutic Preschool is fortunate to be able to provide a full time, onsite nurse to meet the individual needs of our students/clients.

**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 decision will be made regarding whether the child should be sent home. The school nurse, coordinator, teacher, and director will consider the following:

- Prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities
- This 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 the spread of 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 pick up your child from our care as soon as possible or within one hour of notification.

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 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.

\*\*Covid symptoms may require children to be absent from school or other services for longer than 24 hours based on most recent recommendations by our medical advisors.

### **COVID-19**

A separate set of procedures relating to COVID-19 will constantly be monitored and adapted based on the most up-to-date recommendations and rates of infections for our area. If your child is exposed to, exhibits symptoms of or contracts COVID-19, please notify staff as soon as possible so that we may take appropriate precautions.

### **Symptoms of 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 of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher**
- 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 the 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.
- Early Head Start Families are required to provide health screenings. We will assist families in completing the following screenings as needed: 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 school nurse.

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 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 can brush their teeth at school each day as required by their individual needs. Due to Covid, modifications to the classroom routine of teeth brushing will be in place and may change due to the recommendation of our medical advisors. 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 by Great Western Dining and delivered each

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

Based on individual needs, children who do not participate in Head Start may bring lunch from home. A request to bring lunch from home could be due to either medical reasons or special diets for other than medical reasons. We must have documentation on file for this to occur for the external agencies that review and oversee the CCC nutrition program. Please discuss your child's needs with the classroom coordinator and your child's teacher.

***It is important that you notify the school nurse, classroom coordinators 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 classroom coordinator, classroom teaching team, therapist, and nurses at enrollment or when a change in your child's diet occurs.
- If your child requires tube feeding, you will need to meet with the 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 that are medical based, you must have your physician complete a food substitution form. This form is available from the classroom coordinator or school nurse.
- Ability KC 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**

Accidents and 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 a coordinator 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 contacted 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.
- If 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 can 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 or receptionist.
- Visitors **MUST** sign in at the front desk and **MUST** wear a visitor sticker for the duration of their stay.
- The security guard or receptionist will call for someone to come to the front to escort visitors to their appropriate destination.
- **New policies regarding visitation amidst the COVID-19 pandemic have been sent home. Ask an administrator if you have questions.**

**\*\*NOTE: please do not provide entrance into the building for others. When the door is opened for you, please enter without holding the door for others to enter. Each person will be screened and buzzed in on an individual basis to maintain security.**

## 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 your own car while on CCC property.**

## 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 Family Advocate for available resources.

## **Parking**

We share the building with other agencies who serve children. For this reason, our parking lot can be busy. It is important for the safety of your child that you always hold their hand 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. At no time is idling permissible on our property.

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. Absolutely no standing or idling vehicles allowed on the property. Overflow parking is 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 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 classroom coordinator. 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.

**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 is determined to remove a child from Ability KC and 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 status of the custody dispute. If 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 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 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 participates in water therapy.

The water in the CCC pool and air around the pool are kept at a comfortable 90-94 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 through Swim Angelfish®. 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, eyeglasses, 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 weeks to 3-month practicum assignments. These students are supervised and provided with 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.

### **Early Head Start**

Ability KC has been a partner site for Mid-America Head Start since 2010. Early Head Start is a federal program that provides 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 Early Head Start Program. If you have questions, please discuss them with our Family Advocate.

- No fees are charged to the family for classroom services and supplies during the school program.
- **Children MUST maintain 85% daily attendance.**
- Families participate in Home Visits and/or Parent Teacher Conferences four times per year.
- Families provide current medical and dental information for the child and keep updated as needed.
- Families take their 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.

It is important to note that beginning with the 2021-22 school year, our program is an Early Head Start provider only and children who enroll in our preschool will be required to enroll in a different Head Start program when they age out of Early Head Start. Transition planning for the family will begin within the final year of eligibility but no later than 6 months prior.

## **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 accordance 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 recorded 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 (HIPAA)**

Ability KC is in full compliance with 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 there is adequate time to discuss the issue. If 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. If, after addressing the issue with the person involved, you feel you need additional support, please contact the coordinator for your child's classroom. If no resolution can be found following that conversation, a follow-up with the program director may be warranted. Please follow this procedure for any concerns that you may have.

### **Proactive Problem Solving**

- **Step 1:** Discuss staff concerns directly with the staff member(s) involved. Please do not discuss the matter with other teachers, staff members, or other parents. This undermines our policy of open and honest communication.
- **STEP 2:** If the matter remains unresolved, please bring your concern to the classroom coordinator. At this time, it may be necessary to schedule a meeting with the appropriate coordinator and the staff member(s) involved.
- **STEP 3: Any** additional follow-up that is needed will then be passed on to the program director as appropriate.
  - Note: If the problem involves the coordinator or director, the second step would then involve the appropriate supervisor to that staff member.
- **STEP 4: 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 from 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.**

**Attachments:**

**Staff contact list**

**Guidance and Discipline Policy (NAEYC 1E.1) new language and guidance 2022**